

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 4 JULY 2013

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – TOPIC SCORING OUTCOMES - UPDATES

1. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 consider the proposed amendments to the outcomes of the topic scoring as detailed in Appendix 1;**
- 1.2 consider the details of the workshop on Landscaping and the demonstration of the funding database (reported separately on the agenda) and determine whether any further investigative actions are to be taken; and**
- 1.3 note that consideration of several topics has been deferred pending workshop sessions which have yet to be scheduled, to be reported back to committee for consideration at a later date.**

2 Background

- 2.1 Under the Council's scheme of delegation, the Committee is empowered to:**
 - (a) review the effectiveness of Council policy implementation and Council service delivery, and to identify potential improvements;
 - (b) undertake an annual programme of reviews; and
 - (c) make recommendations regarding improvements to the performance of services.
- 2.2 Members of the Committee met informally on 1 May 2013, to discuss areas for potential review and investigation in 2013/14. Members considered a variety of topics suggested by Committee members, other Aberdeenshire Councillors and Senior Management Team, covering a wide range of issues. These were formally agreed at the previous meeting of the Committee (16 May 2013, Item 17 refers).**
- 2.3 Subsequent to this meeting, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee met with the Director of Housing and Social Work, at his request, to discuss the undernoted four topics which had been identified for progression from within his service in 2013/14.**
 - Monitoring of Elderly Residents in Residential Homes and in Nursing Homes. Role of Volunteer Visitor;
 - Demographic time bomb of Care for the Elderly. Short fall in the Number of Home Carers;
 - Sheltered Housing versus Very Sheltered Housing Policy; and
 - Sheltered Housing Provision. (Deferred from 2012)

It had previously been agreed that these would be best progressed by being merged, initially, into a single exploratory workshop. This was also understood to fulfil the previous outstanding instruction, from the workshop held in January 2013 on Protection of the Vulnerable, that a specific workshop be held on the vulnerable elderly.

- 2.4 It was also agreed that a visit to the Joint Equipment Service on the issues surrounding home aids and occupational therapy equipment be held on 24 June 2013 and that this would replace a potential workshop discussion.
- 2.5 Based on the clarification provided by the Director of Housing and Social Work, it is proposed that the agreed actions be amended as set out in the Appendix.
- 2.6 Since the last meeting of the Committee, a workshop on Landscaping was held on 23 May and a demonstration of the funding database was seen on 27 May. These are subject to a separate report on the agenda. The outcome of these activities means that the deferred response to topic 6, Funding of local community groups, and topic 10, Landscaping Services can now be considered.
- 2.7 The Head of Finance and the Monitoring Officer within Corporate Services have been consulted on this report and have no adverse comments to make.

3 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 3.1 An equalities impact assessment is not required because this report records the outcome of informal discussions which do not impact on any of the protected groups. Any further actions or recommendations which might impact on these groups in service delivery will be considered by officers and reported to the relevant Policy Committee.
- 3.2 This report has no adverse staffing or financial implications. It supports the Council's policy to have an effective scrutiny and audit function and will help make the Committee's work more sustainable.

Christine Gore
Director of Corporate Services

Report prepared by Jan M McRobbie, Support Officer (Scrutiny and Audit)
28 May, 2013

OUTCOME OF TOPIC SCORING SESSION 1 MAY, 2013

	TOPIC	NO ACTION	DEFER	WORKSHOP/ REPORT	INVESTIGATE
1.	Dog fouling – staff training options.	√ - Premature Get copy of report to ISC May and email to members for information			
2.	School Meals.			Update report – to see how current situation compares to previous investigation 2006	
3.	Clerical Staff in schools - .Are they getting enough hours to complete the work assigned to them and all the extra work they have to do complete?	√ - Premature	Defer – premature and assurance given re review/ options for admin/ budget reintroduced		
4.	Induction Training including Health and Safety Training.		Defer – consider in context of topic 18 – and await outcome of report to Committee in Sept 2013		
5.	Assess demand responsive transport solutions for rural areas.	√ -Workshop already explored issue (report to formal cttee 16 May)	Consider report on agenda on workshop outcome and determine if further action required.		

6.	Funding of local community groups.		<p>Consider in light of demonstration of funding database held 27 May – consider after this.</p> <p>If pursuing, may focus on Area Top Up, Report outcome to committee July 2013.</p>		
7.	Monitoring of Elderly Residents in Residential Homes and in Nursing Homes. Role of Volunteer Visitors		<p>Focused discussion via workshop to be held – specific brief for workshop to be agreed by SAC.</p>	√ -	
8.	Demographic Time bomb of Care for the Elderly. Short fall in the Number of Home Carers.		<p>No further action – already being looked at by Social Work and Housing Committee. Report to be provided for information.</p>	√ -	
9.	Sheltered Housing v Very Sheltered Housing Policy.		<p>No further action – already being looked at by Social Work & Housing Committee. Committee report to be provided for information in the autumn.</p>	√ -	
10.	Landscape Services.		<p>Workshop held 23 May – consider way forward.</p>		

11.	Principle of outsourcing Human Resources, IT, Legal Services	√ - Not appropriate for SAC consideration - Political role to decide this and would require external consultants to make assessment.			
12.	Corporate Diary Management		Defer for consideration when new system in place and operational.		
13.	Audit on Landlord Registration. (deferred from 2012)		Defer pending report awaited September 2013		
14.	Local Review Body. (deferred from 2012)	√ - Under consideration by others already (officers and participating Cllrs)			
15.	Sheltered Housing Provision. (Deferred from 2012)		Recommend no further action – already being progressed by Social Work & Housing Committee – committee reports to be provided for information.		
16.	Benchmarking/ Performance Management/ Using cost information – part 2 – (deferred from 2012)	√ - Initial investigation not yet come to conclusion – premature.			

17.	Home Aid/ OT Equipment			√ - Recommend workshop now become a site visit to the Joint Equipment Service, Inverurie.	
18.	Cross Council Learning and Development Budget Commissioning and Delivery				√ - Terms of reference to be considered, and confirmed in September 2013 on receipt of commissioned report (see topic 4 – to be included)

No timescales for these events have yet been confirmed but these will be agreed with the respective services and advised to the Committee in due course.