ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 23 JUNE 2015

OUTCOME OF SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC CANVASS

REPORT BY JANINE WILSON, SERVICE MANAGER- GOVERNANCE AND CONSULTANCY

ABSTRACT
This report informs the committee of the outcome of the 2015-16 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 that for 2015-16 there be one major panel review and a number of mini-reviews
(ii)   Agree the major review for 2015-16 be Customer Care
(iii)   Agree that there be two scrutiny panels set up, one to take forward the major review and one to work through a suite of mini-reviews with a chair for each identified at this meeting
(iv)   Agree the Convener and his lead officer allocate the remaining members of the panels, after a canvass of preferences
(v)   Note that review topics not addressed this year can be carried forward to the next tranche of reviews

2.   ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE 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 2015-16 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. Nine members attended but all Elected Members have had an opportunity to put forward suggestions.

At the topic workshop it was evident that the members in attendance were keen to vary the arrangements and conduct one major panel review in 2015-16 with a number of mini-reviews (Scrutiny Rapid Improvement Events) and it was agreed that this revised process be recommended to this committee.

With the exception of one mini review topic (SLA's), no new topic areas have been identified from this year's canvass exercise but the members at the workshop were keen to review Customer Care as the main review for 2015-16. Whilst this area did not score particularly highly last year (see Appendix I for the list of review topics carried forward to 2015-16) it was felt that this area had a direct link to council priorities and the workstream of Improved Customer Experience within the Council's Transforming Angus change programme.

Members at the workshop were also keen to be seen to be listening to, and addressing, citizen concerns that have been raised with them and it was felt that the mini review process would provide a medium for that. A number of mini projects were identified last year but have not been progressed due to time pressures in conducting and supporting two major panel reviews and these, together with the newly identified review, are shown in Appendix 2. It is intended these reviews be worked through on a priority basis by one scrutiny panel, covering as many reviews on the list as is possible within the scrutiny year. A broad prioritisation has been applied and is detailed in the appendix.

Given the above the reviews recommended for 2015-16 are

Panel A – Major Review	Panel B – Mini Reviews (priority order)
Customer Care	Housing repairs Economic Development (links to planning) SLA's Business Managers in Schools

5.   **SCRUTINY PANEL COMPOSITION**

The 2014-15 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. It is recommended that the 2015-16 reviews follow the same format but with the Governance and Consultancy Team facilitating the mini review process.

A Chair for the major review panel will be required and it is recommended that the chair be identified at this meeting. In terms of panel B it is recommended that the Convenor act as chair for the overall programme but the panel choose a chair for each mini review on a topic-by-topic basis.

A Lead Officer for the major review will be sourced from a canvass of Officers through the leadership forum which will allow a senior lead officer support for the reviews. A canvassing exercise for volunteers for the 2015-16 review will commence shortly.

Members of the committee will be asked for their preference in relation to a panel to serve on, although first preference cannot be guaranteed.

6.   **NEXT STEPS**

Once the review areas are agreed and the panels appointed 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 review. These will be agreed by the panel and the review will then commence.

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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List of Appendices
Scrutiny Review Major Topics List 2015-16
Scrutiny Review Mini Topics list 2015-16

Scrutiny Review Canvassing Exercise – Full review areas brought forward to 2015-16

No	Area	Reason(s)	Questions	Potential Improvements	Panel Review	First Filter	Score	Rank
b/f **1**	Customer Care	Concerns about complaints received about the way people are treated when making enquiries (not ACCESS)	1. Do departments adhere to the customer charter 2. What training is given in dealing with difficult members of the public 3. How is this linked and delivered through TA workstream of Improved customer experience	Identification of training needs	Yes		4	
b/f **2**	Homelessness – Assessment Outcomes Vs Performance Targets	Performance in this area in relation to outcomes is positive but at the expense of delivering to Statutory Timescales	1. Is the focus on quality outcomes vs statutory timescales sustainable? 2. Can community planning partners do more to provide information quickly?	Assess the corporate appetite for shifting the balance of risk of outcomes v timescale of service delivery Assess whether there are synergies within the council that can	Yes		6	

		3. Is there a risk averse culture that prevents decisions being made against statutory timescales? 4. Are performance systems up to the task?	be realised					
3	Education – Additional needs	Constituent requests/queries around Additional Needs provision	1. What are the councils statutory responsibilities 2. What are the councils customer care objectives 3. What are the councils additional needs policies and are they adhered to	Performance and satisfaction improvements	Yes	This is an enormous area therefore review 3a is recomme nded as a starter	5	
3a	English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service (Children and Young People's Service)	Significant increase in the number of children and young people with EAL in Angus schools	1. What is the current level of need? 2. How do we ensure we are meeting these needs through provision of services including EAL service/	Increases capacity and consistency of approach through staff training Recommendations regarding adequate staffing to meet	Yes	ok	See above	See above

			translators/ access to translated information etc? 3. Are we meeting legislative requirements e.g. ASL/ Equalities?	increased EAL needs				
4	Public Transport	Perception that some routes not well utilised	1. Are the routes well used? 2. Does the network as a whole "make sense"	Better utilisation of resources to provision	Yes	**Excluded** – EY project		
5	Procedures for enrolling pre-school children into Local Authority Pre-school classes.	Currently operating a system for enrolment which offers places to children based on catchment area and age. Some parents feel disadvantaged by this system.	1. How effective is the current system in allocating places fairly and equitably? 2. With the impending increase in hours and flexibility, is this a good time to make a change to enrolment criteria? 3. How will a change impact on	More parents may be offered a place of their first choice	Yes	ok	4	

			➢ school capacities ➢ early years teams particularly in relation to planning learning, ➢ consistency ➢ transitions? 4. .How will a change in the system affect resourced provision					
6	Early years and attainment	This is a major council priority	1. Are all nursery age children being reached and provided for		-	Incorporated above	n/a	n/a
7	Impact of Digital First strategy on ACCESS	Current digital programme is developing transactional services on the web site and the promoting the web as a customer service channel. This aligns with the commitment to deliver channel shift as contained in the	1. What is the impact on the council's high street presence of the "Digital First" strategy? 2. How do we maximise the opportunities from the new digital services whilst ensuring customers enjoy a seamless experience? 3. How do we maximise our investment in	• Cost savings • More effective use of existing resources in support of customer strategy • Improved customer service (24x7, single point	Yes	**Excluded** – TA workstream/CLT	n/a	

		Council Plan. This creates opportunities to review the future operations of ACCESS and explore the convergence of on-line and phone and reduce face to face transactions via ACCESS offices.	ACCESS and the web by adding additional services? 4. Is there a need to separate ACCESS offices and ACCESSline to enable the "digital first" strategy?	of contact) Moving transactional queries to lowest cost channel and resource.				
8	Pupil Unit Cost	This is an area of significant expenditure for the council that merits examination.	1. Are there any links in Angus between individual pupil cost and achievement outcomes? 2. What is the variance of pupil cost within Angus? 3. What are the factors that influence this variance?	Improved resource alignment to impact on outcomes. Recommendations about best use for the school estate. There may well be specific advice for service processes and systems.	Yes	ok	4	

Scrutiny Review Canvassing Exercise – Mini Review Areas for 2015-16

No	Area	Reason(s)	Questions	Potential Improvements	Score	Priority
1	SLA's with external parties	Desire to work more with external partners	1. How do we decide what is within a SLA 2. How do we manage SLA's with external parties 3. How do we monitor delivery of SLA	Ability to work better with other parties including the voluntary sector	1	3
c/f 2	Business Managers in primary schools	Secondaries have managers but primaries do not, they rely on central support. Some other authorities have shared managers	1. What would the advantages be to a Head teacher to have the services of a (shared) business manager 2. What would the main responsibilities of a business manager be 3. Could Business Managers be phased in eg on leave/retire replacement basis	Improved support to HT's	0	4
c/f 3	Housing Repairs	Some complaints about poor workmanship on repairs and central heating	1 How are repairs monitored and managed? 2 Do contracts have quality PI's 3 How many complaints does it take before there is an investigation	Report 246-14 new tender might address some areas but short RIE/workshop might give some other areas of improvement	3	1

c/f 4	Economic Development	Economic Development is a major Council priority	1. Could more be done to promote economic development through the planning process 2. Do the planning policies support or mitigate against Ec Dev	Improvement in economic development outcomes	2	2
c/f 5	Keptie Pond and Park, Arbroath	Considerable expenditure does not seem to have rectified the low water and aquatic weed problem	1. Why has the recently installed borehole not alleviated the low water problem 2. Why has an ornamental pond specialist not been consulted 3. Why has the weed problem not been seriously addressed 4. Why has a report not been brought forward to address members concerns 5. Why has there been little consultation with the public and elected members	High profile and regularly visited by locals and visitors and improvements are required Alternative solutions may be available and identified through review	n/a Excluded – see note below	n/a

Keptie Pond – since the canvass topic meeting a further meeting has taken place between officers and the Convener of Scrutiny and Audit. At this meeting a number of the issues related to the Keptie Pond were discussed. This area will be further progressed through meeting/facilitated review involving the Arbroath elected members.

Prioritisation Matrix

Mini Review	Local Outcome Link	Material Budget	Complaints to Members	Score	Priority
1 SLA's	No	Yes (eg Nursery)	No	1	3
2 Business Managers in Schools	No	No	No	0	4
3 Housing Repairs	Yes (9)	Yes	Yes	3	1
4 Economic Development	Yes (1)	Yes	No	2	2