Scrutiny Committee

Members of the Scrutiny Committee:

Mrs M Dewsbury (Chairman)
Mr T Lewis (Vice Chairman)
Mrs V Bell
Mr C Gould
Mr L Hornby
Mr A Pond
Mrs S Thomson
Mr G Watt
Mr K Weeks
Mrs J Wilby
Mr M Windridge

Agenda

Date
Wednesday 10 April 2013

Time
9.30 am

Place
Colman & Cavell Rooms
South Norfolk House
Long Stratton
Norwich
Norfolk
NR15 2XE

Contact
Sue Elliott tel (01508) 533663
South Norfolk District Council
Swan Lane
Long Stratton Norwich
NR15 2XE
Email: democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk

If any member of the public wishes to speak on a non-confidential item, they may do so at the discretion of the Chairman

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance
Large print version can be made available

02/04/2013
A G E N D A

At the discretion of the Chairman, a short break will be taken after the meeting has been running for approximately two hours.

1. To report apologies for absence and to identify substitute members;

2. Any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972. Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency;

3. To Receive Declarations of Interest from Members;
   (Please see guidance form and flow chart attached – page 4)

4. To confirm the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 30 January 2013 and 6 February 2013. (attached – page 6)

5. Proposed new structure for the management of South Norfolk Council funding schemes; (to follow)

6. Review of South Norfolk Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Community Champion Awards; (attached – page 14)

7. The Eighth Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee May 2012 – April 2013; (attached – page 18)

8. Scrutiny Work Programme and Cabinet Core Agenda (attached – page 27)
Working Style of the Scrutiny Committee

Independence
Members of the Scrutiny Committee and Overview Sub-Committees will not be subject to whipping arrangements by party groups.

Member leadership
Members of the Committees will take the lead in selecting topics for and in questioning witnesses. The Committees will expect members of Cabinet, rather than officers, to take the main responsibility for answering the Committee’s questions about topics, which relate mainly to the Council’s activities.

A constructive atmosphere
Meetings of the Committees will be constructive, and not judgmental, accepting that effective overview and scrutiny is best achieved through challenging and constructive enquiry. People giving evidence at the Committees should not feel under attack.

Respect and trust
Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust.

Openness and transparency
The Committees’ business will be open and transparent, except where there are sound reasons for protecting confidentiality. In particular, the minutes of the Committee’s meetings will explain the discussion and debate, so that it could be understood by those who were not present.

Consensus
Members of the Committees will work together and, while recognising political allegiances, will attempt to achieve consensus and agreed recommendations.

Impartial and independent officer advice
Officers who advise and support the Committees will give impartial and independent advice, recognising the importance of the Scrutiny Committee and the Overview Sub-Committees in the Council’s arrangements for governance, as set out in the Constitution.

Regular review
There will be regular reviews of how the overview and scrutiny process is working, and a willingness to change if it is not working well.

Programming and planning
The Scrutiny Committee will have a programme of work, in conjunction with the Overview Sub-Committees. The Committee will agree the topics to be included in the work programme, the extent of the investigation to be undertaken in relation to resources, and the witnesses to be invited to give evidence.

Managing time
The Committees will attempt to conclude the business of each meeting in reasonable time. The order of business will be arranged as far as possible to minimise the demands on the time of witnesses.
1. **Purpose of Scrutiny**

1.1 This report is being presented to the Scrutiny Committee to seek its views on the proposals, contained in the draft Cabinet Report (Appendix A), regarding changes to the Council’s Grants function.

1.2 As the Grants Review Group were asked to report their findings to Cabinet in May 2013, views from this Committee at this stage would be helpful to ensure that the implementation phase can continue as planned, minimising any down-time during the transition period.

2. **Scope of Scrutiny**

2.1 The scrutiny committee are asked to consider the proposed changes to the grants function with particular reference to the issues raised by some members of the Grants Review Group and the Localism Committee. These issues are highlighted in section 3 below.

3. **Specific Issues**

3.1 The work undertaken to date on the revised grants function aims to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of awarding SNC grants. Once implemented, these changes will play a key role in supporting the delivery of the Localism Act within South Norfolk.

3.2 However, some specific issues which have been raised by some Members and which the committee is asked to comment upon include the following:

3.2.1 The Grants Panel has provided an important role in awarding Capital Grants and the Neighbourhood Fund, ensuring that awards are made in a transparent and objective manner. Whilst findings from the Grants Review Group highlighted a number of shortcomings...
(e.g. the resource implications of supporting this group, the opportunity for double dipping between projects and growing confusion over how SNC grants are differentiated from each other) a number of Members involved in the Grants Review Group and the Localism Committee do not agree with the proposal to discontinue this Panel.

3.2.2 It is recognised that if the Grants Panel is to be discontinued, robust processes must be put in place to ensure that all financial decisions are made in a transparent and accountable manner. Concerns raised by some Members included:

- Funding decisions would no longer be made within a public meeting but instead be made by delegated authority;
- The proposed decision-making processes for the Neighbourhood Fund would no longer allow for Members of the opposition to comment on proposals.
- Conflicts of interest are likely to arise in relation to the revised award of the Neighbourhood Fund as local Members are unlikely to oppose funding applications from their within their areas.

3.3 Proposed changes to the Neighbourhood Fund will reduce the opportunity for worthy applicants to gain the financial support that they need to deliver their projects. Leaving SAP aside, the proposed grants function could leave a clear gap in provision between the £2K Neighbourhood Fund and the £45K (Capital Grant).

4. **Implications and Risks**

4.1 A delay to the implementation phase would extend the transition period when no Capital Grants, Affordable Housing grants or Neighbourhood Fund could be issued and lead to reputational damage for SNC. Grant applicants will need to be made aware of pending changes and implementation timeframes for the new applications process.

4.2 The process for awarding Affordable Housing grants needs to be agreed at the May Cabinet meeting to ensure that the necessary processes can be put in place prior to the first grant application, which is expected in May.

5. **Action Required**

5.1 For Members to consider the draft cabinet report and make recommendations(s) as appropriate.
APPENDIX A

Proposed new structure for the management of South Norfolk Council funding schemes.

Nina Cunningham

The purpose of this paper is to present the conclusions of the review of the Grants function findings for Cabinet to consider.

The report sets out:

- General background and findings from the review;
- Proposed management for each of the key grants and corresponding benefits;
- Recommendations

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<th>Cabinet member(s):</th>
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<td>Martin Wilby</td>
<td>All</td>
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Contact Officer, telephone number, and e-mail: Nina Cunningham 01508 533745 ncunningham@s-norfolk.gov.uk

1. Background

1.1 On 29 October 2012, Cabinet considered the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Board Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. In doing so, Cabinet agreed that once the Funding Manager was in post, a review group should be formed to assess the Grants Panel, and in particular whether the Neighbourhood Boards should have responsibility for local funding applications.

1.2 Given the close alignment of the role of Neighbourhood Boards with the funding schemes being reviewed, in conjunction with the time scale of the review, it was agreed that the recommendations of the Grants Review Group should be reviewed by the Localism Committee.

2. Current Position and Issues
2.1 The initial review of funding schemes currently in place established that there are essentially five different types of grants, four of which fund similar types of activity while two member-led committees (the grants panel and the Neighbourhood Boards) are able to award/recommend funding for similar types of activities. In addition, a number of one-off payments are also being awarded by officers on an annual basis from teams across the Council. The result is a confusing array of grants (some of which are called similar names) which Members are keen to simplify.

2.2 Over time, confusion over competing funding streams has also arisen as a result of establishing new funds without reference to overall grants provision. The County Council Construction Fund and South Norfolk Alliance make awards of their own (in addition to providing funding to the Grants Panel); Neighbourhood Boards make capital grants as part of Social Action Projects—all these deriving their funding from the same ultimate source, i.e. second homes money. This, combined with very broad eligibility criteria, has led to applicants being able to secure grants from more than one South Norfolk Council pot derived as well as repeat-applications to the same funding pots in different years. To address this, a centralised database of funding applications will be created to track applications/awards and avoid multiple applications.

3. Proposal and Reasons

3.1 The Grants Review Group put forward two proposals, as presented at Appendix 1.

3.2 The Localism Committee considered both options presented by the Grants Review Group. These, in turn, were reviewed by officers. The following proposals are set out to address the issues raised by the LGA peer-review in conjunction with transparency issues, equity of opportunity for applicants and the ability of the Neighbourhood Boards to take on additional responsibility and meet the remit of this Cabinet-led review.

Neighbourhood Fund

3.3 The Neighbourhood Fund (£62K) should remain as a centrally-managed grant which would be launched on an annual basis. A simplified two-stage application process will be put in place.

3.4 Stage 1: Once the Fund is launched, applicants from within the District will be invited to bid for funding up to a maximum of £2k on a first come, first served basis. A simple online application process will provide fast track access to the fund and assurance that a set of strict SNC eligibility criteria have been met. A two-page application form will be available for those without internet access.
Stage 2: the relevant Neighbourhood Board chair and Local Member will make funding recommendations in consultation with the delegated officer. Once all three parties are in agreement, the decision on funding applications will be taken by the delegated officer – the Director of Growth and Localism.

Funding assessment against the current criteria for this grant will be delegated to the Director of Growth and Localism in conjunction with Cllr Martin Wilby.

If agreed, it is proposed that this grant is launched within a relatively short time scale to accelerate implementation.

As this grant will no longer be able to fund projects with a greater value than £2K, applications for larger amounts of funding will be channelled towards either Social Action Projects or to other sources of external funding.

To adhere to transparency rules, all delegated funding decisions made will be notified on the website within a set timeframe.

Benefits of this proposal include:

Changing the award process will enable simplification of the current grants process through the removal of a Committee;

A simplified application, appraisal and award process which is proportionate to the level of funding being requested. Improved efficiencies will have benefits for both the applicant (shorter lead-in times) and the Locality Officers (who will have more time available to support larger funding applications);

Projects from across the District will continue to be able to apply for this funding regardless of which Neighbourhood Board they are part of, allowing those areas which are more proactive to continue making applications without being disadvantaged by the Neighbourhood Board funding formula;

Subject to funding availability, applicants will be able to apply to this fund on an ongoing basis. There will be no specific submission deadlines as applications will be processed as and when they are received and decisions made within a strict fast tracked timeframe;

This grant is easily distinguishable from both Social Action Projects and the Capital Grant as thresholds and eligibility for funding will be established and clearly communicated;

A transparent process which is fit for purpose and better able to demonstrate measurable outputs.

Capital Grant (£150k)

It is proposed that the Capital Grant fund is managed by Cabinet and forms part of the capital programme. This funding will be used to support 2-3 projects per annum which meet the strategic requirements of the Council (for example health and young people are currently high priorities) which have
been identified by local Members and/or Neighbourhood Boards and fall within communities with a demonstrably low level of current facilities. Any such schemes should also be well placed to attract match funding. Cabinet is best qualified to make these strategic decisions with a clear overview of the opportunities and challenges identified by its committees. The Localism Committee will be asked to propose capital projects to Cabinet for consideration within the Council’s capital programme. If agreed, proposals will be recommended to Cabinet alongside the budget proposals for the following year.

3.17 Due to the timing of this review, it is proposed that a transition period is agreed, during which proposals for 2013/14 funding will be invited. The Localism Committee will be asked to review and comment upon applications prior to approval by Cabinet.

Benefits of this proposal include:

3.18 A grant distinct from a) funding schemes managed by the Neighbourhood Boards, and b) small grants which will allow SNC to plan and commission capital investment in line with its key priorities and external funding opportunities;

3.19 A process which curtails double dipping between SNC grants pots;

3.20 A transparent process whereby eligibility and appraisal criteria are agreed by Cabinet and funding decisions are taken at publically held meetings (from 2014/15);

3.21 A grant which can better demonstrate measurable outputs.

Affordable Housing Grant (£461K)

3.22 Although Cabinet approved the Grants Panel’s role to award the Affordable Housing Grant in November 2012, given the findings from the Grants review group, it is recommended that Member involvement in the Affordable Housing Grant scheme should be facilitated through the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee in accordance with the assessment criteria agreed by Cabinet in November 2012.

3.23 The Committee will make recommendations on funding proposals, following which the Director for Environment and Housing will make the funding decision. Given that the majority of funding applications are likely to be in the region of £60K, this will ensure that decisions can be made using a delegated officer.

3.24 Funding decisions will normally need to be made within a timeframe of three weeks. The delegated officer will utilise the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee to consider the recommendations where possible; otherwise Members of the Committee will be asked for their views and the overall view of the Committee will be provided by its Chairman.
3.25 Recommendations regarding match funding opportunities from the Homes and Community Agency will also be taken by the Director of Environment and Housing, in consultation with the Housing and Public Health Committee.

3.26 When decisions need to be taken more quickly (due to the competitive funding environment in which SNC operate within), in-principle agreements will be made within prescribed timescales. These funding decisions will be taken by the delegated officer, the Director of Environment and Housing, in consultation with the Policy Committee’s Chairman. Members of the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee will be advised of these decisions at the earliest opportunity.

3.27 Should any such funding decisions total more than £100k, the decision will be referred to Cabinet for a decision.

3.28 All delegated funding decisions will be notified on the website within a set timeframe.

Benefits of this proposal include:

3.29 The Housing and Public Heath Policy Committee is well placed to advise and add value to these funding applications;

3.30 Decisions will be able to be made within the prescribed timescales;

3.31 The process offers the required level of transparency; as Cabinet has already approved the funding criteria and, going forward, funding recommendations will be provided by the relevant committee in consultation with the delegated officer;

3.32 As there appears to be no valid function for the Grants panel within this proposed structure, it is recommended that this Panel is discontinued, transferring functions to more appropriate mechanisms for recommendations/decisions.

4. Other Options

4.1 Two options were proposed within the Grants Review panel paper, attached as Appendix 1.

5. Relevant Corporate Priorities

5.1 Enhancing our quality of life and the environment we live in.

5.2 Supporting communities to realise their potential.

5.3 Driving services through being businesslike, efficient and customer aware.
6. Implications and Risks

Financial

6.1 In a climate of financial uncertainty, SNC is likely to be delivering more in partnership in order to make best use of scarce resources. It is, therefore, imperative that the process for awarding and evaluating SLAs is consistent across the Council, robust in nature and proportionate to the amount of funding involved.

Any decision on the current process of awarding grants and SLAs should clearly be able to demonstrate a saving in administration costs.

Legal

6.2 Determining how to allocate grant funding from within a set budget is primarily an Executive (Cabinet) function within a Local Authority. However, as the proposed changes entail disbanding the Grants Panel, Council will be required to authorise the change to the Constitution. The Monitoring Officer report to Council on 13 May will include a proposal for this change to be made, subject to Cabinet's approval.

Risks

6.3 Developing a consistent set of processes for awarding and managing SNC funding schemes will ensure that SNC is in a more secure position should 'right to challenges' be submitted.

6.4 Completing the review of funding within the proposed timeframe will help to ensure that there are robust processes for funding schemes within the 'implementation phase' when the audit of 'Partnerships' is undertaken in the Summer.

6.5 The process for awarding the Affordable Housing Grant needs to be agreed imminently as SNC wants to maximise inward investment opportunities and does not want the reputational damage of delaying the process; applications for this funding will form part of a wider application package with other organisations also considering funding bids.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Cabinet are advised to endorse the recommendations set out in this paper which collates advice from the Grants Review Group, Localism Committee, LGA peer review and Officers.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that:

8.1.1 The proposals on the future of funding streams as set out in Section 3 are adopted;
8.1.2 The Grants panel to be discontinued and no further funding awards are made through this group.

8.1.3 Good practice is captured from the Grants Panel and where appropriate, incorporated within the new processes going forward.

8.1.4 Further work is undertaken to determine the baseline of current and proposed South Norfolk Council Service Level Agreements. It is recommended that additional work is undertaken and initial considerations presented to the Localism Committee in July.

8.1.5 A discreet piece of work is undertaken with the Localism Committee to clearly define and provide guidance on Social Action Projects.
Appendix One

Grants Review Group- Findings and Recommendations

Findings

SNC funding schemes form a very important strand for the delivery of the Localism Act- helping people to help themselves. With the establishment of the Neighbourhood Boards and additional funding streams being made available to applicants both from SNC and others - the funding landscape is confusing for applicants and Members alike. In addition the application and evaluation processes need to better enable Members to demonstrate value for money when they award funding.

This review of SNC funding schemes, as requested by Cabinet in November 2012 is an opportunity to simplify and improve the management and accountability of SNC funding schemes. While the Grants review group agreed that SNC should continue to issue small grants on a competitive basis to those applicants that meet the eligibility criteria. It was agreed that given the limited amount of time which the group has been awarded to do this work -two options should be described within this paper for the consideration of this committee.

Option 1 -recommends that:

The management of both the Capital grant and Neighbourhood grant should be transferred from the Grants Panel to the Neighbourhood boards to manage.

If decisions on bids for Affordable Housing Grant are to be made by elected members, the Grants Panel would be well placed to take on this role. These transfers of responsibilities would only take effect once the set of agreed transitions provisions were been out in place.

To ensure that SLA’s are consistently managed, it is recommended that a member led committee should be in place to review and monitor these agreements.

Option 2 -recommends that:

An allocation of additional time is granted to allow for all of the relevant recommendations from the Neighbourhood Boards T&F group to be implemented. Once complete, the work of the Grants review group should continue to deliver its remit.
Review of South Norfolk Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Community Champion Awards

Communities Officer - People

This report looks back on last year’s South Norfolk Queen’s Diamond Jubilee (SNQDJ) Community Champion Awards. The report reviews the SNQDJ Awards and members are asked to endorse a second years awards to be called South Norfolk Community Champion Awards 2013. Members are invited to comment and make recommendations.

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<th>Cabinet member(s):</th>
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<td>Martin Wilby</td>
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Contact Officer, telephone number, and e-mail:
Oliver Hill 01508 533 666
ohill@s-norfolk.gov.uk

1 Purpose of Scrutiny

1.1 The Localism agenda has put even greater emphasis on the importance of local communities and the need for local champions, whether they are groups or individuals.

1.2 Last year the Council launched the South Norfolk Queens Diamond Jubilee Community Champions Award, designed to celebrate local volunteering and helped to promote the opportunities and examples of volunteering. The awards were also an opportunity for the Council to raise its own profile within the District by providing a new way to engage with its communities.

1.3 South Norfolk Council (SNC) has a strong track record of running award schemes. The Design Awards scheme is now in its twelfth year, South Norfolk Community Pub of the Year has been supporting local businesses for four years and the Community Sports Achiever Awards has supported approximately 200 young people over the past four years.

1.4 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to evaluate the SNQDJ Awards in terms of the event itself, the categories for nomination and the effectiveness of this form of engagement. Members are asked to consider this event against their own experiences of the other Council events.
2 Scope of Scrutiny

2.1 The report covers all aspects of the SNQDJ Awards 2012. Members are invited to make comments as appropriate on last year’s Awards and recommendations regarding the future of the Awards.

3 Overview of the Awards and Findings

3.1 The Council sought nominations from the communities of South Norfolk. Residents were asked to nominate individuals or groups that they believed had served their community and therefore deserved recognition for the voluntary work they did.

3.2 The criteria for nominating was made as simple as possible. A nomination form was designed to enable the provision of some practical examples of the nominee’s personal involvement with the community over the previous 12 month period and any notable achievements during that time.

3.3 The Council received 85 nominations in total. 20 in the category of Supporting People, 11 in the category of Young Volunteer, 17 in the category Community Volunteer Group, 6 in the category of Charity Fundraiser, 13 in the category of Culture & Sport and 18 in the category of Inspiring Achievement.

3.4 A Review Panel consisting of the Deputy Leader of the Council, The Deputy Chief Executive and a Neighbourhood Officer met to short list the nominations. Using assessment criteria they selected the three strongest nominations in each category.

3.5 The Review Panel’s recommendations were then presented to the Judging Panel which consisted of the Leader of South Norfolk Council, the Chief Executive of South Norfolk Council, the Chief Executive of the Norfolk Rural Community Council, the Head of Operations at Voluntary Norfolk, the PR Manager of Saffron Housing Trust and the Director of the Norfolk Community Foundation. The Judging Panel were then responsible for choosing the overall winner in each category.

3.6 The Council wrote to every individual who received a nomination. Those that had been nominated but not shortlisted were sent a letter congratulating them on their nomination. Those who were nominated and shortlisted received a different letter congratulating them and inviting them to the Awards Ceremony.

3.7 The Awards Ceremony was held on Friday 19 October at the John Innes Conference Centre. All shortlisted nominees attended and were invited to bring along up to three friends/members of their families. However flexibility was built in to take into account the numbers of people involved in organisations nominated for the category of Community Volunteer Group.

3.8 The event was hosted by local BBC news presenter Stuart White. Stuart White introduced all of the nominees and then announced the winner of each category. The winners were then invited on stage to receive a cheque for their chosen charity and a framed certificate recognising their award from the Chairman of the Council and the Deputy Leader of the Council.
3.9 Once all the awards had been presented Stuart White closed the ceremony and all attendees were invited to stay afterwards for a networking buffet. During this time each shortlisted nominee and winner had their picture taken with Stuart White.

3.10 Following the event the Council received a number of written and verbal congratulations for delivering such an enjoyable event. The Council also received letters from some of the charities that received cheques from the winners of some categories. An article was included in the next edition of the Link magazine.

3.11 The event attracted a number of sponsor’s. Each sponsor’s logo was included on all promotional material. Each sponsor was invited to the event and thanks given to each sponsor for their contribution. Each sponsor was invited to present an award however none took up the opportunity.

3.12 The event cost approximately £5,000 when taking into account sponsorship funding. This includes venue hire and buffet, paying for a Guest speaker, the cost of award certificates and other promotional materials.

3.13 One specific learning point, for future events, has been indentified following feedback. Officers who attend such events should be appropriately briefed so that they are able to engage effectively with all invitees. In particular, care should be taken to ensure that key attendees, such as sponsors, are identified and engaged with in a way that recognises the valuable contribution they have made to the event.

4 Relevant Corporate Priorities

4.1 ‘Enhancing our quality of life and the environment we live in’ and ‘Supporting communities to realise their potential’ by recognising and championing the members of our communities that really make a difference. This not only gives their communities the chance to thank them for their contribution but also helps to promote volunteering.

5 Risks

5.1 There is a reputational risk. As with all events that South Norfolk Council lead on there is a risk that the event encounters some issues which in turn reflect poorly on the Council. The Council’s Events Team are very experienced in leading on events and it is envisaged that we will follow a very similar format to last year.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Last years SNQDJ Awards were considered to have been a very successful way of recognising the achievements of individuals and groups that make a real difference to their communities.

6.2 Running an awards programme that recognises the contributions and achievements of volunteers in our communities is very important. It promotes the social capital invested within our communities and the opportunities available to
people who wish to volunteer. It is a powerful promotional tool in the Council’s efforts to increase volunteering.

7 Action Required

7.1 Members are asked to review last year’s Community Awards and endorse the plans to run the South Norfolk Community Champion Awards 2013 which will replace last year’s awards.

7.2 Members are also asked to consider the process implemented last year that led to 85 nominations, then 18 shortlisted nominations and the 6 overall winners and endorse this process for this year’s awards.
The Eighth Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee
May 2012 ~ April 2013
Foreword by the Chairman

I am pleased to present my second Annual Report as Chairman of South Norfolk Council’s Scrutiny Committee. Twelve months ago it looked as though there would be very little work for the committee but the last year has been surprisingly busy.

Scrutiny and pre-scrutiny make an important contribution to democracy both inside and outside the council. Scrutinising the Corporate Business Plan within a workshop, which was open to all members, gave everyone the opportunity to participate in the scrutiny process. This was welcomed by members and helpful to officers.

Our Task and Finish Group spent many hours observing and commenting on the changes to the Neighbourhood Boards and we look forward to reviewing them later this year and seeing how our recommendations have been put into practice. The boards play a major role in democracy and community engagement.

Once again we have all looked at ways of reducing overall costs in this difficult economic climate but the councils’ members and staff have risen to the challenge and identified even further savings to ensure efficient delivery of public services.

I would like to thank all the officers who contribute the information and research needed for our work and especially our Scrutiny Officer, Emma Nangle, for the support she gives the committee and for ensuring we receive clear and concise reports on which to base our assessments and recommendations.

I commend this Report to the Council.

Cllr. Margaret Dewsbury
Chairman, Scrutiny Committee
Scrubity and how it operates at South Norfolk

What is scrutiny?
Scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that the Council, its partners and other public bodies remain effective and accountable. Scrutiny can examine and monitor all or part of the activity of a public sector body with the aim of improving the quality of public services. Scrutiny ensures that executives are held accountable for their decisions, that their decision-making process is clear and accessible to the public and that there are opportunities for the public and their representatives to influence and improve public policy.

Predominantly, Scrutiny Committee carries out most of its work in relation to the Council's Cabinet. It undertakes this through scheduled reviews of decisions and policies that have been agreed by the Cabinet in order to hold it to account. In addition, Scrutiny considers call-ins. A summary of decisions made by Cabinet is published immediately after each meeting of Cabinet and any three members of the Council may call-in a decision for Scrutiny to consider, which effectively means the decision is delayed until Scrutiny can examine the decision at its next meeting. After examination, Scrutiny can decide to recommend an alternative option or endorse the decision of the Cabinet.

Structure and membership
At South Norfolk Council the scrutiny function is carried out by the Council's Scrutiny Committee and any Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups that it may appoint to investigate specific issues in greater depth. The Scrutiny Committee is chaired by Cllr Margaret Dewsbury, who is a member of the Conservative party which is the majority party at South Norfolk Council. The Committee's Vice-Chairman is Cllr Trevor Lewis, who is a member of the Liberal Democrat Party. The Scrutiny Committee is made up of 11 Councillors and membership is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Conservatives</th>
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<td>Margaret Dewsbury (Chairman)</td>
<td>Trevor Lewis (Vice-Chairman)</td>
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<td>Lee Hornby</td>
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<td>Jenny Wilby</td>
<td>Independent Member</td>
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<td>Michael Windridge</td>
<td>Keith Weeks</td>
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The work programme
The Scrutiny Committee has a structured work programme that sets out the investigations and reviews that will be carried out and reported to Committee, which is decided by members. There are opportunities for parish councils and the Council's Neighbourhood Boards to suggest topics for the Committee to look into. This process is known as the Community Reference scheme and was developed by the Council some years ago and remains unique to South Norfolk. This demonstrates the commitment South Norfolk has to scrutiny and the involvement of others in the process. Members of the Council are also able to raise topics by way of a simple form or discussion with the Chairman or the Scrutiny Officer. Potential reports are assessed by way of the Council TOPIC analysis which
evaluates the merits of scrutinising the issue in terms of Timeliness, Objectives, Performance, Interest and Corporate priorities.

Support
The Scrutiny function is supported by Democratic Services. The Scrutiny Officer provides advice to both members and officers and supports the Scrutiny Committee and the various task and finish groups that may be set up. Democratic Services Officers produce agendas and clerk the meetings. Senior officers and managers of the Council are expected to attend Scrutiny Committee and present reports at the request of the Committee. In addition, Cabinet members are often present to aid the Committee's understanding of a particular item, which makes scrutiny more effective and constructive.

Policy Committees
The way in which the scrutiny function is carried out has changed significantly over the past twelve months. Policy development that was once carried out by Scrutiny and its two Overview Sub-Committees (OSCs) has this year been undertaken by the new Policy Committees. This change enables a clear segregation between scrutiny and policy development. In the past, the Scrutiny Committee and OSCs supported the development of policy, whilst also evaluating and assessing policies at an early stage. The new structure affords the Scrutiny Committee a more independent role when challenging service delivery. In addition, the OSCs were abolished, although, as above, Scrutiny Committee may still appoint Task and finish Groups to look at matters in more depth when required.

The Policy Committees feed directly into Cabinet and make recommendations based on their research and findings. Working on a formal and informal basis, these Committees are flexible to programme their work around upcoming policy and are able to focus on specific areas of the Council. They are aided by appropriate training/ information sessions. In light of this shift, Scrutiny Committee has requested that a review be carried out regarding the transition. At the time of writing this report, the Compliance and Risk Manager and Scrutiny Officer are attending meetings of the Policy Committees and speaking to key members and officers in order to establish good practice and evaluate their effectiveness.

The Work of Scrutiny over the Year

There have been a number of areas of work carried out by Scrutiny throughout 2012/13. These include:

- Call-ins
- Business Planning and Budget 2012/13
- Scrutiny Committee
- Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups
- Training
Call-ins

Members made no call-ins in 2012/13. Most councils rarely use the power to call Cabinet decisions in, perhaps because it seldom, if ever, changes a decision. Members have chosen alternative methods to hold Cabinet to account, by way of scheduled reports. The lack of call-ins may also be attributed to the strong level of member involvement and consultation regarding Council decisions.

Business Planning and Budget 2012/13

Once again, Scrutiny Committee has been involved in the business planning and budget process. The way this was conducted altered this year due to all scrutiny work being undertaken by one Scrutiny Committee instead of being divided over Scrutiny Committee and the two OSCs. In order to facilitate an effective session to consider the directorate business plans, Scrutiny held a workshop in November 2012 that was open to all members of the council. It was important that this session bore the name of Scrutiny as this presents the right forum for this type of debate. Members were invited to put forward their questions relating to the plans ahead of the workshop to enable officers to answer all queries during the session. The workshop was split into two halves, each covering specific directorate(s). Generally, members found this more useful and were able to get more out of the session, as explanations and rationale were available instantly.

Officers took on board comments received by members and incorporated these and additional information regarding performance measures into plans that were presented to Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in January 2013. Members made a number of further comments relating to the use of consultants, replacement of IT, improvements to be made to procurement, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the provision of temporary accommodation. These debates ensure that the key priorities for the Council are being delivered in a way that all members have been able to comment on and influence. It enables members to ask important questions of the Executive in terms of how it plans to achieve the outcomes that have been agreed for the forthcoming year. This, in effect, is shaping how the Council will operate in the future. In conclusion, members congratulated officers on the hard work they had put into developing the plans, particularly the continued input from all staff in the process. Further work will be undertaken to review this process ahead of the next directorate planning process.

The Scrutiny Committee also commented on the Council’s 2013/14 budget at its meeting on 6 February 2013, ahead of approval by Council on 20 February 2013. Scrutiny Committee recommended to Council that the budget be approved. Members praised officers for the savings that had been identified throughout the year to be incorporated into the budget process. Members noted that staff were continually identifying savings and that this would continue in the next financial year, assisted by further Lean reviews.
Scrutiny Committee

Pre-Scrutiny – this refers to scrutiny which takes places before decision by Cabinet is taken. This avoids call-ins and provides insightful evaluation.

Procurement Strategy
Scrutiny Committee considered the Procurement Strategy at its meeting on 11 April 2012 ahead of approval by Cabinet. Members particularly discussed previous audit reports that had resulted in negative audit recommendations. Much work had been undertaken by officers since the audit and members were reassured that the highlighted issues had been rectified. Members noted that internal systems had been developed and reviewed by the council's Accounts and Audit Committee and that a corporate approach to procurement had been developed, rather than departments procuring in isolation. It was hoped that this would result in the Council becoming much more cost efficient. Members concluded by endorsing the Strategy but also added an additional objective to the Strategy: “to seek to obtain best value for the council”, which was agreed by Cabinet members and officers present at the meeting.

Welcome Booklet for Residents
The Committee received a report that outlined a proposal from the Cabinet regarding the recommencement of the welcome booklet, which aimed to make new residents aware of Council services and encourage web use and effective means of payment (eg, direct debit). Members discussed the possibility of advertising in the leaflet, however the Chief Executive advised that attracting advertising would prove difficult without a definite number of recipients. Members concluded by recommending that the booklet be reintroduced.

Development Management Policy Document
Scrutiny Committee members were given the opportunity to comment on the draft Development Management policies ahead of consideration by Cabinet in June 2012. Members made a number of suggestions, specifically focussing on where particular attention should be drawn and whether the Council required specific policies in relation to areas of development management. Members made a number of recommendations to Cabinet, which were agreed.

Review – Scrutiny has been involved in many reviews of areas where significant change has occurred. Work has focussed on areas of greatest risk at a time of great change in the national environment.

Proposed efficiencies and reduced costs of waste collections and recycling service
Scrutiny Committee considered a review of the proposed efficiencies and reduced costs of the above service. This report was a result of a previous call-in that questioned whether proposed efficiencies and reduced costs could be achieved and whether the performance targets that had been agreed by Cabinet were ambitious enough. The review presented to members advised that the amount of material that was being recycled had increased and that complaints regarding the service had fallen. The Director of Environmental Services and the relevant Cabinet member also informed the Committee that savings of £400,000 had been
achieving since the review had been initiated. Members were satisfied by the update since the last report and with the progress that had been made. The Committee congratulated officers on the savings and efficiencies achieved to date.

Nplaw
In December 2012, members received a report detailing a review of the transfer of the Council’s legal service to nplaw. The review was shaped by members of the Committee, which considered the original proposal in February 2012 ahead of approval by Cabinet. Members were satisfied with the transfer, especially the satisfaction levels/feedback received as part of the review, however they resolved to review the arrangements after a further 12 months to ensure that this crucial service provision was still working satisfactorily.

Civil Parking Enforcement
Members reviewed the first year of the Council taking responsibility for on-street parking enforcement. Members were pleased with progress and that the service had been delivered by existing staff. The Committee was advised what action the Council could take; primarily the enforcement of signs and lines and liaising with those involved by way of proactive measures. In response to concerns regarding issues on new housing developments, members were reassured that parking issues are considered as part of the planning process. In conclusion, members recommended that specific guidance regarding parking be enhanced in the next review of the Place Making Guide.

Development Management Scheme of Delegation
Members reviewed the Development Management Scheme of Delegation that had been in operation for just over a year. Members were advised that the changes had worked well, resulting in the Development Management Committee mainly receiving major applications. This resulted in more delegated decisions taken by officers. On this point, the Committee stressed the point that members should ensure that their reasons for referring applications to Committee were clearly outlined on the comment slip and were based on planning policy. In addition, the Committee resolved to make a formal recommendation relating to ensuring that the reasons given by members for referrals to Committee should be recorded in the officer report.

CNC Building Control
The Cabinet Member for Innovation and Efficiency advised members that the transfer of CNC Building Control to South Norfolk Council was both challenging and exciting. He explained to members that the South Norfolk bid had been strong and gained support from other partners based largely on the significant investment in a single Building Control IT system. Members discussed various aspects of the transfer, including the level of savings to be delivered, the impact of the investment in IT, and how the service would be delivered. Scrutiny Committee recommended the Business Plan to Council and also agreed that the Committee would review the progress after one year.

**Progress Reports** – members have been updated on the progress of certain areas of development mid-way through the progress, which enables scrutiny to have more influence and the ability to make a difference.
Development Management Policy DPD Update
Members considered a report regarding the Development Management Policy DPD in April 2012. The input from Scrutiny Committee was in addition to the Council's own Local Planning Steering Group and brought a different perspective to the Policies that were being devised. Members noted progress and made various comments relating to the focus of the Policies.

Local Community Safety Plan
Members were advised that the Local Community Safety Plan was a good example of how well the Council worked with its partners to improve the lives of residents. South Norfolk is the only area in Norfolk to have its own Plan; others rely solely on the overall plan for the County. Members paid particular attention to domestic abuse and heating oil theft and were satisfied by the advice received. Members did not consider that specific recommendations were required and commended the report and plan.

Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups
Scrutiny Committee is constituted to set up Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups. These Groups are set up to investigate specific issues and make subsequent recommendations, with the help of Officers and interested parties outside of the Council.

The Neighbourhood Boards Review Task and Finish Group
A Task and Finish Group was established in May 2012 to review the Council's Neighbourhood Boards in light of a significant emphasis on neighbourhood working and the creation of the Council’s “Your Neighbourhood, Your Choice” scheme. The Neighbourhood Boards are meetings at which residents can share ideas about how their community can be improved by working together. The Boards bring together a number of various agencies and are made up of District and County Councillors and a number of community representatives. The Task and Finish Group was made up of Cllrs Dewsbury (chairman), Allen, Billig and Blowfield. The Group was tasked to specifically review the Neighbourhood Boards themselves so that they had a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities and as such were able to work more objectively and efficiently on behalf of their communities. The Task and Finish Group also wanted local residents to have a better understanding of the mechanism for getting involved with the Neighbourhood Boards so that the Boards could clearly articulate local needs and reflect local priorities accurately, through comprehensive community engagement.

The Group met with many stakeholders including the Neighbourhood Board Chairmen, the Neighbourhood Officers who support the Boards, the community representatives appointed to the Boards and also consulted with attendees (public and parish councils) by way of a questionnaire given out at the meetings. The Group was able to formulate a number of recommendations from its findings, based on the feedback they had obtained through various meetings and from the evidence they had gathered. The recommendations included increasing membership of the Boards to include all local District Councillors, elections for
community representatives, enhanced training for Chairmen and Board members, and improving advertising and identity. The Group made its recommendations to Scrutiny Committee firstly, which accepted the majority of them and subsequently forwarded them to Cabinet. The recommendations were also shared with the Localism Committee (one of the Council's Policy Committees), which made its own comments and recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet then considered the two sets of recommendations and heard from the Chairman of the Task Group. Cabinet made a few minor amendments to the Task Group recommendations, however agreed the majority of the recommendations put forward by the Task and Finish Group.

To date, officers are working to implement the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. It is hoped that elections for the community representatives will be in place for May 2013 and currently ‘job descriptions’ for Chairmen and members of the Boards are being worked on. Scrutiny Committee will also be reviewing the implementation of the recommendations at its meeting in May 2013.

Training

The Scrutiny Officer attended a Scrutiny seminar in June 2012, which was attended by Clive Betts MP (Labour) who is currently Chair of the Department for Communities and Local Government Select Committee. This interactive seminar presented an opportunity to share good practice with officers and members from other councils and provided useful elements that have been utilised at South Norfolk.

Future

The future of local government remains uncertain and this impacts on the wider community and the level of service that public authorities are able to provide. Scrutiny has an important role to play in ensuring the successful and efficient delivery of public services (beyond South Norfolk Council). In light of this, another key role is to ensure that the public are empowered to participate in their local community to enhance their locality. Scrutiny Committee will be focussing future work on these themes and will be looking at such items as the implications of welfare reform and volunteering in South Norfolk.

Public Involvement

South Norfolk Council is always keen to involve the public in its Scrutiny process. If you are a member of the public and wish to raise an issue to be investigated by Scrutiny, please let us know. You can do this by contacting the Scrutiny Officer:

Post: South Norfolk Council, South Norfolk House, Swan Lane, Long Stratton, Norwich
Email: democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk
Telephone: 01508 533747
Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme

In setting future Scrutiny TOPICS, the Committee is asked to consider the following:

T imely – O bjective – P erformance – I nterest – C orporate Priority

T Is this the right time to review this issue and is there sufficient Officer time and resource to conduct the review? What is the timescale?
O What is the reason for review; do officers have a clear objective?
P Can performance in this area be improved by input from Scrutiny?
I Is there sufficient interest (particular from the public)? The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny.
C Will the review assist the Council achieve its Corporate Priorities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of meeting</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Organisation/ Officer/ Responsible Cabinet Member</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Method(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 May 13</td>
<td>Review of Localism delivery in South Norfolk</td>
<td>Director of Growth and Localism &amp; Cllr M Wilby</td>
<td>For members to assess the delivery of localism in South Norfolk and particularly the implementation of the Neighbourhood Board Task and Finish Group recommendations (as agreed by Cabinet) and the developments made since the last scrutiny review.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 May 13</td>
<td>End of Year Performance Report</td>
<td>All Directors and all Cabinet members</td>
<td>For members to consider the Directorate Business Plans 2012/13, particularly the big picture and strategic measures ahead of Cabinet on 17 June 2013.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 May 13</td>
<td>Implications of Welfare Reform</td>
<td>Revenues and Benefits Manager &amp; Cllr G Wheatley</td>
<td>For members to receive a report outlining the implications of the Welfare Reforms on the revenues and benefits service. Members to gain an understanding of the impact that has been felt so far and how the Council is preparing to deal with the future challenges and support customers. Members to make recommendations if required.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 May 13</td>
<td>Pension reforms</td>
<td>HR and OD Manager &amp; Cllr G Wheatley</td>
<td>For members to consider the changes to the local government pension scheme and how the Council is preparing for implementation. Members to also receive figures relating to the number of staff in the pension scheme presently and how the Council can encourage staff to join the scheme and remain in the scheme once they are automatically enrolled in November 2013.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 July 13</td>
<td>NO ITEMS SCHEDULED</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Aug 13</td>
<td>MEETING TO BE CANCELLED IN THE EVENT OF NO CALL-INS</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 Sept 13</td>
<td>Draft Directorate Plans</td>
<td>All Directors and all Cabinet members</td>
<td>For members to ensure the alignment of the 2014/15 Directorate Plans with the Corporate Business Plan and Budget priorities.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Nov 13</td>
<td>Policy Committee Review</td>
<td>Compliance and Risk Manager and all Cabinet and Deputy Cabinet members</td>
<td>For members to assess the effectiveness of the Cabinet Policy Committees in delivering their role. Matters considered will include the role of Portfolio Holders and Deputy Cabinet members; interaction between Cabinet and Policy Committees, the sharing of best practice amongst policy committees and the development of member skills to support policy committees.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Nov 13</td>
<td>Review of nplaw: update</td>
<td>Compliance and Risk Manager &amp; Cllr G Wheatley</td>
<td>For members to consider a review of nplaw since the last scrutiny review in December 2012, including the performance of the service received from nplaw, satisfaction levels, savings achieved, impact on resilience and the reliance on legal advice from Solicitors.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Nov 13</td>
<td>Engagement and Marketing review</td>
<td>Engagement and Marketing Manager and Cllr J Fuller</td>
<td>For members to assess the value added by engagement and marketing activity with customers through the different marketing channels (eg, web, social media, printed material such as the Link Magazine, consultation, etc).</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Dec 13</td>
<td>Volunteering in South Norfolk</td>
<td>Communities Officer – People and Volunteer Co-ordinator &amp; Cllr M Wilby</td>
<td>For members to review how the Council is encouraging volunteering and assisting organisations that support volunteering throughout the District. Members to also gain an overall picture of volunteering in the District, with contributions from the voluntary sector. This review is scheduled a year into a two-year temporary post (Volunteer co-ordinator) that has been established to support volunteering in the District. Members to be in a position to make recommendations as appropriate.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Dec 13</td>
<td>Council Funding review</td>
<td>The Funding Manager and Cllr M Wilby</td>
<td>For members to consider the level of funding the Council has attracted in the last 12 months. The review to include the success rate of applications made, what has been delivered/gained from funding, who the funding has assisted, the funding multiplier and intervention rate. Members to also consider how the Council has assisted partners to become more self-sufficient in relation to obtaining their own funding.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 14</td>
<td>Review of charges for pre-application advice (planning)</td>
<td>Development Control Manager and Cllr K Kiddie</td>
<td>For members to review the introduction of charging for pre-application advice in relation to planning. Members to consider feedback from developers, the impact of charging on the frequency of advice given to developers, the impact of the frequency of advice given on the quality of applications that go to Committee (eg, has there been an increase in re-submission of applications) and the effect on the timescales related to applications - has this decreased.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 14</td>
<td>CNC Building Control Review</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Executive and Cllr D Bills</td>
<td>Members to review the transition of CNC Building Control to South Norfolk Council; including the outcomes from the ICT investment and savings delivered, how risks have been monitored and mitigated, and how customers are responding to the new arrangements.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
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# CABINET CORE AGENDA 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cabinet Meeting</th>
<th>Decisions: Key, Policy, Operational</th>
<th>Key Decision/Item</th>
<th>Lead Officer</th>
<th>Cabinet Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 May</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Consideration of the Examiner's Report and Recommendations to the CIL Charging Schedule for South Norfolk</td>
<td>T Horspole</td>
<td>J Fuller</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 April</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Development Management Pre-Application Strategy</td>
<td>T Horspole</td>
<td>K Kiddie</td>
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<td></td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Business Case for Purchase of Intergrated HR and Payroll System</td>
<td>J Foglietta</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Review of Future of Grants Funding</td>
<td>T Horspole</td>
<td>M Wilby</td>
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<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Lease of Land for Sewage Works</td>
<td>R Garfoot</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Purchase of Land (exempt) (moved from March)</td>
<td>R Garfoot</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Vehicle Procurement (exempt)</td>
<td>K Lunness</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
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**COUNCIL: MONDAY 13 MAY 2013**

| 17 June         | O                                   | Finance, Performance & Risk Report Q 4                                              | D Lorimer        | G Wheatley     |
|                 | O                                   | Materials Recycling Facility                                                        | P Kearsey        | K Kiddie       |
|                 | O                                   | Draft Business Continuity Plan                                                      | LMickleborough   | K Kiddie       |
|                 | O                                   | Capital & Treasury Review Q4                                                        | A Jarvis          | G Wheatley     |
|                 | O                                   | Finance, Performance & Risk Report Q 1                                              | B Wade           | K Kiddie       |
|                 | O                                   | Capital & Treasury Review Q1                                                        | D Lorimer        | G Wheatley     |

**22 July**

| O               | Finance, Performance & Risk Report Q 1 | D Lorimer | G Wheatley |
| O               | Capital & Treasury Review Q1           | P Kearsey | LMickleborough |

**9 Sept**

Key decisions are those which result in income, expenditure or savings with a gross full year effect of £100,000 or 10% of the Council’s net portfolio budget whichever is the greater which has not been included in the relevant portfolio budget, or are significant (e.g. in environmental, physical, social or economic) in terms of its effect on the communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.