

## COMMISSIONING THE SCRUTINY PANELS 2015/16

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF SCRUTINY AND AREA ARRANGEMENTS

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider and commissions the policy reviews to be undertaken by the Lead Scrutiny Members and their supporting Panels.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Annual Scrutiny Debate was held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 with the aim of presenting, discussing and developing potential topics for consideration by the various Lead Scrutiny Members and their panels.

#### 3. SCRUTINY POLICY REVIEWS

- 3.1 The undertaking of scrutiny policy reviews allows the opportunity within an agreed period of time to examine the Council and its partners' policies and determine whether the Council and / or the relevant public service provider(s) intended policy outcomes have been achieved. The process also considers the views of all key stakeholders involved from their own perspective.
- 3.2 The policy reviews are project planned with appropriate methodology applied to investigate the chosen topic. This may include meetings, site visits, surveys, commissioning of research, public meetings or analysis of comparative practice in other local authorities.
- 3.3 Within the revised scrutiny arrangements, the Scrutiny Committee does not undertake a policy review of its own. Instead the Committee commissions the Lead Scrutiny Members and their respective scrutiny panels to undertake focused policy reviews during 2015/16.
- 3.4 Each Lead Member and supporting Scrutiny Panel has now convened to discuss the topics discussed at the Debate and agreed its priorities and some indicative timescales for completion. The list of potential topics, where available, for each of the Lead Scrutiny Members is attached as **Appendix 1**. It should be noted that a number of panels will not have met prior to the committee agenda deadline and therefore further information around the various panel deliberations will be circulated at the meeting. It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee commissions each Lead Member to undertake a minimum of one policy review for 2015/16.
- 3.5 Following the Scrutiny Committee's consideration and endorsement of the policy review topics, further reports will be provided to the scrutiny panels which will include detailed terms of reference, definitions, links to corporate outcomes, partnerships, the national and local context, and proposals for gathering evidence. The Scrutiny Committee will receive on-going updates from Lead Scrutiny Members through the monthly Lead Scrutiny Member Update. Any suggested deviations, amendments or additions to the work of

the Scrutiny Panel's will be brought to the Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

## 4. Recommendations

6.1 That the Scrutiny Committee:-

- (a) Considers the list of suggestions for policy review topics and commissions the relevant Lead Scrutiny Members to undertake this policy review work, as part of the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme; and
- (b) Receives regular updates on the progress of the work of the Lead Scrutiny Member and the supporting Panels through the Lead Scrutiny Member Update report.

## 5. Background Papers

## 5.1 Scrutiny Panel notes – June 2015

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## **APPENDIX 2: PROPOSED POLICY REVIEW TOPICS FOR 2015/16**

### **CHILDRENS SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Children's Scrutiny Panel met on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

The panel agreed that SENd (SEN and disabilities) Local Offer – One Year On may be the most useful topic. From September 2014 the Council published a 'Local Offer' which set out what is available for children and young people with SEN and disabilities.

A scrutiny review could :

- Evaluate the process by which the Local Offer has been developed;
- Evaluate the level of engagement from partners, young people and their families, schools and other agencies;
- Evaluate what has been included in the Offer and where there are any gaps.

### **CITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

The City Services Scrutiny Panel met on 7 July 2015.

The panel has agreed to conduct a review into the way in which street licences can support a vibrant city. Such a review could examine the way in which the policies and processes surrounding the granting of street licences can help to support the aim of a more vibrant city centre and also the potential for bringing greater flexibility to the process. The review could also help to identify any zones/areas within the city that could most benefit. The review is timely in so much as it would provide an opportunity to discuss these issues with a range of partners such as local traders and the BID.

The panel also felt it would be useful to take a more general look at enforcement and the extent to which enforcement powers available to the Council across a range of areas are being used. This would involve consideration of the correct balance which should exist between persuasion, education and enforcement.

The panel would also look, as a one-off topic, at the issue of road surface patching. This could consider the potential long term solutions available to help reduce the Council's liability from accident claims.

### **HEALTH HOUSING AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

The HHAS Scrutiny Panel met on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

The panel has agreed to look at the issue of transition from children to adult social care, the approaches taken, how these vulnerable children are supported into adulthood and independent living, where does the system fail or create gaps, what new sustainable approaches can be taken

and what common themes or denominators exist in transition.

The review is timely on 2 counts in that: **(i)** the Directorate are currently looking at a number of approaches and a scrutiny focus would be useful at this time ; and **(ii)** the explicit duties in relation to the Care Act 2014 for local authorities to conduct transition assessments for children, children's carers and young carers where there is a likely need for care and support after the child in question turns 18 and a transition assessment would be of 'significant benefit' and the Children and Families Act 2014 has also added new duties to the Children Act 1989 to assess young carers and establish whether they are 'children in need' and to assess parent carers of disabled children and consider what support they may need.

The panel will also look at, as a one-off topic, the scale of Houses of Multiple Occupation proliferation in relevant areas. The panel felt that this was an interesting topic but was not sufficient for a major review and therefore will hold a meeting to gain an overview of the issue and the progress the local authority is making in tackling the issues.

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH, WELLNESS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Public Health, Wellness and Culture Scrutiny Panel met on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015.

The panel has agreed to look at self-harm and specifically in relation to 'immediate' self-harm; examples of this include cutting, burning and poisoning.

The panel will also look to a secondary shorter topic specifically around sexually transmitted diseases and prevention and a visit to the Genito Urinary Medicine clinic was suggested. .

#### **RESPONSIVE SERVICES AND CUSTOMER CARE SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Responsive Services and Customer Care Scrutiny Panel met on 2nd July 2015.

The panel has agreed to focus on the issue of Customer Care. It was suggested that the review could examine what customer services has achieved to date, how the council makes use of customer satisfaction data and the way we use information to improve services.

The Panel has asked to receive a progress report on the implementation of the new powers contained in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act and the way in which it is impacting on the work of the Council and its partners.

it was also suggested that later in the year the Panel could receive a one-off update report on the implementation of Universal Credit. This could consider the progress being made by the Council and its partners in preparing for the introduction of Universal Credit in the city.

#### **SKILLS ECONOMY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Skills, Economy and Customer Care Scrutiny Panel met on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015.

The panel has agreed to look at Key Cities – Learning from others to maximise the effectiveness of Sunderland's Regeneration. The review could include research of all 26 Key Cities, analysis of best practice and most appropriate to Sunderland's needs and conclusions and learning to take forward. The review is timely because Sunderland has a number of new and exciting initiatives happening and that this was an ideal time to look at how we can learn from others and best use the Key Cities Network.

The panel also considered as a potential secondary topic, should time allow around, the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) and the skills that would be needed to ensure local people are able to meet the requirements. Concerns were raised about whether or not this came under the Skills remit and the Lead Member agreed to discuss this with other Lead Members.