



*Altogether better*

# **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017-2018**

**Transformation and Partnerships  
Durham County Council**

**May 2018**

# Foreword

During the first year following election of the new Council in 2017, we have had an influx of new Members, as well as returning Members. Scrutiny members are keen to re-invigorate and promote scrutiny, and focus on the four key principles of good scrutiny: constructive challenge; amplifying the voice of the public; independent and responsible leadership; and driving improvement in public services<sup>1</sup>. A comprehensive member induction programme was carried out, and we have had a busy year. This report provides an update of the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny during 2017/18. We have carried out a number of in-depth scrutiny reviews, continue to play our part in the Council's budget process, monitor quarterly performance, and continue to maintain an excellent relationship between executive and non-executive members.

The next few years will continue to be challenging for the Council in terms of austerity and Government funding. A key achievement for the authority will be to continue to maintain and deliver improvements to services, whilst meeting the required savings targets. Overview and Scrutiny will contribute in a constructive way to support the Council in meeting these challenges.

The Transformation Programme is an evolving programme for DCC over the next few years, looking at new ways of working, relocation of the council's headquarters and redevelopment of the Aykley Heads site, as well as other projects which form a comprehensive change programme for the Council. Scrutiny will play its role in this, and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) will receive regular updates on the programme.

The statutory scrutiny roles of Health, Crime and Disorder and Flood Risk Management feature within this Annual Report alongside thematic scrutiny work. In-depth review work included a pilot of the new Customer Relationship Management System (CRMS) Members' Portal, and scrutiny reviews on Cybercrime; Arson and deliberate fires; a review of DCC's allotments policy; the role of the social worker from a child's perspective; and retail support provided by Durham County Council. Scrutiny has also had input into a number of consultations.

We have carried out a recruitment exercise to refresh the non-voting co-optees who sit on the scrutiny committees and we look forward to working with the successful applicants. Recruited for their relevant skills and knowledge, they will bring their own expertise and views to scrutiny, and provide 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.

The findings of the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee review on the Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees was published in March 2018 and was shared with COSMB Members. One of the recommendations was that the guidance issued to councils by DCLG on overview and scrutiny committees is revised and reissued to take account of scrutiny's evolving role. Once the revised guidance is received, further discussions will take place at COSMB to see how Durham will move forward.

We have continued to work with our regional authorities on the North East Combined Authority (NECA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee; the North East Regional Joint Officer/Member network; and Members have attended a number of regional health scrutiny meetings.

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

I hope that you find this report interesting and informative. If you would like to find out more, all Scrutiny Committee meetings are open to the public and the scrutiny team will be pleased to supply you with more information. Contact details are listed below.

*Councillor Rob Crute*

Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

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<sup>1</sup> Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) four principles

# Key Achievements 2017-18

## Overview and Scrutiny Review Activity

The scrutiny work programme for the year has reflected a balanced programme of work and of improvement in the operation of scrutiny which meets the four principles of effective public scrutiny:

- Provides a constructive “critical friend” challenge to executive policy-makers and decisions-makers
- Amplifying the voice and concerns of the public;
- Is carried out by ‘independent minded governors’ who lead and own the scrutiny role
- Drives improvement in public services.

### Constructive challenge

The following in depth evidence based reviews have been completed and have been or will be reported to Cabinet, the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder and the appropriate thematic Partnership.

**Cybercrime** – presented to Cabinet in May 2018, identified as a gap in activity, this work focused on partnership work being undertaken to prevent young people becoming engaged in cybercrime activity through forms of hacking within the Computer Misuse Act. Recommendations from the review are on inclusion as an action within partnership plans, education and engagement activity with young people and to explore apprenticeship opportunities.

**Arson and deliberate fires** – presented to Safe Durham Partnership Board and shared with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder in January 2018, a focused review looking at partnership work to address a significant increase of arson and secondary fires within the East Durham area. Recommendations from this work include monitoring of performance, education, improving community confidence and engagement with local Members with the development of a Fire Reduction Plan for the area

**Review of DCC’s Allotment policy** – focused on providing an opportunity for overview and scrutiny members to further develop and inform DCC’s proposed future allotment policy, management arrangements and consultation process to be undertaken with relevant stakeholders. This will be finalised in autumn 2018.

**Retail Support** – examined the support provided directly by DCC to the retail sector, how DCC works with partners to develop and deliver support to this sector, received the views of retailers in the county on support provided, identified any gaps in current provision and considered how these gaps can be addressed. The final report is expected to be completed and presented to Cabinet towards the end of 2018.

**Role of the social worker from a child’s perspective** – studied how referrals are made into the service and how casefiles are allocated. Explored the training and development of social workers and the support given to them and how this impacts upon stability for the child. The review considered views and opinions from children and young people who had experience of edge of care services. This report and recommendations will be presented to Cabinet in autumn 2018.

**Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) Member Dashboard** - a working group of COSMB Members carried out a pilot of the dashboard, feeding into the design and functionality of the system. The findings were fed back to the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders in November 2017.

### **Other review activity in 2017/18 included:**

- 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 cost reduction proposals, as well as ongoing quarterly scrutiny of the delivery of savings. Comments were fed back to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder in November 2017.
- Increased awareness of the Council's scrutiny function through articles in local media, social media and an ongoing update of the scrutiny web pages.
- Formally responded to NHS Quality Accounts 2017/18 for: North East Ambulance Service; County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust; and the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust.
- Engaged and responded to a statutory consultation in respect of NHS Sunderland and South Tyneside's Path to Excellence programme.
- Continued to maintain and establish links with all thematic partnerships. A series of briefings and reports have been shared with thematic partnerships, for example:
  - Progress updates on Cybercrime review
  - Presentation of report on arson and deliberate fires in East Durham
- Contributed to:
  - Activity of the Safe Durham Partnership Board;
  - Police and Crime Panel;
  - Youth Justice Plan.
- Had input into:
  - The Review of Youth Support Consultation
  - County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Three-Year Plan Consultation
  - The Housing Strategy
  - The Homelessness Strategy
  - Industrial Strategy White Paper 'Building a Britain fit for the future'
  - 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' government consultation.

### **Amplifying the voice of the public**

During the year chairs and vice-chairs have focused on how to bring the public voice into overview and scrutiny (OSC) review activity and meetings. This has been achieved through building public feedback strongly into review work, including site visits across the County and increased use of social media to promote the work of overview and scrutiny.

Scrutiny Members have attended a number of site visits linking into the scrutiny work programme and engaged with external partners and local residents to enable their views to be taken into account for a number of reviews and issues on scrutiny agendas.

On 5 October members of the Environment OSC visited the Suez Plant at Haverton Hill, the company who handle the county's recycled waste. Members were able to tour the facilities, and find out about the process from receipt of waste to the recycling of the ash residue once the process is complete.



*Suez Plant, Haverton Hill*

In March 2018 Economy and Enterprise (E&E) OSC members visited County Durham Parks, visiting Hardwick and Wharton Park. These are two very different types of park, both successful, with high visitor figures throughout the year. Members were able to learn the history of both parks, use of funding received and future work programming for both sites. Members also visited Salvus House on the Aykley Heads site to engage with the businesses in situ received a lot of positive feedback and visited the Chapter Homes site at Newton Aycliffe where they viewed the sites and met with officers for a question/answer session. A visit also took place to permanent travellers' sites throughout the County where members met with officers and wardens, some of whom were members of the travelling community themselves, to discuss the experiences of living on a permanent traveller site and again much debate took place and positive feedback was received.



*Hardwick Park*



*Wharton Park*



*Salvus House*



*Members meet retailers in Stanley*

Members of the E&E OSC Review Group looking at the support provided by DCC to the retail sector took part in four visits, and held discussions with retailers and developers at Seaham, Stanley, Barnard Castle and Chester-le-Street.

As part of the review of DCC's future Allotment Policy, Environment working group members have visited various allotment sites across the County. Environment members also took part in a tour of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the county who have benefited from the Business Energy Project (BEEP) which is a project designed to help SMEs to make financial savings through energy efficiency, and to hear their views on the project.



*Visit to Allotments*

Members of CYP OSC held a Special meeting at Seaham School of Technology, where they were able to engage with pupils and teachers, and were given a tour of the facilities. Agenda items were chosen to encourage the pupils to join the debate and give their views on, for example, the Student Voice Survey and Elective home education. Members of the CYPS OSC Review Group looking at the role of the social worker from a child's perspective held a meeting at DCC's MASH (Multi-agency safeguarding hub), where they were able to experience the partnership working and processes in place to deal with safeguarding issues.

To seek views and gauge an understanding of awareness of cybercrime by young people, a focus group session was held at Police HQ with Durham Constabulary's Police Cadets. This was extremely positive engagement and findings from this session reported that the impact on victims is not seen or understood by offenders. Anyone could carry out a cybercrime attack or become a victim and many young people would do it to look cool and be unaware that they could receive a criminal record.



*Police HQ – Cybercrime workshop*

A joint visit by members of the E&E OSC and Environment and Sustainable Communities (ESC) OSC to the Heritage Coast, where Members met with officers, considered the options for encouraging more visits to the area and how to provide more facilities, by looking at what was already on offer, and viewing the improvements that have already taken place.



*Heritage Coast*

The overview and scrutiny process provides an opportunity for members of the public and local communities to comment upon any service change proposals. There are a number of examples particularly in relation to changes to health services, where local councillors, community representatives and members of the public have fed into consultations on change proposals, including closure of the dispensary at St John's Chapel; proposed closure of a GP surgery at Byers Green; DDES CCG Review of Urgent Care; North Durham CCG rapid specialist opinion referrals; and the establishment of sub regional scrutiny arrangements for NHS Sustainability Transformation Programmes.

## **Led by independent minded governors who own the scrutiny process**

Following elections in 2017, and an influx of new Members, a comprehensive induction programme was provided for Members, both new and returning. This included bespoke sessions on the thematic scrutiny committees with high attendance, and enthusiastic input from Members appointed to these committees. These sessions were chaired by the relevant chairs and vice-chairs.

The new Chair and Vice-chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, Cllr Rob Crute and Cllr Andrea Patterson, have worked with Chairs, Vice-chairs and Members of the thematic committees during the year to improve overview and scrutiny in Durham:

1. Extending the use of social media. Scrutiny meetings are now publicised on the day of the meeting on DCC's Corporate Twitter account which has over 22,000 followers. Since October there have been 30 'tweets' relating to scrutiny. Analysis from the 30 tweets shows they have each received between 707 – 1,480 views. This approach has led to 119 occasions where a link to the agenda or information has been accessed and 20 media engagements. The highest number of 1,480 views by twitter was for an advert for recruitment of non-voting co-opted members in April 2018, this was also posted on 'Facebook' and reached 4,349 people.
2. Bringing external voices into scrutiny, including through co-optees, and by continuing with wide-ranging evidence gathering sessions and visits. There has been a refresh process for co-optees, including changes on education co-optees, to ensure strong external representation. A detailed report on this was presented to COSMB on 14 February 2018. A successful recruitment process has since taken place and interviews were carried out by politically balanced panels in May 2018. Due to the use of social media, a higher number of expressions of interest than usual was received, with 39 requests, and 19 applications received. A new tranche of 10 non-voting co-optees were subsequently appointed.

Use of visits and community engagement is covered earlier in this report.

3. Scrutiny skills training - at an OSC Chairs and Vice Chairs briefing meeting on 9th October 2017, members discussed a series of options on the provision of external training to OSC members to supplement the scrutiny induction training sessions held in May/June 2017 following the County Council elections. Members agreed that bespoke training be provided on an in-house basis regarding Finance and Questioning Skills where this can be arranged, along with other options including sharing online material such as CfPS briefings/guides.

## **Drives improvement in public services**

The Overview and Scrutiny work programme is informed by the Council Plan, the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Council's Forward Plan of decisions and other partnership plans and strategies, and so is aligned to key improvement areas for the Council.

The majority of detailed in depth reviews are carried out by the Committees, but smaller working groups may be set up to carry out light touch reviews. The 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.

Examples of the impact of DCC's overview and Scrutiny so far this year are:

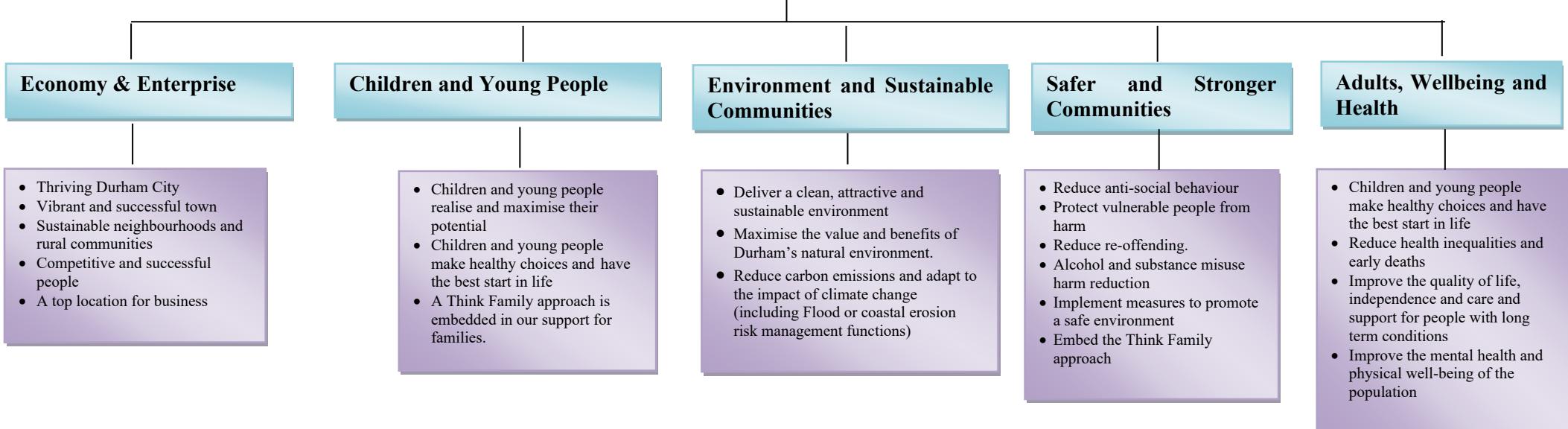
- Cybercrime recommendations to include as an action within Safe Durham Partnership Plan, to undertake education and engagement activity with young people and explore apprenticeship opportunities for cybersecurity.
- Arson and deliberate fires within the East Durham area - recommendations for the Safe Durham Partnership to monitor performance, carry out education initiatives and approaches to improve community confidence and engage local Members within the development of a Fire Reduction Plan for the area.
- Water Safety – noted progress and success and commented on the challenge to maintain resources to keep up the momentum of the campaign, the rural location of some high risk locations and ensure all efforts are made to engage with schools in these areas.
- Alcohol and its Demand on Emergency Services – outcomes from review led to the report being shared and a letter from the Safe Durham Partnership Board sent to all Constituent MPs, to raise awareness of the impact of alcohol on emergency services and as evidence in relation to reduction in drink drive limits, licensing and minimum unit pricing.
- Stroke Support Services – facilitated extension and reprocurement of a new contract.
- Closer link between between the CYP OSC and Corporate Parenting Panel to strengthen oversight of children's services, including the involvement in scrutiny in a number of politaical oversight meetings.
- The Environment OSC is also the designated Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee, and has established formalised arrangements for engaging with Flood Risk Management partners for County Durham.

# 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.

## 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 re 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 the Sub National Review/Single Integrated Regional Strategy and associated issues.
- The establishment of appropriate liaison with the Executive in the interests of achieving common aims and continuous improvement for the Council  
Putting the Customer first  
Working with our communities  
Effective use of resources  
Support our people through change



# Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

The **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB)** provides a strategic direction for the work of all the committees. Its work programme for 2017/18 included the following:

- Carried out in depth scrutiny of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/2018 – 2020/2021 (MTFP 7), Council Plan and Service Plans and revenue and capital budget proposals for 2017/2018 to make sure that the Council's resources are used effectively and efficiently;



Cllr Rob Crute  
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny



Cllr Andrea Patterson  
Vice-chair, Overview and Scrutiny

- Took part in a pilot of the Customer Relations Management System (CRM) Member Portal;
- Received details and commented on the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000;
- Refreshed the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board work programme;
- Received quarterly updates on:
  - Performance Management 2017/18 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 Transformation and Partnerships and Resources;
  - Customer Feedback: Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions.
- Received updates on:
  - The County Durham Partnership;
  - Welfare Reform;
  - Implications of the Government's Policy Programme on DCC;
  - The delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan 7.
- Continued to receive regular updates on:
  - Performance management every quarter before it is disseminated to respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees for further comment;
  - Petitions
  - 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;
  - Work programme activity from each of the COSMB Chairs.

# Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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. This committee is aligned to the **Altogether Healthier** priority theme and has:

- Examined and provided commentary upon Quality Accounts 2017/18 including proposed priorities for 2018/19 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 2017/18.



Cllr John Robinson  
Chair of AWH OSC



Cllrs Jean Chaplow  
Vice-chair of AWH OSC

- Reviewed Annual Reports and performance information in respect of County Durham HealthWatch, Durham Local Safeguarding Board and the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board;
- Received information on the following NHS Service reviews and, where appropriate, as statutory consultees commented upon the proposals and associated communications and engagement plans:
  - South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Partnership Path to Excellence Programme;
  - Post implementation update report following the reconfiguration of Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group (DDES CCG) Urgent Care Services;
  - Post implementation update report following the reconfiguration of Organic Inpatient (Dementia) Wards serving County Durham and Darlington;
  - Stroke support services across County Durham;
  - Rapid Specialist Opinion service across North Durham CCG;
  - Improved Access to Psychological Therapies Model development;
  - NHS England Review of Specialised Vascular Services;
  - County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust and Durham CCGs Review of Stroke Rehabilitation;
  - Closure of a Dispensing service at St John's Chapel by the Weardale Practice;
  - Proposals to close the Branch Surgery at Byers Green, St Andrew's Medical Practice;
- Continued the examination of the Sustainability and Transformation Plans covering County Durham – the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham STP and the Durham, Darlington and Teesside, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby STP, including the promotion and establishment of the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham STP Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

- Considered update reports in respect of:
  - Preventative Mental Health Services Review and Recommissioning;
  - Adult and Health Services;
  - DDES CCG Accident and Emergency Ambulance Service Review – post implementation update;
  - Winter pressures and the work of the Local A&E Delivery Board;
- Received information and, where necessary, provided commentary in respect of:
  - The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2016/17
  - Proposals to re-procure community services across County Durham;
  - Service developments and Improved mental health rehabilitation services for adults by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust;
  - The draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2018 consultation;
  - Implementation of Care Navigation across County Durham GPs;
  - Teams around the Patient/Health and Social Care Integration;
  - A review of Community Hospital services in County Durham;
- Examined the CQC Re-inspection report and associated action plan in respect of County Durham and Darlington NHS FT;
- In conjunction with the Children and Young People's OSC, examined the work of the County Durham Healthy Weight Alliance with a focus on Obesity;
- Monitored the performance and revenue and capital expenditure through quarterly performance management and budgetary reports.

# Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYP OSC)** is aligned to **Altogether Better for Children and Young People** priority theme in the Council Plan. This Committee has:

- Received information on:
  - The One Point Service
  - Elective Home Education
  - Case File Audit
  - Child Poverty
  - Student Voice Survey
  - Serious Case Review Process
  - Neglect in County Durham
  - Summary of school Ofsted results
- Scrutinised Annual Reports from the Director of Public Health; and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board; the Health and Wellbeing Board; Looked After Children; and Adoption Service.
- Undertaken review activity looking at the Role of the Social Worker from a Child's Perspective which has involved children and young people.
- Considered the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Review of Health Services for Children Looked After and Safeguarding (CLAS) in County Durham.
- Received updates on:
  - School Funding
  - Management of Exclusions
  - Growing Healthy 0-19
  - Support to Care Leavers
  - Impact of the Children's Centres Review
  - Progress of the Recommendations of the Self Harm Review
- Monitored the performance and revenue and capital expenditure through quarterly performance management and budgetary reports;
- Received summary of minutes from Children and Families Partnership;
- Involved young people through taking committee meetings to them in their school.
- Greater liaison between Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Parenting Panel.



Cllr Christine Potts  
Chair of CYP OSC



Cllr Heather Smith  
Vice-Chair of CYP OSC

# Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** (Economy OSC) is aligned to the **Altogether Wealthier** priority team in the Council Plan. This Committee has:

- Received updates and commented on key developments and the direction of travel in relation to the EU funding programme, Regional Funding, DurhamWorks Programme, the North East Combined Authority (NECA) in relation to transport, the County Durham Plan and the 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places' government consultation;
- Received detail of and commented on the Industrial Strategy White Paper 'Building a Britain fit for the future', Durham Key Options lettings policy, the Homelessness Strategy, the progress of the Digital Durham Programme (support for the business sector), the Local Transport Plan, delivery of the various town centre masterplans and DCC's housing function;
- Considered on an annual basis detail of the work undertaken by the County Durham Economic Partnership and Business Durham;
- Received information on Chapter Homes, the performance of County Durham Housing Group, projects undertaken with the private housing sector and an investment pipeline for major projects in the county;
- Received an update on the progress of recommendations of the Tourism marketing activity undertaken by Visit County Durham scrutiny review and the Skills development scrutiny review;
- Monitored the performance and revenue and capital expenditure through quarterly performance management and budgetary reports;
- Received minutes from the County Durham Economic Partnership.



Cllr Alison Batey  
Chair, Economy and Enterprise OSC



Cllr Malcolm Clarke  
Vice-chair, Economy and Enterprise OSC

# Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** (Env OSC) has statutory responsibility under the Localism Act 2011 as amended to scrutinise flooding and coastal risk management functions of the council and external bodies (Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water Ltd.) This committee is aligned to the **Altogether Greener** priority theme in the Council Plan. The committee has:



Cllr Eddy Adam  
Chair of Environment OSC



Cllr Olga Milburn  
Vice-chair of Environment OSC

- Received regular updates on the waste programme, European Structure and Investment Funding programme, Carbon Management Plan, Climate Change and delivery Plan, Warm Up North project and Fuel Poverty and winter maintenance programme;

- Received an update on the progress of recommendations on:
  - The management of DCC's woodland estate
- Considered information on:
  - Air quality in County Durham
  - Community Action Team and the use of targeted interventions
  - County Durham Environment Awards Scheme;
- Received an overview of the Business Energy Efficiency Project, Highways maintenance, Culture and Sports Services and the further development of the Heritage Coast;
- Received minutes from the County Durham Environmental Partnership, the Durham Strategic Flood Group and Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee;
- Monitored the performance and revenue and capital expenditure through quarterly performance management and budgetary reports;
- The Committee is the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham and receives on an annual basis an update on the work of the Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham which focuses 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

The **Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** (SSC OSC) has powers under the Police and Justice Act 2006 as amended to scrutinise work being undertaken by the statutory crime and disorder reduction partnership; the Safe Durham Partnership. The committee is aligned to the **Altogether Safer** priority theme in the Council Plan.

The committee has completed review activity on:

- Cybercrime
- Arson and deliberate fires

Received reports on the progress of recommendations from review activity of:

- Organised Crime
- 20 mph limits/zones
- Alcohol and the demand on Emergency Services
- Improved safety in the Home – Safe and Wellbeing Visits



Cllr David Boyes  
Chair of Safer and Stronger  
Stronger Communities OSC



Cllr Heather Liddle  
Vice-chair of Safer and  
Communities OSC

Considered reports and provided a response to respective Portfolio Holders and/or Partnership leads on:

- Open Water Safety
- Hate Crime
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- Substance Misuse Services

Considered and commented on reports and presentations on:

- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Consumer Protection – Enforcement Activity
- Safe Durham Partnership Reducing Re-offending Group
- Youth Justice Plan 2016/17
- Youth Offending Services
- Road Safety Reduction Partnership
- Responded to consultation on Safe Durham Partnership and County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plans.
- Received reports and provided comment on activity of the Safe Durham Partnership Board and the Durham Police and Crime Panel.
- Monitored quarterly performance reports and provided acknowledgment of high performance areas and included performance challenges within its work programme.

# **Regional Scrutiny**

The North East Regional Employers' Organisation supports a region-wide NE Joint Scrutiny Member/officer 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.

The network met in January 2018, where DCC's Chair of Overview and Scrutiny was appointed as Vice-chair of the network. Also at that meeting, the network discussed the findings of the Department for Communities and Local Government Select Committee's Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government Inquiry and a CLG Specialist was in attendance to answer questions. Regular future meetings are planned.

## **North East Combined Authority (NECA) scrutiny arrangements**

The North East Combined Authority (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. 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. The North East Combined Authority (NECA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee is made up of 14 councillors from across the 7 combined authority areas.

Durham County Council is represented on the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Cllr Rob Crute and Cllr Andrea Patterson, Chair and Vice-chair of DCC's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, and Cllr Alison Batey and Cllr Malcolm Clarke, Chair and Vice-chair of Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are the nominated substitute members.

The NECA scrutiny committee meets 4 times a year at varying locations across the NECA area and meetings are open to the public. Further details on NECA can be found at [www.northeastca.gov.uk](http://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 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 2017/18, the committee has examined:

- NHS England – North East and Cumbria specialised commissioning updates regarding Neonatal Services; Neonatal transport; Congenital Heart Disease Review and Vascular services;
- The North East and Cumbria Learning Disabilities Fast Track Transformation Plan;
- Updates from the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham STP Joint Health OSC and the Durham, Darlington and Teesside, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby STP Joint Health OSC;
- NEAS Quality Accounts and performance updates including the new National Ambulance response times initiative;
- Community Pharmacies and the use of pharmacies for minor ailments and other health service provision.

Following the publication of NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plans nationally, there are two sub-regional Joint STP Scrutiny Committees covering the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham STP and the Durham, Darlington and Teesside, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby STP. Durham County Council is the only North East Council with representatives that sit on both STP Joint OSCs reflecting the fact that County Durham is covered by these two STPs.

It is envisaged that much of this regional and sub-regional health scrutiny work will roll forward into 2018/19 and the regional and sub-regional joint scrutiny OSC arrangements will be used to scrutinise the development of Sustainability and Transformation Plans and any associated proposals for substantial developments or significant variations in services arising out of these plans.

## 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.

A fundamental review of the appointment process for non-statutory, non-voting co-optees was undertaken in 2014. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) in March 2016 agreed that the appointment period for currently serving non-statutory, non-voting co-optees would be extended for a further two years with a further fundamental refresh of the appointment process to be undertaken May/June 2018. The refresh has now taken place and a number of new non-voting co-optees have been appointed. These newly appointed co-optees will undertake the necessary induction programme.

# 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 Transformation and Partnership directorate which leads on the transformation programme, performance management and improvement, consultation and engagement, communications, partnership working, equalities and diversity and information management, as well as 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)