



*Altogether better*

# **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-2015**

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

**May 2015**

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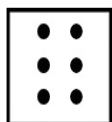
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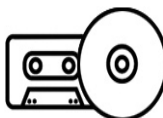
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# Foreword

A strong and robust Overview and Scrutiny function is an important element within the Council's Governance and decision making arrangements and it is vital that we can continue to support this work in an ongoing climate of budget pressures.

Thanks to the leadership and management within the authority, the Council's budget continues to be managed effectively, and Overview and Scrutiny continues to play its part. The excellent relationship between executive and non-executive members continues.



The statutory scrutiny roles of Health, Crime and Disorder and Flooding Risk Management feature within this Annual Report alongside thematic Scrutiny work in respect of Economy and Enterprise and Children and Young People and the report provides an update of the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny during 2014/15 – it has been another very busy year. Issues covered have included Management of Woodland owned by Durham County Council; Customer First; Self-harm amongst children and young people; Organised Crime; Tourism Marketing; as well as feeding into a number of consultations.

The Children and Young People's OSC's Review into Alcohol and Substance misuse by young people was entered in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny Awards and the Committee's Review of Self Harm amongst children and young people has highlighted the importance of early intervention and the availability of and accessibility to support services.

Councillor Ossie Johnson, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said: "Most young people who self-harm do not access any kind of help or support, they remain hidden to the agencies that can help them. This is why it is important to raise awareness and understanding of self-harm among both those who do it and those who care for them. The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recent review of self-harm by young people achieves this."

Many thanks to all who have been involved in supporting and assisting the Overview and Scrutiny process – be it Members, officers, partners, or co-opted members.

I would like to take this opportunity to give special thanks to Councillor Robin Todd, the Chair of the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee who sadly passed away in May this year. He served as the Chairman of the County Council's Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee since November 2009 and has led that Committee's input into a number of significant NHS Service reviews. Councillor Todd was well known and highly regarded within the NHS Community.

The people of South Hetton and Shotton Colliery have lost a hugely popular, hard-working and committed local Councillor and community representative and my fellow Councillors and I have lost a trusted friend and colleague.

I hope you will find this report interesting and informative. Scrutiny Committee meetings are open to the public and the scrutiny team 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 2014-15

## Overview and Scrutiny Review Activity

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

- Management of the woodland estate owned by DCC - Durham County Council owns and manages a substantial area of woodland in the County totalling 1280 hectares with a further 214 hectares on long term lease arrangements with partners and further woodland creation taking place as part of various initiatives within the County. It was considered timely for Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC to investigate whether the current policies and strategies in place for the management of the woodland estate are 'fit for purpose' and that funding and diversification opportunities are maximised.
- Tourism marketing undertaken by Visit County Durham - Tourism within County Durham supports over 10,600 full time jobs and is worth over £708m a year to the economy, however there remains a great deal of untapped tourism potential within the County. Visit County Durham sits within the Regeneration and Economic Development Service Grouping of Durham County Council and is the Destination Management Organisation for the County, marketing the County as a visitor destination. Economy and Enterprise OSC decided to investigate the marketing performance of Visit County Durham and to determine how future marketing activity will continue to build upon the recent success of key signature events in 2013/14 including Lumiere, Lindisfarne Gospels, Durham and the Ashes Test Series.
- Organised Crime – The Safer and Stronger Communities OSC undertook scrutiny review activity on organised crime looking at community intelligence, illegal waste sites and the potential financial risk to the Council. The Committee examined a wide range of evidence through presentations, viewed video footage and looked at innovative approaches to raise awareness with communities. Conclusions and recommendations for the review focus on acknowledging positive partnership work to disrupt and tackle organised crime through the Disruption and Intervention Panel; methods to reduce the risk of fraud to the Council; raising awareness with communities, elected members and frontline staff. The review also recommends engagement from partnership agencies in development of the Local Area Profiles and through existing work continue to seek a prompt response to removing illegal waste sites.
- Self-Harm amongst Children and Young People – Following concern expressed by members about the number of young people in County Durham who self-harm, especially those who do not come into contact with services, the Children and Young Peoples OSC undertook a review to raise awareness and understanding of self-harm among young people and adults. The review investigated how early intervention and support can be increased by examining:-
  - What policies and practices does Durham County Council have in place to help, support, prevent and intervene early where looked after children and young people self-harm?
  - How reliable and accurate is performance data and what does it tell us about self-harm in this area compared to regional and national data.

- What services are available in the community for young people with anxieties or mental health problems to talk to people and how accessible are these services?
- How are schools addressing students' issues that may lead them to self-harm? What prevention and early intervention methods do they use?
- How can awareness of self-harm be increased among young people, parents and carers and what are the signs to look out for?
- Customer First Strategy - The Corporate Issues OSC review of Customer First focused on ensuring that the Council's key objectives regarding customer service provision are delivered against with key recommendations within the Customer First Review report supporting this including Customer First training across the Council; implementation of a new CRM system; the development of a Customer First delivery plan for business critical projects; the emerging "Information Durham" service branding, and Social Media as a developing customer access channel.

#### **Other review activity in 2014/15 included:**

- Led scrutiny of the budget process through consideration of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Considerations were broad-based and ranged from scrutiny of the timetable for the budget process, scrutiny of developing proposals, all the way through to our ongoing quarterly scrutiny of the delivery of savings.
- Increased awareness of the Council's scrutiny function through articles in local media, Members' Bulletin, and an ongoing update of the scrutiny web pages.
- Formally responded to NHS Quality Accounts 2013/14 for: North East Ambulance Service; County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust; and the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys 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:
  - Impact of changes to Government policy and funding on the economy of County Durham – Members' Reference Group report – County Durham Economic Partnership
  - Flooding scrutiny review report – County Durham Environment Partnership
  - Alcohol and substance misuse by young people – Children and Families Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Contributed to:
  - The Housing strategy for County Durham
  - The Customer First Strategy
  - County Durham Drugs Strategy 2014-17
  - In-house Residential Homes Consultation Process
  - Children's Centres consultation process
  - Draft Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2014/17
  - Consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2015/16 to 2017/18
  - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2018
  - Safe Durham Partnership Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2015/17
  - Children, Young People & Families Plan 2015-2018
  - Healthy Weight Framework



# Key Achievements 2014-15

## Overview and Scrutiny Site Visits

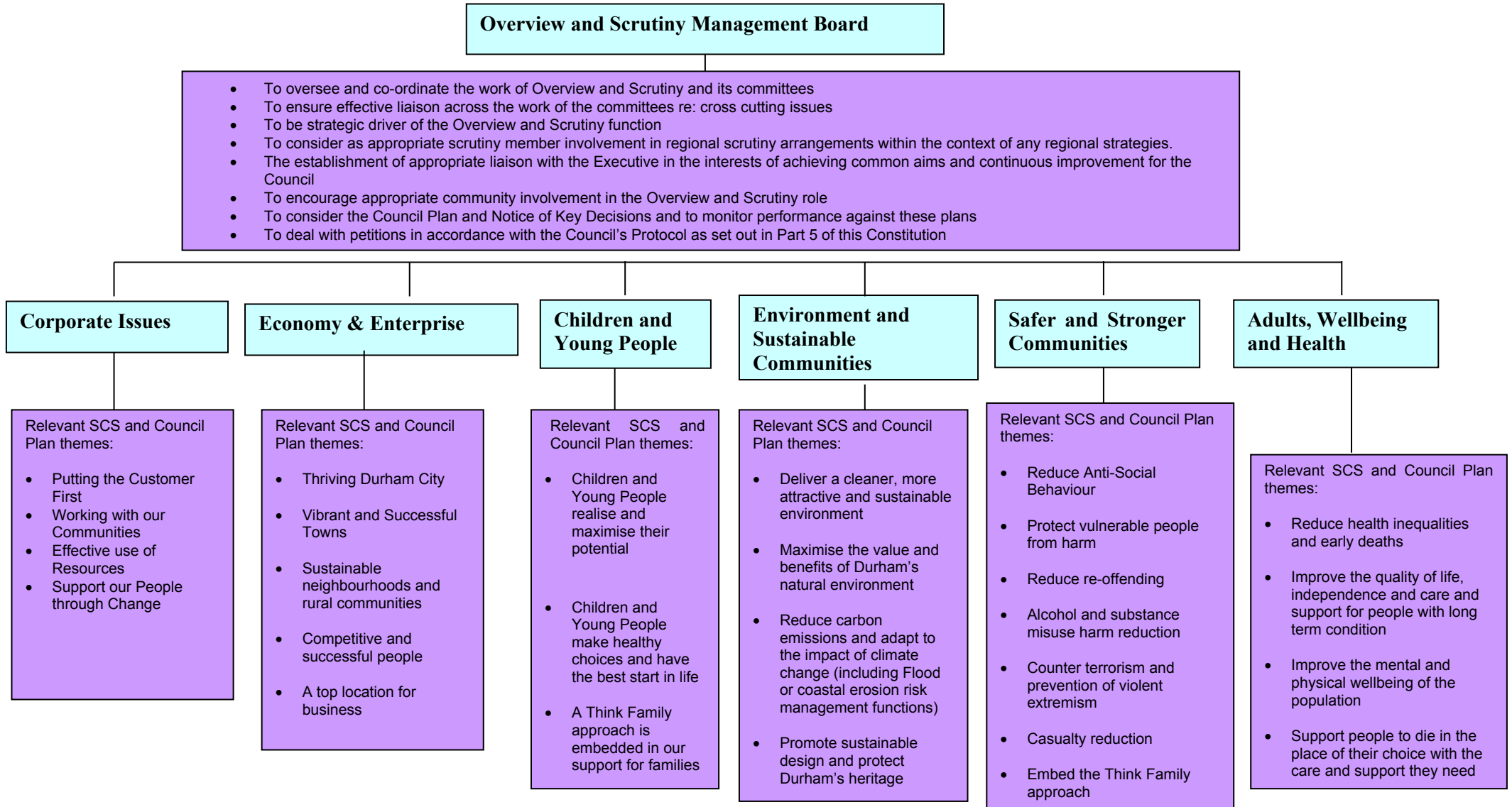
Members and/or Officers have undertaken a number of scrutiny visits to support the Committees' work programmes, including:

- Sunderland City Council's Customer contact centre as part of the Customer First Task and Finish Group review;
- The Heritage Coast;
- Freemans Reach – the Archimedes Screw;
- Woodlands review – visit to 3 community woodland sites at Cassop, Quarrington Hill and Coxhoe;
- Woodlands review – visit to Sunderland Bridge to look at timber extraction;
- Sensory Room, Spennymoor Leisure Centre;
- Durham Constabulary Police HQ;
- County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service HQ;
- Durham Community Fire Station;
- Comeleon House, Tanfield Lea, to look at the ICT systems.



# 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

The **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB)** provides a strategic steer for the work of all the committees. Its work programme for 2014/15 included the following:

- Examination of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP5) 2015/2016 – 2017/2018, Council Plan and Service Plans and revenue and capital budget proposals for 2014/2015 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, and to provide information on scrutiny involvement if any;
- Updates on petitions received which enables Members to track progress on behalf of communities;
- Updates on major policy developments and announcements made by Central Government and the implications for the Council and County Durham.
- Received regular updates on:
  - The work of the County Durham Partnership
  - Welfare Reform
  - The delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan 4
- Led and co-ordinated the review of the non-voting scrutiny co-optees and the new round of appointments to Scrutiny Committees;



Cllr Joe Armstrong,  
Chair of Overview and  
Scrutiny Management  
Board



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

The Board has also received updates on:

- Proposed revisions to the Council's Bank Contract;
- Performance management every quarter before it is disseminated to respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees for further comment;
- Work programme activity from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs;
- A request for Call-in - Durham Villages Regeneration Ltd;
- Consultation and providing a response to County Durham Drug Strategy 2014-2017;
- Report on Children's Centre review consultation process;
- Council Plan and Service Plans.



# Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr John Lethbridge,  
Chair of Corporate  
Issues Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Katherine Henig  
Vice- Chair of Corporate  
Issues Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee

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

- Undertaken and finalised a major review on the Customer First Strategy
- Collaborated with the OSMB on in depth scrutiny of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP5) 2015/2016 – 2017/2018, Council Plan and Service Plans and revenue and capital budget proposals for 2014/2015 to make sure that the Council's resources are used effectively and efficiently;
- 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 quarterly updates on:
  - Performance Management 2014/15 and commented on progress against the Council's corporate basket of performance indicators for the Altogether Better Council Theme;
  - the Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn for Assistant Chief Executives and Resources;
  - Customer Feedback: Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions;
  - The Children's and Adults Service Annual Representations Report 2013/14;
- Had input into:
  - the refresh of the Council Plan and Service Plans;
  - the performance indicators for Altogether Better Council;
- Received overview presentations on:
  - Creditor Payment Performance 2013/14;
  - Fairness of Local Government Funding;
  - The County Durham Drug Strategy 2014/17, inviting input from Members;
  - The ICT Prioritisation project;
- Received an update and signed off the final update on the scrutiny review of Area Action Partnerships: Fit for Purpose, Fit for the Future.

# Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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



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



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

- Examined and provided commentary upon Quality Accounts 2013/14 including proposed priorities for 2014/15 for Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS FT; County Durham and Darlington NHS FT and North East Ambulance Service NHS FT. The Committee also considered updates on progress from all three Trusts in respect of priorities during 2014/15;
- Scrutinised North Durham CCG's Review of Urgent Care services in North Durham;
- Engaged with North Durham and Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCGs in the development of their Urgent Care Strategy;
- Considered the final evaluation report of the Reconfiguration of Emergency Medical and Critical Care Services at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS FT, to ensure that desired outcomes from the review were realised;
- Reviewed proposals by Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCGs in respect of Accident and Emergency Ambulance service model changes in their area including the establishment of an independent review by NHS England's Northern Regional Clinical Senate;
- Examined key Health and Wellbeing Board strategies including;
  - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2014 and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2018;
  - Healthy Weight Strategic Framework for County Durham;
  - Public Mental Health Strategy;
  - Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Prevention Strategic Framework for County Durham;
  - Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment;
- Reviewed Annual Reports and performance information in respect of the Health and Wellbeing Board and County Durham HealthWatch;
- Considered overview presentations and information in respect of;
  - County Durham and Darlington NHS FT's emerging Clinical Strategy;
  - North Durham CCG and DDES CCG's proposals to address NHS England's Five Year Forward View;
  - Planning Progress Update and Draft Commissioning Intentions for North Durham CCG and DDES CCG;

- Engaged with CCGs and County Durham and Darlington NHS FT in considering potential service changes in respect of Midwife-led Maternity Service provision at Bishop Auckland Hospital and Breast Services as a pre-cursor to formal consultation;
- Engaged with local Councillors in respect of a consultation undertaken by NHS England's Regional team which reviewed GP service provision across three practices and, in doing so, secured contract extensions for all three practices to enable more detailed work be undertaken.

# Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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



Cllr Jan Blakey,  
Chair of Children &  
Young People OSC



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

- Undertaken a major review on Self Harm by Young People by looking at the numbers recorded of self-harm and the reasons why this occurs;
- Examined the Ofsted Single Framework for Children's Services and School Improvement looking at Local Authority Inspections;
- Scrutinised Annual Reports from the Director of Public Health, Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Health and Wellbeing Board;
- Maintained a keen interest in the health and wellbeing of children and young people in County Durham and has received information in the impact of smoking on children and young people and the Wellbeing for Life programme;
- Continued to follow closely progress to improve health weight among children and young people and received information on the Healthy Weight Strategic Framework for County Durham;
- Received information on the process of the Children's Centres Consultation, the committee did not respond to the consultation but the information received enabled members to go back to their communities and encourage members of their communities to take part;
- Scrutinised the Early Years Strategy developed jointly by the Council and County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust and the Safeguarding Framework;
- Continued to receive updates on special education needs and disabilities reforms;
- Considered the Local Safeguarding Children's Board – serious case review process to ensure that members of the committee were aware of how the process worked;
- Received presentations and commented upon:
  - Review of the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2014-2017;
  - Healthy Weight Strategic Framework for County Durham;
  - The refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2014 and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015 – 2018;
- Continued to receive updates on:
  - School Funding Reforms;
  - Council Plan and Service Plans;
- Received quarterly updates and commented on:
  - Performance Management 2014/15;

- The Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn for Children's and Adult Services;
- Received an update on the recommendations of the:
  - Review of Support for Children and Young People with Mental Health Issues
  - Review of Alcohol and Substance misuse among Young People
- Received minutes from the Children and Families Partnership



# Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

- Undertaken reviews on:
  - Tourism marketing undertaken by Visit County Durham (VCD) – focusing on the marketing undertaken by VCD including detail of marketing campaigns, how it works with partners and performance;
- Continued to monitor, challenge and provide comment in relation to housing stock transfer project looking at how the authority will manage housing stock in the future;
- Received updates on the EU funding programme, Youth Employment Initiative and the Combined Authority and commented on key developments and the direction of travel;
- Received details of and commented on the development of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Site Management Service, masterplans for County Durham and the Digital Durham programme;
- Scrutinised the work of Durham Employment and Skills in relation to pre-employment training and considered an update report identifying work within County Durham in relation to skills development and apprenticeship opportunities;
- Provided comments to be fed into the consultation processes for the County Durham Plan and Housing Strategy with further updates planned for the future;
- Received on an annual basis detail of the work undertaken by the County Durham Economic Partnership, Business Durham and Visit County Durham;
- Examined performance data in relation to youth unemployment focusing on 18-24 age group with Partners including JCP;
- Continued to receive information on the development of Durham Key Options, affordable homes and the Homelessness Strategy;
- Received updates on Family Intervention Project (FIP), Housing Intervention Project (HIP), RED Capital Programme and Local Transport Plan and Transit 15;
- Monitored performance and revenue and capital expenditure through quarterly performance management and budgetary reports;
- Received updates on the progress of recommendations of the Empty Homes scrutiny review, Increasing young people's employment opportunities (18-24) within County Durham scrutiny review and The Impact of Changes in Government Funding and Policy on the Economy of County Durham scrutiny review;



Cllr Rob Crute,  
Chair of Economy and  
Enterprise OSC



Cllr Alison Batey  
Vice-chair of Economy  
and Enterprise OSC

- Received and challenged performance information on:
  - Durham City Homes, Dale and Valley Homes and East Durham Homes;
- Received minutes from:
  - County Durham Economic Partnership.

# Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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



Cllr Barbara Graham  
Chair of Environment and  
Sustainable Communities OSC



Cllr David Hall,  
Vice-Chair of Environment and  
Sustainable Communities OSC

- Undertaken reviews on:
  - Management of the woodland estate owned by DCC, which included information on the procurement of woodland, timber extraction, tree management, and funding available to manage the woodland estate;
- Received presentations and commented upon the Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan, Local Air Quality Management Plan for County Durham and Clean Bus Technologies;
- Held Special meetings of the committee allowing members the opportunity to focus on specific issues including the Tyne and Wear Aquifer Protection Scheme and Underground Coal Gasification;
- Received information and commented on various environmental improvement campaigns and projects including the work of the Community Action Team and the use of targeted interventions together with detail of the work of the Clean and Green Team;
- Considered an overview of landscape scale projects and detail of the work undertaken by various partnerships within the County including the Limestone Landscape Partnership, Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership and the local nature partnerships;
- Received updates on the progress of the waste programme, winter maintenance programme and the Warm Up North project;
- Considered and commented on the development of the EU funding programme in relation to the low carbon economy funding strand;
- Received minutes from:
  - The County Durham Environment Partnership Board;
  - Durham Strategic Flood Prevention Group;
  - Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee;
- Received quarterly updates on:
  - Performance management 2014/15;
  - the forecast of revenue and capital outturn for Neighbourhood Services;
- Received an update on the recommendations of the:
  - Review of development of Renewable Energy Technologies in County Durham;
  - Reducing the Council's Carbon Emissions Scrutiny Review;

- Flooding Review;
- The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is the flood and coastal erosion risk management overview and scrutiny committee for the purposes of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The committee has received an update from the flood risk management authorities for County Durham on:
  - Flood mitigation work currently being undertaken within County Durham by the Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham;
  - Future flood mitigation work to be undertaken and detail of funding;
  - Any issues identified by the Flood Risk Management Authorities in relation to flood mitigation schemes/projects within the County.

# Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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



Cllr David Boyes  
Chair of Safer and Stronger  
Communities OSC



Cllr Thomas Nearney  
Vice-chair of Safer and Stronger  
Communities OSC

- Undertaken review activity into topics on organised crime, substance misuse centres and 20mph limit/zones. The Organised Crime review looked at issues relating to community intelligence, illegal waste and financial risk to the Council. A review group is continuing to provide oversight of a new contract on delivering joint alcohol and drug services that focus on recovery. Following its previous review on road safety, the committee is scrutinising implementation of a Cabinet decision for 20mph limits around schools and a revised policy;
- Received information and requested further reports from the National Probation Service and Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company on the implementation of the Government's Transforming Rehabilitation Programme;
- Following a presentation on road safety initiatives and performance, provided a response raising concern about the number of people killed or seriously injured on the County's roads to the County Durham Road Casualty Reduction Forum;
- Considered a presentation by the Deputy Chief Constable on work of the CONTEST group and implications of the forthcoming Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Committee requested a further report to be received during 2015/16;
- Following a report on the new ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014, held a Members awareness session to highlight implications of the Act;
- Responded to consultations on the Safe Durham Partnership Plan, County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan and Safe Durham Partnership Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy;
- Received reports and provided comment on activity of the Safe Durham Partnership Board, Police and Crime Panel, actions undertaken by the Domestic Abuse Executive Forum and delivery of the Safe Durham Partnership's Reducing Re-offending Strategy;
- Considered quarterly performance reports to develop its work programme that included holding a performance session with the Durham Police and Crime Panel on key areas of policing with Durham Constabulary and in addition the committee has also received presentations on emerging issues including the fire risk and impact of hoarding on households within County Durham and cybercrime.



# Regional Scrutiny

The North East Regional Employers' Organisation supports a Region – wide Joint Member and Officer Scrutiny network where all twelve North East local authorities' Scrutiny leads discuss national developments in scrutiny and also have an opportunity to share their work programmes and priorities and consider emerging issues that have an impact across local authority boundaries. Key issues considered by the network during 2014/15 have included Governance arrangements for Local Enterprise Partnerships; updates on the work of the North East and Tees Valley LEPs; the developing North East Culture Partnership; and the Department of Communities and Local Government Select Committees call for a national evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny.

The establishment of the North East Combined Authority (NECA) has provided an additional opportunity for joint scrutiny. The NECA is a formal partnership, established through legislation in April 2014, enabling the local authorities to work together on transport and economic development. It covers the geography of: Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The NECA has agreed three broad areas of focus:

- Transport
- Employability and Inclusion
- Economic Development and Regeneration

Governance arrangements for the NECA include an Overview and Scrutiny Committee which enables local councillors, on behalf of their communities, to scrutinise and challenge all matters within the remit of the Combined Authority and the committee investigates matters of significant importance to residents across the areas covered by the seven councils with a view to influencing decisions made in respect of all matters within the remit of the Combined Authority. Durham County Council is represented on the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Councillor Joe Armstrong, Chair of Durham County Council's OSMB and Councillor Rob Crute, Chair of Durham County Council's Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

# 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 and 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.

During 2014/15, the committee has:

- Considered and commented upon the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) NHS Foundation Trust Quality Account 2013/14 including the priorities for 2014/15 and also examined updates regarding progress made against these priorities;
- Examined NEAS Ambulance performance across the region;
- Reviewed proposals by Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust in respect of Adult Mental Health Services;
- Considered an update regarding the National Congenital Heart Disease Review;
- Received information regarding an Eating Disorders Service;

- Investigated proposals to harmonise the criteria used across the North East Region for accessing the Patient Transport Service;
- Engaged with NHS England's Regional team and Northern Regional Clinical senate to examine the challenges facing the NHS in England and, within this context, what this may mean for the future provision of NHS services in the region.

As part of the Regional Network's commitment to health scrutiny, a training and development package for member authority use has been commissioned from the Centre for Public Scrutiny which covers modules including Performance Management and Monitoring, Understanding Health Scrutiny (Powers and Context), External Inspection Regimes for Children and Adults Services and Health Provision (Ofsted and CQC) and the Scrutiny role of Challenge.

## **Police and Crime Panel**

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.

Throughout 2014/15, the Police and Crime Panel have held 6 meetings and its work programme and activity has included:

- Receiving reports on hate crime and HMIC inspection report and updates;
- Receiving presentations on WOW awards, violence against women and girls 'one year on', mental health and initiatives Checkpoint and Mutual Gain;
- Monitoring and providing challenge to the progress of the Police and Crime Commissioner's budget and police crime plan;
- Undertaking review activity that identified a number of recommendations that were agreed to enhance challenge to the PCC and create a consistent agenda for panel meetings;
- A recruitment exercise and appointment of two new co-opted independent Members in October 2014;
- Reviewing working arrangement documents with Overview and Scrutiny functions within both local authorities and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The panel has also fulfilled its requirements within the Act through reviewing the PCC's annual report, precept and revised Police and Crime Plan 2015 – 17.

# External Review and Inspection

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny function is frequently engaged in external review and inspection processes. During the course of 2014/15, the Adults Wellbeing and Health and Children and Young Peoples' Overview and Scrutiny Committees submitted evidence portfolios setting out how they had worked alongside NHS Partners. These portfolios were submitted as part of Care Quality Commission Inspections of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust and North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust.

The Chairs of the Adults Wellbeing and Health and Children and Young Peoples' Overview and Scrutiny Committees were also interviewed as part of a Local Government Association Peer Review of the County Council's Health Wellbeing Board. The Peer Review team found that "the clear governance arrangements between Scrutiny and the Health and Wellbeing Board are amongst the best in the country." It also commented that "Overview and Scrutiny have a clear connections with the Health and Wellbeing Board and are pro-active...there is a closer relationship between the Health and Wellbeing Board and scrutiny than in the majority of areas. The agendas are related, work flows back and forth and partners take scrutiny seriously. This effective working is advanced in national terms."

The Review highlighted "the Health and Wellbeing Board's relationship with scrutiny as an example of best practice...to follow up and share with the sector."

## Co-optees

Non-councillors 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;
- to bring specialist knowledge and/or skills and an element of external challenge to the Overview and Scrutiny process;
- to take an interest in, attend and contribute to the committees or working groups to which appointed;
- to establish good relations with other members, officers and co-optees;
- where individuals are representatives of any particular organisation or group, to feed back any appropriate discussions or decisions of the relevant committee or working group to their respective organisation or group.

Co-optees must abide by the respective sections of the Council's Constitution in relation to Committee procedure and act with due propriety according to standards laid down for conduct in local government. There is a Co-optees' Protocol and recruitment procedure in place to assist with these appointments.

In addition Co-optees are offered the same development opportunities as Council Members including:

- in-house training/development relevant to their role as a Co-optee and the remit of the overview and scrutiny committee on which they serve;

- attendance at site visits relevant to the remit of the overview and scrutiny committee on which they serve as a Co-optee, and an opportunity to attend site visits of all overview and scrutiny committees subject to the approval of the Chairman or Vice-chairman of the relevant Committee.

Following recent changes to DCC's Constitution in relation to the number of non-voting co-optees appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny committees, and as the term of the existing co-optees had come to an end, a recruitment exercise was carried out in June 2014 to appoint the new set of co-optees. All successful appointees have undertaken an induction process with the respective Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to which they have been appointed as well as the lead Overview and Scrutiny Officer for that Committee.

## 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.

## 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.



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).