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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ...the past 12 months

ANNUAL REPORT 2005/6



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Foreword by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Councillor Andrew Palfreeman



This year's Annual Report illustrates the continued development of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny process.

Twelve months ago my colleagues on the Management Committee and I identified areas where, we believed, improvements could be made. These were confirmed by feedback we received from panel members, both elected and coopted. We introduced a number of changes which have enhanced the process and, most importantly, provide additional opportunities for everyone to be involved in what has always been a valuable part of the Council's work.

By reading the individual sections of this report you will see how Scrutiny can make a real difference, not only to the Council's decision making process, but also to service delivery and wider areas which affect the lives of all of us who live in the Borough. I am particularly pleased that the outcomes of the separate pieces of work we have undertaken are detailed by each Panel. These should go some way to answering those critics who say that Scrutiny fails to deliver any positive improvements.

Scrutiny is one part of the overall governance of Kirklees. We have always believed that early and full engagement with the Council's Executive is vital. I thank the members of the Cabinet for the way that they sought to work with us during the past year and hope that the new administration will realise the benefits of embracing Scrutiny.

It would be remiss of me not to express my appreciation for all the hard work undertaken by the team of Scrutiny officers. The process is undoubtedly Member led, but everyone needs support and we are fortunate to have such a dedicated and well lead team.

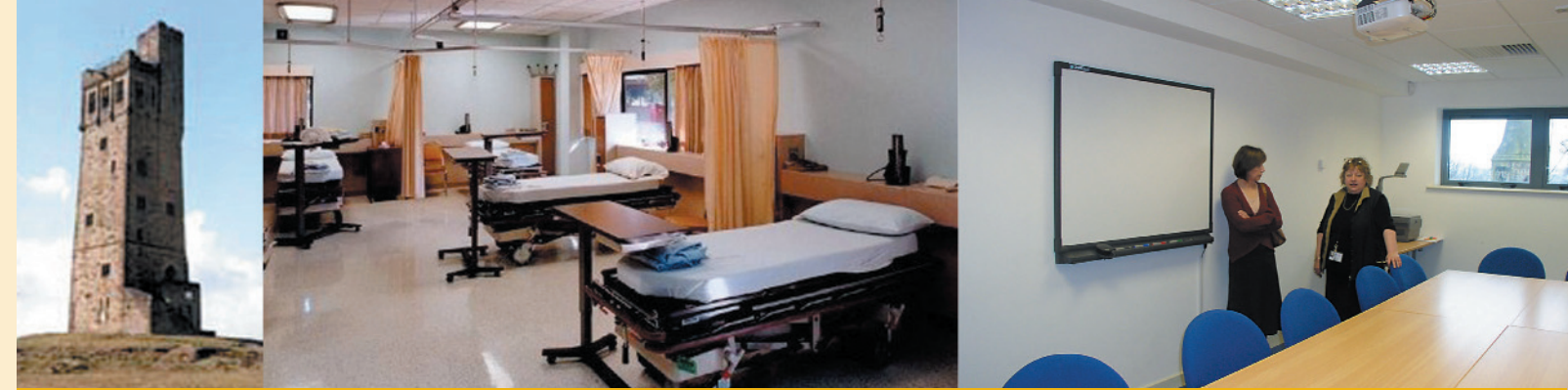
Yet again our Community cooptees have played an invaluable part in our work and I thank them for their contribution, just as I thank

our Panel lead members for their enthusiasm and hard work.

Many months ago I decided that, after six and a half years, it was time that I vacated the Chair. I have enjoyed my period of leadership and am proud of what we have created in Kirklees. None of this would have been possible without the support I have received from my Management colleagues. My sadness at leaving Scrutiny was compounded by the news of the death of Councillor Annie Smith. Annie was a member of our Management team and a Lead Member for Education for a number of years. She typified the changing attitude towards Scrutiny as we moved from the old system of Council Committees to the Executive/Scrutiny split. Annie embraced the new concept and became one of its most valuable advocates, making it work to advance her own view of how the Council, and Education in particular, should develop whilst engaging others whose views did not fundamentally coincide with hers.

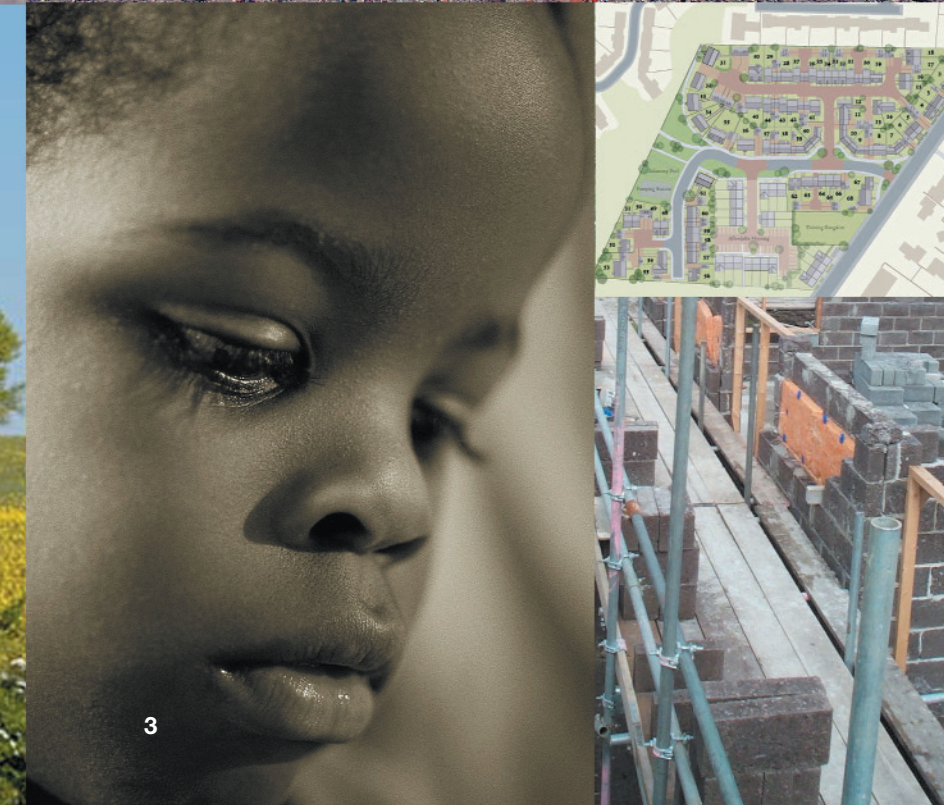
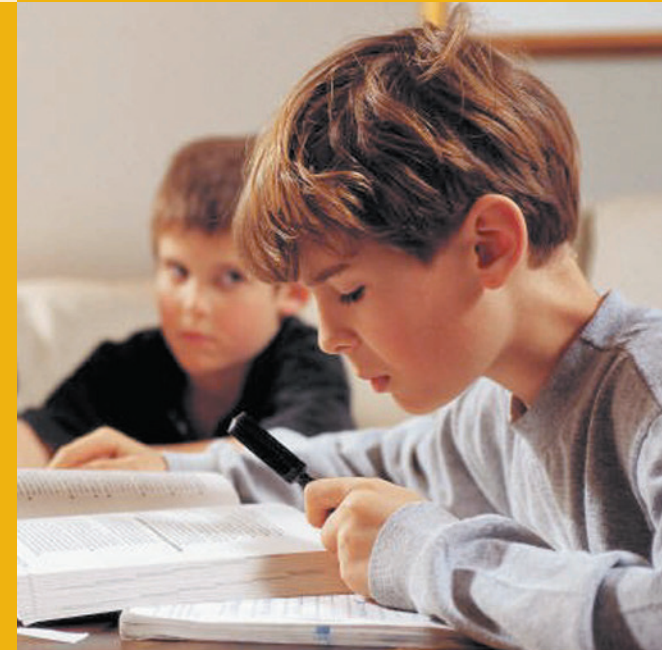
I would like to think that Annie would read this Annual Report and see a great deal of her influence in the way that Scrutiny is developing.

As I move on to other things I wish my successor, Molly Walton, every success in her new role.



Councillor Molly Walton

As I start in my new role as Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, I want to thank Andrew Palfreeman for all the work he has undertaken over the last six years in setting Scrutiny in Kirklees on a firm foundation. Through his leadership he has given Scrutiny credibility and helped to establish a scrutiny function that is recognised as a model of good practice nationally. It is my intention to continue to work with the principles laid down by Andrew Palfreeman and develop Overview and Scrutiny in Kirklees to meet the next challenges that it faces.



Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee ...the past 12 months

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has overall responsibility for coordinating, managing and developing the scrutiny process. The committee also acts as the Council's Audit Panel.

Management Committee membership:

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



The Committee has implemented a number of changes this year as part of an ongoing process of review and development which seeks to ensure that we continually improve Overview and Scrutiny in Kirklees. The key changes were:

- Consolidation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Management Group into one, with the creation of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Introduction of a new, streamlined panel structure to allow panels to develop a more coherent, strategic approach
- Incorporating more flexible working practices such as panel members undertaking 'assigned tasks' and the creation of 'mini ad hocs' to undertake short, sharp in-depth reviews and involve members who are not necessarily members of the standing panels

The new committee and panel structure has worked well. Panels are beginning to adopt a more strategic approach and we have seen improved outcomes from Scrutiny's involvement, including panel recommendations being approved by cabinet members.

A mini-ad hoc review has been completed and panel members from across the standing panels have taken forward a variety of 'assigned tasks' which have improved the depth and breadth of scrutiny's involvement and influence.

Progress against Objectives

Significant progress has been made in taking forward the key objectives we agreed at the start of the year, with each member of the Management Committee taking a lead responsibility for one or more of the objectives. Some highlights are:

- Developed an effective approach to the overview and scrutiny of partnerships, which panels and Lead Members have now started to implement. This will focus the scrutiny of partnerships on the four new Local Public Service Boards, with scrutiny standing panels holding the LPSBs to account for their delivery of the Local Area Agreement objectives.
- Improved the links and working relationships between scrutiny and local area committees. Agreement has been reached on a number of proposals to progress as follows:

Develop ways in which area committees can undertake scrutiny activity and area committees becoming more involved in providing a local perspective on issues being considered by scrutiny

Linking scrutiny to the area committee liaison panels

Exploring shared approaches to induction and development work for members and cooptees

Improved information sharing and joint working

- Tested out different approaches to communicating scrutiny work at full Council - for example, the ad hoc review on services for people with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder was presented by members to full council along with a facilitated 'block 1' session.
- Worked closely with Executive Management Group to ensure effective support to scrutiny on key strategic issues in panel work programmes.
- Coordinated wider elected member engagement and input into the Local Area Agreement (LAA) discussions.

- Coordinated a significant programme of communication and publicity activity both internally and externally, including helping to share and develop best practice with colleagues from other local authorities.

In addition to this developmental agenda for Scrutiny, Management Committee has also taken the lead in scrutinising issues and decisions which cut across the remits of the standing panels - for example the development and implementation of the Sustainability Appraisal framework, and the agreement of the Kirklees LAA.

The Committee also continued to review a select list of key performance indicators from across the council as part of our contribution to effective performance management.



Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Children and Young People



Panel membership:

Cllr Maggie Blanshard (Lead Member),
Cllr Khizar Iqbal, Cllr Ann Raistrick,
Cllr Elizabeth Smaje, Cllr Annie Smith,
Cllr Christine Stanfield, Kate Cross,
Helen Singleton, Reverend Tim Wiley.

Panel Highlights

- Visit South Gate Family Nursery and the Chestnut Children’s Centre.
- Visit to Extended Schools Provisions.
- Regular and informative panel meetings.
- Engaging with members of the public.
- Scrutinising interesting and challenging agendas.

“The Extended Schools work gave an in-depth look at how the Extended Schools programme in Kirklees is being formulated, through both discussions with officers and visiting schools to see first-hand the service provided. My thanks to both officers and schools for their input”.

CLLR ELIZABETH SMAJE

“The panel has worked effectively over the last year, both in monitoring policies and plans for children’s services and in experiencing first-hand how these policies are enacted. The panel have provided valuable member input and challenge into a system which would otherwise rely solely upon cabinet members for this”.

CLLR MAGGIE BLANSHARD

- The Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Children and Young people was established at the start of 2005/06 municipal year and was an amalgamation of the scrutiny panels for Education and Young People’s Service and the Children’s Act. Both these panels had been dealing with complex agendas and it was a challenge for the new panel to develop a work programme that would allow them to continue to focus on these agendas and set priorities for the forthcoming year.
- A detailed planning session with the Cabinet Member for Children’s services which was held at the start of the municipal year, helped to provide focus for the panel; and as a result they developed an extensive work programme which included issues such as: Extended Schools Initiative, Every Child matters, Building Schools for the Future, Corporate Parenting, Looked after Children, and Improving Standards and Attainment in Kirklees Schools.
- The Children’s Act remained a primary focus for the panel as this was the legislation that underpinned many of the initiatives they would be focusing on in 2005/06; and was also the main driver for the creation of a Children Services in Kirklees.

- The panel carried out their work programme by assigning projects and tasks to individuals or small groups of panel members; and a number of the panel members had investigated individual scrutiny topics, thereby increasing the work capacity of the panel. This approach enabled members to develop a comprehensive knowledge of particular issues, thus enabling effective scrutiny.
- Officers were also invited to scrutiny panel meetings to up date the panel on the progress being made on issues the panel had been focusing on. The panel has had presentations on: The Children and Young Peoples Plan, Extended Schools, Every Child Matters, Performance Management and Inspection information from the Children and Families Service.
- The panel has benefited greatly from open and regular input and briefing sessions from officers, both at panel meetings and individual briefings. These sessions proved to be invaluable as they allowed the panel to keep fully appraised of key developments, giving scrutiny the opportunity to contribute and positively influence important issues at an early stage.

- An important aspect of the panels work is having an overview of, and keeping up to date with key developments pertaining to children and young people, both locally and nationally. One particular initiative the panel had been interested in finding out more about was city academies. Research conducted on the panel’s behalf provided background information on the role and development of academies, and the panel will continue to monitor this initiative.

Panel Outcomes

- Influenced the development of the Children and Young Peoples Plan.
- Monitored and contributed to the development of the Extended Schools Strategy and the development of the criteria
- Made recommendations on improving standards and attainment in Kirklees Schools particularly in relation to specific areas;- Maths and English key stage 2 and 4, boys attainment, mechanisms for engaging parents in children’s education.
- Made recommendations on improving Councillors role as corporate parents.
- Positively contributed to a number of important issues and initiatives that affects the lives of children and young people.

- Contributed to discussions on the development of the Local Area Agreement.
- The panel has an important function in scrutinising policies, agendas and initiatives that affects the lives of children and young people, and will continue to do so in 2006/7. The panels aim is to build on their good work and successes by ensuring that the issues subjected to scrutiny are still pertinent and in the best interest of children and young people. The newly formed Children and Young People Service in Kirklees will continue to be a primary focus for the panel as well as developing and forging links with the Local Public Service Board for Children and Young People and the Local Safeguarding Board.
- The panel would like to thank Councillor Geoff Alvy, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and officers from Education Services and Children and Families for their support. Special thanks also go to all the co-opted members of the panel for their contributions and commitment. The panel would also like to acknowledge and say thank you to Sally Bramwell, former Overview and Scrutiny Officer who left in January 2006, for all the support she has given to the panel over the years.



Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Corporate Affairs



Panel membership:

Cllr Angela Ellam (Lead Member),
Cllr Tabassum Aslam, Cllr Gordon Beever,
Cllr Jim Dodds, Cllr David Hall,
Cllr Julie Stewart Turner, Neil Robertson,
Anthony Shaw, Hilary Wainwright

Portfolio overview

It has been a busy year for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Corporate Affairs. For the early part of the municipal year the Panel focussed on gaining an overview of the remit of the services in the portfolio. This included a visit to the Kirklees Direct Call Centre, a presentation on the work of the Emergency Planning Service and finding out about the current projects that keep Heads of Service awake at night!

Email Policy

The Panel also scrutinised the Employee Email Policy. The Panel invited Union representatives to take part in the discussion because of concerns that had been raised through the disciplinary appeals process.

The Panel made a number of recommendations relating to manager training to enforce the policy and employee training on the policy and the implications of not adhering to the policy. The Panel also agreed to undertake research into the implications of imposing a ban on the use of personal email at work, including looking at the approaches taken by other Councils.

Emergency Planning

The Panel also scrutinised the work of the Emergency Planning Team.

Discussion with Emergency Planning Officers also looked at the implications of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 on Council Services and how services were responding to the requirements.

The Panel questioned the role of Councillors in emergency situations in their wards. The Panel recommended that Councillors should have the opportunity to attend a training session. The Panel is planning to attend the joint emergency planning exercise in September 2006 and to continue to monitor the implementation of the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act.

Procurement Strategy

Following the 04/05 Panel's critical appraisal of the Procurement Strategy in 2004, the Panel undertook some follow up work to see how the agreed action plan had been implemented. The Panel were pleased to see a satisfactory level of progress. The Panel will be continuing to monitor progress, in particular seeing how the implementation of the strategy is translated into efficiency savings.

Panel Highlights

- Revised Community Strategy
- Procurement Strategy
- Emergency Planning
- Employee E Mail Policy
- Pay and Rewards
- Intech Control Systems

Thanks... Councillor Ellam wishes to thank those members of the Panel who attended regularly and participated in assigned tasks. Thanks also goes to those officers who contributed to the work of the Panel over the last year.

Community Strategy

In July 2005, the Panel saw an early draft of the revised Community Strategy.

The Panel was very dissatisfied with what was proposed, feeling that it didn't set out a clear identity for Kirklees and the focus of outcomes and targets was not sharp enough.

In December 2005, the Panel considered further, extensive revisions to the Strategy that addressed some of the concerns that the Panel had raised.

The revised version was a much more focussed and user friendly document.

Human Resources Issues

The Panel has also kept a close watch on a number of human resources pieces of work. These include Pay and Rewards – the implementation of single status, equal pay claims, age discrimination and absence management. The Panel have a good understanding of the approaches that have been taken and will continue to look at the issues in the new municipal year to ensure that approaches have been effective in meeting targets and delivering the desired outcomes.

Panel Outcomes

- A clearer, more focussed Community Strategy
- Previous Scrutiny recommendations concerning the Procurement Strategy have been implemented and satisfactory progress is being made in implementing the Strategy Action Plan
- More inclusive arrangements for Elected Members in understanding Emergency Planning arrangements and responsibilities
- Clearer and better communicated Email Policy



Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Safer, Stronger Communities



Panel membership:

Cllr Imtiaz Ameen (Lead member), Cllr Tony Brice, Cllr Sharon Elaine Fallows, Cllr Naz Hussain, Cllr Robert C Iredale, Cllr Mohan S Sokhal, Ute Pfeifer, Fred Lewis, Janice Thomas

Panel Highlights

- Cleaner Greener Safer
- Community cohesion
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
- Winter maintenance
- Gully cleansing scheme
- Strategic Office Accommodation Review
- Vine Street Depot improvements
- Supporting the voluntary & community sector

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the panel members for their invaluable contributions to the success of the panel's work. I also extend my thanks to all the Officers who supported the Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Safer, Stronger Communities had a broad remit, covering a diverse range of complementary services including: Environment and Transportation, Supporting Communities, and Housing and Property. This enabled the panel to adopt a more strategic approach to its work.

Environment and Transportation Waste Recycling

Panel Members identified this as an important issue because it has significant health and wellbeing implications for local communities and because of the potential financial costs of increased volumes of waste going to landfill.

Members considered a proposed pilot scheme targeted at certain wards in Kirklees which aims to encourage composting and to increase the volume of waste diverted from landfill. They broadly supported the pilot initiative, but made a number of important recommendations, including the need to monitor the health implications of changing the frequency of wheeled bin collections, and the need to improve levels of awareness about recycling and composting in certain communities.

Cleaner Greener Safer

The panel have continued to maintain an overview of key project milestones of the Cleaner Greener Safer initiative. They were particularly supportive of mainstreaming the more proactive ways of working piloted under the Area Rangers scheme.

Supporting Communities Voluntary and Community Sector

Members scrutinised the role of the council in relation to the voluntary and community sector in Kirklees. The sector is diverse, ranging from small community groups engaged in activities with local people to large organisations delivering service on behalf of public agencies.

Panel members appreciated the Council's partnership with the voluntary and community sector and supported the positive role that the authority plays in facilitating a corporate approach to this work.

However, the panel have made a number of recommendations about the council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector including the need to avoid duplication of activities, and also to guard against taking an over prescriptive approach to how we support the voluntary and community sector,

as this could have an unwanted adverse effect for smaller organisations.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)

The panel considered in some detail progress made to date in respect of NRF and the plans for the 2006-2008 funding allocation. Members expressed a clear desire to recommend a continued scrutiny focus on this next year, particularly in relation to the larger allocations of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and the basis on which the success or otherwise of these initiatives will be assessed when deciding whether these new approaches should be mainstreamed.

Housing and Property

The panel scrutinised a range of housing and property issues including the Strategic Office Accommodation Review and work on developments and changes to the council's Homelessness Strategy. The panel's involvement with these issues has contributed to developing policy.

Excellent Homes for Life (Housing PFI project)

The Excellent Homes for Life Housing PFI represents part of Kirklees Council's plans to achieve Decent Homes by 2010 and it is in

line with government's policy regarding Sustainable Communities. The project will replace approximately 650 non decent homes with 550 new purpose built ones.

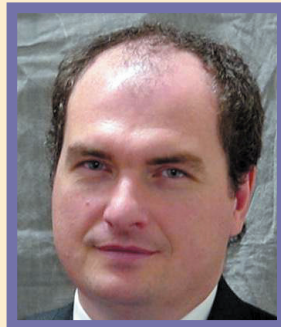
The panel and Lead Member maintained a detailed overview of the Housing PFI scheme including extensive briefings with the Cabinet Member and senior officers. The panel's discussions and views were fed into the ongoing updates of the scheme, including the need for a robust and detailed financial model and effective contract management arrangements and the maintenance of review and affordability appraisals throughout the project.

Panel Outcomes

- Recommendations on the implementation of the pilot initiative to divert waste and encourage recycling
- Maintained a detailed overview of the 'Excellent Homes for Life' Housing PFI scheme
- Successfully introduced new working practices such as panel member assigned tasks and site visits
- Enabled an elected member contribution to the development of the Safer Stronger Communities block of the Kirklees Local Area Agreement



Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Regeneration



Panel membership:

Cllr Nigel Patrick (Lead Member), Cllr Jean Calvert, Cllr Jim Dodds, Cllr Peter McBride, Cllr Keith Oldroyd, Cllr Tony Woodhead, Chris Hawkshaw, Geoff Sykes, Chris West.

Panel Highlights

- Castle Hill
- The Planning Application Consultation Process
- Kirklees Strategic Economic Zone -
- Cooper Bridge to Huddersfield Town Centre
- Implementation of Licensing Reform
- Section 106 Agreements
- Local Development Framework Progress

The Panel has made a number of recommendations arising from Scrutiny of planning issues in particular. I am keen to see follow up of the recommendations to ensure that they are implemented and effect change.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Regeneration has had a very busy year, with the Lead Member and Panel looking at a range of issues. In addition to those identified in the Panel Highlights, the panel has also considered Huddersfield Library, Market Hall and Piazza Project, the Waterfront Development, St Georges Square proposals, Town Centre Stadium Axis, Media Centre Friendly Street Development, planning officer delegated powers, Planning enforcement, high hedges charges, Library and Information Centres Project, development of Local Area Agreement / Local Public Service Board, festive lights, Kirklees Music School and inclusive play areas.

The Effectiveness of the Planning Application Process

The Panel decided to scrutinise the effectiveness of the Planning application process following concerns raised by Councillors on Planning Committee. Councillors were concerned that when they came to make decisions they did not always have the full range of consultation responses to consider. The Panel looked at the issue from the consultee viewpoint, including the consultees ability to respond and what they saw as the shortcomings of the current process.

In carrying out the work the Panel spoke to Planning Service officers, at both strategic and practitioner level, and representatives from the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water. The Panel also carried out a successful questionnaire exercise to ascertain the views of all statutory and non statutory planning consultees.

The Panel has decided to make a number of recommendations, including some relating to the accuracy of consultee data held by the Planning Service, the effective use of pre application consultation and feedback once an application has been approved.

Castle Hill

The Panel has been keen to be kept updated on progress regarding the future of the Castle Hill site in Huddersfield. The Panel recognise that it is an important landmark in Kirklees and the site has great potential.

The Panel scrutinised the Conservation Management Plan for the hill before it was submitted to Cabinet and whilst welcoming the proposals within the Plan to conserve and manage the site, the Panel urged Officers and Cabinet to resolve the development issue on the hill which was central to the future of the site.

Section 106 Agreements

The Panel raised concerns about the administration and use of section 106 monies in Kirklees. The Panel met with officers from a range of council services to discuss how section 106 monies were used; who decided the most appropriate use of monies and the role of Councillors in influencing how monies might be spent.

The Panel concluded that there were many different monitoring systems in place for section 106 monies but there was no single officer with an overall co ordination role.

The Panel recommended that Internal Audit should review the processes for administering and tracking the spend of section 106 monies. The Panel also recommended that an annual report on the spend of section 106 monies should be produced for councillors and the public.

The Panel was concerned at the level of involvement of elected members. The Panel recognised that there were legal constraints about what section 106 money could be used for. Nevertheless the Panel felt that ward councillors should be consulted on proposals and where possible have the opportunity to influence spend to best meet the needs of the local community.

The Cabinet accepted most of the recommendations made and the Panel will continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations.

Licensing Reform

Geoff Sykes, Community Cooptee carried out an assigned task to look at the impact of Licensing Reform on Council Services. The Panel found that the initial surge of activity had been well managed. The Panel decided to look again at the issue, in particular the impact on small business and West Yorkshire Police's view on the impact of the new legislation in Kirklees.

Panel Outcomes

- Establishment of dedicated Section 106 Officer post
- Agreement to audit section 106 activity across the Council
- Agreement to publish Annual Report on the progress of section 106 schemes
- Recommendations regarding the planning application consultation process
- Recommendations regarding Kirklees Strategic Economic Zone proposals Cabinet agreed to defer a decision until all the concerns raised in the consultation had been considered.



Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Adults and Older People



Panel membership:

Cllr Molly Walton (Lead Member), Cllr Mahmood Akhtar, Cllr Shahida Awan, Cllr Marie Bower, Cllr Dorothy Lindley, Cllr Derrick Yates, Paul Horbury, Morry Smith, Joe Calder.

Panel Highlights

- Services for people with sensory impairments
- Holme Valley Memorial Hospital
- Local Area Agreement and the Local Public Service Board for Adults and Older People
- Mini ad hoc into Mid Yorkshire Hospitals Trust
- Healthy communities and health inequalities
- Social services budget issues

Inequalities in health has been a cross cutting theme throughout this year's work programme and the panel has been keen to ensure a continued focus on this issue.

Health Inequalities

The Panel has reviewed and challenged how the Council and NHS are working together to reduce inequalities in health outcomes among our local populations and to promote healthier communities. This is a vital role for the health scrutiny function, because the differences in people's health outcomes remain alarming - for example, babies are three times more likely to die in their first year of life in the ward in Kirklees with the highest infant mortality than the ward with the lowest .

The panel has received information from both the Directors of Public Health for the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and the council's Health Policy Team on progress towards tackling health inequalities and promoting healthier communities. We also reviewed specific initiatives to tackle inequalities in health, such as the work of the North Kirklees and Wakefield Breastfeeding Strategy Group.

The increasing demand for and financial pressures on social services have also featured highly on the panel's agenda. The panel have challenged senior officers about the reasons for the recent budget overspend on social services and have contributed information on this issue to the Audit Commission review into the reasons behind

the overspend.

In response to a request from carers and relatives of people cared for at the Hawthorn Ward in Holme Valley Memorial Hospital, the panel looked into a number of issues and concerns about the proposed closure of the ward. This included arranging a facilitated discussion between relatives, local interest groups, the Public and Patient Involvement Forum and senior officers at South West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust. This led to an agreed compromise which satisfied the concerns of relatives.

The panel was consulted on the proposed priority outcomes and indicators for the 'Healthier Communities and Older People' block of the Kirklees Local Area Agreement (LAA), and helped to facilitate an opportunity for all elected members to contribute to this process. We have also begun to implement the new approach to the overview and scrutiny of partnerships, by developing relationships with the Local Public Service Board (LPSB) for Adults and Older people. This will continue to be an important part of the panel's work next year, as we begin to hold the LPSB to account for how effective it is at delivering the objectives expressed in the LAA.

Assigned Tasks

The ways in which the panel has taken forward scrutiny work this year have changed, with the introduction of more flexible ways of working, such as individual panel members undertaking 'assigned tasks' between formal panel meetings. The panel's two co-opted members - Paul Horbury and Morry Smith - as well as making an excellent contribution to panel discussions at meetings, have jointly led on an assigned task investigating the provision of services for people with sensory impairments. Scrutiny's involvement with this issue has resulted in officers undertaking a commissioning review of services for people with sensory impairments which is due to be completed in August 2006.

The Lead Member has continued to hold regular liaison meetings with the chairs of local NHS Trusts, the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and the Public and Patient Involvement Forums. This has been essential to ensuring good communication between the council and the NHS and is one example of how the scrutiny function has effectively contributed to the community leadership role of elected members. It has also provided opportunities for scrutiny to maintain an effective overview of health and social

services issues.

In addition, we have strongly influenced the development and implementation of approaches to regional health scrutiny through the Lead members' involvement on the West Yorkshire health scrutiny 'project board'.

Panel Outcomes

- Commissioning review of services for people with sensory impairments is now being undertaken in response to scrutiny concerns
- Enabled an elected member contribution to the development of the Local Area Agreement
- Maintained an effective overview of health and social care issues, including monitoring the financial issues in the local NHS and in respect of council social services
- Challenged progress on tackling inequalities in health and promoting healthier communities

Cllr Walton wishes to extend specific thanks to Feisal Jassatt, Head of Health Policy for his advice to the Panel over the last four years. The Panel wishes Feisal well in his new appointment.



Committee membership from Kirklees:

Cllr Ann Raistrick, Cllr Julie Stewart-Turner,
Cllr Elizabeth Smaje, Cllr Molly Walton

This year, Kirklees Members have played a leading role in developing a coordinated, West Yorkshire approach to regional health scrutiny.....*Cllr Molly Walton*

While the general overview of local health issues and services comes within the remit of the Adults and Older People's scrutiny panel, separate ad hoc panels or joint arrangements with other councils were established to respond to specific NHS consultations.

A 'Project Board' consisting of the lead members for health scrutiny from each of the 5 Councils in West Yorkshire has overseen the regional health scrutiny process, including a number of joint reviews where issues affected neighbouring councils.

In cases where proposed changes to how local NHS services are deemed to be significant, the NHS is under a statutory duty to formally consult Overview and Scrutiny, and scrutiny has the power to refer contested issues to the Secretary of State if members don't believe the proposals to be in the best interests of local people.

The past 12 months has seen a large number of proposed changes to health services both locally and nationally. Reviewing and responding to these significant proposals has meant a considerable workload for scrutiny members.

Calderdale and Huddersfield - 'Looking to the future'

The proposals to reconfigure some hospital services in Huddersfield and Calderdale and to increase the provision of services in local communities has been an issue of significant interest and debate. A joint scrutiny committee of Kirklees and Calderdale councillors was established to review and respond to the proposals.

Over a 14 week period, the committee gathered a substantial amount of evidence and information in order to reach objective, evidence-based conclusions about the proposed changes. The joint committee was supportive of the majority of the proposals and felt them to be in the best interests of the local population.

However, the committee felt that one aspect of the proposals - maternity services - was not in the best interests of the local population and agreed to refer this element of the proposals to the Secretary of State for determination.

Ensuring a patient-led NHS - proposed changes to Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Strategic health Authority boundaries

The proposals to create a strategic health authority for Yorkshire and the Humber, coterminous with Government Office boundaries and to reconfigure PCTs in line with local authority areas were announced in December 2005. An ad hoc scrutiny panel reviewed and responded to these proposals. The panel supported the proposals to create a single PCT for Kirklees, but with a number of conditions - principally, that the new PCT demonstrates commitment to developing effective and robust arrangements for locality working, preferably coterminous with the council's area committee boundaries. The proposals have now been approved, and scrutiny will continue to be involved in their implementation.

North Kirklees and Wakefield Service Strategy

Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust has begun early engagement with scrutiny members from Kirklees and Wakefield on the development of their service strategy. This will be the subject of a formal consultation in the autumn of 2006.

West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust - proposals to modernise services and estates

A joint committee of members from Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield councils was consulted on proposals by South West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust to modernise services and estates.

The Joint Committee indicated their general support for SWYMHT's preferred option of reallocating services from St Luke's Hospital to Huddersfield Royal Infirmary and Fieldhead Hospital and maintaining inpatient services at the Dales Unit and the Priestly Unit. Members felt the proposals to be in the best interest of the local health service, mental health service users, their families and the public. This support however was dependant on a number of conditions around implementation of the proposals, which were subsequently agreed to by the Trust.



Ad Hoc Scrutiny Review into the Financial Monitoring Issues Arising from the First Grouped Schools PFI Contract



Panel membership:

Cllr Andrew Palfreeman (Chair), Cllr Jean Calvert, Cllr Robert Iredale, Cllr Julie Stewart-Turner

A request for an ad hoc scrutiny review into the financial monitoring arrangements arising from the first grouped schools PFI project (known as PPP1) was made by Council in January 2005.

The review has been carried out in two distinct stages:

Part 1 - focused on issues up to the financial close of the project (i.e. until the contract was signed)

Part 2 - focuses on events after the contract was in place and on the facilities management arrangements

The panels report on Part 1 of the review was debated at Council on 18 January 2006. Part 2 will report in Autumn 06.

For Part 1 of the review, the panel's key remit was to consider whether the council could have anticipated the financial instability of the contractor and potential contract overspends at the outset, and before the contract was entered into.

Cllr Palfreeman: "One of the main purposes of this scrutiny review was to see whether any lessons could be learnt for future PFI contracts. This was the first PFI contract the council entered into, and some of its problems have been well reported and publicised".

"The scrutiny review was obviously centred on a review of past events, and therefore had the benefit of hindsight. The conclusions are intended to see what lessons can be learnt from the first experience of PFI, which will hopefully benefit arrangements and management of future PFI projects".

In the Part 1 report, the panel concluded that the Council could not have anticipated the financial instability of the contractor or potential contract overspends at the outset, and before the contract was entered into.

Financial evaluations - with the support and expertise of consultants - were thorough, robust and applied consistently and at that time the financial position of Jarvis did not pose any cause for concern. Issues to do with affordability checks were carried out throughout the process and dealt with appropriately.

However, the panel did express concerns about the accuracy of some of the mechanisms used to test value for money. The panel acknowledged that these concerns were raised with the benefit of hindsight, but felt that had they been identified and addressed during the development of the project, that some of the affordability issues and contract overspends may not have occurred.



Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel into Support for People with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder



Panel membership:

Cllr Julie Stewart Turner, Cllr Marie Bower, Cllr Angela Ellam, Cllr David Hall, Margaret Bower

The Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel looking at Support for People with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder compiled its final report during the summer of 2005. Having gathered evidence from numerous sources on a very complex subject, compiling the report was a major challenge for the Panel.

The final report of the Panel was presented to Full Council on 8 December 2005 and the Panel Members undertook a presentation to Council on the key findings of the scrutiny investigation. Panel members also facilitated a block one discussion session that focussed on the role that councillors can play in supporting people with ADHD and what support and tools councillors would need to carry out their role effectively.

Councillor Stewart Turner, who lead the Ad Hoc Panel said:

"...The Panel were pleased that the majority of recommendations made were accepted by the Council and its partners. The Panel has begun the work of following up on progress and is pleased to note that work to implement recommendations is already underway..."

Panel Outcomes

- The Panel report welcomed by Council partners
- The majority of Panel recommendations accepted including those relating to:
 - A Public awareness raising campaign
 - A Central contact point for information
 - GP Training
 - Autism Resource provision in Schools in North Kirklees
 - A single route for diagnosis
 - Medication to be part of a support package
- Successful Block 1 discussion session at Full Council

In addition to the hard work carried out by Councillors involved in Overview and Scrutiny, the work of community and statutory cooptees has been invaluable.

By law Councils are required to include statutory cooptees on panels considering education matters. In 2003, Kirklees Council decided it would like to extend the cooptee role across all standing scrutiny panels by involving members of the community in Overview and Scrutiny.

The first recruitment exercise was undertaken in autumn 2003 and community cooptees took their places on Standing Panels in January 2004. In addition to the community cooptees on panels, there was an additional pool of cooptees who could be placed on Ad Hoc Panels or mini adhoc as required.

The contribution and commitment of cooptees has been praised by all the Scrutiny Panel lead members and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. Councillor Palfreeman, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny comments...

"...The contribution that the statutory and community cooptees have made to overview and scrutiny during the last two and a half years has been invaluable. Cooptees have brought a lay person's viewpoint to overview and scrutiny work and can challenge Council policies and the delivery of services from a grass roots perspective..."

Geoff Sykes, a former Senior Process Engineer at Syngenta became a coopted Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Regeneration in May 2005. When asked why he had applied to be a cooptee Geoff commented;

"...I wondered about the workings of the Council and how decisions were made. I applied to join Overview and Scrutiny to find out and to try and give something back to the community.

Over the past year the Panel has scrutinised an array of subjects, most of which I was hopefully able to contribute to discussions on and help, by questioning, to improve the quality of various procedures and project proposals. Invariably officers close to projects have done a professional job, but sometimes asking what appears to be an obvious question leads to a rethink of the process.

I see the remit of a coopted panel member to ask the less obvious or way out questions which may have been overlooked by council officers, leading to a better result for the community..."

Paul Horbury, a former research fellow, lecturer and manager in Further and Higher Education sets out his experience of being a co opted member of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel.



GEOFF SYKES



PAUL HORBURY

"...This year marks the completion of my third year as a coopted member of Overview and Scrutiny panels. This year, as a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Adults and Older People, I have been involved in scrutinising several developments that have real relevance to the health and well being of adults and older people in Kirklees.

Together with Councillor Marie Bower and Social Affairs Officers, I visited a residential accommodation for older people at Birkenshaw and Scissett, in order to appreciate the ways in which residential accommodation has been enhanced. I gained an appreciation of the improvements which can be made to raise the quality of life for residents. I also looked at the protocols that have been put in place to enable the smooth transfer of residents when this becomes necessary for their care.

With my coopted colleague Morry Smith, I began a task based assignment into the provision of services for people with a sensory impairment. To date we have received oral evidence on the provision of services from officers responsible for visual and auditory impairment and the work will hopefully continue in the new municipal year.

I was also a member of an mini ad hoc panel that scrutinised whether the expected outcomes had been achieved through the amalgamation of Dewsbury District Hospital, Pinderfields Hospital Trust and Pontefract Hospital Trust to form the Mid-Yorkshire Hospitals Trust .

The Adults and Older People's Panel has received a number of significant presentations from health care professionals over the year. Two presentations stood out for me, one relating to breast-feeding and the second on health inequalities and healthier communities. For me both these topics highlighted the differences between northern and southern parts of the Kirklees district and gave rise to concerns.

In conclusion, the year has provided valuable insights into services that directly affect the health and quality of life of adults and older people. The quality of information provided is first class and the Panels questions are always answered in full by officers and health care professionals. The support provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Office has been professional and timely and ensured the smooth management of proceeding through out the year. I have found being a coopted member of a Scrutiny Panel to be stimulating and consider that I have had the opportunity to make a worthwhile contribution to scrutiny investigations..."

Next year will no doubt continue to present new challenges, and we have built on our experiences in 2005/06 to ensure we are well placed to respond to these challenges and to continue to improve the scrutiny function on behalf of Council.

Scrutiny will continue to implement the agreed approach to the overview and scrutiny of partnerships, with the relevant standing panels and their Lead members playing a key role in developing effective relationships with the Local Public Service Boards and holding them to account for their delivery of the Local Area Agreement objectives. This will need to be balanced against the broader overview of council service delivery.

The expected government white paper on local government will almost certainly set out new expectations regarding scrutiny of neighbourhood services and local peoples' involvement in scrutiny. Following decisions at the budget council in February 2006, we have already begun to develop mechanisms whereby local residents and communities will be able to trigger scrutiny reviews when they consider their local services are failing. This 'community call to scrutiny' will be a major component of a drive to ensure that the scrutiny function becomes better at involving residents and service users.

Scrutiny also wants to place a much greater emphasis on ensuring that scrutiny members effectively hold cabinet members

to account and an improved focus on outcomes and scrutiny's involvement making a demonstrable difference.

Next year will also see an enhanced role for scrutiny in the budget process - not in relation to the detailed development of the budget which is a matter for political groups - but to provide an independent challenge to examine the potential impact of budget decisions in the context of risk analysis, CPA issues and Corporate Improvement Priorities.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee have agreed their specific objectives for the next 12 months as:

1. Maximise overview and scrutiny's contribution to effective governance and democracy

For example, by:

- Maintaining effective relationships with the executive, area committees and other parts of the councils decision making structures
- Ensuring greater focus on holding the executive to account, and scrutiny's involvement making a demonstrable difference in terms of outcomes

- Effectively implementing the agreed approach to the overview and scrutiny of partnerships

2. Improve the perception of overview and scrutiny both internally and externally

For example, by:

- Better communicating scrutiny work and outcomes
- Ensuring that overview and scrutiny issues are properly considered and discussed at Full Council meetings

3. Get better at involving residents and service users in overview and scrutiny

For example, by:

- Reviewing how scrutiny works so that it becomes better at involving residents and service users
- Carrying out a 'refresh' exercise for community co-optees
- Developing and implementing an effective approach to service-level scrutiny in response to 'community triggers'

4. Continue to progress member development

For example, by:

- Ensuring effective scrutiny induction for new councillors, new panel members and lead members
- Contributing to the corporate member development work from a scrutiny perspective
- Continuing to support panel lead members and panel members to implement new approaches to scrutiny work such as task-based working.

Overview and Scrutiny Contacts

There have been some changes in the staff supporting Overview and Scrutiny during the 2005/06 municipal year. The Overview and Scrutiny Team is located in the Scrutiny Office at the Town Hall, Huddersfield. Members of the team are:



John Heneghan

Overview and Scrutiny Team Leader
Contact number: 01484 221687

John supports the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Adult and Older People Panel (which incorporates the scrutiny of Health role).



Fortune Mahlangu

Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Contact: 01484 221945

Following a previous placement in the Scrutiny Office in 2005, Fortune rejoined the team as an Overview and Scrutiny Officer in January 2006. Fortune supports the work of the Safer Stronger Communities Panel



Penny Bunker

Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Contact number: 01484 221944

Penny supports the work of the Regeneration and Corporate Affairs Panels.



Mary Brooks

Scrutiny Administrator
Contact: 01484 221908

Mary provides administrative support to the Scrutiny Team and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny.



Jenny Bryce Chan

Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Contact number: 01484 221907

Jenny joined the scrutiny team in January 2006 and supports the work of the Children and Young People Panel.

In January 2006, Sally Bramwell left her post as Overview and Scrutiny Officer after nearly five years for a new life in Australia. The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny would like to thank Sally for her hard work and commitment to the work of Overview and Scrutiny. Her contribution will be greatly missed.