

By: Paul Wickenden, Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager  
To: Scrutiny Board – 10 March 2011  
Subject: **Select Committee Work Programme**

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Summary: To receive (a) an update on the current Topic Review Programme and the resources available to deliver the programme and (b) also to consider guidelines for webcasting of Select Committee topic reviews.

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## **1. Resources to Deliver the Select Committee Work Programme**

There are currently two and a half FTE Research officers supporting the Select Committee topic review programme. They are supported by three Democratic Services Officers from the Overview and Scrutiny team who also support the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees. In addition I have one Research officer who is dedicated entirely to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a Research Officer to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Research Officer, who in addition to supporting the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee also carry's out a number of specific projects to support the development of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

## **2. Select Committees that have completed their work**

### *Renewable Energy and Extended Services Select Committee*

(1) In accordance with the monitoring process agreed by the County Council, an action plan for the recommendation from Renewable Energy Select Committee will be submitted to the Environment, Highways and Waste POSC on 8 April 2011. The Select Committee will be re-convened at the end of 2011 to receive a report on progress with their recommendations.

(2) The action plan for the Extended Services Select Committee recommendations was due to be submitted to the 5 April meeting of Communities POSC and 14 April Education, Learning and Skills POSC. However, with the agreement of the Chairmen, has been postponed until the July meetings of the POSC's as a process of informal and formal consultation on the future resources and structure for extended services is being carried out. Until this process is complete it will not be clear what resources, if any, will be available to deliver on the recommendations of the select committee.

## **3. Select Committee – Topic Review Programme**

### *Educational Attainment Select Committee*

(1) The Select Committee on Educational Attainment of Pupils in Schools in Areas of High Deprivation held its inaugural meeting on 3 February 2011, Mr C

Wells was elected Chairman. The Select Committee have agreed their terms of reference and scope (attached as **Appendix A**)

(2) The current timetable for the review is to hold Informal Briefing, hearings and Visits etc during May/June/July and September 2011. As hearings may go into September is unlikely that this review will be completed in time to report to Cabinet in November and County Council in December. A revised timetable will be reported to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board for approval.

#### Select Committee: Dementia

(3) The Select Committee on Dementia under the Chairmanship of Mrs Dean is continuing with its work, Throughout February they have carried out a number of visits to day centres, care homes, dementia cafes, peer support groups, carer support groups, meeting people with dementia, being shown around the venues and talking to people involved in care and support. Hearings are going to be held throughout March and early April 2011.

(4) The Select Committee are still in the process of developing their Terms of Reference and Scope and are very keen that carers are able to influence the work and will use the input from carers who will be attending the first hearing session on 9th March 2011. There will be another carers-support themed session on 16th March and from then sessions will focus on a range of professionals who can answer questions on the key themes identified. The scope for the review is potentially broad but with feedback from the Focus Group of Professionals and from carers it should be possible to choose a few specific areas towards which they we can direct their efforts in subsequent questioning of experts and information gathering.

(5) The Research officer has been approached by several carers, who are quite elderly but keen to take part. With Mrs Deans agreement officers are exploring options to go out and interview people, possibly on video, in their homes in order to share this with Select Committee Members and provide an opportunity for the voices of possibly the most marginalised people, to be heard.

(6) A number of GPs are involved in the work and we plan a further piece of engagement work in addition to our hearings. In addition, one trainee GP has also kindly agreed to share the findings of some recent research work with us.

(7) There has been a great response to our call for involvement in the review and in fact the greatest challenge has been to manage the volume of information received.

(8) The Select Committee will be meeting in early June to discuss evidence and recommendations and the Focus Group will meet shortly afterwards to give their input, and identify any further evidence required at that point, prior to production of a draft report in the summer. The timetable for the review is challenging but it is still intended for the report to be submitted to Cabinet in November and to County Council on 15 December 2011.

(9) At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Board Officers were tasked with finding funding to alternative care to be provided to enable four Carers coming

via Maidstone Carers and Age Concern (now Age UK) Canterbury to give evidence to the Select Committee. The relatively small amount of funding needed has been provided by Kent Adult Social Services (KASS) from their Engagement Budget.

#### *Select Committee - The Student Journey*

(5) Mr Kit Smith is the Chairman designate for this review and the Membership of the Committee is currently being established. It is anticipated that the inaugural meeting for this Select Committee will be held at the end of April 2011 which will agree the Terms of Reference and scope for this review.

(6) The timetable for this review is still under discussion and it is unlikely that it will report to County Council in December 2011. Approval will be sought for the timescale for this review at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board, once the terms of reference and scope of the review have been approved.

#### **4. Webcasting of Select Committee meetings.**

(1) At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Board there was a discussion on the suggestion from the Select Committee on Dementia that hearings of that Select Committee should be webcast.

(2) It was acknowledged that there was a balance to be struck between using webcasting to keep the public informed of the work of the review and ensuring that it did not restrict evidence gathering and participation. There was a view that the use of webcasting may be more appropriate for sessions involving professionals and could be used later in the Select Committee process.

(3) The amount of time available to webcast under the webcast contract was limited to 250 hours a year, with any additional hours incurring extra cost, so the use of this resource needed to be monitored. There it was important that, if approval was given by the Scrutiny Board to webcast, it was used for sessions from which the maximum benefit could be gained (e.g. where there was a need for a wider contribution or where there was great public interest).

(2) It was agreed that draft guidelines for the webcasting of select committee reviews should be produced and submitted to the Scrutiny Board for approval (copy attached at **Appendix B**).

#### **4. Recommendations that the**

(a) progress of the Select Committees on Educational Attainment and Dementia and the Student Journey be approved;

(c) Board considers whether it wishes to agree to webcasting select committee meetings, with approval being granted on a review by review basis, and to adopt the draft guidance (appendix B) with any amendments that the Board wish to make.

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*Background Papers – Nil*