

Meeting: COUNCIL

**Council Agenda
Item:**

Date: 17 JULY 2013

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ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2012/2013

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report on the work undertaken by the Development and Scrutiny Committees during the 2012/13 Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the work undertaken by the Development and Scrutiny Committees during 2012/13 be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 Overview and Scrutiny's role is to operate as an independent function of the Councils decision making process, by having overview of the Council's decision making, holding the Executive to account, having the power to "call in" decisions for reconsideration, undertake internal and external scrutiny reviews.
- 3.2 The Council's Constitution requires that there be an annual report to Council on the scrutiny activity over the past Municipal Year (see Article 6.3 of the Constitution).
- 3.3 In the 2012/13 Municipal Year the Scrutiny function was conducted by 7 Development and Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.4 This report is a retrospective look at the scrutiny review work undertaken by the seven Development and Scrutiny Committees during 2012-13, which mirrored the Executive Portfolio areas:
- Children and Young People, Culture, Sport and Leisure
 - Community, Health and Older People
 - Economy, Enterprise and Transport
 - Environment and Regeneration
 - Housing
 - Resources
 - Safer and Stronger Communities

- 3.5 In addition to the Scrutiny studies the Committees have worked with their relevant Executive Portfolio Holders Developing Policies and considering reports before their submission to the Executive. This report, however, focuses on the Committees' Scrutiny role.
- 3.6 In accordance with the Constitution the Committees were also charged with scrutinising the Executive's proposals on Budget & Policy Framework items that go before Council for decision. The Committees also considered updates on Scrutiny studies that had been undertaken previously, examining the progress of recommendations and where appropriate following up on matters raised. On occasions individual Committees had also been asked to comment on formal consultations.

4. SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEWS FOR 2011/2012

- 4.1 Each Development and Scrutiny Committee review made formal recommendations to the relevant Executive Member, officers and external partners. This process has been fully reported to each of the Development and Scrutiny Committees and recorded in its agenda papers and Minutes. The following is a summary of the outcomes of each scrutiny review.

4.2 Children and Young People, Culture, Sport and Leisure Development and Scrutiny Committee – Review of Stevenage Museum

- 4.2.1 In conducting this review the Scrutiny Members received written and oral evidence from the following people:

Roz Allwood, Manager, North Herts Museum Service and Jane Munns and HCC Museum Development Officer as "Critical Friend"
Jill Campbell, Museum Information Officer
Pauline Maryan, Chair of Local History Society
Ruth Stratton, SBC Museum Curator
Geoff Caine, SBC Leisure Services Manager
Aidan Sanderson, Head of Leisure, Environmental Health & Childrens Services
Howard Burrell, SBC Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Culture, Sport & Leisure

- 4.2.2 The key findings and recommendations of this review were as follows:

- That officers to investigate matters relating to the website and IT support
- That Members be kept informed of progress of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid process
- That officers respond to the issues highlighted in the report regarding School visits to compare the current service with those recommended by the "critical friend" witness

- That officers approach Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust regarding the refurbishment of the Natural History corner of the Museum
- That the tools for improved marketing and publicity as suggested by the “critical friend” witness be investigated by Officers
- That the ideas suggested for enhancing small revenue streams be investigated by Officers
- That the Museum review its relationship with any ‘Friends of’ group, as these groups can act as influential fundraisers and benefactors for Museums as is witnessed at the Hertford Museum example
- That officers investigate the suggestion regarding the Museum exploiting its 60th anniversary in 2014 with sponsorship from local firms towards a series of related events.

4.2.3 The following response was received from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Culture, Sport & Leisure:

4.2.4 Regarding improved website and IT support Improved data is now available for website visits. Leisure officers will review with ICT officers the potential for improved presence on Google for searches for” Hertfordshire Museums”.

4.2.5 The web page has changed and now includes all publications available to download, the new Manager\Curator will continually look for ways to improve it within the framework of the SBC website. However, to host an external dedicated website is costly and would not be viable for the small team of Staff to manage on a daily basis.

4.2.6 New ICT equipment has been installed for back office functions this included laptops, professional scanning hardware and software, a quicker solution for data storage and access, new photo and video manipulation software and larger PC screens. Other items soon to be installed include, wireless projector and laptop in the Lecture Room, new touch screens and PC’s for the public galleries plus a new operating platform with 2010 Microsoft office packages.

4.2.7 Regarding Members being kept informed of the progress of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid process. A new Museum\Curator was appointed on 01.06.13 and is currently recruiting the HLF Project Officer, we expect the new appointee to be in place by August 2013.

4.2.8 Regarding school visits the Manager\Curator will be reviewing the existing arrangements regarding School visits to compare the current service with those described by the “critical friend” witness as described at 3.6.1 in the report.

4.2.9 Regarding approaching the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust regarding the refurbishment of the Natural History corner of the Museum when the new Manager\Curator is in post they will be contacting Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and looking for potential funding to refurbish the Natural History Area.

4.2.10 Regarding improved marketing and publicity the Museum Manager\Curator will meet with the Communications Team on a monthly basis, a marketing and publicity forward plan has been agreed and used to manage the forward planning of marketing for the facility.

4.2.11 Regarding enhancing small revenue streams in the Museum shop a new Point of Sale system has been installed, which is user friendly, quick plus the system is far more flexible in dealing with transactions for retail and admissions and provides concise stock management as well being able to generate reports for retail and admission trends.

4.2.12 The New Manager\Curator is working with ICT officers regarding methods to provide the opportunity for the sale of photographs over the internet.

4.2.13 Other improvements include:

- new free public access WIFI throughout the Museum
- the Café area has partially been refurbished with the addition of new seating, large screen TV (showing information about the Museum) with a quality hot drinks machine
- Further works will include a refresh of the Café\Lobby area
- A new automatic internal entrance door will replace the existing manual doors to allow greater access for senior citizens, wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs
- opportunities to attract a new market of users to the Lecture Room for training and conferencing opportunities with its new I.T Facilities, which the Museum\Curator is looking at developing
- A new general brochure and Children's Party package are currently being finalised and the "What's on Guide" is being produced every three months
- A range of press releases have been used to successfully publicise events and courses

4.2.14 Regarding developing the relationship of the Museum with any "Friends Of" groups The Manager\Curator will be reviewing the existing arrangements and making recommendations based upon the review.

4.2.15 Regarding marking the Museums 60th Anniversary the Manager\Curator in conjunction with Communications Team will investigate opportunities to celebrate the anniversary and funding to celebrate the Museum anniversary.

4.3 Community, Health and Older People Development and Scrutiny Committee – Review of Access to GP Surgeries

4.3.1 In conducting this review the Scrutiny Members received written and oral evidence from the following people:

Michael Downing, Hertfordshire LINK
Norman Phillips, Stevenage Carers Support Group
Annemarie Smith, Stevenage Health Improvement Panel

Angela Chalmers, Viewpoint (a Mental Health & Drug & Alcohol addiction Charity)

Cllr Sherma Batson, Portfolio Holder for Community, Health and Older People

4.3.2 Members had wanted to engage with Health professionals during the review but for operational reasons no Health professionals were available to take part in the review.

4.3.3 Having interviewed Stevenage Carers, Hertfordshire LINK and Viewpoint, the findings and key recommendations of this review were:

- GPs tend to have a policy of 'one complaint one appointment' often resulting in the need to book double appointments for the 'cared for' given the complexity of their complaints
- Support for carers is patchy and depends who is on duty at the surgery
- There can be difficulties in reaching the surgery for appointments given at short notice
- There can be difficulty in arranging cover to allow the carer to attend an appointment in their own right
- GPs should consider the needs of the carer and include as 'part of the team'
- There can be difficulties with continuity of understanding when different GPs were seen
- Carers feel that it is important to include the patient when dealing with Health structures. Too many service evaluations appeared to ignore the end user – the patient. From the carers perspective patients were not at the heart of the discussion regarding the new health structures
- Stevenage Carers Support Group are concerned that if carers are not welcome at appointments or unable to assist their relative when answering questions at consultations, then there was a danger of misdiagnosis and inaccurate prescriptions happening if the Doctor was unfamiliar with the patients conditions and took at face value the patients response, which in some cases are inaccurate, and potentially dangerous
- It's important for the cares voice to be heard when new Health Commissioning Groups are established, as they can help shape the service
- Hertfordshire LINK's experience was that generally access to surgeries was good but in some cases there was room for improvement, for example Mental Health knowledge was sometimes patchy
- Hertfordshire LINK has published a simple survey on the GP Surgeries in Stevenage who use the Choose and Book, comparing current usage with data from March 2011
- Regarding Patient Participation Groups, Hertfordshire LINK were of the view that they were a good development but they tended to work well when the subject matter was non-contentious but GP's were less happy to receive feedback if the group was looking at more fundamental issues. Publicising and recruiting to Patient Participation Groups was difficult.

- Access to drug and alcohol services through the GP is inconsistent
- Dual diagnosis – some GPs do not appear to draw the connection between mental health and drugs/alcohol related problems when often the issues are combined
- A 360 degree feedback survey conducted amongst GPs suggests that this is a recurring problem
- GPs need to understand the person, and the causal effects, rather than the ailment

4.3.4 Members recommended that the issues raised be passed on to NHS Hertfordshire for comment and that Members be kept informed of changes in the NHS including the new Health Commissioning Groups as well as being kept informed regarding the Council's involvement in promoting public health.

4.3.5 The report and recommendations were sent to the Chair of County Health Scrutiny for information and to NHS Hertfordshire for a response. There has been no response received from NHS Hertfordshire. The Portfolio Holder for Community, Health and Older People welcomed the review and suggested that all Members would be kept informed of any developments locally in the NHS that had an impact on local patients.

4.4 **Economy, Enterprise and Transport Development and Scrutiny Committee – Review of Training & Employment Opportunities for Young People**

4.4.1 In conducting this review the Scrutiny Members received written and oral evidence from the following people:

16, Year 10 and Year 12 Students from Barclay, Barnwell, John Henry Newman and Nobel Schools.

Richard Westergreen-Thorne, Chair of Stevenage Educational Trust (SET).

Martin Gittins, Ridgemond Training.

Jackie Clementson, HCC Operation and Strategic Manager, North Herts and Stevenage Services for Children & Young People, (Youth Connexions).

Bev Jones, North Herts College & Herts Training and Development Consortium.

SBC Head of Service (Viv Evans, Head of Planning Regeneration and Transport, Aidan Sanderson, Head of Leisure, Community & Children's Services/Graham Buck.

Cllr Ralph Raynor SBC Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport.

Viv Evans, SBC Head of Planning Regeneration & Transport

Members of the Youth Council acted as a "Critical Friend" to provide some peer comment on their attitudes towards training and employment.

4.4.2 The findings and key recommendations of this review were:

- That the Head of Planning & Regeneration & Officers consider starting a Directory of Businesses in Stevenage who are willing to visit local

schools and talk about their careers/what qualifications needed/routes to employment/barriers etc, as detailed in the report.

- That the Head of Planning & Regeneration & Officers consider positively exploiting Stevenage's position as a leader in the Life Science/Bio Science centre of excellence linked to above business career directory recommendation at 4.2 as detailed in the report.
- That the Head of Planning & Regeneration & Officers consider replicating the Kirklees Council's initiative of surveying its 1400 businesses to ask businesses "whether the business had or would consider taking on an apprentice?" Using the results to promote the National Apprenticeship Service as detailed in the report.
- That the Head of Planning & Regeneration & Officers consider exploring with the Council's contractors (on major contracts such as the Decent Homes Contract), as part of companies corporate social responsibility, offering youth diversionary activities leading to further training and potential direct employment routes for young people as detailed in the report.
- That partners at HCC Children's Services and Stevenage Education Trust consider the issue raised by Students who asked for an increase in the visibility and access to the Careers Advice Service in Schools, and for more variety of careers talks in School as detailed in the report.
- That the Head of Planning and Regeneration and other Officers be requested to approach local employers to determine their understanding of what constitutes an apprenticeship; the employers expectation of potential applicants for their schemes; and to consolidate and circulate responses to schools in the Borough to enable pupils to make a more informed career choice in respect of apprenticeships.

4.4.3 The following response was received from the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport:

4.4.4 Regarding starting a starting a local Directory of Business who are willing to visit schools and talk about their careers this work has not started yet but will be factored into the Regeneration Team's work programme for the 2013-14.

4.4.5 Regarding positively exploiting Stevenage's position as a leader in centres of excellence (such as Life Science / Bio Science and Defence) this is now underway with the Regeneration Team. Key industry sectors are being targeted as part of the inward investment programme and further initiatives will be delivered over the next 3 years.

4.4.6 Regarding replicating the Kirklees Council's initiative of surveying its 1400 businesses to ask 'whether they had or would consider taking an apprentice?' A business survey is currently underway, and a key question within this survey seeks to ask local employers about apprenticeships.

4.4.7 Regarding approaching local employers to determine their understanding of what constitutes an apprenticeship. An apprenticeship event is planned for June 2013 that will aim to positively promote apprenticeships to local

employers. A strong Young Enterprise and Princes Trust also operate within Stevenage. The Jobs Centre Plus team are also involved in promoting apprenticeships and have requested support and contacts from the Council to promote available incentives, and subsidies to local employers.

4.5 Environment and Regeneration Development and Scrutiny Committee – Review of Fixed Penalty Notices (Dog Fouling)

4.5.1 In conducting this review the Scrutiny Members received written and oral evidence from the following people:

Andy Godman, Head of Housing and Public Protection at North Hertfordshire District Council as “Critical Friend”.

Sarah Sheldrick, Dog Watch as “Critical Friend”.

Councillor John Gardner, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration.

Lee Myers, Head of Environmental Services.

Tim Butterfield, Environmental Enforcement Manager.

Chris Dorow, Environmental Performance Manager.

4.5.2 The findings and key recommendations of this review were:

- That officers consider organising a concentrated campaign on educating dog owners involving Dog Watch and Environmental Services officers which could include highly visible group patrols in parks handing out rolls of dog waste bags and where appropriate issuing fixed penalty notices which could then be publicised in a local media campaign with a newspaper article highlighting the issue to help raise awareness. Officers are asked to discuss the details of the campaign with Members of the Environment and Regeneration Development & Scrutiny Committee
- That in conjunction with the campaign on dog fouling as detailed at recommendation 4.2 that officers consider a campaign involving interested local primary schools to address the problem of dog fouling on grass verges, lanes and pathways leading to schools as detailed in the report
- That officers continue to work closely with Dog Watch and that the Council help promote their events by highlighting them in Chronicle and by any other means available
- That officers consider the offer made by the Head of Housing and Public Protection, North Hertfordshire District Council, to undertake some joint informal work with North Herts District Council Environmental Enforcement Officers, on a quid pro quo basis
- That officers arrange with those Members who are interested to join Environmental Enforcement officers on site visits

4.5.3 The following response to the review and recommendations were received from the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration:

- 4.5.4 A campaign has been developed by the Campaign Officer from Environmental Services with input and steer from the Environmental Enforcement Manager. The Campaigns key aims and objectives have been identified along with methodology. The key message campaign was Bag it, Tie it, Bin it, Sort it
- 4.5.5 A series of high visibility patrols have been scheduled throughout the campaign timescale of February – August 2013. Officers carrying out these patrols are engaging with dog walkers, offering free dog waste bags and educating as to how the waste can be disposed of and how to report incidents seen.
- 4.5.6 Radio, newspaper, television articles have been released about the campaign and Environmental Services have deployed their campaign trailer to locations across the town. The trailer allows information to be displayed to the community along with the chance to speak to officers. The most recent deployment was at Stevenage Day. One instance of a fouling offence was witnessed, but the owner of the dog was persuaded to pick the waste up.
- 4.5.7 Posters were issued to 8 schools who are members of the Eco Schools network. The service has been invited to attend the Lodge Farm School fete later in the year.
- 4.5.8 Dog watch events have been supported by the council and promoted. The Dog Watch logo is on all the campaign material produced. The Enforcement Team attended a Dog Watch event in the Town Centre Gardens in May. Additional Dog Watch events in July and October will be attended by Environmental Enforcement.
- 4.5.9 Officers have worked with NHDC Enforcement Officers on two joint patrols. Further joint events will be considered, subject to the availability of NHDC colleagues. NHDC Officer presence was greatly appreciated. Officers worked well together and discussed future enforcement options. SBC Officers have thanked NHDC for all their support, time and advice during the campaign.
- 4.5.10 Cllr Gardner has attended a number of events where the Enforcement Team have been present, promoting the aims of the campaign. Members are welcome to attend patrols and site visits.

4.6 Housing Development and Scrutiny Committee – Review of Homelessness

- 4.6.1 In conducting this review the Scrutiny Members held a round table discussion with the following people:

Marian Hurle, Stevenage Citizens Advice Bureau
Barbara Howard, Stevenage Haven
Gill Gold, Aldwyck Housing Group
Lisa Reilly, Aldwyck Housing Group
Sue Waller, SBC Strategic Housing Solutions Manager

Janet Hagger, Service Manager Supported Housing
Jaine Cresser, Head of Housing Management
Richard Protheroe, Head of Housing, Community and Communications

4.6.2 The findings and key recommendations of this review were:

- That the tracking of homelessness applications be improved with improved IT
- That Officers identify ways to assist people in managing their finances
- That the Council identifies ways of reinforcing the involvement of the voluntary sector, for example providing a 3 year contract with the CAB
- That Officers identify ways of promoting the use of the Credit Union to residents
- That Officers review the Council's and Partners severe weather provision for the homeless
- That Officers investigate ways and means of avoiding future use of bed and breakfast accommodation as the level of demand on Council services increases, to be addressed through the drafting of a Temporary Accommodation strategy
- That Officers examine more creative ways of dealing with claimants, for example by providing extensions to existing properties to deal with overcrowding
- That Officers investigate supporting / mentoring those requiring assistance, especially as access to benefits is proposed to be via on-line methods and penalties for non-compliance (i.e. failure to notify change of circumstance or attend for interview) are severe
- That the Head of Housing, Community and Communications keep Housing Scrutiny Members informed of any significant pressures on the Council and its partners to deliver an effective service in the future
- That consideration be given by Officers to how individuals who present themselves as Homeless are initially dealt with by the Council, with specific thought given to providing a more private area for interviews
- That Officers consider providing an electronic banner messaging service in the Customer Services Centre to signpost what advice and services are available from CAB and Credit Unions etc
- That Officers consider using a "mystery shopper" in the CSC to test the service to make sure the advice and service given regarding Homelessness is as helpful as possible

4.6.3 As these recommendations were not finalised until June 2013 the Portfolio Holders response is expected in September.

4.7 **Statutory Crime and Disorder Committee – Safer and Stronger Communities Development and Scrutiny Committee – Review of the Night Time Economy**

4.7.1 In conducting this review the Scrutiny Members received written and oral evidence from the following people:

Debbie Barker, SBC Community Safety Officer

Cllr Richard Henry, Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities
Richard Protheroe, SBC Head of Housing, Partnerships and Communications
Inspector Simon Tabert, Stevenage Safer Neighbourhood Team, Herts
Constabulary

4.7.2 The findings and key recommendations of this review were:

- That the SoSafe Stevenage Community Safety Partnership continue to fund the Taxi Marshals scheme
- That the SoSafe Stevenage Community Safety Partnership continue to part fund Stevenage Street Pastors
- That Stevenage Borough Council Licensing Officers and the Operational Delivery Group investigate introducing as a condition or requirement on new licenses that the licensee be members of the 'Pub Watch'
- That Stevenage Borough Council Licensing Officers and the Operational Delivery Group discuss arranging more joint licensing visits to pubs with SBC Licensing Officers and the Police
- That the Safer and Stronger Communities Development and Scrutiny Committee supports the current SoSafe priorities to tackle the incidents resulting from the night time economy, as described in the briefing paper of the Community Safety Officer
- That officers monitor and report back on the impact of the partial/reduced street lighting regime on crime and accident data a year after its introduction in Stevenage.

4.7.3 With regards to the recommendations above the Executive Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities provided the following response:

4.7.4 Taxi Marshals are deemed by SoSafe to play an integral role in the night time economy of Stevenage. Continued funding and support of this service is a high priority to the partnership. However, there is uncertainty over whether or not SoSafe will receive any external funding in 2013. We have relied on this funding in the past to commission Taxi Marshal services. The scale of service provided in 2013 will unfortunately be determined by this factor.

4.7.5 SoSafe will continue to provide support for Street pastors, and will consider all requests for funding from the organisation. With the small amounts normally requested, it is possible that internal funding can provide for this service in 2013.

4.7.6 Licensing officers are already requesting that new licensees take up membership of Pub Watch; and licensees are voluntarily joining the group. A new chair has recently been appointed who is the manager of a public house. SoSafe will continue to endorse these requests and encourage landlords, in the absence of legislation that compels licensees to comply.

4.7.7 SoSafe will continue to schedule joint licensing visits, and will undertake forward planning to schedule dates for 2013.

4.7.8 SoSafe thanks the committee for their support in these matters, and will continue to prioritise alcohol and night time related crime in 2013.

4.7.9 The community safety officer has incorporated investigation the impact of the partial night time street light switch off into her forward plan for April / May 2013.

4.8 **Resources Development & Scrutiny Committee - Budget and Policy Framework Items:**

4.8.1 Throughout the year the Resources Development and Scrutiny Committee carried out Budget and Policy Framework Scrutiny as required by the Council's Constitution, and also one off scrutiny of strategic issues these included scrutiny of:

- Building Maintenance Organisation – Supply Chain Contracts on
- Council Tax Support Scheme
- Shared Support Services Draft Business Case
- General Fund Savings Options – Forward Plan and Financial Strategy on
- HRA Draft Rent Setting & Budget for 2013/14 (joint with Housing Development & Scrutiny Committee)
- Draft General Fund Budget, Capital Forward Plan & 5 Year Capital Strategy
- Consultation and Engagement Strategy
- Consultation and Engagement Strategy & Member Complaints
- New Homes Bonus & Scrutiny of the Corporate Plan

4.8.2 Comments made by the Committee on the above subjects were incorporated into reports to the Executive and Council.

4.9 **Monitoring outcomes from previous reviews**

4.9.1 As well as undertaking their own specific reviews the Development and Scrutiny Committees were invited to revisit previous Scrutiny reviews that fall into their area of interest.

4.9.2 The Children, Young People, Culture, Sport & Leisure Development and Scrutiny Committee met jointly with the Community, Health and Older People Development and Scrutiny Committee to revisit the 2009 HCC Health Scrutiny review into Childhood Obesity that SBC had led on.

4.9.3 Since 2009 there has been a downward trend in levels of excess weight of children between the reception class and year 6 and the work and intervention of the Children's Centres in Stevenage were highlighted as playing a crucial role in promoting healthy lifestyles.

4.9.4 The Community, Health and Older People Development and Scrutiny Committee met jointly with the Economy, Enterprise and Transport

Development and Scrutiny Committee to revisit the 2009 SBC review into Cycleways.

- 4.9.5 A comprehensive written update was provided by engineering officers from SBC and HCC into the numerous original recommendations and responses to the review. Members welcomed the update and would continue to monitor progress in this area and further recommended that consideration be given to having a 'Cycling Champion' to coordinate cycling activities and establishing a cycling forum.

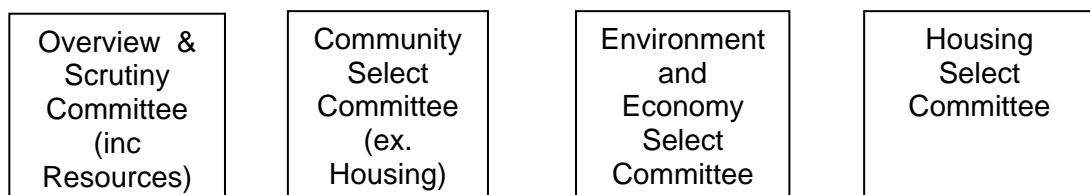
5. OTHER ISSUES

5.1 Review of Scrutiny Arrangements

- 5.1.1 Following the annual Scrutiny Evaluation and Planning event officers produced an options paper for consideration by all non-Executive Members that set out 4 different models for Member Level Scrutiny. This review was launched with a seminar with officers to go over the working arrangements of each of the options and provide the Members an opportunity to ask questions. Non-Executive Members were then able to express their preferences and comment on the Scrutiny model to be adopted for 2013/2014.

- 5.1.2 The outcome of this review was to go forward with the model of 1 Overview & Scrutiny Committee and 3 Select Committees with the select Committees mirroring the remit of the three Strategic Directors. However one recurring comment made regarding this model concerned the options for scrutiny of Housing. It was commented that the remit of the proposed Communities Select Committee was too big, covering 4 portfolios it would severely limit the opportunity for Members to scrutinise Housing Services. With this comment, added to the fact that the Communities Select was to also sit as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee as least once per year it is recognised that this may be addressed by perhaps amending the remit of the select Committees. In response to these comments it is considered that the favoured option could be amended, without losing the rationale of the proposed new working arrangements.

- 5.1.3 As evident earlier in this report the majority of meetings of the Resources Development & Scrutiny Committee had been to consider Budget & Policy Framework matters. Under the favoured option this work falls to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This being the case, and recognising that housing should perhaps be the subject of a Select Committee on its own, it was considered that the favoured model for 2013/2014 would benefit from an amendment and therefore the following structure was recommended to Annual Council in May 2013 and formally adopted –



5.2 Training in 2013/14

- 5.2.1 Having changed the scrutiny arrangements to adopt a Select Committee approach to working, a training programme is being drawn up to help Members prepare for Select Committee meetings.
- 5.2.2 As well as providing training internally for all Scrutiny Members a visit to a Parliamentary Seminar arranged by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) is also being set up for the Chair's and Vice-Chair's of the Select Committees and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to attend once a programme for the year has been published by the CfPS.

5.3 2013/2014 Scrutiny Workplan

- 5.3.1 The 3 Select Committees have agreed their Scrutiny work plan items for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.
- Community Select Committee – Older People's Community Transport & SoSafe RAG Community Safety Priorities/Action Plan
 - Environment and Economy Select Committee - Refuse & Recycling (including bad weather response) and Energy Management of SBC Buildings
 - Housing – Decent Homes – Monitoring of the contract and Affect on Housing from Welfare Reform
- 5.3.2 In addition to undertaking all scrutiny of Budget & Policy Framework items and decisions of the Executive, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also undertake a "Select Committee" style meeting to scrutinise Members' Expenses and Hospitality
- 5.3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions and also consider all 'Call-in' requests in accordance with the Council's Constitution as well as considering any Councillors Call for Action in relation to matters relating to Resources and any Petition appeals, in accordance with the Councils Petition Scheme, regarding matters relating to Resources or of a Corporate or Council wide nature.
- 5.3.4 A schedule of meetings for the 3 Select Committees is being arranged for the 2013-14 Municipal Year. These meetings will incorporate the scoping of the review where Members will identify the areas they wish to cover during the review, who to interview, what evidence/background information is required and which Members will lead the questioning on a specific area. Meetings will also be arranged to revisit previous reviews to monitor actions.
- 5.3.5 Policy Development work will be undertaken as and when requested by Executive Portfolio Holders in consultation with Strategic Directors and Heads of Service.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

There is a budget of £2,500 to support study activities, site visits and specialist advice and training where necessary.

6.2 Legal Implications

Any legislative changes during the 2013-14 Municipal Year will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the relevant Select Committee(s) regarding any legal changes to the function and impact it could have on the authority.

6.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Equalities and Diversity issues are considered at the scoping stage of each Scrutiny review with regards to questioning of witnesses and the collection of oral and written evidence. Also E&D issues are addressed in the final report for each review.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Local Government Act 2000

Individual agendas and study material for each Scrutiny review undertaken by the Development and Scrutiny Committees as described in this report are available for inspection.

APPENDICES

None