

Engage to improve



Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2006/07

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Foreword



Molly Walton Chair Overview & Scrutiny

I would like to thank the members of each scrutiny panel for the excellent work they have done throughout the year. Numerous issues and policy areas have been investigated in depth, concluding with sensible and helpful recommendations.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the cabinet members and Leader of the Council

for their cooperation with the scrutiny process which has been positive from the outset.

All scrutiny reports are available from the office, each of which contains useful information which I hope all councillors will find valuable in their work.

Finally, I must thank the scrutiny staff for their

support to me personally throughout the year, and collectively to all scrutiny members. We can rightly be proud of the high regard in which Kirklees' scrutiny process is held nationally; a standard set by my predecessor Councillor Palfreeman and one which I have attempted to emulate by being a critical friend acting in a non-partisan way.



Frequently asked questions

Here are some brief answers to the most frequently asked questions about overview and scrutiny.

More detailed information is available from www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Overview and scrutiny is an important council function led by councillors, who:

- monitor the quality of the services delivered by the council and others
- review issues, policies or services in areas of concern or where there is potential for improvement
- develop policy proposals to recommend to the cabinet, Kirklees Partnership or others
- hold the cabinet accountable for its policies and decision-making
- hold the Kirklees Partnership accountable for its effectiveness

In addition, these councillors can look into specific issues relating to local NHS bodies such as primary care trusts and hospital trusts.

Who is involved?

Overview and scrutiny gives an important role to all councillors who do not hold a cabinet post. The role is undertaken by councillors and voluntary scrutiny co-optees, who are supported in this by a dedicated officer team.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee leads the scrutiny process. It agrees what issues will be covered, co-ordinates the work, and approves review reports. There are five permanent scrutiny 'panels' and these are made up of councillors and voluntary co-optees and focus on different areas. Short-term, 'ad-hoc' panels are also set up from time to time and these usually carry out more in-depth investigations.

What powers does scrutiny have?

Scrutiny panels have the statutory power to interview people relevant to their enquiries, see relevant papers and to require a response to any recommendations they make.

The panels do not make decisions – that is the role of the cabinet which is held to account for the decisions it takes. However, by making recommendations based on evidence the panels can have a powerful influence on decision and policy making.

Local NHS bodies such as primary care trusts and hospital trusts are required to consult with scrutiny about any proposals to substantially change local health services.

Is scrutiny a political activity?

Scrutiny is a key part of the political process. However, it is not party political. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and its panels involve councillors from all political groups. When undertaking scrutiny, councillors 'leave their party politics at the door' in order to look objectively at the issue and agree on recommendations based on evidence and which are in the best interests of Kirklees residents.

Frequently asked questions

Details of current ad hoc reviews and the work programmes of the scrutiny panels can be found at www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny

How are issues chosen for scrutiny?

The councillors and voluntary co-optees involved in scrutiny decide which issues they want scrutiny to look at. Effective scrutiny takes a lot of time, commitment and effort so it is not possible to look at every issue.

When choosing issues, scrutiny will consider whether it can make a real difference. For example, whether its recommendations could result in improved services.

What can't scrutiny look at?

Individual complaints are not appropriate for scrutiny and the panels cannot investigate regulatory or 'quasi-judicial' decisions such as those involving planning or licensing.

How can I be involved?

Members of the public can:

- attend public meetings of the management committee or scrutiny panels
- suggest topics for a scrutiny review
- give evidence to a panel or send in views

- about any of the reviews being carried out
- check on what is happening in scrutiny by looking at the website www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny
- join a pool of people interested in being involved in the panels when there are vacancies.

When do the panels meet?

The management committee meets every two weeks. The five permanent scrutiny panels usually each meet every four to six weeks. Ad hoc panels may meet more frequently depending on the topic being reviewed. Information on meeting dates, times and venues are available on the website.

How can I find out what issues are being looked at by scrutiny?

Details of current ad hoc reviews and the work programmes of the scrutiny panels can be found at www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny



The past twelve months

The role of the management committee in leading, managing and co-ordinating scrutiny has been more important than ever in this climate of change.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The past 12 months has seen change for the council as a whole and for scrutiny. Following the local government elections in 2006, Council agreed a new political administration, a new Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and an enhanced management committee involving more political groups.

The role of the management committee in leading, managing and co-ordinating scrutiny has been more important than ever in this climate of change. The committee has made significant efforts to maintain and strengthen its constructive engagement with the cabinet. It has been supported in this by the positive engagement of cabinet members with scrutiny.

One of the committee's roles is to co-ordinate the overall work programme for scrutiny, including considering requests for scrutiny

work. This year these requests have come from full council, area committees, individual councillors and members of the public. Some were declined because they were not appropriate for scrutiny or were considered to be a lower priority than others. Those agreed included:

- Academy schools. The committee established a separate ad hoc panel to review this issue
- Children's centres. Concerns expressed by head teachers and governors were referred to the Children and Young People's Panel to explore
- Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF). Initial concerns were referred to the Safer Stronger Communities Panel. The committee has agreed to set up a major review in 2007/08 to investigate the effectiveness of the council's approach to tackling deprivation and this will include further consideration of NRF
- Contraceptive and sexual health services. As a result of a request received from

clinicians working in the local NHS, the committee has agreed to review in 2007/08 the strategy for tackling sexual health problems in Kirklees

- Unique Care Providers (UCP). Following a request from full Council an ad hoc scrutiny investigation has been set up into the council's relationship with UCP.

Significant progress has been made toward the key objectives agreed at the beginning of the year. This includes the following key highlights:

- Implementing a new approach to scrutinising partnerships with standing panels having a role in holding the Local Public Service Boards to account for their effectiveness in meeting their key objectives
- Developing an approach to the Community Call for Action (CCfA) and implementing Phase 1 of the CCfA in two Huddersfield localities. This work has been in response to a budget amendment which enabled Kirklees to put its programme into action

The past twelve months

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before being legally required to do so. As this is a national first, Kirklees is now regarded as a trailblazer on this issue. The work has generated significant national interest and the scrutiny office has responded to over 40 information requests from other local authorities and has contributed to national discussions with government, the iDeA and the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

This year the management committee has piloted an enhanced role for scrutiny in relation to the budget process. This has involved a retrospective challenge around the degree to which the outcome of the budget reflected the council's priorities. Using the information gained from the pilot, councillors have now agreed how they wish to develop this approach in future budget rounds.



Overview and scrutiny panels

During the past 12 months, councillors involved in overview and scrutiny have ensured that there is more focus on the involvement of scrutiny achieving positive action. This has resulted in significant improvements this year in scrutiny's impact and influence. There follows some key highlights from each of the scrutiny panels and these are just a flavour of the issues scrutiny has been involved with. These are in addition to the ongoing, day-to-day influence of scrutiny councillors on the decision-making in the council.

Information

For more information or copies of detailed reports please contact the scrutiny office on 01484 221908 or visit www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny

Adults and older people



Panel membership

The Adults and Older People Panel for 2006/07 was led by Cllr Julie Stewart Turner. Also on the panel were

Cllr Marie Bower, Cllr Barbara Jones, Cllr Terry Lyons, Cllr Liz Smaje, Cllr Christine Smith, Joe Calder,

John Hebblethwaite and Morry Smith.

Dental health

The panel carried out a review of NHS dentistry, dental health and related issues in response to concerns expressed by councillors last year at full Council.

The panels overall conclusions were that access and availability of NHS dental care for people in Kirklees is fair in comparison with other areas. The Primary Care Trust (PCT) and local dentists are making the new contract work as well as they can. In particular it was recognised the dental contract leads in the PCT played a crucial role in ensuring that all NHS practices remained in the NHS after the introduction of the new NHS dentistry contract in April 2006.

However, young children in parts of Kirklees suffer from the highest rates of tooth decay in England. There are also significant variations in oral health across Kirklees for socio-economic and cultural reasons. There

is a need to tackle the localities with greatest health inequalities. The ageing population has increasingly complex dental care needs.

The review which will be reported to full Council in June resulted in some significant recommendations, including:

- changes to the way places are allocated to people on the waiting list for an NHS dentist
- giving greater priority to oral health promotion and ill health prevention work, for instance, by inclusion in the Local Area Agreement and identifying a separate budget to ensure different ways of changing behaviour are explored in areas where oral health inequalities are greatest
- improving the way in which the oral health needs of the area are assessed.

Commissioning

Commissioning involves identifying the health and social care needs of the target population and working with the potential providers of

services to develop a service to meet those needs. The majority of health and social care commissioning decisions are undertaken by the Council and PCT who commission services from a selection of providers for a variety of services to provide care and improve the health of the local population.

Joint commissioning brings together the PCT and social care services in the strategic planning and development of services. In Kirklees the Local Public Service Board for Adults and Healthier Communities has the responsibility at a strategic level to ensure resources are used collaboratively to get the best outcomes for local people.

GPs or groups of GPs also now have a central role in planning what services their patients need through 'practice based commissioning'.

With support from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, the panel has now developed a framework for how scrutiny can influence

Adults and older people

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health and social care commissioning. The panel were of the strong view that elected councillors need to have a much more robust role in holding commissioners to account for their decisions, and that scrutiny should play a central role. This will enable scrutiny to focus not just on how health and social care services are provided but also the decisions about which services are provided and which aren't; and the process for how the needs of an area are assessed and resources allocated to best effect.

Local Area Agreement

The panel provided a challenging contribution to the refresh of the Adults and Healthier Communities block of the Local Area Agreement. As a result of the panels involvement, some of the key priorities and objectives for Kirklees were amended or retained. For example:

- Agreement to investigate the inclusion of registered social landlord properties within the target for decent social housing

- The targets for older people to have a transport system that supports them to live full and active lives was extended to include people with disabilities
- Retention of the target to reduce excess winter deaths (it had been proposed that this target be dropped)



Children and Young People



Panel membership

The Children and Young People Panel for 2006/07 was led by Cllr Maggie Blanshard. Also on the panel were Cllr Imtiaz Ameen,

Cllr Margaret Fearnley, Cllr Gwen Grailey, Cllr Ann Raistrick, Cllr Elaine Ward, Kate Cross and Helen Singleton

Corporate Parenting

‘Corporate parenting’ (the term used to describe the councils and councillors responsibilities to ‘looked after children’, such as children in care or foster homes) was a key priority for both the panel and the cabinet member this year.

The panel’s aim was to ensure that there are adequate resources in place in Kirklees and that support can be given to councillors to enable them to fulfil this role. So far the panel has:

- met with representatives from the children and young people’s service to explore ways in which councillors can be positively involved in the lives of looked after children
- recommended that initial research and benchmarking be undertaken to look at successful work in this field by other local authorities

- suggested that key information about looked after children is provided to councillors on a ward-by-ward basis.

The panel has also been actively involved in proposals to create a Corporate Parenting Panel in Kirklees, and expect to be involved at an early stage in 2007/08 to help further shape and influence the panel’s remit and development.

Cllr Blanshard attended a conference on corporate parenting. She said: “The keynote speaker was the Minister, Beverley Hughes. It demonstrated to me that there are wide variations in how councils and individuals believe that we should carry out our duties as corporate parents, but there was no doubting the passion and commitment to do better for these children. The highlight was a speech by Matt Huggins, himself a looked after child, now in his late twenties, who was really inspirational.”

The panel was also involved in the preparations and delivery of a Kirklees event with looked after children. “The event had been well-planned and the young people who took part were comfortable with their role in the proceedings which was to increase members’ understanding of the realities of their lives. Those who attended were challenged about our possible preconceptions about looked-after children, in a fun and informal way, and were given the opportunity to chat to the young people in an unstructured way at the end of the session. I would say that I learned a huge amount, just from the 10 or 15 minutes which I spent talking with three or four looked after children around the table. That first-hand experience has informed the work which I have led for the rest of the year.”

Children Centres

At the start of the municipal year the panel decided to have a broad overview of progress in relation to the development and

Children and Young People

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implementation of the children centres programme. However, in response to a number of concerns raised by head teachers and governors to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee the panel began a more in-depth investigation into phase 2 of the programme. This work is ongoing and will continue in 2007/08.

“Adequate scrutiny and understanding of the issues has led to recommendations which have strengthened the Council’s processes and consequently made a positive impact on the lives of some of our younger citizens.”



Corporate Affairs



Panel membership

The Corporate Affairs Panel for 2006/07 was led by Cllr Angela Ellam. Also on the panel were Cllr Gordon Beever, Cllr Roger Roberts,

Cllr Nigel Patrick, Cllr Linda Wilkinson, Anthony Shaw, Neil Robertson and Hilary Wainwright.

Kirklees Leadership Academy

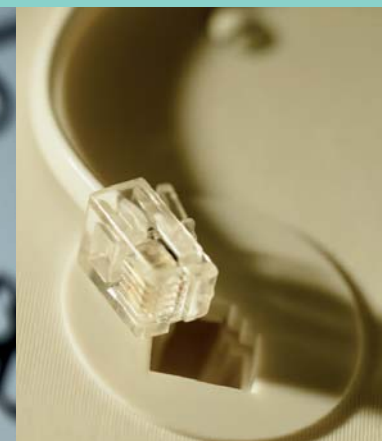
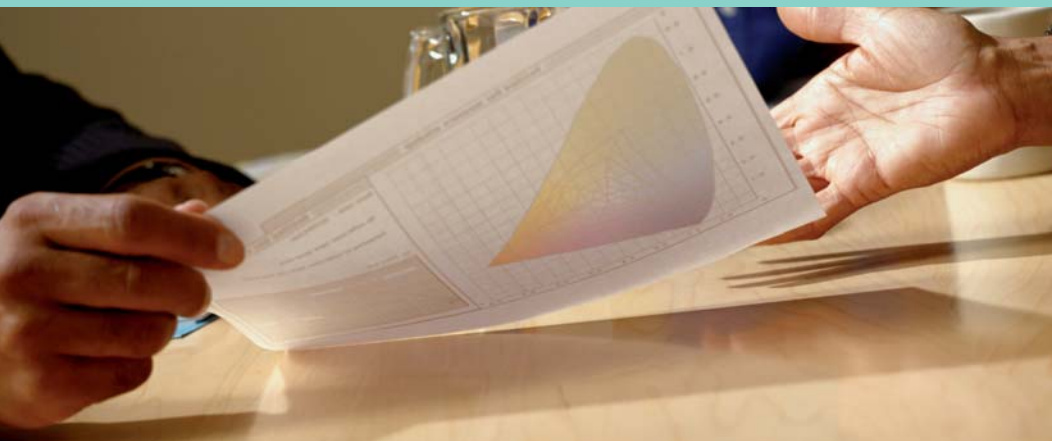
The scrutiny panel looked in to the development of the Kirklees Leadership Academy. Cllr Angela Ellam and Cllr Linda Wilkinson carried out the investigation and reported their findings back to the panel.

The scrutiny panel asked the following questions:

- Why was the Kirklees Leadership Academy set up?
- What are the academy's aims and objectives?
- What has happened so far and how successful has it been?
- How is the academy's effectiveness and impact being evaluated?

The panel met with academy managers Philip Cotterill, Director of Organisational Change, and Jane Brady, Corporate Improvement Manager to discuss the rationale and find out about recruitment and delivery of the programme.

As well as getting a management perspective, the panel was keen to talk to current participants in the academy and to some of those who had not got a place.



Corporate Affairs

...one of the key findings of a workforce planning exercise was that the council would face significant gaps in senior management tiers within the organisation because it had an ageing workforce.

Panel conclusions

The panel supported the reasons for establishing an academy. In 2004, one of the key findings of a workforce planning exercise was that the council would face significant gaps in senior management tiers within the organisation because it had an ageing workforce. Establishing a leadership academy would allow talent to be identified and developed to potentially fill some of the gaps being forecast.

The panel identified a number of potential improvements including:

- Reviewing promotional material to deliver clear messages about the academy to potential applicants
- Analysing the full costs of the academy including the use of external facilitators and internal senior officers acting as coaches
- Reviewing how unsuccessful applicants were supported, particularly with tailored and timely feedback

- Having a clear method of measuring the progress of the Leadership Academy in meeting its aims and objectives and demonstrating that it is benefiting the council
- Being clear about the future management and resources needed for the Leadership Academy.

The Cabinet felt that some of the concerns raised by the scrutiny panel had already been addressed through ongoing reviews. The reviews would look at the effectiveness of coaching, value for money and recruitment to the academy. The scrutiny panel intends to come back and look at further progress in 2008.

Communication Infrastructure for the 21st Century

With a number of key IT contracts due to be renewed early in 2008, the scrutiny panel decided to look at how the council was preparing to meet the communication needs of both services and customers in the years ahead.

The panel was very satisfied that full consideration was being given to the issue and the range of communication options. One of the challenges still facing the council centred around how services were thinking about developing a future vision for communication to better meet the needs of the council's customers. The panel was concerned that while managers had the chance to contribute their views, front line staff had not. The panel recommended that there should be consultation with a 'vertical slice' of services, including employees on the frontline with a working knowledge of customer needs and

Corporate Affairs

It will also help to encourage a young and dynamic workforce by creating a communications infrastructure that is an attractive part of what the council has to offer as an employer.

knowledge of how things might be improved through the use of new technology.

The panel recognised that communication infrastructure was a very complex area and the council needed to ensure it had adequate technical expertise to inform decisions. The panel recommended that the council should consider using a rolling secondment to secure the skills of a strategic technical adviser from one of the private sector experts in the IT communications field.

The panel concluded that the proposed communications infrastructure is in line with the council's vision to provide excellent customer services. It will also help to encourage a young and dynamic workforce by creating a communications infrastructure that is an attractive part of what the council has to offer as an employer. It will also allow the flexibility required to continue to develop locality, mobile and home-working in line with council policies.

Outcomes for 2005/06 work

The Corporate Affairs Panel has seen the following outcomes from some of the recommendations made during 2005/06.

Employee use of IT

The scrutiny panel felt that employees were unsure about what might be considered minor breaches of the policy. As a result revisions were made to the Employee use of Electronic Communication Policy, including a chart showing more clearly what is a breach of policy – particularly in email use – and potential consequences. This was widely publicised among employees.

Ward councillors' role in emergency planning

The panel had raised concerns about the lack of information on the role of ward councillors in emergency planning situations. As a result, a well-received session was held before full Council in November 2006 which took

councillors through potential emergency scenarios that could be encountered in their wards. Councillors indicated that they felt that emergency planning information should be built in to the induction process. In response, an induction session is being planned for later in the year and a Councillor Guide to Emergency Planning has been produced.

Safer Stronger Communities



Panel membership

The Safer Stronger Communities Panel for 2006/07 was led by Cllr Masood Ahmed. Also on the panel were Cllr Ann Denham,

Cllr Andrew Marchington, Cllr Royston Rogers, Cllr Mohan Sokhal, Cllr Kathleen Taylor, Fred Lewis, Geoff Sykes and Janice Thomas.

Preventative approaches

Panel members carried out detailed investigations into the approaches taken in Kirklees to tackle anti-social behaviour, with a particular focus on prevention. A separate investigation focused on the effectiveness of preventive measures in relation to the 'streetscene', including how the council responds to local environmental issues such as litter and graffiti. Panel members interviewed the cabinet member and relevant senior officers, and considered research carried out by the scrutiny office on national policy and approaches taken in other local authorities.

Anti-social behaviour

The panel commended the overall work that was being done by the council and its partners to prevent anti social behaviour. This includes parenting skills and behaviour improvement programmes which were supported by funding from the Home Office and the Neighbourhood

Renewal Fund. Kirklees' Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, set up in 2002-03, continues to be recognised nationally as an example of good practice. However, there were areas where the panel felt that improvements could be made and members agreed a number of specific recommendations:

- To strengthen links between the Youth Offending Team and Safer Stronger Communities Service
- To consider allocating additional resources to the Anti Social Behaviour Unit to employ Victim Support Workers
- To utilise the existing pool of volunteers who work with the Youth Offending Team to do similar work for the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit
- That the LPSB for Safer Stronger Communities develops mechanisms to liaise with schools regarding excluded pupils and the support provided to them.

Streetscene

In relation to the streetscene investigation, the panels research indicated that Kirklees was one of the highest performers (based on nationally agreed measures of cleanliness) for a relatively low cost per head of local population. The panel heard that Environmental Services had a robust enforcement regime which acted as a deterrent against fly-tipping, graffiti and fly-posting.

The panel was advised that the re-organisation and integration of the rangers and warden services would enhance coordination and make further contributions towards improvements in environmental cleanliness.

Members commended the cross-service, corroborative approaches taken to tackle waste issues, between Environment & Transportation and Culture and Leisure Services. Again, however, there were areas where panel members felt that further

Safer Stronger Communities

Better engage ward councillors as community leaders in championing neighbourhood cleanliness and green living.

improvements could be made and they recommended:

- That resources for environmental education be increased to better emphasise the links between streetscene issues, community safety and the school curriculum.
- Target environmental education to the wider community in partnership with voluntary and community groups, tenants

associations, unions, employers organisations and Neighbourhood Management Groups

- Run awareness raising campaigns, focussing on the following messages:
 - Personal responsibility over waste
 - Respect for neighbours
 - Respect for public spaces
 - Pride and ownership

- Responsibility to leave a sustainable environmental heritage for future generations
- Develop a strategy to better engage ward councillors as community leaders in championing neighbourhood cleanliness and green living.



Safer Stronger Communities

The pilot scheme resulted in 10% of waste previously put in grey bins – around 10 tonnes a week across the pilot area – being put in the recycling bin.



Waste and recycling pilot scheme

The panel maintained an overview of the councils waste management strategy and reviewed in some detail the planned changes to household waste and recycling collection services.

The panel urged the Cabinet to re-examine its timetable for rolling out the household waste collection pilot. The pilot scheme saw more than 5,000 households in parts of the Almondbury, Dalton, Lepton and Moldgreen areas have a weekly bin collection based on the grey bin for normal waste one week and the green recycling bin for dry recyclables the alternate week, instead of the normal weekly collection of grey bins and monthly for the green recycling bin. It resulted in 10% of waste previously put in grey bins – around 10 tonnes a week across the pilot area – being put in the recycling bin.

The Cabinet's plan was to roll the scheme out over the rest of the district, starting in the summer in Dewsbury, Mirfield, Batley and the Spen Valley, and then in the rest of Kirklees from the summer to November of 2008.

The scrutiny panel, while acknowledging the success of the pilot scheme, felt that the Cabinet was moving too quickly to roll the scheme out across the rest of Kirklees.

Cllr Masood Ahmed said: "The general feeling was that the Cabinet was being too ambitious with its timetable, and should re-consider, particularly in relation to involving local councillors and residents more fully before action is taken to extend the scheme".

As a result of the panel's recommendations Cabinet directed that a revised programme of implementation be developed.

Regeneration



Panel membership

The Regeneration Panel for 2006/07 was led by Cllr Peter McBride. Also on the panel were Cllr Mumtaz Hussain, Cllr Robert Iredale,

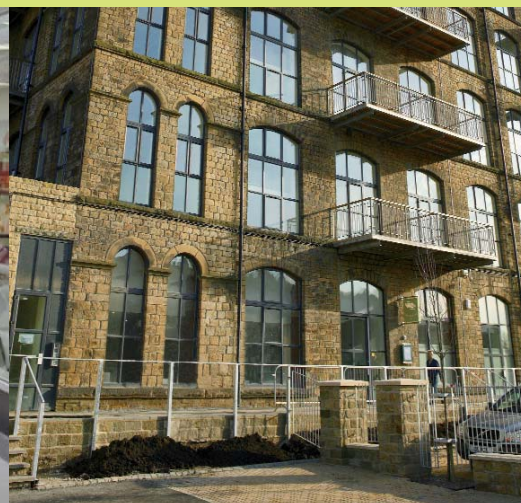
Cllr Vivien Lees, Cllr John Smithson, Cllr Derrick Yates, Chris Hawkshaw, Paul Horbury and Chris West

Queensgate Revival Scheme

In 2006/07 the panel significantly influenced the Queensgate Revival Scheme. The changes, agreed through consultation with scrutiny and others, led to significant improvements to the whole scheme.

Members of the panel were concerned about the lack of consultation with public transport providers and difficulties for passengers, including older people, in having to travel further if the options were not well thought through. Their perception was that the transport implications gave easier access to private rather than public transport. A high proportion of users of the market access the town centre by public transport and 40 to 50%

of those coming to the town centre as a whole do so by public transport. The panel suggested that for both social and commercial reasons the emphasis should be on public transport. The panel asked officers to consider the likely impact of reducing car parking in order to increase the practicability of some of the public transport options and requested a public discussion with Metro, First Group, Arriva and K-Line.



Regeneration

At that meeting representatives from the bus operators also expressed a number of concerns including that the transport providers should have been involved at an earlier stage in the discussions and that the issue of public transport had been addressed as an afterthought. The transport providers stressed that they were not anti-development and wanted the opportunity to be engaged as part of the process of developing the proposals.

The Queensgate Transport Project Group was established following these discussions and included all major transport providers in the area as well as council officers. It met a number of times and transport providers reported they were very pleased with the process. Further to this transport providers met as a group to discuss the potential for reconfiguring bus services to aid options for the scheme.

The key changes to the scheme were:

- a review of public transport and traffic flows. This has led to proposals for three positions which operators and Metro supported. It prevents the possibility of queuing on the ring road at peak times which was a risk in the previous draft proposals.
- Car parking has been reduced to accommodate some of the public transport options but without prejudicing the scheme. This follows the council's 'Green Travel' policy.
- The building has been reshaped which allows for the anchor store to be moved to the front of the scheme. This will bring more passing trade to the market which would then be sandwiched between Kingsgate and the new premium store.
- Due to the 'eco agenda' of the scheme there is a higher possibility that a major premium store will be attracted to the new space.

Local Development Framework

The panel have kept updated on the progress of the Local Development Framework (LDF). Panel members were concerned that while the change from Unitary Development Plan to LDF was taking place the rights of the general public to challenge planning applications could be marginalised. They recommended that more assistance be given to the public in the transition phase.

Regeneration

Transport Issues

The panel received a presentation on regional and local transport issues and discussed some of the Kirklees problem hot spots as well as what tools were available to reduce congestion - including the contentious issue of road pricing. The panel agreed a fuller debate would be needed before any decision could be made on whether these tools were appropriate

for Kirklees. It intends to conduct research which looks at:

- The full range of demand management tools available
- Where these were being used already and if they were working
- Where the tools would be appropriate for use in Kirklees.

Scrutiny could then present the findings at Council to ensure a structured debate.



Regeneration

Best Practice

In March the panel visited the Manchester City Council Regeneration Team to hear first hand about some of its regeneration projects. They visited Ancotes Village, Sports City, and Hulme which are areas where significant improvements have been made. They also spent time with Manchester's Deputy Chief Executive, Scrutiny Regeneration Chair and Head of Planning, to exchange ideas and share best practice.

In April the Chairman of Cibitas, Sir Alan Cockshaw, and Managing Director David Shelton visited Kirklees to talk about some of their ambitious regeneration work in Manchester and elsewhere. This stimulated a discussion on regeneration in Kirklees.

Lessons learnt

From these best practice events the panel gained significant insight into Manchester's approach to regeneration.

The key lessons learnt were;

- Manchester City Council ensure that the people of Manchester are the main beneficiaries of investment and economic regeneration. Emphasising the point that regeneration should be measured by its impact on the community.
- They translated this into Community Plans, prioritising the areas of greatest need, and worked with these communities to develop their spatial strategies.
- They effectively used tools such as, compulsory purchase orders, supplementary planning guidance and

public realm planning to aid development

- They concentrated on providing a good standard of housing, reduction of crime and anti social behaviour, raising standards and aspirations in education and skills, while considering the business development angle of regeneration.
- They utilised multidisciplinary teams.
- They worked with developers and partner agencies such as Health, Police, Transport, and communities and neighbourhoods but maintained their leadership role throughout.
- This nurtured an holistic climate and culture which provided a clear direction but allowed shape and dexterity to come from all stakeholders.

Ad Hoc Panels

“It is important that if academy schools are developed that they do not act in isolation of the local school network”.

Academy schools

Kirklees is among 50 local authorities across the country to be given the go-ahead in principle for a huge investment in building new schools – and investing in improving existing ones – under the Government’s Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

Two state-of-the art school academies – one in Huddersfield and one in North Kirklees – formed part of Kirklees’ £200m bid, together with other major buildings investment in schools across the district.

An ad hoc review panel, chaired by Cllr Molly Walton was established to examine, in principle, issues associated with establishing

Academy Schools and to explore potential implications for Kirklees. The panel considered implications in relation to:

- The curriculum, educational standards and attainment
- Governance and accountability
- Admissions
- Special Educational Needs



Ad Hoc Panels

Cllr Jim Dodds, Cabinet Member said: “The panel’s work has been extremely valuable. They have considered the main issues, looked at them thoroughly, and have put forward constructive and positive thoughts and conclusions, which I fully support”.

- Strategic and financial implications for the Local Authority
- Staffing

Other panel members were Cllr Maggie Blanshard, Cllr Tony Brice, Cllr Robert Iredale, Cllr Kath Pinnock, Cllr Elizabeth Smaje, Kate Cross and Helen Singleton.

The panel recommended that any academy schools developed in Kirklees should have the council as ‘co-sponsors’ in order to ensure maximum local influence in how they are run.

In addition they called for any academy schools to have their own governing bodies, rather than an overarching governing body to run more than one school.

Cllr Molly Walton said: “The governance arrangements, local involvement at community level, and sponsorship and funding any academy schools, are key issues.

“As well as recommending individual governing bodies the panel felt it was also essential the membership of them should reflect the local school community.

“It is also recommending that an Academy Trust should be formed locally and involve local people with a local interest.

“It is important that if academy schools are developed that they do not act in isolation of the local school network, that the local community has a major influence over their running, and that they are local schools in the true sense.

“The panel felt it was crucial that the council should be a co-sponsor of any academy school developed in order alleviate concerns that academies could work in isolation from other school provision in the area.

“In terms of other sponsors the panel recommends that the Cabinet should look for

local sponsors, such as the University in order to involve a local commitment to any schools developed along the academy lines.

“Academy schools are a relatively new concept. The panel received conflicting evidence, none of which led it to conclude that the existing academies are either a huge educational success, or abject failures.

“We were hampered in reaching a firm conclusion by the lack of historical data available, due to the short life span of existing academies.

“The panel wishes to stress that getting the detail of the funding agreement right will be central to the success of the academy proposals, and that the Cabinet should fully explore the detailed financial implications of deciding whether to have one or more academies, together with the implications for the other schools in the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Ad Hoc Panels

“We hope that the Cabinet learn from experience elsewhere and continue to evaluate the academies programme between now and the implementation date for any academies in Kirklees.”

Cllr Jim Dodds, Cabinet member for schools, said he welcomed and supported the conclusions and recommendations of the scrutiny panel.

“The panel’s work has been extremely valuable. They have considered the main issues, looked at them thoroughly, and have put forward constructive and positive thoughts and conclusions, which I fully support.

Unique Care

Unique Care Providers (UCP) is one of a number of organisations which the council currently contracts with for the provision of care services. In late 2006 / early 2007 a deputation was brought to Council by UNISON following a dispute between UCP and a number of their staff.

As a result of the deputation Council requested that scrutiny investigate relevant issues.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee asked the Lead Members of the two relevant standing panels (the Corporate Affairs Panel – Cllr Angela Ellam – and the Adults and Older Peoples Panel – Cllr Julie Stewart-Turner) to undertake the review.

It was agreed that the scope of the scrutiny investigation would include:

- the background and context to the councils relationship with Unique Care

- the rationale and process for entering into contracts with Unique Care and associated (or partner) companies
- the effectiveness of arrangements to manage such contracts
- the councils role in respect of the issues raised in the deputation to Council
- any implications to the council and to clients arising from the situation which led to the deputation to Council
- Business continuity arrangements

The review was carried out between February and April 2007. The outcomes from the review will be reported back to full Council in the 2007/08 municipal year.

Ad Hoc Panels

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

The Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel into Services for People with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder reported its findings to Council in December 2005. As it was such a large piece of work, it was decided that the panel should continue to meet during 2006/07 to monitor the implementation of the agreed recommendations.

During the 2006 /07 municipal year, the panel, led by Cllr Julie Stewart Turner, has met with representatives from council services, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, the Primary Care Trust and education practitioners. The Panel has monitored and challenged the progress that is being made.

In some areas progress has been slower than the panel would have liked. However there has been some examples of excellent practice, particularly from Kirklees Early Years Service and the establishment of an early intervention Primary Mental Health team. The Panel is in the process of finalising a progress report which should be presented to Council in September 2007.

Co-optees Viewpoint

The findings of these sessions will be used to address the needs of co-optees and assist in future recruitment.

Voluntary co-optees continue to play an invaluable role in the work of Overview and Scrutiny and they bring a public perspective to the issues being looked at.

A co-optee Information and Review day was held in October 2006 and this included a presentation by Chief Executive Rob Vincent on key changes and challenges facing Kirklees Council. There was also a presentation and group work on declaring interests which was led by John Emms, Solicitor to the Council.

The profile part of the day focussed on revising the role of co-optees and a session on reviewing the experiences of co-optees to date. The findings of these sessions will be used to address the needs of co-optees and assist in future recruitment.

As a result of the review exercise the following will take place:

- Recruitment material will emphasise the difference co-optees can make rather than focus on the tasks they would undertake. The website will be used to help recruitment
- Co-optees should receive more training on how the council works as well as general computer skills to help them access information
- A buddy system should be introduced for new voluntary co-optees.
- All scrutiny papers should be sent out in good time and reports should avoid acronyms and jargon
- Regular feedback on what has happened as a result of scrutiny will be provided for co-optees.

Work is continuing to address all the recommendations. A regular co-optee bulletin has been introduced and a further recruitment exercise will be held in Autumn 2007.

Co-optee perspective

“I find it very satisfying to be learning first hand what is happening and to have the opportunity to influence the future provision of services to our young people...”

Kate Cross, a co-optee to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel, comments on her experience: “...I have served as a parent governor representative on the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel and I am now a voluntary co-optee on the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Children and Young People.

“Over the last four or five years I have welcomed the opportunity to listen to and question council officers on issues relating to the children and young people of Kirklees. On occasions our concerns, questions and recommendations have helped to direct the way policy has developed.

“I have a particular interest in special needs and am always keen to ensure officers address this important area within their policies and actions.

Over the last year our work programme has covered a wide range of issues including extended schools, safeguarding children, children’s centres and a new play strategy. This year I have also been part of an ad hoc panel looking at the development of academies in Kirklees.

“It is an interesting role as a panel co-optee. Although I am required to read a lot of papers and listen to and question officers, I find it very satisfying to be learning first hand what is happening and to have the opportunity to influence the future provision of services to our young people...”

Thank you

Councillor Walton, on behalf of everyone involved in Overview and Scrutiny, would like to wish them success in whatever they choose to do next.

This year has seen the retirement of three of scrutiny's valued Voluntary Co-optees.

Mr **Fred Lewis** had served on the Environment Panel and later on the Safer Stronger Communities Panel before retiring at the end of 2006. Mr Lewis brought a common sense perspective to his scrutiny work whilst still being able to look at things from a strategic viewpoint.

Mr **Anthony Shaw** had served on the Corporate Affairs Panel for three years before stepping down at the end of the municipal year. He has been a valued and committed member of the panel, bringing a private sector challenge to the council practices.

Ute Pfeifer has served for two years on the Environment Panel and then for a year as part of the co-optee pool. Ute was a very committed member of the scrutiny panel and made a valuable contribution to discussions on strategic green issues.

The Chair of Scrutiny would like to thank Fred, Anthony and Ute for the voluntary contribution and difference that they made to scrutiny over the last three years.

Councillor Walton, on behalf of everyone involved in Overview and Scrutiny, would like to wish them success in whatever they choose to do next.

The Year Ahead

2007/08 will be a challenging and exciting year for overview and scrutiny during which we aim to maintain and improve how scrutiny operates. We will respond to new challenges and implement new initiatives, some of which come from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill that is due to receive Royal assent in the Autumn.

The Bill, alongside the recently-published Local Government White Paper and other legislation, sees an enhanced role for scrutiny in a number of areas, including:

- Scrutiny of partners and partnerships with a particular focus on the Local Area Agreement
- Introducing a locality or area dimension to scrutiny as part of the Community Call for Action (CCfA)
- An increased importance on the 'frontline councillor' role in both local government and crime and disorder issues as part of the development of the CCfA
- Developing formal scrutiny arrangements for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Local Government White Paper

"We want to strengthen the ability of local councillors to speak up for their communities and demand an answer when things go wrong. We propose that this role should be exercised by individual councillors through a 'Community Call for Action' or collectively by councillors through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee"

We are well prepared to meet these challenges and have already anticipated some of the key changes in advance of the White Paper such as aligning the scrutiny standing panels to the Local Public Service Boards, scrutiny of the Local Area Agreement and its implementation and introducing phase 1 of the Kirklees CCfA.

As well as responding to these national challenges, the management committee also wants to improve how the outcomes and impact from scrutiny work are communicated

both within the council and outside.

Councillors involved in scrutiny are conscious that while scrutiny has made more impact this year than ever before, it is due to the commitment of a relatively small number of councillors. As scrutiny is a core part of good governance and is a role undertaken on behalf of the council, it is vital that all councillors are aware of how they can contribute to scrutiny and the difference it can make. Scrutiny lead members have suggested that there should be regular opportunity for them to update Council on the impact their panels make - a change which is now incorporated in the councils constitution.

We also want to improve the support provided by the management committee to lead members in recognition of the vital role that they undertake.

Contacts

There have been some changes in the staff supporting Overview and Scrutiny during the 2006/07 municipal year. The team is based in the Scrutiny Office at Huddersfield Town Hall. The team are as follows:



John Heneghan

Overview and Scrutiny Team Leader
Contact number: 01484 221687

John supported the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the

Adult and Older People Panel (which incorporates the health scrutiny role).



Penny Bunker

Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Contact number: 01484 221944

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



Mary Brooks

Scrutiny Administrator
Contact: 01484 221908

Mary provided 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 supported the work of the Children and Young People Panel.



Beth Hewitt

Scrutiny Assistant.
Contact: 01484 221684

Beth joined the team in January 2007 following her work with the Children and Young People's

Service. Beth provided research support to the Scrutiny Office, councillors and the public in relation to the Community Call for Action (CcfA).



Fortune Mahlangu

Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Contact: 01484 221945

Fortune supported the work of the Safer Stronger Communities Panel



Jayne Purcell

Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Contact: 01484 416569

Jayne joined the team in September 2006 following her work in the Kirklees Partnership Team.

Jayne supported the work of the Regeneration Panel.