

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 21 JUNE 2016**

**OUTCOME OF SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC CANVASS**

**REPORT BY JANINE WILSON, SERVICE MANAGER- GOVERNANCE & CONSULTANCY**

**ABSTRACT**

This report informs the committee of the outcome of the 2016-17 scrutiny review canvassing exercise and provides options for review areas and scrutiny panel composition.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Scrutiny & Audit Committee:

- (i) Agree the scrutiny review topics for 2016/17 Scrutiny Rapid Improvement Events;
- (ii) Agree that the Service Manager-Governance and Consultancy will contact committee members to establish their interest in participating in each of the reviews.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COUNCIL PLAN**

This report supports services in the delivery of all local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016.

**3. BACKGROUND**

Reference is made to Item 5 of the minute of meeting of the Scrutiny and Audit Committee of 4 April 2013 where the framework for conducting scrutiny reviews was approved. This framework requires an annual topic canvass to identify areas for review for the forthcoming year.

The canvass exercise for 2016/17 topics has now concluded and this report presents the outcomes for the committee's consideration and decision.

**4. CANVASS OUTCOMES**

As part of the canvass exercise to identify topics, a workshop with elected members was held and all members invited. Eleven members attended but all elected members have had an opportunity to put forward suggestions.

At the workshop, Members who had been involved in the Economic Development / Planning Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) in November 2015 were very positive about the experience and commended this as an approach for future scrutiny panels. It was therefore agreed that the reviews for 2016/17 would be conducted on this basis.

Two scrutiny topics were identified at the workshop:

Major Service Change Projects

At the workshop, members were agreed that there should be a scrutiny review of the process that leads to reports to committee which require decisions on major changes and transformation to services, including new service delivery models. Members were keen to

use the recent changes to the Tenancy Support Officers provision as a case study within this process review.

The review would be scoped to consider the methodology used to conduct the reviews including how information and evidence to make and support conclusions and recommendations is gathered, analysed and reported.

It was recognised at the workshop that this would require a full-day Scrutiny Rapid Improvement Event (SRIE) with considerable lead officer work before-hand.

#### Sickness Absence Management

It was suggested that a SRIE could be held, to provide assurance to members about the processes that are in place and the actions being taken to manage sickness absence. The 2016/17 Internal Audit plan, agreed by this committee in April 2016 (report 156/16) includes an allocation of time to follow up any issues or weaknesses identified at the SRIE.

### **5. SCRUTINY PANEL COMPOSITION**

In previous years, scrutiny reviews were conducted by two panels of 6 members each, with a lead officer independent of the area under review. Administration support was also made available. For the 2016/17 reviews, it is proposed that the Service Manager Governance & Consultancy contact committee members to establish their interest in participating in each of the SRIEs, which will be facilitated by the Governance & Consultancy team.

### **6. NEXT STEPS**

Once the review areas are agreed and committee members' interest established, the panels will meet to consider background information and, where appropriate, receive briefings from relevant officers which will inform the development of the specific terms of reference for the SRIE. These will be agreed by the panel and the outcome of the SRIE's will be reported to this committee.

### **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with the terms of this report at this time.

The expectation remains that support for scrutiny reviews will be managed from within existing resources, albeit it will consume staff time which will not be available for other purposes.

There may be a cost in securing external input (of a technical/specialist nature) to support reviews and this would be funded from within the existing Corporate Initiatives revenue budget when required.

In the event that resource issues to support scrutiny reviews arise these can be considered as part of the budget process for future years alongside the potential benefits which would be hoped to arise from review activity.

### **8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The issues contained in the report fall within an approved category that has been confirmed as exempt from an equalities perspective.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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