



Meeting: **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
Date: **20 FEBRUARY 2013**  
Time: **5.00PM**  
Venue: **COMMITTEE ROOM**  
To: **Councillors Mrs W Nichols (Chair), R Price (Vice Chair),  
I Chilvers, M Dyson, M Hobson, D Mackay, C Pearson, D  
Peart, R Sweeting**

## Agenda

### 1. Apologies for absence

### 2. Disclosures of Interest

A copy of the Register of Interest for each Selby District Councillor is available for inspection at [www.selby.gov.uk](http://www.selby.gov.uk).

Councillors should declare to the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest in any item of business on this agenda which is not already entered in their Register of Interests.

Councillors should leave the meeting and take no part in the consideration, discussion or vote on any matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Councillors should also declare any other interests. Having made the declaration, provided the other interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest, the Councillor may stay in the meeting, speak and vote on that item of business.

If in doubt, Councillors are advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer.

### 3. Minutes

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Scrutiny Committee held on 22 January 2013 (pages 3 to 9 attached).

### 4. Chair's Address to the Scrutiny Committee

### 5. Call In

### 6. Scrutiny Development Workshop

Scrutiny Committee  
20 February 2013

To consider the issues raised in Councillor Metcalfe's report on Scrutiny, (pages 10 to 15 attached).

**Jonathan Lund**  
**Deputy Chief Executive**

<b>Dates of next meetings</b>
26 March 2013
23 April 2013
21 May 2013 (Provisional)

Enquiries relating to this agenda, please contact Palbinder Mann on:  
Tel: 01757 292207, Email: [pmann@selby.gov.uk](mailto:pmann@selby.gov.uk).

## Scrutiny Committee

- Venue: Committee Room
- Date: 22 January 2013
- Present: Councillors W Nichols (Chair), R Price (Vice Chair), I Chilvers, M Dyson, M Hobson, C Pearson, D Mackay and D Peart.
- Apologies for Absence: Councillors R Sweeting.
- Also Present: Councillor M Crane, Colin Moreton – Community Safety Partnership, Chief Inspector Mark Iveson – North Yorkshire Police and Jez Rushworth – North Yorkshire Fire Authority.
- Officers Present: Keith Dawson – Director of Community Services, Karen Iveson – Executive Director (s151), Richard Sunter – Lead Officer, Planning and Palbinder Mann - Democratic Services Officer.
- Press: None

### **31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **32. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i) **That the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 23 October 2012 be APPROVED and that they are signed by the Chair.**

### **33. CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chair informed the Committee of an amendment to the running order of the agenda. The item on the Crime and Disorder Review would be taken first and the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue item would be taken second. The Chair also informed the Committee that the item on Health Service provision

would be deferred as the Yorkshire Ambulance Service had stated they were the subject of Care Quality Commission inspection. The Ambulance Service had stated they would attend if a deferral was not possible however the Chair informed the Committee that it was thought best to defer the item.

#### **34. CALL IN**

No items had been called in.

#### **35. CRIME AND DISORDER REVIEW**

Chief Inspector Mark Iveson from North Yorkshire Police and Colin Moreton from the Community Safety Partnership were present to discuss the latest position with regard to crime in the district.

Chief Inspector Iveson referred to data which had been included with the agenda and explained that the data was measured between 1 April to 31 March. The Committee were informed that crime was down 5.2% overall which essentially meant 150 less reports of crime from last year. Chief Inspector Iveson reported on the following key areas:

**Burglary in a dwelling** - With regard to helping victims of burglary, the Committee were informed that a handyman scheme had been funded which provided victims with equipment to prevent further burglary incidents. There was also work being done to educate people on preventing burglary.

**Other Burglary** - The Committee were informed the Committee on an initiative call 'Sheduction' which had helped prevent burglaries to non dwellings.

**ASB/Drug Offences** - It was reported that overall incidents of anti social behaviour and drug offences had fallen.

**Domestic Violence** - The Committee were informed that domestic violence remained a concern with the data 1% higher than last year. Chief Inspector Iveson stated that it was important to address the causes of domestic violence and there was an initiative where in cases of domestic violence, the partner was removed from the property and work was done to improve their behaviour.

The Committee were also informed that the Selby North area had the highest levels of domestic violence and that the Police were working with partners to take a holistic approach to the issue within the ward. This meant looking at asking the community what would lead to an improvement in their life.

**Theft from Motor Vehicles** - It was reported that there were 13 more offences of thefts from motor vehicles compared to last year. It was explained that this was due in part to a spate of catalytic converter thefts. Chief Inspector Iveson explained that an initiative had been launched to tackle this

type of theft however due to the valuation of metal prices, this type of theft was unlikely to go away.

There had also been a significant amount of number plate thefts and an increase in taking off without payments. The Committee was informed that there was equipment which could be bought to make it difficult to steal the number plate.

It was queried whether it was possible to identify the ethnicity of domestic violence victims. Chief Inspector Iveson stated that data could possibly be broken down to do this. It was also possible that some issues were not to do with the Police however and involved other agencies such as Adult Social Care.

In response to a query concerning partnership work between other forces, Chief Inspector Iveson stated that work was done in partnership as similar crimes were committed in other areas as well.

It was queried whether shops were identified of potential shoplifters. Chief Inspector Iveson stated that images of people who had committed offences were passed onto shops and work was done with shops to tackle offenders. The Committee were also informed that every two months, meetings with shop owners were held to discuss what they could or could not do when faced with shoplifters.

A query was raised concerning how the financial cutbacks would affect the Police. Chief Inspector Iveson stated that the previous Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police had left the force in a stable financial situation. The Committee were informed that two Contact Centres had been merged into one which had produced some savings. With regard to the frontline, it was stated the force were in the position they needed to be. Chief Inspector Iveson explained that some officers who retired would be replaced however there should not be too much difference noticed as the force were on top of crime and the cutbacks should not place too much pressure on them.

A question was raised with regard to the opening of nine centres for reporting hate crime. Chief Inspector Iveson explained that this would give people a chance to come forward in confidence if they were a victim of hate crime.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Committee receive and note the report.**

#### **36. NORTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Jez Rushworth from North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service was present to provide an update on the position of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service within the district.

Mr Rushworth explained that there were three strands to the work of the Fire Service. These were:

### Fire Safety Audits

It was explained that there were two different types of audit and data was presented in the report which displayed the performance of the audits. Mr Rushworth explained the audit was a risk based assessment and if a risk to life was identified, this would be followed more closely. The Committee was informed that close work was done with the Police and the UK Border Agency on issues.

### Fire Prevention Activities

Mr Rushworth explained that there was now a more qualitative approach with regard to home fire checks. This was due to installing specialist equipment and there had also been a lot of training around this. Due to this, there had been a reduction in community safety activity however the performance of the district was holding up well.

### Emergency response

The Committee were informed that the average time taken from answering a call to the creation of a fire call and mobilisation of appliances was 1 minute 46 seconds.

Mr Rushworth explained that the regional control centre had been cancelled and it had been agreed to install a new mobile system. The Committee were informed that one of the benefits of the system was that better data about call handling was received. The system also allowed mobilisation of the nearest fire engine to the incident. It was explained that the new system was due to go live in April 2013.

The Committee were informed that the average time taken from the time of mobilisation to the time of arrival was 6 minutes 34 seconds. Mr Rushworth explained that in some instances, repeat calls were received about car fires and suspected malicious calls were challenged by control staff

In response to a query concerning the costs for the new system, Mr Rushworth stated that the proposed regional control centre would have cost more than four individual control centres and therefore the new system would be more cost effective. With regard to downsides of the new system, Mr Rushworth stated that a better evaluation of this would be achieved when the system went live.

### **RESOLVED:**

- i) **That the Committee receive and note the report.**

**37. ACCESS SELBY 2<sup>ND</sup> INTERIM KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR  
PROGRESS REPORT: APRIL 2012 TO SEPTEMBER 2012 AND  
SLA DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillor M Crane, Leader of the Council and Keith Dawson, Director of Community Services presented the report which provided details of Access Selby key performance indicators following the second quarter of reporting for the financial year 2012/13

The Committee were informed that the data for this quarter was reported up to September 2012. There was currently one red indicator and four amber indicators.

In response to a query concerning customer service, the Leader of the Council stated that there was data which would be made available for Members concerning call stats identifying areas such as time taken to answer a call received.

A query was raised concerning indicator around satisfaction with the leisure service as people's comments recorded as 'no comment' may have been recorded as pleased with the service. The Director of Community Services stated that this survey had been conducted in March 2012. It was stated that dates should be included on the information stating when the consultation was undertaken.

A query was raised concerning which areas of Access Selby were there commercial development opportunities. The Director of Community Services stated that he would send a response to the Committee regarding this.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Committee receive and note the report.**
- ii) That the accountable officers take the necessary action to ensure that performance indicators and projects under development achieve the targets set at the beginning of the financial year, as defined in the Service Level Agreement (SLA).**

**38. HEALTH SERVICE PROVISION – YORKSHIRE AMBULANCE  
SERVICE**

As mentioned in the Chair's address, this item was deferred until the Committee meeting in April 2013.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the item be deferred.**

### **39. ACCESS SELBY SERVICE PROVISION – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE**

The Lead Officer, Planning presented a report which detailed the work and performance of the Development Management Service.

The Lead Officer, Planning explained that the work of the service was outlined in the report and included working on a range of applications other than planning applications. These included, amongst other, Tree Preservation Orders Consents and Conservation Area Consents. There was also pre application advice provided by the service.

The Committee were referred to the information in the report outlining the number of applications. The Lead Officer, Planning reported that 70% of the applications were dealt with in time. It was explained that there had been problems at the beginning of the year when the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had been implemented and this had implications for the Council's Core Strategy which had led to a backlog of applications being built up. In response to this, an action plan was implemented and an agreement was reached with Consultants, Capita Symonds who had assisted with the workload and this had worked well.

A query was raised with regard to whether planning advice was offered to residents. The Lead Officer, Planning stated that this was offered and that there was a duty Planning Officer based at the Access Selby Customer Contact Centre every Tuesday and Thursday. The Lead Officer, Planning explained that the service for pre application advice had to be weighed up with processing planning applications as the applicants had paid a fee. It was explained that different ways of providing advice were being considered and a possible consideration for the future was that the pre application advice would not be free.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Committee receive and note the report.**

### **40. SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENT**

Karen Iveson, Executive Director (s151) presented a report which summarised the comments by the Scrutiny Committee members at the Scrutiny Development Workshop on Tuesday 23 October 2012.

An error was pointed out in the report as recommendation two should have stated "under 2.3 – 2.5" rather than "2.5.1".

A matrix outlining criteria with which the Scrutiny Committee could use to select topics for the work programme was circulated to the Committee. It was suggested that the matrix be including as a standing item on future agenda.



The Chair suggested that Executive Members could be programmed into the work programme to talk about decisions which were outlined in the Forward Plan and fell inside their portfolio. Issues such as areas of responsibility and how they were delivered could be discussed.

It was agreed that the next workshop would be held on 20 February 2013.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Committee receive and note the report.**

**41. WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14**

It was agreed that if Members had any comments on the proposed work programme for 2013/14, they would email the Democratic Services Officer. It was also stated that the proposed work programme would come back to the Committee before it went to Council for approval.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Members email the Democratic Services Officer with any comments they have on the work programme for 2013/14 and that the work programme come back before the Committee before being submitted to Council for approval.**

**42. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Committee were informed that it would be aimed for the officer from the Police and Crime Panel to attend the meeting in April to outline how the Panel worked and for the Police and Crime Commissioner to attend a future meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Committee receive and note the work programme and the above amendment be made.**

The meeting closed at 7:03pm



**Report Reference Number: SC/12/22**

**Agenda Item No: 6**

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**To: Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 20 February 2013**

**Author: Palbinder Mann, Democratic Services Officer**

**Lead Officer: Karen Iveson, Executive Director (S151)**

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**Title: Scrutiny Development Workshop (Covering Report)**

**Summary:**

Councillor Metcalfe, Lead Executive Member for Communities has prepared a report following the submission of a Notice of Motion to Council relating to the operation of the Scrutiny function.

**Recommendations:**

**The Scrutiny Committee are asked to discuss and consider the issues raised in the report relating to the following topics:**

- Effective questioning techniques
- Co-ordination of effort
- Achieving added value
- Formulating workable and specific recommendations

**Reasons for recommendation**

**The Committee is asked to consider the above issues outlined in the report and provide its comments to contribute in improving the Scrutiny function for those areas at Selby District Council.**

**1. Introduction and background**

A report was prepared by Councillor Metcalfe, Lead Executive Member for Communities on improving the Scrutiny function at Selby District Council. The report was considered and endorsed by the Executive at its meeting on 6 September 2012 and approved by Council at its meeting on 11 September 2012. The Committee held its first workshop at its meeting on 23 October 2012 where they discussed the following issues:

- The creation of a functional and meaningful work programme
- Building a relationship with the Executive
- The use of task and finish groups to extend resource and effectiveness

This second work is planned to look at the remaining key issues outlined in the report.

## **2. The Report**

The main report is attached at Appendix 1 to the agenda.

## **3. Legal/Financial Controls and other Policy matters**

### **3.1 Legal Issues**

These are outlined in the main report.

### **3.2 Financial Issues**

These are outlined in the main report.

## **4. Conclusion**

The Committee is asked to provide its comments on the report relating to the key issues listed above to contribute in improving the Scrutiny function at Selby District Council.

## **5. Background Documents**

N/A

### **Contact Officer:**

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### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Report on the 'Review of Scrutiny Function' from Councillor Metcalfe

### Summary:

This report has been prepared for the Executive following the submission of a Notice of Motion to Council relating to the operation of the scrutiny function. It has been compiled following discussions with a number of councillors from the two main political groups and seeks through its recommendations to amend and refine the operation of scrutiny at the Council in order that the process adds value to the Council's operations.

### Recommendations:

- i. To amend the Council's Constitution to give effect to the following:
  - The Scrutiny Committee
    - to debate all call-ins
    - To have the call-in presented to the Scrutiny Committee by the "sponsor" of the call-in and one or more of his/her co-signatories
    - To hear from any other appropriate contributors, including where necessary the relevant Executive member
    - To pass any relevant and specific recommendations to the Executive or Council as appropriate
    - To comment on the validity of the call-in itself
- ii. To provide a series of development workshops to re-appraise the role of the scrutiny function to help deliver the objectives set out in paragraph 3.3
- iii. To introduce a system of named substitutes for scrutiny committees

### Reasons for recommendation

To improve the operation of the scrutiny function following discussions with elected members from across the Council.

#### 1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The catalyst for this review could be seen as the motion raised at Council on 24 July and currently standing in abeyance until the next meeting of Council on 11 September 2012. However, it is true to say that the concerns regarding the operation of the scrutiny function have been rumbling for some time and that a review of the process under Executive arrangements was, in any case, due.
- 1.2 I offered to lead a review on behalf of the Executive and this report and its recommendations are offered as a way of improving and refining the scrutiny function and hopefully addressing expressed concerns both current and longer running.

- 1.3 I wish to place on record my thanks to the many councillors who gave their time in the three forums that I facilitated in bringing this report forward. The forums were:
- The Conservative members of the Scrutiny Committee
  - The “new members” group
  - The Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

Each forum was marked by a candid and constructive dialogue and, for me, this underlines the common will to make scrutiny more effective and add value to the Council’s operations. I was somewhat taken aback by the way these colleagues clearly welcomed what they thought as a rare opportunity to engage in and talk through the issues surrounding scrutiny and member involvement generally, and their wish to play a more active role in the Council’s operations... a role which they felt was denied them under the current arrangements.

- 1.4 Discussions seemed to revolve around two core elements, call-in and general operation, so I will deal with these in sequence in the following paragraphs.

## 2 Call-in

- 2.1 There can be little doubt that the current call-in procedures have raised the greatest concerns across the political divide. This single topic was high on the agenda in all three forums and, although it highlighted a major common concern, it also produced a fairly unanimous suggested solution.

- 2.2 To summarise the concerns, most felt that:
- The discussion and vote by the Scrutiny Committee on whether to even hear the call-in was embarrassing both to the Committee and to potential visitors who had been invited in the event that the call-in would indeed be debated
  - The ability to deny the debate could lead to accusations of party manipulation
  - Denying the opportunity to debate a call-in undermines democratic input
  - Any informal arrangements put in place to resolve the issues seem to have failed

- 2.3 The suggested way forward is:
- To debate all call-ins
  - To have the call-in presented to the Scrutiny Committee by the “sponsor” of the call-in and one or more of his/her co-signatories
  - To hear from any other appropriate contributors, including where necessary the relevant Executive member
  - To pass any relevant and specific recommendations to the Executive or Council as appropriate

- To comment on the validity of the call-in itself

This last suggestion is geared towards exposing frivolous use of the call-in process.

- 2.4 I would support these suggested changes which, I believe, address the concerns outlined in paragraph 2.2 and would secure this important facility for calling the Executive to account and ensure it is used appropriately in the spirit of legislation and the Council's constitution.

### 3 General Operation

- 3.1 These issues were wide ranging but, again, produced a high degree of unanimity.

- 3.2 There was much evidence that there was a lack of clarity and understanding about the role of the scrutiny function as a whole. We have only operated under the revised arrangements for a little over a year but it was obvious from the discussions that revisiting the very purpose of scrutiny under Executive arrangements would not only be beneficial but necessary.

- 3.3 This reappraisal, supported by training and advice sessions for scrutiny members (and others), should cover, amongst other things:

- The creation of a functional and meaningful work programme
- Building a relationship with the Executive
- The use of task and finish groups to extend resource and effectiveness
- Effective questioning techniques
- Co-ordination of effort
- Achieving added value
- Formulating workable and specific recommendations

- 3.4 Underlying all of the discussions was the intent that the scrutiny function must be seen by all as a valuable part of the Council's operations. For this to be achieved certain conditions need to be met. Some have been explored to some extent above but the list would include the following:

- Clarity on the role of scrutiny
- Freedom and willingness on behalf of scrutiny members to challenge the Executive and hold them to account
- Willingness on behalf of the Executive to respond positively to challenge in the interests of democratic debate
- Regular attendance by members of the Executive at scrutiny to answer questions and provide contextual information on the operation of their individual remits
- Access by the Chair and/or other representatives of scrutiny to informal discussions with the Executive
- Quality of debate at, and recommendations from, scrutiny

- Structured feedback from the Executive to scrutiny on any recommendations made by scrutiny
- A meaningful work programme for scrutiny which adds value to the Council's operation and is not seen as an end in itself
- Co-ordination between the three strands of scrutiny (Policy Review, Scrutiny and Audit) to ensure best use of their combined resources
- Use of T&F groups by scrutiny to extend their resource and effectiveness (could include members not on scrutiny)
- The Executive engaging with scrutiny earlier in the process of decision making or new policy formulation to expand member involvement and explain the wider context of decision making
- Scrutiny playing a role in quashing some of the wilder statements made in the media and wider community by ensuring a debate based on evidence rather than supposition
- Scrutiny testing the performance of Council services

An additional procedural recommendation from the forums is that a named substitute system for scrutiny be implemented. Again, a recommendation I am happy to support.

- 3.5 It is in all of our interests to secure a meaningful and effective scrutiny function and to promote democratic input to the overall decision making process. The responsibility for decisions will remain with the Executive but, in order to avoid the feeling amongst the wider membership of the Council that they have little or no part to play, information, communication and involvement needs to be enhanced.
- 3.6 The Executive needs to value the role of scrutiny but, by the same token, scrutiny needs to enhance its reputation by its deeds to earn that trust and sense of value. This is a two way street which requires commitment from us all.
- 3.7 Success will not be achieved overnight. Some cost may be involved and I will bring forward a further recommendation for a support resource for scrutiny as part of the forthcoming budget round. In the meantime, I ask the Executive to support the thrust of this report along with the recommendations above.