

## ANNEX A

### Transforming Suffolk Joint Scrutiny Panel



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### Protocol

1. The Transforming Suffolk Joint Scrutiny panel (referred to in this document as the Panel) has been established to review and scrutinise:
  - a) The performance of the Suffolk Strategic Partnership (SSP) Board, Delivery Partnerships (DP) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP);
  - b) The delivery of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) against the agreed performance outcomes and targets; and
  - c) The delivery of the LAA against the outcomes and priorities for each of the four themes of "Transforming Suffolk", the Community Strategy for Suffolk 2008 – 2028.
  
2. The membership and terms of reference for the Panel are set out in Appendix 1 to this Protocol.
  
3. Monitoring Officer

Suffolk County Council's Monitoring Officer will provide procedural advice and support to the Panel.
  
4. Appointment of Independent Community Members

Appointments shall be made jointly by the Monitoring Officers of Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council, and an officer of another participating authority.
  
5. Criteria for scrutinising a topic

For the purpose of including a matter on its agenda, the Panel shall take into account the following criteria:

  - a) that the matter comes within its terms of reference;
  - b) that there is a significant level of public interest in the matter;
  - c) that it is an issue which has been raised by auditors or other inspection regimes, such as Comprehensive Area Assessment;
  - d) the effect of new government guidance or legislation;
  - e) that there is an opportunity to identify and promote good practice;
  - f) that priority should be given to subjects where scrutiny could make a difference by having a positive impact and adding value to the work of the SSP.

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#### 6. Forward Work Plan

- 6.1 The Panel will maintain an annual forward work plan. Topics can be added to, or removed from, the forward work plan as priorities change.
- 6.2 In agreeing its forward work plan the Panel will have regard to the work programmes of each Council's overview and scrutiny committees to avoid duplication and to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to scrutiny of the Suffolk LAA and the SSP.
- 6.3 Similarly when a local authority overview and scrutiny committee is considering a proposal to scrutinise the Suffolk LAA and SSP, there will be an expectation that it will request the Panel to include the item on its forward work plan.

#### 7. Gathering Information

- 7.1 In addition to reports from officers, members can collect information to assist them in their scrutiny role. This may be gathered from a wide variety of people, including the general public, and could be in the form of written or oral evidence, or via 'site visits' (talking to the people who are actually doing a particular job or are in receipt of a particular service).
- 7.2 Commissioned research and comparative data from other local authorities, partnerships, bodies or organisations can provide useful information to support the Panel. For example, performance measurement and benchmarking against other LAAs and SSPs.
- 7.3 The Panel will develop a non-exclusive list of organisations and individuals who may be able to assist it in scrutinising particular topics.
- 7.4 By this document, all parties to the Suffolk LAA and the SSP agree to co-operate fully with the scrutiny of any topic by
  - (1) making available all information reasonably requested by the Panel; and,
  - (2) ensuring that any request by the Panel that a particular member or officer attend a Panel meeting is complied with.

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#### 8. Presenting Information

8.1 Where written reports have been included with agenda papers, the Chairman will usually ask the report author to introduce the item to the Panel. The introduction should normally last up to 5 minutes and look to highlighting the key issues within the report. Within these introductions it is important NOT to run through the written report in great detail as it is reasonable to expect that Panel members will have had time to read and consider the reports before the meeting.

8.2 Alternatively, oral presentations can be made and the use of PowerPoint can often be helpful. The suggested time for oral presentations is up to 10 minutes.

#### 9. Methods of operation

9.1 A range of methods can be used to discuss items on the agenda. These can include the formal committee style debates or breaking up into assembly/workshop mode with smaller discussion groups feeding back key points and issues.

9.2 The Panel may also wish to consider the use of smaller sub groups or working parties for in depth scrutiny of an identified subject. Such groups would report back to a meeting of the full Panel, who would agree the final outcomes and recommendations of the scrutiny.

9.3 Where appropriate the use of video conferencing should also be encouraged. The Panel should not consider itself restricted to formal meetings.

#### 10. External Involvement

Consideration should be given as to who else could be included and add value to relevant debates. Such external involvement could include:

- (a) Past, present or future service users;
- (b) Experts or witnesses;
- (c) Independent representatives;
- (d) Members and/or officers of related organisations in the private or voluntary sectors;
- (e) Representatives of local communities;
- (f) Members of the appropriate DP;
- (g) Members of the relevant LSP.

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#### 11. Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure (Appendix 2) shall apply to all meetings of the Panel.

#### 12. Financial Arrangements

##### (1) **Servicing the Panel**

Suffolk County Council will provide administrative support with regard to convening and minuting Panel meetings, the cost of which will be shared equally by the eight local authorities.

Suffolk County Council will provide Scrutiny Officer support, the cost of which will also be shared equally by the eight local authorities.

##### (2) **Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

All Panel members shall be eligible to receive travel and subsistence allowances. For representatives of local authorities these should be at a rate set out in their respective Members' Allowance Scheme and the cost shall be borne by their local authority.

For Independent Community Members the relevant travel and subsistence allowances are those set out in Suffolk County Council's Members' Allowance Scheme. These costs shall be borne equally by the eight local authorities.

#### 13. Code of Conduct

13.1 All members of the Panel will be required to sign up to, and abide by, the Code of Conduct, to complete the Register of Members' Interests and to declare any gifts and hospitality received in relation to their role as a member of the Panel.

13.2 Independent Community Members will be bound in honour by the Code of Conduct and shall make a written declaration to be bound by the Code and to complete their entry in a Register of Interests within 28 days of appointment. Any alleged breaches of the Code will be investigated by the Monitoring Officer and be determined by Suffolk County Council's Standards Committee.