



Scrutiny Programme Board

Date:	Wednesday, 27 May 2009
Time:	6.15 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 3 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Members are asked to consider whether they have personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they are.

Members are reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they are subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

The Committee is requested to appoint a vice-chair.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 1 - 16)

These are attached for information and guidance.

4. REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 17 - 70)

Information on the work programmes of the former overview and scrutiny committees has been collated for consideration by the Board.

5. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE (Pages 71 - 76)

New scrutiny powers from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act came into force on 1 April 2009. They cover scrutiny of partner organisations that have signed up to Local Area Agreement targets. Guidance from the Centre for Public Scrutiny is attached.

6. SURVEY OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2008 (Pages 77 - 100)

7. WIRRAL COUNCIL SCRUTINY SURVEY (Pages 101 - 120)

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services will report.

9. SCRUTINY CHAIRS' VISIT TO WARRINGTON (Pages 121 - 126)

10. CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The Board is requested to give consideration to the question of co-option on to overview and scrutiny committees.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The specific terms of reference for each overview and scrutiny committee are set out below. Their general functions are as follows:

(a) Policy development and review - Overview and Scrutiny committees may:

- (i) assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of the budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
- (ii) conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- (iii) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
- (iv) question members of the Cabinet and committees and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area; and
- (v) liaise with other external organisations operating in the area (whether national, regional or local) to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.

(b) Scrutiny - Overview and Scrutiny committees may:

- (i) review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Cabinet and committees and Council officers, both in relation to individual decisions and over periods of time;
- (ii) review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- (iii) question members of the Cabinet and committees, and chief officers, about their decisions and performance, whether generally or in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
- (iv) make recommendations to the Cabinet or appropriate committees of the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- (v) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the overview and scrutiny committee and local people about their activities and performance; and,
- (vi) question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).

(c) Best Value - Overview and Scrutiny Committees will:

- (i) recommend the terms of reference for best value reviews to the Cabinet;
- (ii) receive progress reports on best value reviews;
- (iii) recommend the final report and improvement plans to Cabinet.

- (d) **Finance** - Overview and Scrutiny Committees may exercise overall responsibility for any finance made available to them.
- (e) **Annual Report** - Overview and Scrutiny Committees may report annually to the Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amend working methods if appropriate.
- (f) **Officers** - Overview and Scrutiny Committees may exercise overall responsibility for the work programme of any officers employed to support their work.

SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD

The Scrutiny Programme Board will:

- (i) approve and co-ordinate the work programme for the five themed overview and scrutiny committees including resolving any conflict between such committees;
- (ii) allocate work to (or remove work from) any of the five overview and scrutiny committees
- (iii) review or scrutinise decisions made or other actions taken in relation to any executive functions, particularly (but not exclusively) in relation to cross-cutting issues or matters not within the terms of reference of any of the five themed overview and scrutiny committees.
- (iv) consider any call-in notices in relation to any executive functions and determine such notices or allocate them to one or more of the five themed overview and scrutiny committees as it considers most appropriate.
- (v) be responsible for the development and monitoring of an annual scrutiny work programme;
- (vi) undertake scrutiny in its own right with regard to cross-cutting or strategic issues not covered by other overview and scrutiny committees;
- (vii) identify and share good scrutiny practice across all overview and scrutiny committees.

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

In support of Objective 1 of the Corporate Plan, which is:

to create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral, and in particular to:

- ***reduce worklessness and***
- ***increase enterprise,***

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

(i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;

(ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;

(iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and

(iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive;

within the following terms of reference of the Cabinet portfolio(s) indicated:

Regeneration and Planning Strategy

- (1) Matters relating to the economic and urban regeneration of Wirral
- (2) The economic regeneration strategy for Wirral.
- (3) All economic regeneration programmes including European programmes, any other Council programmes and residual issues in relation to the Single Regeneration Budget.
- (4) Consultation and liaison with all organisations involved in regeneration in Wirral, including NWDA, English Partnerships, GoNW, Learning and Skills Council, Greater Merseyside Enterprise, Wirral Metropolitan College, trade unions, the private sector, the voluntary sector, etc.
- (5) All matters in relation to European issues.
- (6) The promotion of Wirral as a premier location for inward investment through the work of Wirral Direct and other organisations; in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Leisure in the case of tourism initiatives.
- (7) To ensure that an adequate supply of sites and premises is provided in order to cater for the needs of local businesses and to help attract new businesses.
- (8) Financial support, where appropriate, to businesses, co-operatives and other profit making and non-profit making ventures for the benefit of Wirral.

- (9) Provision of a comprehensive business support service to local companies.
- (10) The development of community employment and training initiatives and other initiatives designed to strengthen the economy of local communities and combat disadvantage including the development of a comprehensive “pathways to Integration” strategy for Wirral.
- (11) Monitoring economic trends in Wirral and identifying examples of good practice elsewhere in the field of urban policy and economic regeneration from which Wirral can benefit.
- (12) Lobbying Government and other agencies nationally, regionally and internationally, to ensure that Wirral achieves its economic regeneration objectives.
- (13) Welfare to Work.
- (14) The Development Plan and related plans and policies.
- (15) National, regional and strategic issues, including green belt policy.
- (16) The designation and preservation of conservation areas and liaison with conservation bodies.
- (17) The application of the Planning Acts in relation to:
- preservation of general amenity
 - shopping improvement areas
 - derelict sites
 - building regulations
 - mineral planning issues
 - contributions to the Council’s urban regeneration initiatives
 - compulsory purchase.
- (18) Liaison on planning matters with other local authorities and external bodies.
- (19) The identification of, and action in relation to, derelict land and buildings.

[Culture,] Tourism [and Leisure]

- (20) The development, management, implementation and review of all aspects of the Council’s Tourism Strategy.
- (21) The promotion of Wirral as a location for tourism and in consultation with the Cabinet member for Regeneration and Planning Strategy, to encourage tourism initiatives designed to bring new jobs to the Borough.

Housing [and Community Safety]

- (22) Housing strategy.
- (23) The assessment of housing need including the needs of vulnerable people.
- (24) Enabling vulnerable clients to remain at home, through the provision of low level housing support services (the Supporting People programme).

- (25) The provision of homelessness and housing advice services, including rough sleepers.
- (26) The provision of services to enable access to accommodation.
- (27) The assessment of housing markets.
- (28) Housing market restructuring and renewal.
- (29) Housing matters relating to:
- dealing with unfitness and poor condition;
 - acquisition and clearance;
 - financial policies for home improvement funding;
 - regulation and enforcement of statutory provisions relating to private sector housing.
- (30) Housing matters relating to:
- the promotion and monitoring of partnerships to achieve wider strategic housing objectives;
 - monitoring the performance of new Housing Stock Transfer organisations;
 - the accreditation and licensing of private landlords.
- (31) Monitoring and responding to the needs of gypsies and travellers.

All portfolios

- (32) Those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this Committee,
- (33) To seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through these areas.
- (34) To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women;
- (35) To scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

In support of Objective 2 of the Corporate Plan, which is:

to create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment, and in particular to:

- ***sustain improved levels of recycling;***
- ***reduce the Council's carbon footprint;***
- ***reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents,***

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

(i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;

(ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;

(iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and

(iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive; and

(v) specifically, act as the Council's **crime and disorder committee** for the purposes of Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 (as amended);

within the following terms of reference of the Cabinet portfolio(s) indicated:

Streetscene and Transport Services

- (1) Highways, streets and footpaths, including street lighting and related enforcement activities.
- (2) Traffic regulations and road safety.
- (3) The management of Council car parks.
- (4) Liaison with the MITA and other external organisations.
- (5) Reservoirs, sewerage and land drainage.
- (6) The provision of civil engineering services to the Council.
- (7) The provision of architectural, quantity surveying and mechanical, electrical and structural engineering services.
- (8) Coast protection and sea defences.
- (9) Restricted and selective tendering for civil engineering services.
- (10) Grass cutting in residential areas

- (11) Weed control.
- (12) Refuse collection and street cleansing.
- (13) Advertisement control.

Environment

- (14) Trading standards and consumer protection.
- (15) Food safety and hygiene.
- (16) Home safety.
- (17) Health education.
- (18) Control of communicable diseases.
- (19) Port health.
- (20) Monitoring of waste disposal.
- (21) Recycling
- (22) Public conveniences.
- (23) Preservation and improvement of amenities in residential areas.
- (24) Clean air and pollution control.
- (25) Abatement of nuisance (other than statutory nuisance in private dwellings).
- (26) Identification and action in relation to derelict land and buildings.
- (27) Sea Fisheries.
- (28) The development and implementation of strategies for continually improving sustainability and reducing the environmental impact of the Council, its policies, plans, programmes and services.

Culture, [Tourism] and Leisure

- (29) The provision of leisure and cultural services including:
 - library services;
 - museums and galleries, promotion of the Arts;
 - civic theatres, entertainment and cultural activities;
 - swimming pools, sports halls and indoor recreation;
 - parks, recreation grounds, and adventure playgrounds;
 - public playing fields, outdoor sports facilities.
- (30) Community centres and public halls.

- (31) Sports activities and development, the promotion of sporting activities and joint use of sporting facilities.
- (32) Resort activities, including publicity.
- (33) Beaches and the Beach Lifeguard Service.
- (34) The provision of country parks and allotment gardens.
- (35) The provision and management of cemeteries and crematoria.
- (36) The heritage of the Borough, including the preservation of buildings of architectural or historic interest in liaison with the Heritage Champion.

[Housing and] Community Safety

- (37) Community Safety including:
- Co-ordinating neighbour nuisance policies in the private and public sector.
 - Co-ordinating anti-social behaviour policies.
 - Working with partners, the Police and other Cabinet members on youth diversion schemes.
 - Working with the appropriate Cabinet member in liaison with the Drug & Alcohol Team.
 - Working with the Licensing Team on issues of under age sales of alcohol and with Trading Standards in liaison with the Cabinet member for Environment.
 - The use of the Council's powers under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Housing Act 1996 and the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
 - The Council's duty under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to have regard to the effects on crime and disorder in the exercise of all of its powers and duties;
 - Liaison with other agencies such as the police, Primary Care Trusts, the voluntary sector and the Probation Service on community safety issues;
 - The development and implementation of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy
- (38) The operation and development of Community Patrol.

Corporate Resources

- (39) The Emergency Plan and resilience issues.

All portfolios

- (40) Those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this Committee,
- (41) To seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through these areas.
- (42) To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women;

(43) To scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

In support of Objective 3 of the Corporate Plan, which is:

to improve health and well-being for all, ensuring that people who require support are full participants in mainstream society, and in particular to:

- ***promote greater independence and choice,***

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

(i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;

(ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;

(iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and

(iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive; and

(v) specifically, examine the healthcare provision within the area in relation to all residents of the Borough; participate in all initiatives for improving health and the healthcare provision within the area and call officers from the NHS community to account and request them to appear before the Committee when appropriate;

within the following terms of reference of the Cabinet portfolio(s) indicated:

Social Care and Inclusion

(1) The planning, commissioning and delivery of social care services for all adult client groups and to provide leadership to the wider vision of social care.

(2) Developing preventative services that will reduce the need for social care intervention.

(3) Work with a range of partners, including health and the voluntary and independent sector, to provide services which are well planned and integrated, make the most effective use of available resources and met the needs of our diverse community.

(4) Social inclusion and to promote the role of the local authority, working with the NHS community on Wirral, to improve Public Health and well-being and to address health inequalities.

(5) Ensure that services are of a high quality and delivered by a well-trained workforce or by informal and family carers who are themselves supported.

(6) Promoting better use of technology to support people.

(7) Ensure that services have an emphasis on preventing problems and that social care and health work on a shared agenda to help maintain the independence of individuals.

(8) Ensure that people with the highest needs receive the support and protection needed to ensure their own well-being and the safety of society.

(9) Ensure that the risks of independence for individuals are openly shared with them and balanced against benefits.

(10) Matters relating to section 47 of the National Assistance Act 1948 (as amended).

All portfolios

(11) Those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this Committee,

(12) To seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through these areas.

(13) To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women;

(14) To scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

In support of Objective 4 of the Corporate Plan, which is:

to raise the aspirations of young people, and in particular to:

- ***raise overall educational attainment, particularly that of lower achieving young people and***
- ***safely reduce the number of looked-after children,***

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

(i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;

(ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;

(iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and

(iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive;

within the following terms of reference of the Cabinet portfolio(s) indicated:

Children's Services and Lifelong Learning

(1) The powers and duties set out in

- the Children Act, 1989
- the Education Act, 1996
- the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998
- the Education Act, 2002,
- the Children Act, 2004
- the Education Act 2005
- the Education and Inspection Act 2006 and
- any other legislation relevant to the functions defined below.

(2) The promotion of improvement in the outcomes for children and young people in terms of their health, their education and training, their ability to make a positive contribution, and their social and economic well-being.

(3) Ensuring that children and young people in Wirral are safe from harm and neglect, and that their welfare is promoted.

(4) The provision of services for children and young people including services for children and young people in care to the Council, provision for early years childcare and education, primary and secondary education, adult education, and youth and play activities.

(5) The promotion of effective partnership working between all the statutory and non-statutory agencies which provide services for children and young people and, where feasible, to promote the integration of services.

- (6) Ensure that systems are in place to manage and scrutinise the performance of all the services for children and young people.
- (7) Ensure that resources are efficiently and effectively targeted towards the improvement of outcomes.
- (8) Liaison with the Strategic Health Authority and health trusts serving Wirral on matters relating to children and young people.
- (9) Liaison with the Learning and Skills Council on matters relating to further education and training, ensuring, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Regeneration and Planning Strategy, that the training needs of employers, employees and prospective employees are met.
- (10) Liaison with the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership on matters relating to young people's preparation for working life and specifically to have responsibility for the regulation of the employment of young people.
- (11) Liaison with the Police Authority, the Probation Service and the Youth Offending Service on matters relating to youth crime and disorder.

All portfolios

- (12) Those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this Committee,
- (13) To seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through these areas.
- (14) To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women;
- (15) To scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

In support of Objective 5 of the Corporate Plan, which is:

to create an excellent council, and in particular to:

- ***improve the use of the Council's land and assets;***
- ***maintain a sustainable and stable budget, providing value for money;***
- ***improve the Council's budgeting process to fully reflect its priorities,***

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

(i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;

(ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;

(iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and

(iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive;

within the following terms of reference of the Cabinet portfolio(s) indicated:

Community and Customer Engagement

(1) Development of the Council's approach to Community engagement and to build community capacity.

(2) The Council's Area Forum network.

(3) Initiatives in the wider community that will increase the understanding of the democratic process, and reduce alienation and apathy.

(4) The Council's Customer Access Strategy and for ensuring that it takes full account of the needs of hard to reach people.

(5) The Council's compliance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

(6) Grants and loans to voluntary and community organisations.

(7) Contributing to the development and operation of Wirral's community Legal Service.

(8) The following areas:

- mayoralty and civic ceremonial
- hospitality
- town twinning
- registration of births, marriages and deaths
- maintenance of memorials
- membership of outside bodies.

- (9) The Council's Communication Strategy and public relations.
- (10) Equality and diversity.

Corporate Resources

- (11) The development, implementation and review of the Council's arrangements for ensuring effective use of resources including meeting the requirements of the Audit Commission's Use of Resources Assessment.
- (12) Financial monitoring, including standing orders and financial regulations.
- (13) Financial propriety.
- (14) Procurement compliance and contract compliance within the Authority.
- (15) Restrictive and selective tendering (other than civil engineering).
- (16) Where it is not a specified responsibility of the Employment and Appointments Committee, personnel issues including employee development and training, equal opportunities in employment and service delivery, disciplinary and grievance procedures and recruitment.
- (17) The provision of legal and administrative services to the authority; and the Coroner's Service.
- (18) The preparation, maintenance and review of an overall strategy for the management, use and disposal of all Council-owned land property (including the preparation of the Asset Management Plan).
- (19) Land issues including:
 - acquisition, disposal and appropriation of all land and property;
 - provision and management of administrative and civic offices;
 - commercial development and redevelopment of the Council land and property;
 - matters relating to the Council's freehold interest and shareholding in Birkenhead Market.
- (20) The organisation of a corporate planned maintenance policy.
- (21) Co-ordinating performance management and performance indicators.

Finance and Best Value

- (22) The Council's contribution to the major partnership initiatives in which it is engaged, such as the Local Strategic Partnership, Local Area Agreement Partnership Board, Liverpool City Region and Local Government Association.
- (23) The following areas:
 - the formulation and submission of proposals relating to strategic policy;
 - the overall production of the Corporate Plan;
 - revenue and capital budgets, including preparations for the annual budget and Capital Plan;
 - schemes under the Private Finance Initiative;

- procurement.
- (24) Information technology.
- (25) Financial matters including insurance, rating, council tax and housing and council tax benefits.
- (26) The performance of the Council as measured through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Comprehensive Area Assessment process.
- (27) Initiatives in relation to local democracy and the modernisation of local government.

All portfolios

- (28) Those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this Committee.
- (29) To seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through these areas.
- (30) To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women;
- (31) To scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

UPDATE ON WORK PROGRAM : CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING OSC

POSITION AT THE END OF THE 2008/09 MUNICIPAL YEAR

New Reports to assist in monitoring the Committee's work programme

It was agreed by the Scrutiny Chairs Group in September 2008 to use the following reports to monitor the work programme for each Scrutiny Committee. The last item on each Scrutiny Committee agenda should be 'Review of the Committee Work Programme'.

Report 1 - Monitoring Report for Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

This report will list all items that have been selected by the Committee for inclusion on the work programme for the current year.

It will also include items, such as previous Panel Reviews, where recommendations have been made to Cabinet. It is important that the implementation of these recommendations is monitored. Otherwise there is no measure of the success of scrutiny.

For each item on the work programme, the report will give a description, an indication of how the item will be dealt with, a relative timescale for the work and brief comments on progress.

Report 2 - Suggestions for Additions to Work Programme

The Work Programme for the Committee should be reviewed at each meeting. This will include members having the opportunity to ask for new Items to be added to the programme. This report will list any newly suggested items. Committee will then have the opportunity to agree (or not) for them to be added to the programme.

Report 3 - Proposed Outline Meeting Schedule for the Municipal Year

The report will, for each scheduled Committee meeting, list those items which are likely to be on the meeting agenda. This will give the opportunity for Committee members to take a greater lead in organising their work programme.

Report 4 - Progress Report on In-Depth Panel Reviews

This report will give a very brief update on progress / timescales for in-depth panel reviews which are in the 'ownership' of the Committee.

REPORT 1
MONITORING REPORT FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : 2008 / 2009

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
2006	Report on the Support Given to Schools Pre- and Post-Ofsted Inspections	Panel Review		Final Report produced April 2007. Implementation of recommendations to be monitored by Standards sub-committee.	
2006	Fostering Service Review	Panel Review		Final Report produced March 2008. Report discussed by Cabinet on 10th December. Implementation of recommendations to be monitored at a later date.	
Oct 2007	Youth Outreach Review	Panel Review	Report agreed Nov 2008	Final Report to Scrutiny Committee on 11th Nov. Report discussed by Cabinet on 10th December.	
July 2008	Update on Special Schools	Officer reports		Report to Committee 11th Nov. OSC members to visit schools.	
July 2008	Transition from Children's to Adult Social Services	Officer Report		Report to Committee 16th March. Item deferred until meeting in June 2009	
July 2008	NEET rates (Not in education, employment or training) - in particular, what has been the impact of specific projects aimed at NEETs?	Officer Report		Report to Committee 13th Jan.	Complete
July 2008	Behavioural Issues and Exclusions	Officer Report		Report to Committee 11th Nov.	Complete
July 2008	Committee Structure and Governance Arrangements in Children's Services	To be agreed	Report due June 2009	Report being produced to detail all committees / panels / working parties / outside bodies for Children's Services. Data being gathered.	
July 2008	Literacy Levels in schools at the end of Key Stage 2	Panel Review	Report due June 2009	Draft scope form agreed by Committee on 11th Nov. Data gathering has commenced with visits to schools.	
July 2008	School Funding	To be agreed		Notice has been given that the Committee intend to scrutinize School Funding during the 2009 / 10 municipal year.	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
Oct 2008	Wirral Music Service	Officer Report		Committee requested a further report during a budget savings debate on the Wirral Music Service on 28th October 2008. Item on agenda for 13th Jan 2009.	(13/01/09) Agreed that Annual report on Music Service to be produced - for a future meeting.
Nov 2008	Early Years Education	Officer Report		Item requested by Sheila Clarke (11th Nov meeting). Item on agenda for 13th Jan 2009. Item deferred until 16 th March.	Complete
Nov 2008	Private Fostering	Officer report		Item discussed by OSC on 11th Nov 2008. Members requested another report in one year's time. As a result of the Ofsted Annual Performance Letter, it was agreed on 13/01/09 that a report would be produced for the March meeting. However, this report will now be deferred until a future meeting.	
Nov 2008	Wirral Adoption Service	Officer Report		Item discussed by OSC on 11th Nov 2008. Further reports to be produced on the Adoption service in the future, including Special Guardianship.	
Jan 2009	Teenage Pregnancy	Panel Review??		Item requested by Sheila Clarke (13 th Jan meeting). The OSC meeting on 16/03/09 agreed to receive an officer report at the June meeting. (A similar report will go to Cabinet on 09/04/09).	
Jan 2009	Child protection	Officer report		As a result of the verbal report on 'The Impact of the Baby P Case' given by Howard Cooper (13/01/09), it was agreed that a further update report would be produced in the future.	
March 2009	Proposed Children in Care Council	Officer report		A future progress report will be produced on the Children in Care Council	

REPORT 2
SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME
CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : END OF 2008/09

Topic Description	Topic suggested by	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Completion Date
The identification of deprivation and the impact on learning outcomes	Tom Harney and supported by OSC meeting on 16/03/09	Consider for inclusion on the work programme for the 2009/10 municipal year	
Impact of alcohol on children	Frank Doyle and supported by OSC meeting on 16/03/09	Possible joint scrutiny work with Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee	
Surplus in school budgets (held by some schools)	Tony Smith	Consider for inclusion on the work programme for the 2009/10 municipal year	
Member's visits to Children's homes (see report from 13/01/09 meeting)	Item deferred from the meeting on 16/03/ 09.	Officer report	

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REPORT 3
PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR
CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : 2008 / 2009

Meeting Date	Topic Description
02/06/08	Committee Work Programme for 2008 / 9 Consultation on Informal Adult Learning Performance Monitoring Report for 2007 / 8 Children's Complaints - Evaluation and Monitoring Assessing Children's Social Care
16/0908	School Standards - Presentation on headline results Committee Work Programme 2008/9 Q1 Performance Monitoring Report Children's Services - Complaints Procedures
11/11/08	Final report from the Youth Outreach Scrutiny Panel Update on Special schools Behavioural Issues and Exclusions Children in Care Private Fostering Fostering and Adoption Services Inspection Reports Financial Monitoring Report Performance Management Report
13/01/09	Secondary School Review NEET rates (Not in education, employment or training) - in particular, what has been the impact of specific projects aimed at NEETs? Update on Music Service Actions resulting from the Baby P case Annual Performance Assessment

Meeting Date	Topic Description
16/03/09	Member's visits to Children's homes (see report from 13/01/09 meeting) Early Years Education - Update on Sure Start Children in Care Council Adoption service Contracts report Complaints Monitoring Capital Programme Financial Monitoring Report Performance Management Report – Quarter 3

REPORT 4
PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS
CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : END OF 2008/09

Title of Review	Members of Panel	Progress to Date	Date Due to report to Committee
Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2	Councillors Sheila Clarke (chair) Frank Doyle Tony Smith	Draft scope agreed at OSC meeting on 11th Nov. Data gathering has commenced. Visits to three primary schools have taken place; one further visit is due to take place later in March. 'Interviews' with key officers have also commenced; others are due to take place during March / April.	June 2009

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COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

Minute Decision

Resolved - That the scrutiny work programme for 2008/09 focus on the issues of:

- (i) Equality and Diversity
- (ii) Comprehensive Engagement Strategy
- (iii) Customer Care Standards
- (iv) Area Forums

The Committee received a number of reports on the Equality Standard, but none specifically on the other topics.

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CORPORATE SERVICES

COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

Minute Decision :

Resolved - That the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2008/09 include the following 4 topics:

- (i) Human Resources
- (ii) Asset Management
- (iii) Planned maintenance
- (iv) Emergency Planning and Resilience

and that reports on these matters be provided to the next meeting of this Committee.

The Committee considered reports on the first two items during the course of the year.

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CULTURE, TOURISM AND LEISURE

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

Minute Text

The Director of Regeneration gave a presentation to the Committee on the Cultural Services review to initiate debate on a scrutiny programme for the year. He informed the meeting that cultural services in Wirral underpinned all the strategic objectives of the Council. There were very high levels of satisfaction with the cultural and leisure services which the Council provided, but there was also a continuing deterioration of buildings in which the services were provided. Cultural services were responsible for half of the buildings in the Council's portfolio. The service had competition from the private sector and there was increasing demand for improved services.

Following on from the review the Council would need to define its desired outcomes, priorities and have a clear vision, strategy and direction. Budget sustainability was also an issue which needed to be addressed and opportunities for partnerships with private, voluntary and community sectors needed to be developed.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Minute Decision

Resolved -

(1) That this Committee notes the presentation given tonight and recognises the difficult problems outlined and the hard decisions which will have to be made to deal with these problems.

(2) That the officers bring forward possible solutions to a future meeting which can only be considered once the Committee is in possession of the Consultant's report.

The Cultural Services review was the dominant issue over the course of the year

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Update on Work Programme for Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs meeting to adopt the following procedure to allow the committee members to monitor their work programme. It is felt that the work programme should be a 'living' document and as such is intended to act as a guide for the Committee throughout the year, while providing the degree of flexibility needed to respond to any emerging or pressing issues as they arise. Committee members, and particularly the Chair, should have a major role in owning and managing the work programme.

The final item on the agenda for each Scrutiny Committee will be 'Review of the Committee Work Programme'.

It is suggested that there should be four short reports. I have attached the following reports:

REPORT 1 - Lists all the issues the committee agreed to include in their Work Programme:

This report lists all items that have been selected by the Committee for inclusion on the work programme for the current year.

It also includes items, such as previous Panel Reviews, where recommendations have been made to Cabinet. It is important that the implementation of these recommendations is monitored. Otherwise there is no measure of the success of scrutiny.

For each item on the work programme, the report gives a description, an indication of how the item will be dealt with, a where possible a relative timescale for the work and brief comments on progress.

REPORT 2 - Suggestions for Additions to Work Programme

The Work Programme for the Committee should be reviewed at each meeting. This will include members having the opportunity to ask for new Items to be added to the programme. This report will list any newly suggested items. Committee will then have the opportunity to agree (or not) for them to be added to the programme.

REPORT 3 - Proposed Outline Meeting Schedule for the Municipal Year

The report lists those items which are likely to be on the meeting agenda. This will give the opportunity for Committee members to take a greater lead in organising their work programme.

REPORT 4 - Progress Report on In-Depth Panel Reviews

This report will give a very brief update on progress / timescales for in-depth panel reviews which are in the 'ownership' of the Committee.

Report

MONITORING REPORT FOR ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Comments on Progress	Complete?
JUNE 2008	Underage Sales of Alcohol and Off Licences	Officer Report (Regeneration)	<p style="text-align: center;">Report to the 28th Jan. 09</p> <p>The Director provided details of operational activity, which had focused upon the prevention of the sale of tobacco, fireworks, offensive weapons and alcohol to those under 18 years. He commended the young people aged between 13 and 16 years, who had volunteered to undertake test purchases, and commented that without their help under age sales enforcement activity by Trading Standards and the Police could not be undertaken.</p> <p>The Director reported also upon the lack of powers available to Trading Standards staff under the Licensing Act 2003, to investigate the sale of alcohol to children without a police officer being in attendance. He commented that the lack of investigative powers could frustrate an investigation where, for instance, the staff of licensed premises refused to allow the inspection of a refusals log or access to training records. All the main legislation enforced by Trading Standards gave officers powers to inspect goods, examine documents and seize and detain goods or documents which the officer had reason to believe may be required as evidence in proceedings for a breach of those Regulations. He reported that the Policing and Crime Bill was currently before Parliament and Part 4 of the Bill dealt with Alcohol Misuse, including selling alcohol to children. He sought the views of members as to whether to take the opportunity to request the Home Secretary to include an amendment to the Licensing Act 2003 to give Trading Standards sufficient powers to effectively investigate sales of alcohol to children.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report be noted. 2. That the Escalation Protocol for Licence Reviews set out in Appendix 1 to the report now submitted, be supported. 3. That the Director of Regeneration write to the Home Secretary proposing an amendment to the Licensing Act 2003 to give Trading Standards powers to effectively investigate the sale of alcohol to children 	

JUNE 2008

Carbon Neutral Wirral Working with Communities, Schools & Businesses to Improve the Environment

Officer Report (Tech Services).

Progress Report to Committee 3rd Dec Minutes:

The Director of Technical Services reported upon significant changes to the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Programme made by the newly formed Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), since the previous report to the Committee (minute 35 (15 January 2008) refers). The CRC was a carbon trading scheme covering large business and public sector organisations with an annual half-hourly metered electricity consumption above 6000 Mega Watt hours and organisations above the threshold were required to include emissions from all energy consumed from non-transport use. The scheme was due to begin in April 2010 and as Wirral Council was well above the qualifying threshold of consumption, the Director set out the actions that were required in advance of the start date.

Schools were now included in the scheme and their emissions would be included under the local authority's 'carbon footprint'. As emissions from schools accounted for approximately 40% of the Council's total emissions, their improved energy efficiency was paramount to the success of the scheme in Wirral. The local authority would be the organisation legally required to calculate emissions, purchase allowances, monitor and report annual consumption and keep an evidence pack for audit purposes. He commented that CO₂ allowances would have to be purchased according to the organisation's emissions and initially, the cost would be set by the Government at £12/tonne for the first 3 years. All revenues collected nationally would be recycled using a league table to determine the value of return and a bonus/penalty would be applied to the base element according to league table position (+/- 10% in year 1, +/- 20% in year 2 and so on to +/-50%). He reported that based on CO₂ emissions in 2007, it was estimated that the Council would have to purchase £510,000 of allowances for the first year of operation, and it was essential therefore, that the financial implications were fully taken into account in the future financial planning for the Council.

He referred to a number of pro-active energy efficiency initiatives undertaken by the Council which, it was anticipated, would secure an early financial advantage and he reported upon additional measures that were required to provide the required year on year improvements.

In response to questions from members, the Director proposed to present a further report once more detailed information on the CRC scheme became available. In addition, he commented that many

			<p>school governing bodies may not yet be fully aware of the inclusion of schools within the scheme and he proposed to undertake extensive consultation with schools in conjunction with CYPD.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That this Committee believes that the value of bonus or penalties should be apportioned across all sites to encourage the individual sites to actively participate. 2. That, to ensure that the costs are not absorbed into utility budgets, and due to its complexity, the CRC scheme be identified as a separate expenditure item. 3. That the details and financial implications of the CRC scheme be included in the future financial planning for the Council, and the report be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration. 4. That the implementation of the proposals detailed in section 5 of the report now submitted, be endorsed. 5. That further reports be presented to future meetings of the Committee as more detailed information on the CRC scheme becomes available. 	
JUNE 2008	Tackling Dog Fouling.	Officer Report (Regeneration)	<p style="text-align: center;">Report 3rd Dec. 08.</p> <p>The Director of Regeneration reported upon the Council's continuing 'Don't Give a Dog a Bad Name' campaign to combat dog fouling, which had been launched in April 2008 with an additional one-off budget allocation of £40,000 to maintain the campaign and in particular to tackle dog fouling in coastal areas and country parks. The Director outlined a range of initiatives as part of the campaign, which included –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increased Enforcement Activity <p>He reported upon increased partnership working between the Council's Dog Wardens, Neighbourhood Wardens from Wirral Partnership Homes and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) in conjunction with the Home Office 'Not in my Neighbourhood' initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Targeted Clean-Up Operations <p>He referred to a multi-functional clean up/enforcement quad bike that had been purchased which would be used to promote responsible ownership and to reinforce the campaign message. Targeted clean up operations would coincide with enforcement, positive</p>	

			<p>reinforcement and reward campaigns and would focus on the coastal areas of West Kirby, Hoylake, Meols, Moreton, Leasowe, Wallasey, New Brighton, Egremont and Seacombe.</p> <p>■ Improved Signage and Publicity</p> <p>The Director referred to improved campaign materials that would be used in the targeted areas as part of a rolling programme of promotion and increased enforcement. In response to comments from members in relation to a lack of coverage in the local press regarding the awards that had been presented and the fines that had been imposed, the Director referred to ongoing work with the Council's Marketing Section to generate increased publicity.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report be noted. 2. That an update report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee 	
JUNE 2008	Clinical Waste - Working with the PCT.	Officer Report (Tech Services)	<p>Update Report to Committee 3rd Dec. 08</p> <p>Minutes:</p> <p>The Director of Technical Services reported upon the limitations and risks associated with the current service provision for the capture of sharps waste from diabetic and other patients on injectable drugs. He indicated that the clinical waste collection policy included free of charge provision of sharps drop-off points at twelve pharmacies across Wirral and he indicated that following a recent procurement exercise undertaken by the PCT, the annual cost of the service to the Council had been reduced from £4500 to £3340.</p> <p>However, he reported that the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) had identified serious concerns over the presence of significant amounts of sharps waste being recovered from the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Bidston. He commented that whilst some of the items may have been as a result of illicit drug use, he believed that 70% of the waste originated from patients on injectable drugs disposing of medical paraphernalia in their grey bins. Following consultation with the PCT, the Director provided details of a proposed expansion of the drop-off service to all 86 pharmacies in Wirral which, together with a communications campaign, would encourage responsible sharps disposal and maximise the capture of sharps containers as patients visited pharmacies to collect their</p>	

prescriptions. In response to a comment from a member, he expressed the view that the proposal would also include those located within large supermarkets. The cost of the proposed expansion was £30,500 per annum, which would require an increase in budget provision of £25,400, to be funded from within existing resources. The Director reported upon and set out the costs of alternative solutions that had been considered. However, he believed that an increase in the number of drop off points in Wirral pharmacies was the most cost-effective and sustainable method of dealing with the majority of self-administered sharps waste that could be hazardous to human health. He commented that it was essential that the Council acted to reduce the risk of exposure of a hazardous waste stream to employees working in the waste industry.

In response to comments from members, the Director referred to the importance of publicity to encourage people to take advantage of the expanded drop-off service and to take personal responsibility for safe disposal of sharps. The Director confirmed that monitoring would be undertaken to measure the effectiveness of the scheme and he was confident that the PCT would work in partnership with the Council in publicising the expanded scheme. In response to further comments he agreed also to approach the PCT with a view to securing a financial contribution towards the costs of the service.

Resolved –

(1) That the proposed expansion of the sharps drop-off service to all pharmacies in Wirral by April 2009 be endorsed.

(2) That the decision to vire £25,400 from within the existing Waste and Recycling budget to fund the proposed Sharps Drop-off Service on an annual basis, be supported.

(3) That the PCT be requested to make a contribution towards funding the expanded service and to assist the Council in ensuring that it is adequately publicised.

(4) That a progress report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

JUNE 2008

Improving Local Environmental Quality.-

Officer Report
(Tech Services)

Progress Report 7th April 09.

Project Plan Update

Further to minute 180 (4 September 2008), the Director of Technical Services presented the latest version of the Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) Project Plan for 2008/2009. The Plan was prepared by Technical Services in partnership with Biffa Waste Services, Regeneration, Together Neighbourhood Management and local housing associations and it aimed to achieve the LEQ objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan and Wirral Local Area Agreement. He outlined completed projects and provided updates in relation to various projects that were ongoing and were contained within the latest plan. He referred to an independent survey of the key Super Output Areas (SOA's) undertaken by Encams, which revealed that the cleansing standards, as scored with the NI195 methodology, were almost three times as poor when compared with the overall Borough-wide scores. He presented the results of both an SOA-specific and a borough wide survey and he commented that the significantly greater improvement in the SOA areas compared to the rest of the Borough had demonstrated that the Council had 'narrowed the gap' in environmental quality standards. He reported that a new LEQ Project Plan was currently being developed for 2009/2010 and he set out projects being developed for next year to address LEQ issues throughout the borough.

A member referred to the continuing problems across the Borough associated with fly tipping, particularly on private land or on land in indeterminate ownership. The Director asked for details of specific problem areas to be notified to him and he commented that issues associated with Merseyrail would be dealt with at a regional strategic level. He referred also to the criteria for awards made under the Tidy Business scheme and agreed with members that greater publicity would help to promote the positive message they sought to convey. In response to a further comment in relation to projects outside SOA's, the Director agreed to hold a workshop for members with regard to the promotion of the Tidy Business Campaign across Wirral.

Resolved – That the progress made in delivering the LEQ Project Plan for 2008/2009 be noted and endorsed.

JUNE 2008

Healthy Food - Takeaway Food Survey

Officer Report (Regeneration)

Report 28th Jan. 09.

Further to minute 45 (5 March 2008), the Director of Regeneration reported upon the progress of Trading Standards in quantifying and mapping the nutritional impact of takeaway food. He commented that lifestyle-related ill-health was caused by a combination of factors and excessive consumption of salt, fat and sugar could become contributory factors in diet related ill health such as Cardio-vascular disease (CVD), coronary heart disease, hypertension, strokes and obesity related ailments. He set out dietary recommendations in relation to Guideline Daily Amounts of calories, total fat (including saturated fat) and salt and presented a summary of nutritional results of a sampling and analysis programme. The survey had involved a geographically representative sample and was broken down by reference to popular takeaway meals, which had been found to contain disproportionate amounts of salt and saturated fats.

He indicated that the raw data was now available to map and evaluate against ward and super output areas and to correlate against health criteria. Initial indications were that some simple steps such as reducing the amount of salt by better recipe management, using alternatives to high fat products and portion control to reduce the weight of the finished products would have health benefits.

However, the challenges were that the takeaway sector was a widely diverse group of small business making a multiplicity of meals, facing a difficult economic environment where customers may see biggest as best.

He reported that discussions would now take place in the Health and Well-Being Co-ordinating Group (Joint PCT/Wirral Group) to examine the following steps to improve the nutritional value of takeaway food and to develop an action plan to take the project forward –

- Work with takeaways to identify how they can reduce health risks
- Raise health profile with consumers
- Promote a healthier takeaway scheme with takeaway businesses
- Repeat and evaluate impact in 2009 and 2010

In response to a comment from a member in relation to controlling the availability of takeaway food in the vicinity of schools, the Director of refer it to Development Control for consideration and liaison with trading standards officers.

			<p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report be noted. 2. That a further report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee when the action plan has been formulated 	
JUNE 2008	Biffa Waste and Environmental Services.	Officer Report (Tech Services)	<p style="text-align: center;">Second Annual Review Report 28th Jan 09.</p> <p>The Director of Technical Services reported upon the current position with the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract and the development of the service. Since the contract was awarded to Biffa in June 2006, a close working partnership with the company had transformed Environmental Streetscene Services in Wirral and had resulted in a continuous improvement of service quality. Wirral had improved from a 2 star to a 3 star rating in the Environment Block of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and DEFRA had also named Wirral as the second most improved Council (UK & Wales) with regard to recycling performance in 2007/2008. He set out the contract management framework and reported upon progress in relation to the following key work streams that had been agreed in January 2008 by the Waste Partnership Board, for implementation in 2008/2009 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Garden Waste: Procurement of Treatment Facilities ■ Street Cleansing: Improving Environmental Quality with particular focus on Litter and Detritus ■ Multi-Occupancy Co-mingled Dry Recycling Provision ■ Compaction of Collected Co-mingled Recycling ■ Springboard Integration <p>He highlighted other key achievements in 2008 and indicated that the Partnership was on track to meet the PSA 8 target of 14% (BV199a) for 2008/2009. He provided a detailed performance summary in relation to key performance indicators together with an Analysis of Benefits Realisation and commented that the following work streams had been agreed by the Partnership Board to be the focus of improvement/progress in 2009 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Street Cleansing (including fly tipping) (continued from 2008) ■ Springboard integration ■ Compaction and contamination risk reduction (amended from 2008) ■ ERIC Service: Re-launch of the service and quality monitoring 	

Members were invited to put forward suggestions for additional work streams in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the contract. The Director introduced Zak Shell and Mark Hodkinson from Biffa's management team who gave a presentation on progress and key achievements. The presentation provided an overview of the company and its organisational structure, and indicated that Wirral was the company's largest municipal contract. The focus for 2009 was to build on successes achieved in the first two years and to secure further improvements in relation to quality and service performance. Information was provided to demonstrate the benefits to be placed on improvements in relation to missed bin collections, the reduction of side waste, improved customer care and safety performance. Links had been forged with the Authority's emergency planning team, which had resulted in liaison with the gritting service to improve safety of winter working. In addition, all vehicles now used a PDA device to give live round information and it was hoped to develop this further with CRM integration. In response to comments from members in relation to a number of issues, the Director reported upon problems associated with the return of wheeled bins and commented that a strategy had been developed to deal with locations with ongoing problems. In relation to the recycling of trade waste, he reported that the Council did not collect trade waste via the Biffa Municipal Contract. Therefore, waste arising from commercial businesses did not form part of the calculation for any of Wirral's waste national indicators. Nationally, there was a drive from DEFRA for Collection and Disposal Authorities to provide alternative recycling solutions for businesses, recycling in the future. However, this was not an option at the present time because of capacity issues at the MRF. Members expressed the view that fly tipping could increase significantly once the proposed charge was introduced for the ERIC service and, in addition, items that the ERIC service refused to collect were often fly tipped. The Director indicated that the list of collectable items would be reviewed by way of negotiation with the contractor and having regard to health and safety. It appeared that much fly tipping related to trade waste and would be monitored as part of a review of the enforcement process. With regard to community spending of 'You Decide' resources on street cleansing, the Director assured members that such resources would not be used for anything included within the Biffa contract.

			<p>With regard to further issues raised by members, the Director indicated that a report in relation to the evaluation of the graffiti removal scheme would be presented to the Cabinet in March 2009. He proposed also to present a report to a future meeting on a review of the operation of Household Waste Recycling Centres, in conjunction with the Mersey Waste Partnership, once the new operator was in place. In relation to a specific issue concerning the removal, by the supermarket, of bring sites at Sainsbury's in Prenton, the Director agreed to contact the supermarket direct with a view to replacement, and to present an update to the next meeting.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the progress of the Environmental Streetscene Services contract be noted. 2. That the following topics be considered for inclusion in the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract Work Streams for 2009/2010 – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Review of the annual leaf fall removal programme. (b) Review of street cleansing and litter bin provision in relation to Match Days at Tranmere Rovers FC. 3. That a monitoring report in relation to any increase in fly tipping, following the introduction of a charge for the ERIC service be presented to the June/July meeting of the Committee 	
<p>JUNE 2008</p>	<p>Reducing the Council's Carbon Footprint - Corporate Improvement Priority</p>	<p>Officer Report (Tech Services)</p>	<p>Progress Report 24th Sept. 08.</p> <p>The Director reported also upon progress on individual Council projects, viz: –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Various schemes included within the three phases of the Investment Energy Efficiency Programme (IEEP). ▪ Related Energy Projects. ▪ The development and implementation of the microgeneration strategy, and extension of the project to include renewable technologies. ▪ The development of 'Green Building' specifications (Wirral GreenSpec). ▪ Ensuring the use of compulsory Site Waste Management Plans on all construction projects over £300,000 in value. 	

- A detailed audit of the Council's waste minimisation and recycling systems.
- The development of the Travel Plan to further reduce Council mileage. However, he commented that an aspect of flexible and agile working was an adverse effect on car sharing, as colleagues often travelled to work at different times or visited their offices less frequently.
- Improvements to the Grounds Maintenance and Arboricultural Contract.
- The introduction of agile working within Highway and Engineering Services, and a review of the procurement process for the new HESPE contract to require tendering companies to provide details of how their environmental policies and systems will minimise the carbon footprint and environmental impact of contract administration
- The use of bio-fuel in the Council's transport fleet. However, although trials of a 20% bio diesel mix had shown no problems, manufacturers maintained that anything over a 5% mix could compromise the vehicle warranties. The Director also noted concerns that had been expressed in relation to the overall environmental impact of bio-fuel, and those concerns would be taken into account when the bio-fuel trials and Council policy was reviewed.

Resolved –

- 1. That the performance and progress of the various Council 'Carbon Footprint Reduction' projects to date undertaken by the Technical Services Department, be noted.**
- 2. That the further 'Carbon Footprint Reduction' projects proposed be endorsed.**
- 3. That the proposed arrangements for monitoring the delivery of the projects, including regular informal briefings for the Cabinet Member for Environment, be endorsed**
- 4. That regular progress reports be presented to future meetings of this Committee.**

Further Progress Report 7th April 09.

Progress Report 7th April 09.

The Director of Technical Services presented a six monthly progress report on the various projects being undertaken by Technical Services to achieve the Council's Corporate Objective to 'Reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint', as set out in the Carbon Reduction Programme. He set out performance to date in relation to the reduction of carbon emissions and commented that with the Cabinet approval of the implementation of the CRed initiative, the Council had now adopted the challenging CRed target of a 60% reduction by 2025 and would be working with residents, communities and both the public and private sectors to achieve their own reductions. He outlined the year on year improvements required by the Council to achieve the target and he provided details of progress on individual Council projects.

In response to various comments from members in relation to microgeneration and renewables, the Director referred to ongoing work to encourage the participation of schools and to alternative proposals for sustainable energy at Thurstaston Visitor Centre. He commented also that the biomass boiler at the Floral Pavilion was now fully operational and there were plans to install similar systems at the new developments at Woodchurch High School and Park Primary School. The boilers were fuelled by woodchip pellets and he indicated that the system was classed as sustainable because of the proximity of supply. In response to a further question regarding staff business mileage, the Director proposed to present a report to a future meeting following analysis of the figures for 2008/2009.

Resolved – That the performance and progress of the various Council 'Carbon Footprint Reduction' projects undertaken to date by the Technical Services Department be noted and endorsed.

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JUNE 2008

Waste Recycling and Minimisation -
Corporate Improvement Priority

Officer Report
(Tech Services)

Progress Report 28th Jan. 09.

UPDATE

The Director of Technical Services reported that at its meeting on 26 June 2008, the Cabinet (minute 85 refers) endorsed the Recycling and Waste Minimisation Project Plan and the Wirral District Action Plan. (minute 85 refers). He appended the latest version of the Project Plan to his report and set out the current position with regard to the Recycling and Waste Minimisation Action Plan to achieve the Corporate Objective "to create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment". Increasing levels of recycling was a priority for improvement for the Council and a stretch target of the Local Area Agreement, and he commented that in 2007/2008 Wirral had been recognised by DEFRA for becoming the second most improved Council for Recycling and Composting performance in England. This was attributed to the stepped increase due to the grey and green bin alternate weekly collection service as well as the expansion of the garden waste service. However, Wirral remained below the national average and it was hoped that further increases in performance, as a result of exceeding targets would result in an improved rating for 2008/2009.

The Director set out the current position in relation to infrastructure roll out, to improved communication to residents and with regard to progress on Council Notices of Motion He reported upon projects planned from April 2009, which included mechanical street-sweeping recycling, the new garden waste contract, section 46 enforcement and food waste minimisation.

In response to comments from members, the Director reported that although fines had not yet been imposed, considerable work had been undertaken in relation to changing behaviour to reduce levels of contamination. However, deliberate contamination remained an issue and effective monitoring would enable action to be taken in problem areas. With regard to the MRF at Bidston, the Director reported that it was now operating at full capacity since it had begun taking waste from Liverpool and Knowsley and at peak times waste had been diverted to a similar facility in Ireland.

The Director assured members that all steps would continue to be taken to avoid waste being sent to landfill. In response to a further comment in relation to the disposal of nappies, the Director reported that the Authority currently offered up to 50 vouchers per year that

			<p>were made available for Wirral residents wishing to trial the local Nappy Laundering Services. He commented that the scheme was promoted by "Happy Bums" and that 20 vouchers had been requested so far in 2008/2009. The Council had offered further support by attending roadshows during the annual Real Nappy Week. He reported also that around 4% of Wirral's waste stream was made up of disposable nappies.</p> <p>Resolved – That the report be noted and the progress being made in delivering the Waste, Recycling and Minimisation Action Plan for 2008/2009 be endorsed.</p>	
JUNE 2008	Packaging/recycling in supermarkets	Officer Report (Tech Services)		
JUNE 2008	Markets for plastic recycling in addition to bottles	Officer Report (Tech Services)		
JUNE 2008	Fairtrade in Wirral in the community, business and the Council	Officer Report (Procurement.)		
JUNE 2008	Landfill Tax	Officer Report (Tech Services)		
JUNE 2008	Council Volunteer Scheme	Officer Report		
JUNE 2008	Departmental objectives to reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured	Officer Report (Tech Services)		
April 2009	Health and Safety	Officer Report (Regeneration)	<p><u>Report to 7th April Meeting Minutes:</u></p> <p>The Director of Regeneration reported upon recent work undertaken by Environmental Health Officers working within the Health and Safety Enforcement section of the Environmental Health Division and he outlined the progress made by a range of local and regional campaigns aimed at promoting the Health and Safety Commission's 'Fit 3' initiative. The initiative set the following national targets – a 35% reduction in the</p>	

			<p>incidence rate of work related fatal and major injuries; a 6% reduction in incidence rate of cases of work related ill health and; a 9% reduction in the incidence rate of days lost due to work related injuries and ill health. The Health and Safety Enforcement Team had identified and prioritised those 'Fit 3' campaigns, projects and interventions that were most relevant to the workforce in Wirral and had fully supported the 'Fit 3' programme, recognising that in order to effectively contribute towards meeting the national targets, efforts needed to be focused in partnership with the HSE. To promote consistency, good practice and joint working on shared priorities across the Merseyside region the team also worked closely with 'Environmental Health Merseyside', a collaboration of all greater Merseyside Authorities. The Director commented also that whilst officers always tried to take a proportionate, informative and educative approach to enforcement, where there had been a clear and flagrant disregard for health and safety, it was necessary to consider formal action and he set out a number of the most recent prosecutions.</p> <p>In response to comments from members in relation to the recovery of legal costs, the Director indicated that officers always sought to recover the costs incurred by the Department of Law, HR and Asset Management, external agents, and Environmental Health. However, the costs awarded, if any, were entirely at the discretion of the courts.</p> <p>Resolved – That the report be noted and the Health and Safety sections continuing work programme in support of The 'Fit 3' programme, be endorsed.</p>	
7 April	Environmental Streetscene Services Contract Work Streams,	Officer Report (Tech Services)	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>VERBAL RESPONSE</u></p> <p>In response to comments from members in relation to items that had been selected for inclusion in the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract Work Streams, the Director of Technical Services agreed to present a report to the next appropriate meeting. He also proposed to report further upon 'signposting' scripts that were being developed to ensure the right advice was given to members of the public.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <p>(1) That the report be noted and the officers be requested to report to the next meeting of the appropriate Committee in order to agree a work programme for the forthcoming municipal year.</p> <p>(2) That the officers be requested to liaise with officers from Peel Holdings regarding the submission of the local Environmental Plan.</p>	

Report 2

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

Topic Description	Topic suggested by	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Completion Date
Fair Trading in Wirral The use of Fairtrade products in Wirral Health and Safety (Report above) ✓			
Environmental Streetscene Services Contract Work Streams. (Report above) ✓			

Report 3

PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2008/09

Meeting Date	Topic Description
3 December 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Working with Communities, Schools and Businesses to Improve the Environment - Progress Report (Tech Services).▪ Tackling Dog Fouling (Regeneration).▪ Clinical Waste Update - Working with the PCT (Tech Services).
28 January 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Biffa Waste and Environmental Services - Second Annual Review. (Tech Services - Members from Streetscene & Transport O&S Committee also to be invited).▪ Waste Recycling and Minimisation - Corporate Improvement Priority Progress Report (Tech Services).▪ Underage Sales of Alcohol and Off Licences (Regeneration).▪ Healthy Food - Takeaway Food Survey.
7 April 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reducing the Council's Carbon Footprint - Corporate Improvement Priority Progress Report (Tech Services).▪ Improving Local Environmental Quality - Progress Report (Tech Services).

Report 4

PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Title of Review	Members of Panel	Progress to Date	Date Due to report to Committee
NONE			

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FINANCE AND BEST VALUE Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report of Chair

During the Municipal Year 2008-9 the Finance and Best Value O and S committee was –

- concerned that the Council's budget should remain on course
- was particularly anxious that the Department of Adult Social Services was taking steps to manage its budget effectively

During the year the members questioned the reports on projected budgets closely, to ascertain whether the reported pressures on energy costs were likely to be realised, placing further pressures on the budget. Members were also anxious that income should be closely monitored, and sought timely information on trends, and that shortfalls should be recognised and reported early enough.

In view of concerns about the projected overspends in the Department of Adult Social Services, a special meeting was held in December 2008 when the Director and Cabinet member were closely questioned on the management of expenditure, with particular interest in how the Department were responding to demand but also reorganising to deal with the transformation of services. Members were concerned that these concerns mirrored those set out in earlier years and were relieved that 'support' was offered to the Department in view of staffing matters.

The Committee also recognised that the Treasury Management policy and the timely actions of officers had enabled Wirral to react promptly to the changing market, so reducing the Authority's exposure as the world financial situation deteriorated.

In January 2009 the members received detailed reports on the assumptions driving the Strategic Asset Review. The need for a review was recognised but members had particular concerns about the direction of the review, the impact on local services, and questioned whether the projected investment should be in major centres or would be better directed into to improving the condition of locally accessible facilities. Members remained anxious that the committees views were not reflected in the Cabinet's deliberations though appreciated that the review of office accommodation was being progressed albeit not as quickly as they hoped to make early savings in that area of the budget.

Councillor PN Gilchrist

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**UPDATE ON WORK PROGRAM : HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY OSC-
END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR 2008/9**

New Reports to assist in monitoring the Committee's work programme

It was agreed by the Scrutiny Chairs Group in September 2008 to use the following reports to monitor the work programme for each Scrutiny Committee. The last item on each Scrutiny Committee agenda should be 'Review of the Committee Work Programme'.

Report 1 - Monitoring Report for Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

This report will list all items that have been selected by the Committee for inclusion on the work programme for the current year.

It will also include items, such as previous Panel Reviews, where recommendations have been made to Cabinet. It is important that the implementation of these recommendations is monitored. Otherwise there is no measure of the success of scrutiny.

For each item on the work programme, the report will give a description, an indication of how the item will be dealt with, a relative timescale for the work and brief comments on progress.

Report 2 - Suggestions for Additions to Work Programme

The Work Programme for the Committee should be reviewed at each meeting. This will include members having the opportunity to ask for new Items to be added to the programme. This report will list any newly suggested items. Committee will then have the opportunity to agree (or not) for them to be added to the programme.

Report 3 - Proposed Outline Meeting Schedule for the Municipal Year

The report will, for each scheduled Committee meeting, list those items which are likely to be on the meeting agenda. This will give the opportunity for Committee members to take a greater lead in organising their work programme.

Report 4 - Progress Report on In-Depth Panel Reviews

This report will give a very brief update on progress / timescales for in-depth panel reviews which are in the 'ownership' of the Committee.

REPORT 1
MONITORING REPORT FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : 2008 / 2009

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
June 2008	Update report on the use of Section 30 Dispersal Orders, crack house closures and Anti-Social Behaviour Watch schemes in Wirral	Officer Report		Report to Committee 8th Sept	Complete
June 2008	Housing Market Renewal – Progress Report for 2007 /8.	Officer Report		Report to Committee 8th Sept	Complete
June 2008	CCTV Control Room Report.	Officer Report		Report to Committee 8th Sept	Complete
June 2008	Section 17 Presentation [Planners and Community Safety/Crime Prevention Officers to attend].	Officer Report		Report to Committee 8th Sept	Complete
June 2008	Financial and Performance Management Report	Officer Report		Report due to Committee on 8th Sept, 18 Nov, 15 Jan plus 19 March	
June 2008	Empty Property Strategy Annual Report	Officer Report		Report to Committee 18th Nov	Complete
June 2008	Visit by Jon Ward, Area Commander to discuss policing / community safety issues.	Presentation plus question / answer session		Agenda Item: 18th November	Complete
June 2008	Family Intervention Project – Presentation.	Officer Report		Report to Committee 18th Nov	Complete
June 2008	Stock Transfer Progress Report	Officer Report		Report to Committee 15th Jan	
June 2008	Brian Simpson of Wirral Partnership Homes re. Tower Blocks and Sheltered Housing	Presentation plus question / answer session		Agenda Item: 15th January	Complete

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
June 2008	Homelessness – Rough Sleepers / Street Drinkers	Officer Report		Report to Committee 15th Jan. Report deferred until 19 th March meeting. Committee requested a further update report in approximately 12 months time (that is, spring 2010).	Complete
June 2008	A joint meeting of Regeneration and Planning Strategy and Housing and Community Safety will be sought to scrutinise Section 106's, Housing Restraint Policy and provision of affordable housing.	Officer Report and Presentation followed by debate		Special joint meeting of Regeneration and Planning Strategy plus Housing and Community Safety OSC's is due to held on 12th November. A Section 106 officer has now been appointed. Subsequently, agreed for a further report to be produced in approximately one year's time.	
June 2008	A future decision on a joint meeting with Children's Services Dept regarding youth issues will be made when the report being prepared by three elected members has been published and considered by the Chair and Party Spokespersons.	To be confirmed			
Dec 2008	Wirral Homes Allocations Policy	Officer report		Discussed at Special OSC Meeting held on 8th December. A further report will be produced, hopefully before the end of the municipal year.	
Jan 2008	Stock transfers (WPH / BBCHA) - Customer Satisfaction data	Officer report		A report will be prepared for a future meeting.	
Jan 2008	Housing Market Renewal - Property Acquisitions in the Church Road and Holt Hill areas	Officer report		A report will be prepared for the meeting on 19 th March.	Complete

REPORT 2
SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME
HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR

Topic Description	Topic suggested by	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Completion Date
Alcohol and young people	Frank Doyle	Possible joint review with Children's Services and Social Care & Health OSC's. To be considered when the 2009/10 Work Programme is discussed.	

REPORT 3
PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR
HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : 2008 / 2009

Meeting Date	Topic Description
05/06/08	Committee Work Programme for 2008 / 9 Performance Monitoring Report for 2007 / 8 Stock Transfer Monitoring Update
08/0908	Annual update on the use of Section 30 Dispersal Orders, crack house closures and Anti-Social Behaviour Watch schemes in Wirral Housing Market Renewal – Progress Report for 2007 /8. CCTV Control Room Report. Section 17 Presentation [Planners and Community Safety/Crime Prevention Officers to attend]. Finance and Performance Report [by exception].
18/11/08	Empty Property Strategy Annual Report Visit by Jon Ward, Area Commander to discuss policing / community safety issues. Family Intervention Project – Presentation. Anti-Social Behaviour Watch Schemes (re-named Respect Watch Scheme) Finance and Performance Report [by exception].
08/12/08	Proposed changes to Wirral Homes Advertising and Allocations
15/01/09	Stock Transfer Progress Report Brian Simpson of Wirral Partnership Homes re. Tower Blocks and Sheltered Housing Housing Market Renewal Initiative - six monthly update Finance and Performance Report [by exception].
19/03/09	Homelessness – Rough Sleepers / Street Drinkers Housing Market Renewal - Property Acquisitions in the Church Road and Holt Hill areas Financial and Performance Management Report – Quarter 3

REPORT 4
PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS
HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR

Title of Review	Members of Panel	Progress to Date	Date Due to report to Committee
None			

REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY

Extracts from minutes

17. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (November)

Verbal report

Minutes:

Resolved – That the following items of business be referred to the next meeting:

- Presentation by The Mersey Partnership
- Update Report – North West and Wirral Cluster Groups

Discussion on the subsequent presentation appears to have included the topic of cluster groups

29. Work Programme (January)

Verbal report

Minutes:

Resolved – That the following items of business be referred to the next meeting:-

- Working Wirral Update
- Current Economic Trends

The subsequent presentation on the latter was noted.

In relation to Working Wirral the Committee resolved that

- the items relating to IT capacity and connectivity, and power supply, be referred to the next meeting of this committee for further consideration.

- this committee endorse the Business Support Programme and ask that it be regularly reviewed with a view to utilising further WNF to expand the scheme.

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UPDATE ON WORK PROGRAMME : SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & INCLUSION OSC- END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR 2008/9

New Reports to assist in monitoring the Committee's work programme

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It will also include items, such as previous Panel Reviews, where recommendations have been made to Cabinet. It is important that the implementation of these recommendations is monitored. Otherwise there is no measure of the success of scrutiny.

For each item on the work programme, the report will give a description, an indication of how the item will be dealt with, a relative timescale for the work and brief comments on progress.

Report 2 - Suggestions for Additions to Work Programme

The Work Programme for the Committee should be reviewed at each meeting. This will include members having the opportunity to ask for new Items to be added to the programme. This report will list any newly suggested items. Committee will then have the opportunity to agree (or not) for them to be added to the programme.

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The report will, for each scheduled Committee meeting, list those items which are likely to be on the meeting agenda. This will give the opportunity for Committee members to take a greater lead in organising their work programme.

Report 4 - Progress Report on In-Depth Panel Reviews

This report will give a very brief update on progress / timescales for in-depth panel reviews which are in the 'ownership' of the Committee.

REPORT 1
MONITORING REPORT FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : 2008 / 2009

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
Feb 2008	Hospital Discharge Review	Panel Review	Report due March 2009	Final report presented to Committee on 25 th March 2009. Recommendations to be monitored. Initial Action Plan due in April 09. Follow-up report due in Oct 09.	
July 2008	Transforming Adult Social Care	Officer reports		Report to Committee 2nd Sept 08 and 24th Nov 08. Subsequent reports to follow. Call-In meeting held on 4 th Dec 08.	
July 2008	Support for carers	Officer Report		Report to Committee 2nd Oct 08	
July 2008	Update on LinKs	Officer Report		Report to Committee 2nd Oct 08	
July 2008	Update on Wirral Respond & Convey Pilot (NW Ambulance service)	Officer Report		Report to Committee 2nd Oct 08 Visit to Emergency Control Centre to be arranged	
July 2008	Adult Protection / strategy report	Officer Report		Report to Committee 2nd Oct 08	
July 2008	Occupational Therapy	Officer Report		Report to Committee 2nd Oct 08	
July 2008	Alcohol services, including geographical differentiations in the borough	Initial officer report which may lead into an 'in depth' panel review.		Report to Committee 24th Nov 08. Possible future scrutiny review.	
July 2008	Update on Children's Transition to Adult Social Services	Initial officer report. Children's Services Scrutiny Committee has also requested a similar report in Jan 09. A joint panel review involving both committees may follow.		Initial report due to Committee in Jan 09	
July 2008	Report back from the Older People's Parliament Survey of patient's hospital stay / discharge.			Report to Committee in Nov 08.	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	
July 2008	Review of Meals on Wheels contract	Officer report		Report to committee in Nov 08. Agreed for further report to Committee in approx one year's time.	
July 2008	Business / Departmental Plan	Officer reports		Report to Committee 2nd Sept 08. Subsequent reports to follow.	
July 2008	Reducing health Inequalities in the borough	Workshop (Replaced by officer reports)		Presentations to Committee on 20 Jan 09 and on 25 March 09.	
Sept 2008	Access to healthcare for people with Learning Disabilities	Officer report		Report to Committee in Nov 08	
Sept 2008	Dementia Strategy	Officer report		Report to Committee in Nov 08	
Sept 2008	Individual Budgets	Officer report		Report to Committee in Nov 08. Report back on pilot project due after April 2009.	
Sept 2008	IDeA Healthy Communities Peer Review	Officer Report		Report to Committee 2nd Oct 2008. Subsequent reports to follow.	
Oct 2008	Sickness Absence	Officer Report		Report to Committee in Nov 08	
Oct 2008	MRSA and c difficile	Report by Chief Exec of Wirral University Hospital Trust		Presentation to Committee in Nov 08	
Oct 2008	Reform of funding for Support & Care in Britain	Officer Report		Report to Committee in Nov 08. Further report due to a future meeting.	
Jan 2008	Possible presentation by Professor Ken Wilson - Hospital Readmissions and depression	Presentation to Committee			
Jan 2008	Public Interest Disclosure Act – Adult Social Services follow-up of PIDA disclosure	Officer Report			
Jan 2008	Joint 'End of Winter' report on hospital admissions (WUHT / Wirral NHS / Social Services)	Officer report / Presentation		Joint Presentation to Committee on 25 March 09.	Complete

REPORT 2
SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME
SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : End of municipal year 2008/9

Topic Description	Topic suggested by	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Completion Date
Homelessness and Health	Hospital Discharge Scrutiny Panel		
Support for people with dementia in hospital and in the community	Hospital Discharge Scrutiny Panel	Councillors A Bridson, D Roberts, S Clarke nominated to obtain evidence from staff and carers.	
Implications of alcohol on health, especially in relation to young people	Hospital Discharge Scrutiny Panel	Possible joint scrutiny review with Children's Services OSC	
Update report on 'Valuing People Now' and Wirral Learning Disability Partnership Board	Ann Bridson	Report from Tina Long	June 2009
LINKS – How is LINKS progressing and how can LINKS best work with the Scrutiny Committee	Ann Bridson (and supported by OSC – 25/03/09)	Initial meeting between LINKS and representatives of the Scrutiny Committee to take place after April (when a new LINKS Board will be elected).	June 2009
Dignity in Care	Denise Roberts (and supported by OSC – 25/03/09)	Officer report	June 2009
Health Inequalities Action Plan – A recommendation in the Action Plan reads: "Ensure that Scrutiny has a programme to monitor progress on the Health Inequalities Action Plan, and that this programme includes a focus on the preventative agenda as well as on health service delivery.	Report on the Health Inequalities Action Plan presented to Committee on 25 th March 2009.	Further officer reports	

REPORT 3
PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR
SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : 2008 / 2009

Meeting Date	Topic Description
02/09/08	Update on Hospital Discharge Review Transforming Adult Social services - An update Business / Departmental Plan update Financial Monitoring Report Performance Management Report NHS Constitution Committee Work Programme for 2008 / 9
02/10/08	Update on Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) Wirral Respond and Convey Pilot Mid-Project Review Re-admissions Q1 Performance Monitoring Report Support for Carers Occupational Therapy (to include examples of caseloads) Safeguarding Adults Annual Report Response to the Consultation on the NHS Constitution IDeA Healthy Communities Peer Review
24/11/08	Access to healthcare for people with Learning Disabilities Older People's Parliament Survey of patients' hospital stay / discharge Review of Meals on Wheels contract (including reports on consultation) Financial Monitoring Report, including Proposed Savings Performance Management Report Individual Budgets Alcohol Services (including geographical differentiations in the borough) CSED Dementia (Integrated care and support planning) Reform of funding for Support and Care in Britain (Joint Commissioning Strategy for Carers) Sickness Absence within the department of Adult Social Services MRSA and c difficile infections - Report by Chief Executive of Wirral University Hospital Trust Transforming Adult Social Services

Meeting Date	Topic Description
20/01/09	Update on Children's Transition to Adult Social Services Progress report from Hospital Discharge Panel Business / Departmental Plan Financial Monitoring Report Performance Management Report Health Inequalities Personal Budgets
25/03/09	Final report from Hospital Discharge Panel Joint 'End of Winter' report on hospital admissions (WUHT / Wirral NHS / Social Services) Health Inequalities - Action Plan Annual Health Check World Class Commissioning Performance Management / Financial monitoring Report – Quarter 3

REPORT 4
PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS
SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : End of Municipal year 2008/9

Title of Review	Members of Panel	Progress to Date	Date Due to report to Committee
Hospital Discharge	Councillors Ann Bridson (chair) Sheila Clarke Denise Roberts plus Sandra Wall	Scope agreed. 'Interviews' with key officers are complete. Visit to Discharge Lounge at Arrowe Park complete. Visit to Rehabilitation ward at Arrowe Park complete. Three focus groups held to assess the "patient's experience" – these were run by an external consultancy and a report from the focus groups has been prepared. Meetings with representatives of Alzheimers Society, Wired, Citizens Advice Bureau and VCAW have been held. The final report has now been produced. Further work is needed to monitor whether the recommendations are implemented and, if so, whether they are successful. Initial Action Plan due in April 09. Follow-up officer report due in Oct 09.	March 2009 The report is complete

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STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

Minute Decision :

Resolved - That the scrutiny work programme for 2008 / 09 focus on:

- (i) the issue of road safety looking at every aspect and angle to make the borough's roads safer.
- (ii) the approach to maximising benefits from new developments to maintain and improve the highway network, particularly via the Section 106 process

These two topics were dealt with at the subsequent meeting

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Implementing new powers for scrutiny of Local Area Agreements: Your questions answered

This briefing provides information about the new powers for councils to engage other public services in scrutiny of Local Area Agreements. All areas in England have Local Area Agreements for 2008-11, led by their council working with other public services. The new scrutiny powers have just been brought into law, and basic information about what this means is provided here. Some further sources of information are suggested at the end.

What is a Local Area Agreement?

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a partnership agreement to take action to tackle the area's most important problems and goals for the future. It is a three year agreement between the council (county and district councils in one county-wide agreement in areas with two tiers of local government) and other public services. Some targets (up to 35) are included which are priorities agreed between the council, other public services and the government.

The council, as the area's democratic voice, takes the leading role. It brings together other public services, and representatives of local businesses, and community and voluntary organisations, in a Local Strategic Partnership. This partnership negotiates a Local Area Agreement, a practical plan to move forward the longer term aims set out in the community strategy. Local Area Agreements in this form have been agreed for all parts of England for 2008-11. This is a requirement of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

What are the new scrutiny powers which relate to Local Area Agreements?

The new powers in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 for scrutiny of Local Area Agreements enable council scrutiny committees or panels to:

- Scrutinise local improvement targets (LAA targets)
- Require information from partner organisations signed up to LAA targets
- Require these organisations to have regard to scrutiny recommendations which relate to a relevant LAA target.

Overview and scrutiny committees are part of the democratic arrangements of councils. Committees or panels of elected councillors review the performance of public services and other local issues, and recommend improvements and new initiatives. This can concern the council's own services, other public services, and any issue which affects the area or its inhabitants. Different councils can have different structures or arrangements to do this. Overall, this should help ensure public services work together to understand and tackle the area's problems and make it a better place.

When did the new powers come into law?

These new powers for the scrutiny of LAAs (Clauses 121, 122, 123, 124 of the Act) were commenced on 1 April 2009. Clauses 119, 236 and 237, covering the Councillor Call for Action were also commenced on this date, but are not discussed here.

What partner organisations are required legally to co-operate with Local Area Agreements?

District councils The Environment Agency Natural England Fire and rescue authorities Jobcentre Plus The Health and Safety Executive The Broads Authority National Park Authorities Youth Offending Teams Police authorities Transport for London Chief Officer of Police Local Probation Boards Probation Trusts and other providers of probation services	Primary Care Trusts National Health Service Trusts NHS Foundation Trusts Joint Waste Authorities Joint Waste Disposal Authorities Regional Development Agencies The Learning and Skills Council Sport England English Heritage Arts Council Museums, Libraries and Archives Council Highways Agency Metropolitan Passenger Transport Authorities Homes and Communities Agency Others could be added by Secretary of State (by Order)
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Are all these organisations covered by the new LAA scrutiny powers?

No. All these public services have legal duties to respond to council scrutiny. However, police and National Health Service bodies are covered by separate, earlier legislation on scrutiny. The scrutiny powers in the Police and Justice Act 2006, which commence from 30 April 2009, can be used to underpin scrutiny of LAA targets on police and crime, (as well as supporting other scrutiny of these issues). Powers from the Health and Social Care Act 2001 can be used to scrutinise health targets. In reality, small differences in the legal frameworks will not be important, particularly as public services learn more about how council scrutiny operates in their area, and the benefits it is seeking to achieve.

District councils are subject to scrutiny?

Yes, district councils are defined in LAA legislation as ‘partner authorities’ in county-wide LAAs. This means they are likely to be signed up to LAA targets (for example on housing) and can be subject to scrutiny on their role in delivering these targets. At the moment, this would be by a county scrutiny committee. Once the regulations on two tier arrangements and district scrutiny powers in relation to LAAs are complete, the scope of two-tier arrangements will change to some extent. District council scrutiny committees can look at their own council’s contribution to targets as well.

Are all organisations involved in Local Strategic Partnerships covered by these legal powers?

No. Public services other than those listed above could be signed up to specific LAA targets, for example a local housing association, or a university or college. LSPs generally include representatives of local businesses and the local voluntary sector, who might also choose to sign up to relevant LAA targets. These organisations are not obliged to be involved in scrutiny enquiries, but they are encouraged to take part.

What regulations are being produced as part of this legal framework?

The Act provides for the Secretary of State to issue regulations on: access to information, two tier arrangements and district council powers, including the role of fourth option councils (smaller district councils with a committee structure rather than a cabinet). These regulations will complete the legal framework.

What is the timetable for finalising the regulations?

The regulations have to be drafted by civil servants in the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), and then sent to Parliament for approval. CLG has indicated that they expect regulations on access to information, on district council powers, and on fourth option councils, to be completed by the summer parliamentary recess (mid July) and the regulations for joint two-tier committees to be completed later.

What is the impact of the regulations not being finalised yet?

The regulations define or extend some aspects of the framework set out in primary legislation. In the period before regulations are finalised there are only a few limitations on what councils can do, and the powers on which they can draw. Apart from the access to information issue, the main implications are for two tier areas and district councils. We expect the regulations to provide scope for a range of joint scrutiny arrangements in two tier areas, and for district councils (including fourth option districts) to be able to draw on the new scrutiny powers. At the moment, two tier options are more constrained: see below.

What can councils do about access to information?

Without regulations on this, there is no legal definition yet of the information which partner organisations must provide to scrutiny enquiries. Information can be requested on a voluntary basis or using the Freedom of Information Act. We hope partner

organisations will recognise the importance of providing information to support public debate and understanding of their work as publicly funded bodies.

What can unitary councils do now?

Apart from lacking a definition of access to information powers, unitary councils have full scope to use the new legal powers to scrutinise LAA partners. This includes London Boroughs, metropolitan councils and other unitary councils.

What can two tier areas do now?

In two tier areas (with county and district councils), county scrutiny committees can operate with the same scope as unitary councils.

In advance of the regulations, there is no legal provision for joint county/district scrutiny committees. However county councils can use co-option powers to involve district councillors in county scrutiny committees, creating a committee/committees which involve councillors from both tiers. Legally, this would be a county council committee with co-optees, not a joint committee.

District and county councillors could work together in informal task and finish groups to carry out joint scrutiny reviews; these would need to report to a properly constituted county scrutiny committee to be able to use the provision that partner organisations should have regard to scrutiny recommendations.

District council scrutiny committees, including fourth option councils, can look at any LAA issue which affects their area, but without currently having specific legal powers in relation to partners.

Will there be Statutory Guidance on this?

CLG has said they have no plans for Statutory Guidance on these powers, but have commissioned good practice guidance from the Centre for Public Scrutiny. This will provide information and advice, but will not have the legal status of Statutory Guidance (to which councils and others have to 'have regard' in interpreting the legislation).

What should councils do now?

Legally, councils don't have to do anything. Councils are free to decide locally what they want to do to scrutinise Local Area Agreements and partnership work more generally. As councils have an existing power to scrutinise any issue which affects their area or its inhabitants, many have already involved local agencies and services in scrutiny enquiries, including review of LAA performance. There is no requirement to set up separate arrangements for scrutiny of LAAs. In unitary areas in particular it may well make more sense to integrate work on LAAs into other scrutiny arrangements.

Councils are advised, if they have not already done so, to discuss with their LSP how scrutiny of LAAs could work, and to provide information for partners. Some places have produced scrutiny protocols for the whole LSP, joint training or briefing on the role of scrutiny, and agreements on how council scrutiny bodies will work with partners and handle recommendations.

What is the type of scrutiny activity with which partners might be involved?

Scrutiny committees and panels work in a variety of ways. These can include meetings which review performance, which could include questioning those responsible for managing services. Another approach is to carry out a thematic review of one issue over a period of several meetings and develop recommendations. This more investigative approach is designed to find new ideas and solutions to achieve specific LAA priorities, through engaging councillors with community and users, partner organisations, independent experts, in finding new ways to tackle complex problems.

Partner organisations might be asked to:

- give evidence at a scrutiny enquiry, to put their ideas on how problems could be tackled
- provide written information
- discuss the performance against targets in the LAA with which they are involved, and answer questions on how that performance could be improved
- provide expert advice to councillors on issues in the LAA
- engage in discussions with services users about issues which affect them
- take part in consultation about the Sustainable Community Strategy, or other strategies relevant to their work, for example on health or crime.

Although the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 does not make it compulsory for partner organisations to attend scrutiny meetings, partners are encouraged to do this when appropriate. This provides an opportunity to answer questions and have a dialogue, including putting the views and concerns of their organisation. Councils should provide prior information about how they work and the type of meeting which is proposed.

What other scrutiny powers are included in this Act?

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 scrutiny powers also includes the requirement for council executives to respond to scrutiny recommendations. It also provides a legal framework for the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA). Separate guidance has already been issued on CCfA and can be found at www.cfps.org.uk.

What support and advice is available?

The Centre for Public Scrutiny will be publishing good practice advice on: the role of partners, issues relating to district councils and joint committees, and scrutiny models and structures. CfPS will also be working with the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) to run a series of Leadership Academy sessions for councillors. Conferences and events are advertised on the websites.

Further information is available from the following websites: www.cfps.org.uk; www.lga.gov.uk; www.idea.gov.uk

Publications, also on the relevant websites:

A councillor's guide to the new Local Area Agreements (LGA, December 2007),
Changing Places: Local Area Agreements and two-tier local government (LGA, September 2008),

A wider conversation: effective scrutiny of Local Strategic Partnerships (IDeA, February 2007).

How to win friends and influence partners (CfPS, March 2008).

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May 2009

The **2008** annual survey of overview and scrutiny in local government



Introduction

This is a report of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's sixth annual survey of overview and scrutiny in local government. We are very grateful to all the officers and Members who took the time this year to complete the questionnaire.

The scope of the survey has developed since 2003 to provide what is now the most comprehensive national picture of overview and scrutiny available. For some areas of questioning we are now able to provide useful trend information that enables us to chart the development of overview and scrutiny within the context of other changes to the work of local authorities.

We are pleased that this year the rate of responses to the survey has increased to a healthy 67% of all local authorities in England and Wales. For the second year running we asked respondents to identify whether they are officers or members and we are pleased that the response rate from elected members has increased significantly, giving us a much stronger picture of what elected representatives with responsibility for scrutiny are feeling about their role.

In terms of benchmarking information and trends, there have been some modest changes since 2007. The overall average number of scrutiny officer posts per authority has remained the same, but discretionary budgets for scrutiny have fallen. While not surprising in the financial climate this is of concern given scrutiny's ever-increasing powers and responsibilities.

Our concern is enhanced when this figure is set against other findings from the survey, such as the finding that the two areas of greatest challenge for scrutiny are felt to be scrutiny of partnerships and holding the executive to account, and the fact that public engagement remains an issue, with the number of topics suggested by the public falling. Scrutiny needs to make the case for proper resourcing more strongly, and CfPS will be focusing on this in the coming year to support scrutineers in doing so.

Finally for the first time in the survey we asked for your feedback on the services that CfPS provides. This reinforced the importance that our on-line services such as the library of scrutiny reviews and downloadable publications hold for practitioners, but also a need for us to do more to reach scrutiny elected members who showed much lower awareness of our services. What was really encouraging, however, was the appetite amongst members and officers for training. Scrutineers seem keen to improve their practice and to access development opportunities, and in the coming year we will focus on improving both the reach and quality of the services that we provide.

1. Response Rates

The survey was conducted amongst local authorities in England and Wales. Invitations for completion were sent to councillors and officers from local authorities that are registered with the CfPS' Scrutiny Champions Network, along with individuals from councils who are directly involved in the scrutiny function and the survey was also available on the CfPS website <http://www.cfps.org.uk/>

A breakdown of the response rate is shown in the table below:

Total	67% (275 authorities +16)
District / Boroughs	(144 authorities +13)
County Councils	(27 authorities +1)
London Boroughs	20 authorities -3
Metropolitan Borough Councils	27 authorities +3
Unitary Authorities	47 authorities +7
Welsh Authorities	10 authorities -4

The response rate for the 2008 CfPS Annual Survey is 67% of all authorities in England and Wales, which is an improvement of 4% on last year despite the imminent cessation of 35 authorities to form new unitary authorities. The absolute number of responses is 690, which is a 110% increase on last year's total of 329. This increase is largely due to encouraging Members to get involved in the survey this year.

In 2008 for the second year we asked respondents to identify whether they were an Elected Member or an Officer of a local authority. The relative response rates are provided below:

Role	% of respondents
Councillor	39.9%
Scrutiny manager/officer	43.8%
Other local government officer	7.4%
Other	9.0%

2. Committees, meetings and participation

Committees and structure

The average number of committees on an authority is 4 with a range from 1-15. These figures are sustained across most variables. The exception, as might be anticipated, is a low average and range among district and fourth option councils.

The following table documents the typical committee structures reported to be used for overview and scrutiny over the last four years, showing the growth of more streamlined structures and a less rigid split between “scrutiny” and “overview”.

Committee Structure	2008	2007	2006	2005
Multiple overview and scrutiny committees	64%	65%	54%	59%
One "scrutiny" committee and multiple "overview" committees	7%	12%	8%	16%
One OSC that commissions time-limited panels	19%	17%	12%	14%
One OSC that does all the work	11%	7%	8%	7%

Number of scrutiny reviews

The average number of scrutiny reviews undertaken, across all authorities, is **6 (5.73)** with a range from **0-28**. The table below shows the percentage of councils that told us they had completed a certain number of scrutiny reviews. There is a clear cluster between 2-6 reviews being undertaken by most authorities.

No of reviews	% of councils	No of reviews	% of councils
0	7%	11	0%
1	7%	12	2%
2	10%	13	0%
3	13%	14	2%
4	9%	15	2%
5	10%	16	1%
6	14%	17	1%
7	4%	18	1%
8	5%	19	0%
9	4%	20	1%
10	5%	20+	3%

Committee membership

Across all authorities that responded, the average number of members on an overview and scrutiny committee is **eleven**, which has stayed the same in each of the last 4 CfPS surveys of overview and scrutiny. The numbers ranged from **3-34**, which is wider in range than last year.

Non-statutory co-opted members

Across all local authorities each year, the average number of non-statutory co-opted members (i.e. not including parent governor and diocesan representatives in single and upper-tier councils) appointed to overview and scrutiny committees was **2.2**. This is a fall of **0.8** from 2007 when the average was **3**. Over half of all authorities (57%) reported having no non-statutory co-opted members which is up 3 percentage points on last year.

80% of authorities do **not** give these co-opted members of overview and scrutiny committees full voting rights, whilst **20%** of authorities do, which is an increase of 7 percentage points on the 2007 results.

Public engagement

The average number of suggestions for scrutiny topics coming from the general public in the last year was **4**, a marked decrease from the average of **6** in 2007, and **11** in 2006. The range of the responses to this question has narrowed this year to 0-200 from 0-500 in 2007. **55%** of authorities reported having received 0 suggestions for scrutiny topics from the public which is an increase of 4 percentage points since last year.

External witnesses

The average number of external witnesses who have attended overview and scrutiny meetings in 2008 was **20**, which is **1** fewer than in 2007. The range of figures received showed responses from 0 to over 500. The average value is skewed by a small number of large values and when the top 10 results are removed the average value falls to 14. Only **45%** of authorities reported having between 11-50 external witnesses at their scrutiny meetings which has fallen from **54%** in 2007. This suggests a general trend towards using fewer external witnesses whilst notable exceptions have much larger numbers.

No of external witnesses	No of authorities in range
0	11%
1 to 10	38%
11 to 20	29%
21 to 30	11%
31 to 40	2%
41 to 50	3%
51 to 60	3%
100+	2%

Chairing overview and scrutiny

As part of the survey, we asked for details of how chair and vice-chair positions were apportioned. Across all authorities, the figures are as follows:

- Authorities giving NO scrutiny chairs to opposition: 38%
- Authorities giving SOME scrutiny chairs to opposition: 41%
- Authorities giving ALL scrutiny chairs to opposition: 21%

The table below summarises how chairs are shared according to majority party control.

Control	Don't share Chairs		Keep at least one Chair but share others		All Chairs held by other parties	
Con	35%	(+2)	40%	(-10)	25%	(+7)
Lab	70%	(+15)	26%	(-17)	4%	(+2)
Lib Dem	17%	(-6)	72%	(+22)	11%	(-16)

There may be a number of reasons why chairing positions are offered or not and accepted or not, so it should be noted that these figures do not necessarily indicate good or bad practice on the part of the controlling group in individual authorities. The principle of sharing chairmanships according to the political composition of an authority is good practice, and CfPS would encourage administrations with an overwhelming majority to offer at least one such position to another significant group. Note that the change from the previous year's figures (2007) is displayed in brackets after the results from 2008.

3. Support for Scrutiny

Support type

The following table documents the types of model by which overview and scrutiny is supported in authorities¹.

Authority Type	Committee Model		Integrated Model		Specialist Model		Other
	2008%	% (=/-)	2008%	% (=/-)	2008%	% (=/-)	2008%
County Council	15%	-2	15%	7	55%	-20	15%
District Councils	50%	11	7%	-10	36%	-7	8%
London Borough	23%	23	0%	-7	69%	30	8%
Metropolitan Boroughs	24%	-3	6%	2	59%	-16	12%
Unitary Authorities	24%	1	9%	0	65%	-3	3%
Welsh Authorities	30%	17	10%	-3	60%	-15	0%
All Authorities	37%	9	8%	-4	47%	-12	8%

The results suggest that there has been an increase in councils using the committee model and moving away from the integrated and specialist models, although the latter remains the dominant model in all types of authority except Districts. The exceptions to this trend are among county and metropolitan authorities which have seen a small decrease in use of the committee model.

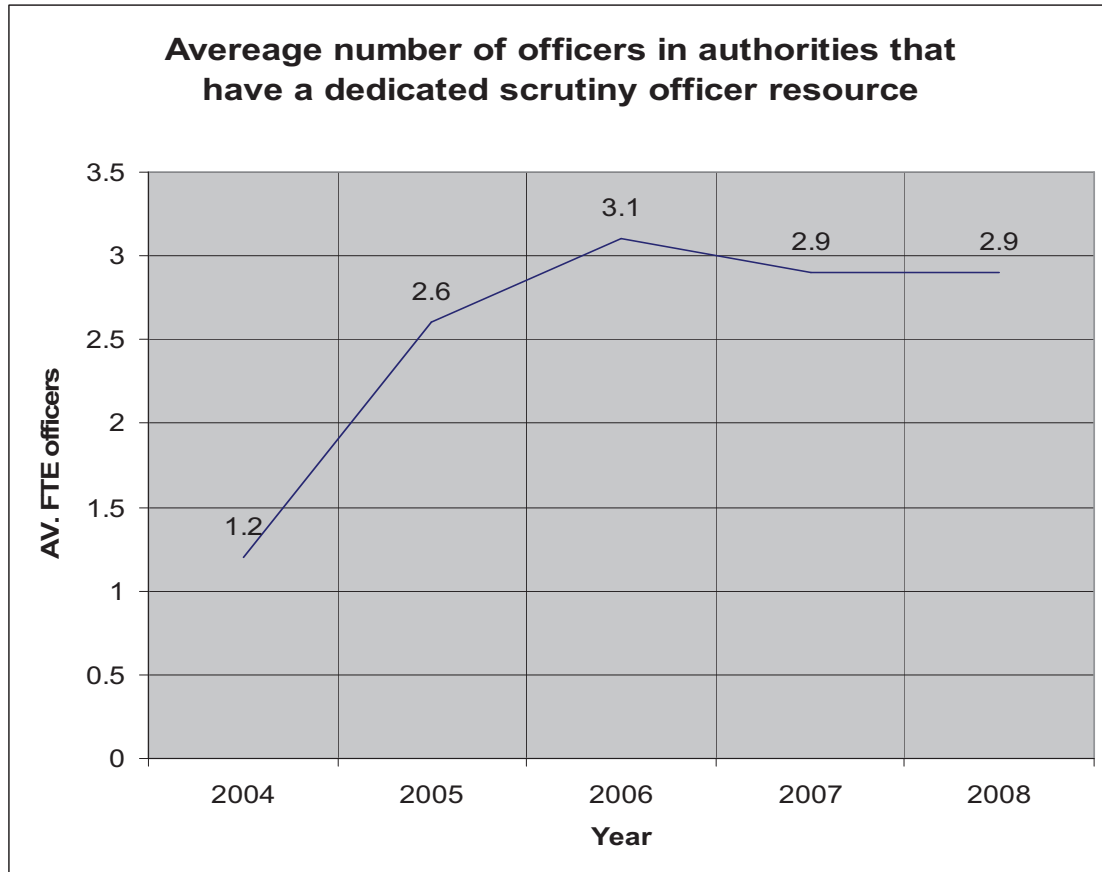
Scrutiny teams and FTE officers

From the survey, **74%** of authorities had a dedicated scrutiny officer/team, whereas **26%** did not. These figures represent a positive but small (**1%**) change since last year towards more authorities declaring that they have a dedicated scrutiny officer.

The average number of FTE scrutiny officers for all authorities, including those who have no dedicated support, is **2.08** whilst amongst District / Borough councils the average is

¹ **Committee Model** – where committee officers, who also support other political forums, such as the executive, provide support to the full council and so on.
Integrated Model – where support is provided, on an ad hoc basis, from a variety of sources, including committee services, officers within departments, and corporate policy officers.
Specialist Model - support is provided by a scrutiny support unit with dedicated officers, who only work to the overview and scrutiny function

0.94. Amongst authorities that said they do have a dedicated scrutiny officer/team the average number of FTE officers was **2.9** which is the same as in 2007.

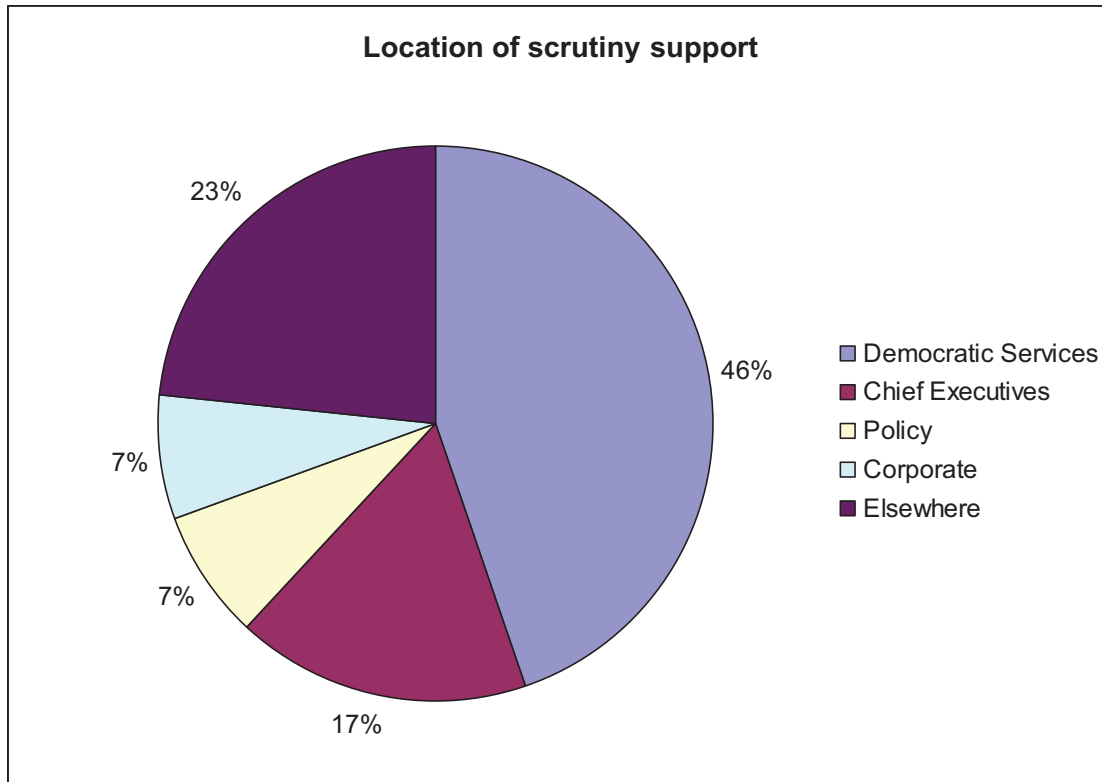


The average number of support officers in authorities that have dedicated support has remained largely stable when plotted across types of authority (see below). The major exception to this rule is unitary authorities which have seen a relatively large decrease of almost one whole FTE scrutiny officer (0.9) in the support staff levels available. Another exception is Welsh authorities with dedicated officers who have gained 0.5 FTE scrutiny officers since 2007.

Authority Type	Ave # (of those who have a dedicated officer)	Change from 2007
County Concils	4.8	0.5
Unitaries	3.3	-0.9
Met Borough	4.5	-0.1
Welsh	4.3	0.1
LBs	5.3	1
Districts	1.4	no change
All authorities	2.8	-0.1

Location of scrutiny support within the council

This year, the survey repeated a question to identify what department scrutiny officers or teams are located within. There were a variety of responses, but the most popular location for scrutiny support was within the Democratic Services department. Other popular departments for scrutiny support were the Chief Executive’s office, Policy and Performance and Corporate Services.



Scrutiny budgets

In 2004, the average amount of money available to conduct scrutiny across all authorities was £8,280. In 2005 that figure had risen 120% to £18,141, decreasing to £11,853 in 2007. The 2008 survey shows a continuation of this downward trend with a reduction of **£1,936** from 2007 to **£9,917**. It is worth pointing out that a discretionary budget may be inflated for a variety of reasons that do not necessarily relate to the relative health of support for scrutiny. As such the large range (0 - £280,000) illustrates the differing circumstances of each authority and explains why such large annual fluctuations are possible. Nevertheless there is a clear negative trend in the size of allocated discretionary budgets for scrutiny.

As shown in the table below, the average budget at district councils (£3,735) is quite dissimilar to the budgets elsewhere (up to £60,302 in London boroughs, for example). The average scrutiny budget in top-tier authorities is **£17,336**.

Authority Type	Av. Discretionary budget	
County Councils	£13,812	(-£5,780)
District Councils	£3,735	(-£1,588)
London Boroughs	£60,302	(+£38,940)
Metropolitan Boroughs	£22,961	(+£6,307)
Unitary Authorities	£5,989	(-£11,837)
Welsh Authorities	£7,544	(-£26,830)
All Authorities	£9,917	(-£1,936)
Av. Excluding districts	£17,336	(-£2,061)

4. Roles for OSCs and members

Roles undertaken by OSCs

Respondents were asked to identify what types of role are undertaken by the overview and scrutiny function at their authority.

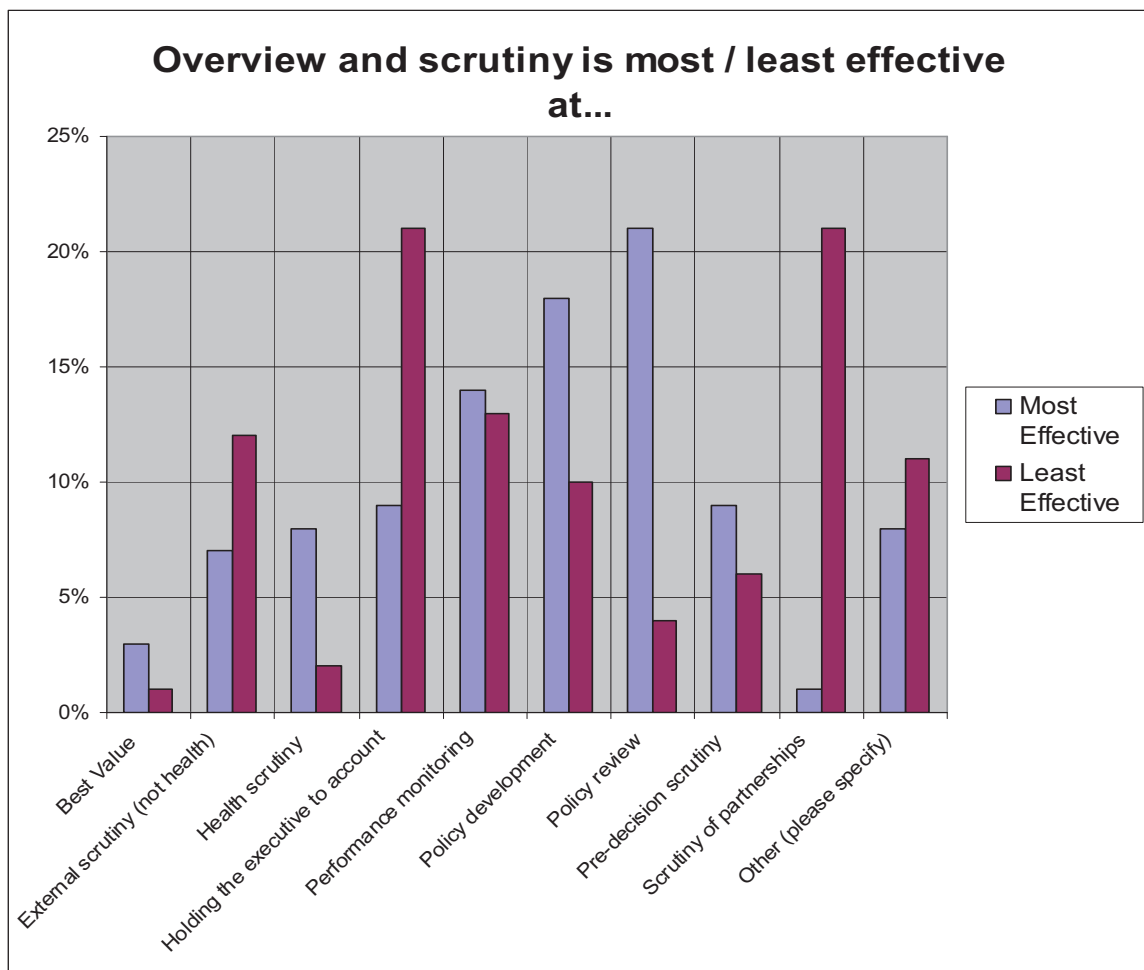
Rank (change)	Role	Percentage of authorities	Change (+/- %) from 2007
1 (1)	Performance monitoring	85%	-8
2 (2)	Holding the executive to account	79%	-12
3 (3)	Policy review	78%	-13
4 (4)	Policy development	69%	-12
5 (5)	Pre-decision scrutiny	62%	-11
6 (6)	External scrutiny (not health)	60%	-2
7 (7)	Scrutiny of partnerships	60%	-2
8 (8)	Health scrutiny	54%	-7
9 (9)	Best Value reviews	31%	-4
10 (new)	Other	4%	new

As last year, **performance monitoring** is the role most frequently undertaken by the overview and scrutiny function. However there have been decreases in the prevalence of all roles on the whole since 2007. This may suggest that the scrutiny function is

becoming a more intuitive process that has matured sufficiently to focus on the work in which it can add the most value. The least commonly ascribed role for overview and scrutiny is that of ‘best value reviews’ and this has decreased further by 4 points from last year’s results.

Role: Most effective at

This year the research also asked respondents to identify which role that overview and scrutiny has been most effective at. Below is an illustrative summary of the responses.



The most frequent response in terms of scrutiny being most effective was **policy review** followed by **policy development**. Respondents felt that they were least effective at the **scrutiny of partnerships** and **holding the executive to account**, which indicates the areas where local authority scrutiny functions need most support in the future, as both of these are significant responsibilities for overview and scrutiny.

Member involvement

This year's survey also asked respondents about the roles that members undertake as part of the overview and scrutiny process. Below is a table summarising these responses.

Member role	Percentage of authorities	Percentage change (+/-)
Presenting recommendations	84%	+2
Monitoring outcomes of previous work	81%	+2
Critically challenging decision-makers	84%	+7
Proposing/writing recommendations	66%	+3
Presenting an annual report to Council	63%	+1
Conducting research outside of meetings	59%	+3
Proposing scrutiny topics at the public's request	55%	+9
Writing reports	21%	+3

The fact that this year the number of elected members who responded to our survey rose from just 36 to 275 accounting for 40% (rather than 11% as in 2007) of the respondents has led to a more balanced picture of Member roles. The slight increase in the involvement of Members in all roles this year viewed alongside increased Member representation in our survey would seem to suggest that Members feel they are more active than scrutiny officers assert.

The most significant increase in Member involvement seems to be in **proposing topics on the public's behalf** with an increase of **9%**. This balances the picture which we receive elsewhere from the survey which shows that more than half of all authorities report receiving no suggestions for topics for scrutiny reviews direct from the public. It suggests that members may be filling an important gap in councils' engagement with the public in this area and are ensuring that scrutiny reviews focus on topics of importance to local residents. In future councils might usefully consider developing more transparent procedures for raising topics for scrutiny on behalf of the public. Councillor Calls for Action (CCfA) provide an avenue for residents to lead scrutiny through elected members. Utilising CCfA can help to ensure that scrutiny is relevant to the local community and empower Members to lead on behalf of residents.

Party politics

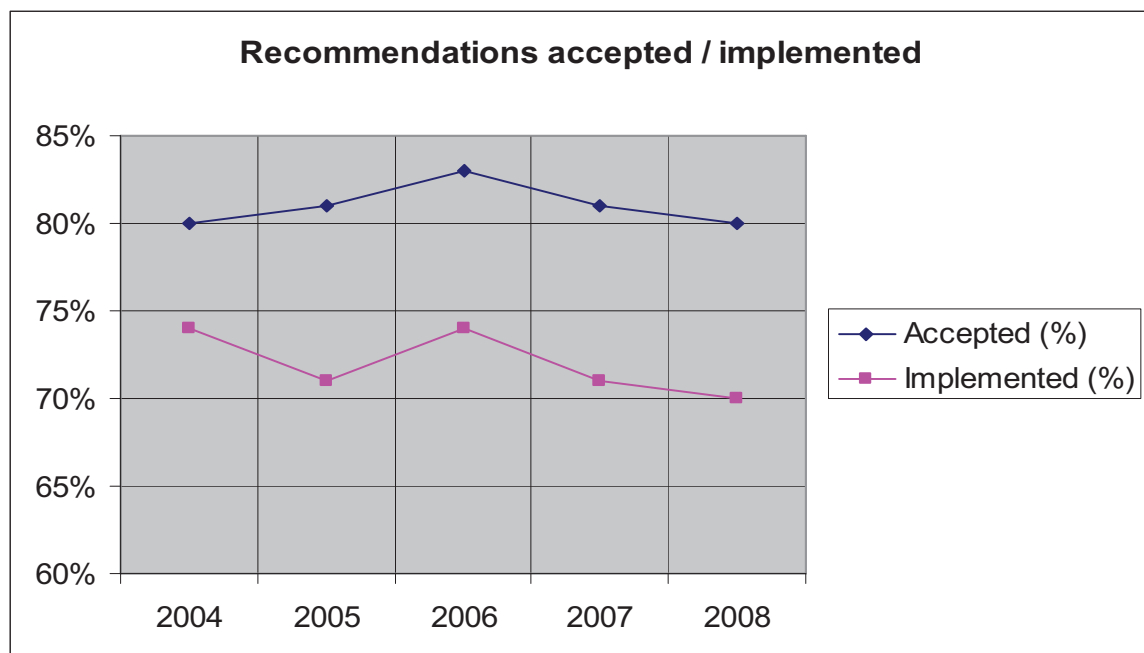
The survey also questioned the extent of the role that respondents thought that party politics plays in overview and scrutiny. This was ranked on a scale from 1-5 where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 5 strong agreement. The modal and average response to this question was **3** indicating that respondents were neutral towards the statement.

The survey further questioned whether the respondent thought that the impact of party politics was positive, negative or had no impact on overview and scrutiny, again ranked on a scale of 1-5. The average response has increased from **2.3** in 2007 to **2.5**, meaning that although the majority of respondents thought that party politics had a negative impact on overview and scrutiny they are less inclined hold this view than last year.

6. Impact and Influence

Recommendations

Over the last five years this survey has asked what percentage of recommendations from overview and scrutiny have been accepted by the executive or policy committee. Last year the average was 81% whilst this year it has dropped slightly to 80%. Questioning the percentage of recommendations accepted by the executive or policy committee is usefully supplemented by asking how many of those accepted have gone on to be implemented. In 2007 the response to this question was 71%, which again has dropped in 2008 to 70%. Below is a graph plotting the average responses to these two questions over the last five years. It would seem that there is a clear downward trend with fewer recommendations being accepted and implemented year on year, particularly since 2006. Statistical analysis of the data also suggests a correlation between those authorities who felt that party politics had a greater impact on overview and scrutiny, and those authorities reporting a lower percentage of recommendations accepted. Whilst these trends are disappointing taken at face value it may well be that scrutiny is getting better at tracking recommendations resulting in a more accurate account in recent years.



Call-ins

As last year, we asked how many call-ins there has been in each authority in the last year. The average number of call-ins this year was **2.5** which is a slight fall from 2007 where the average was **2.8**. The range of results has appears to have broadened dramatically from **0 -30** last year to **0 – 90** this time. However, if we remove the one response with the highest figure this range falls to **0 -15**, which represents a halving of last year’s range and may give a more representative picture overall.

Further to this question, we asked how many of those call-ins had resulted in an amended decision. In 2007 the average was **0.48** which has remained relatively stable at **0.43** in 2008. However, the range of results has widened this year to 0 -11 from 0 - 4 in 2007.

Evaluating scrutiny

The research also posited a question regarding the methods used to evaluate the impact of individual pieces of overview and scrutiny work and the function as a whole. Shown below are the tabulated responses.

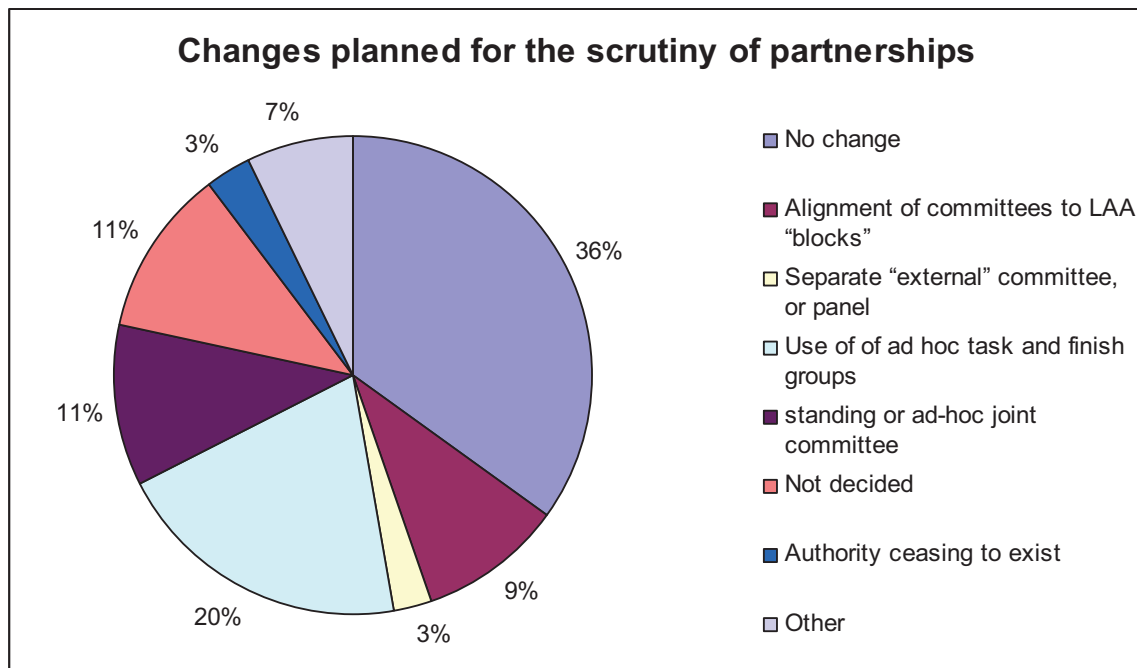
Options	Percentage of councils	Percentage change (+/-)
Regular update on recommendations from scrutiny support	50%	+7
Regular update on recommendations from those responsible for implementation	70%	+9
Regular update on recommendations from Members	22%	+1
An annual report for O&S is produced	88%	+14
Reporting on performance measures and targets developed in house	61%	+13
External consultants have reviewed overview and scrutiny	24%	+6
An internal review of overview and scrutiny has been undertaken	34%	no change
The CfPS self-evaluation framework has been used	23%	+4

As shown in the table, the most popular way to evaluate the impact of overview and scrutiny is via an **annual report**. The most significant increases since 2005 have been annual reports, an internal review of scrutiny function and regular updates on recommendations from members. Use of the CfPS self-evaluation framework has also increased to nearly one quarter of all authorities.

7. Models and structures for the scrutiny of partnerships

Planned structural changes for the scrutiny of partnerships

We asked respondents to tell us what structural changes were being planned for scrutiny in their authority. The pie chart below presents their responses.



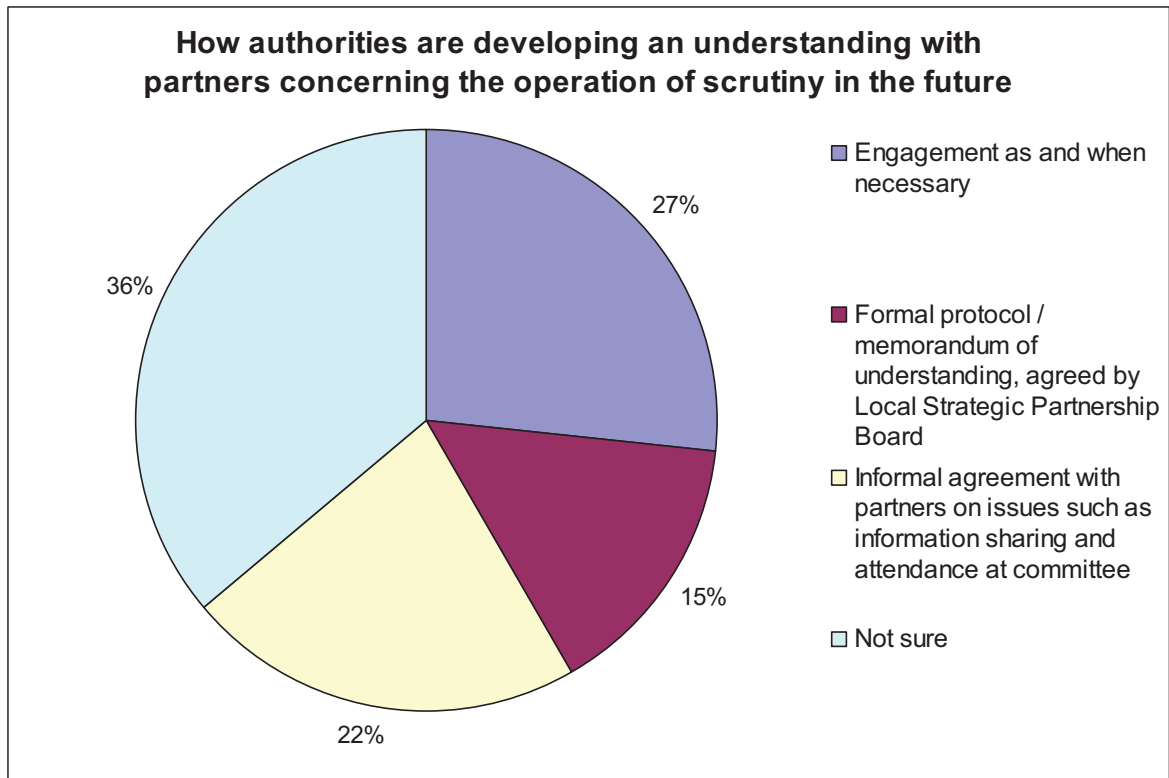
Other necessary steps in preparation for scrutinising partnerships

We asked respondents to tell us what other steps they thought were necessary in preparation for the scrutiny of partnerships and although we received a wide range of opinions there were some common issues that many felt needed to be addressed. The most consistently identified need was for more **Member training** on the scrutiny of partnerships whilst many respondents recognised a need for more support for scrutiny, particularly in the form of **increased officer support**. Many of our respondents identified the need for a **culture shift** amongst both officers and Members while others saw a need for **new protocols** for overview and scrutiny.

Scrutiny's relationship with partners

The chart below shows a still evolving picture of scrutiny's relationship with external partners, in line with the earlier finding that scrutiny of partnerships was not felt to be

scrutiny's strongest activity. While 15% of authorities reported developing formal relationships with the Local Strategic Partnership, well over one third (36%) reported being unsure about how the relationship would develop.



8. Developing professional standards for scrutiny

The research which CfPS recently carried out into the role of the professional scrutiny support officer has led to the development of core competencies or skills necessary to support effective scrutiny. We are interested in developing further ways of improving the quality of scrutiny practice and the questions in this part of the survey were designed to help us understand how we might best achieve this.

Personal development to improve scrutiny

This year we asked respondents which development opportunities they would be interested in that could add value to overview and scrutiny. The table below shows how respondents with different scrutiny roles answered this question.

Answer Options	Councillor	Scrutiny manager/officer	Other local government officer	Other	Total
joining a membership body for scrutiny	24%	65%	38%	45%	48%
joining an accredited scheme for professional standards of scrutiny practice	24%	61%	38%	42%	46%
attending ad hoc scrutiny development sessions as and when appropriate	66%	90%	69%	81%	80%
nothing - I don't see scrutiny as a profession or career	26%	2%	14%	12%	12%

The table above shows a clear demand amongst scrutiny officers for formal development and recognition. **90%** of scrutiny officers said they were interested in attending ad-hoc development sessions and an encouraging **65%** and **61%** said they would be interested in joining a membership body for scrutiny and an accredited scheme for professional standards of scrutiny practice respectively. Members are less interested in the more formal and professional development but two-thirds still show interest in attending training and development.

Benefits of a membership body for scrutiny

The table below shows the most popular benefits of joining a membership body for scrutineers amongst respondents to our survey. Each respondent was asked to choose the three most attractive benefits.

Benefits of joining a membership body	Percentage chosen
Regular news about developments in policy and practice	54%
In-depth policy and practice analysis	30%
Discounts for general CfPS events and services	19%
Accredited recognition for skills I have gained to assist future career development	35%
formal training and development sessions	44%
coaching and/or mentoring	23%
private /distance learning focused on practical skills and competencies	17%
private /distance learning with an academic component	14%
informal networking and learning from others in the field	22%
All are important to me	29%

Overall **receiving regular news about developments in policy and practice** and receiving **formal training** were the most popular benefits with **54%** and **44%** respectively. However, there was a marked difference between different scrutiny roles. While the most popular choice for councillors was formal training (**51%**), the most popular choice for scrutiny officers was receiving regular news about developments in policy and practice (**58%**).

Costs of a membership body for scrutiny

There was a consensus amongst our survey sample that the annual cost of membership of a scrutiny body ought to be no more than £100 with **73%** of respondents seeing this as a sensible threshold. However, **26%** thought that a fair price was between £100 and £150 while just **2%** thought it should be more than £150.

CfPS will use this information to develop its approach to supporting practitioners to improve their standards of scrutiny practice, in line with our mission to improve scrutiny as a professional discipline.

9. Perception Tracking

As last year, the survey asked respondents for their perceptions about the overview and scrutiny function. This is to assess how practitioners think and feel about the function and its value to councils and beyond. Below is a summary of the results.

This question is ranked on a scale from 1-5 where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 5 strong agreement.

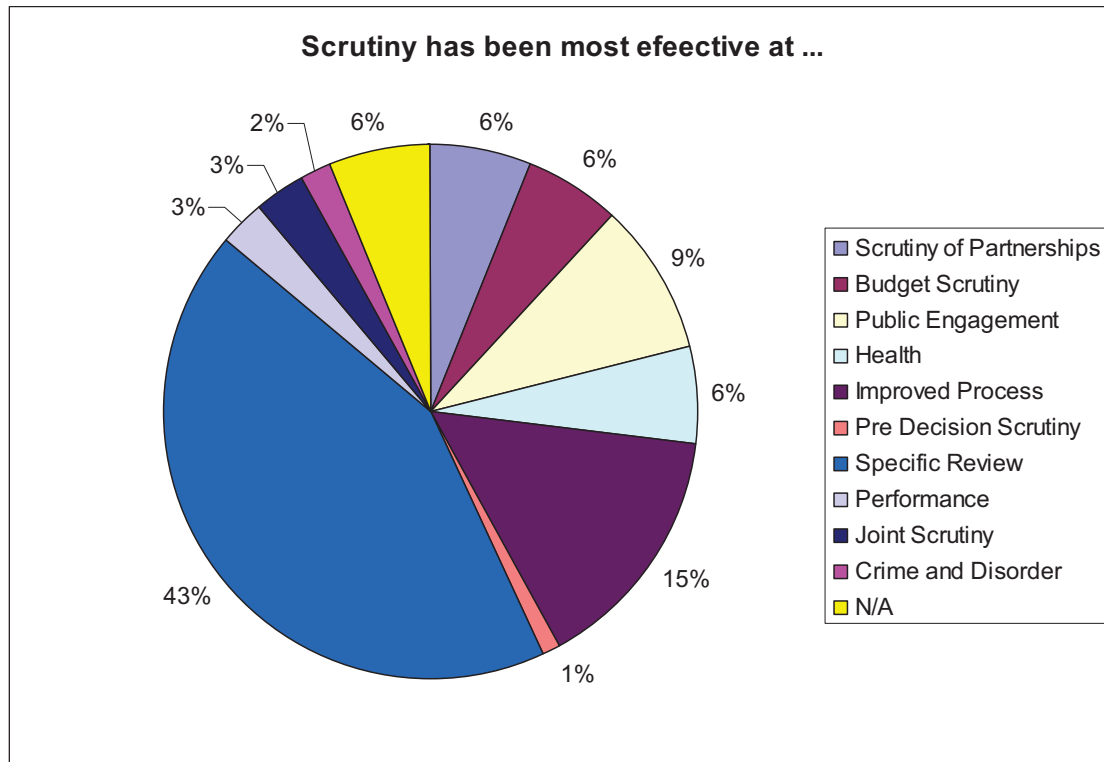
Statement	Ranking	% change (+/-)
Overview and scrutiny is good at holding the authority to account	3.2	+0.1
Those being held to account by overview and scrutiny are co-operative and helpful	3.4	-0.1
Overview and scrutiny adds value to the authority	3.6	no change
Overview and scrutiny is valued by the authority	3.0	+0.1
Overview and scrutiny is recognised and valued by the public	2.2	-0.3

Despite the fact that a larger proportion of respondents to the 2008 survey were elected members than in 2007 the level of agreement with the above statements has remained quite stable. Perceptions amongst Members and officers of the health of overview and scrutiny were very similar. The major exception to this was in the extent to which respondents felt scrutiny is valued by the public. It would seem that Members close involvement with the public has resulted in a slightly more negative perception.

10. Final Thoughts

Now and in the future

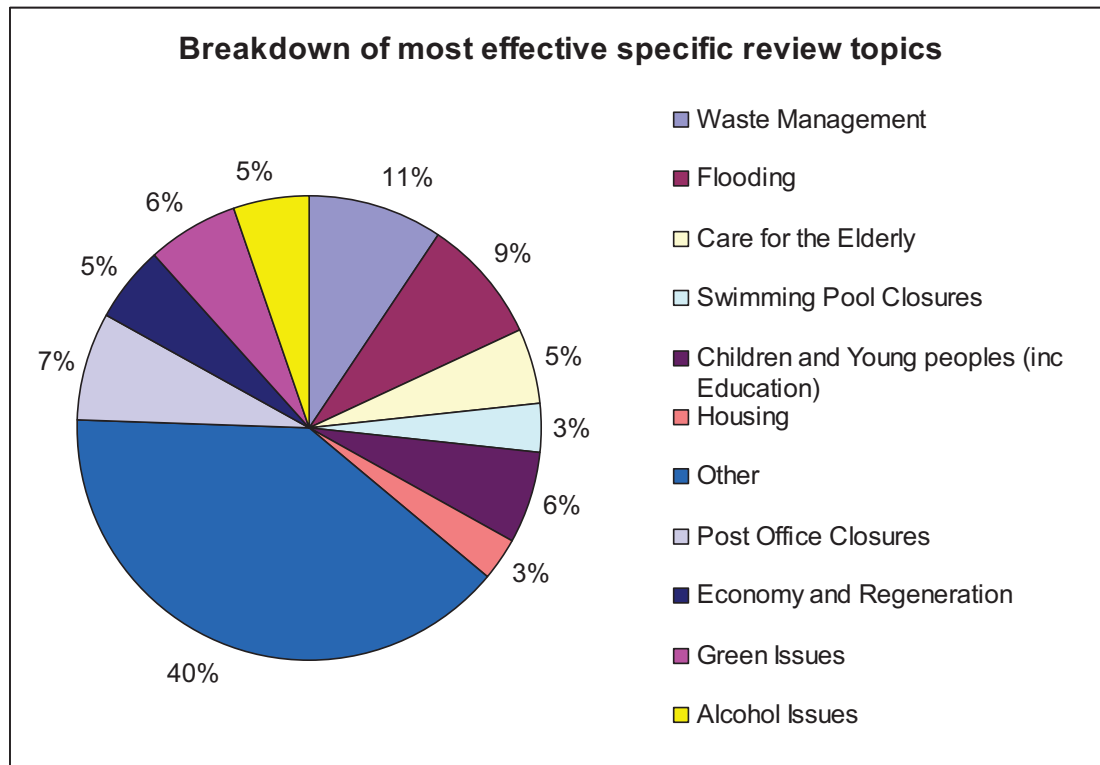
As in previous years we asked respondents an open-ended question to tell us what had been the single most effective thing that overview and scrutiny had done in 2008. The responses have been categorised and are presented in the charts below.



The responses to this question show that scrutiny has been both quick to adapt to the challenges of the economic downturn and dexterous in seizing the opportunities offered by government policy. For example, many overview and scrutiny committees decided to expand scrutiny of the budget to include treasury management amidst the Icelandic banking crisis. This was clearly seen as a valuable exercise as it has led to a rise in those who identified **budget scrutiny** as the most effective piece of work undertaken by scrutiny from **2%** in 2007, to **6%** in this year's survey.

Other contemporary issues in local government scrutiny are also well represented in the responses to this question. The number of respondents who thought that **public engagement** was the most effective area of work grew from **4%** in 2007 to **9%** this year. **Scrutiny of partnerships** was highlighted by **6%** of scrutineers as the most effective work area this year after barely being on the radar in 2007.

6% of respondents felt that scrutiny had not been particularly effective in any area for a number of reasons ranging from developmental issues to the negative influence of party politics. Others could not pick anything as ‘most effective’ as their work had not yet come to fruition and so could not be judged on its effectiveness.



The pie chart above shows a breakdown of reviews into specific topics that respondents felt were most effective in their authorities. The fact that the top 10 topics only account for 60% of the most effective topics is representative of the diversity of local concerns and the scope of work being undertaken by scrutiny. However the chart clearly shows that scrutiny is responding to the major issues of public concern to many local communities, from flooding to post office closures.

Scrutiny topics for 2009

This year we asked respondents to tell us what scrutiny reviews were planned for 2009. In a continuation of established scrutiny activities many authorities are planning to scrutinise the budget, health issues and **waste management**. As expected many authorities are planning to review areas that have been subject to recent government policy objectives such as **public involvement in scrutiny** and the **scrutiny of partnerships**. Other popular themes for scrutiny reviews in 2009 relate to recent events that are of concern such as the provision of **children and young people’s services**.

The economic downturn and the Icelandic banking crisis have resulted in growing public concerns and overview and scrutiny will be undertaking reviews that look the current economic situation from a number of different angles. Some authorities have decided to look at **treasury management** and **financial risk** whilst others have focused on how to mitigate the effects of recession by looking at **regeneration**, **worklessness** or supporting **local businesses**. The survey reveals that **climate change** looks set to be one of the biggest issues for scrutiny in 2009 despite being somewhat crowded out of the media by other events recently.

CfPS is ensuring that its products and services will be geared towards these priorities for scrutiny in the year ahead. We have already produced a guide to scrutiny of treasury management, *Treasure Your Assets* (available to order from our website), which supplements our popular generic guide to budget scrutiny, *On the Money*. We are currently working on a guide with IDeA on scrutiny of services for safeguarding children, and guidance on scrutiny of partnerships to supplement the new legislation. We also intend to produce publications during 2009 on scrutiny's role in ensuring authorities respond effectively to the recession and on public involvement in scrutiny.

11. CfPS and you

Satisfaction with CfPS services

We asked respondents to tell us what services they were using and rate their satisfaction with those services 1 to 5 (1 being very poor and 5 being excellent). As part of our own commitment to being open to scrutiny as an organisation, the table below shows both the popularity (percentage of those who answered the question who are using a given service) and the average satisfaction rating for each CfPS service. We will use these results to inform our own service planning for the future and this survey provides a valuable baseline assessment for future improvements.

Answer options	Respondents using service (%)	Scrutiny officers	Members	Overall rating average
Reviews library	78%	4.1	3.9	4.0
Online Discussions forum	60%	3.7	3.3	3.6
Other sections of the website	73%	3.7	3.4	3.6
Events	66%	3.8	3.3	3.7
In-house training from CfPS staff or Associates	39%	3.7	4.2	3.8
Health programme	33%	3.6	3.0	3.5
Free publications	78%	4.2	3.6	4.1
Priced publications	36%	3.8	3.1	3.6
Monthly e-bulletin	72%	4.0	3.5	3.8

The table above shows that our most popular services, not surprisingly, receive the highest average scores for customer satisfaction. 78% of respondents to this question had used the CfPS scrutiny reviews library, rating their satisfaction as 4 out of 5 on average. Similarly popular amongst respondents were our free publications which had been used by 78% of respondents in the last year and received an average satisfaction rating of 4.1 out of 5.

There were some significant differences between Members and officers in terms of their satisfaction with services. Members rated all of our services between 0.2 and 0.6 points lower than scrutiny officers apart from in-house training from CfPS staff or Associates which Members rated 0.5 points higher than scrutiny officers at 4.2. The general trend of

Members rating services lower than officers could be due in part to their lower exposure to CfPS activities compared with scrutiny officers. This is a clear indication that we should do more to reach Members directly. The fact that Members rated their satisfaction with **in house training from CfPS staff or Associates** as 4.2 out of 5, however, is encouraging and we are committed to continuing to provide high-quality support for Member development in the future.

CfPS in the future

In response to our request for suggestions of things that CfPS ‘should do, or do more of’ respondents provided us with a wealth of useful information which we will be using to help ensure our services are as targeted as possible. The most common suggestions were asking for CfPS to ‘do more of’ its existing activities, particularly in terms of providing updates and **guidance on government legislation, providing free publications, sharing good practice and offering training and networking opportunities**. Some respondents felt that CfPS should do more to **champion the role of scrutiny** to executives and outside the authority whilst others wanted CfPS to continue to provide **regional events**.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD 27th MAY 2009

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIR - Cllr Dave Mitchell

MEMBERS QUESTIONNAIRE ON SCRUTINY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides details of responses to the members' questionnaire on scrutiny that has been recently undertaken.

1. Background

- 1.1 It was agreed by the Scrutiny Chairs Group in November 2008 that a questionnaire should be sent to all Council members to give members an opportunity to express their views on current scrutiny arrangements. The Scrutiny Chairs Group agreed a format for the questionnaire and also agreed that the questionnaire should be sent to all Council members towards the end of the 2008/9 municipal year. Members requested that the "anonymity of responses be assured".
- 1.2 The questionnaire was sent to members in April 2009 and responses have now been received. This report provides an update on the responses and requests that members consider the suggestions for improvement.

2. Responses to the Questionnaire

2.1 Participation in the questionnaire

Of the 66 members of the Council, **29 responses** were received.

Of the participants:

20 were on a Scrutiny committee during 2008/9 municipal year.

9 were NOT on a Scrutiny committee during 2008/9 municipal year, of which at least 5 were Cabinet members.

2.2 Detailed responses

The responses from all participants have been combined onto a single document (see Appendix 1). All responses have been made anonymous.

3. Summary of the Comments and matters for consideration by members

3.1 Satisfaction with the workings of Scrutiny Committees (Questions 1 and 2)

More members were either 'Fairly dissatisfied' (10) or 'Very dissatisfied' (2) than were 'Fairly satisfied' (7) or 'Very Satisfied' (1).

The Scrutiny Programme Board may want to reflect on why a majority of participants are dissatisfied with Scrutiny arrangements. (In addition, a majority of Council members did not respond to the questionnaire). The most frequent response to the question of 'How could we make our Scrutiny Committees more effective?' related to there being more working groups undertaking 'positive' scrutiny on a specific issue.

3.2 Satisfaction with Scrutiny Support (Questions 3 and 4)

Far more members were either 'Fairly satisfied' (8) or 'Very Satisfied' (8) than were 'Fairly dissatisfied' (0) or 'Very dissatisfied' (1). However, a variety of different comments were made regarding scrutiny support in the future.

3.3 The impact of scrutiny (Question 5)

There was a mixed response with a number of members recording that scrutiny had little or no impact on the services provided by the Council. However, approximately half of the recipients reported positive impact of scrutiny, with the reviews undertaken by Children's Services Scrutiny Committee (Fostering and Youth Outreach reviews) and by Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee (Hospital Discharge review) being cited as examples by most of these members.

3.4 Importance of the different functions of scrutiny (Questions 6 and 7)

When asked to rank the different functions of scrutiny by importance, the vast majority of recipients selected either 'Holding the Cabinet to account' (12) or 'Policy and Service Review' (11). The function ranked least important by most recipients is 'Scrutinising external organisations' (15). The result regarding the scrutiny of external organisations is perhaps a reflection of most scrutiny committees having not dealt directly with external organisations. However, new legislation will widen the responsibilities of Councils towards the scrutiny of external organisations.

3.5 Helping scrutiny members to become more effective (Question 8)

The most popular suggestion to the question 'As a scrutiny member, how could you become more effective?' related to the provision of further training, increasing knowledge of scrutiny and being better prepared.

3.6 Suggestions of items to be included in the work programmes for the new municipal year (Question 9)

There were a significant number of suggested topics for further scrutiny. The Scrutiny Programme Board may wish to pass these suggestions to the five Scrutiny Committees for consideration when preparing their work programmes.

4. **Conclusion**

- 4.1 Members of the Programme Board may consider appointing three members to a Working Group to consider the responses in detail and report back to the next meeting. The responses to the questionnaire have generated a number of suggestions which members may want to discuss further.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- (1) the Scrutiny Programme Board comments on the responses to the Members' Scrutiny questionnaire;
- (2) consideration be given to a working group of three members being appointed to reflect on the responses in detail and report back to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Board;
- (3) the suggested topics for inclusion on the work programmes for the new municipal year be passed to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.

Dave Mitchell
Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Board
19/05/09

WIRRAL SCRUTINY MEMBERS ANNUAL QUESTIONNAIRE – APRIL / MAY 2009

The responses to each question are analysed below. The responses from all participants have been combined onto this single document. All responses have been made anonymous.

General Comments on responses

Of the 66 members of the Council, **29 responses** were received.

Of the participants:

20 were on a Scrutiny committee during 2008/9 municipal year

9 were NOT on a Scrutiny committee during 2008/9 municipal year, of which

5 were Cabinet members

Of the participants:

4 were members of the Conservative group

10 were members of the Labour group

10 were members of the Liberal Democrat group

5 were unknown

The answers to each question are detailed below:

1. How satisfied are you with the workings of our Scrutiny Committees?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	No response
1	7	7	10	2	2

2. How could we make our Scrutiny Committees more effective?

Get involved in more real scrutiny of issues other than items from Cabinet.

.....
Full engagement of **ALL** councillors

.....
Longer briefings to include all members of that committee

.....
More formal Chairs Group
De-politicised scrutiny officers
On-going training

.....
They cannot be made more effective because members will not vote in opposition to their colleagues in cabinet.

.....
Keep Scrutiny Support Officers well informed.

.....
They need to more focused and less overtly party political.

.....
Each committee offering appropriate scrutiny agenda.
More working groups, leading to a greater variety of themes.
Support staff committed to scrutiny.
Public involvement in scrutiny needs increasing.
Listening / information and experience exchange with other groups, for example, Older Peoples Parliament, Charity groups.
Visits to other Councils recognised as delivering good scrutiny.

.....
Get more members involved in wanting to take part.

.....
No response

.....
Members need to take greater responsibility for the identification and investigation of items and issues for scrutiny. This needs to be an **active** process looking forward to fulfil the Corporate Plan. It need not involve the whole committee except when a decision or recommendation needs to be made – the use of small **working parties** has been very successful in some scrutiny areas such as Children’s Services. More items might receive in-depth consideration if the committees delegated work between members. Issues could be considered and discussed prior to their submission to Cabinet, who would then be in a better-informed position to come to a decision.

.....
In my case limited experience, only chairing Finance and attending Customer Engagement. As Scrutiny Committees have ‘no power’ they are ignored.

.....
By reducing the number.
Becoming more focused.
To tell one political group to stop politicising the committees.

.....
From my observations, the Scrutiny Committees that work best are those such as Children’s Services which has identified a clear work programme and has produced useful pieces of work in a cross-party, non-partisan way. Regrettably, too many Scrutiny Committees have been politicised and used for largely party

political purposes.

No response

The agendas are (usually) comprehensive and well constructed. There is, however, a perception that committees 'go through the motions' but that major concerns registered in Scrutiny Committees are not always properly acted upon by officers or Cabinet.

The new, more clear roles and functions should help to achieve this.

More proactive, than reactive.
Produce a year plan and see it through.
Give recommendations on service improvement
Less aggressive at Call-Ins.

More thorough investigation by members of scrutiny topics, with recommendations to Cabinet of areas of improvement. Some committees do this well, others simply receive reports from Officers, criticise areas of concern without giving any positive recommendations. Holding the Cabinet to account is very important but so is active engagement in policy review and improvement.

Better use of Scrutiny Support officers?

Make them scrutinise issues.
I'm still not convinced they work as real scrutiny committees.

More engagement in scrutiny projects – Children's Services and Adult Social Care & Health have both produced Scrutiny Reports – but the output from all the other committees has been zero. The unwillingness of some committees to engage in this type of work is a disgrace.

No response

Is it possible?

I feel that the OSC I chair operates well.
I get all the support I need from the officers.

Ensuring that all political parties are on board with the correct application of scrutiny.

Members taking more ownership and responsibility for what is discussed and agreed.

Members ensuring that there is continuity between meetings by using the minutes more actively to trace and follow through decisions.
Chairs being more forceful and generally better at chairing
Doing less things more thoroughly.

For members of committees to understand what scrutiny is and to develop ways of doing it effectively via agreed scrutiny programmes.

The committees are being used by one party to promote the political ambitions. I

think the number of Call-Ins is clear indication of this and Scrutiny Committees should take a stronger line to avoid this. Some in-depth scrutiny has been done by some Committees, but in the main they have not developed this.

.....
I think we have made the first steps by reducing the amount of committees. We need to start effective scrutiny by choosing topics for genuine scrutiny.

3. How satisfied are you with the support that you receive for doing scrutiny work?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	No response
8	8	7	0	1	5

4. How can the support you receive be improved?

No real scrutiny has been undertaken

Do not align the scrutiny officers to political parties

WHO can support us?

De-politicised scrutiny officers

The support from officers is first class

No response

Our Scrutiny Support officer is great – no knowledge of other officers – except of course enormous support given by Mike on fostering.

More support staff – working to support scrutiny only.

Training for support staff re. scrutiny

Some financial / budgetary support, for example, Wirral NHS (PCT) financed research for the hospital discharge review. Unable to employ professional company if no finance available.

As at the present time, my select have not done any scrutiny, we are having a working group to look into flooding.

Group training

Officers (not just Scrutiny Officers) and others might identify examples of good scrutiny practice to facilitate the work programme identified by members. These could be from within our Council or elsewhere. They may include in-depth review of specific issues; working groups with delegation from the main committee to investigate and report back; contacts with other authorities / departments; commissioned reports

I did not make use of 'support' but recognise that our Scrutiny Support Officer has provided considerable support to projects they have been involved in.

By reducing the number of Committee Officers and admin staff, can offer a greater range of support.

This is not relevant to my role as a Cabinet member, but I feel that there is generally good support for scrutiny committee members.

No response

Recommended actions should be far more specific and prescriptive. The recommendation that the information should be 'noted' is inadequate and does not encourage proper involvement in the scrutiny role. It is my belief that the Chairman may need to be more proactive in this role – but officers who prepare the actual agenda should also encourage proper scrutiny of cabinet decisions.

We will have to see how the revised structure works out.

.....
Not sure

.....
No response

.....
I'd need to devote more time to it and ask questions.

.....
I cannot comment on this personally – however members do report to me a high degree of satisfaction with the work of our Scrutiny Support Officer.

.....
No response

.....
By providing it!!

.....
I get all the support I need from the officers.

.....
Our scrutiny support Officer has been excellent during this past year.

.....
Officers explain more clearly why things are on the agenda – what members are expected to do.

Ensure non-spokes members understand their role

Make reports clearer, more concise and with clear key points brought out

More information about best practice and new stuff being tried elsewhere.

.....
By appointed scrutiny officers dedicating their time to that function.

.....
No response

.....
I am satisfied with the support from our Scrutiny Support officer. I have seen little or no support from the other parties support officers.

**5. Does Scrutiny have a positive impact on the services provided by the Council?
(Please give examples).**

Don't know of any personally

Yes – the Children's Services Scrutiny exercises have brought about changes.

No response

Yes, work undertaken by Children's Services.

Very little

Sometimes yes; sometimes no.

Not much. Cabinet have no real method of using the Forward Plan to ensure a rational decision-making process.

Review of hospital discharge process led to change of practice across hospital / DASS and GP's.

Opportunities for members of public to present their experience of services.

Yes it should, of the pieces seen to date, Children's Services and social services have both done good work.

Yes, Call-In on external housing changes or policies where we can ask and identify weakness of any changes that may have impact on residents.

It can do, but the impact is limited. Areas where committee members want to take a positive role have greater impact than those where the role is reactive to reports from officers and decisions already made by cabinet.

Believe that work on hospital discharges influenced policy but not aware of 'positive' impacts elsewhere.

Yes, it does when used constructively through a work programme.

Yes for those committees that take their scrutiny role seriously. No, for those committees whose members use scrutiny to mount party political campaigns, for example, the SAR process.

No response

I am not sure that it does. For example, little account appeared to be taken of the major concerns expressed by scrutiny committees involved in the (allegedly) flawed SAR process. Constructive recommendations on how to overcome some of the financial problems appear to have been studiously ignored – or am I being cynical.....

We will have to see how the revised structure works out.

Education – about the best.

Others cannot remember a positive outcome.

.....
Sometimes, for example, youth service provision.
.....

No – Opportunity for political point-scoring
.....

Not sufficient – engagement in scrutiny projects would result in greater innovation and ideas that could be presented to Cabinet.
.....

No response
.....

The only time I have seen and experienced it working was a couple of years ago when we scrutinized a problem with Oaklands.
.....

If the OSC does as described then yes.
.....

Yes, we have secured a Section 106 officer and there is a process in place for planning-out Crime (Section 17) as a result of scrutiny. Both issues are related to Housing and Community Safety.
.....

The only one I'm aware of is the fostering report from Children's and Young Peoples.
.....

Need to get the public more engaged.
.....

Yes – Fostering and Adoption, Youth Services and Hospital discharge.
.....

Very limited impact so far.
.....

Yes, see Children's Services
.....

6. Please rank the following Scrutiny functions in importance. ('1' being the most important; '5' the least important)

The number of members who put '1' (that is, they think that this function is most important):

Scrutiny Function	
Holding the Cabinet to account	12
Policy or Service review	11
Performance management	2
Policy Development	3
Scrutinising external organisations	1
No response	4

The number of members who put '2' (that is, they think that this function is second most important):

Scrutiny Function	
Holding the Cabinet to account	4
Policy or Service review	4
Performance management	8
Policy Development	9
Scrutinising external organisations	2
No response	4

The number of members who put '3' (that is, they think that this function is third most important):

Scrutiny Function	
Holding the Cabinet to account	5
Policy or Service review	3
Performance management	7
Policy Development	5
Scrutinising external organisations	3
No response	4

The number of members who put '4' (that is, they think that this function is fourth most important):

Scrutiny Function	
Holding the Cabinet to account	2
Policy or Service review	7
Performance management	2
Policy Development	7
Scrutinising external organisations	2
No response	5

The number of members who put '5' (that is, they think that this function is least important):

Scrutiny Function	
Holding the Cabinet to account	2
Policy or Service review	0
Performance management	4
Policy Development	0
Scrutinising external organisations	15
No response	8

7. For the function you selected as '1', how could we improve?

THOSE MEMBERS WHO THINK THAT 'HOLDING THE CABINET TO ACCOUNT' IS MOST IMPORTANT REPLIED THAT IT COULD BE IMPROVED BY:

There is a lack of a clear common understanding of the systems which result in decisions, which results in too many ad hoc decisions.

.....
Only if the cabinet were genuinely interested.

.....
Making sure the relevant Scrutiny Committee is well read on the subject matter and understands the decision of Cabinet with relation to its own work programme.

.....
The key challenge is to persuade senior politicians to take the role of scrutiny seriously. Could IDEA help?

.....
By ensuring that Cabinet takes notes – and is seen to take note – of constructive recommendations made. Particularly where the scrutiny committee recommendations are not overtly 'political' but are for the general benefit of the community at large.

.....
Ask Cabinet members to genuinely react to Scrutiny's views.

.....
Hold to account against Corporate Plan.

.....
Self explanatory.

=====
THOSE MEMBERS WHO THINK THAT 'POLICY OR SERVICE REVIEW' IS MOST IMPORTANT REPLIED THAT IT COULD BE IMPROVED BY:

Select a few key areas for review

.....
Improve our scoping technique

.....
More time given to it

.....
Each committee needs to focus on issues, for example, where performance indicators are not being met.

.....
Committee need to ensure residents have their concerns addressed.

.....
Simply doing more studies

.....
By learning about scrutiny and developing a proper scrutiny programme

.....
We need a seed change within elected members to show a desire to undertake genuine scrutiny.

=====

THOSE MEMBERS WHO THINK THAT 'PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT' IS MOST IMPORTANT REPLIED THAT IT COULD BE IMPROVED BY:

Take on board ideas from other councils who do things better.

.....

=====

THOSE MEMBERS WHO THINK THAT 'POLICY DEVELOPMENT' IS MOST IMPORTANT REPLIED THAT IT COULD BE IMPROVED BY:

More time given to it.

.....

More 'constructive' criticism and policy development – would welcome good ideas to take forward.

.....

Start to do more work on specific policy areas.

.....

=====

OTHER RESPONSES:

Noted rated the 5 functions because I don't think it makes sense – they're all important. We could improve 'Holding Cabinet to account' by group members acting independently of group leaders and cabinet membership. The other areas, I don't think members understand their role.

.....

I think the answer (regarding the ranking) alters depending on the Scrutiny Committee.

.....

8. As a Scrutiny member, how could you become more effective?

More in-depth training
.....
Increase my knowledge and expertise
.....
More general knowledge of subject
.....
Training.
Looking at good practice
.....
No response
.....
No response
.....
There is a need to work towards an agreed agenda which will involve all members. A good start would be for training in decision-making systems.
.....
Budget / resources to finance scrutiny, for example, use of outside bodies, transport.
.....
By having the time and support of other members.
.....
Not applicable
.....
By taking a more active role in persuading others to adopt an active role.
.....
By seeking an improved call-in procedure so that challenges to Cabinet decisions receive full and proper scrutiny, with the committee able to question the proponent of the call-in and, rather than relying on the caller-in or portfolio holder to do this, to invite witnesses who are able, in the committee's expectation, to shed light on the issues.
.....
This is in member's hands, applying themselves fully and asking awkward questions.
.....
By being better appraised of the subject matter.
Read all relevant papers and be better prepared.
.....
Not applicable
.....
No response
.....
I believe that I already do all that I can.
.....
Not sure on this one.
.....
Not applicable
.....
No response
.....
Put more effort in when I have time to.
.....

I am not a scrutiny member

.....
No response

.....
I just generally think that scrutiny is a charade

.....
No response

.....
No response

.....
Working more closely / subtly with the chair to get genuine scrutiny on the agenda.

Getting common goal for committee to unite behind and work towards

.....
Not applicable

.....
No response

.....
No response

9. Are there any items you feel should be included in the Scrutiny Committees' work programme for the new municipal year?

Quality control of services at the delivery point

.....

In Children's – Deprivation money review
Teenage pregnancy
Alcohol-related issues

.....

No response

.....

Council complaints procedure
Customer Satisfaction

.....

No response

.....

No response

.....

The working of the Cabinet
The interface between the Cabinet and senior officers
How the community are involved in the work of the Council

.....

Dementia support and services
Alcohol issues, for example, hospital admissions, underage drinking, possible improvements to prevention services
Homelessness and health
Working with outside groups, for example, LINKS, Citizens Advice Bureau.

.....

Yes. Reduction of killed and seriously injured on our roads.

.....

No

.....

I don't know yet on which committee(s) I may serve in the coming year. If it were *Council Excellence*, then a review of call-in arrangements; continuing input to accommodation use; investigation of sharing assets (and costs) with partners for greater service efficiency; barriers to shared use of council assets.

.....

I am not taking any committee places this year in order to devote time to work in my community, to help it recover from damage done by the cabinet, so do not wish to comment.

.....

Not applicable

.....

Not applicable

.....

No response

.....

Keeping within budget whilst providing the most cost effective services possible.
Avoiding wastage of resources at all levels

.....

No

.....

Protecting the Council's image; after all we are all in the same team.

.....
No response
.....

No response
.....

This is for scrutiny members to decide.
.....

No response
.....

No – you will gather that I am not a fan of scrutiny
.....

No response
.....

The impact of the increase in the availability of alcohol, as a result of the
Licensing Act 2003, and the effects on the residents of Wirral.
.....

The website – how does it work to assist the residents of Wirral.
.....

Council communications – Are we any good at it?
.....

Getting the public more engaged in democracy
.....

Cycling – how do we get Wirral to be a cycling borough. Why aren't they cycling?
.....

Road safety policy
.....

No response
.....

Alcohol misuse across all age groups
.....

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SCRUTINY CHAIRS GROUP - VISIT TO WARRINGTON

WEDNESDAY 14TH JANUARY 2009

1. ATTENDEES

Councillors Ann Bridson, Phil Gilchrist, Simon Mountney, Denise Roberts and Alan Taylor
Alan Veitch (Scrutiny Support Officer)

2. BACKGROUND

It was agreed by the Scrutiny Chairs Group that it would be useful to visit another authority to investigate the workings of their Scrutiny mechanisms. Warrington Borough Council was chosen because:

- the balance of the Council is similar to Wirral (No Overall Control, resulting in a joint administration)
- Some good working practice is evident from Warrington Council website
- Close proximity

The format of the visit was:

- Attendance at a meeting of Warrington Scrutiny Chairs Forum, the last agenda item of which was 'Questions and Discussion with Wirral MBC Councillors'. (See Sections 4 and 5 below).
- Attendance at a meeting of Warrington's Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (See Section 6 below).

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- The visit was very interesting; highlighting a number of different ways of working from Wirral.
- As with many Councils, creating impact through Scrutiny is not easy. However, there are ways in which it can be done. One Warrington member commented that "What we do, we try to do well".
- Emphasis is given to scrutiny via Working Groups. These appear to be flexible in their formation (not bound by political proportionality) and can produce positive results.
- There is a limit to what can be done in scrutiny, based on the capacity of both members and scrutiny officers.
- The aims of members depend, at least to some extent on the political context, for example, opposition members may see scrutiny in a different light to members of the party in administration.

4. SCRUTINY CHAIRS FORUM

4.1 Composition of the Chairs Forum

Warrington Council, which is a Unitary Authority, has five Scrutiny Committees, namely:

- Children's Services
- Communities
- Sustainable Environment and Regeneration
- Health
- Resources

The Chairs Forum is made up of the Chair and Deputy Chair of each of these Committees. Six members were present at the meeting. The Forum meets once per cycle, that is, five times per year. One of the members is elected chair of the Chairs Forum for the year. The purpose of the Forum is to identify ways in which scrutiny can work more effectively.

4.2 Forward Plan

The Chairs Forum considers the Forward Plan, identifying issues for further consideration.

4.3 Committee Work Programme

A short verbal report was given by each Chair to update members of activities of their Committee. This included a proposal for a small number of members from the Children's Services OSC to attend a meeting of the Health OSC to discuss an item of relevance to both Committees (Mental health). This demonstrated joint working between committees.

4.4 Legislation

Short written updates on proposed changes to legislation were included on the agenda for information. These included an update on Councillor Call for Action.

4.5 Expert witness

A Working Group has been established to produce a report on members allowances. An expert witness, a member of the Independent Review Panel, has agreed to give evidence to the Working Group.

4.6 Monitoring the impact of scrutiny

Working Group reports have recently been presented to the Executive. A Warrington member commented that "The issue for scrutiny is whether anything has changed twelve months after a report has been presented. Our watchword should be 'impact'".

4.7 Overview and Scrutiny training

Some Warrington members are attending training delivered through modules of the 'Cheshire and Warrington Improvement and Efficiency Partnership - Overview and Scrutiny Programme. Planning of the programme has been facilitated by IDeA.

5. **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION WITH WIRRAL MBC COUNCILLORS**

5.1 Officer Support

Warrington Council has 2.75 FTE in their Scrutiny Support team. The team is part of Democratic Services. Each Committee is supported by a scrutiny officer. That officer will also provide support for any Working Groups that are created. The scrutiny officers are part of the Committee section within the Democratic Services organisation.

5.2 Committee Structure

When scrutiny was first introduced, there were only two committees - one looking forward and one looking backward. However, that was amended so that there were ten committees, as Policy & Overview Committees were separate from Scrutiny. Approximately three years ago, a decision was taken to reduce and simplify the structure. Four of the current committees equate to directorates within the Council organisation. The fifth Scrutiny Committee is Health. Each committee usually meets five times per year, although one Chair did express the opinion that more frequent meetings would be useful.

The Executive has ten members. Therefore, there is not a one-to-one relationship between Executive portfolios and Scrutiny Committees. Although the five committee structure tends to work well, it is "sometimes difficult to pin down Executive portfolio holders to one Scrutiny Committee".

Four of the Committees have 11 members. (The share between parties is currently 6:4:1). Children's Services, due to the inclusion of co-opted members, has 15 members. The larger committees, compared to Wirral, provide more members from which to choose volunteers for Working Groups. However, the larger committees can appear unwieldy. Some members at Warrington serve on more than one Scrutiny Committee.

5.3 Health Scrutiny

Unusually, Health is separate from Social Care within the Warrington structure. A decision was taken three years ago to have a separate Health Scrutiny Committee due to the volume of work in that area. Wirral has a much simpler relationship with its health partners as the Council, PCT and Hospital trust all operate to similar geographical boundaries (with the exception of mental health). However, in Warrington there is a much more complex relationship with over-lapping boundaries. This gives rise to a large number of consultations, including joint consultations with neighbouring boroughs.

As there is no Executive portfolio for Health, Social Care is part of the Communities directorate. It was therefore natural for Social Care to be included as part of the Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Some health consultations are carried out using email; rather than formal meetings.

5.4 How are the scrutiny officers tasked with work?

The work of the scrutiny officers is generally determined by the Annual Work Programme, which sets priorities for the year. The programme is set by the Committees during the June cycle of meetings. The Committees hold a Work Programme setting event at which possible topics are discussed. As an example, Children's Services invited young people to the Event and asked them for suggestions. Some of these suggestions were included in the work programme.

Possible topics for the work programme will be proposed based on information gathered from a variety of sources, including ward issues, community issues, performance indicators, political groups, and so on. However, whether topics are selected for a review by a Working Group depends on "How many members are interested in pursuing this?". There is no point in setting up a Working Group if there is no interest from members in doing the detailed work.

The meetings of the Chairs Forum reviews progress against the work programme but the Forum does not set the work programme.

The Resources Scrutiny Committee has undertaken a review into the 'Effectiveness of Scrutiny at Warrington'. The review was carried out by a Working Group of members, which included some Executive members.

5.5 Scrutiny and political parties

Interest in the scrutiny process appears to be affected by the party political situation. One Warrington member argued that Scrutiny can do a good job. However, that member also indicated that scrutiny was more useful as a member of the party in administration and less of the case when in opposition. Another member felt that Scrutiny enabled opposition members to raise the profile of issues and hopefully "nip problems in the bud".

The current administration took control in May 2007. The opposition have so far declined the chairs of Scrutiny Committees. Therefore, the Chairs are of the same party as the administration. This can sometimes give the impression that "Scrutiny can appear too comfortable for the executive members". There is a concern regarding the politicisation of the scrutiny process.

5.6 Call-In process

Since the administration changed (May 2007), there have been three Call-ins, two of which were effectively on the same issue (proposed closure of a secondary school). The third issue was called-in by members of one of the administration parties (relating to a ward issue).

Call-Ins are dealt with by one of the five normal Scrutiny committees.

None of the Call-Ins have resulted in an amended decision. However, some of the Call-Ins have highlighted issues with procedures that were subsequently altered.

5.7 Working Groups

Each Scrutiny committee selects topics for which Scrutiny is undertaken by a working group. For example, Children's Services committee have created two Working Groups for the current municipal year, namely, 'Child poverty in Warrington' and 'Places and Spaces', which is investigating facilities for young people.

The membership of each Working Group is determined by 'volunteers'. There is no fixed allocation of places, for example, on a 1:1:1 basis. Party politics tends to "go out of the window" on the Working Groups, with much reduced disagreement on party lines. Some Working Groups are chaired by members of the opposition party. There was also an example where only member was interested in a particular topic. Therefore, that member undertook a review (supported by a scrutiny officer) and produced a report for the Scrutiny Committee to consider.

The scrutiny officer provides support to each Working Group which is set up for 'their' Committee. In addition, the Working Group will be supported by a departmental officer(s).

There is a limit to the number of Working groups that can operate at any one time, due to the capacity of both members and scrutiny officers. Care is taken "not to over-commit resources at any one time". Each of the five Scrutiny Committees operate a maximum of two Working groups at any one time. Space is left in the work programmes to allow topical / urgent items to be added if necessary.

6. **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEETING**

6.1 Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest were invited at the start of the meeting. However, no declaration regarding whipping arrangements was made at the start of the meeting.

6.2 Officer Support at Committee meetings

Only three departmental officers attended the meeting, each speaking to specific items on the agenda. (Two officers spoke to more than one item). The introductions to each report, which were given by officers, were extremely limited, highlighting only one or two major points. The scrutiny officer takes the minutes of the meeting (that is, there is not a specialist Committee clerk present. (Apparently, the current scrutiny officers all have a background in Committee work). There is no legal representative present as it is recognised that the meeting cannot determine Council policy (only make recommendations). Officers were sat amongst members, helping to give the meeting a greater feel of informality.

6.3 Co-options

Members discussed the possibility of making further co-options to the committee, including representatives of 0 - 5 education, 16 - 19 education and young people.

6.4 Referring Outcomes to the Executive

On one agenda item, referring to 'Social Care Performance' the Committee agreed to convey concern to the Executive regarding the replacement of a respite home for children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities. (Some of the Warrington Committees have a permanent agenda item called 'Review the Recommendation Log' whereby members review a document which analyses progress against past recommendations agreed by the Committee).

6.5 Involvement of young people (Public participation)

A young person had been specifically invited to the meeting as a report regarding 'Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) in Warrington schools' was on the agenda. This topic had been suggested for further scrutiny by the young people attending the work programme Setting Event.

A questionnaire is currently being organised by a group of young people (Impact - Warrington Youth Council) to assess the effect of PSHE education in the schools and colleges of Warrington. Representatives of Impact will be invited back to a future meeting to share their findings.

6.6 Working Groups

Both Chairs of the two current Working Groups (in Children's services) presented verbal reports to update members on progress. The activity of the Working Groups takes place outside the Committee, accessing relevant information / evidence from meetings with officers, residents, community groups, site visits, expert witnesses and so on.

6.7 Item referrals from Resources Scrutiny Committee

The Corporate Performance Report is scrutinized by the Resources Scrutiny Committee. That Committee identified two specific performance indicators relevant to Children's Services. Those two indicators were referred to Children's Services Committee for further comment. (This demonstrates cross-working between committees).

Alan Veitch (Scrutiny Support Officer – 19/01/09)

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