

LEAD SCRUTINY MEMBER UPDATE: JANUARY 2016

JOINT REPORT OF THE LEAD SCRUTINY MEMBERS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Scrutiny Committee regarding the work of each of the six Lead Scrutiny Members and supporting Panels.

2. LEAD SCRUTINY MEMBER UPDATE

Scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair (Cllrs Norma Wright and Dianne Snowdon)

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee received at its last meeting a report on scrutiny arrangements and the next steps in developing a new scrutiny model and operating practices. It was agreed that the new model would exist in a shadow format from January 2016 with full implementation taking place in May 2016. These proposals will be put before full Council at its January 2016 meeting.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Committee also in December met with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Secretary and interim Head of Paid Service and Director of Finance as part of the budget consultation process. A full presentation was given to Members on the national funding outlook, the Council budget, the challenges and demand pressures and the Council/City response.
- 2.3 The Safeguarding Working Group also met in December 2015 and again looked at the continued journey of improvement in and around Children's Services in the City through the Improvement and learning Plan.

Children's Services (Cllr Darryl Dixon)

- 2.4 The Children's Services Scrutiny Panel met on 10th December 2015, continuing its policy work around children and young people's mental health.
- 2.5 The Children's Services Scrutiny Panel also discussed the new scrutiny structure and transition arrangements that would be implemented in January 2016. It was also noted that under the new arrangements the work of the Safeguarding Working Group will fall under the remit of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee.

City Services (Cllr Lynda Scanlan)

- 2.6 At its last meeting and as part of its review into environmental enforcement, the Panel looked at the approach being taken with regards to the control of illegally tethered horses. David Gustard (Senior Surveyor) outlined the background to what was a growing issue for the city; including the respective powers and responsibilities of key players such as the Police, RSPCA, land owners and the Council.
- 2.7 It was noted that the Council does not have a statutory responsibility for either animal welfare or the danger posed to the community by animals as these were the responsibility of the RSPCA and Police respectively. The Council's duty was as a

landowner and involved managing any trespass on its land and issuing notices to inform owners that their animal should be removed. If this does not occur, further action could be taken though, in practice, this process is complicated and expensive. The Council therefore takes a risk based approach to when the enforcement powers are used for example where an animal poses an immediate nuisance to the public or where the trespass is repeated.

- 2.8 Members recognised that this was a very difficult area and discussed the range of options available to the Council given the very tight financial constraints under which it is operating. Reference was made to improving the procurement process with contractors in order that action could be taken more quickly and flexibly. The option of identifying specific grazing areas within the city was recognised as being costly; however it was felt that there was scope for developing relationships with other local authorities such as Durham who have better infrastructure for grazing. Members also felt that it would be useful to establish a clear policy and procedure within the Council on how to handle specific cases of illegal tethering of horses and look at the potential for improving signage and advice/guidance for owners.
- 2.9 The Panel also considered a report on the forthcoming changes to the arrangements for scrutiny. Members supported the proposals contained in the report.

Health, Housing and Adult Services (Cllr Jill Fletcher)

- 2.10 The HHAS Scrutiny Panel visited Portland Academy in December to continue its work around the transition from child to adult social services. Portland Academy provides education for students with a wide range of needs. The majority of students have severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, with some pupils also having complex medical conditions. Members used the visit to understand how the school prepares their students for the transition into adulthood and adult social care.
- 2.11 Members also considered the report detailing the changes to the scrutiny structure and the interim transitional arrangements. Members were satisfied with the proposals within the report and supported them.

Public Health, Wellness and Culture (Cllr George Howe)

- 2.12 The Public Health, Wellness and Culture Scrutiny Panel held a meeting on the 8th December 2015. Karen Brown, Scrutiny Officer, updated the panel on the Scrutiny Review, giving background, current position, proposals and the structure and membership of the panels, including thematic membership and co-option. The Scrutiny Officer also detailed the work programmes moving forward and addressed queries from the panel in relation to declaring relationships and political balances. The panel queried involvement of young people within the panels, to which the Scrutiny Officer explained work had been previously done with School Councils and the Youth Parliament. The panel expressed an interest in young people being further involved in the future, but that young people find the formal environment intimidating. Lorraine Hughes, Public Health Lead, explained that there are youth inspectors that can be called in to give young people's views as an alternative to them attending.
- 2.13 The panel further discussed the draft sexual health report and made reference to the unsuitable seating plan in the hospital, the condition of the building and also that the first recommendation should be strengthened to read 'consider earnestly' the co-location of

the GUM and CASH services. It was also noted that the panel agreed there was a high quality of service but the 'tired' looking building lets the service down. The draft report was then agreed by the panel.

Skills, Economy and Regeneration (Cllr David Snowdon)

- 2.14 The Skills, Economy & Regeneration Panel met on 19 November to consider in more detail the two cities chosen as examples for learning among the Key Cities Group of local authorities (Coventry and Hull).
- 2.15 At the meeting, Andrew Perkin produced a matrix which highlighted the main initiatives and projects designed to encourage economic regeneration within the two cities, along with those being undertaken or planned for Sunderland. Members felt that the experiences of Coventry and Hull should be very useful in informing the development of regeneration in Sunderland in the years ahead.
- 2.16 The Panel agreed that it would be useful to invite representatives from Coventry City Council to a future meeting in order to discuss in more detail their plans and experiences.
- 2.17 A further meeting of the Panel was arranged for 14 December in order to consider the report on the proposed changes to the scrutiny structure. The proposals were supported by members. It was also felt that there would be value in continuing its work into the experiences of other Key Cities.

Responsive Services and Customer Care (Cllr Ronny Davison)

- 2.18 At its last meeting, the Panel received an update on the progress being made in implementing of the new powers contained in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- 2.19 Stuart Douglass (Lead Policy for Community Safety) was in attendance to provide details of the range of powers now available and the approach being taken by the Council and its partners. Members referred to the considerable potential of the new powers in relation to tackling problems such as anti- social behaviour in specific localities. They also referred to the importance of the Council making use of environmental enforcement powers issues such as litter and dog fouling were a clear priority for the people of the city.
- 2.20 As part of its review into customer services, individual members of the Panel have also invited to make arrangements to view at first at first-hand the operation of the Customer Services Network. Arrangements are currently being made for these visits.
- 2.21 The Panel also considered a report on the forthcoming changes to the arrangements for scrutiny. Members supported the proposals contained in the report.

3. MEMBERSHIPS AND ALIGNMENT OF WORK PROGRAMMES

- 3.1 It is proposed that the current six Lead Scrutiny Members will start immediately to deliver a phased approach into the new arrangements by working collaboratively towards the full adoption of a Scrutiny Committee Chair and Vice-Chair roles.

- 3.2 This proposal will require that the six Lead Scrutiny Members will oversee the introduction of the three thematic Scrutiny Committees by working in partnership to chair the 'shadow' committee which most closely aligns with their current remit (**see Appendix 1**). Panel Members will also be aligned to the 'shadow' committee closest to that panel which they have previously been a member of.

4. DEDICATED SCRUTINY BUDGET

- 4.1 A small budgetary provision of £15,000 per annum is available to the Scrutiny Committee and the supporting Panels to deliver the agreed Annual Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.
- 4.2 As of 4th January 2016 the breakdown of the budget stood as follows:-

Description	£
Scrutiny Development	£5,269
Member Development	£898
Policy Review Development	£0.00
Total Expenditure to Date	£6,167
Budget	£15,000
Remaining Budget	£8,833

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee;
- (a) notes and considers the update of the Lead Scrutiny Members and receives, where appropriate, a further verbal update at the meeting;
 - (b) notes the current expenditure and remaining scrutiny budget for 2015/16.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Scrutiny Committee Agenda and Papers – December 15

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Appendix 2 – Transition of current projects: Alignment of the current work programme (2015/16) to the new remits

New Scrutiny Committee	Existing Scrutiny Panels	Realigned Work Programme Topics for Remainder of 2015/16
Coordinating Scrutiny Committee	Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Article 4 Policy Framework documents including budget setting and corporate plan Anti-Social Behaviour – new powers (not started)
Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	Public Health, Wellness & Culture Health, Housing & Adult Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual Health Policy Review (concludes end Dec 15) Transitions from Child to Adult Social Care Policy Review (on-going) Site visit to HMO (concludes end Nov 15) Substantial Variations to health services / Statutory health scrutiny role
Children, Education & Skills	Children's Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Mental Health Policy Review (on-going) Children's Safeguarding Working Group (on-going) Ofsted Improvement Plan / Monthly Performance Monitoring Report School Performance (Validated Results) – Feb 16 C&YP Community Services Annual Performance Update (Mar 16)
Economic Prosperity	Responsive Services & Customer Care Skills, Economy & Regeneration City Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's Customer Services – Policy Review (concludes Dec 15) Key Cities Policy Review (on-going) Digital Skills Policy (not started) Environmental Enforcement – Policy Review (concludes end Dec 15) BID Annual Update (Feb16)