

Item 7: Future Business: The Work Plan

For those of us who have sat on scrutiny committees before there is a danger that such committees do not contribute perhaps as much as they can do by conducting in-depth reviews of areas of the Council's business, as opposed to simply receiving reports from Officers and engaging in relatively passive debate.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman want the Services Select Committee ('SSC') to be an effective scrutiny committee. To that end we propose that during the course of this Council year that the SSC undertake *in-depth scrutiny* ('IDS') reviews of **two** key areas of the Council's business, pursuant to the terms of reference of the SSC.

This will involve an initial meeting before the SSC to discuss the scope of any IDS, the use of dedicated sub committees (5 members, including a chairperson) who would meet on a number of occasions, collection of evidence from Officers, members of the public and other Districts and producing a report together with Officers, and a final meeting before the SSC where the subcommittee's report and findings would be reviewed and actions suggested (For detailed explanation of the stages involved please see your 'In Depth Scrutiny' Handbook, and schedule produced by Officers for the June 2011 Meeting). As will have been noted from the above it is intended there will be a clear starting point and conclusion for any IDS.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman have no doubt that members have carefully considered the SSC's terms of reference document. For those whose recollection of the document is a little sketchy the SSC's principal areas of business include: -

- Information Technology
- Development and Retention of Staff

- Public Relations – including communications and customer services
- Development of Housing Strategy
- Waste and Recycling
- Licensing Policies
- Payments of benefits to those who have been the subject of Maladministration
- Scrutinise cabinet decisions – including a review of the budget
- To carry out specific research and development projects and to submit recommendations to cabinet

It will be noted that IDS projects are specifically contemplated within the SSC's terms of reference. Having carefully considered the above and consulted Officers we consider that IDS's should take place within SSC in relation to: -

- Housing. In particular, the under-occupation of social housing across the district and the points allocation system. Questions for such an IDS may include how the under occupation of social housing and the points allocation system could be improved.
- The introduction of the 'one benefit' payment system. Questions for such an IDS may include how to ensure the new payment system is as effective as possible.

In suggesting areas for review we have taken into account the fact that IDS's or similar were conducted in relation to Empty Homes, Waste Recycling and the Call Centre in 2010.

Benefits of an IDS would be that a report would be produced that would be of some real benefit to the Council and the Public (as has occurred before – the empty homes in depth scrutiny review to name but one) and that members on this committee would really be able to contribute to the Council's and SSC's business.

In addition, and in order to ensure we comply with our terms of reference, SSC would also deal with the following: -

- Regular updates would be received from Officers in relation to those areas not covered by an in depth scrutiny review. It is proposed that such updates would be relatively brief (no more than a two or three page report), would flag any areas of concerns for members and would detail any action required.
- Information Technology. The IT budget is considerable and policies need to be developed to ensure that the IT dept. meets the needs of the Council while reducing costs as much as possible. A sub committee will be required to meet with Officers to develop such policies. It should be noted that this will not amount to an IDS of the IT dept.
- Some time would need to be set aside for discussions in relation to the budget.

Richard Davison – Chairman – SSC

Cameron Brown – Vice Chairman – SSC

19th June 2011

In-Depth Scrutiny of Under-Occupation

	Services Select 1st Committee 20 th September 2011	Working Groups		Services Select 2nd Committee 8 th November 2011	Services Select 3rd Committee 31 st January 2012	Services Select 4th Committee 3 rd April 2012
		Sept	Oct			
Stage 1	✓					
Stage 2	✓					
Stage 3		✓	✓			
Stage 4				✓		
Stage 5 (a)				✓		
Stage 5 (b) - outcomes					✓	
Stage 6						✓

In-Depth Scrutiny of Universal Credit*

	Services Select 1st Committee 31 st January 2012	Working Groups		Services Select 2nd Committee 3 rd April 2012	Services Select 3rd Committee June 2012	Services Select 4th Committee September 2012
		Jan	Feb			
Stage 1	√					
Stage 2	√					
Stage 3		√	√			
Stage 4				√		
Stage 5 (a)				√		
Stage 5 (b) - outcomes					√	
Stage 6						√

* Dates to be confirmed.