

**Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board**  
**25<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

**Report of the Lead Officer**

**Outstanding Issues from Previous Scrutiny Committees**

**Purpose of report**

1. To resolve outstanding items of business from the previous Scrutiny Committee regime.

**Background**

2. The inaugural Overview and Scrutiny Management Board felt that from the discussions there were a number of key issues which had not yet been resolved and that a Special Meeting of the Board be set up to take forward these issues.
3. Following a trawl through of previous Committee minutes, Democratic Services staff identified a number of issues. The first related to the last Community Safety and Community Services Scrutiny Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, and its consideration of the report of the Director of Urban Environment (DUE) on Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
4. The second issue revolved around the strategic direction of the Library Service and its funding issues.

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act Report 1998**

5. Attached at Appendix A are the minutes of the meeting which clearly indicate that this last Community Safety and Community Services Scrutiny Committee of the year was, in effect, a one item agenda focussing on a key strategic issue for the Council, that of how DUE contributes towards fulfilling the obligations of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

6. As Members will know, this is not a sole responsibility of DUE but each Directorate periodically reports on its contribution to its Section 17 responsibilities.
7. Ordinarily the reports are an opportunity for Members to discuss the contribution each Directorate makes towards ensuring a reduction in crime and disorder. Given the often charged nature of the subject matter, these reports can often stimulate considerable thought and insight into the debate. However, on the night the Members felt that as only one officer from DUE was in attendance, they were not able to respond to many of the questions. "This had resulted in questions having to be answered by written response rather than on the evening of the meeting. Members agreed that not all officers or senior officers of the Directorate would be expected to attend a meeting in the future, however, further officer representation would be required in order that the report could be scrutinised effectively."
8. In essence, it was resolved that the officer presenting the report provide written responses to Members' concerns and that in view of the concerns, further consideration of the Section 17 report be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee in order to be effectively scrutinised.
9. The full report has been attached (Appendix B). As one would anticipate, the four divisional areas of DUE have their own sections outlining their individual contribution and responsibilities under Section 17.
10. Also attached as Appendix C is an undated note from the Assistant Director Culture and Leisure, and a series of very detailed answers to the concerns Members raised. The vast majority of the answers relate to areas outside of his remit.
11. In an effort to address this issue then, on the night of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board, there will be senior officers from those areas which seemed particularly significant, ie green care, fly tipping, trading standards and street lighting.
12. From analysis of the areas in question, this should cover at least 90% of the areas Members were obviously concerned about.

## Library issues

13. The second item identified by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board as an area which had some unresolved issues related to the question of the infrastructure of the Library Service in the medium term, given that the sub-regional proposals had not been taken forward in their entirety. Throughout the budget considerations of the Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Committee deliberations had taken place and, in essence, two issues had been identified:

- (i) The forecast at the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013 Select Committee had been for a shortfall of £272,000 in revenue funding to meet the medium term financial strategy (see attached Appendix D).
- (ii) As the new infrastructure for the Library Service would be taken forward then commitments were given by officers that the Scrutiny Committee would be involved in that consultation.

14. In the event, the in year financial issues have been resolved and there will be an opportunity for the November Adult, Community & Housing Services Scrutiny Committee to consider this as part of the budget consultation process.

15. On the second point, at present there are no specific plans for restructuring Libraries and therefore there are no consultation issues that could be raised with Members.

## Finance

16. The costs of operating the revised scrutiny arrangements will be contained within existing budgetary allocations.

## Law

17. Scrutiny Committees are established in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and the requirements of the Council's Constitution, which was adopted under the Local Government Act 2000, subsequent legislation and associated Regulations and Guidance.

18. Scrutiny powers relating to health are included in the Health and Social Care Acts 2001 and 2012 and associated Regulations and statutory guidance. The Police and Justice Act 2006 gives the Council powers to scrutinise the work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enables local authorities to scrutinise other partners. Much of this legislation has now been consolidated in the Localism Act 2011.

### **Equality Impact**

19. Provision exists within the recommended scrutiny arrangements for overview and scrutiny to be undertaken of the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

### **Recommendation**

20. That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board note the report.



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### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Minutes of the Community Safety & Community Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

Appendix B – Report of the Director of the Urban Environment to the Community Safety and Community Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March – Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Appendix C – Briefing sheet (not dated) from the Assistant Director Culture and Leisure to members of the Community Safety and Community Services Scrutiny Committee responding to issues raised by Members at the Community Safety and Community Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

Appendix D – Report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services to Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013 – Libraries, Archives and Adult Learning Division budget update.