

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 SEPTEMBER 2011

TOPICS FOR INDEPTH SCRUTINY REVIEWS – PRIORITIES AND TIMETABLE

Report from: Richard Hicks, Assistant Director, Customer First,

Leisure, Culture, democracy and Governance

Author: Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services

Summary

This report invites the Committee to discuss topics suggested by each of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the in depth review work programme and to decide how the reviews should be prioritised and timetabled over the next eighteen months.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The Council's Constitution states that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for setting its own work programme, which should take into account the wishes of all Members of the Committee.
- 1.2 This Committee has within its remit the provision of guidance and leadership on the development and co-ordination of the scrutiny function for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees, including guidance on priorities for scrutiny activities.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 14 April 2011, as a consequence of budget reductions, the Council decided to reduce the level of in-depth scrutiny review work across all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to three task groups and/or themed meetings in total per year. Officers were asked to report to this committee on how this might be co-ordinated and managed.
- 2.2 As there are four Overview and Scrutiny Committees it was agreed by this Committee on 9 June that it should exercise a more pro-active role than

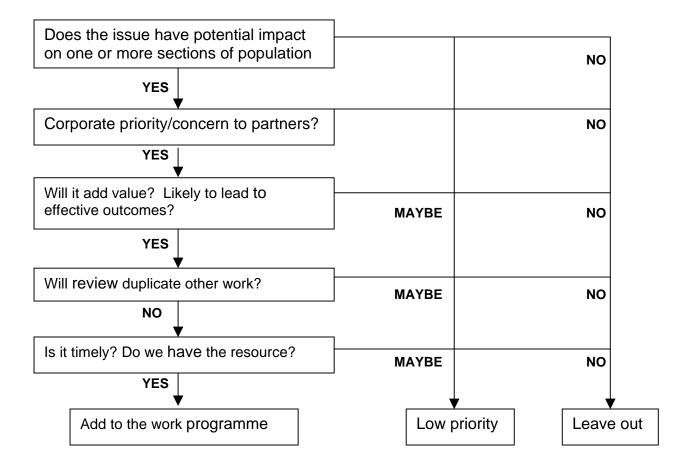
previously in prioritising the programme of in-depth scrutiny review work for 2011/12. Recognising there are a number of new Councillors and that Committees would need time to discuss and select the topics they would wish to put forward the following process was approved:

- (i) **7 to 23 June** each committee was invited to agree that the Chairman and Opposition Spokespersons should meet during June and July with appropriate officer support to draw up suggestions for indepth review topics
- (ii) 19 July 18 August each committee agreed its selection of in-depth review topics to be forwarded to this Committee for prioritisation with a rationale for each using an agreed template based on practice elsewhere and commended by the Centre for Public Scrutiny in its guidance on devising a scrutiny work programme. A copy of this guidance has been sent to every member of the Committee under separate cover and used during the informal discussions on work programming over the Summer.
- (iii) **5th September**: All Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Opposition spokespersons were invited to an informal meeting to review the long list of suggested in-depth review topics with the aim of reaching agreement on a recommended priority order.
- (iv) 20 September: Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee to formally discuss suggested topics and decide how the reviews should be prioritised and timetabled.
- 2.3 The Committee asked Officers to include as part of this process consideration of the 2012/13 work programme and examples of good practice from other Councils.

3. Outcome of discussion by Overview and Scrutiny Committees

3.1 The list of topics put forward by each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is attached at Appendix A to this report with supporting information under each of the headings in the template this Committee agreed should be used. The covering sheet summarises the long list and suggests some key questions to assist in deciding the priority in which topics should be programmed. This process for selecting topics was recommended by the external trainer at the Effective Scrutiny training session held in Medway on 28 July 2011 (attended by 19 Councillors) and can be summarised as follows:

Questions to ask when prioritising topics for review



- 3.2 Examples of reviews undertaken by other local authorities and best practice have been discussed at each of the informal meetings and at the training for Medway members on Effective Scrutiny held on 28 July.
- 4. Outcome of informal meeting of Chairmen and Opposition Spokespersons held on 5 September 2011
- 4.1 The meeting on 5 September was attended by Councillors Avey, Bright, Carr, Cooper, Griffiths, Juby, Maple, Price, Smith and Royle.
- 4.2 The questions set out in the covering sheet at Appendix A were discussed in relation to each of the long listed topics and the conclusions of the informal meeting are reflected there for the Committee to consider. In summary, it was suggested that the first in depth review in the programme should be the topic put forward by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to underperformance in schools (KS2). It was suggested that the second review should be Supported Accommodation as put forward by this Committee. Members asked this Committee to decide between Decluttering Town Centres and the Impact of European Funding as the third review after taking a view from the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture on which would be likely to have the most impact taking into account

the financial position of the Council. It was considered that the fourth review should be Mental Health to take place at the end of the programme so that the re-tendering process for adult mental health services has concluded and that any relevant recommendations emerging from the Supported Accommodation Review can be included in the scope for this review.

- 4.3 The more detailed comments made at the informal meeting on each of the topics included on the long list are summarised below:
 - Supported Accommodation it was recommended that this review should include consideration of funding for, and provision of, other support for people in supported accommodation more generally so that the review is not restricted exclusively to an examination of providers of housing.
 - Review of Fairness the Head of Democratic Services was asked to email
 to members a link to the report of the Islington Fairness Commission.
 Recognising that there was insufficient capacity at the moment to launch a
 review of this scale in Medway it was suggested that work should be
 undertaken to develop a scope for this type of review locally for possible
 inclusion in a future phase of work programming for in depth reviews.
 - Universal Credit it was recommended that rather than include this in the
 current programme of in depth reviews there should be a report to the
 Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee once the Welfare
 Reform Bill is enacted and the impact of Universal Credit on Medway
 residents is known. The Committee may wish to invite a representative of the
 Department of Work and Pensions to attend the meeting when this matter is
 discussed. It was suggested that the Committee might examine the wider
 picture for those adversely affected by changes to the benefit system
 particularly with regard to the practices of money lending organisations.
 - Effective challenge to address under performance in Medway Schools there was concensus that this should be the first review in the programme in order that any recommendations can be implemented ahead of the 2012/13 academic year. Members agreed that the review should give priority to performance at Key Stage 2 in Medway's primary schools and the impact of support provided by the Council to the schools achieving less well. It was also recommended that the review should look at learning from successful schools in Medway and other local authority areas. It was suggested that the Task Group should examine experience in other local authority areas with a grammar school system.
 - Mental Health there was concensus that this should be recommended as the fourth review in the work programme to enable the re-tendering of adult mental health services to be concluded. By timing the review towards the end of the programme it could include an evaluation of the impact of the new provider and also address any related issues emerging for the earlier review of supported accommodation. It was suggested that the review should include mental health services for children and adolescents and that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be invited to participate in the work of the Task Group.

- Transition and personalised budgets there was concensus that this should not be programmed until after the Parliamentary Select Committee has concluded its work on the outcomes from the Dilnott Commission. It was agreed the topic should be reviewed for possible inclusion in the next phase of the scrutiny in depth review work programme.
- De-cluttering Town Centres members discussed whether this review could make a difference given current financial constraints and the likelihood that there would be significant costs associated with a programme of de-cluttering town centres. Before including this review or the one on Impact of European Funding in the work programme it was suggested that a view should be sought from the Director of Regeneration Community and Culture on the likelihood of being able to generate recommendations requiring minimal expenditure (for example a set of design principles) or to take any forward recommendations requiring budget provision as a consequence of this review. Members expressed an interest in covering some of the main arterial roads as well as town centres in Medway if this review were to proceed. Impact of European funding – as set out above members agree to take a view from the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture before adding this topic to the work programme. It was recommended that the scope of the review should include an assessment of the value of EU funded projects and whether the Council is having success in sustaining the impact of successful projects once the funding ends.

5. Risk management

5.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
In depth scrutiny reviews fail to make an impact	In published guidance on effective work programming for Overview and Scrutiny Committees the Centre for Public Scrutiny says "effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well, it can help to lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal"	This Committee has agreed a rigorous process for identifying and prioritising topics for inclusion in the in depth review work programme for the next eighteen months.

6. Consultation

6.1 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been able to discuss and contribute suggestions for topics to be included in the programme of scrutiny in depth review work. The outcome of these discussions is summarised in Appendix A to this report.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 The reason for the limitation of in depth scrutiny review work and the introduction of a new work programming process is a response to reduced capacity across the organisation to support this work.
- 7.2 The Committee is asked to ensure that the agreed timetable of reviews is consistent with the decision of the Council that no more than three reviews or themed meetings in total can be programmed in each municipal year. Support for only one review at a time can be provided from within the Democratic Services Team.
- 7.3 There is a budget of £5210 within Democratic Services to support activity associated with in depth scrutiny review work in this financial year. This can be used for member level visits, expenses claims from those invited to give evidence, expert advice and support with community engagement and other review expenditure.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The Committee is recommended to agree that the following reviews should be included in the scrutiny in depth review work programme as follows:
 - Effective Challenge to address under performance in Medway Schools (1)
 - Supported Accommodation with an extended scope to include other support for those in supported accommodation (2)
 - Mental Health (4)
- 8.2 The Committee is asked to decide whether the third review should be De-cluttering Town Centres or Impact of European Funding having taken into account advice from the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture on which is likely to add most value in the current economic climate
- 8.3 The Committee is asked to agree that the comment and suggestions of members at the informal meeting on 5 September 2011 should be actioned as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report

Lead officer contact:

Richard Hicks, Assistant Director, Customer First, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance 01634 332302

Richard.hicks@medway.gov.uk

Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services 01634 332760
<u>Julie.keith@medway.gov.uk</u>

Background papers

Minutes of Council meeting – 14 April 2011 A Cunning Plan? Devising a scrutiny work programme – guidance published by Centre for Public Scrutiny

LONGLIST OF INDEPTH TOPICS SUGGESTED BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES Aid to prioritising the work programme

	· · · ·		<u> </u>	work programm			T = 1. 1.
COMMITTEE	Does issue have potential impact on one or more sections of population?	Corporate concern/issue for partners?	Will it add value/lead to effective outcomes?	Will review duplicate other work?	Is it timely/ do we have the resources?	Add to work programme? Yes/No	Priority order (4 reviews to be selected by members to take place over the next 18 months)
Business Support							
Supported Accommodation	YES	YES – also raised by Audit Committee	YES	NO	YES	YES	2
Review of Fairness	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO – insufficient capacity to undertake such a wide ranging review	NO	
Universal Credit	YES	YES	NOT KNOWN	N/A	NO – report to Committee requested once legislation enacted	NO	
Children and Young	People						
Effective challenge to address under performance in Medway Schools	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	1
Health and Adult So	cial Care			·			
Mental Health – possible joint review with CYP	YES	YES	YES	NO - if timing right	Not until after completion of re- tendering for adult mental health services	YES	4
Transition and personalised budgets –possible joint review with CYP	YES	YES	Not at moment	Await outcome of Parliamentary Select Committee work	NO	NO	
Regeneration, Com							
De-cluttering town centres	YES	YES	TBC	NO	TBC	ТВА	3
Impact of European Funding	YES	YES	TBC	NO	TBC	TBA	3

PROPOSED TOPICS FOR IN-DEPTH REVIEW AND THEMED MEETING

Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Supported accommodation

(cross cutting task group review)

Reason for Review

Concern has been raised by several Councillors and also by the Audit Committee regarding the provision of adequate and appropriate supported accommodation (housing) in Medway.

Note: When this matter was discussed by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4th August an ex-offender was present and spoke about his experiences with one of the providers of supported accommodation. He asked Members to investigate the matter further. The Committee agreed that if the topic is not selected for an in-depth review, that a report be submitted to a future meeting (with the possibility of the meeting being a single item meeting.

National/local context

The committee previously requested a report into the outcome of work on benefit payments for people in supported accommodation and this is on the work programme with a future meeting date to be confirmed, once the work has been completed. This matter is a specific local issue.

Performance indicators (where relevant)

These performance indicators may be relevant to this review:

NI21L Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police (proxy measure)

NI141 - Number of service users who have moved on in a planned way from temporary living arrangements

NI142 - Number of services users who are supported to establish and maintain independent living

This also affects the number of vulnerable people leading independent lives, anti-social behaviour, the number of people in temporary accommodation and the Council giving value for money

Public feedback/interest in issue (where known)

The Citizen's Panel identified that suitable and affordable housing is a priority for Medway Council.

The Audit Committee has been advised that the Chief Finance Officer has commissioned a report on supported accommodation and also that this committee had identified it as a possible matter for in-depth review. Members of the Audit Committee agreed that the outcome of the review is reported to them or, if this review is not taken forward by this committee, that a report is submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration.

This topic was also endorsed as suitable for an in-depth review by the Regeneration, Community & Culture O&S Committee Chairman and Spokespersons particularly with regard to aspects affecting ex-offenders and drug takers.

Reason for Review

At a time when families and individuals are under increasing pressure and public services are being cut, it is suggested that the committee should scrutinise the extent to which the Council with its partners are taking action to narrow the gaps in outcomes and opportunities for Medway residents.

Review of Fairness

National/ local context

(cross cutting task group review)

In 2010 the Coalition Government in its publication "Our programme for Government" included the following commitment and a range of specific actions to tackle inequalities:

"The Government believes that there are many barriers to social mobility and equal opportunities in Britain today, with too many children held back because of their social background, and too many people of all ages held back because of their gender, race, religion or sexuality. We need concerted government action to tear down these barriers and help to build a fairer society".

In Medway, two of the four principles underpinning the six overarching ambitions in the Sustainable Community Strategy for 2010-2026 are particularly relevant:

Fairness: do our actions take account of all the sections of society ensuring that everyone benefits from the regeneration of Medway and

Review of Fairness (continued)

Narrowing the gap: will our actions contribute to improving the lives of everyone so reducing the gap between deprived and more affluent areas.

In addition the Council Plan for Medway includes a commitment to support the building of strong communities where people feel they belong.

Performance indicators (where relevant)

The scoping of this review would include identifying the relevant performance indicators. For example, the recent Fairness Commission in Islington covered seven priority areas; Income, Work, Families, Community, Safety, Housing and Health.

NI1 in the Council Plan for Medway will also be relevant: % of people that think that people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Public feedback/interest in issue (where known)

In a recent Citizens Panel Survey about what influences feelings of community 88% agreed/strongly agreed that people trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly helps to bring the community together.

Universal Credit

(themed meeting to be held in 2012/13 once legislation is implemented)

Reason for Review

The Government is proposing to unify out of work benefits, housing benefit and tax credits into a simplified single universal credit. It is suggested that the Committee should review the impact of this on Medway residents; with particular reference to vulnerable people and those unable to work.

National/ local context

Following publication of the White Paper, "Universal Credit: Welfare that works" the Government has introduced a Welfare Reform Bill setting out plans to reform the welfare system by creating a new Universal Credit. The Department of Work and Pensions states that the main elements of the Bill include:-

• the introduction of Universal Credit to provide a single streamlined benefit that will ensure work always pays

Universal Credit (continued)

- a stronger approach to reducing fraud and error with tougher penalties for the most serious offences
- a new claimant commitment showing clearly what is expected of claimants while giving protection to those with the greatest needs

According to the latest data, there are currently 20,000 Medway residents on out of work benefits or 12.0% of Medway's workforce.

Performance indicators (where relevant)

Potentially the following indicators would be relevant to this review:

NI146 Adults with learning disabilities in employment

ECD48c REGEN1c Employment that has lasted 26 weeks

ECD7b REGEN1a New registrations by local people accessing employment support services

ECD8b(ii) REGEN1b Number of jobs taken up in the period

LRCC3 REGEN2a The number of intensive assists to local businesses

LRCC4 REGEN2b Number of jobs created and safeguarded

NI117 REGEN3a 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

NI148 REGEN3b Care Leavers in education, employment or training.

PROPOSED TOPICS FOR IN-DEPTH REVIEW AND THEMED MEETING

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Effective challenge to address under performance in Medway schools

(Task Group –the Committee would like group whips to name membership speedily, so there is no time delay if chosen as first review topic]

This review needs to begin immediately, in order to inform schools and their practices by next year's KS2 exam time [May 2012])

Reason for Review

There are a number of schools below target and it is a key local responsibility and accountability to be assured that Medway children and young people have the best chance of success in good, well led, local schools.

National/local context

<u>Nationally</u>: Local authorities have a strong strategic role as champions of parents and families of vulnerable pupils and of educational excellence.

<u>Locally</u>: narrowing the gap in attainment between the highest and lowest achievers continues to be a priority.

In the last academic year 18 primary schools were below the national threshold. KS2 results fall short of the national average, in contrast to other Key Stages.

Performance indicators (where relevant)

Council Plan:

Outcome: Children & Young People succeed in learning. Increase and enhance provision in Medway, including raising achievement at Key Stage Two.

Public feedback/interest in issue (where known)

Feedback from a Focus Group – focusing on a child's potential.

PROPOSED TOPICS FOR IN-DEPTH REVIEW AND THEMED MEETINGS

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Reason for Review

To contribute to the re-tendering process and scrutinise the provision of mental health services in Medway.

National/local context

<u>Local:</u> The council has recently served notice for the re-tendering of adult mental health services and for children and adolescent mental health services (Tier 3) within Medway from January 2012. The review wishes to assist in shaping the provision of future services and then, at a later stage in the process, how the services are being formed.

Mental health

(task group review to comply with re-tendering timeline)

(joint task group review with C&YP O&S?) Medway: (information taken from the Kent & Medway Mental Health JSNA)

- has a different model of carer support to the rest of Kent
- invests a higher proportion of its resources in crisis teams than East and West Kent, and a higher proportion in access and crisis services than the Office of National Statistics (ONS) cluster and national averages
- invests less overall than Kent, the ONS cluster and England averages for adults and older adults
- has fewer staff in selected staff groups and fewer adult acute beds than the ONS cluster and England averages, and fewer community mental health teams (CMHT) resources and smaller CMHT caseloads than Kent
- has most referrals to primary care services.
- appears to have the lowest rate of admissions for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Conclusions:

There remain gaps in the mental health services commissioned to meet the needs of the working age population in Kent and Medway. There are gaps in services for those with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and substance misuse, and community forensic and criminal justice diversion services are not fully developed. A&E liaison services are being strengthened. Across the area, several gaps relate to more comprehensive partnership working by secondary services with other agencies e.g. criminal justice, substance misuse and acute general hospitals. Medway has a different model for carer support and Eastern and Coastal Kent had fewer primary care services in 2008.

Performance indicators (where relevant)

The following performance indicator will be relevant to this review:

NI 149 – adults receiving secondary mental health services in settled accommodation

Public feedback/interest in issue (where known)

Transition and personalised budgets

(joint task group review with C&YP O&S?)

Reason for Review

To focus on two key transition stages of life; for young people moving into adult services, and adults at the point at which they may require adult social care services. Members wish to scrutinise the transition systems to ensure that they are easy to navigate and that service users can be confident that agencies and partnerships are working well together. The review would also scrutinise take-up of personalised budgets at these transition points and make recommendations on how this can be maximised to provide greater control and choice for service users over their support services.

National/local context

The Government has pledged to continue the transformation of adult social care and has made a commitment to ensure that adult social care is tailored to individual needs with personalised budgets being offered to all users of care. The Dilnot Commission on the funding of care and support has recently reported its findings and this work will be taken forward by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Health in the Autumn.

Transition and personalised budgets

Performance indicators (where relevant)

These performance indicators may be relevant to this review:

NI 130 – social care clients receiving Self Directed Support

NI 132 timeliness of social care assessment (for all adults)

C10 improve participation of disabled children and their parents and carers in service design, care planning and service evaluation.

<u>Priority – children and young people in Medway have the best start in life</u> local indicator – timeliness and effectiveness of early help

Public feedback/interest in issue (where known)

PROPOSED TOPICS FOR IN-DEPTH REVIEW AND THEMED MEETINGS

Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Reason for Review

Members have expressed an interest in understanding and balancing the needs of competing interests of items placed upon the public highway and to make a series of recommendations that can be practically implemented to reduce the street clutter in Medway town centres similar to recent refurbishments to Union Street, Chatham and Corporation Street, Rochester.

National/local context

Nationally: English Heritage have published a document in 2009 The Public Realm and Historic Areas.

<u>Locally</u>: Adoption of Public Realm Strategy for Chatham that contains design principles and materials to be used.

De-cluttering town centres (task group review)

Historic Rochester Conservation Area appraisal and management plan that contains a set of principles that help guide the management of the conservation area. That includes principles on de-cluttering.

As part of the validation of planning applications and design our planning policies cover the impact on the street scene and accessibility.

Performance indicators (where relevant)

There are no directly relevant performance indicators although this will be reviewed at scoping stage

Public feedback/interest in issue (where known)

Feedback has been received from a variety of sources relating to street furniture and amenities including:

De-cluttering town centres (continued)

Comments via the Rochester Visitors Survey 2009 : -

Over 94% of all respondents rated the road signs, pedestrian signs and the display maps and information boards as being 'good' or 'very good'.

Road signs and pedestrian signs both received the highest mean scores of all destinations within the 'All Historic Towns' group.

Comments via the June 2009 Medway Council and NHS Medway Disability Consultation Event: included references to a number of service providers such as the bus service within Medway, poor access to specific shops due to steps, not enough dropped kerbs to assist disabled drivers, disabled toilets not located centrally and stiff doors in public buildings, including Medway hospital. Attendees felt it was important that those with a disability were aware of what facilities were available and where they were located eg disabled parking and disabled toilets. Websites and the Beverly text messaging service were given as good examples of where such information could be found.

Impact of European funding (task group review)

Reason for Review

In the current financial climate it is suggested that Overview and Scrutiny could review how effective Medway is at obtaining EU finding for projects and how this funding is used. The Task Group would expect to formulate recommendations on how priorities for future projects should be determined to maximise impact and value for money.

National/local context

<u>Nationally</u>: in relation to Interreg funding (which is a programme of specific funding involving cross border collaboration between coastal regions of the UK, Belgium, Holland and France), Medway Council is the lead partner for more EU funded projects than any other local authority in the coastal and maritime areas of Southern and Eastern England.

<u>Locally</u>: by match-funding Government funds, Medway has been able to lever in £15 million of funding from the EU over the past 10 years.

Examples of initiatives with support from EU funding are:

Through the Flexible New Deal programme, 409 people have found employment and 654 have accessed support since November 2009.

Impact of European funding (continued)

The "Employ Medway" shop in Chatham exceeded its target for the number of people assisted into employment (6,000 plus) until March 2011.

The employment rate in Medway has increased from 66.8% (September 2010) to 68.3% (December 2010). An extra 2,600 people have found employment during this period. This is the highest increase across Kent and Medway and also amongst our family of similar authorities.

Performance indicators (where relevant)

Two of the Council Plan 2011/2012 priorities are: "we will support the building of strong communities where people feel they belong" and "we will work to ensure that people have the skills they need to take up job opportunities created."

The following performance indicators may be relevant to this review:

NI 1 - % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (LAA).

NI 4 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (LAA).

ECD49a – number of people involved in neighbourhood work

ECD49b – number of hours given to neighbourhood work

LRCC3 – number of intensive assists to local businesses

LRCC4 – number of jobs created and safeguarded

ECD7b – new registrations by local people accessing employment support services

ECD8b(ii) – number of jobs taken up in the period (FND)

ECD48c - employment that has lasted 28 weeks

Public feedback/interest in issue (where known)

As part of NI 1 (% of people who think that people from different backgrounds get on well together) – in a recent citizens panel survey about what influences feelings of community, 88% agreed/strongly agreed that people trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly helps to bring the community together. 16 – 24 year olds were more likely to strongly agree than other age groups.