

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 6
6 NOVEMBER 2014	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director of Communities and Targeted Services

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SCRUTINY IN A DAY – ONE YEAR ON

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update the Committee on proposals for reviewing the joint Scrutiny in a Day on the impacts of welfare reform.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To agree to hold a further joint scrutiny event on 9th January 2015 to review the progress made against the lines of enquiry developed at the Scrutiny in a Day event on the impacts of welfare reform.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Welfare Benefit system has undergone significant changes over the last two years. Further changes to the benefit system will take place during the next year and likely into the new Parliament. The impacts of these changes may be considerable for some people both in and out of work.
- 3.2 The purpose of the joint scrutiny approach to this area will be to understand the impact to individuals and identify measures that the council can adopt to protect the most vulnerable people in our community.
- 3.3 There are links to improving health, education and skills, empowering communities, increasing economic activity and building community cohesion.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 On 17th January 2014, each Scrutiny Committee and Commission agreed to participate in a ground-breaking ‘Scrutiny in a Day’ event, entitled ‘Understanding and Managing the Impacts of Welfare Reform on Communities in Peterborough’, to develop an in-depth understanding of the issues and opportunities and to scrutinise responses on this cross-cutting agenda. The event provided all scrutiny councillors and other participants with a chance to understand the Government’s strategy on Welfare Reform, and how it affects Peterborough.
- 4.2 As a result, a number of recommendations and lines of enquiry were developed – these are set out in annex A.

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 Since the Scrutiny in a Day event, a number of work streams have been developed that can demonstrate the impact that the council is having to support vulnerable people. It is proposed that a follow up half day event is held on Friday 9 January 2015 to review and update all Scrutiny Committees and Commissions on the lines of enquiry. The event will also be an opportunity for Scrutiny Committees and Commissions to develop any further lines of enquiry.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 None

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 A programme will be developed for 9th January 2015 and invites sent to all councillors to attend the event.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

9.1 None

10. APPENDICES

Annex A attached – Recommendations and lines of enquiry

Annex A

Recommendations and Lines of Enquiry from each Scrutiny Committee or Commission

Four of the five Scrutiny Committees or Commissions produced a shortlist of key lines of enquiry or recommendations that those present felt they may want to focus on during the 2014/15 municipal year. These are set out as follows:

Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities

1. To explore the impact of welfare reform on young people and their attainment in mainstream education.
2. To identify barriers to work and explore how early years provision, support and related services can help parents into employment.
3. To understand the impact and needs arising from welfare reform and ensure that initiatives such as Connecting Families can meet these needs.

Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee

1. To explore the impact of the cessation of the Local Welfare Provision funding from Department of Work and Pensions and develop recommendations to Cabinet on how the Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme can be sustained.
2. To raise awareness of the ongoing reforms, the impacts and support available with communities, councillors and partners. Develop opportunities for sharing experiences caused by welfare reforms between communities, councillors and partners.
3. To explore opportunities of how investing in local community groups can help to prevent and tackle poverty.
4. To receive a report on the extent of gambling within the city and develop actions to mitigate the impact of gambling such as education, awareness raising and prevention.

Scrutiny Commission for Health Issues

1. To create an accessible, visible and customer-orientated access point for advice
2. To receive and scrutinise a report from Public Health on planned initiatives relating to healthy eating, food and nutrition along with the links to poverty and other lifestyle factors
3. When receiving the Public Health report above, to look at links between the nutrition and uptake of school meals and educational attainment.
4. To receive and scrutinise a report on the impact of poverty on public health and explore how investing in measures to tackle poverty can improve health outcomes.

Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee

1. To consider the Council's response to gambling and to devise a holistic approach to combatting the economic threats posed by gambling and vice
2. To understand the role that the voluntary sector can play in helping the council to deliver its key objectives. To foster closer links into and between the voluntary sector and review how the Council can support this
3. To scrutinise the Affordable Housing Capital Strategy to enable the Committee to consider recommendations relating to social housing.

Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities

As the remit of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities is cross-cutting, members will consider which of the recommendations and lines of enquiry above they wish to pursue alongside new suggestions that have emerged since the event.

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