

To: City Executive Board
Date: 12 February 2015
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Communities and Neighbourhoods Service

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To present comments from the Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Services Team

Key decision? No

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Simmons, Chair of Scrutiny Committee

Executive lead member: Councillor Simm, Executive Member for Culture and Communities

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan 2014-2018 – Strong, Active Communities

Recommendation: That the City Executive Board agrees that the reviews of priority areas draws on the findings of the Inequalities Scrutiny Panel, as well as the latest social and demographic research data.

Introduction

1. The Scrutiny Committee considered a report detailing the work of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Services Team. The Committee would like to thank Angela Cristofoli for providing her report and facilitating this discussion, and Ian Brooke for his helpful contributions.

Summary of the discussion

2. The Communities and Neighbourhoods Services Team Manager advised that the team co-ordinate a range of activities and projects, including linking with health as well as environmental issues, within communities that have not previously had this support.
3. The ward member representing Cutteslowe spoke to express concerns about the level of service provided in this community.

4. The Committee asked a range of questions, including how the findings from Street Meets are addressed, how research data is used and made available, engagement with hard to reach groups about Individual Voter Registration, and whether information is made available in different languages. The Committee suggested that the Team's KPIs and analysis of the Quality of Life Survey 2014 is clearly available on the Council's website.
5. In response to a question, the Committee heard that the 7 priority community areas will be reviewed to take account of fast changing demographics. The Committee welcome this review and suggest that it links into the work of the Inequalities Scrutiny Panel.

Recommendation – That the review of priority areas draws on the findings of the Inequalities Scrutiny Panel, as well as the latest social and demographic research data.

6. The Committee noted that there is a budget proposal to remove £60k of Community Development Grant funding from 2015/16. The Committee suggest that this should be a priority spending area in the event that additional resources are available in the budget. This has been included as a recommendation in the Budget Review report.

Further consideration

7. The Committee requested information around the numbers and availability of computers at Community facilities, with an indication of usage rates.

Director and Board Member Comments

I am fully in support of work being undertaken to identify areas deprivation throughout the City within the seven identified areas. Work is underway to provide an evidence based report to identify demographic change and areas of need drawing upon multiple indices of deprivation. The findings of the Inequalities Scrutiny Panel will inform this undertaking and I expect to be able to present a completed report in the summer of this year.

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List of background papers: None