

Role of scrutiny at the County Council

**Culture and Communities Select Committee
15 June 2017**

Background to Scrutiny

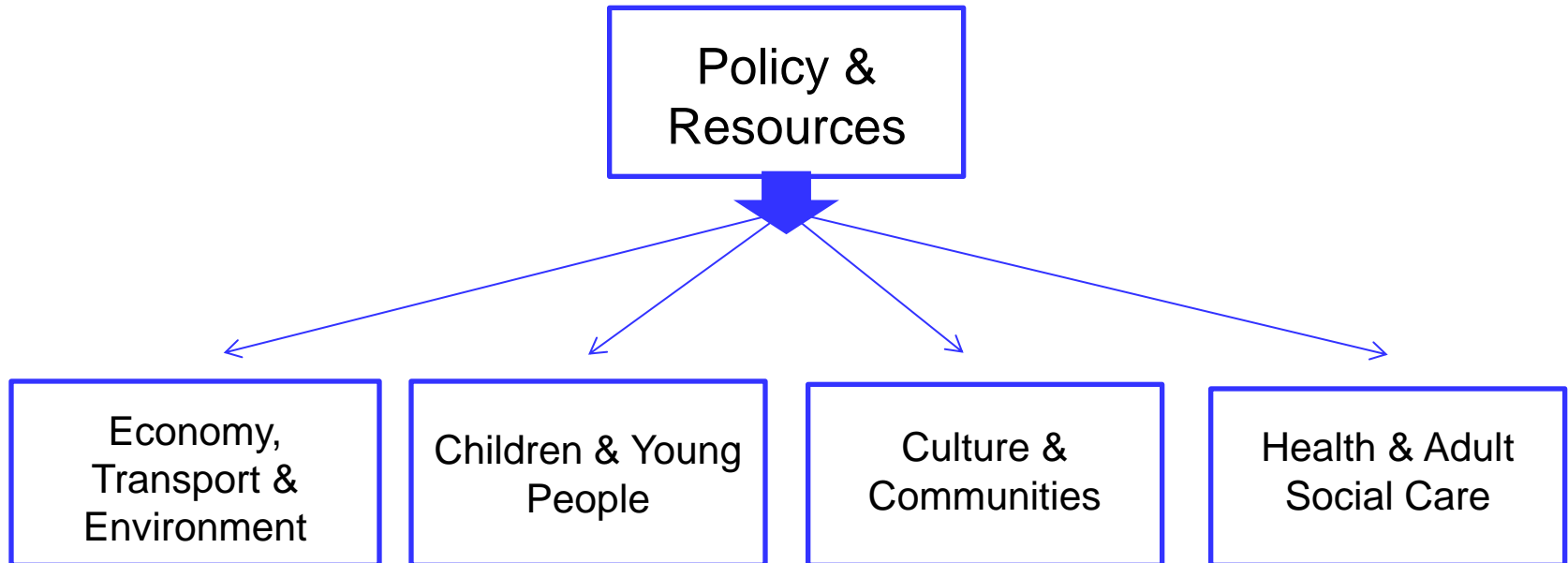
- Formal scrutiny introduced as part of the move to Executive Arrangements following the Local Government Act 2000
- Authorities operating Executive Arrangements must have at least one Scrutiny Committee

Role and purpose of Scrutiny

- To assist the Executive and the County Council in the development of the Budget and Policy Framework
- To conduct research and analysis of policy issues and possible options
- To hold the Executive and the Council to account
- To make recommendations to the Executive or to the County Council arising from the scrutiny process



Select (Scrutiny) Committees



C&C SC – Terms of Reference

Reviewing how **policies, services and decisions support thriving culture and sustainable, inclusive communities**; how they are implemented and how performance is evaluated and improved.

Policy Development and Review

Key work stream is to review and make recommendations either to the Executive or to the Full Council to assist in the development of future policies and strategies.

Policy Development

- Contribute to development of new or improved council policies and strategies
- Proactive where there may be gaps or changes

Policy Review

- Reviewing existing policy, to consider:
 - Do we have a clear and up to date approach?
 - Is it the right approach?
 - Are policies coherent and joined up?
 - Are the policies effective when put into action - is it working? Are they delivering what was intended?

Holding the Executive and the Council to Account

- Scrutinising decisions which the Executive is planning to take (Pre-scrutiny)
- Scrutinising Executive decisions that have been taken before they are implemented (Call-in)
- Scrutinising Executive decisions after they have been implemented, whether shortly afterwards or as part of a wider review of policy to measure their effect

Scrutiny of Decisions

- Issues to consider when scrutinising decisions:
 - Are decisions evidence based?
 - Has appropriate consultation been undertaken?
 - Do decisions reflect the County Council's priorities?
 - Have alternative options been considered?

Call-in

- Only applies where a decision has been made but not yet implemented
- Can only be done within 5 working days of the date members have been notified of the decision
- A quorum of members can call a meeting of a select committee to consider an executive decision. The Committee must meet within 14 days of the of meeting being called

Call-in options

- That the decision remains and is not amended
- That the decision be reconsidered by the relevant decision maker
- Where the decision is not in line with the Policy or Budget Framework that the County Council should take that decision



- Any decision which is not in line with the Policy or Budget Framework cannot be implemented until the call-in has been disposed of
- Urgent Key Decisions cannot be ‘called-in’ but are taken in liaison with the relevant Committee Chairman

Working Groups

- Group of Members identified to meet outside of the formal committee meetings
- Terms of Reference agreed by Select Committee
- Aims and timescale scoped, meetings held with relevant officers to discuss, culminates in summary of findings and recommendations where relevant

Items for the Agenda

- Any member of the Committee can request an item be put on the agenda
- Any member of the County Council can refer a matter to a committee provided it is relevant to the function of that committee
- The Executive, or the County Council, may request that a committee considers a matter referred by them

Topic Suggestions

- Suggestions welcome at any time to the Chairman or to Democratic Services
- Make clear the reason for the request – is there evidence this is an area of concern? (e.g. performance data, frequently raised by constituents) – is it a County wide rather than local issue?
- Note: Member Briefing Programme takes place monthly – for information items

Conclusion

- Role of scrutiny is wider than simply holding the Executive to account
- There needs to be an effective dialogue between scrutiny committees and the Executive to ensure that the work of committees has positive impact on policy and, ultimately, on service provision

Role of Scrutiny

Any Questions?