



Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee Thursday 21st July 2016

Report of: Policy and Improvement Officer

Subject: The role and remit of the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee

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Summary: To provide a brief overview of the role and remit of the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee, including areas of responsibility and legislative powers.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	X
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

- Note the contents of the report
- Contact the Policy & Improvement Officer if you have any further questions / require any additional information

Background Papers:
[Sheffield Council Constitution](#)

Category of Report: OPEN

The role and remit of the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee, Thursday 21st July 2016

1.0 Overview of Scrutiny

1.1 Overview and scrutiny is an essential part of modern governance. It helps to ensure that local government is effective and accountable. The central purpose of scrutiny is to monitor and examine services provided by the Council and its partners, as well as to carry out in-depth reviews into specific topics.

1.2 Sheffield has five Scrutiny & Policy Development Committees covering the following areas:

1. Children, Young People and Family Support
2. Economic and Environmental Wellbeing
3. Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care
4. Safer and Stronger Communities
5. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC)

1.3 All Scrutiny Committees meet bi-monthly, apart from OSMC which meets a minimum of four times a year. The remit of scrutiny committees doesn't follow that of Cabinet Members, so there can be cross cutting issues where the committee can choose to invite members of another committee to attend their meeting. Scrutiny bodies may also undertake external scrutiny of other organisations that provide local services.

1.4 All scrutiny meetings are open to the public. The only time the public can't attend is when confidential issues are being discussed, if this is the case it will be made clear on the agenda and at the start of the meeting. Each committee agenda has a section for public questions and petitions.

1.5 In terms of public questions, if required a written response is provided within 10 working days and a copy of the response is included with the minutes of the next meeting. Petitions can also be submitted to scrutiny, full details of the [petitions scheme](#) are available online. Petitions with 2,500 or more signatures can require a senior officer to give evidence at a Scrutiny Committee. Petitions with 5,000 or more signatures will trigger a public debate by Full Council

1.6 Scrutiny also provides opportunities for community involvement and democratic accountability. Scrutiny can engage with communities through open calls for evidence, inviting people to attend as expert witnesses and also through the appointment of co-opted or observer representatives.

1.7 The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee exercises an overview and scrutiny function in respect of five broad areas:

- Housing
- Community Safety and Crime
- Community Cohesion
- Social Inclusion
- Locality Management

1.8 Scrutiny committees tend to focus on 1-2 main issues per meeting, a report on the topic is circulated in advance of the meeting and made publically available online, lead officers and if appropriate, the relevant Cabinet Member then attend the meeting to respond to questions / engage in discussion. The Committee can also choose to request briefing papers on topics that are of particular interest, these are classed as “for information only” and there is no officer attendance to present the report.

1.9 Scrutiny can choose to set up Task Groups to undertake more detailed reviews or pieces of policy development work. Task Groups are made up of members of the committee and tend to meet over a number of months to gather and analyse evidence, reporting back to the committee on their findings and recommendations.

1.10 Scrutiny is not a decision making body but it can, under the Local Government Act 2000 make recommendations to the council's executive, and under other legislation may also make recommendations to other local bodies. The Cabinet is under a duty to respond to recommendations made by scrutiny committees. A number of external partners must "have regard to" such recommendations.

1.11 Scrutiny will also look at decisions of the Executive that are “called-in”. “Call-in” enables scrutiny to have another look at a decision before it is implemented, this can enable scrutiny to: examine the reasoning for the decision; and / or to consider an alternative solution if one has been suggested. Five members, including two from the relevant scrutiny committee must give notice to “call-in” a decision for scrutiny. Full details of the process are outlined in the Councils Constitution, under part 4 Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

2.0 Legislative Powers

2.1 Under the Police and Justice Act 2006, every local authority is required to have a Crime and Disorder Committee with the power to scrutinise the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). In Sheffield the Crime and Disorder Committee is the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee and the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) is the Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership.

2.2 The requirements of the 2006 Act were enacted by the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 which came into force for local authorities in England on 30 April 2009. Under the Act the Crime and Disorder Committee (in Sheffield the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee) can:

- Scrutinise decisions made and actions taken in connection by the responsible authorities that make up the CDRP
- Request information from the responsible authorities
- Require attendance of officer or employees or responsible authorities to answer questions or to provide information.

2.3 The Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership is made up of all the public services in the city, with representatives from the private and voluntary sectors. The Partnership considers issues across the breadth of community safety, such as: crime, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, community cohesion, preventing offending and reoffending, and protecting vulnerable people.

2.4 The bodies represented on the Partnership have a statutory duty to work together to prevent crime and disorder in their area. The Partnership is also required by statutory regulation to produce an annual assessment of the levels and patterns of crime, disorder and substance misuse, and agree an annual partnership plan. This is referred to as the Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment.

2.5 The Police Crime Panel was established with the statutory function to scrutinise and hold to account the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire. A proposed joint working protocol between the four local Authority crime and disorder scrutiny committees (Sheffield, Barnsley, Doncaster & Rotherham) and the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel (PCP) has been drafted.

3.0 Resources for scrutiny

3.1 We have set up a [scrutiny intranet page](#) which contains some useful documents and links, including the following documents:

- **Selecting topics** - PAPER criteria - **P**ublic Interest, **A**bility to Change, **P**erformance, **E**xtent, **R**eplication - our tool for selecting the most appropriate topics for scrutiny
- **Approaches to scrutiny** – an overview of the four broad ways in which a committee can choose to scrutinise topics
- **Developing KLOEs** –questions to ask when developing Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs)
- **Questioning styles** - a Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) guidance document

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

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