

# Scrutiny Annual Report

## 2010/11





# Chair's Introduction

Scrutiny plays an important role in Kirklees. It is the process which allows the Council to look at its own performance and that of other public sector services to check how well they are doing. Scrutiny is about challenging decisions and policy. It is about looking at processes and procedures to see if they work properly or if they have been followed correctly. It is about making recommendations for improvements where needed and making sure these are implemented through our follow up work.

In 2010/2011 the scrutiny service was chaired by Councillor Robert Iredale and this report highlights a number of subject areas looked at by the scrutiny panels during the year. Further details on the wide range of work carried out by scrutiny can be found on the dedicated website at [www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny).

I would like to thank the members and co-optees for all their hard work last year. I look forward to working with you all in 2011/12.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Iredale', written on a light-colored background.

# Difference we have made

The Commission into Kirklees Safeguarding Services was established in 2009 and the Scrutiny function was assigned the lead role in organising the work of the Commission. The Commission completed its work in August 2009, making 54 recommendations within a wide range of categories including; prevention and early intervention, child protection, assessment & care management, multi-agency working, social care work force and the safeguarding board.

Scrutiny made **71** formal recommendations to the Cabinet in 2010/11 – **93%** of these were accepted.



The Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel took on responsibility for maintaining an overview of the implementation of the agreed recommendations and during 2010/11 the Panel has considered in detail the progress that had been made. As part of this monitoring work, the Panel highlighted areas where significant progress had been made – 35 of the recommendations had been fully implemented.

The Panel also identified a number of areas where there remained concern and made a further 5 recommendations including: the need to have understandable information for parents and carers at child protection conferences; having social workers consult chronologies when assessing families; tackling cautious attitudes to information sharing; and assessing why some social workers felt unsupported and isolated. The Panel noted that there was reluctance for people to undertake the role of the Lead Professional in the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and that the support in carrying out the role was inconsistent across the authority. As a result of the Panel's challenge, the Children & Young People's Service has agreed to carry out further targeted training on the CAF.

**“It's that ability of scrutiny to see things and ask questions from the outsider's perspective – ‘what does that mean’ and ‘why do you do that?’”**

**Assistant Director; Children & Young People's Service**

# Holding to Account

The need for an increased focus on holding Cabinet to account and a strengthening of the Scrutiny-Cabinet relationship, was identified as a key priority during 2010/11 and Scrutiny has continued to hold the Cabinet to account in a number of ways, both formal and informal:

- Cabinet Members have been invited to attend Scrutiny Panels and have been challenged on delivery of their priorities;
- Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee and the Cabinet have held a quarterly joint meeting to develop and strengthen their relationship;
- Scrutiny Lead Members and Cabinet Members have held regular briefings;
- Two decisions made by the Cabinet have been called-in.

**“It’s been very helpful, it’s been very collaborative, it has been challenging and quite rightly, and it has helped to improve the quality of the service that the Council provides.”**

**Cllr Mehboob Khan, Leader**

**“We try to be a critical friend of the decision-makers to make sure they have all the information they might need to make the right decision first time.”**

**Cllr Julie Stewart Turner,  
Resources Scrutiny Panel  
Lead Member**

**Cabinet Members  
attended  
Scrutiny Panels  
15 times in  
2010/11.**



**There were 13  
Scrutiny Lead  
Member/Cabinet  
Member Briefings  
in 2010/11.**

In April, the Development & Environment Scrutiny Panel heard a Call-In of the ‘Housing Futures – Options Appraisal’ decision. The Panel held a full day’s meeting and questioned the Cabinet Member and key officers, and received evidence from members of the public. The Panel determined that they felt the consultation process had been flawed as tenants had not been consulted on the options for the future of council housing and consultation had not been carried out with all political groups. They therefore referred the decision back to Cabinet with a number of recommendations. In July, the Cabinet considered the Panel’s comments and agreed that consideration of Scrutiny’s recommendations should be deferred to allow further work to take place. The Panel is continuing to receive updates on the progress of this work.

# Raising Scrutiny's Profile

A key objective for 2010/11 was to raise internal and external awareness of scrutiny and to increase public involvement in the work of scrutiny. An important contribution in addressing this objective was a project to redesign the scrutiny website with the aim of making a website that was more engaging, had a greater emphasis on showcasing the work of scrutiny, encouraged greater public participation and would help increase the profile of scrutiny within the Council and across Kirklees.

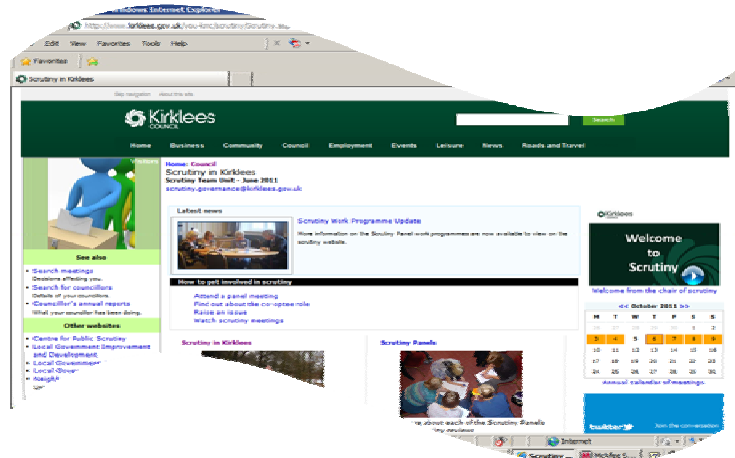
**Councillors, MPs, the public, local businesses and other local authorities all follow us on Twitter.**

**@kirkleescrutiny has 167 followers**

**485 people watched the live webcast of the Housing Futures – Options Appraisal Call-In in April**

Following a consultation exercise and working closely with the council's web team the new website was successfully launched in June 2011. A number of new innovative features were introduced including: social media tools enabling scrutiny to communicate to more people and so increase awareness of the issues that are being reviewed; a simplified design making it easier to navigate round the site; information that can be accessed in a more creative and interactive manner; and a variety of options allowing individuals to comment and express views on current scrutiny issues aimed at encouraging wider involvement in the work of scrutiny.

Feedback has been encouraging and the early signs indicate that the new features have been well received. Why not visit the site today and look for yourself at [www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny)



**Scrutiny work featured in 41 local press articles in 2010/11 – a 450% increase from 2009/10**

# Building Relationships

Successful Scrutiny is based on developing good relationships between organisations and individuals. In 2010/11 the Kirklees Scrutiny function has worked hard to achieve continued mutual co-operation and understanding of other partners and their priorities and constraints.

**68 different  
Council officers  
attended  
Scrutiny Panels  
in 2010/11**

**A quarterly meeting  
is held between the  
Scrutiny Health  
Leads and the Chairs  
of the five health  
trusts operating  
within Kirklees.**

This was particularly evident in the work Scrutiny did on the Yorkshire Ambulance Response times within Kirklees, focussing on immediately life threatening calls. The Panel undertook a thorough evidence based review to understand a multitude of factors affecting response times and spoke with a wide range of individuals to complete the review, interviewing no less than 15 different witnesses from YAS, NHS Kirklees, the Calderdale & Huddersfield Hospitals NHS Trust and the Mid Yorkshire Hospitals Trust. The Panel were also able to visit the Yorkshire Ambulance Service Communications Centre where they had conversations with emergency call handlers, paramedics and the regional operations centre staff, responsible to provide real-time data on Yorkshire Ambulance Performance.

**Scrutiny has a formal role in respect  
of health, and must be consulted on  
all significant changes to health  
services. This year, Kirklees has  
worked closely with the other 15 local  
authorities within Yorkshire &  
Humber to scrutinise the proposals  
to change children's cardiac surgery  
services.**



Scrutiny has also played a role this year in strengthening links between the Council and the funeral trade, through its project looking at the renewal of crematoria and cemeteries review. The Bereavement Partnership, which includes representatives from the trade and the Council, now has a renewed focus and an increased commitment from the Council to working with the funeral trade.

## Councillors

Scrutiny is member-led and the process empowers councillors to review the work of Cabinet, to help enhance and improve the delivery of services to local residents and provides a forum for councillors to review performance and provide input and influence of policy development. Their role in scrutiny is to seek improvements in a constructive manner and provide support and act as a 'critical friend' to the decision-makers.

## Co-optees

Voluntary Co-optees are members of the public who sit with Councillors, on the Scrutiny Panels. They are drawn from all sectors of Kirklees' community irrespective of age, gender or ethnic background. As a panel member, they scrutinise decisions, and help influence and develop Policies being made by the Council and its partners. Co-optees also help to shape how Kirklees Council and its partners deliver services to meet the needs of the residents of Kirklees.

## Who is involved in Scrutiny?

## Scrutiny Team

The Scrutiny function is supported by a number of officers who provide independent information-gathering, analysis, advice and governance assistance to those involved in Scrutiny.

## Others

To carry out its work, Scrutiny liaises with a large number of people and organisations. Evidence is submitted by: Council officers; other councillors; public sector partner organisations such as the health trusts and the police; private sector organisations; other local authorities; the voluntary sector; and members of the public.

# Contact details

Scrutiny & Governance Team  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Civic Centre 3  
Huddersfield HD1 2TG

Tel: 01484 221700

[scrutiny.governance@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny.governance@kirklees.gov.uk)

[www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/scrutiny)

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