



Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-2020

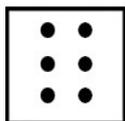
Resources

Durham County Council

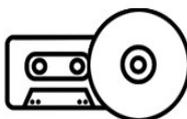
2020

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

العربية (Arabic) (中文 (繁體字)) (Chinese) اردو (Urdu)
polski (Polish) ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi) Español (Spanish)
বাংলা (Bengali) हिन्दी (Hindi) Deutsch (German)
Français (French) Türkçe (Turkish) Melayu (Malay)



Braille



Audio



**Large
Print**

Contents

Introduction	2
Scrutiny in County Durham	4
Overview and Scrutiny Committees	6
Scrutiny in 2020.....	7
Overview and Scrutiny Review Activity 2019/20	10
Planned Overview and Scrutiny in 2020/21	16
Work Programme 2020/21	17
New statutory guidance on scrutiny arrangements	18
Training	19
Site visits	20
Impact of Overview and Scrutiny in County Durham	23
Co-optees and engagement.....	28
Constitutional Responsibilities of Overview and Scrutiny	29
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.....	31
Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.....	32
Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee	33
Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee	34
Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee	35
Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee	36
Regional Scrutiny	37
Key contacts:.....	41

Introduction from the Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

The COVID-19 pandemic has dominated our lives this year and Durham County Council is working extremely hard to help and support our residents and businesses through this unprecedented emergency. The challenge of overview and scrutiny has always been crucial in supporting high quality public service delivery in County Durham. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that we paused our planned scrutiny work programme for 2019/20 from March 2020 to enable members to concentrate on working to support our communities. The scrutiny team operated a skeleton service and rescheduled much of our work.

New emergency legislation enabled our formal meetings to be held remotely and in June we were able to hold our first scrutiny meeting. We have all had to work flexibly and quickly to adapt to new ways of working.

This report covers the 2019/20 year but also includes references to our remote meetings held in June and July 2020 before the usual summer recess. Work programmes for 2020/21 were agreed by most of the scrutiny committees at a later stage than usual due to the delays caused as a result of the cancellation of meetings.

Durham County Council had already been facing the challenges of continuing austerity and financial uncertainty. A key priority for the authority will be to continue to work hard to protect frontline services whilst meeting savings targets and managing the additional considerable pressures resulting from the pandemic. Overview and scrutiny will contribute in a constructive way to support the council in meeting these significant challenges. Scrutiny provides a valuable tool to review and challenge how the Council and partners deliver public services and drive improvement.

We are supported by a dedicated scrutiny team and senior and specialist officers across the council which has helped develop a strong scrutiny culture and adds value to the work of the council.

This annual report sets out details of work undertaken by scrutiny in the past year and anticipates work we will be doing in the coming year. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues we will review our work programmes and identifying areas of the county's response appropriate for further overview and scrutiny review.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in supporting and assisting the overview and scrutiny process – members, officers, partners, co-opted members and the scrutiny team themselves.

All scrutiny committee meetings are open to the public and if you would like to get involved, the scrutiny team's contact details are at the end of this report. Remote scrutiny meetings are available to view on the council's YouTube channel if you would like to see the sort of work we do.

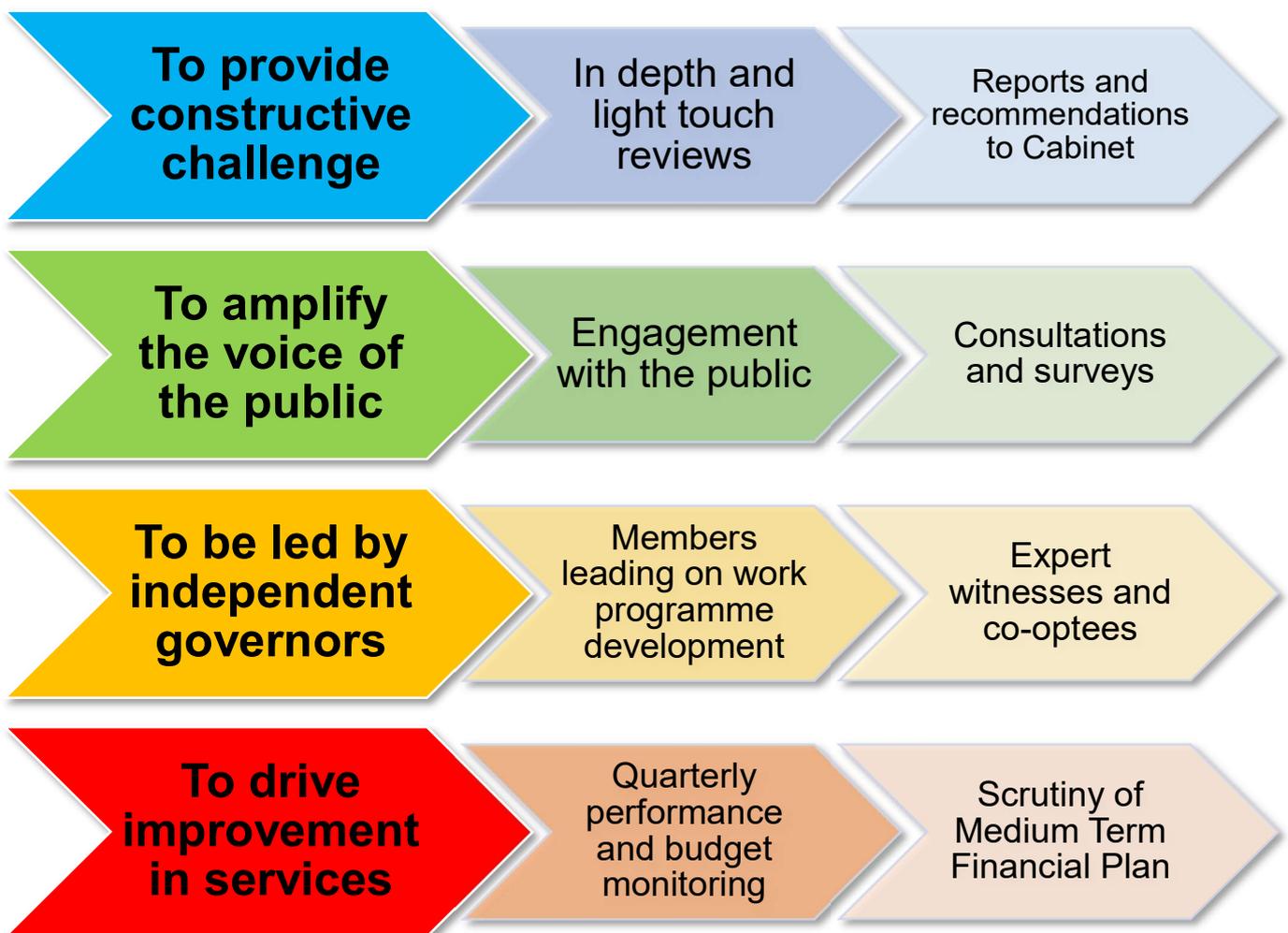
Councillor Rob Crute

Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Scrutiny in County Durham

Durham County Council has embedded the four principles of good scrutiny, developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, in all our work. These are:

- To provide a constructive critical friend challenge to executive policy-makers and decisions-makers.
- To amplify the voice and concerns of the public.
- To ensure scrutiny is carried out by independent minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny role.
- To drive improvement in public services.



Durham County Council's overview and scrutiny function involves a considerable amount of partnership working. Our aim is to ensure that the good work already taking place contributes to our Transformation Programme's key principal of moving partnership working from good to great.

We also promote engagement with local expert and academic researchers in overview and scrutiny where they can add to our work.

The scrutiny team works with colleagues in communications to publicise any matters within the work programme which may be of particular public interest. Meetings considering items such as the climate emergency and changes to the delivery of health services have provoked a great deal of interest.

Scrutiny has welcomed the introduction of Local Democracy reporters who are in attendance at most scrutiny meetings. Their coverage is helping to raise the public profile of scrutiny and for specific issues it has encouraged increased public participation in the scrutiny process. The overview and scrutiny process provides an opportunity for members of the public and local communities to comment upon any service

During the year, chairs and vice-chairs have focused on how to bring the public voice into overview and scrutiny review activity and meetings. This has been achieved through building public feedback strongly into review work such as with the Elective Home Education Review undertaken by Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). Parents who had chosen to home educate their children were surveyed for their views on how DCC supported them. The results of the survey were fed into the review and helped shape the recommendations.

Scrutiny committees decide which areas they wish to examine. This may arise following representations by members of the public about a particular matter; be an issue identified by councillors themselves; or follow on from reports or performance assessment on the council's activities made by the cabinet or outside agencies.

This ownership of the work programme and strong organisational culture underpins scrutiny's legitimacy as an effective and strategic function.

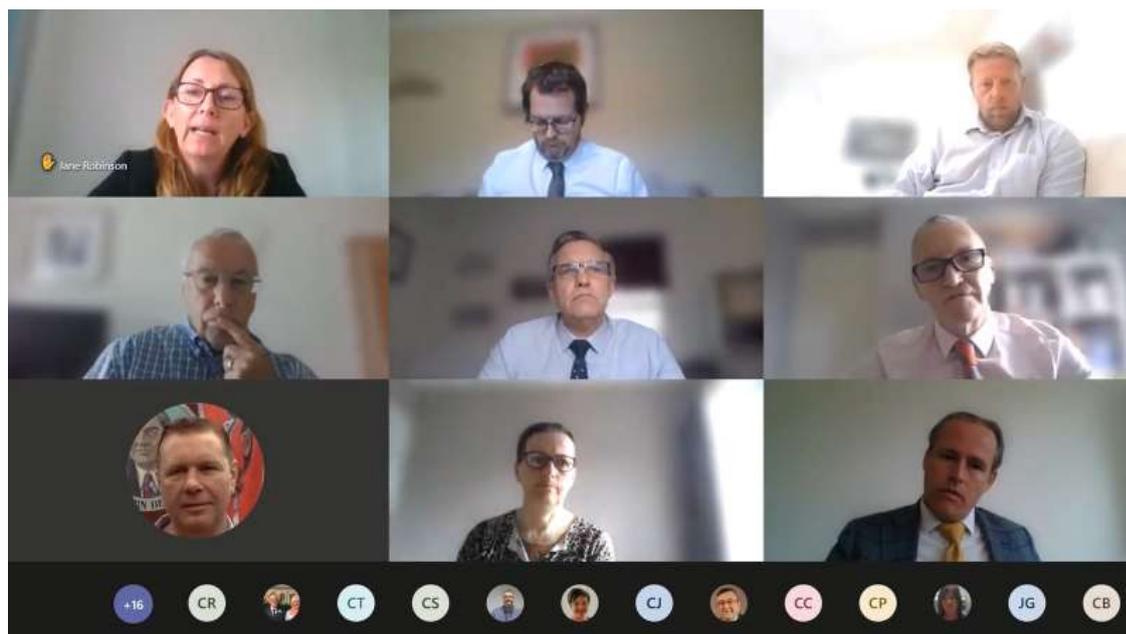
Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Overview and scrutiny is a valuable part of local democracy and has important statutory roles in the scrutiny of health and crime and disorder. All scrutiny work is carried out by our Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and five thematic scrutiny committees as below. In addition, all committees have the power to form temporary task and finish groups to focus on a specific topic for in depth review, in line with their work programmes, as the need arises.



Scrutiny in 2020

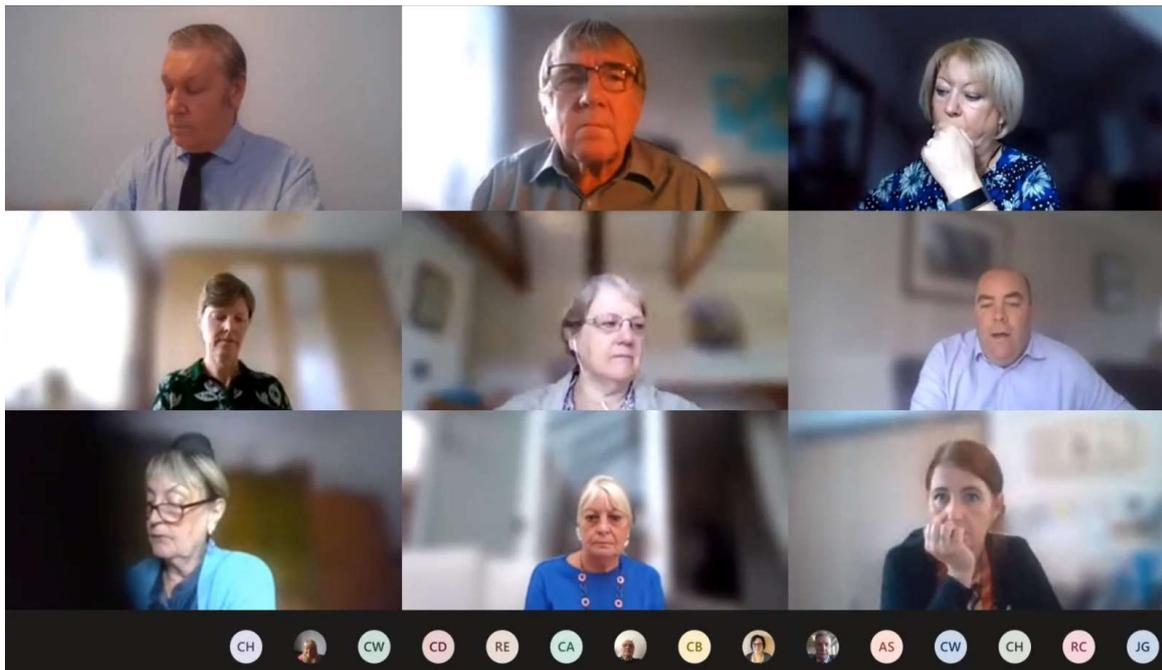
New emergency legislation came into force in 2020 to enable local authority meetings to be held virtually. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board was the first virtual scrutiny committee to be held by Durham County Council in June.



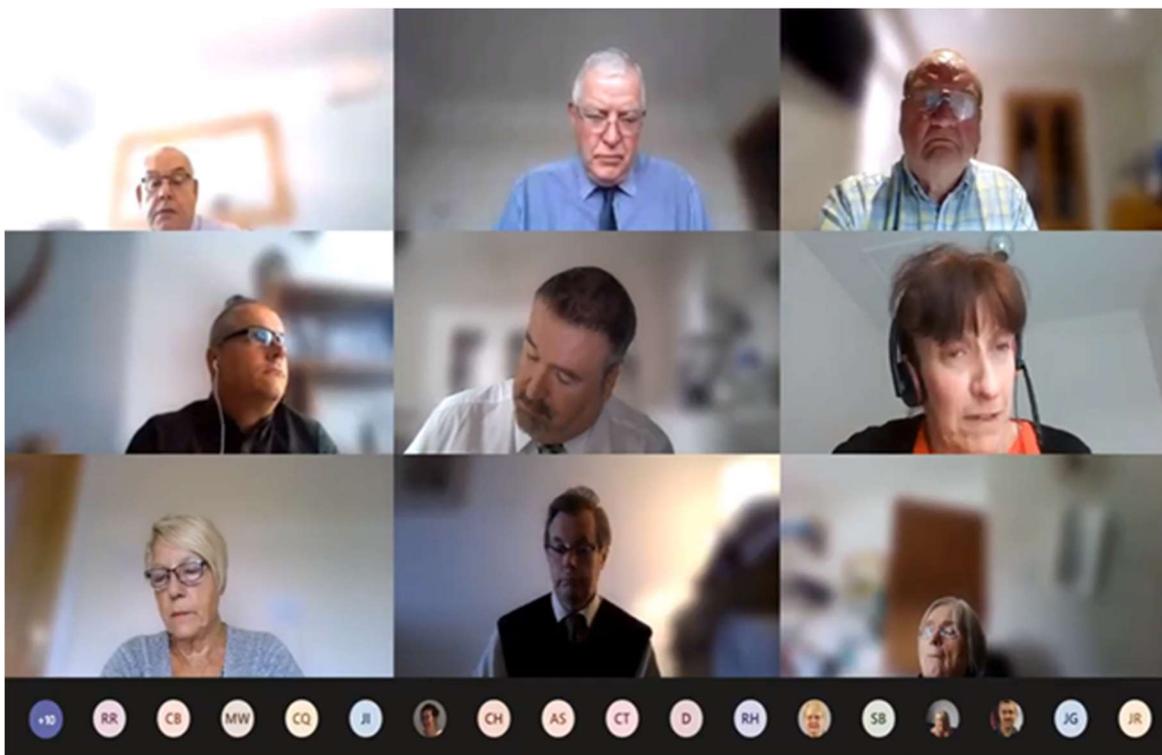
Members questioned the Chief Executive and the Corporate Management Team on the work undertaken nationally, regionally and locally to protect our communities and maintain services in response to COVID-19. A huge amount of work had been undertaken in partnership with agencies and organisations including Durham Constabulary, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, the local NHS and Clinical Commissioning Groups, Area Action Partnerships, the Community and Voluntary Sector and Trade Unions.

The immense contribution local communities had made to the response and the cooperation of County Durham residents throughout the unprecedented situation together with the contribution the Council's employees and strategic partners had made to the response was acknowledged.

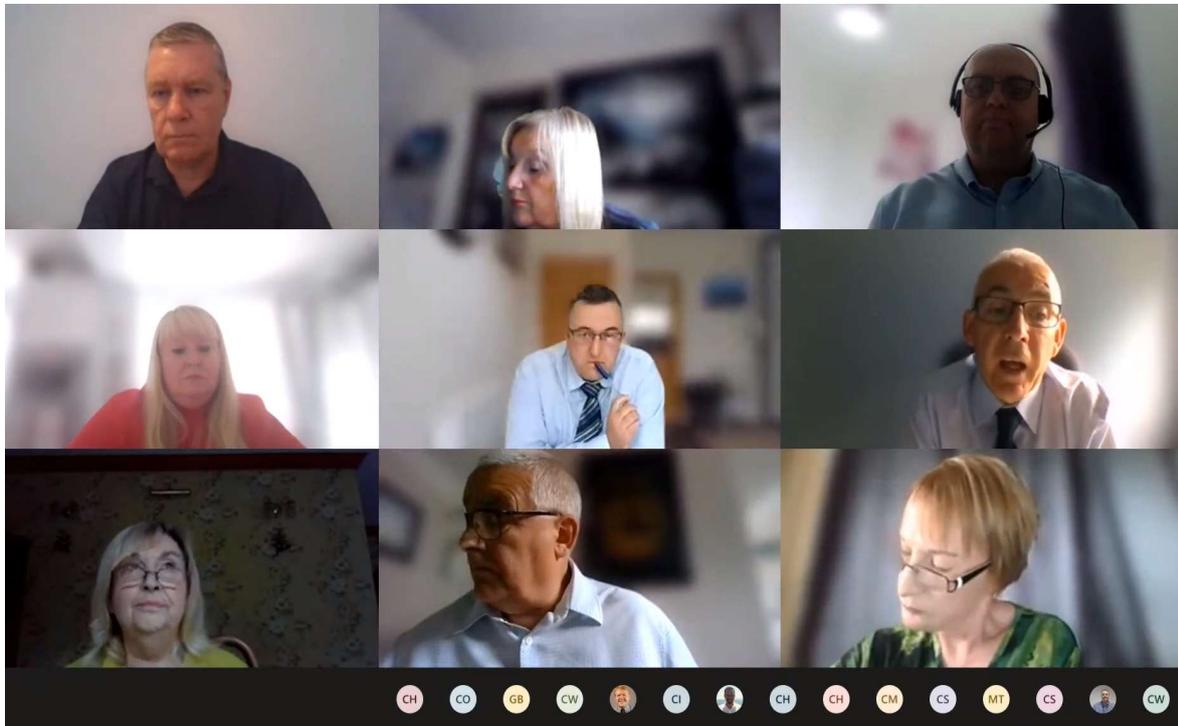
The CYP OSC in July focused on an update on the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's services and specifically on vulnerable children, children in receipt of free school meals, child poverty, education and the reduction in safeguarding referrals.



The Corporate Director for Children and Young People Services and the Head of Education and Skills answered questions from members of the committee on how services had needed to change to continue to deliver services to children, young people and their families.



The AWH OSC meeting in July enabled members to hear from the Director of Public Health on the public health planning, response and current recovery position to the COVID-19 pandemic. The County Durham Care Partnership System response to the pandemic was also presented to members.

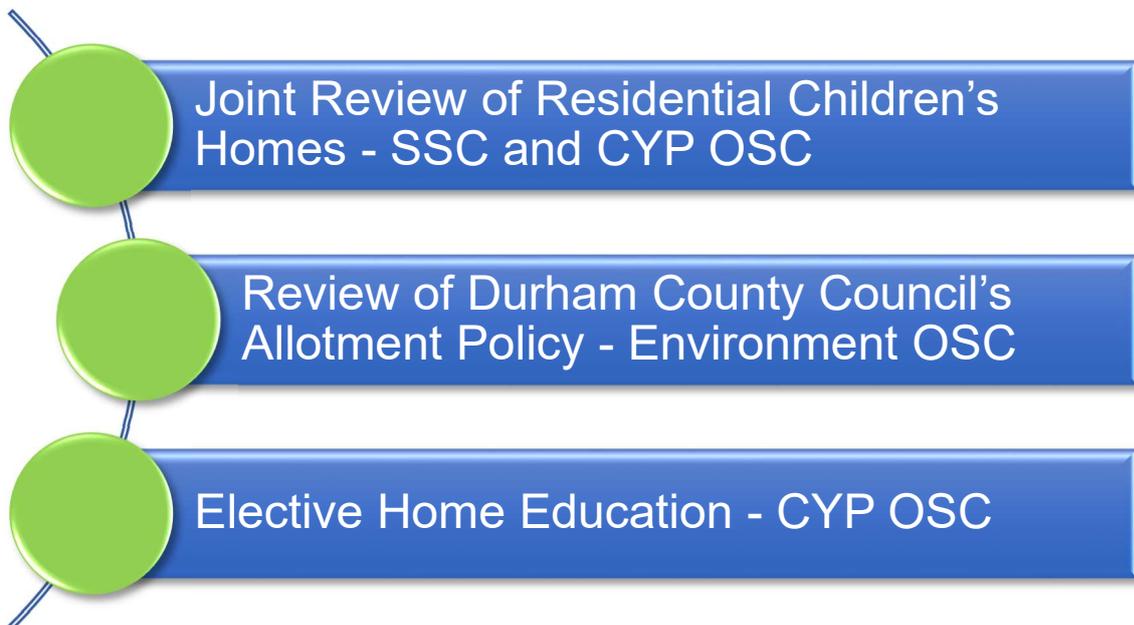


The E&E OSC met in July and received an update on the support that Durham County Council and Business Durham had delivered during the COVID-19 crisis to help businesses and the economy.

Overview and Scrutiny Review Activity 2019/20

Each year the scrutiny work programme is developed to ensure a balanced programme. Alongside considering overview reports and updates, we plan focussed review work throughout the year. These reviews can be light touch or in depth and are usually reported to Cabinet and the appropriate thematic partnership. Due to the pause in the work programmes this year, some reviews will be completed in 2020/21

Three in depth evidence-based reviews below have been completed this year with two further reviews continuing into next year.



Joint Review of Residential Children's Homes

A joint review of children's residential care homes was undertaken by the Children and Young People's and Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The aim of the review was to gain an understanding of concerns associated with the impact of private children's residential care homes demand on services. The review also explored approaches to lobby government/national bodies for tighter legislation.

Six recommendations were made by the review. These are, in summary:

- The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) receive a further report on the timeliness and accuracy of information received from placing authorities to the Council and partner agencies for out of area children looked after residing within a children's residential care home within the county.
- The demand placed upon the Local Authority Designated Officer be monitored and ensure that all private children's residential care homes receive information about courses provided by DSCP relating to residential care
- The DSCP monitor the number of incidents reported to Durham Constabulary from all residential children's care homes within the county and action taken to reduce demand.
- The Council's Corporate Parenting Panel receive regular information on reported incidents to Durham Constabulary, for County Durham children looked after who reside within any residential children's care home within County Durham with a specific focus on reports of missing from home.
- Following an evaluation of the accreditation scheme, proposals for a revised scheme tare taken to the Corporate Parenting Panel. The revised scheme should be promoted with all children's residential care homes within County Durham.
- The DSCP consider lobbying regionally and nationally for agreement to explore an accreditation scheme for residential children's homes nationally.



Review of Durham County Council's Allotment Policy

The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a scrutiny review looking at Durham County Council's proposed future allotment policy. Nine recommendations were made by the review of the future policy. These are summarised below:

- Concerning the housing of large animals no longer permitted on allotment plots, the five year period identified in the proposed transition arrangements should apply.
- All DCC directly managed allotment sites in the county are managed by one DCC service team
- A review group is established to undertake a complete review of allotment sites not used for purpose and that the review group
 - Considers each site on an individual basis
 - Undertakes site based consultation meetings
 - Considers whether tenancy agreements on retained sites are transferred to match the purpose for which the plot is used
 - Ensures that the sale of sites is handled under the Land Disposal Policy subject to necessary approval where the site is a statutory allotment.
- Area allotment associations are established where appropriate to take over day to day management and control where appropriate.
- Discussions take place with Town and Parish Councils that have expressed an interest in taking over the management of allotment sites and where they do take over management, advice and support should be provided by DCC for an agreed period
- Reconsideration be given to the process for the allocation of plots to co-workers by acknowledging previous contributions whilst not registered, subject to any legal advice. In addition, the need for co-workers to register is publicised.
- The provision of smaller sized allotment plots be considered if there is demand.
- That consideration is given to a rental review of DCC's allotment portfolio with recognition given to the health and wellbeing benefits of cultivating allotment plots. Any increase in rent could be managed via annual increments.
- A review of progress of these recommendations be undertaken six months after the report is considered by Cabinet.



Elective Home Education - Children and Young People OSC

Members of CYPOSC undertook a review of Elective Home Education following members concerns about the rise in numbers of children in County Durham who are educated at home. Members wanted to examine the standard of education for children who are home educated, how relationships with partners protect children from harm, relationships with schools and support available for children and families. Their recommendations in summary:

- Cabinet lobby for a common framework to improve oversight of the quality of education and safeguarding of children and young people who are Elective Home Educated. The framework should include a national register of all children and young people who are home educated and reasons why they are.
- Work continues with the Principals of Further Education Colleges in County Durham to provide places to enable access to vocational and core GCSE courses for year 10 and 11 pupils who are electively home educated. Capacity is developed to ensure all children and young people who are electively home educated have access to the courses.
- A high understanding of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities including autism be promoted. All schools be encouraged to provide appropriate training to staff so that children and young people with a special educational need or disability receive the appropriate level of support whichever school they attend.
- A reporting model be developed to encourage all schools to include within their annual Head Teacher report to the Governing Body:
 - Discussion of reasons given for Elective Home Education
 - Where bullying is cited as a reason that this is discussed
 - Ensure that anti-bullying policies are continuously reviewed.
- An annual event be held for families who home educate their children to engage with the service and meet other families in a similar position to themselves. The event to give children an opportunity to interact and socialise with other children who are home educated.





Road Safety Strategy- SSC OSC

GP Service Provision in County Durham- AWH OSC

Road Safety – Stronger and Safer Communities OSC

The aim of the review is to provide comment on the development of a County Durham Road Safety Strategy. The Committee has a statutory role to scrutinise work of the Council and the Safe Durham Partnership. Implementing measures to promote a safe environment is one of the priority objectives within the existing Council and Safe Durham Partnership plans. ‘Ensuring a safer road environment’ is a focus within this objective.

Road Safety is an area in which the Committee has previously undertaken review work, holding a focussed session on the “fatal four” being the four most common causes of casualties and fatalities in road traffic accidents (inappropriate speed, using a mobile phone while driving, not wearing a seatbelt and drink/drug driving). The Committee has also received annual reports on activity of the Durham and Darlington Casualty Reduction Forum and monitored quarterly performance against road safety performance indicators.

Within its work programme, the Committee agreed to undertake further review activity looking at road safety performance, specifically the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions within County Durham. In preparing for this review activity, a request was received from the Council’s Head of Technical Services for the Committee to undertake a policy development review and provide comment on development of a new County Durham Road Safety Strategy.

The strategy will set out how the council will work with partners to improve road safety within the County and will also contribute to activity undertaken by the County Durham & Darlington Road Casualty Reduction Forum who report to the Safe Durham Partnership Board.



GP Service Provision in County Durham – Adults, Health and Wellbeing OSC

This review is looking at the extent of GP coverage across County Durham and the range of services offered by GP practices. It is considering the issues and barriers facing patients in accessing their GP including the availability of branch sites across individual practices

The Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been engaged in a number of consultation and engagement processes undertaken by GP practices which involve a range of issues including reductions in practice branch sites, reductions in pharmacy/dispensing provision and branch closures.

During these processes, the Committee have become increasingly concerned about challenges in GP recruitment, retention, retirement and other workforce related pressures that are impacting on the level of service provision available to residents within County Durham.

There are concerns, nationally, regionally and locally about the falling number of GPs, the availability of GP appointments, the number of GP practices that are accepting new patients, the range of services available from GP practices, and the reduction in the number of GP branch sites.

It is expected the review on GP provision in County Durham will be completed in October 2020.



Planned Overview and Scrutiny in 2020/21

The work programmes for overview and scrutiny are developed in the context of the current Council Plan, the Cabinet's Forward Plan of decisions, the County Durham Vision 2035, partnership plans and strategies, performance and budgetary control data and changes in government legislation.

Importantly in this next year, we will also be focussing on County Durham's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and reflecting on performance within that context.

The process for developing the Council's overview and scrutiny work programmes is consultative and comprehensive. Initial proposals are influenced by legislation, plans and strategies, performance reports and include engagement with the executive, partners and officers. Each overview and scrutiny committee has an experienced chair to ensure there is a clear focus on the committee's role and forward plan of work. Where there are any cross-cutting matters, joint meetings are held to avoid duplication and make the best use of capacity of both members and officers

Work programmes are usually finalised during June and July and are designed to ensure there is flexibility and capacity to take on topics which may arise throughout the year. Work programmes for 2019/20 have had to be cut short or rescheduled due to the need to prioritise work on the response and recovery to COVID-19.

A summary of the planned programme for 2020/21 is shown overleaf. The Safer and Stronger Communities and the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be agreeing their work programmes in September as it had not been possible to meet earlier.

Work Programme 2020/21

COSMB

- Budget and MTFP Process reflecting response and recovery process to COVID-19
- RIPA
- Performance and budget outturn
- Customer Feedback
- Welfare Reform and Poverty
- Transformation Programme
 - Transformation and ICT
 - Business Support Services
 - Digital Transformation
 - Organisational Development

Children and Young People OSC

- Impact of COVID-19
- Child Poverty
- Neglect in County Durham
- Children & Young People's Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing
- Care Leavers
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
- Young Carers
- CAMHS
- Educational Outcomes
- Best Start in Life

Adults, Wellbeing & Health OSC

- Future of services delivered at Shotley Bridge Hospital
- Ward 6 Bishop Auckland Hospital
- Review of Stroke Rehabilitation Services in County Durham and Darlington
- Extended and Enhanced Primary Care Access
- Progress update on the Community Services Contract
- Monitoring of the Council's COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan

Economy OSC

- Economic impact of COVID-19
- DurhamWorks Programme
- Business Durham activity undertaken
- Housing Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Selective Licensing Scheme
- Transport (regional and local)
- Tourism and Visit County Durham Activity
- Retail support provided and detail of the Town and Village Centres report

Environment OSC

- Impact of COVID-19
- Air Quality in County Durham
- Emerging Climate Emergency Response Plan
- Carbon Management Plan
- Refuse and recycling collections
- Fly Tipping
- Fuel Poverty
- Highways and bridge maintenance
- Bereavement services
- Flood Risk Management Authorities

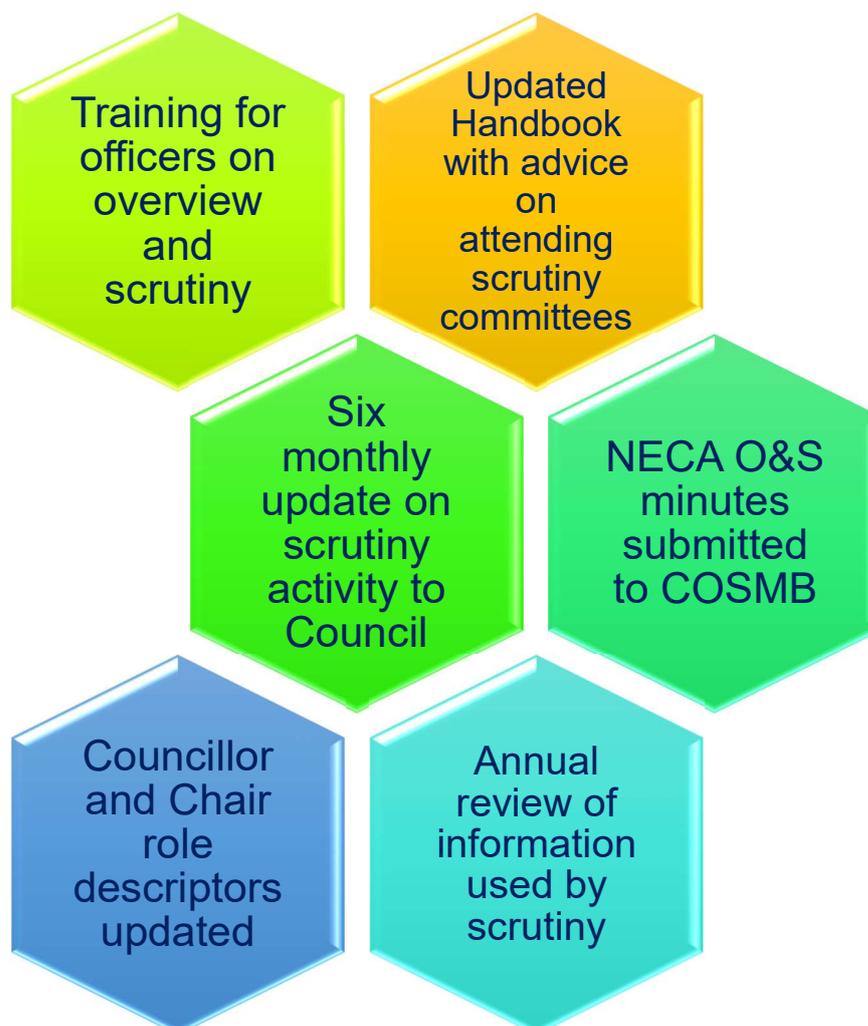
Safer & Stronger Communities OSC

- Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse
- Prevent - Counter Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism
- Arson and Secondary Fires
- Hate Crime
- Impact of COVID-19 on Community Safety Partners
- Youth Justice Plan
- Reform of Probation Services
- Reducing Reoffending
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Cybercrime

New statutory guidance on scrutiny arrangements

New statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local and combined authorities was published in May 2019 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The guidance covered six areas – culture, resourcing, selecting committee members, power to access information, planning work and evidence sessions.

We carried out detailed work to consider and reflect on how our scrutiny function operates and whether we needed to make any changes in the light of the guidance. We concluded that our scrutiny arrangements are robust and effective and already incorporate much that was recommended. However, we took the opportunity to implement some changes to further enhance our work:



Training

Training and development for overview and scrutiny has been identified as an essential element of the council's member development programme.

In the summer of 2019, chairs and vice chairs of committees undertook media and social media training delivered by the Communications team. The training reflected one of the key principals of good scrutiny to amplify the voice of the public. This was also underlined by the statutory scrutiny guidance published in May 2019 which stated that authorities should ensure that scrutiny has a profile in the wider community and confirmed the need to understand how to get messages across.

The training sessions covered the changing media landscape, dealing with media requests, social media hints and tips and some practical exercises. Members are increasing engaging with residents using social media and the training was a valuable opportunity to learn from the communications team.



Scrutiny members involved in scrutinising budget monitoring reports received financial awareness sessions from the Head of Finance and Transactional Services. These detailed sessions included an overview of how our budgets are constructed, what we mean by cash limits, an overview of the format and the content of budgetary control reports. The role and responsibilities of scrutiny members in relation to scrutinising financial information were discussed with reference made to the recent statutory scrutiny guidance about the clear division of responsibility between the audit and scrutiny functions. Practical advice and guidance was given on reviewing reports and the Head of Finance and Transactional Services answered questions from members.



Site visits

Unfortunately, several scrutiny visits were cancelled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, evidence gathering has had to use other methods and be sensitive to social distancing.

Visits are invaluable in helping to engage with external partners and local residents to enable their views to be taken into account for reviews and issues on scrutiny agendas. We have considered carrying out virtual site visits as an alternative to visits in person however these bring their own difficulties as many sites place restrictions on filming and photography. We continue to explore new ways to carry out this important aspect of scrutiny.

Two of the scrutiny committees were able to hold site visits before restrictions were put in place.



Members of the Children and Young People's OSC continued their practice of holding one of their meetings in a local school. This practice began in 2015 with a meeting being held at Consett Academy and a visit around the school building.

The committee puts great importance on engaging with young people and by holding a meeting in a school this helps young people to understand how scrutiny works in County Durham and gives them an opportunity to ask questions of both senior officers and politicians.

In March 2020 the committee had a very successful visit to the Durham Johnson School.

The agenda items for the meeting included Schools Engagement in Tackling the Climate Emergency; Education and Attainment Standards and What is there for Young People to do in County Durham. An additional presentation was given at the start of the meeting to explain how scrutiny operates in Durham County Council that took the form of a question and answer session for the students who attended the meeting.



The school was represented by two pupils from every year group, the Head Girl and Head Boy, members of the school's environment and climate change group and an invitation was given to any other pupils who wanted to attend. In total there was approximately 30 pupils in attendance at the meeting. The pupils showed excellent knowledge of the Cabinet and Scrutiny system and were given comparisons with the government's cabinet select committee model. The pupils took advantage of the opportunity to ask questions of all of the presenters at the meeting.



Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities OSC attended a series of events to gain an insight to road safety activity delivered by the Council and partner agencies.

During 2019/20 members attended the following events:

- Bikeability training session with primary school pupils at Framwellgate Moor Junior School
- Year 9 safety carousel event at Seaham High School

- Young Driver seminar with apprentices at the Learning Curve in Spennymoor.

The Bikeability session enabled Members to observe a session delivered by the Council's Road Safety Team to primary school pupils on bike safety, road safety awareness and how to safely undertake manoeuvres at junctions near to the school.

The Safety Carousel event focused on safer road choices aimed at secondary age pupils that included the potential risks of mobile phones as a pedestrian or cyclist and road safety within vehicles. Members also attended carousel sessions linked to the Committee's work programme on Anti-Social Behaviour and Arson.



The young driver seminar with apprentices was delivered by the Council and Durham Constabulary and focused on education on road safety and the fatal four areas of speeding, mobile phones, not wearing seatbelts and driving whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The session also sought views of young drivers on these areas and included an interactive virtual reality exercise to experience the impact of a road traffic collision and the response by emergency services to extricate people from the vehicle.

The field study exercises undertaken by Members provided a great insight into these approaches and highlighted proactive work being undertaken by partners to deliver key road safety messages.

Impact of Overview and Scrutiny in County Durham

Overview and scrutiny can have a real impact in contributing to and helping to shape public service policies and practice. It is integral to the improvement of services and plays an important role in linking in with regulation and inspection regimes.

Oral Health Strategy

In July 2019, Durham County Council's Oral Health Strategy was examined by the Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC. During its consideration, members noted proposals for extending the Community Water Fluoridation Scheme in conjunction with a number of regional partner local authorities. In view of the wide-ranging implications for the proposals, a joint OSC consisting of members of the Adults Wellbeing and Health, Children and Young Peoples and Environment and Sustainable Communities OSCs was set up.

It met in February 2020, following an initial postponement due to the calling of the December 2019 General Election, and was attended by a number of public and community groups together with representatives of the dental profession to consider evidence regarding the perceived benefits of community water fluoridation schemes and also listen to concerns of anti-fluoridation campaigners.

Further meetings of the Joint OSC will be held once arrangements for the proposals are finalised and public and stakeholder consultation plans can be safely established in the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Raising awareness of the consequences of cybercrime

In 2017, the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee led a review exploring methods to prevent young people engaging in or continuing to commit cybercrime.

One of its recommendations was for Durham Safer Cyber Group to work with young people to produce a film

HACK is a hard-hitting film written and produced by college students to highlight the dangers of cybercrime.



It was officially launched in July 2019 at New College Durham, as part of the Safe Durham Partnership's work to prevent young people from engaging in illegal online activity. Filmed on location in the North East, the production was created entirely by New College media students.

Climate Change Emergency

Durham County Council declared a climate change emergency following a motion to Council in February 2019, adopting a target for the Council to reduce carbon emissions by 60% from 2008/09 levels by 2030. The Council also resolved to investigate what further actions were necessary to make County Durham carbon neutral by 2050.

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee have a crucial role to monitor progress of these aims and identify barriers.

In October 2019, the Committee provided a comprehensive response to the Climate Emergency Consultation that included recommendations to:

- Fit solar panels and LED lighting on DCC buildings where appropriate and to encourage and support this process in community owned buildings.

- Encourage drivers to switch off engine's whist waiting at school gates.
- Highlight issues associated with climate change in communities.

In addition, the committee felt there was a need to consider:

- The use of all new technologies
- Rolling out advice and support to all town and parish councils across the County on energy efficiency measures
- Developing a suite of measures to report against progress regularly, breaking down the climate change targets into constituent elements.

The Environment and Sustainable Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended giving greater focus to increasing woodland and restoration of peatlands in the County to increase carbon absorption.

The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee takes its role to monitor the Climate Emergency Response Plan very seriously and has received information on the following areas during the last twelve months:

- DCC's Fleet
- Air Quality
- DCC's Carbon Management Plan
- Fuel Poverty
- Woodlands.

Members of the committee have also attended Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee to jointly consider Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.

Scrutiny of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan

Detailed scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is undertaken each year by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. In 2019/20 the Board considered the MTFP 2020/21 to 2023/24 and Revenue and Capital Budget at their meetings in September and again in February 2020. COSMB raised several points which were subsequently considered by Council as part of its budget discussion. These included:

(a) The Committee expressed concern about future financial uncertainties given the results of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review and Fair Funding Review would not be known until Autumn 2020. Members stated that in

view of the significant future potential financial pressures there was a need to continue to lobby Government for a better share of national funding.

(b) Members were particularly concerned about the potential threat to the current levels of public health funding linked to the national Fair Funding Review which could dramatically affect the County.

c) Members welcomed the additional £10 million investment in the Towns and Villages Fund and hoped it will be used to drive improvements in the local economy. The Board added that there should be local member input into how it is allocated, that funding should be prioritised according to need and that there is a need to include a focus on villages.

(d) The Board considered the funding in relation to flood relief. The Chair of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee highlighted a six year investment programme of £127 million across agencies which his committee had considered. Members highlighted the need for continuing proactive investment.

(e) COSMB welcomed the additional revenue investments proposed by Cabinet in providing new services and highlighted that some would be important for consideration in future thematic scrutiny work programmes, such as the youth parliament and tree planning proposals.

(f) Additional funding to repair potholes was welcomed, but some members emphasised the need for more investment in highways in future years.

(g) The proposed capital investments in better facilities for County Durham were also welcomed by the Board.

(h) Some concerns were expressed by members of the Board about utilisation of Budget Support Reserve when it needs to be available to meet the significant future financial pressures that MTFP(10) sets out. However, members were assured that reasonable contingency has been built into plans.

Informing Emerging Plans

- Safe Durham Partnership Plan

The Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the priorities and actions within the draft Safe Durham Partnership

Plan. In response, whilst acknowledging ongoing partnership work, Members commented on the importance of road safety and that a performance report to the Committee's meeting highlighted an increase in the number of people killed or seriously injured within the county compared to the previous year.

Within this context, the Committee requested that consideration be given for road safety to be included within the Safe Durham Partnership Plan. This request was agreed by the Safe Durham Partnership Board and is included within the Partnership plan.

- Selective Licensing

Durham County Council has decided to apply to the Secretary of State for permission to introduce a Selective Licensing Scheme in County Durham. The scheme will allow DCC to designate areas of the county for Selective Licensing to support the improvement of privately rented properties, providing certain conditions are met.

In areas designated, landlords must apply for a licence if they want to rent out a property and this includes landlords who rely on lettings agents to manage their properties on their behalf. This allows the council to check whether they are a 'fit and proper person' to be a landlord or letting agent, as well as making other stipulations concerning management of property and appropriate safety conditions.

The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received regular reports monitoring the progress of the proposed scheme. In addition, at a special meeting of the committee held on the 11 March 2020 to which all Overview and Scrutiny members were invited providing an opportunity for members to comment on the proposed scheme. The meeting confirmed members support for the proposed scheme with members making the following additional comments:

- Ensuring that the income from the proposed scheme is sufficient to fund all individual elements of the scheme.
- Ensuring that information is available as to how the £16m income will be utilised in funding the proposed scheme.
- Need to monitor any dispersal incidents occurring in the county.
- DCC continuing to engage with landlords to promote the benefits of the scheme including the support, advice and training provided.
- Support for a range of options in relation to the payment of the fee.

- Need to monitor rent levels in the designated Selective Licensing areas to determine whether landlords are increasing rents to pay the Selective Licensing fee.
- That DCC continues to provide support and advice in relation to housing issues in those areas of the county not included in the Selective Licensing Scheme.

The comments made by Overview and Scrutiny members were incorporated into an overview and scrutiny response and fed into the extensive consultation process undertaken for the proposed scheme. The committee will receive feedback from the consultation and consider the business case as part of its 2020/21 work programme.

Co-optees and engagement

We continue to work with the non-voting co-optees who sit on our scrutiny committees. They bring skills, knowledge and their own expertise and views to scrutiny and provide important external challenge to our work programme.

We have also promoted engagement of local expert and academic researchers in overview and scrutiny where they can add to our work.

Co-opted members appointed to scrutiny committees ensure a strong external representation and help scrutiny to engage with the public.

We value the different perspectives and challenge our co-optees bring to our work. Co-optees:

- Act as an independent voice for those who live or work in County Durham.
- Bring specialist knowledge, skills and an element of external challenge to the overview and scrutiny process.
- Take an interest in, attend and contribute to the committees and working groups to which appointed.
- Establish good relations with other members, officers and co-optees.



Constitutional Responsibilities of Overview and Scrutiny

The constitutional responsibilities of the scrutiny committees are based on the themes within the current council plan. A new council plan is under development following the agreement of a County Durham Vision 2035. The new plan will reflect the priorities in the Vision and there are expected to be some changes to the roles and responsibilities of scrutiny committees in due course.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

- To oversee and co-ordinate the work of Overview and Scrutiny and its committees
- To ensure effective liaison across the work of the committees on cross cutting issues.
- To be the strategic driver of the Overview and Scrutiny function.
- To consider as appropriate scrutiny member involvement in regional scrutiny arrangements within the context of any regional strategies.
- The establishment of appropriate liaison with the Executive in the interests of achieving common aims and continuous improvement for the Council
- To encourage appropriate community involvement in the overview and scrutiny role.
- Putting the customer first
- Working with our communities
- Effective use of resources
- Support our people through change

Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC

- Deliver a clean, more attractive and sustainable environment
- Maximise the value and benefits of Durham's natural environment.
- Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change

Children and Young People OSC

- Helping children and young people realise and maximise their potential
- Helping children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life
- A Think Family approach is embedded in our support for families

Adults, Wellbeing and Health OSC

- Reduce health inequalities and early deaths
- Improve the quality of life, independence and care and support for people with long term conditions
- Improve the mental health and physical wellbeing of the population
- Supporting people to die in the place of their choice with the care and support they need



Economy & Enterprise OSC

- Thriving Durham City
- Vibrant and successful town
- Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities
- Competitive and successful people
- A top location for business



Safer and Stronger Communities OSC

- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Protect vulnerable people from harm
- Reduce re-offending
- Alcohol and substance misuse harm reduction
- Counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism
- Casualty reduction
- Embedding Think Family approach



Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



Cllr Rob Crute
Chair



Cllr Alison Batey
Vice chair

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) provides a strategic direction for the work of all the overview and scrutiny committees.

COSMB reports and presentations scrutinised during 2019/20 include:

Attendance Management- Review of recommendations	MTFP (10) 2020/21 2023/24 and Budget 2020/21	Regulation of Investigative Powers Act (RIPA) 2000	Quarterly Performance Management
Quarterly Budget Outturn reports	Transformation Programme	MTFP Delivery reports	Customer Feedback - Complaints, Compliments & Suggestions
Digital Strategy	New County Durham Vision 2035	Welfare Reform	Updates on Petitions
Council Tax Empty Homes consultation	County Durham Partnership	Chairs Updates	Notice of Key Decisions

Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr John Robinson
Chair



Cllr Jean Chaplow
Vice chair

The Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (AWH OSC) has a statutory role under the Health and Social Care Act 2001 as amended to scrutinise local health services

AWH OSC reports and presentations scrutinised during 2019/20 include:

Future of Stroke Rehab in County Durham & Darlington	Future of Ward 6 Bishop Auckland Hospital	Consultations on NHS reviews	North East Ambulance Service performance
Public Health updates	Integrated Sexual Health Services	NHS Foundation Trusts Quality Accounts	Durham Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019/20 - Adults
Community Hospitals in County Durham	Interated Care System/Partnerships Development	Changes to Delivery of GP Services	Engagement and Communication Plans - Shotley Bridge Hospital
County Durham Healthwatch	Local Safeguarding Adults Board	Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020	Review of Enhanced and Extended Primary Care

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Heather Smith
Chair



Cllr Christine Potts
Vice chair

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYP OSC)

Children and Young People OSC reports and presentations scrutinised during 2019/20 include:

Annual Report Director of Public Health	Joint Targeted Area Inspection Action Plan	Update on Free School Meals and holiday provision review	School Funding
Healthy Weight Alliance	Educational Attainment	Growing Healthy 0 -19	Ofsted results - Durham Maintained Schools
Children and Families Partnership minutes	Visit to Durham Learning Resource	Child Protection Offer	Participation in Learning
Child Poverty	SEND Inclusion and Exclusion	CYP Mental Health Local Transformation Plan	Edge of Care and Pre Birth teams

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Malcolm Clarke
Chair



Cllr Richard Manchester
Vice chair

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Economy OSC)

Economy and Enterprise OSC reports and presentations scrutinised during 2019/20 include:

Regional Funding and Investment Pipeline	Regional and Local Transport Provision	Homelessness in the county	DurhamWorks Programme
Skills Advisory Panel (NELEP)	Employment in the County	EU Funding programme	Tackling Empty Properties
Business Enterprise Group of the CDEP	Selective Licensing Scheme	Local Industrial Strategy	Engagement with Social Housing Providers
Housing Strategy	Visit County Durham	Business Durham	County Durham Economic Partnership

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Eddy Adam
Chair



Cllr Olga Milburn
Vice chair

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Env&Sust OSC)

Environment & Sustainable OSC reports and presentations scrutinised during 2019/20 include:

Single Use Plastics	Highways and Bridge Maintenance	Sustainable Heating	Climate Change
Leisure Centres Transformation	Tree Management Policy	Heritage Coast and the Tourism Offer	Carbon Management Plan
Gala Theatre	Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham	Fly-tipping	Management of DCC's fleet
European Structure & Investment Funding	Environmental Schemes	Fuel Poverty	Winter Maintenance

Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr David Boyes
Chair



Cllr Heather Liddle
Vice chair

SSC OSC has powers under the Police & Justice Act 2006, as amended, to scrutinise work being undertaken by the statutory crime and disorder reduction partnership - the Safe Durham Partnership

Safer and Stronger OSC Reports and presentations scrutinised during 2019/20 include:

Durham Police and Crime Panel	Youth Justice Plan	Hate Crime	Consumer Protection Enforcement & Intervention Activity
Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service	Safe Durham Partnership	Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015	Consumer Protection Enforcement Activity
ERASE Child Sexual Exploitation	Safer Durham Partnership Board	Fire Service Integrated Risk management Plan	Arson and Deliberate Fires
Modern Slavery	Open Water Safety & City Safety Group	Cybercrime	Domestic Abuse

Regional Scrutiny

Durham County Council contributes to the scrutiny of important regional issues such as transport, health, economic development and regeneration through membership of the following:

- North East Joint Scrutiny Member / Officer Network
- North East Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- North East Joint Transport Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- North East and North Cumbria ICS and Northern and Central ICP Joint OSC
- North East and North Cumbria ICS and Central and Southern ICP Joint OSC
- South Tyneside and Sunderland Health Partnership Path to Excellence Phase 2 Joint OSC

North East Joint Scrutiny Member / Officer Network

The North East Regional Employers' Organisation supports a region-wide North East Joint Scrutiny Member/Officer network where all North East local authority scrutiny leads discuss national developments in scrutiny. Durham County Council chairs the network which provides an opportunity to share work programmes and priorities and consider emerging issues that have an impact across local authority boundaries.

During 2019/20 the officer network has met to discuss the new scrutiny guidance, future health scrutiny arrangements, combined authorities, work programmes and future topics. Unfortunately, due to the calling of the general election in 2019 and then COVID-19 the member network had been unable to meet during 2019/20. Virtual meeting arrangements are now being explored.

North East Combined Authority scrutiny arrangements

We continue to work with other regional authorities as the North East Combined Authority (NECA) which is comprised of the four councils of Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

NECA has three broad areas of focus:

- Transport

- Employability and Inclusion
- Economic Development and Regeneration

We have representation on the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise and challenge decision-making on behalf of our communities. The committee investigates matters of significant importance to residents across the areas covered by the four councils with a view to influencing decisions.

Durham County Council is represented on the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Councillors Rob Crute and Alison Batey, the Chair and Vice-Chair of COSMB. Councillors Malcolm Clarke and Richard Manchester, the Chair and Vice-Chair of Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are the nominated substitute members.

North East Joint Transport Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Transport is of strategic importance to the north east and both NECA and the North of Tyne Combined Authority (Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland councils) (NoTCA) work collaboratively to ensure effective decision making takes place across the region.

We work with NECA and NoTCA on a North East Joint Transport Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee established with representatives from all seven authorities. Councillors Rob Crute and Alison Batey, the Chair and Vice-Chair of COSMB represent Durham County Council. Councillors Malcolm Clarke and Richard Manchester are the nominated substitute members.

Both scrutiny committees normally meet at varying locations across the NECA area and meetings are open to the public. During the pandemic, meetings have been held virtually.

Further details on NECA can be found at www.northeastca.gov.uk.

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 Regional Joint Health Scrutiny Committee consists of lead Health Scrutiny members from all 12 north east local authorities.

The committee is charged with scrutinising issues around the planning, provision and operation of health services in and across the north east region, comprising for these purposes the areas covered by all constituent authorities.

The North East Regional Joint Health OSC has not met during 2019/20 because of the emergence of the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System and associated Integrated Care Partnerships. The development of these systems has resulted in the establishment of two Integrated Care System/Integrated Care Partnerships Joint OSCs.

North East and North Cumbria ICS and Northern and Central ICP Joint OSC

This Joint OSC comprises representatives from Durham County Council; Gateshead BC; Newcastle City Council; North Tyneside BC; Northumberland CC; South Tyneside BC and Sunderland City Council

The committee has examined:

- South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust service updates
- Primary care and the development of Primary care networks
- Integrated Care update
- Revised terms of reference and protocol for the Joint OSC to reflect the development of an Integrated Care System for North East and North Cumbria;
- The development of an Integrated Care System for North East and North Cumbria and associated clinical priorities;
- ICS Partnership arrangements;
- ICS Communications and engagement update;
- Workforce updates
- Updated joint OSC work programme.
- North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Mental Health ISC Programme Update
- Optimising Health Services and Child Health and Wellbeing NENC ICS Update

North East and North Cumbria ICS and Central and Southern ICP Joint OSC

This Joint OSC comprises representatives from Darlington BC; Durham County Council; Hartlepool BC; Middlesbrough BC; Redcar and Cleveland BC; North Yorkshire County Council and Stockton on Tees BC

The committee has examined:

- Durham Darlington and Teesside, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby STP Terms of Reference and Protocol revisions
- Proposals for the development of an Integrated Care System for the North East and North Cumbria

Durham County Council is the only North East Council with representatives that sit on both ICS/ICP Joint OSCs.

The regional and sub-regional joint scrutiny overview and scrutiny arrangements will be used to scrutinise the development of the ICS/ICPs and any associated proposals for substantial developments or significant variations in services.

South Tyneside and Sunderland Health Partnership Path to Excellence Phase 2 Joint OSC

Arrangements have been made for Durham County Council to join a Joint OSC to consider South Tyneside and Sunderland Health Partnership's Path to Excellence programme Phase 2. This involves a review of services across South Tyneside and Sunderland in respect of Acute medicine and emergency care; Emergency surgery and planned care (including surgery and outpatient care).

The Joint OSC has yet to meet due to General Election 2019 purdah restrictions and the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Overview and Scrutiny Team

The Overview and Scrutiny team is part of the Resources Directorate. Jenny Haworth, the Head of Strategy is designated as the Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

Tom Gorman is the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager and Stephen Gwilym the Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer. Diane Close, Jonathan Slee and Ann Whitton are Overview and Scrutiny Officers. Clare Luery is the Scrutiny Support Assistant.

Key contacts:

Email: scrutiny@durham.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/scrutiny>
Tel: 03000 265978

Adults, Wellbeing & Health OSC

- Stephen Gwilym
- Tel: 03000 26814
stephen.gwilym@durham.gov.uk

Children & Young People OSC

- Ann Whitton
- Tel: 03000 268143
ann.whitton@durham.gov.uk

COSMB

- Clare Luery
- Tel: 03000 265978
clare.luery@durham.gov.uk

Economy & Enterprise OSC

- Diane Close
- Tel: 03000 268141
diane.close@durham.gov.uk

Environment & Sustainable Communities OSC

- Ann Whitton/Diane Close
- ann.whitton@durham.gov.uk &
diane.close@durham.gov.uk

Safer & Stronger Communities OSC

- Jonathan Slee
- Tel: 03000 268142
jonathan.slee@durham.gov.uk