

## **ENGLISH HERITAGE CHRISTMAS WORKSHOP**

### **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**Strategic Priorities: CIO1: Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO4: Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'.**

#### **1. Why has this report come to the Committee?**

- 1.1 The report provides a brief overview of the English Heritage Christmas workshop attended by members of the committee on Monday 14 December 2009. The workshop was around working in partnership and the opportunities for effective scrutiny.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 placed a duty on named partners to cooperate and provide information to local authority overview and scrutiny committees on request. English Heritage is one of those named partners and English Heritage see this as an opportunity to work in partnership, establish relationships, showcase their good work and contribute to Local Area Agreements.

#### **3. The Christmas Workshop – Working Together**

- 3.1 The workshop outlined the significance of working together and emphasised not only the importance of scrutiny within the democratic process but also ensuring that this process was not too daunting or onerous for participants. It was also noted that scrutiny needed to set a good example when requesting participation from partners including clear explanations of what is required, the timescales, the context and the how the process will operate.
- 3.2 The event also explored the importance of protecting and promoting our local heritage and how this cross-cutting issue touches on regeneration, social inclusion, sustainability, local distinctiveness, tourism and local identity.
- 3.3 The workshop looked at how scrutiny functions can monitor, support or promote the mainstreaming of heritage protection into service areas. This could be achieved by:
- questioning Cabinet proposals as they are developed
  - recommending that links to heritage issues are included in relevant Cabinet reports

- including issues in the scoping criteria for scrutiny reviews.
- 3.4 It was also discussed that in a more formal setting scrutiny committees can challenge and monitor their authority's policies in order to identify if any of the following were in place:
- Heritage at Risk register
  - Local list of heritage valued by the local community
  - Actively involved with Heritage Open Days
  - Responsive to Heritage Protection Reform.
- 3.5 The workshop concluded that local authorities needed to share their experiences and examples of heritage related scrutiny across the region.
- 3.6 Like many other partner organisation English Heritage have indicated they have limited resources to engage with each scrutiny committee individually. This highlights the role of the Regional Scrutiny Network as a potential forum for discussion between partners and the 12 Local Authorities in the region as a vehicle for identifying new developments and sharing best practice.
- 3.7 The overriding message from the workshop was one of making the new scrutiny powers work for the benefit of both overview and scrutiny committees and our partners. Ensuring that partners respond to scrutiny effectively, and that we are open and clear about our priorities and the information required.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The report provides members with an overview of the English Heritage Christmas workshop exploring themes of working together and mainstreaming heritage in local authorities.

#### **5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 That Members note the information contained in the report.

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