

**Meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee**  
**Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2015 at 6.00pm**  
**In Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley**

**Agenda - Public Session**  
**(Meeting open to the public and press)**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To report the appointment of any substitute members serving for this meeting of the Committee.
3. To receive any declarations of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct.
4. To receive the minutes of the meetings of the Adult, Community and Housing Scrutiny Committee and Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2015.
5. Public Forum
6. Terms of Reference for the Place Scrutiny Committee (Pages 1-3)
7. Annual Scrutiny Programme 2015/16 (Pages 4-11)

Oral presentations will be made in respect of each area of scrutiny referred to in the appendices attached.

8. To consider any questions from Members to the Chair where two clear days notice has been given to the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) (Council Procedure Rule 11.8).



**Strategic Director (Resources & Transformation)**  
**Dated: 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2015**

## **Distribution:**

### **Members of the Place Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillor A Finch (Chair)

Councillor M Aston (Vice Chair)

Councillors K Casey, J Hill, Z Islam, K Jordan, I Kettle, D Perks, H Rogers, K Shakespeare and G Simms

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- Elected Members can submit apologies by contacting the officer named below. The appointment of any Substitute Member(s) should be notified to Democratic Services at least one hour before the meeting starts.
- The Democratic Services contact officer for this meeting is Helen Shepherd, Telephone 01384 815271 or E-mail [helen.shepherd@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:helen.shepherd@dudley.gov.uk)

**Minutes of the Adult, Community and Housing Services Scrutiny  
Committee**

**Monday, 9th March, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.  
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley**

**Present:**

Councillor M Hanif (Chair)  
Councillor R James (Vice Chair)  
Councillors R Body, I Cooper, A Goddard, Z Islam, J Martin, D Perks, K Turner,  
D Tyler and D Vickers.

**Officers:**

M Williams Chief Officer (Corporate and Customer Services), (Lead Officer to the Committee), M Bowsher Chief Officer (Adult Social Care), S Lackenby (Head of Commissioning) – (Both Directorate of People Services) and K Buckle (Democratic Services Officer) – (Directorate of Resources and Transformation).

38. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor K Turner declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 6 – The Care Act and Market Shaping as Director and Chairman of Age Concern, Stourbridge and Halesowen.

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39. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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40. **Public Forum**

There were no issues raised under this agenda item heading.

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41. **The Care Act and Market Shaping**

M Bowsher Chief Officer (Adult Social Care) summarised the areas of the Care Act that the Committee had scrutinised on three separate occasions during the municipal year, including the legal changes arising from the Act, the financial implications of the Care Act to the Council, savings delivered to date and changes to eligibility, costs and charges together with the new rights for Carers,

the range of services and support that would be required, associated costs and the views of an experienced carer, Mr P Acutt.

The Chief Officer (Adult, Social Care) advised that the questions raised to date had assisted Officers to refine Care Act implementation plans and referred to further work that had been undertaken to improve the information and advice systems. It was noted that that work had been accelerated to identify support for Carers and continual financial modelling was being undertaken.

The Chief Officer (Adult, Social Care) outlined the purpose of the presentation on The Care Act and Market Shaping, advising this would be a key area that would influence the range of care services on offer to people in the Borough and also the quality and sustainability of those services

There followed a powerpoint presentation on The Care Act and Market Shaping by the Head of Commissioning, Adult, Social Care, with Members asking questions, making suggestions and comments throughout the presentation.

The concept of commissioning services in relation to Care Act requirements was outlined including the need to consider the Borough's communities, examine the services currently available and addressing the need for current and future services.

In relation to market shaping it was indicated that the key parts included the need to shape local provision to ensure local people choose and control the support they require which would involve the requirement to continue consistent dialogue with local people and encouraging relationships with providers.

It was noted that an oversight of all services was required in order to provide more timely responses to crisis and deal with provider failure in order to mitigate against financial or organisational failure, with a new statutory duty to drive the quality of care and support services for the better.

The three specific strands to commissioning were outlined which included access and prevention for those requiring adult, social care services, that would involve working with public and voluntary organisations to assist people to remain in their own homes and providing a single point of contact; the need for assessment and independence in relation to those who were elderly and required adult, social care services, with linkages required with extra care housing and the hospital discharge services and the need for services to deal with those who had complex needs, such as learning and physical disabilities.

The Head of Commissioning referred to the Dudley Quality Standard of adult, social care that locally had been delivered for the previous three years and rated organisations within the Borough in meeting care needs as either, bronze, gold or silver, with the standard being rolled out to all providers. It was noted that there would be continuing work in order to progress their services from bronze to gold. It was also noted that there was a Trip Advisor type

ratings scheme whereby service provision could be rated from one to five, and the implementation of the Gateway electronic system that would record all interventions with providers with the requirement for organisations to provide self assessments in order for the Council to recognise what capacity organisations had, and being notified of vacancies as and when they arose in order to continue partnership working in relation to the delivery of adult, social care.

In responding to a Member's question relating to that part of the presentation in respect of the Dudley Quality standard, the Head of Commissioning advised that given the vast number of adult social care contracts expiring and renewing at differing times continual support would be provided to those organisations in order to achieve a gold standard and in view of this, access to systems of identifying standards and rates of providers would not take place until the process had been embedded with organisations across the Borough.

It was noted that work had been undertaken in relation to assisting people requiring adult social care services to remain in their own homes and ensure more timely hospital discharges, with the Council's housing services in order to fast track tenancies, providing adaptations and that further work would be conducted in order to increase the amount of capacity to provide specific residential care beds.

The Head of Commissioning also referred to the need for organisations to collaborate to provide services and the prospect of organisations sharing human resources and back office functions in order to plug the gaps in areas of service provision and produce good practice.

In responding to Members' questions regarding organisations operating from co-locations and problems that may occur with organisations charging differing amounts for adult social care services, the Chief Officer (Adult, Social Care), referred to statutory duties of the Council under the Localism Act to provide a list of their building assets that could be utilised to provide adult social care services. He referred to a Council owned building situated in Stafford Street, Dudley that was now a day care centre and available to provide a whole range of services.

The Head of Commissioning referred to the range and quality of choice of preventative services and referred to discussions that had taken place with organisations in relation to providing access to those services to those who struggled with transport, indicating that discussions had taken place with those organisations who had fleet vehicles available in order to both provide care and accessibility to care. He also advised of the need for a level of engagement with local people and co-production with organisations.

In responding to a question from a Member, the Head of Commissioning advised of the training available in relation to dementia and undertook to provide Members with further details of dementia training.

In relation to a query in relation to the Gateway and Partnership working aspect of adult social care commissioning, the Head of Commissioning referred to two extra care schemes at Broadmeadow and Willowfields advising that to date twelve people had expressed an interest in extra care facility. He advised that advertising the facility at Lime Gardens had taken place both at general practitioners surgeries and hospitals and the lack of take up of the extra care provision may be due to the continuing adaptation of older people's properties. He also advised that given the number of staff that had to be in place at Lime Gardens the Council had to purchase a certain amount of hours of care for an initial three month period, however following that initial period it had been made clear that purchasing hours of care would be upon an individual basis.

The Head of Commissioning undertook to provide the Vice-Chair with details of the twelve people who had expressed an interest in the facility at Lime Gardens.

The Chief Officer (Adult, Social Care) advised that there was a Panel process with the Panel meeting twice weekly in relation to those wishing to receive extra care at the Lime Gardens facility and that the allocation of places would occur on a phased basis given the need to assess needs and prioritise the scheme upon the basis of appropriateness to individual needs.

There followed suggestions by Members in relation to integrating communities, the need to address integration urgently and the difficulties in achieving such integration. The possibility of all needs being catered for and an example of a couple was provided, one being the carer and being active and the other not so active and requiring care.

The Head of Commissioning outlined the current Adult, Social Care Services provided, including those promoting living independently by providing short term support, advice and services, the provision of care and support, prevention services and universal services where non social care support or universal services could assist.

Details of the services provided, including the three Dementia Gateways, twenty five home care providers, four extra care housing schemes and 1700 residential and nursing beds in the Borough were noted.

It was further noted that every service available would be exhausted to prevent a person entering the residential care system.

Details of further support, services, community connections and partnership working were outlined including investigating respite services and how to innovatively provide transport for those experiencing difficulties accessing services due to transport issues.

In responding to a Member's question in relation to how the needs of people were met who were in minority groups, the Head of Commissioning referred to the need to be reflective for demographic communities, when restructuring services as the notion of community commissioning progresses.

The Head of Commissioning advised that it was intended for all front line workers to be aware of the adult social care services available in all areas of the Borough, in order to signpost the Borough's residents accordingly.

The Head of Commissioning referred to the move towards a Community Council and the need to work together with local people in shaping the adult social care services being offered which would require opportunities to join up services and promote awareness in relation to community services and activities.

Members made suggestions in relation to bringing local people together in order to shape the services in their communities as follows:-

- Publicise via the Clinical Commissioning Group, Community Forums, Health Watch, Dudley Council for Voluntary Services and Council meetings in order to form links with the community;
- Publicise on notice boards, for example at supermarkets or in shop windows;
- That closer integration was required with General Practitioners and pharmacies in order to engage with the public;
- The possibility of engaging the public at sporting events such as football matches;
- The Council should go out to the public in order to engage them in more private environments, given the sensitivity surrounding the need for adult social care;
- The requirement to investigate the area of engagement thoroughly in order to devise a workable model for this purpose;
- That all Members of the Council should be requested to make suggestions and recommendations in order to shape services;
- That consultation should take place with the Council's Marketing Department in order to engage with the public;
- The use of facebook and twitter;

In responding to a Member's question in relation to the community commissioning their own services, the Head of Commissioning advised that although that was an option the community required the ability to shape the services they received and further investigation would be required in relation to how beneficial it would be to place commissioning into the hands of the Community.

Members confirmed that they would welcome the opportunity to become involved in the roll out of the Dudley Quality Standard.

Resolved

That the information contained in the presentation and comments made arising from the presentation, as indicated above on The Care Act and Market Shaping, be noted.

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42. **Closing Remarks of the Chair and Vice-Chair**

This being the last meeting of the Committee of the current municipal year, the Chair thanked the Vice-Chair for his support and Officers and Members of the Committee for their contributions during the year.

The Vice-Chair thanked the Chair for his contributions to the work of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.

CHAIR



**Minutes of the Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee**

**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 at 6.00 pm**  
**in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley**

**Present:**

Councillor D Tyler (Chair)  
Councillor A Finch (Vice Chair)  
Councillors J Cowell, W Duckworth, C Hale, P Harley, I Kettle, P Miller, R Scott-Dow and E Taylor.

**Officers:**

P Coyne (Chief Officer – Planning & Economic Development), W George (Economic Development Manager), H Martin (Head of Planning), J Scott (Principal Executive Support Officer) (Directorate of Place) and H Shepherd (Democratic Services Officer) (Directorate of Resources and Transformation).

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23     **Apology for absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor N Gregory.

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24     **Appointment of Substitute Member**

It was noted that Councillor P Harley had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor N Gregory for this meeting of the Committee only.

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25     **Declarations of Interest**

No member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

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26     **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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27     **Public Forum**

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

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## **Inward Investment in Dudley Borough and the Black Country**

A report of the Scrutiny Committee Lead Officer was submitted outlining recommendations for Members to consider for implementation in 2015/16.

The Economic Development Manager presented the report and gave a background of the inward investment activities that had been considered by the Urban Environment Scrutiny Committee and Working Group during 2014/15.

In referring to the recommendations outlined in the report, the Economic Development Manager stated that comments that had been raised by Members at previous Committee meetings and those received by email, had all been incorporated into the proposed recommendations.

Following the presentation of the report, the Chief Officer (Planning & Economic Development) commended the Economic Development Manager and his team for work undertaken during the scrutiny process and considered it to have been a valuable exercise in establishing a work programme to further develop the service.

In response to a question raised by a Member, the Chief Officer (Planning & Economic Development) confirmed that the office space available for investment at the Waterfront was in the region of 200,000m<sup>2</sup>, but that he was unable to confirm the current capacity for the whole of the Borough. The Chief Officer (Planning & Economic Development) agreed to provide this information, direct to Members, following the meeting. It was stated that the Point North landmark building located at the Waterfront had now been developed into residential luxury flats and it was anticipated that this development would encourage activity back into the Waterfront and that the next stage of regenerating the area would now be progressed.

A Member further commented that employers also looked at facilities that were available within the vicinity, such as leisure centres, when making an investment and considered the facilities currently provided required improvement and suggested that a more attractive amenity infra-structure be developed.

The Chief Officer (Planning & Economic Development) agreed with the comments made and referred to the on-going Dudley Town Centre regeneration project and the proposed Castle Hill Leisure development. It was expected that these projects would have a positive impact in attracting people into the Borough and enhance the visitor economy.

In referring to the Very Light Rail (VLR) line that is planned to be introduced linking Castle Hill to Dudley Port, the Chief Officer (Planning & Economic Development) considered it important to develop the transport link in the context of the scope for expansion of office space at Brierley Hill and in connecting Castle Hill to Birmingham's visitor economy. It was stated that the first phase of the proposal was to implement a passenger train service to Dudley port, allowing an easier connection to Birmingham and the second phase would be to link the VLR to Brierley Hill. This would enable better connectivity and enhance

the public transport offer for residents, visitors and workers.

The Chair was mindful that a number of leisure centres had ceased to operate over recent years but commented that Local Authorities were no longer in a financial position to fund all these services and that investment opportunities in developing sport and leisure facilities in the borough needed to be encouraged.

In response to a question raised by a Member in relation to whether The Waterfront property owners were providing a reduction in rent as they were in receipt of a two year rate relief period, the Economic Development Manager stated that whilst INTU was the main owner within The Waterfront area, there were also a number of private owners. The majority of property owners acknowledged that a reduction in rent was an option to attract business investment, but were not compelled to be a part of the Dudley Business Investment Zone initiative.

Arising from a question raised by a Member, the Chief Officer (Planning and Economic Development) stated that all specifications for the next round of European Funding should be announced over the next few weeks; applications for funding will need to be submitted by the end of May 2015.

In response to further questions raised, the Economic Development Manager confirmed that the Dudley Business First website received approximately 8500 hits during 2013/14. He however reported that the number of hits had reduced slightly for 2014/15 but that visitors were viewing the site for longer periods of time; that enquiries were received via email and telephone contacts; that a trial period for people viewing the website was currently being undertaken and would provide more information in relation to who was looking at the site; collaborative working with Dudley's marketing team would continue to encourage further hits to the website and make Dudley Business First a recognised brand name; that automated emails were not sent to people expressing an interest, but that local businesses were automatically registered onto the local business directory and would always be made aware of a service suitable to their required needs.

In referring to the presentation given by Wayne Langford of Invest Black Country at the Scrutiny Committee meeting in December 2014 and in response to a question raised by the Chair, the Economic Development Manager confirmed that Invest Black Country would continue to exist until December 2016 and Wayne Langford would continue in his role as Head of Investment, Programmes and Development.

In referring to recommendation 3 of the report submitted, the Chair commented that when prospective international investors visited Dudley, Civic Leaders should play a part in promoting the borough as a development opportunity.

In response to a further question from the Chair, the Economic Development Manager confirmed that the Dudley Business First web address had been included on Business rate bills, but due to statutory information required to be included, no further information could be attached. It was also stated that Dudley Business First were proposing to work with Business Rates to be

automatically informed of any new businesses that were established within the Borough.

Resolved

That the following outcomes be recommended to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, for implementation in 2015/16:-

(1) Member awareness of inward investment activities

That updates on current and proposed inward investment activities, at both a local and regional level, be embedded into existing and periodic updates to Members.

(2) Partnership working with Invest Black Country

That close working with Invest Black Country, in line with the Collaboration Agreement, be continued, to ensure:

- the Council work closely with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) to continue to attract inward investment enquiries received at a national level;
- greater co-ordination of delegation visits to the Borough
- local development opportunities for prospective investors are promoted by Invest Black Country to a national and international audience;
- the Borough is promoted as an inward investment location via appropriate social media channels; and
- the Black Country Bullet website (Dudley MBC-led) is promoted as an inward investment tool to showcase the strengths of the automotive sector within Dudley and the Black Country.

(3) Promoting the Borough to an international audience

That work with the Government's Regeneration Investment Organisation (RIO) and Invest Black Country to better promote the Borough's strengths and development opportunities to prospective international investors, be continued.

The RIO, launched in November 2013, works on behalf of UK Trade and Investment to:

- identify and assess credible UK regeneration opportunities;
- promote UK regeneration opportunities at an international level; and
- support investors and facilitate regeneration investment deals.

(4) Secure external funding to increase inward investment

That close working with the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Black Country local authorities to identify external funding opportunities for inward investment and regeneration projects, be continued. This will build on the Council's successes to date in securing European funding (via the 2007-2013 Programme), Regional Growth Fund, City Deal and Local Growth Fund to support inward investment activities and wider regeneration developments. Key funding opportunities for 2015/16 include: -

- future rounds of Local Growth Fund (the Council in partnership with Warwick Manufacturing Group has recently secured £4.5m to support the development and delivery of the Very Light Rail project); and
- the next round of European Funding (up to 2020) – call for new proposals to commence 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015.

(5) Capacity within the Economic Development Team

That staff resources available to the Economic Development Team be reviewed through the budget review process. In addition, the current restructure proposals offer the opportunity to create greater synergies between services and enhance capacity as a result.

(6) Dudley Business Investment Zone

That close working with Invest Black Country, Marketing Birmingham, INTU (owners of the Merry Hill Shopping Centre) and local property agents to further market the Waterfront and business rate incentive scheme to encourage take up of vacant office space, be continued.

(7) Point of contact for prospective inward investors

That Dudley Business First continues to act as the single point of contact for receiving and handling inward investment enquiries.

To further enhance the Dudley Business First website by promoting Invest Black Country and undertake further analysis of website users to better understand the residence and sector of users (trial period now live for a period of one month at nil cost).

(8) Unique selling points of the Borough

That a refresh of the 'unique selling points' of the Borough focused based on the following areas, be undertaken :

- Pipeline regeneration projects
- Transport, rail and air accessibility
- Sector strengths
- Workforce
- Education strengths - drawing on the recent successes of Dudley College (Centre for Advanced Building Technologies and Construction Skills) and Halesowen College (Advanced Science, Engineering and Technology Centre) in securing Growth Deal funding
- Broadband availability
- The lifestyle strengths of Dudley Borough (visitor economy, housing, culture and green spaces)

(9) Supporting existing businesses to invest

That support to local businesses continue to be invested by:

- Continuing to provide a single point of contact for business support and inward investment enquiries via Dudley Business First;
- Providing assistance in sourcing and securing grant and/or loan assistance to expand (e.g. Regional Growth Fund);
- Enabling local businesses to promote their products and services for free via the Dudley Borough Business Directory;
- Assisting businesses to source locally available land and property within the Borough; and
- Signposting businesses to the relevant support offered locally, regionally and nationally.

As this was the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in the 2014/15 municipal year, the Chair expressed his thanks to the Scrutiny Committee Members, Lead Officer to the Scrutiny Committee, Officers and the Clerk, for the support and active role that everyone had played during the Scrutiny process.

The meeting ended at 6.45pm.

**Place Scrutiny Committee – 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2015**

**Report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation)**

**Terms of Reference for the Place Scrutiny Committee**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To note the terms of reference for the Place Scrutiny Committee.

**Background**

2. At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 11th December, 2014, a report was considered on the implications of the corporate restructuring on the Council's future overview and scrutiny arrangements.

Approval, in principle, was given to establish a Scrutiny Committee structure aligned to the new Strategic Directorate structure for the 2015/16 municipal year.

The establishment of the following Committees was recommended and approved by the annual meeting of the Council, to take effect from May 2015:

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board  
People Services Scrutiny Committee  
Resources and Transformation Scrutiny Committee  
Place Scrutiny Committee  
Health Scrutiny Committee.

3. The Council's scrutiny arrangements are set out in Part 2, Article 6 of the Constitution (Overview and Scrutiny). The associated Scrutiny Procedure Rules are contained within Part 4 of the Constitution which also contains the terms of reference for the Place Scrutiny Committee. These terms of reference are attached as an Appendix to this report..

**Finance**

4. The costs of operating the revised scrutiny structure will be contained within existing budgetary allocations.

**Law**

5. 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.

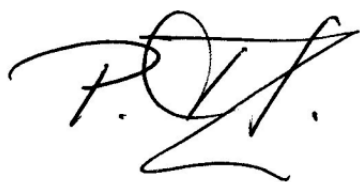
The Council's scrutiny arrangements are set out in Part 2, Article 6 of the Constitution (Overview and Scrutiny) and the associated Scrutiny Procedure Rules are contained within Part 4.

### **Equality Impact**

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

### **Recommendations**

7. That the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committee, as set out in the attached Appendix, be noted.



.....  
**Philip Tart**  
**Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation)**

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### **List of Background Papers**

The Council's Constitution



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **Membership**

11 Councillors.

### **Terms of Reference**

In accordance with any relevant statutory requirements and the Annual Scrutiny Programme approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:-

- (a) To undertake in-depth scrutiny investigations, inquiries and reviews in accordance with the Annual Scrutiny Programme;
- (b) To contribute to policy development by carrying out the scrutiny of matters falling within the functions of the Directorate of Place and the portfolios of the Cabinet Members for Planning and Economic Development, Environmental Services and Housing.

To submit reports and recommendations to the Cabinet and/or the Council on the outcomes of scrutiny investigations, inquiries and reviews.

To make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on any proposed amendments to the Annual Scrutiny Programme.

**Place Scrutiny Committee – 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2015**

**Report of the Lead Officer and the Strategic Director (Resources & Transformation)**

**Annual Scrutiny Programme 2015/16**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To note the items proposed and suggested for inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for detailed consideration by this Scrutiny Committee during 2015/16.

**Background**

2. Meetings of this Scrutiny Committee have been scheduled, on the dates below, primarily to carry out the reviews that are allocated to them and to undertake detailed scrutiny of the Council's revenue budget proposals in November -

- Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015
- Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2015
- Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2016
- Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2016

3. The Committee will formally endorse the Annual Scrutiny Plan at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2015. The items proposed for detailed consideration by this Scrutiny Committee during 2015/16 are:

- Business Friendly Planning
- Recycling Participation
- Housing Voids/Hard to Let Properties

A brief summary of each topic will be provided by the relevant Chief Officer at the meeting.

4. Appendix 1 provides more detailed information on the topics set out in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2015/16, as referred to in paragraph 3 above.

**Finance**

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

## Law

6. 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.
7. 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

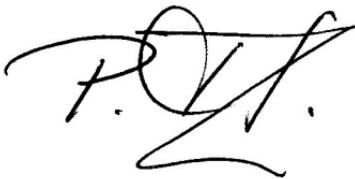
8. Provision exists within the recommended scrutiny arrangements for overview and scrutiny to be undertaken of the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

## Recommendation

9. That the proposed items contained in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2015/16, as referred to in paragraph 3 and Appendix 1, be endorsed.



.....  
**Mike Williams**  
**Lead Officer**



.....  
**Philip Tart**  
**Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation)**

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## List of Background Papers

**Report to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 – Annual Scrutiny Programme 2015/16**

<b>Place Scrutiny Committee</b>	
<b>Portfolio</b>	Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration
<b>Area for Scrutiny</b>	Business Friendly Planning
<b>Link to Council Plan</b>	<p>The Local Planning Authority's work provides the legislative and strategic framework for delivering the Council Plan (2013-16) priorities.</p> <p>The Council Plan Local Priority 2 "<b>Regeneration, skills and employment</b>" seeks to enable young people and adults to maximise their capabilities, by focusing on the creation of an environment that supports businesses and attracts new industries to provide apprenticeships and jobs for local people.</p> <p>Council Plan Local Priority 7 "<b>Community Council, people being served better</b>" seeks to give local people customer friendly and responsive services, a borough where people enjoy greater choice and flexibility to access high quality council services.</p> <p>By providing advice to businesses on investment proposals and assisting them through the regulatory process all aids the regeneration and inward investment into the borough ensuring the retention of existing employment and the creation of new jobs.</p> <p>We wish to strength our partnerships with businesses (existing and new) to improve service provision and provide customer oriented, focused and tailored support and guidance.</p>
<b>Context</b>	<p>The service has been transformed over the last few years in terms of systems and processes and we have moved from paper records to 100% electronic working.</p> <p>Application history and advice is available 24/7 via the web site and we provide a duty officer service 9-5 and free pre application advice at the point of service for all customers.</p> <p>However, many businesses have little contact with or understanding of the planning process; and are unaware of the services we can provide and the need for certain statutory approvals when setting up or seeking to expand businesses.</p>
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>The strategic focus of the Council Plan and the Local Plan documents is to create a sustainable, self sufficient borough by increasing inward investment, jobs, and provide high quality housing that meets the needs of all tenures and incomes located within a green and pleasant environment.</p> <p>To do this the planning service needs to be seen as "business friendly", "open for business" and here to support investment and regeneration.</p> <p>The LPA already provides a range for services, all of which can be tailored to the customer's needs but this does need to be more widely marketed and further engagement with the customer is required to agree their priorities and future service needs.</p>

<p><b>What are we asking from the Scrutiny Committee?</b></p>	<p>The Scrutiny Committee will be asked to consider a variety of ways of improving and engaging with business. Key stakeholders will be identified which will be influential in driving service improvements and achieving our long term objectives of inward investment.</p>
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<b>Place Scrutiny Committee</b>	
<b>Portfolio</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Area for Scrutiny</b>	Housing Voids
<b>Link to Council Plan</b>	<p>Empty homes matter to local people. Efficient management of lettings contributes to a number of the Council's key priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour – homes that are empty for any length of time are susceptible to theft and vandalism</li> <li>• Cleaner, greener and environmentally friendly – empty homes are an eyesore and can blight neighbourhoods</li> <li>• People being served better – empty Council homes represent lost revenue and long term voids impact on the Council's ability to meet housing needs</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing - empty homes can impact on sense of place &amp; community wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p>It also matters to local people how we let Council homes, and who they are let to, and scrutiny will therefore also include the Allocation Policy.</p>
<b>Context</b>	<p>The end to end letting process has been reviewed within the last five years with the aim of reducing costs and improving customer service, and a backlog of high cost voids was cleared.</p> <p>In the past two years, we have had higher levels of difficult to let properties, mostly high rise flats and three bedroom maisonettes, which have adversely affected our overall performance. In 2014/15, Scrutiny Committee considered the sustainability modelling that will be used to determine the future course of action for some of our stock that has low demand, high investment need, or both.</p> <p>The cost of void properties continues to be an issue – in 2014/15 the budget was £17.2m and the expected out turn is £17.1m. There has been some work with tenants' representatives to examine how the costs of a void are built up, and whether the void standard strikes the right balance between cost and lettable.</p> <p>The Allocation Policy is subject to ongoing review in response to legislation and government guidance, but the last major review was in 2010, when the points scheme was replaced with a bandings scheme. Since then, a two year residency qualification has been introduced (May 2014), and most recently new government guidance has been issued on a Tenant's Right to Move.</p>

<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<p>There is considerable public and member interest in voids and lettings. The Housing Board has also asked to receive reports, and it would be appropriate to align their scrutiny with political scrutiny.</p> <p>Voids are one area of financial risk to the Housing Revenue Account. There will be additional financial risks from the implementation of Universal Credit (where housing benefits will be included in payments to tenants instead of directly to landlords, and will be paid in arrears) and potentially from further Welfare Reforms. As indicated above, void costs are a balance of interests, and this balance will need political and public support.</p> <p>Proposed new regulations on Housing Allocations will need to be responded to, and policy decisions made. Previous decisions of this nature have been considered by Scrutiny Committee. There is also the opportunity to conduct a review of the Allocations Scheme overall, and to ensure that the policy objectives are clear and that the policy and procedures are capable of delivering the outcomes desired by the Community Council.</p>
<p><b>What are we asking from the Scrutiny Committee?</b></p>	<p>The Scrutiny Committee will be asked to consider how the budget on void properties is spent and to review the void standard that is currently applied. This is likely to include further consideration of our response to high cost voids.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee will be asked to consider the policy and process of allocating void properties (the Bandings Scheme and Choice Based Lettings respectively), agreeing key outcomes, looking at alternative methods of dealing with voids, and considering examples of good practice.</p>

<b>Place Scrutiny Committee</b>	
<b>Portfolio</b>	Cabinet Member for Environment
<b>Area for Scrutiny</b>	Recycling Participation
<b>Link to Council Plan</b>	<p>The Council Plan 2013-16, under the Local Priority '<b>Cleaner, Greener and Environmentally friendly</b>', our future objective is to encourage sustainable waste management practices amongst the borough's residents and businesses and to provide increased opportunities for recycling.</p> <p>On a quarterly basis we update Cabinet and Corporate Board through the Corporate Performance Management report, on the identified key activity '<b>To change public perception of waste minimisation and recycling through education and awareness raising.</b>' Additionally, the borough recycling rate forms the basis of a Council Plan key performance indicator, with a target to reuse, recycle and compost 45% of waste by 2015/16.</p>
<b>Context</b>	<p>Prior to August 2013, the majority of residents were recycling using 1 x 55 litre box in which they were able to recycle, paper, cans and glass. In 2009, we approached WRAP (Waste Action Resources Programme), to complete an options appraisal to help determine the most cost effective way of collecting recycling from within the borough. A number of options were considered, including the mixing of all recyclables in a wheeled bin. However, the system determined to be the most efficient and economical and the one that provides the highest quality of recyclable materials, is the use of two reusable bags and the existing black box. Councils who offer a 'comingled' service generally have to pay to dispose of this waste.</p> <p>In 2010 a 'trial' plastics and cardboard collection was conducted across approx 11,000 properties in 10 separate areas of the borough. The outcomes of this trial led to the submission of a bid to secure funding to rollout the enhanced service borough wide. Between August 2013 and March 2014, using a grant of £1.8 million secured through the government weekly collection support scheme, the Council introduced a new recycling service. In addition to the black boxes, residents were given 2 reusable bags- a blue bag for papers and cardboard and a green bag for plastic bottles and cans. With the new service, residents were asked to use their existing black box for recycling glass bottles and jars. In addition to the recycling bags, all households were given a comprehensive guide to recycling. The booklet contained information on how to recycle using the new service, information on the Council's HWRC (Household Waste Recycling Centre), the national 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign, home composting and information on how to recycle 'other' less usual items.</p> <p>A key criteria of the bid was that the service would be financially sustainable once the grant funding had ended i.e. April 2015. The role of Recycling Officer is fundamental to this area of work, and this post has been vacant since September 2014 (one failed recruitment exercise and about to shortlist for a second time). In the meantime we are endeavouring to work with existing limited resources.</p>



<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<p>The Quality Action Plan, published by DEFRA ( Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) in 2013 sets out a clear vision for recycling in England, ‘ <b>To not only increase the quantity of materials recycled, but also promote the quality of recycling. This will help maximise the environmental and economic benefits of reprocessing these raw materials as part of a global market, and will deliver a robust recycling supply chain’.</b></p> <p>Although there is considerable public and member interest in recycling, participation could still be improved, especially in the less affluent areas. In addition, market values of the recycled materials are lower than predicted, (this is an issue impacting on councils nationally).</p> <p>It is imperative recycling participation increases. As far as is possible through existing resources we plan to target identified poor performing areas by a door to door campaign. In advance of the canvassing exercise the Driver Team Leader will be asked to monitor participation rates. This information will then be used to target a canvassing campaign at those households who either partially participate or not at all.</p> <p>Working alongside the Council’s Communications and Public Affairs Team, a number of other measures are being identified for the rest of the borough, including the production of a leaflet to be delivered to all borough residents. It is hoped that these measures will ensure that different demographics are targeted – for example media releases and press adverts in local papers will be more accessible to older residents and a social media campaign is more likely to have an impact with younger residents.</p> <p>It is critical to maximise quantity and quality of recycling and therefore recycling income to ensure the sustainability of the service.</p>
<p><b>What are we asking from the Scrutiny Committee?</b></p>	<p>The Scrutiny Committee will be asked to consider a variety of ways of improving and engaging with the public.</p> <p>Further, the Scrutiny Committee will be asked to discuss the best way of delivering recycling services against a background of ongoing budget pressures.</p> <p>Key stakeholders will be identified who will be influential in driving performance and achieving our long term objectives in line with our Waste Strategy.</p>