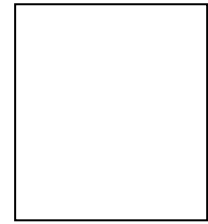




SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Full Council



Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 23 January 2013

Subject: Scrutiny – Mid Year Update Report

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Summary:

This report provides an overview of scrutiny activity undertaken so far this Municipal Year.

It summarises the work done through formal meetings (scrutiny and policy development committees) of the:

- Children Young People and Family Support
 - Economic and Environmental Wellbeing
 - Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care
 - Safer and Stronger Communities
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Recommendations:

Full Council is asked to note the work undertaken through the scrutiny committees so far this year.

Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
NO Cleared by:
Legal Implications
NO Cleared by:
Equality of Opportunity Implications
NO Cleared by:
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human rights Implications
NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
NO
Property implications
NO
Area(s) affected
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
NO

Scrutiny – Mid year update report

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an overview of scrutiny activity undertaken so far this Municipal Year.

It summarises the work done through formal meetings and task and finish groups of the:

- Children Young People and Family Support Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee
- Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee
- Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee
- Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee.

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE

2.1 A challenging and effective scrutiny function is a key contributor to Sheffield achieving its long term goals. The key priorities set out by the Council are reflected in the breadth of issues that Scrutiny Committees look at.

2.2 By investigating issues of local concern, reviewing performance against local targets, and making recommendations for improvements in services, scrutiny can ensure that better outcomes are achieved for Sheffield people.

3.0 CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SUPPORT SCRUTINY & POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (CHAIR: CLLR GILL FURNISS)

4.1 In June, we heard from Dr Sonia Sharp, the Executive Director of Children, Young People and Families, on the priorities for the Directorate for the forthcoming year. Sonia set out the key aims as being:

- Improving the quality of learning and skills
- Enabling safe, healthy and strong families, and
- Ensuring they are active and engaged

4.2 We were also told of the key challenges for the forthcoming year. These included:

- Urgently accelerating and improving the overall standards of attainment in the city, particularly at secondary level
- Addressing the under-achievement of children from some BME groups, children with additional needs, looked after children and children from deprived families

- Redoubling of efforts to improve health outcomes for children and young people to ensure progress is made on key areas like teenage pregnancy and mental health issues does not stall
- Young people and parents not thinking there are enough affordable and accessible high quality things to do and places to go
- Managing the increased pressure on services for families in challenging circumstances and children at risk of harm
- Securing improved progression for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities

We have used these priorities and challenges to guide our work programme for the municipal year.

- 4.3 In September, we looked at the issue of adoption and fostering following some concerns about performance in these areas. We were informed that changes in government policy, such as the introduction of an 'adoption scorecard and the speeding up of adoption processes, were having an impact on our performance. However, we as a scrutiny committee took the view that the overall success of adoption placements is not compromised by trying to rush adoptions through, and we were very satisfied by the fact that Sheffield has a very low number of adoptive placement breakdowns. We wish this success story to continue, despite some concerns about the diminishing future role of the Adoption Panel. We made some helpful recommendations around the future promotion and marketing of the Adoptions Service and requested that Elected Members have a strong input into the next adoptions recruitment campaign.
- 4.4 We have continued to focus our attention on the city's educational attainment results. In November we learnt of the latest educational attainment statistics for the city for the 2011/12 academic year. We were encouraged by the latest picture which we feel shows how the consistent approach of the Council working in partnership with our schools in relation to school improvement is beginning to lead to successful outcomes for our children and young people. The Committee wanted to place on record its thanks and appreciation for all the hard work of Council Officers, school leaders, governors and teachers across the city for this improvement in performance. We, along with the rest of the City Council, however, feel it is imperative that this improvement is sustained and built upon over the next few years, particularly in the context of an increasing school autonomy which is being driven at a national level. We are especially keen that our school governors continue to receive a high quality of data and are able to easily access school information, in order to hold our schools increasingly to account for their performance in helping to further drive up standards.
- 4.5 In response to concerns by some of our Members on the issue of youth unemployment in the city and, in particular, about the quality of information, advice and guidance that our young people are receiving in

schools, we requested some further information on this in the context of the 'Raising of the Age of Participation'. This session, combined with work that the Economic & Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee has been doing into the issue of youth unemployment, has prompted a joint scrutiny session to be organised in the new year between our two scrutiny committees to consider these issues in greater detail.

We are looking to combine this with the endorsed October Full Council Motion on the construction of the University Technical College and the request for our 2 scrutiny committees to investigate what further support the Council can provide to the development of the College.

4.6 Other areas of focus in our work programme thus far have included examining in greater detail the educational outcomes for looked after children. Members were keen to see what has been working for this cohort of young people in relation to the expenditure of Pupil Premium funding. Other issues raised by Members, specifically in relation to Pupil Premium included:

- Whether the correct target groups are being focused upon, and
- If these groups were not making progress, what further could be done to use Pupil Premium funding more effectively

Members were also keen to ensure that Pupil Premium funding is not used by schools to prop up their core budgets.

4.7 Remaining issues that we are looking to scrutinise during the rest of the municipal year include:

- The Annual Safeguarding Report, and
- Progress on improving the quality of school governance

5.0 ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING SCRUTINY & POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (CHAIR: CLLR HELEN MIRFIN-BOUKOURIS)

5.1 The Committee started the year in July, with a discussion with the Executive Director, Place, on the current issues and challenges facing the portfolio. Key developments highlighted included:

- City Centre Developments
- High Speed Rail 2
- Highways Maintenance Private Finance Initiative
- Sheffield Bus Agreement
- Alternate Weekly Refuse Collections
- Green infrastructure.

This discussion helped to inform the Committee's work programme for the year.

- 5.2 In September, Cabinet approved a decision to enter into a Bus Agreement with partners in the city, aimed at improving the bus offer in Sheffield through network design changes, new ticketing products, and reducing the price of more expensive fares.

This decision was 'called in' for further consideration by the Scrutiny Committee to look in detail at how the agreement might impact the city's transport offer. There was public concern over some of the proposed changes to bus routes and frequencies – which led to a large number of members of the public attending the meeting to address the Committee.

After hearing from these members of the public, as well as officers from the City Council and the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, the Committee endorsed Cabinet's original decision, and the Bus Agreement was launched in October.

- 5.3 The Committee held its annual meeting with local businesses in September. As well as representatives from Sheffield business and industry, officers from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Sheffield City Council attended for a discussion on how well the Council supports business – with a particular focus on small and medium sized enterprises and start ups. As part of this session, Committee Members were invited to attend Sheffield's Entrepreneur Festival – MADE.

Key themes to emerge from the discussion were:

- The need to foster an entrepreneurial culture in the city
- Promoting Sheffield as a place to do business
- Focussing on young people, skills and apprenticeships.

The Committee intends to follow up these themes at a session with business representatives in the Spring, and Members requested that meeting with business becomes a bi-annual event. The Committee is also planning a joint session with the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider supporting the University Technical College and work going on to help young people set up businesses.

- 5.4 In November, the Committee heard from the main cultural trusts in the City - Sheffield Theatres, Sheffield International Venues, Museums Sheffield and Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust – on their priorities and challenges for the year. Finance was a key area of interest – against a background of decreasing public funding, the Committee was pleased to note the Trusts' successes in attracting external funding, and recognised the importance of finding innovative ways to generate additional income.
- 5.5 As the 'Streets Ahead' Highways Maintenance PFI project is such a significant development for the City, the Committee felt that it was important to take an early look at performance on the contract, and how work is progressing. Representatives from the contractor, Amey attended the meeting, as well as Sheffield City Council Officers. The

Committee heard that overall the contract got off to a good start – communication with the public, partners and Councillors has been effective; Members commented that the Community Assembly Steward system is working well; and in areas where work has commenced feedback has been good.

The Committee will keep a close eye progress throughout the rest of the year.

- 5.6 Other issues considered by the Committee this year include:
Sheffield's Economic Strategy
Household Waste Recycling Centres
Environment, Recycling and Streetscene Cabinet Update
Impact and Legacy of the Olympics and Paralympics for Sheffield

During the rest of the year the Committee will also consider city centre vibrancy, parking on dropped kerbs and pavements and climate change adaptation.

6.0 HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY & POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (CHAIR: CLLR MICK ROONEY)

- 6.1 The Committee began the year by inviting the Health Stakeholders in the City to a meeting to discuss their priorities and challenges facing the city. The Committee heard from:

- NHS Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group
- Sheffield City Council's Communities Portfolio,
- Director of Public Health
- Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust,
- Sheffield Children's Hospital
- Sheffield Local Involvement Network.

This discussion helped to inform the Committee's work programme for the year.

- 6.2 There are lots of changes happening to health and social care services across the city, and the Committee has commented on several proposals:

On transforming support for people with dementia, the Committee highlighted the importance of: support and training for carers; early diagnosis and early intervention; working with people in the early stages of dementia to plan for care in the later stages; understanding the needs of BME Communities; and simplifying assessment processes for people with dementia.

On the Council's Partnership Review with the Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust the Committee welcomed the review and stressed the need to ensure seamless care for patients, regardless of which organisation is providing services; achieve consistency around

NHS and Council protocols, procedures and policies; and develop closer working between housing providers and Community Mental Health Teams.

Other proposals that the Committee commented on include the decommissioning of rehabilitation services at Grenoside Grange West Wing; reviewing NHS Sheffield's Commitment to an Intermediate Care Facility; and contributing to the national Department for Health Consultation on the regulations for health scrutiny.

6.3 The Committee has set up 2 working groups to consider issues in depth.

Last year, lengthy waiting times to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services were brought to the Committee's attention by concerned parents of children waiting for the service. The Committee has kept waiting times under review, and whilst improvements have been made and waiting times have reduced, the Committee decided to take a closer look to ensure that the best possible outcomes are being achieved within the resources that we have.

Nutrition and hydration in hospitals is another area for in depth investigation. The Committee is interested in looking at the quality of food in hospitals, and the levels of support that patients receive to eat and drink during their stay in hospital.

6.4 At a regional level, the Committee has been involved with the Yorkshire and Humber Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC), looking at the provision of Children's Cardiac Surgery. In July, the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts took a decision to close the surgical centre in Leeds, and direct children from Yorkshire and the Humber to surgical centres in Newcastle, Liverpool and Birmingham. After much detailed consideration across a range of issues, the JHOSC concluded that the decision is not in the best interests of people in Yorkshire and the Humber, and used its health scrutiny powers to refer the decision to the Secretary of State for Health for further consideration. The Secretary of State accepted this referral, and the Independent Reconfiguration Panel is carrying out a full review, due to report in March 2013.

6.5 Other issues considered by the Committee so far this year include:

- The Local Account
- End of Life Care
- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Care and Support Performance

7.0 SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY & POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (CHAIR: CLLR CHRIS WELDON)

7.1 Our principal area of work for this year and the previous municipal year has been reviewing the Council's Lettings Policy. This has been an extensive piece of policy development work which the Committee has

been actively engaged in. In January, the revised Lettings Policy will go to Cabinet to be formally agreed and implemented. As Chair, I would personally like to thank all of the Members of the Scrutiny Committee for their active participation, hard work and dedication to thoroughly reviewing the current policy and recommending some important changes so we can ensure that the policy is fit-for-purpose and fair to all the residents of this city.

- 7.2 In addition to the Lettings Policy Review, the Committee has scrutinised other important housing issues. One of these has been the recent rise in homelessness applications in the city. We were requested by the Scrutiny Management Committee to dig deeper into the issue of homelessness after concerns were raised about a recent rise in the number of presentations to the homelessness service. Members were also concerned about projected increases in the number of homeless over the next few years in the city.

As a Scrutiny Committee, we have agreed to keep a watching brief over this issue over the next few months. In particular, we have requested that a further report on homelessness performance is brought to us in 6 months time. We also requested that the Scrutiny Management Committee look into the possibility of implementing cross-cutting measures to deal with the problems of homelessness in Sheffield.

- 7.3 As well as housing, we have closely scrutinised community safety issues. In September, we considered the Anti-Social Behaviour Review and the establishment of Partner Resource Allocations Meetings (PRAM) as a new way of coordinating strong responses to antisocial behaviour. We were informed that there are a number of gaps, both actual and perception, with the current response model, including:

- How intelligence is handled
- Leadership and accountability
- Strategy and delivery

The Scrutiny Committee were generally supportive of the PRAM proposal and requested an update report on progress in the near future.

- 7.4 We have also maintained a keen interest on the preparations for the election of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for South Yorkshire, along with plans for implementing the accountability mechanisms to hold the PCC to account, such as the establishment of the Police and Crime Panel.

- 7.5 Other issues that we are keen to scrutinise for the remainder of the municipal year include:

- The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- The Housing Strategy, and
- The Kier Housing Repairs and Maintenance Contract

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Full Council is asked to note the work undertaken through the Scrutiny Committees to date this year.