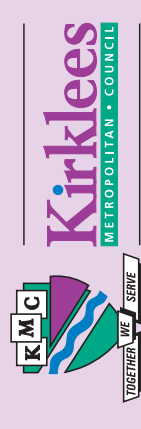
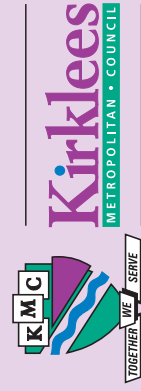


# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

...the past 12 months

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Annual Report 2004/5



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2004/5 ...the past 12 months

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## WHAT IS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY?

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced executive decision making arrangements into Local Government.

Under these arrangements, a Cabinet or Elected Mayor (the Executive) is responsible for making decisions about how the agreed Council budget is spent and the way services are provided. This is balanced by the Overview and Scrutiny function. Overview and Scrutiny gives an important role to all Councillors who do not hold Cabinet posts. The process enables them to challenge, where appropriate, the decision-making of the Cabinet, hold it to account, monitor the quality of service delivery, review policy and contribute to its development. It is now a crucial part of Local Government.

Overview and Scrutiny also has a duty to scrutinise health services in the area.

The aim of these new arrangements is to make Councils more efficient, transparent and accountable.

## CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ...the past 12 months

It is now five and a half years since Kirklees began working with an Executive/Scrutiny split. In many ways we have benefited from the close political profile that the Council has experienced for much of that period. The need for the different political groups to work together has created an atmosphere that has been conducive to the creation of constructive scrutiny.



We have experimented with different structures, explored methods of working, against a background of cynicism and a lack of understanding by some.

Each year I, and my colleagues on the Management Group, pull together the lessons we have learnt from our continuous monitoring of the process. This year we have conceded that more lessons need to be learnt and, as a result, we have proposed radical changes that we hope will further strengthen and enhance Overview and Scrutiny in Kirklees.

However, just as those of us who are directly involved in the process are prepared to recognise the areas where improvement can be made, so too others, Elected Members and Officers alike, must also look to the ways that they can help us to improve the way we work and the contributions we can make to decision making and the corporate profile of the Council. In 2005/06 the Management Committee will be embarking on an extensive programme of education for Officers at all levels to encourage this.

Scrutiny is not the exclusive property of those directly involved in the process. Every Elected Member has a duty to hold the Executive to account in their own way. Many more opportunities have been introduced through changes which have been made to both Council and Cabinet agendas.

The shifting role of Overview and Scrutiny is designed to move the emphasis away from individual decisions and the minutia of service delivery to more thematic issues and corporate targets that will determine the future of Kirklees. We also aim to develop methods through which Elected Members can exercise valuable scrutiny of other processes. The relationship with Area Committees, outside bodies and partnerships will be a priority in the coming year.

Despite the restrictions placed on us in the past year through a budgetary decision that severely restricted our officer resources and our planned development, the past year has seen many successes which are detailed in this Report.

I would like to thank all those Elected Members and their community co-optee colleagues who have worked so hard in the past year as well as the small, but highly dedicated, team of Scrutiny Officers. On a personal note I owe a great debt to my Management Group colleagues whose support and hard work has ensured that, despite the views of some, Overview and Scrutiny in Kirklees still remains a leader throughout authorities nationally.



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL FOR THE CHILDREN ACT



## Panel Membership

Cllr Maggie Blanshard (Lead Member) pictured left, Cllr Margaret Fearnley, Cllr Annie Smith, Cllr Mohan Sokhal, Alison Fisher, John Hebblethwaite



The Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the **Children Act** was set up as a new panel at the start of the 2004/05 municipal year.

The Children Act is a fundamental piece of legislation that will change the way services for children and families are structured and delivered over the coming years. The Panel was set up to monitor and challenge the implementation of the Act in Kirklees and the future development of services for children and families.

The Lead Member of the Panel, Cllr Maggie Blanshard, worked independently for the first few months. Things were beginning to steadily move forward in Kirklees, and Cllr Blanshard took this opportunity to learn more about the Children Act, the Every Child Matters national change programme and the local position.

The Panel was formally established in early 2005. The first challenge it faced was to get up to speed with the **Children Act**; the national programme; Kirklees planning and implementation structures; key pieces of work that had taken place in Kirklees; and work that was due to take place in the near future.

The Panel carried out this work in a very short period of time. However, it was a steep learning curve for the Panel members. Although all of them had some knowledge and experience of services for children and families, the Children Act is a complex, ground breaking agenda that will fundamentally change the way services for children and families are delivered.

Once the Panel had a working knowledge of the Children Act and the local position, it developed a detailed approach and plan for its work. The Panel also agreed an underpinning principal, that it would tackle every piece of work from the perspective of children, young people, their families and their carers.

## Since carrying out its initial work the Panel has concentrated on:-

- Keeping up to date with key developments (both locally and nationally).
- Identifying local issues and challenging key pieces of work when appropriate e.g. the development of a Kirklees Vision for services for children and families.
- Speaking to service users and professionals in Kirklees about their views of services for children, young people, their families and their carers.



Towards the end of the municipal year the Panel started to use the findings of its work to contribute and challenge the thinking and implementation of the Children Act in Kirklees. The deadline for implementing the Act is 2008. However, services for children and families will continue to develop and evolve long after that date.



The Panel will continue its work in 2005/06. Building on the foundations that have been laid this year, its first priorities will be to look again at its work programme for the coming twelve months; carry out more visits and speak to services users; and to contribute to the development of the Council's first single Children's Plan.

**“I do think it is important to look at children's issues and ensure that the council is doing everything possible for the children of Kirklees, they are our future”.**

Cllr Margaret Fearnley

**Thanks go to** the two co-opted members of the Panel, John Hebblethwaite and Alison Fisher for their commitment and invaluable contribution to the work of the panel.

The Panel would also like to thank the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cllr Geoffrey Alvy, Mark Greaves, Philip Cotterill, Gavin Tonkin, Rob Vincent, Tom Irwin and Dr Judith Hooper for their continued support and contributions to the work of the Panel.



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL FOR CORPORATE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



## Panel Membership

Cllr Andrew Palfreeman (Lead Member) pictured left, Cllr Tabasum Jamil Aslam, Cllr Gordon Beever, Cllr Angela Ellam, Cllr Terry Lyons, Neil Robertson, Anthony Shaw.

### Key successes

- Monitoring and challenging the development of the second generation Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA 2G).
- Monitoring and challenging the impact of policy in practice e.g. the implementation of the Council's new Attendance Improvement Scheme.
- Contribution to policy development e.g. in-depth review of the Council's draft Procurement Strategy
- Introducing new ways of working e.g. assigning projects to individuals or small groups of panel members.

2004/05 has been a **challenging but successful year** for this panel.

It has faced a number of key challenges; a wide and varied remit; the arrival of new panel members, many of who were newly elected in 2004; putting into practice new and innovative ways of working. However, the **Panel has embraced these challenges** and used them to its benefit.

The Panel's remit has been wide and varied and this forced it to prioritise the workload and focus on fewer issues. It looked in detail at the Council's Corporate Improvement Priorities and met with all relevant Cabinet Members in order to identify the areas of focus for the year ahead.

The new panel members came with an open mind, new experiences and new skills. The Panel recognised this and used it to its benefit when agreeing its priorities and discussing how to carry out its work.

**‘The new panel members each had their own individual skills, knowledge and experiences. The qualities that they brought, added real value to the Panel's work this year’**

**Cllr Andrew Palfreeman.**

Putting into practice new ways of working is always challenging. However, assigning tasks to individuals and small groups of members has helped the Panel to manage its remit and make the

most of individual's skills and knowledge. As a result the Panel has been able to carry out detailed work in a shorter timescale and respond to the issues as and when they arise.

The Panel has carried out work on a number of corporate issues this year. These issues relate to the delivery of front line services, but are key corporate issues, which will affect the future direction of the Council.

**‘The Panel's work is focused on how Kirklees does its business internally and this has a direct impact on the delivery of front line services in Kirklees’.**

**Cllr Andrew Palfreeman**

What follows is a summary of some of the key pieces of the work that the Panel has focussed on.

### LPSA 2G

The Panel began its work on LPSA 2G in 2004. LPSA 2G affects the whole Council and its partners. It is for this reason the Panel were keen to get involved in its development at the earliest possible opportunity.

To date, the Panel has discussed and put forward its views on; the local priorities for LPSA 2G; the areas of focus and targets under each of the priorities; and the indicators that have been developed for each of the targets.

Negotiations on the targets and indicators are still taking place with Central Government. Once the Agreement has been finalised the Panel will have to make a decision on whether it wants to monitor its implementation and impact.

### Attendance Improvement Scheme

The Panel became involved in the development of the Attendance Improvement Scheme in early 2004 and has maintained this in 2004/05.

Two co-opted panel members, Neil Robertson and Anthony Shaw, took on the task of following up on the Panel's initial recommendations and looking at the impact that the scheme had had on sickness levels in the Council. Their research revealed that the recommendations had been addressed and a lot of work had been done to roll out the scheme. However, there was still a lot of work to do and the scheme had not yet had the desired impact on sickness levels.

Neil and Anthony reported these findings to the Panel and recommended that it request a further detailed progress report on the implementation and impact of the scheme.

The Panel received this report in March 2005. Following discussions it has made additional recommendations to the Human Resources Strategy Unit. It has also decided to continue to monitor the implementation and impact of the scheme and the re-development of sickness policies and procedures.

**‘Working as a co-opted member of the Panel allows me to use some of my working experience when probing the actions of the executive and cabinet members’**

**Neil Robertson.**

### Procurement Strategy

The development of the Council's Procurement Strategy has been a new but key issue for the Panel this year. Given the experience of one panel member, Cllr Angela Ellam, it was decided that she would lead the Panel's work on this issue.

Cllr Ellam carried out an in-depth review of the draft Procurement Strategy. The work led to a detailed report, which set out the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the work.

The Panel held lengthy discussions with the Head of Service and Cabinet Member about the report. As a result, all the recommendations were accepted, some have already been acted upon. This piece of work has played a fundamental part in shaping the direction of Kirklees Procurement Strategy. All that remains is for the Panel to monitor the implementation and impact of his recommendations.

This article only provides a brief overview of the work that the Panel has carried out this year. The issues have been wide ranging and the Panel's contribution has been varied. The intention is to build on the Panel's good work and successes in 2005/06.

**Special thanks go to** the co-opted members of the Panel, Neil Robertson and Anthony Shaw, for their commitment and invaluable contribution. Also to those Officers who have engaged positively in the work of the Panel.



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL FOR EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES



## Panel Membership

Cllr Imtiaz Ameen (Lead Member) pictured left, Cllr Mahmood Akhtar, Cllr Robert Iredale, Cllr Annie Smith, Cllr Christine Stanfield, Cllr Kath Taylor, Kate Cross, Naveed Khawaja, Helen Singleton, Reverend Tim Wiley

## Key successes

- Detailed reviews resulting in clear recommendations e.g. Review of the Strategic Area Review of Post 16 Education and Training in Kirklees.
- Contribution to policy development e.g. review of the draft Special Educational Needs Strategy.
- Introducing new ways of working e.g. assigning projects to individuals or groups of panel members.
- Regular Lead Member briefings to keep up to date with key issues and developments.
- Constructive working relationship between the Panel and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cllr Geoffrey Alvy.
- Engaging interested parties, key stakeholders and members of the public.

2004/05 has been a productive year for this panel. Under the new leadership of Cllr Imtiaz Ameen, it has built on the success of previous years, whilst **embracing new challenges**. Key challenges this year included managing and prioritising the work load and putting new ways of working into practice.

Education is a huge area and the Panel felt that prioritising its workload was key to ensuring that it had a greater impact on service delivery and the direction of education policy in 2004/05.

The Panel held detailed planning sessions with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education Officers. What came out of these sessions was a more focussed work programme for the year ahead.

The Panel has fully supported new ways of working in 2004/05. The approach of assigning tasks to individuals or groups of panel members has been used to great effect. It has made it possible for the Panel to manage the work programme more effectively and respond to issues as and when they arise.

Prioritising and working in new ways, has enabled the panel to carry out some very influential pieces of work. What follows is a summary of some of that work.

## Strategic Area Review of Post 16 Education and Training in Kirklees (StAR)

The Strategic Area Review was carried out by the West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council and led to the development of proposals for the future of post 16 education and training in Kirklees.

However, the Panel, Kirklees Councillors, Head Teachers and parents raised concerns about the review process and the proposals. As a result, it was agreed that the Panel would carry out a detailed review to investigate the concerns and reach an informed view about the proposals.

The review was intense. The Panel gathered as much information as possible and the views of all interested parties on the proposals. Head teachers; parents; Elected Members; representatives from the Learning and Skills Council and consultants were all actively involved in the work.

On completion of the review the Panel found that it broadly agreed with the proposals. However, it shared some of the concerns raised by parents and Head Teachers about the process of the review and the future of post 16 education and training in Kirklees.



**"I feel that the discussion about post 16 provision brought up many issues that needed to be addressed". Cllr Kath Taylor**

The Panel produced a detailed report, which included its findings, conclusions, views on the proposals and detailed recommendations. It's

views and many of its recommendations have been included in the Council's final response to the proposals.

On the whole the Panel's work has been well received and has made a valuable contribution. The challenge for next year is to follow up on the recommendations and ensure that positive changes occur as a result.

**"Scrutiny at its best". Cllr Geoffrey Alvy**

## Special Educational Needs Strategy

Special Educational Needs has always been an important issue for the Panel. In December 2004 the Local Education Authority produced its latest draft Special Educational Needs strategy. When the strategy was distributed for consultation, the Panel set up a small working group to carry out a review of it and respond to the consultation.

Three panel members, Cllr Robert Iredale, Cllr Mahmood Akhtar and Kate Cross, carried out a detailed review and put together a report setting out their views. This report has now been fed into the formal consultation process.

The strategy will not be finalised until later in 2005. The working group plans to meet with the Cabinet Member and senior Education Officer to discuss the scrutiny report and the final strategy in detail.

**"It has been good to work with a small team and I feel that our recommendations will perhaps have more impact as a result of the effort we have put in".**

**Kate Cross**

This article only provides a snapshot of the work that the Panel has carried out in 2004/05. However, it does show the breadth of education issues that the Panel has considered and the contribution that it has made to policy development.

**Special thanks go to** all the co-opted members of the Panel for their invaluable commitment and support. Also the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cllr Geoffrey Alvy and key senior officers, particularly Andrew Pennington, for engaging positively with the Panel.



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL FOR ENVIRONMENT



## Panel Membership

Cllr Nigel Patrick (Lead Member) pictured left, Cllr Jim Dodds, Cllr Naz Hussain, Cllr Mehboob Khan, Cllr Andrew Marchington, Fred Lewis, Ute Pfeifer

## Key successes

- Detailed investigations leading to evidence-based conclusions and recommendations - e.g. in relation to dog fouling and weed control
- Policy development type activity - e.g. sustainable development and the Local Development Framework
- Looking at issues of concern - e.g. environmental impacts of services and potential misuse of materials
- Keeping an overview of key projects - e.g. "Cleaner Greener Safer" and the Vine Street depot proposals - and of relevant decisions and holding the cabinet to account
- Good examples of successfully engaging with the public and service users and significant coverage of the panels work in the local press

The past years work programme for the **Environment Panel** has been interesting and varied, with issues scrutinised spanning the complete range from 'on the ground' service-based issues to overarching strategies and policies.

**"The Panel was very productive this year with a number of important issues investigated, most notably the problem of dog fouling, and the controversial plans to build a new transport depot at Vine Street. Members of the Panel have worked hard and contributed greatly to the work of the Panel, and I am grateful for their commitment and dedication".**

**Cllr Nigel Patrick**

A major success of the Panel has been the development of less traditional ways of working to complement the work that is carried out in formal meetings. This has included adopting a 'task based approach' to issues, whereby individual panel members have carried out tasks between meetings.

**"As a new councillor, the first year has been a very steep learning curve and I have found that being assigned the task ... was an ideal way of learning and getting to meet officers".**

**Cllr Jim Dodds**

**"It was an interesting opportunity to learn about a topic in detail".**

**Cllr Mehboob Khan**

**"Having been on the environment scrutiny panel for two years I feel as a cooptee I have been able to make a contribution to the many and varied subjects that came before the panel"**

**Fred Lewis (Co-opted Member)**

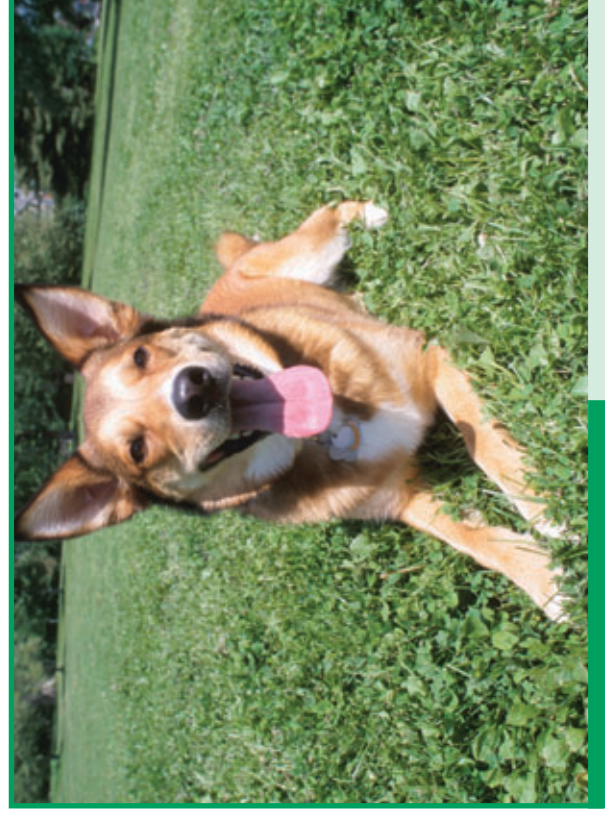
The Panels' work has included looking into issues of concern to service users, members of the public and elected councillors.

## Dog Fouling

It undertook a detailed investigation into the issue of dog fouling and potential solutions to this persistent environmental problem. The Panel tackled this issue in an innovative way, combining formal, meeting-based work with assigned tasks and working with the local media to establish public opinion. Over 50 members of the public gave their views to the Panel, which reinforced its opinion that this is an issue of significant public concern.

Cllr Patrick visited Sands Recreation Ground to get the perspective of the Council's dog wardens who have to tackle this issue on a day-to-day basis. The wardens would welcome the introduction of dedicated bins for dog waste as they believe that the lack of facilities for people to dispose of dog waste is one of the key contributing factors to the problem. This was a view strongly echoed by most members of the public who contacted the Panel. The Panel had to balance these views with a range of other evidence and opinion, including the cost implications of some of the potential solutions such as providing dedicated bins. The Panel came up with a series of practical recommendations to the cabinet member around three main priorities: undertaking education and promotion; providing solutions, and enforcement.

By recommending that the Council actively encourage dog owners to deposit appropriately wrapped dog waste in ordinary litter bins, the Panel felt that it was promoting a highly practical solution to the problem without significant cost implications to the council. While some of the Panels' recommendations were accepted - e.g. the service will now look at the possibility of using the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act to help take action against irresponsible dog owners and will prepare a budget bid for an additional dog warden - the Panel was disappointed that the principle recommendation about the use of ordinary litter bins was rejected and have made efforts to explore further why this particular recommendation could not be accommodated.



**"Despite our best efforts, the problem of dog fouling will persist in Kirklees, because the Cabinet has chosen to disregard the recommendations of this panel. One can only hope that a future administration will act on the recommendations made and clear the streets of this serious problem."**

**Cllr Nigel Patrick**

## Local Development Framework

The Panels' work has also included more strategic, policy-oriented issues, such as exploring the potential opportunities offered by the Local Development Framework (LDF) to help achieve the broader ambition of "sustainable development". Cllr Mehboob Khan and one of the Panels' two co-opted members - Ute Pfeifer - undertook some scoping work and met with relevant Officers in several council departments. Resulting from this, the Panel decided to focus on whether higher than current standards for energy and water conservation and use of renewable energy could be imposed on developers as part of the LDF process. The intention is that the information and evidence the Panel has collected can now be made available to help inform the wider debate that all elected councillors will be involved in about different priorities within the LDF.

**The Panel would like to thank** - Steve Noble and his team in Environmental Services; Philip Webber and the Environment Unit, and Terry Brown and officers from Highways - for their contributions to the Panels' work this year and for their continued enthusiasm for working with scrutiny in a proactive way to help improve outcomes for service users and the public.



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL FOR HEALTH



## Panel Membership

Cllr Molly Walton (Lead Member) pictured left, Cllr Marie Bower, Cllr Martyn Bolt, Cllr Margaret Fearnley, Joyce France, Paul Horbury, Cllr Elizabeth Smaje, Cllr Mohammad Sanwar

## Key successes

- Undertook an investigation into the development of Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) across Kirklees
- Maintained an overview of developments at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals Trust and the implementation of the Healthcare Commissions recommendations
- Began early dialogue with health partners about developing service options - North and South Kirklees and South West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust - and preparations for future possible statutory consultations
- Maintained an overview of the “healthy communities and health inequalities” agenda, which will inform future health scrutiny priorities

The Overview and **Scrutiny Panel for Health** began the year by hosting a scrutiny of health event to which all local NHS organisations and a range of other key stakeholders were invited. This approach provided an opportunity for our partners to come together to identify their key issues, which in turn helped to inform the development of the panel’s work programme. It was also another opportunity for scrutiny to continue to build on the already good relationships with the health family locally.

“I continue to be heartened by the seriousness with which our health partners take scrutiny and the fact that they feel able to share information at the very early stages with myself and Officers”. Cllr Molly Walton.

The Panel has adopted some new ways of working this year, including a ‘task based approach’ to issues, whereby individual panel members have carried out tasks between meetings. This has further contributed to a better understanding of the issues under scrutiny. One example of this approach has been an investigation into the development of Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) across Kirklees.

## ‘PALS’

PALS are a central part of the new system of public and patient involvement in the NHS. They provide, amongst other things, confidential advice and support to patients, families and their carers; assistance in resolving problems and concerns quickly; and a focal point for feedback from patients to inform future health service developments. Scrutiny panel members visited each NHS Trust PALS offices on a fact-finding assignment in teams of two and held informal discussions with PALS managers and staff. This was followed by a formal panel meeting which was informed by the members’ findings. The work has resulted in some tangible and positive outcomes including a recommendation that the different PALS work together collectively on marketing and promotional activities. The work also helped to provide an example of how scrutiny and other mechanisms for public and patient involvement in health can work together to improve health outcomes for local people - Public and Patient Involvement Forums (PIFs) within each trust receive PALS reporting data and can therefore help in the monitoring of trends or gaps in services and liaise within their trusts for appropriate action. Scrutiny maintains a strategic overview of issues coming out of PALS monitoring and, where appropriate, considers issues of concern referred to it by the PPIFs

“As a new member of Council I found membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Health an extremely interesting way of learning how health provision is managed within Kirklees. The task based approach was something I would recommend to be used again”. Cllr Liz Smaje

## Healthy Communities & Health Inequalities

Health scrutiny is not just about scrutinising health services. It is has an important role in looking at

others’ contributions to health, including that of our own mainstream council services. A theme that has cut through this years work programme, and will continue to do so next year, is ‘healthy communities and health inequalities’. This issue has increased emphasis this year since the publication by government in November 2004 of the white paper on public health, called “**Choosing Health**”. The issue is an important one for health scrutiny for a number of reasons. Local Council’s have a big impact on people’s health both directly and indirectly through the wide range of services they provide. Elected Councillors also have an important ‘community leadership’ role to drive forward concerted and integrated action on health. And importantly, the powers and responsibilities of the council’s health scrutiny function means it has an overview of (and can contribute to) NHS, council and other agencies work towards promoting healthier communities and reducing health inequalities.

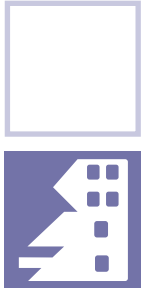
Having maintained an overview of the healthy communities and health inequalities agenda during the past year, one of the key challenges for health scrutiny next year will be to address how best to take forward this work and to prove appropriate challenge to ensure that efforts by a range of agencies are translated into health improvement outcomes for local people.

During the past year the panel benefited enormously from the input of its’ two co-opted members - Joyce France and Paul Horbury.

“The experience of being a co-opted member on this Panel has given me valuable insights into the ways the NHS and the Local Authority are working together for the benefit of our local communities in Kirklees. I have been particularly impressed by the professionalism of the officers from the various organisations which have made presentations to the panel, this, together with the infra-structure provided by the Kirklees Overview and Scrutiny Office has made for the very smooth running of meetings and the provision of information”. Paul Horbury (Co-opted Member)

Sadly, Joyce passed away in April of this year after a period of illness. Everyone on the Panel and all the members of the scrutiny team would like to express their deepest regrets, but also to acknowledge Joyce’s significant contribution, her enthusiasm and friendliness which we will all miss.





# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL FOR REGENERATION



## Panel Membership

Cllr Jean Calvert (Lead Member) pictured left, Cllr Shahida Awan, Cllr Sharon Fallows, Cllr Mark Hemingway, Cllr Keith Oldroyd, Cllr Elaine Ward, Chris West, Mike Heard, David Bettleley

## Key successes

- The Panel successfully used the assigned task approach when Councillor Fallows looked into the Supporting People Programme
- The Panel worked more informally, for example site visits to mobile libraries
- The Briefing process was successful for the Lead Member in engaging with Cabinet Members.
- The Panel maintained an overview of a number of issues including: -
  - Huddersfield Library and Piazza Feasibility Study
  - Castle Hill - Planning Enforcement Issue
  - Performance of Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing
  - Performance of Kirklees Active Leisure .
  - Housing Options Revisions to the housing allocation policy
  - Triennial Review of the Mobile Library Service
  - Building Services Performance and issues facing the service after the Decent Homes Programme is completed



This year the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Regeneration has had a large remit which includes not just **Planning and Economic Development issues** but also **Culture, Leisure and Housing issues**. It has been a challenge for the Panel to prioritise areas for scrutiny, but the lessons learned will be taken forward into the revised panel structure in the new municipal year.

The Panel has been a blend of councillors new to the Council and councillors who have some experience of working in Overview and Scrutiny. The contribution of the co opted members on the Panel has been invaluable, in particular the contribution of Chris West .

## Planning Issues

Following recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Regeneration in 2003/04, the Panel has been following up on the areas of recommendation. The Panel is pleased to note successful progress in the following areas: -

### Management Arrangements

- Introduction of dedicated team dealing with Major Planning Applications
- Centralized management of Enforcement and complaints function

### Planning performance indicators

- Processing of Major Planning Applications in 13 weeks increase from 29% to 43%
- Determining planning applications in 8 weeks increase from 68% to 80% during the year.

The Planning Service has been responsive to the suggestions made by Overview and Scrutiny and has started to see progress as a result of changes made.

## Garage Site Review

The Panel also followed up on the long standing work to review the use of Council owned Garage Sites.

During the last municipal year, funding was secured for a post to take the Review forward. After a preliminary appraisal exercise, Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing was commissioned to undertake the project. In April the Panel scrutinized the proposed project plan and timetable. The Panel was able to comment on the proposals and highlight potential problems for the Project Manager to consider. The Panel also suggested the information that should be made available to Elected Members regarding the review.



## Local Development Framework (LDF)

The Panel has been involved as a consultee in the development of the LDF. This has included commenting on the Regional Spatial Strategy and the draft Statement of Community Involvement.

**“..Considering the challenges faced by the Panel in having such a large remit, I have been pleased by the amount of work that has been undertaken this year...”**

Councillor Jean Calvert - Lead Member

**The Panel would like to thank** the Cabinet their Members for co-operation in sharing information with Scrutiny, particularly Councillors Andrew Cooper, John Smithson and Andrew Pinnock. The Panel would also like to thank Ken Gillespie, Tony Hood, Kimiyo Rickett and the many officers who have contributed to the Panel's work over the year.



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS



## Panel Membership

Cllr Margaret Bates (Lead Member) pictured left, Cllr Shahida Awan, Cllr Gordon Beaver, Cllr Adrian Murphy, Cllr Mohan Sokhal, Cllr Bev Warby, Fiaz Rashid, Morry Smith,

## Key successes

- Undertook a detailed investigation in relation to the Partnership Board for Learning Disabilities and the Partnership Board for people with Physical Disabilities and/or sensory impairments
- Considered actions being taken to address areas for improvement in the Childrens and Families Service identified in the annual review of improvement
- Maintained an overview of a range of issues relevant to the children and families service, including services for children in need and looked after children, and the Councils role as 'corporate parent' for children in care
- Held a public scrutiny event on services for people with sensory impairments, providing an opportunity for service users and members of the public to contribute

## The Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Social Affairs looked to a number of different sources to help inform the development of their work programme for 2004/05.

The Director of Social Affairs and Health attended the first meeting of the year to outline his priorities from the services' perspective. In addition to these, members raised their own issues of interest or concern and the Panel took account of issues of concern raised by the public and/or service users.

**"The Social Affairs Panel has covered some very interesting topics this last year, we have had the opportunity to question many officers from various departments within social services as well as engaging with members of the public with their particular concerns. Members of the Panel who have been able to attend have shown a keen interest in making sure that residents of KMC are getting best value and their needs met from our social services, we are very proud of the service we are scrutinizing"**

Cllr Margaret Bates

## Partnership Boards

One example of where the Panel looked at an issue of public concern is the detailed work undertaken in relation to the Partnership Boards for Learning Disabilities and for people with Physical Disabilities and/or Sensory Impairments. The Health and Social Care Board has established partnership boards to act on its behalf and be the lead partnership arrangement for commissioning health and social care. The intention is that the partnership boards will fully commission services for their areas over a period of time and they will be responsible for distributing pooled budgets approved by the Health and Social Care Board within clear commissioning strategies.

A range of concerns in relation to the work of these two boards had been raised brought to the Panel's attention in the previous municipal year, and it undertook to have a further look at the issues this year. Members wanted to establish whether the priorities and work programme of the partnership boards was based on the needs of users and carers, and what statistical information was used as part of this process; and how the vision has been taken forward in terms of determining priorities and developing action plans or influencing the work of the agencies involved.

The Panel heard detailed information from the relevant partnership commissioning managers and from the Person Centred Planning Team. While the Panel did not find evidence to support the specific concerns raised by the member of the public, the exercise was conducted in an open and transparent way and highlighted a number of areas which will be suggested for future scrutiny consideration, including:

- employment issues for disabled people;
- an update of the outcomes in relation to the review of Leisure and Daytime Activities;
- and further work with the Person Centred Planning Team.

Throughout the year the Lead Member for Social Affairs has liaised closely with the senior management team in social services and has maintained an overview of key issues going through the decision making process. This has included receiving briefings on, for example, older people's proposals and payment of residence allowances and payments for adoption support. The Panel hopes to build on this constructive liaison next year to facilitate more early engagement of Scrutiny when issues are in the developmental phase.

A number of new approaches were introduced by the Panel this year including introducing a more task-based approach to some of the issues and holding themed panel meetings.

## Services for Children & Families

A positive example of using a themed approach to panel meetings was an extended meeting to consider a number of issues in relation to childrens' and families' social services. This included looking at the issue of 'corporate parenting'. The Panel wanted to ensure that the council as a whole is undertaking its' responsibilities as a corporate parent in the best way it can, thinking about children in public care from the perspective of 'If this were my child..?'.

The discussions highlighted a number of areas for possible future scrutiny involvement next year, and concerns that the corporate parenting function is not being discharged as well as it could be - for example, Elected Councillors are not all aware of their specific responsibilities and are not being adequately engaged in the process. The Panel has recommended that information on Members' roles as corporate parents be redrafted and circulated to all Councillors, and has asked the service to consider options for how information about looked after children should be appropriately communicated within the Council, to enable Members and Officers, as corporate parents, to be aware of the lives of looked after children e.g. their education, health and welfare, what they do in their leisure time and holidays, how they celebrate their culture and how they receive praise and encouragement for their achievements.

## Sensory Services for Adults

The Panel has always stressed the importance of engaging directly with the public and service users. The final scrutiny activity this past year was dedicated to issues for adults with sensory impairments; and the Panel facilitated an open discussion event with a range of relevant organisations and council services and will be making a number of recommendations as a result of the discussion.



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL FOR TRANSPORTATION



## Panel Membership

Cllr Donald Firth (Lead Member) pictured left, Cllr Andrew Marchington, Cllr Peter McBride, Cllr Julie Stewart Turner, Cllr Linda Wilkinson, Cllr Derrick Yates, Janice Thomas, Hilary Wainwright

infrastructure issues. The service considered the issues raised by scrutiny and decided that the best way to address the concerns was to seek additional resources. A successful budget bid was approved in February 2005 which included additional resources for both operational work and to establish a Strategic Drainage Team.

## Greenways in Kirklees

The Panel has taken an interest in the development of Greenways across the Kirklees District. This year it has looked closely at the proposals for the Colne Valley Greenway and the Fenay Greenway.

The Panel had some reservations about the accessibility of the proposed Colne Valley Greenway and the use of tow paths. After a visit to the site, the Panel agreed to support the proposals for a pilot scheme and scrutinize the outcomes of the pilot.

The proposals for the Fenay Greenway have generated considerable public opinion. The Panel had concerns about the approach being taken, in particular regarding the ownership of the land required for the Greenway. It did not believe that the Cabinet Committee had sufficiently detailed information to make a decision to approve the project. After a series of meetings and a site visit, the Panel finally agreed a compromise with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration. A further detailed report on each of the four phases of the

Greenway project would be presented to Cabinet Committee for endorsement, before any work can begin on site. The Panel intend to further scrutinize each detailed report at the draft stage.

## Monitoring of Previous Scrutiny Recommendations

The Panel has also received updates on the progress being made by the Highways and Transportation Service in implementing previous scrutiny recommendations. In relation to recommendations made regarding the performance of the Public Rights of Way Unit, the Panel discussed progress made in a number of areas including staffing, the use of temporary closure orders and progress against performance indicators. The Panel had also made previous recommendations regarding the poor condition of street lighting across the district. As a result the Cabinet approved an Investment Programme. The Panel scrutinized what had been delivered to date, whether the project was on target and whether the critical safety issues had been addressed.

**The Panel would like to thank** the Cabinet Members, Councillors Denham and Smithson for their engagement with the Panel. The Panel would also like to thank officers of the Highways and Transportation Service, in particular Terry Brown, Chris Platts, Tom Ghee and Stuart Clewlow for their contributions to the work of the Panel.

## Key successes

- The commitment and attendance levels of all members of the Panel has contributed to its success.
- The Panel has engaged effectively with external partners, particularly Metro and West Yorkshire Ambulance Service.
- The Panel successfully influenced the recommendations to Cabinet Committee regarding the Fenay Greenway proposals.
- The Panel has used informal ways of working including visits to proposed greenway sites and assigned tasks.
- The Panel has followed up on the implementation of previous scrutiny recommendations including the Street Lighting Investment Programme and the performance of the Public Rights of Way Unit.
- The Panel has also undertaken overview work including :
  - The Development of Local Transport Plan 2
  - School Yellow Bus Services in Kirklees
  - The Pedestrian Strategy
  - Parking outside schools/ School Travel Plans



## Gully and Drain Cleansing

Members of the Panel and other Elected Members had raised concerns about the ability of the service to meet gully cleansing targets. On investigation it became clear that there were insufficient staff and vehicles in operation to effectively maintain the gully systems in Kirklees. Furthermore, as illustrated by the problems created by recent rainfall and flash flood problems, the Panel highlighted a need for more resources to be invested in strategic drainage to address longer term



# AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL LOOKING INTO SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER AND AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS



## Panel Membership

Cllr Julie Stewart Turner (Lead Member) pictured left, Cllr Marie Bower, Cllr Angela Ellam, Cllr David Hall, Margaret Barrow (Co-optee)

In January 2005 a panel started to look into an issue raised by a member of the public about the lack of support available for **people with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** and **Autism Spectrum Disorders**. The member of the public was particularly concerned about the lack of support at the transition stage into adulthood.



The Panel has spoken to a wide range of people involved in supporting people with ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorders. The Panel have also looked at similar issues around support to people with dyslexia and dyspraxia. The Panel has spoken to a range of Health professionals, the police, Council services, support groups and parents and carers of people with ADHD, ASD, dyslexia and dyspraxia. In addition the Panel had an open evening that enabled members of the public to have their say on the issue.



In addition to meetings of the Panel, each panel member has undertaken individual assigned tasks and fed the findings of their tasks back to the panel. Work in this area has involved interviews and visits including:

Job Centre Plus,  
Worklink,  
Autism Resource Provisions,  
ADISS National Conference.

## Definitions

ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorders are neurological development disorders, characterized by behavioural and learning & communication disorders.



The Panel intends to consult on the draft report of it's findings at the end of June 2005 and will present the finalised report to Council later in the year.

**"...this is my first experience of working on a scrutiny investigation and I have been impressed with the openness of the process, the thoroughness of the research and the efficiency of the administration ...."**

**Margaret Barrow, Coopted Member**

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND MANAGEMENT GROUP

...the past 12 months

## Management Group Membership

Cllr Andrew Palfreeman (Chair of Overview and Scrutiny), Cllr Jean Calvert, Cllr Robert Iredale, and Cllr Julie Stewart-Turner.

- 2004/5 brought with it many challenges for Committee and Management Group, including:**
- The introduction of a new panel structure and less scope for in-depth ad hoc work.
  - Many new Members involved in scrutiny for the first time following the 2004/05 local elections.
  - Ensuring the success of phase two of the Scrutiny Skills Development Programme.

Along the way there have been successes and lessons learnt. Committee and

Management Group were **keen to continually improve Overview and Scrutiny** by constantly reflecting on experiences. This resulted in the adoption of eight objectives that have been progressed over the last twelve months. Some highlights are summarised right:

- 2004/5 brought with it many challenges for Committee and Management Group, including:**
- The introduction of a new panel structure and less scope for in-depth ad hoc work.
  - Many new Members involved in scrutiny for the first time following the 2004/05 local elections.
  - Ensuring the success of phase two of the Scrutiny Skills Development Programme.

**Objective - To change the perception of scrutiny, both internally and externally and promote the valuable work carried out.**

**Key successes include:**

- A revamped scrutiny web site launched in April 2005.
- An information and guidance pack developed and used internally and externally to explain how Overview and Scrutiny works in Kirklees.
- Management Group attendance at Senior Management Group to develop an appreciation of scrutiny amongst council services.
- Working with services, through attendance at management team meetings, to improve their experience and understanding of Scrutiny.
- Hosting visits from three councils as a means of sharing our good practice.
- Responding to eighteen information requests from other councils.
- Attending regional network meetings and national conferences to share our good practice.
- On average Scrutiny has received press coverage 5/6 times per week over the last twelve months.



**Objective - To improve the relationship between Overview and Scrutiny and the Cabinet.**

**Key successes include:**

- Regular meetings between Lead Members and Cabinet Members to share priorities and work programmes.
- The development of a monthly bulletin for Cabinet Members summarising scrutiny activity.
- An information sheet developed for Cabinet Members setting out their roles and responsibilities in relation to scrutiny

**Objective - To concentrate more effort on following up Overview and Scrutiny recommendations to ensure that they have been acted upon.**

**Key successes include:**

- Monitoring arrangements have been built into

Panel work programmes to oversee the progress of agreed recommendations.

- Cabinet Members have begun to build scrutiny recommendations into their own priorities.
- A data base has been developed to be used as a tool for tracking the progress of recommendations.

**Objective - To invest more time in Member development.**

**Key successes include:**

- The development and delivery of a tailored induction programme for all Councillors new to Overview and Scrutiny.
- The successful completion of phase two of the Scrutiny Skills Development Programme.
- The introduction and ongoing success of task based approaches, whereby individual Panel Members undertake work independently on behalf of their Panel.

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN 2005/6

## ...the next 12 months

### Next year is likely to present many new challenges, including:

- Developing approaches to the Overview and Scrutiny of partnerships and external bodies.
- Responding to the review of the Council's decision making structures carried out by the Audit Commission.
- Ensuring the scrutiny is best positioned to respond to the key lines of enquiry as part of Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA)2.

With this in mind Management Group and Committee have used the experiences of 2004/05 to begin to develop structures and processes to ensure that Scrutiny is best placed to meet these challenges. Next year will see the introduction of a new five panel structure with a more thematic feel. There will hopefully, as a result, be more scope to carry out more in depth Ad Hoc work.

Management Group and Committee will be consolidated into one, with the creation of an Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

It is intended that the new structure will allow Panels to focus on "bigger" issues and incorporate more flexible working practices such as panel sub groups undertaking "mini Ad Hocs", cross panel working on specific issues and

further development of the task based approach. In many ways changing the structures is the easy part, and much effort will need to be invested to make sure that everyone involved can make a meaningful and worthwhile contribution. The newly created Management Committee will play a major role in this area, working with all Councillors, services, co-optees, partners and the public to ensure that the new approaches are accessible and clear.

Whilst there are new challenges, existing issues will still need to be tackled. The effective engagement of Cabinet and services in the work of Scrutiny, taking Councillor development to the next stage, raising the profile of Scrutiny in full Council, and generally raising the profile of Scrutiny are all high on the agenda for 2005/06.

# CONTACTS



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| Corporate   | Stronger Safer Communities   | Adults & Older People  | Children & Young People   | Regeneration   | Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee  |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Corporate Dev</li> <li>- HR</li> <li>- Finance</li> <li>- Training</li> <li>- Equalities</li> <li>- Chief Execs Office</li> <li>- Corp &amp; Dem</li> <li>- Support Services</li> <li>- Customer relations</li> <li>- Legal</li> <li>- Revs and Bens</li> <li>- Intech</li> <li>- FLSPs</li> <li>- Partnerships &amp; Procurement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Safety Unit/YOT</li> <li>- CSS</li> <li>- Neighbourhood Renewal Team</li> <li>- Strategic Housing</li> <li>- Housing Management</li> <li>- Building Services</li> <li>- Design and Property</li> <li>- Environmental Services.</li> <li>- Transportation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health</li> <li>- Adult Services (social services)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education and Young Peoples Services</li> <li>- Children's Services (social services).</li> <li>- Children Act implementation.</li> <li>- Catering and Cleaning</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic Regeneration</li> <li>- Culture and Leisure</li> <li>- Planning</li> <li>- Economic Development</li> <li>- Building Control</li> <li>- Markets and Licensing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manage, co-ordinate and develop the O&amp;S function.</li> <li>- Co-ordinate O&amp;S work on cross cutting issues (2005/6 LDF)</li> <li>- Monitor work of all standing panels.</li> <li>- Manage and co-ordinate the ad hoc review process.</li> <li>- Carry out ad hoc reviews when appropriate (2005/6 PFI).</li> <li>- Promote the work of O&amp;S.</li> <li>- Member development.</li> <li>- Develop O&amp;S approach to partnerships and external bodies</li> <li>- Performance management of key PIs</li> <li>- Audit panel</li> </ul> |
| <p>Cllr A Ellam<br/>Support: Penny Bunker</p>   | <p>Cllr I Ameen<br/>Support: John Heneghan</p>   | <p>Cllr M Walton<br/>Support: John Heneghan</p>  | <p>Cllr M Blanshard<br/>Support: Sally Bramwell</p>   | <p>Cllr N Patrick<br/>Support: Penny Bunker</p>  | <p>Cllr Andrew Palfreeman<br/>Support: Carl Whistlecraft</p>  |
| <p>Cllr K Pinnock<br/>Cllr P Batye<br/>Cllr A Pinnock</p>   | <p>Cllr A Marchington<br/>Cllr A Cooper<br/>Cllr A Denham</p>  | <p>Cllr D Hullock</p>  | <p>Cllr G Alvy</p>  | <p>Cllr J Smithson<br/>Cllr A Pinnock</p>  |   |