



*Altogether better*

# **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012-2013**

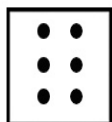
**Assistant Chief Executive's Office  
Durham County Council**

**2013**

**Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.**

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# Foreword

2012 has been another challenging year for the Council. The financial challenges we face are unprecedented. It is important though that we continue to rise to the challenge and make sure that from a scrutiny perspective we continue to look at service improvement and contribute to policy development.

In this context, I am pleased to say that the Peer Review which was carried out in July 2012, noted that overview and scrutiny can often be a challenging role for local authorities but that in Durham it makes a positive contribution to policy development.



Cllr J Armstrong, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

The Overview and Scrutiny process is carried out through Committees and Task Groups, and has cross-party representation. Scrutiny has built up a constructive 'critical friend' relationship with Cabinet that has worked well.

Councillor Alan Napier, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources said:

*"During the continued search for more efficiencies and the ongoing pressure from Central Government to deliver additional reductions to the Council's budget, the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee in examining the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, Budget proposals and Service planning arrangements ensures that all Councillors can engage in the process."*

The next four years (2013/14 - 2016/17) will continue to be challenging for the Council. The total savings for the six year period 2011/12 to 2016/17 are estimated to be £188.1m with the figure expected to exceed £200m by 2017/18. We are all subject to change and there remain requirements to make savings and look for efficiencies. To this end, Overview and Scrutiny must play its part. In April 2013, two team members retired and I wish them both well. The function will continue to be located within the Assistant Chief Executive's service grouping, benefiting from leadership and support from the wider service team and I have every confidence that it will go from strength to strength.

Both the leadership and the organisation's management have done extremely well in managing the budget to ensure every effort is being made to protect frontline services and that savings are made.

This report provides an update of the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny during 2012/13 – it has been another very busy year. From post rooms to scrap yards, colleges to the coastline and hospital wards to fire stations, these are examples of activity and observations undertaken by Scrutiny to deliver its work programme. I would like to thank all those who have given their time to support and assist the Overview and Scrutiny process, be that as a member of a Committee or Task Group, as an officer providing evidence, or from a partner organisation. I hope that you find this report interesting and informative.

If you would like to find out more, all Scrutiny Committee meetings are open to the public and the support officers will be pleased to supply you with more information - contact details can be found at the end of this report.

**Councillor Joe Armstrong**  
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny

# Key Achievements 2012-13

## Overview and Scrutiny Review Activity

*The following in depth evidence based reviews have been completed and been/or will be reported to Cabinet and the appropriate thematic Partnership.*

- ***Use of Legislation to tackle Metal Theft within County Durham*** completed in September 2012, highlighted positive work to reduce the incidence of metal theft within the County and provided evidence to lobby the Government for tighter legislation for all scrap metal dealers. The report received praise from the Local Government Association.
- ***Road Safety for Children and Young People*** highlighted positive work by the Council and Partners and findings from the review recommend to undertake a road safety education audit, information is provided on correctly fitted child car seats and future evaluations are undertaken in line with NICE guidance. The final report was presented to Cabinet in February 2013.
- ***Increasing young people's employment opportunities (18-24) within County Durham*** through the development of partnership working. The review detailed the support and interventions in place to support young people into employment and the emergence of new growth sectors in respect of engineering and manufacturing. The importance of working in partnership with the private sector was emphasised as well as the need to use resources creatively to maximise these opportunities. The review was presented to Cabinet in June 2012.
- ***Empty homes*** review focusing on increasing the number of empty homes brought back into use. The review highlighted the key issues facing the Council and partners in delivering improved performance in bringing more empty homes back in to use including resource pressures, the continued importance of joint working and potential alternative ways forward. It also made a series of recommendations aimed at delivering further service improvements in this area. The review was presented to Cabinet in March 2013.
- ***Reducing the Council's carbon emissions*** – this review was carried out to assess whether the Council is on course to reduce the carbon emissions from its own activities by 40% by 2015, deliver savings in energy costs, include carbon budgets in its Service Plans and create a 'low carbon culture within the Council. The review was presented to Cabinet in January 2013.
- ***Childhood Obesity in Primary Aged Children*** (cross cutting with AWH OS Committee) focussing on the effect of obesity on children of primary school age. The review was presented to Cabinet November 2012.
- ***Support for Children and Young People with Mental Health Issues*** (cross cutting with AWH OS Committee) focussed on a number of issues, including how early intervention and prevention methods can reduce the need for specialist services. The review was presented to Cabinet March 2013.
- ***Light touch review of Postal arrangements within Durham County Council*** was carried out to look at the systems in place for post within the authority, with regard to value for money and best use of resources. This was completed in September 2012.
- ***Telephone Calls*** – a light touch review completed in October 2012 looked at how the Council could improve its contact with customers via its telephone service within the context of the Customer First strategy.

# Key Achievements 2012-13

## Overview and Scrutiny Activity

- Contributed to the budget process through consideration of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Increased awareness of the Council's scrutiny function through articles in local media, Durham County News, national publications and internal publications including the Members' Bulletin, and an ongoing update of the scrutiny web pages.
- Formally responded to NHS Quality Accounts for: North East Ambulance Service; County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust; County Durham and Darlington NHS Community Health Services; and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust.
- Continued to maintain and establish links with all thematic partnerships. A series of briefings and reports have been shared with thematic partnerships, for example:
  - Childhood Obesity in Primary Aged Children was shared with the Children and Families Trust in June 2013;
  - County Durham Economic Partnership received a presentation on the findings of the Increasing young people's employment opportunities (18-24) in County Durham;
  - County Durham Environment Partnership Board received a presentation on the findings of review looking at the development of renewable technologies in County Durham.
- Contributed to consultations:
  - SSC OSC County Durham Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2013/14;
  - Safe Durham Partnership Priority Setting 2013/14;
  - Joint response from Adults, Wellbeing & Health and Children & Young People OSCs to the Government's consultation to cut Alcohol fuelled crime and Anti-social behaviour;
  - Joint response from Children and Young People's and Adults, Wellbeing and Health OSC responding to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
  - Department of Health Consultation – Local Authority Health Scrutiny;
  - Advisory Committee on Resource Allocations recommendations on Future Public Health funding;
  - NHS Tees and NHS County Durham and Darlington proposals regarding the re-procurement of Dental Anxiety Management and Sedation services;
  - North East Ambulance Service proposals to reconfigure Accident and Emergency Ambulance Services in the North East;
  - North East Ambulance Service, Tees Esk and Wear Valley and County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Quality Accounts.

# Key Achievements 2012-13

## Overview and Scrutiny Site Visits

Members and/or Officers have undertaken a wide range of scrutiny visits to support the Committees' work programmes, including:

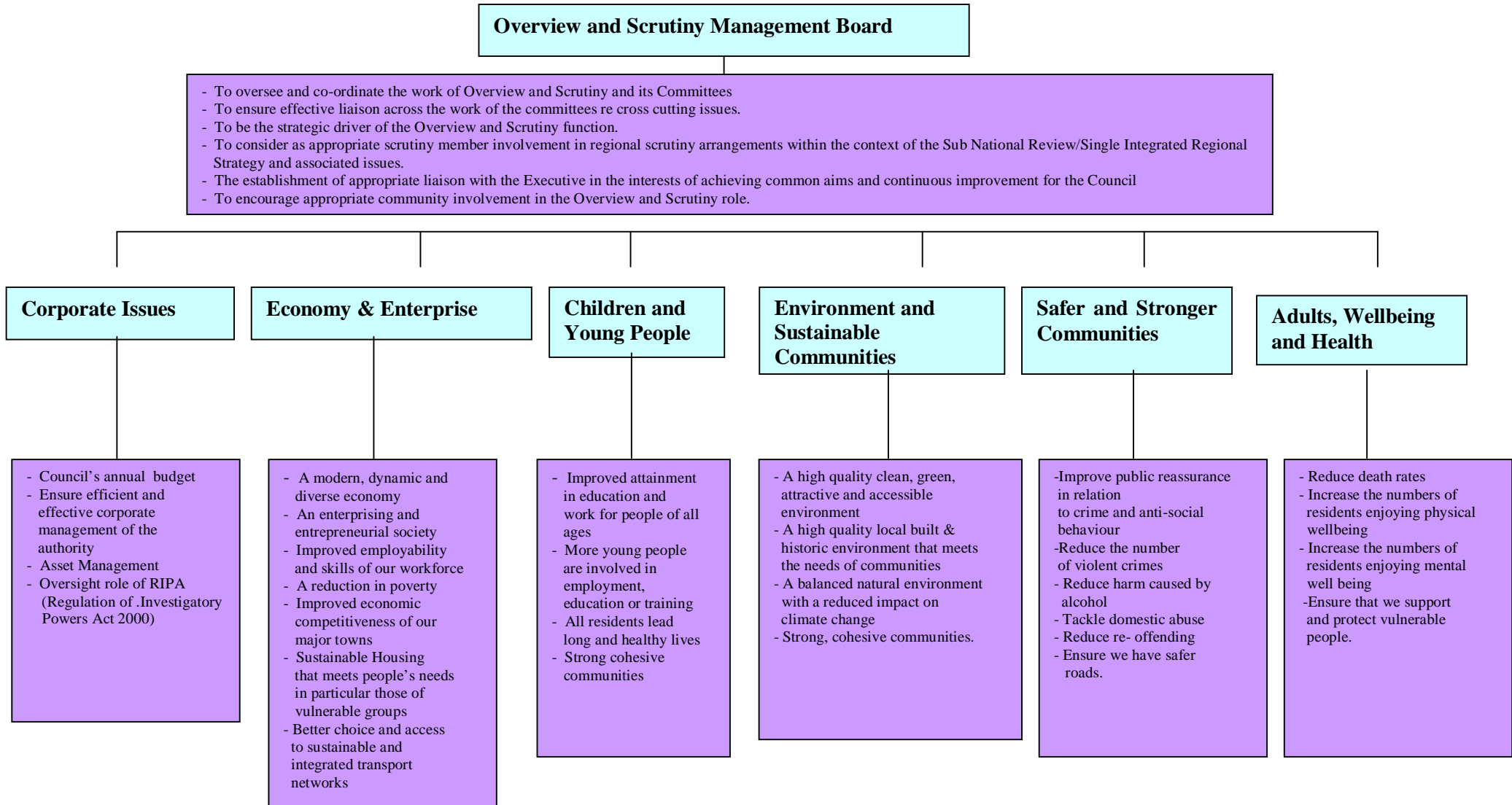


### Overview and Scrutiny Site Visits also include:

- Projects being undertaken by the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership;
- The Full Circle Service at Ferryhill and the Acley Centre which provide help to children and young people suffering with mental health issues;
- Wise Drive Road Safety Carousel, Durham Police Headquarters;
- Safe and fuel efficient driving networking conference, Bishop Auckland College;
- As part of the review on Increasing young people's employment opportunities (18-24) within County Durham site visits took place to:
  - South West Durham Training
  - Derwentside Further Education College
  - Jobcentre Plus – Durham.
- Empty Homes Site Visits:
  - Housing Renewal/Regeneration areas to demonstrate activity undertaken with partners to bring back empty homes in use at Easington, West Chilton and Craghead.

# Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees are aligned to the key priority themes of the Council's vision, which is to build an Altogether Better Durham that is better for local people and provides better places to live and work. Information on all elements of the Overview and Scrutiny function can be found on the scrutiny pages of the Durham County Council website, [www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk). Below is the structure of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.



# Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



Cllr Joe Armstrong,  
Chair of Overview and  
Scrutiny Management  
Board



Cllr Paul Stradling,  
Vice-Chair of Overview  
and Scrutiny  
Management Board

The **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB)** provides a strategic steer for the work of all the committees. Its work programme for 2012/13 included the following:

- Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2013/2014 – 2016/2017 and revenue and capital budget proposals for 2013/2014 to make sure that the Council's resources are used effectively and efficiently;
- Council's Notice of Key Decisions - to ensure that Members are aware of key decisions to be made by Cabinet;
- Updates on petitions received which enables Members to track progress on behalf of communities – Overview and Scrutiny hold an appellate role in the petitions process, dealing with any appeals if a petitioner is not satisfied with the way the council has dealt with his/her petition.
- Updates on major policy developments and announcements made by Central Government and the implications for the Council and County Durham.

The Board also has:

- Received information and commented on performance management every quarter before it was disseminated to respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees for further comment;
- Received work programme updates from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs so that it was able to identify cross service issues and plan accordingly;
- Received updates on the work of the County Durham Partnership.





# Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The **Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee**, which is aligned to **Altogether Better Council** has:

- Collaborated with the OSMB on the County Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and budget process and the Council Plan 2013-2017;
- Been updated on the ICT prioritisation project; which was developed to ensure that the County Council utilised its ICT Resource to the greatest benefit of the Council.
- Received details and commented on the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 and the outcome of a RIPA inspection by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners;
- Received and commented on progress against the Council's corporate basket of performance indicators for the Altogether Better Council Theme;
- Carried out a light touch review of internal Postal Arrangements looking at use of resources and value for money, completed September 2012).
- Completed a light touch review of Telephone Calls in October 2012, looking at improving customer services through the Customer First Strategy.



Cllr Brian Avery,  
Chair of  
Corporate Issues OSC



Cllr Eddie Murphy,  
Vice-Chair of Corporate  
Issues OSC



# Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Robin Todd, Chair of  
Adults, Wellbeing &  
Health OSC



Cllr Jean Chaplow  
Vice-Chair of Adults,  
Wellbeing & Health OSC

The Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is aligned to **Altogether Healthier** priority theme and has:

## NHS Engagement and Health Reform

- Engaged with key NHS Stakeholders in response to NHS Reforms to share information with Councillors regarding (May, June and November 2012 and April 2013):
  - National and regional health service commissioning arrangements;
  - The role of the Health and Wellbeing Board and interim shadow arrangements;
  - The role and function of Clinical Commissioning Groups and their 'Clear and Credible Plans' for service commissioning;
  - HealthWatch – the newly established organisation representing the voice of patients;
  - Public Health reform proposals and the transfer of Public Health functions to the County Council;
  - The Role and Function of the NHS Commissioning Board Local Area Team for County Durham, Darlington and North Tees.

## NHS County Durham and Darlington

- Received information from NHS County Durham and Darlington regarding Cervical Cancer screening recalls in July 2012;
- Responded to joint proposals by NHS Tees and NHS County Durham and Darlington regarding the re-procurement of Dental Anxiety Management and Sedation services (July 2012);
- Considered regular update reports regarding organisational and service changes within NHS County Durham and Darlington, including information on recent white papers and proposed legislation to ensure that any potential implications for the County Council are highlighted;

## County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

- Received an update from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust on the implementation of the centralised Hyper Acute Stroke service at UHND and the associated performance improvements being delivered (July 2012);
- Engaged with County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust at a series of Clinical Strategy Stakeholder events examining Emergency and Unplanned Care Services (May 2012); Children's Services (September 2012); Women's Services (November 2012) and Developing specialist services and Centres of Excellence (March 2013).

## North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

- Continued to engage with North Tees and Hartlepool NHS FT regarding the Momentum project and its service transformation proposals which could impact on residents of south and south east Durham (November 2012 and January 2013);

### **North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust**

- Engaged with the North East Ambulance Service and Rural Ambulance Monitoring Group regarding the potential reconfiguration of Accident and Emergency Ambulance Services (July 2012);

### **North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group and Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgfield Clinical Commissioning Group**

- Delivered presentations to both Clinical Commissioning Groups' Executive Boards highlighting the role of Overview and Scrutiny and the work that health scrutiny undertakes in contributing to health improvement for the residents of County Durham;
- Both Clinical Commissioning Groups have presented their clear and credible plans to the AWH OSC and their commissioning intentions /priorities.

### **Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust**

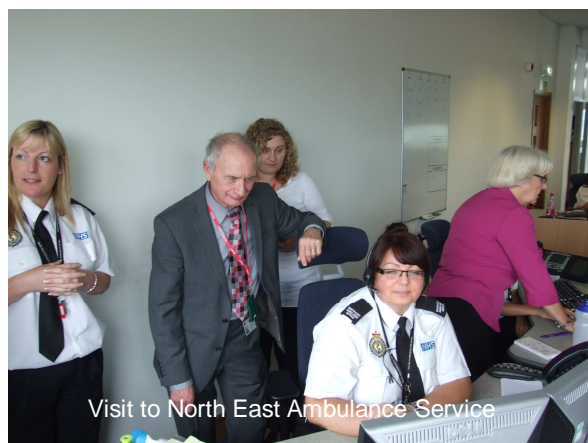
- Engaged with TEWV in respect of proposals by the Trust to change the way inpatient services were provided to older people with an organic illness (dementia) in Hartlepool which would impact on residents of south and east Durham.

### **Formal Consultations**

- Responded to formal consultations by the Department of Health in respect of “future Public Health funding” and “Local Authority Health Scrutiny” (August and October 2012);
- Monitored progress against NHS Quality Accounts for 2011/12 as well as engaging in preparatory work for the 2012/13 Quality Accounts (July 2012 and April 2013);

### **Overview Activity**

- Engaged with the County Durham Local Involvement Network to ensure community views are reflected in scrutiny activity (October 2012);
- Engaged in and responded to the consultation proposals regarding the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (October 2012);
- Received quarterly performance management and budgetary reports to monitor performance and revenue and capital expenditure;



# Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Jan Blakey,  
Chair of Children &  
Young People OSC



Cllr Christine Potts  
Vice-Chair of Children  
& Young People OSC

**Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee** is aligned to **Altogether Better for Children and Young People**. This Committee has:

- Undertaken major reviews on Childhood Obesity in Primary Aged Children and Support for Children and Young People with Mental Health Issues both of these reviews were cross cutting in nature with Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and this was reflected in the membership of the working groups;

- Responded to consultation on the Draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Received and commented on quarterly budgetary and performance management reports for Children and Young People's Services.

The Committee has also received updates and overviews on:

- Received progress update on Recommendations of Under 18 Conceptions Review which was presented to Cabinet April 2012;
- Received an overview presentation on Communities of Learning which reflects the Local Authority's commitment to partnership working with schools;
- Received an update on Places to go Things to do and Youth Strategy;
- Provided comments on and received an overview presentation on Children, Young People and Families Plan 2012-2015;
- Received an overview presentation on the publication of the National Evaluation of Free School Meals Pilot;
- Received information and an update on Think Family Strategy and Troubled Families Programme;
- Received an overview presentation on the requirement of Safe Walking Routes to School;
- Received information from the North East Child Poverty Commission Child Poverty: Local Authorities; Local Duties; Local Action.
- Received an overview presentation on County Durham's Local Safeguarding Children's Board priority of Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Received an information update on Fostering Services, including private fostering and guardianship orders;
- Received an overview presentation on the work of Investing in Children;
- Received the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report 2011/12.



In addition the committee received regular updates on NHS Reforms and the transfer of Public Health functions to Durham County Council.

# Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** is aligned to **Altogether Wealthier**. This Committee has:

- Undertaken in depth scrutiny reviews on increasing young people's employment opportunities (18-24) within County Durham through the development of partnership working and empty homes focusing on increasing the number of empty homes brought back into use;
- Received an overview of the work of the County Durham Economic Partnership identifying issues and priorities within County Durham;
- Provided a response to the preferred options consultation of the County Durham Plan via a workshop for Overview and Scrutiny Members
- Provided comments to be fed into the consultation exercise on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which allows the Authority with the opportunity of charging a levy on new development;
- Monitored, challenged and provided comment in relation to the Stock Options Appraisal project looking at how the Authority to place on a new development;
- Provided comments to be fed into the consultation on Durham Key Options new lettings policy;
- Received an overview and commented upon the refresh of the Regeneration Statement which identifies key issues facing the County and how these issues can be tackled;
- Monitored and challenged the performance of our housing providers;
- Received an overview and commented on the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which identifies existing and future infrastructure deficiencies to be addressed;
- Received an overview of the development of the Tourism offer for County Durham;
- Received an overview and provided comments on the role of Business Durham in providing business support;
- Received information and commented upon the service provided by Housing Solutions and commented upon the Homelessness Strategy for County Durham including the piloting of the 'No second night out' project;
- Received an overview and commented upon the development of the various Masterplans for County Durham;
- Received an update on the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP);
- Received an overview and commented upon the development of the Adult Learning Strategy identifying the learning opportunities available to adults within County Durham;
- Received quarterly performance management and budgetary reports to monitor performance and revenue and capital expenditure.



Cllr John Moran,  
Chair of Economy &  
Enterprise OSC



Cllr Alice Naylor  
Vice-Chair of Economy  
& Enterprise OSC



# Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Dan Myers  
Chair of Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC



Cllr Barbara Graham,  
Vice-Chair of Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC

**Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** aligned to **Altogether Greener**. This committee has:

- Undertaken an in depth scrutiny review to assess whether the Council is on course to reduce the carbon emissions from its own activities by 40% by 2015, deliver savings in energy costs, include carbon budgets in its Service Plans and create a 'low carbon' culture within the Council;

- Monitored performance and revenue and capital expenditure through quarterly performance management and budgetary reports;
- Been updated on the implementation of the alternate weekly collections, the waste procurement programme and the DCLG Weekly Collection Support Scheme;
- Received a presentation on the objectives and activities of the LitterFree Durham from its Chairman;
- Been informed on how the Council responded as Lead Local Flood Authority to the torrential rain on 28<sup>th</sup> June and 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012, including cleaning up and repairing the damage caused by the flooding;
- Questioned representatives of the Coal Authority and the Environment Agency on the site selected at Whitburn for a permanent pumping scheme to control risks posed by the rising mine water within the Westoe and Wearmouth mining block;
- Received information from the Directors of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Nature Beauty and Durham Wildlife Trust on the development of the two Local Nature Partnerships that have been established to cover the uplands and lowlands of County Durham;
- Considered and commented on the draft County Durham Climate Change Strategy which sets out seven key themes that are essential in creating a low carbon and resilient County;
- Reviewed the progress being made in implementing the recommendations from the Committee's scrutiny review on the development of renewable energy technologies in County Durham;
- Considered the evaluation of the NHS/PCT funding provision to the Council's winter maintenance service during 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.



Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership

# Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** is aligned to **Altogether Safer**. This committee has:

- Undertaken in-depth reviews of 'The Use of Legislation to Tackle Metal within County Durham' and 'Road Safety for Children and Young People'. Both reviews achieved positive outcomes and the Metal theft review has been submitted for the Centre for the 'Raising awareness category for the Centre for Public Scrutiny Awards';
- Monitored progress of recommendations from the Committee's previous scrutiny review of 'Adult Substance Misuse Services from Treatment to Recovery';
- Provided comment on the Safe Durham Partnership's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and held a joint meeting with the Council's Children and Young People and Adult, Wellbeing & Health OSCs to provide a response to the Government's consultation to cut Alcohol fuelled crime and ASB;
- Responded to consultations on the Safe Durham Partnership Priorities for 2013/14 and County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority' Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2013/14. The Committee also held a special meeting to consider progress of the IRMP 2012/13 at Spennymoor Fire Station and observed firefighters carrying out a car extrication demonstration;
- Received information on the Safe Durham Partnership Reducing re-offending Strategy including delivery of County Durham Youth Offending Service's Pre-Reprimand Disposal initiative that has achieved significant reductions in the number of first time entrants into the Criminal Justice System and the approach taken by the Partnership to introduce restorative approaches to give victims of crime a greater voice and contribute to a reduction in re-offending;
- Considered overview presentations and reports on Consumer Protection Enforcement Activity and the establishment of the Joint Alcohol Harm Reduction Unit which is a partnership approach between the Council and Durham Constabulary to provide a greater resource to tackle alcohol related crime, licensing issues and intelligence sharing to undertake joint operations;
- Established a joint working arrangement with the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) that is crucial to provide communication between the PCP and the Committee. This arrangement includes receiving update reports from the PCP at each Committee meeting and prior to undertaking an in-depth study into a crime and disorder issue, discussion takes place between both the Chairs of the PCP and Committee and Secretariat to avoid duplication of effort and resources;
- Monitored and commented on quarterly performance management reports which have been a key driver to undertake the Committee's reviews of Metal Theft and road safety.



Cllr David Boyes  
Chair Safer and Stronger  
Communities OSC



Cllr Michele Hodgson  
Vice-Chair Safer and  
Stronger Communities OSC



Car Extrication demonstration – Spennymoor Fire Station

# Regional Health Scrutiny

The Council continues to work collaboratively at a regional level to ensure that the impact of changes to health services across local authority boundaries does not adversely impact upon residents of County Durham.

The North East Joint Health Scrutiny Committee has continued its work in implementing recommendations from its Review of the health needs of ex-service communities. All local authorities in the North East have signed up to an Ex-servicemen covenant committing them to work to improve accessibility to services. The Committee has also re-examined the Review of Children's Congenital Heart services recommendations in light of their referral by the Secretary of State for Health to an Independent Reconfiguration Panel. The Committee continues to support the Review's recommendations which would see the continuation of the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle as a centre of excellence for these services.

The Council has also worked with the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee on a service reconfiguration which, whilst being undertaken jointly by NHS Tees and NHS County Durham and Darlington, will impact upon residents of County Durham. This involved the Re-Procurement of the Dental Anxiety Management and Sedation Service.

## Member Development and Training

Overview and Scrutiny is represented on the Member Development Group which is responsible for overseeing, reviewing and developing the learning and development opportunities available to councillors, as well as ensuring equal opportunities, effectiveness and value for money.

Following this year's elections, memberships will be changing, and overview and scrutiny will be involved in a programme of member induction for newly appointed members on scrutiny committees.

## Co-optees

Local people may be co-opted onto overview and scrutiny committees and working groups, and can help scrutiny to engage with the public. They are used to:

- act as a non-political voice for those who live or work in County Durham.
- bring specialist knowledge and/or skills and an element of external challenge to the Overview and Scrutiny process.
- take an interest in, attend and contribute to the committees or working groups to which appointed.
- establish good relations with other members, officers and co-optees.
- feed back any appropriate discussions or decisions of the relevant committee or working group to any respective organisation or group which they may represent.

A workshop was held on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2012 which provided Co-optees with the opportunity to identify any issues and to shape their future involvement in the Overview and Scrutiny process within Durham County Council. Following the workshop an Action Plan was produced identifying the actions to be implemented to address the issues raised by Co-optees.



# Keeping apace with legislative change

A host of new legislation including the Localism Act, Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act and the Health and Social Care Act has resulted in refinements to Overview and Scrutiny in County Durham to ensure that we remain “fit for purpose and fit for the future.”

Elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Police and Crime Panels (PCPs) were introduced by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. Under the Act, the PCC is responsible for holding the Chief Constable to account, securing an efficient and effective local police force and carrying out functions in relation to community safety and crime prevention. Within the Durham Constabulary area, the Durham PCP is responsible for publicly scrutinising the actions and decisions of the PCC.

Hosted by Durham County Council, the PCP’s membership consists of 10 elected Members (Durham County Council 7 and Darlington Borough Council 3 Members) and 2 independent members.

Since its establishment in August 2012, the Police and Crime Panel has held seven meetings (two in shadow form), agreed its Terms of Reference, Panel Arrangements, a working arrangement document with Overview and Scrutiny functions within both local authorities, a complaints procedure and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Police and Crime Commissioner.



PCP Members with Chief Constable Michael Barton and Police and Crime Commissioner Ron Hogg

The Panel has also fulfilled its requirements within the Act through reviewing the PCC’s precept and draft Police and Crime Plan 2013-17 and holding a Chief Constable Confirmation Hearing within required timeframes.

The Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has spent the last twelve months developing relationships with new NHS Organisations set up under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Representatives of the NHS Commissioning Board’s Local Area Team and newly established Clinical Commissioning Groups have shared their priorities and plans for NHS service commissioning, highlighting how these will meet the objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and deliver step changes to improve health and wellbeing within County Durham.

The Council has conferred its power of review and scrutiny onto the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee together with the power of referral to the Secretary of State for Health. A protocol for working together has been/is being developed in association with partners to ensure that arrangements for information sharing, communication, engagement, reporting mechanisms and organisational liaison are in place and are robust.

# Work Programmes

The current work programmes focus on the priority areas identified within the Council Plan, the Cabinet's Forward Plan of decisions, Sustainable Community Strategy, Partnership plans and strategies, performance and budgetary control data and changes in Government legislation. The work programme for each Overview and Scrutiny Committee can be found on the County Council's website, [www.durham.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.durham.gov.uk/scrutiny).

## Overview and Scrutiny Team

The Overview and Scrutiny team is part of the Assistant Chief Executive's service group (ACE), which leads on the corporate approach to performance management and improvement, consultation and engagement, communications, partnership working, equalities and diversity and information management. ACE is also responsible for the Council's Area Action Partnerships and emergency planning functions.



From Left to right – Back row – Tom Gorman, Stephen Gwilym, Ann Whitton, Jonathan Slee  
Front row – Liz Finnigan, Jenny Haworth, Diane Close

## Moving forward

We have made reference elsewhere in the Annual report to the continuing pressures placed upon the Council to realise further savings and efficiencies and Overview and Scrutiny has had to contribute to this process. In April 2013 two team members retired and the team relocated to the Planning and Performance service.

However the scrutiny function will retain its existing Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure in the new municipal year following the County Council elections in May 2013 and will continue to be supported by a dedicated Scrutiny team within the Planning and Performance function of the Assistant Chief Executive's service grouping with senior managerial support from both Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive and Jenny Haworth, Head of Planning and Performance.

In looking forward to the next year, arrangements have been put in place to deliver a bespoke members' induction session for each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees tailored to their specific areas of responsibility and geared to wards the finalisation of work programmes for each OSC for the coming year. These sessions will take place in June 2013 and provide additional advice, support and information for Councillors over and above that identified during the corporate member induction sessions.

Contact us in the Scrutiny Office on 03000 268145 [scrutiny@durham.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@durham.gov.uk), or see the Durham County Council website, [www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk).