

**Decision maker:** Scrutiny Management Panel – 8 November 2012  
Council Meeting 11 December 2012

**Subject:** Report on Scrutiny

**Report by:** Head of Customer, Community and Democratic Services

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision (over £250k):** No

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### 1. Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to comply with the City Council's Constitution which requires information reports to be provided to the Scrutiny Management Panel and subsequently full Council on the work in which the scrutiny panels have been involved.

### 2. Recommendations

**It is recommended that the report be received and the work done by the panels be acknowledged.**

### 3. Work Undertaken by each Panel

#### Scrutiny Management Panel

The Scrutiny Management Panel arranged for external Scrutiny Training to be offered to Members by South East Employers (SEE) to explore different ways in which scrutiny could be undertaken. All members were invited to participate and ten members took advantage of the training session offered. The training covered different ways of carrying out scrutiny and particularly emphasised how valuable pre decision scrutiny could be in helping to formulate council policy. The training also made clear how effective scrutiny could be where elected members worked together on a non political basis towards achieving particular outcomes. The training also clarified the role of scrutiny following the Localism Act 2011.

The Scrutiny Management Panel considered all the topics that had been put forward for review by the themed panels at its meetings on 13 September 2011 and 26 July 2012 and prioritised and allocated them to the relevant themed scrutiny panels for review.

The Scrutiny Management Panel invited all Strategic Directors to its meeting on 6 December 2011 to advise on "hot topics" likely to affect the City Council in the immediate future. This was to provide information to the panel in order to inform the order and choice of topics to be allocated for review in future and to provide an

opportunity for the panel to put forward its own additional suggestions (if any) in light of the information given.

As part of its remit, the Scrutiny Management Panel is responsible for dealing with any decisions subject to the Call-in procedures. There has only been one decision called-in for scrutiny in recent years. This concerned a decision taken by Cabinet on 1 October 2012 concerning the Fatcher Trust. The Scrutiny Management Panel at its meeting on 30 October 2012 decided that Cabinet had had adequate information before it properly to take a decision and therefore did not refer it back for further consideration by Cabinet.

### **Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel**

The panel conducted an in-depth review into, “whether the resident workforce in Portsmouth has the requisite skills to satisfy the current and future needs of the city, its residents and local employers”. During the course of the review, the panel learnt that the skills agenda is complex and wide-ranging.

The review focused heavily on young people and the challenges they face in learning the skills they need to get into work which suits them. The panel was also made aware that people in their 40s and 50s look for new opportunities or a change in direction and had concerns that there is little or no support or funding for this age group - especially if they are well qualified.

The panel was deeply concerned about the levels of education attainment and basic literacy and numeracy skills in the city and noted the impact low educational achievement had in limiting life choices for residents. The panel made a number of recommendations in the report - including supporting the development of an Apprenticeship Strategy and a Work Skills and Learning Plan by the council. The panel was also keen to see a Volunteers Fair become an annual event in the city and believed that this would provide a significant benefit to residents and service providers including the council.

The panel’s report went to Cabinet on 2 July 2012 where its recommendations were supported. However, Cabinet noted the resource implications of recommendation 13 – funding a venue for an annual volunteers fair – and the money for this was not available. However, the Leader undertook to investigate whether the £3,000 could come from the Leader’s portfolio.

The panel recommended that the Scrutiny Management Panel monitors the outcomes and recommendations contained within the review on an annual basis.

The panel is currently carrying out a review on “Making Community Ownership work for Portsmouth.”

### **Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel**

The Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel undertook its review “**to consider the impact on the rented housing market of welfare reform proposals**” from October 2011 to May 2012.

The panel's report was considered at Cabinet on 2 July 2012. It was noted that due to the timescale involved the first recommendations on lobbying the government to raise concerns on the implications of Universal Credit had been overtaken by events since Parliament approved the Welfare Reform Bill, but Cabinet supported the other 20 recommendations in the report with an amendment to give the Fresh Start furniture and training project support "in kind" rather than "in cash".

Other actions to be pursued include lobbying regarding the unsuitability of shared accommodation for child contact sessions and the reduction in legal aid, the training of the Council's frontline staff to give advice and sign-posting to services and discretionary relief payments. There was also the encouragement of outreach advice services to promote the take-up of benefits and wider use of credit union accounts and rent deposit schemes. The tackling poverty agenda at the Council was also recognised as important in finding gaps or duplication in provision of advice. Education in financial management was seen as key to stemming an increase in debt in the city and IT courses to tackle financial exclusion.

The Strategic Director for Adult Services has been requested to bring a report back in January/February 2013 regarding the progress with the implementation of the recommendations.

The Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel's current review topic is "**Advancing the use of technology in Adult Social Care**" – The scoping document has been approved for this new topic which will include Telecare (including community alarms) and Telehealth and for housing, social care and RSLs clients in the city. This will raise awareness of the services available to promote and assist independent living.

### **Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel**

The panel undertook a review entitled "**Review into admissions to Springfield School having regard to the number of pupils living in the Catchment Area and Attending Feeder Schools who failed to gain a place at the school for September 2011**" referred to it following a Notice of Motion to the City Council on 22 March 2011.

The panel concluded that residential developments in the Drayton/Farlington area would accentuate the need to address the capacity issues at Springfield School. The panel noted the number of surplus places at the City of Portsmouth Boys' School (CPBS) and strongly supported the idea of this school becoming a co-educational University Technical Academy (UTA), as they believed that this scheme would ease the pressure on secondary school places (particularly for girls) at the northern end of the city. However, the panel anticipated that the bid by CPBS to become a UTA had only a 20% chance of success and therefore, it suggested that a fall back plan would be for CPBS to consider becoming a co-educational secondary school.

The panel was concerned about the problems of service families moving into the Springfield catchment area outside of the normal admissions round and the difficulties in obtaining a place for their children at the school. Therefore, they suggested that children of service personnel should be one of the categories dealt with in the Fair Access Protocol and that consideration should be given to adjusting the planned admission number to accommodate these children.

The report was considered by Council at its meeting on 15 November 2011 when following discussion, the recommendations were amended before being accepted by Council.

The panel next carried out a **review of targeted support for children and young people who demonstrate behaviours that may put them at risk.**

This is almost completed but has not been signed off. The review examined the strategy for improving outcomes for children and young people in Portsmouth by moving away from single outcome focused services to services which address the holistic needs of vulnerable children and young people and to look at achieving more with less.

The panel identified a number of areas where it felt changes could be made to improve outcomes including reviewing of protocols to deal with bullying, making greater use of services such as Motiv8 and the Children's Trust Board and placing greater emphasis on the dangers of drug taking in health education programmes. The panel also heard evidence that truanting often leads young people into activities that may cause them harm and therefore recommends that attendance policies and procedures be reviewed.

The panel has just begun a review into **How well do we care for Looked After Children? How can we improve stability and outcomes in their lives?**

### **Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel**

On 19 June 2012, the panel published an in-depth review into how the Council responds to the issues of surface water flooding in the city, which included a plan that outlines the actions it would take in the event of extreme flooding from surface water in the city. As part of the review, the panel considered other reports, such as the Surface Water Management Plan and the Portsmouth Local Plan (adopted by Council on 24 January 2012) which also cover similar matters and sought to bring a different perspective to the same issues and to make some recommendations that will make a positive contribution without imposing financial burdens on the Council.

The panel identified the need to ensure that emergency planning, particularly with regard to flood risks is incorporated into the Council's policies and new Councillors' inductions. It also highlighted the importance of ensuring that residents know where to access help and information.

The report was welcomed by Cabinet on 2 July 2012 and the recommendations accepted. Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson asked that the city council support

Southern Water's bid to Ofwat for funding for the flood defence works in Portsmouth.

Implementation of the recommendations will be monitored by the TECS Scrutiny Panel and updates will be provided to the Scrutiny Management Panel at appropriate intervals.

The panel has now begun a review into "Air Quality in Portsmouth."

### **Health, Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

Over the last 12 months, the panel scrutinised regular updates from local NHS organisations and Portsmouth City Council.

The panel looked at

1. Vascular Surgery.
2. Inviting many people from different organisations to its meetings.
3. Fair Oak Low Secure Service, St James Hospital, Portsmouth.
4. Re-modelling of community substance misuse services for Portsmouth, including de-commissioning existing services and re-commissioning in line with the new model.
5. The Transfer of Responsibility for Public Health to the Local Authority.
6. Male Life Expectancy.
7. Fitness for Surgery Update.
8. The Dementia Strategy.
9. Exbury Ward.
10. Maternity update.
11. Community Pharmacies.
12. Spinnaker Ward, St Mary's Community Health Campus update.
13. Discharge Procedures at Queen Alexandra Hospital.
14. Podiatry Booking Service.
15. Referral to Treatment Times at Queen Alexandra Hospital.
16. Centralisation of Services at St Mary's Health Campus.
17. Unscheduled Care.
18. Personal Health Budgets – looked into by the Education, Children & Young People's scrutiny panel on behalf of the HOSP.
19. Fluoridation.
20. Diabetic Retinopathy.
21. End of Life Care.
22. St Mary's Treatment Centre.
23. Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust's Alcohol National Support Team (NST) Action Plan.
24. Releasing Time to Care.
25. National Review of Paediatric Cardiac Services.
26. Plans for the Resident Wardens/ Managers at Portsmouth Town Court and Friendship House.
27. Continuing Healthcare – Section 75 Agreements
28. Dental services in Portsmouth
29. Diabetes care and prevention work
30. Bus service provision and access to medical services
31. Admission and discharge statistics
32. Alcohol-related hospital admissions

**5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

There is no need for an equality impact assessment as nothing in the report negatively affects any of the equality impact strands.

**6. City Solicitor's Comments**

The City Solicitor has considered the report and confirms that it is within the city council's powers to approve the recommendations above.

**7. Head of Finance's comments**

There are no financial implications to bring to Members' attention arising from the recommendation in this report.

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Signed by:  
Head of Customer, Community and Democratic Services

**Appendices:**

None

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Minutes of Scrutiny Meetings	City Council's website <a href="http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk">www.portsmouth.gov.uk</a>