

Scrutiny Committee – Review Subjects

The following are those subject areas which have been requested for Scrutiny to consider and the stage they have reached:

Source	Issue/Description	Stage	Proposed Scrutiny Committee meeting date
Ettrick and Yarrow Community Council	Great Tapestry of Scotland – to scrutinise the whole process through which the decision appears to have been taken by SBC Councillors to site the great tapestry of Scotland in a new-build at Tweedbank. In particular, to scrutinise the extent to which a full option appraisal was undertaken of all possible sites and that the detailed business case was presented for all options prior to any decision being made.	Letter from CC dated 15 June 2015. Agreed not to consider until it had been presented to Petitions and Deputations Committee on 1 October 2015. EYCC will be notified.	Short term Scrutiny Working Group to be established with membership agreed on 26 November 2015.
Ettrick and Yarrow Community Council – Allocation of Budgets for Road Maintenance and Repairs	To review the extent to which the SBC budget for road repairs and maintenance is sufficient to meet need and the not unreasonable expectation that roads will be maintained in a safe condition. Within this context, to particularly examine how the allocation of budget for <u>rural</u> roads is arrived at and whether more should be allocated.	Letter from CC dated 15 June 2015. Agreed to consider this.	28 January 2016.
Councillor Bhatia	Protection of Private Water Supplies – <i>"in relation to Planning e.g. when a planning application is granted which requires an additional private supply or taking water from an existing private supply, how do existing householders ensure that their supply is protected? This may be purely a civil matter or the Council may have a role. This is further exacerbated with large forestry/windfarm applications."</i>	Presentation will include input from Planning, Environmental Health and SEPA.	18 February 2016
Lib Dem Group	Implications of the Community Empowerment Act on the Council – <i>"there may be multiple implications of the Community Empowerment Act e.g. disposal of assets either SBC or Common Good, the transfer of local services to community groups who wish to take them on, future provision of allotments etc."</i>	Presentation from Shona Smith, Communities and Partnership Manager now scheduled.	18 February 2016

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Scrutiny Committee	Financing arrangements for the Transport Interchange in Galashiels - to include subsidy arrangements and departure charges.	Agreed to consider this. Consideration whether or not to conduct a review of the financing arrangements for the Transport Interchange would also be decided in November.	
Councillor Logan	Support for High Achievers in Schools		28 January 2016. Presentation by Service Director Children & Young People.
Councillor Torrance	Passenger Transport and Escorts		
Greenlaw and Hume CC	<p>Local Authorities have for some time now had “their backs to the wall” with funding cuts and freezes. I know from my dealings with various departments of SBC that activity levels are always being reviewed for yet more efficiencies. The reality however is that such reviews, after many years, will collide with the laws of diminishing returns. The efforts of the review in fact might outweigh the efficiencies delivered, some of which might be more theoretical than realisable.</p> <p>Another approach, often shied away from because of the implications for current staffing levels, is to consider whether any SBC activity could more efficiently and cost effectively be delivered by external service providers. Outsourcing can of course sound like a good idea, but years down the line can become an even bigger burden, if the terms and conditions have not been properly thought through, and the relationship has not been nurtured and kept healthy.</p> <p>So outsourcing is not an easy option, or one that should be entered into lightly, but for any of the 32 local authorities in Scotland there is a potential</p>		

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	<p>short cut to identify really good outsourcing opportunities i.e. by looking at best practice in other LA's and learn from their outsourcing success stories.</p> <p>I think this is particularly relevant where the most obvious provider for outsourced services is a not for profit organisation. The example I have in mind is in the area of social services where SBC's neighbouring authority, Dumfries and Galloway, have outsourced debt and benefit advisory service provision completely to Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).</p> <p>Like many Third Sector organisations operating on a national level, CAB can access a level of high quality trained volunteer resource, many from a professional background, that Local Authorities are simply unable to access. Like CAB many have a highly regarded reputation, network, and track record of performance delivery, which makes them an ideal partnership candidate, which already has deeply embedded credibility in the community.</p> <p>So my suggestion in summary is that SBC Scrutiny Committee should look at outsourcing success stories elsewhere in Scottish Local Authority bodies, in particular where the service has been outsourced to a third sector organisation.</p>		
Scrutiny Committee	Renewable energy – to include arrangements for biomass boilers at high schools.	Likely to be considered by the Executive Committee. <i>Scrutiny Review on hold.</i>	