

## RESPONSIVE SERVICES AND CUSTOMER CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

**Notes of meeting held on:** 5 July 2012

**Present:** Cllrs David Errington, Bob Heron, Elizabeth Gibson, Barry Curran, Anne Lawson, George Thompson and David Tate.

Helen Lancaster, Susan Kellie and Kelly Henderson

**Apologies:** Cllrs John Scott and Iain Kay

1.	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>The Chair introduced everyone to the panel and introductions were made.</p>	
2.	<p><b>The Scrutiny Panel – First Meeting of the Scrutiny Panel</b></p> <p>HL presented the first report which included the changes to scrutiny and the formation of an overarching Scrutiny Committee and six supporting Lead Scrutiny Members and Scrutiny Panels, as well as explaining how this Scrutiny Panel would operate going forward.</p> <p>HL emphasised the operating model's ability to allow more flexible and responsive scrutiny of the issues that are constantly changing within local government, as well as those issues of local concern.</p> <p><b>One off items</b> - Although the Panel will not set its own work programme, Members can and should continue to raise issues where appropriate. This should be done with Cllr Errington in the first instance who will raise it with the Scrutiny Committee if appropriate.</p> <p>Following a query from Cllr Gibson, HL confirmed that where an issue was deemed to be of an urgent nature, there was flexibility in place for the relevant Scrutiny Lead Member to raise the issue with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee outside of the confines of the Committee meeting to ensure issues are dealt with quickly.</p> <p><b>Policy Reviews</b> - HL explained that the Panel had been commissioned to undertake two 'spotlight' policy reviews. The methods of evidence gathering (i.e. site visits, meetings, calling expert witnesses etc) had not changed, although the shorter reviews would mean a requirement for a more focussed approach to the consideration of issues.</p> <p><b>Future Ways of Working</b> - The Panel agreed that future panel meetings should continue to be held in the evenings to reflect the capacity of those Members who work to attend. Where site visits are undertaken these will be held during the day.</p>	

	The Panel agreed that that it's next meeting would be held on 19 July at 5.30pm.	
3.	<p><b>New issues referred from the Scrutiny Committee</b></p> <p>HL reported this would be a standard item on the agenda, the Scrutiny Committee can commission work for this panel to look at, in addition to the policy review the Panel is undertaking.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Policy Reviews – Introduction to the Lead Officers and subject areas of Reducing Re-offending and Domestic Violence</b></p> <p><b>Reducing Re-offending</b> – SK introduced the Panel to the topic and advised Members of some potential ideas for the focus of the investigation and evidence gathering activities including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Integrated Offender Management Unit – a site visit to the base at Bridge House</li> <li>• Support in Custody and the Community – a visit to HMP Northumberland</li> <li>• Accommodation issues for offenders – a Health, Housing and Adult Services strategic introduction, an opportunity to engage with Stonham Housing who run the Bail and Assisted Support Service (BASS) and the perspective of housing specialists.</li> </ul> <p>The Panel gave further discussion to accommodation for offenders and the impact of welfare reform as well as the recent Government drive to get prisoners working whilst in custody. It was also felt it would be invaluable to talk to offenders whilst on the visit to HMP Northumberland. <b>(ACTION)</b></p> <p>Cllr Heron queried the issues around youth offending and HL and SK advised that at the Scrutiny Conference the discussion had very much centred around the aforementioned issues and that with Members agreement, this would provide an ideally focused approach to the review mentioned earlier and had a good fit with the Panel's remit (without the potential cross over with the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel).</p> <p>The Chair requested as much notice as possible for the site visits.</p> <p>HL explained that the next stage would be for the Panel to agree the scope of the review and learn more about the context to the review in a scene setting presentation on 19 July. Following this evidence gathering would begin in September and the final report would be agreed by the Panel in December.</p> <p><b>Domestic Violence -</b> Kelly Henderson gave an introduction to the topic and circulated potential areas of investigation as well as evidence gathering activities the Panel may wish to undertake.</p>	SK

	<p>The Panel considered that it would be a good idea to consider best practice and innovation across the country as well as preventative publicity and work with perpetrators. It also requested the opportunity to meet the residents of the refuges. <b>(ACTION)</b></p> <p>HL explained that the review into Domestic Violence would not begin until December 2012 and at that point the Panel would revisit the topic and decide which areas it wished to focus on as part of the review.</p> <p>Cllr Lawson suggested an informal Code of Conduct be agreed by the Panel given the sensitive nature of the topics it would consider.</p>	<b>KH</b>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Issues to feedback to the Scrutiny Committee</b></p> <p>HL reported this would be a regular item on the agenda, where Members can feedback to Scrutiny Committee and then pass back to the panel to commission work.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>AOB/Member items</b></p> <p>NA</p>	
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>Thursday 19 July 2012 at 5.30pm in Committee Room 2</p>	