



## Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016

**Report of:** Policy and Improvement Officer

**Subject:** Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee:  
Scrutiny Annual Report 2015-16 (draft content) & Work  
Programme 2016-17

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### Summary:

This report provides the Committee with a summary of its activities over the municipal year for inclusion in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2015-16. The Committee is asked to consider and comment on this document (Appendix 1).

The report also includes a list of topics which it is recommended be put forward for consideration as part of the 2016-17 Work Programme for this committee.

**Type of item:** The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	X

### The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

- Consider and comment on the summary of activity for inclusion in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2015-16
- Agree that the list of topics outlined in section 3.0 be put forward for consideration as part of the 2016-17 Work Programme for this committee; and provide any further comment.

**Background Papers:** None  
**Category of Report:** OPEN

**Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee:  
2015-16 Annual Report (draft) & 2016-17 Work Programme**

- 1.0 A proposed summary of this Committees activity over the municipal year, for inclusion in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2015-16 is attached - please see Appendix 1.
- 2.0 Each Scrutiny Committee will produce a summary of their activity for inclusion in the Scrutiny Annual Report. In addition the Annual Report will also provide an overview of the role of scrutiny within the authority and a summary of some of the activities and outcomes across the Council's five Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.0 The list below outlines topics which it's recommended be put forward for consideration as part of the Work Programme for the 2016-17 municipal year. This includes topics that the Committee have considered and recommended there be a future update on and also items that were identified, but not considered in 2015-16.
  - Welfare Reform
  - Housing & Planning Bill 2016
  - Challenge for Change: Vacant Property Management (update on progress)
  - Local Area Partnerships
  - Gateway Project
  - Housing+ Model
- 3.0 Appendix 2 outlines the PAPER selection criteria which have been designed to assist Scrutiny Committees to focus on the topics most appropriate for their scrutiny.

**Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee**  
**Chair: Cllr Tony Damms**

**Appendix 1**

**Implications of the National “Summer Budget” for Housing**

The Governments’ **summer budget announcement** on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015 had a number of housing implications, both for Local Councils and Housing Associations. The Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny committee therefore dedicated its September 2015 meeting to focus on this topic, this included presentations from both the Council and South Yorkshire Housing Association (SYHA).

The Committee heard about the key policy changes and how the Council was planning to respond. This included changes to rent policy, the extension of the Right to Buy Scheme to Housing Association Tenants through a new Housing Bill, higher rents for higher earners, further welfare reforms and a review of security of tenure. The Committee also heard about the impact of the changes on the Council Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and associated risks; along with the impact on longer term development plans for South Yorkshire Housing Association. The Committee asked questions across a broad range of topics, including engagement with tenants, sharing learning, financial implications for the local authority, rent reductions, housing benefit eligibility for 18-21’s, the enforced sale of assets, long term investment and the impacts on younger people.

The Committee agreed to note its concerns in terms of the impacts of the proposed policy changes, for both the local Council and Housing Associations in the city and in light of these changes subsequently received a further report on the **Housing Revenue Account Business Plan** in October 2015 and the further developments surrounding the **Housing & Planning Bill** in December 2015. Given the significance of these changes the Committee also agreed to retain an open invitation for officers to return again in the future.

**Housing Revenue Account Business Plan**

In October 2015 the Committee received a report which provided an annual review of the **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan**. Members of the committee made a number of comments and asked questions across a range of topics including, tenancies, income generation, photovoltaic installations and reduced subsidies, the building of new Council homes and vacant properties.

The outcome of the meeting was a request from the Committee that officers give consideration to devising an efficient, streamlined system for tenant, resident and leaseholder consultation.

**Community Safety**

The Committee dedicated its February 2016 meeting to focus on **community safety** issues. This included an introduction to the new Local Policing Model which covered the financial context, achieving savings, Local Policing Units, specialist support and reducing demand.

The Committee also received an update on Community Safety, this made particular reference to the Sheffield Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership, community safety priorities, current performance, meeting structures, the Partner Resource Allocation Meeting (PRAM) and future proposals.

Members of the committee raised a number of areas for questioning and discussion including, communications, resources, shared functions, serious incidents, crime rates and recording processes.

## The Private Rented Sector in Sheffield

The Committee looked at the **private rented sector in Sheffield**, including the percentage of private sector accommodation in the city, the increasing numbers of people living in private sector accommodation and the implications of this along with the legislative framework that the Council works within. The Committee also received an update on the Selective licensing Scheme that is running in Page Hall.

The Committee raised questions and discussed a number of areas including tenancy support and durations, the buy to let market, council resources, enforcement action, houses in multiple occupation (HMO's), legislation and opportunities for further cross border working with local towns and cities.

To enable the Committee to continue to monitor progress, they also received two further written updates on private sector housing (in October 2015 and February 2016), this included specific updates on legal action, the Letting and Managing Agents Redress Scheme, the selective licensing scheme in Page Hall, the new stock condition survey and the work of the Member Task & Finish Group.

## This year the Committee has also considered and commented on:

- Customer engagement in the housing repairs insourcing project
- Community Engagement Review – presented by the Housing & Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel (HNAP) Advisory Panel
- Homelessness: rough sleeping in Sheffield – at its January 2016 meeting Council requested scrutiny consider this issue

## Police & Crime Panel Links

The Committee's remit includes Community Safety and part of its work has been to build links with the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel. The South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel's role is to scrutinise and hold to account the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire, who at present is Dr Alan Billings.

Cllr John Campbell is one of the Council's representatives on the Panel and is also a member of the Scrutiny Committee and so provided a link between the two bodies by providing regular updates to the Committee and feeding back any comments and raising questions at the Police and Crime Panel on the Committee's behalf.

This has included questions and discussion on the policing budget, neighborhood policing teams, the 101 number and the Annual report of the Police Crime Commissioner.

## In brief

The Committee have also requested a number of written updates where it wants to be kept up to speed on particular topics, these have covered the following topics:

- Welfare Reform
- Figures on Right to Buy
- Private Rented Sector Housing
- Sheffield Money
- The Challenge for Change review of Community Engagement
- Challenge for Change: Vacant Property Management

You can find papers and minutes of meetings [here](#)

## Selecting Scrutiny topics – PAPER Criteria

This tool is designed to assist the Scrutiny Committees focus on the topics most appropriate for their scrutiny.

- **Public Interest**

The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;

- **Ability to Change / Impact**

Priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically have an impact on, and that will influence decision makers;

- **Performance**

Priority should be given to the areas in which the Council, and other organisations (public or private) are not performing well;

- **Extent**

Priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the city (geographical or communities of interest);

- **Replication / other approaches**

Work programmes must take account of what else is happening (or has happened) in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort. Alternatively, could another body, agency, or approach (e.g. briefing paper) more appropriately deal with the topic

### Other influencing factors

- **Cross-party** - There is the potential to reach cross-party agreement on a report and recommendations.
- **Resources**. Members with the Policy & Improvement Officer can complete the work needed in a reasonable time to achieve the required outcome

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