Dear Sarah

Thank you for your letter regarding the work programme update from the CPB Scrutiny Panel dated 27th Aug 2013. In response to the points you raise, the Panel does recognise the CPB’s approach to capture the relevant information when considering emerging issues and evaluating performance. The Panel also recognises that the existing highlight reports help the CPB fulfil this role and provide the relevant information.

The Panel also agree with your point about not duplicating effort when resources are reducing and it is precisely for this reason that the Panel has not taken a significant role in monitoring the performance of partnership Programmes. Rather, the Panel is concentrating its scrutiny on three key issues with each of the programmes:

- The outcome to the citizen
- Effective partnership working
- The role of the CPB in relation to that programme.

The Panel therefore feel that the pro forma is a very useful tool to gain an insight into these specific issues prior to their meeting, which are not included in any detail in the highlight reports. The pro formas also provide the Panel with a useful tool to help compare the different Programmes’ partnership issues and provide quick comparisons with the positive and negative elements of each, to see if issues are unique to an individual Programme or being shared across the Partnership.

The Panel do appreciate that the SROs are very busy, and do not wish to overburden them with additional reporting. However, the most recent report the Panel received (attached) was minimal, but still provided the Panel with enough information to help frame their questioning. Furthermore, as the Panel only meets quarterly and will
only be scrutinising one programme per meeting, it would mean that the majority of SROs will only need to complete a report once every two years. The Panel will also give significant notice as to when they will require the report to give the SROs as much time as possible to provide the required information.

The Panel would therefore sincerely like to maintain the use of the proforma for their scrutiny as it provides essential additional information that is not included in the Programme Highlight reports. We hope that you do not find this an unreasonable request and will be able to see how these forms can help improve the quality of scrutiny of partnership issues across the Programmes.

In relation to the forthcoming Scrutiny Panel meetings, the Panel would like to hear from the following SROs

- Scrutiny Panel meeting in December 2013 (date to be confirmed shortly but likely to be the 12th of December) – Thriving and Prosperous economy SRO.
- Scrutiny Panel meeting in March 2014 (date to be confirmed) – Families and Young People SRO.

Finally, the Panel have also discussed what progress has been made on the recommendations they have made from their previous meetings and how they can best find out this information. The Panel feel that written updates would be most suitable to prevent taking up officers’ time to appear in front of the Panel again. The Panel would therefore like to request a written update in relation to the recommendations made over the previous year.

However, the Panel are also aware that this would be a time consuming request if they had an update of all recommendations at one time. The Panel therefore request a phased written update on their recommendations, starting with recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5 from their scrutiny of engagement with those hardest to hear at our October 2012 meeting (see attached letter).

Yours sincerely