

ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

2008 - 2009



**A SUMMARY OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF WIRRAL BOROUGH
COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR
OF 2008 - 2009**

FINAL REPORT

MARCH 2010

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL
ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2008 – 2009

FINAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

THE YEAR OF 2008 - 2009.....

This report provides an overview of the work carried out and the achievements recorded by the ten Overview and Scrutiny Committees that were in place during the municipal year 2008-9. The report covers the period from May 2008 until April 2009. The following pages contain a section for each of those committees to explain their activities in more detail. As can be seen later in the report, all committees set a work programme, whilst retaining the flexibility to be able to react to the 'unexpected events' during the year.

In addition, the ten Committees were supported by an informal group of the ten Committee chairs – the Scrutiny Chairs' Group - who undertook activities to improve the scrutiny processes across the Council. This Chairs' Group was able to champion a number of issues during the municipal year that would enhance scrutiny arrangements in Wirral:

- The production and adoption of the Scrutiny Handbook and Toolkit were approved by Cabinet in October 2008. These documents have provided a model around which scrutiny work can be developed;
- The implementation of Call-In guidelines has provided a more stable framework around which Call-in meetings can be organised and managed;
- A new process was developed to enable all of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to more easily manage and monitor their work programmes;
- The first members' questionnaire on scrutiny was conducted in April 2009. The findings and conclusions drawn from the questionnaire have since provided input into the work programme of the new Scrutiny Programme Board;
- A visit to a neighbouring Authority, Warrington, by the Scrutiny Chairs Group enabled members to witness scrutiny arrangements in another Council and to discuss relevant issues with members from another Authority.

It is good to report that the overall impact of scrutiny improved during the year. This can be exemplified by the in-depth reviews that have been undertaken by different committees, involving a larger number of members.

PREPARATIONS FOR 2009 ONWARDS.....

In April 2009, Council agreed to a proposal that the number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be reduced from ten to five plus a Scrutiny Programme Board. The reduction in the committee structure will hopefully decrease the number of formal meetings and enable more members to take part in in-depth scrutiny reviews organised by working groups created by the parent Scrutiny Committees.

The role of the Scrutiny Programme Board will be to:

- Monitor the work programmes of the other five Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- Identify and share good scrutiny practice across all Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- Undertake scrutiny reviews into issues of a cross-cutting nature, which overlap the remit of two or more of the other five Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The remit of the remaining five committees mirror the five Strategic Objectives of the Corporate Plan. It is hoped that this organisation will help to focus the priorities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the major priorities of the Council. These five Committees are:

- Children and Young People
- Council Excellence
- Economy and Regeneration
- Health and Wellbeing
- Sustainable Communities

As the number of Committees has been reduced, the number of councillors serving on each Committee increased from seven to ten. This will hopefully enlarge the pool of councillors available to involve themselves in Working Groups undertaking in-depth reviews on specific topics.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee reviews the areas of responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning.

MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE YEAR

There were two scrutiny panel reviews for the municipal year 2008/2009.

The first of these in-depth panel reviews (scoping for which took place in the municipal year 2007/2008) was to review the Council's Youth Outreach Services and explore partnership arrangements which were in place, both internally and externally. The work of both the Youth Outreach team and the Community Safety (Anti-Social Behaviour) team were part of the review. Evidence was gathered through interviews with key officers as well as several visits onto the streets with the outreach workers. In addition, visits were made to youth clubs and a voluntary organisation which offered outreach work to young people. The final report was presented and agreed by the committee in November 2008 and recommendations taken to December 2008 Cabinet. An ongoing "update" of progress made on the recommendations contained within the report, will continue throughout 2009/10 municipal year.

The second scrutiny panel review, which was scoped in November 2008, was titled 'Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2'. It was recognised that the 2008 Key Stage 2 SAT results for English (including Reading and Writing) in Wirral were above the national average. There were many examples of good practice in Wirral, which contributed to the attainment of these results. However, there remained a consistent number of children (approx 20%) who do not achieve the "expected" minimum national standard of Level 4 in reading and writing. The review gathered evidence to understand the reasons behind this statistic and identify recommendations to inform future policy development. This extensive review will continue during the 2009/10 municipal year.

Committee members re-launched the scheme of elected member visits to all Local Authority Children's Homes within this municipal year.

In addition to performance, financial and complaints reports, the committee requested and received further reports from officers including the following:

- Informal adult learning;
- Evaluation report on a review, carried out by Lancaster University, on the contact and referral taking process at the Central Advice and Duty Team (CADT);
- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) rates;
- Behavioural issues and exclusions;
- Developments in provision for pupils with learning difficulties;
- Provision and support for pupils with behavioural difficulties;
- Wirral Fostering Services;
- Wirral Adoption Services;
- Local Safeguarding.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY

- The ‘in-depth’ panel reviews have been carried out in a non-party consensual environment.
- The re-launch of members’ visits to the Local Authority Children’s Homes enhances the responsibility of elected members as “Corporate Parents”.
- A number of the recommendations in the Youth Outreach report have subsequently been implemented. One of these recommendations resulted in a change to organisational structure that enabled more efficient use of resources and, consequently, a more effective service.
- The Youth Outreach review illustrated a good example of public participation in scrutiny as the panel members engaged with many young people both on the streets and during visits to youth clubs.
- A Committee debate on the ‘Provision for Pupils with Learning Difficulties and / or Disabilities’ in the Borough provided a good example of public participation in scrutiny. A chair of governors plus two parents (from different schools) played an important role during the debate. The three contributors gave a personal perspective which was reflected in the motion approved by members.
- A young lady who had recent experience of the Complaints system addressed the meeting (accompanied by an officer) to give members a view of the system from her personal perspective. This demonstrated the Committee’s ability to involve service users in their proceedings.



**Councillor Sheila Clarke
Committee Chair
2008-9**

COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee reviews the areas of responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Community and Customer Engagement.

MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE YEAR

A major strand of the work of this Committee throughout the year was the scrutiny of Wirral Council's attempt to achieve level 3 of the 'Equality Standard for Local Government' (ESLG)

Committee has received other reports including the following:

- Presentation by representatives of the Post Office to explain closure criteria for post office branches
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Annual Report
- Customer Services Annual Report for 2007
- The Council's Web Strategy
- Report from the Members' visits to Call Centres
- The work of the One Stop Shops with our Health Partners
- Customer Access Strategy Report
- Scrutiny of proposed budget savings within the remit of the Committee
- Audit commission report on 'Access to Services'
- Freedom of Information (FoI) requests

CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY

- The visits to other Customer Call Centres (one operated by another local authority and a second in the private sector) enabled the Committee to establish some valuable benchmarking criteria and learn from the experiences of other organisations.
- By requesting representatives of the Post Office to attend a meeting to explain their criteria for branch closures and explore ideas for closer working in the future, the Committee demonstrated a desire to engage with an important partner organisation and also to fulfil its role in acting “as the voice of residents”.
- In leading the scrutiny work on the ‘Equality Standard for Local Government’ the Committee was able to encourage greater member participation in Wirral’s Equality and Diversity agenda. This was achieved over a series of meetings, workshops and a training session. This scrutiny work has helped the Council to subsequently achieve Level 3 status for the ‘Equality Standard for Local Government’.



**Councillor Chris Meaden
Committee Chair
2008-9**

CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee reviews the areas of responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.

MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE YEAR

The committee agreed the following be added to the work programme for 2008-9:

- Human Resources, to include recruitment, retention and early retirements;
- Progress update on the previously reported new methodologies of reporting sickness and the trial of the employee assistance plan;
- Asset management review submitted to each committee meeting with a list of assets sold month by month;
- Planned maintenance; and
- Emergency planning and resilience.

In addition the committee received presentations and reports on:

- Liscard Hall;
- Managing workforce change;
- Update on Coroner's Budgets;
- Funding of the council's legal service;
- Office accommodation costs (Asset management)

Two extra meetings were called regarding The Strategic Asset Review. Also a further extra meeting was held specifically to consider 2 issues:

- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act; and
- Buildings maintenance.

There were two "call-in" meetings held in 2008/09 to deal with:

- the land at The Warrens and its proposed future use; and
- Asset Management

Performance and Financial Monitoring has been undertaken into those areas within the remit of the Committee. This work included the scrutiny of proposed budget savings.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY

- Public consultation was carried out on those issues which have been raised by members of the public on issues within the remit of the Committee.



**Councillor Leah Fraser
Committee Chair
2008-9**

CULTURE, TOURISM AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee reviews the areas of responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Leisure.

MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE YEAR

Cultural Services in Wirral underpin all strategic objectives of the Council. There are high levels of customer satisfaction which the Council provide, however there is a continuing deterioration of buildings in which the services are provided. It is the committee's wish to maintain and if possible improve services provided. The Chair requested that the committee members were kept informed of all tourism and leisure events across Wirral.

The following items were added to the work programme for 2008-09:

- Maintenance of children's play areas;
- Allotments;
- Charging policy for sporting facilities;
- A review Dog Control Orders (especially regarding beaches during summer months);
- Progress reports on the tourism element of the Destination Marketing Office;
- Warrens Nursery Site;
- Progress of Floral Pavilion scheme.

A petition was received, regarding cyclists travelling at excessive speeds along the Wirral Way. Members noted the difficulties in enforcing the code of conduct and it was considered that education of the potential risk to all users was the preferred option in response to competing demands of walkers and a small minority of inconsiderate cyclists.

A major report, the "Strategic Development Plan for Leisure and Culture Services" together with the report of the Chief Executive "Delivering the Strategic Asset Review" was the subject of a special meeting held in December 2008 and a further special meeting in February 2009. The Committee noted that this important issue would need a period of consultation. The Committee urged members of the public to take full advantage of this period to express their views.

Performance and Financial Monitoring has been undertaken into those areas within the remit of the Committee.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY

- Public consultation was carried out on those issues which have been raised by members of the public through the production of petitions on issues within the remit of the Committee.



**Councillor John Hale
Committee Chair
2008-9**

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee reviews the areas of responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Environment.

MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE YEAR

Committee has received reports including the following:

- Review of the draft policy on the use of plastic bags in Wirral
- Presentations from Wirral's Annual Children's Parliament on the Environment
- Progress reports on reducing the Council's carbon footprint
- Scrutiny of proposed budget savings within the remit of the Committee
- Disposal of Clinical Waste – An update on the proposed Sharps Waste Collection in Wirral
- Community Engagement towards Waste and Recycling Policies
- Tackling dog fouling
- Second annual review of the environmental streetscene services contract
- Recycling and Waste Minimisation Action Plan
- Energy Awareness Raising Programme
- Wirral Healthier Takeaway project
- Prevention of the sale of age restricted products
- Wirral Waste water treatment works
- Fly tipping and enforcement
- Health and Safety Enforcement Activity
- The role of trading standards in supporting the national enforcement priority of Fair Trading

Performance and Financial Monitoring has been undertaken into those areas within the remit of the Committee. This work included the scrutiny of proposed budget savings.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY

- The Committee focused repeatedly on the related issues of recycling, waste minimisation and carbon footprint throughout the municipal year. The scrutiny of these issues, some of which were pre-decision, enabled wider understanding and support for policies.
- The proposed draft policy on the use of plastic bags in Wirral was debated prior to a Cabinet decision. This was a good example of pre-determination scrutiny.

- The presentations from the Annual Children's Parliament on the Environment involved local primary and secondary schools with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The presentations, which focused on the relative merits of Fair Trade and food miles provided a good example of scrutiny engaging positively with the community.
- The investigation of Wirral's Waste Water Treatment illustrates the Committee's willingness to engage with partner organisations; in this case, United Utilities who agreed to attend a meeting to discuss issues arising from odour problems experienced by residents.



Councillor Denise Roberts
Committee Chair
2008-9

FINANCE AND BEST VALUE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee reviews the areas of responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Best Value.

MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE YEAR

At the outset of the municipal year, the members determined that the Committee's Work Programme for 2008/9 would relate to:

1. Monitoring the current position of the Authority revenue accounts and General Fund balances by way of a regular spreadsheet;
2. Consideration of reports and action plans to improve the Authority's CPA score and Use of Resources Assessment;
3. Consideration of reports in relation to any areas of the budget that are causing concern or any other matters that may have an adverse effect on the Council's budget;
4. Consideration of reports in relation to the achievement of savings targets.

Committee has received reports including the following:

- Regular updates of the Financial Monitoring Statement
- Projected Budgets 2009-11
- Corporate Risk and Insurance Management
- CPA 2008 – Use of Resources
- Housing and Council Tax Benefits - Annual Report
- Transforming Adult Social Services – Achieving a Stabilised and Sustainable Budget
- Updates on progress on the Use of Resources Action Plan
- Consistent Monitoring of the Change Programme 2008-9
- Update on the Medium-term Financial Strategy
- Update on the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Strategy for 2008-11
- Scrutiny of proposed budget savings within the remit of the Committee
- Corporate Procurement Strategy 2008-11
- Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) - Use of resources 2009
- Strategic Asset Review – special meeting

Performance and Financial Monitoring has been undertaken into those areas within the remit of the Committee.

The Committee also held special meetings to study the assumptions underpinning the proposed Strategic Asset Review. The Committee sought specific answers on the costings and the savings put forward. Questions were raised on the treatment of capital and maintenance expenditure. Alternative suggestions on the use of capital investment were put forward for further consideration by Cabinet.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY

- The Committee undertook detailed scrutiny of ‘Transformation of Adult Social Services’ and a projected overspend in the budget of Adult Social Services over several meetings throughout the municipal year. The Committee sought assurances regarding budget monitoring in Adult Social Services, the achievement of predicted savings and the managerial and systems capacity to deliver those savings. By selecting this one important area to persistently scrutinise, the Committee demonstrated independence and delivered all-party scrutiny.



**Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Committee Chair
2008-9**

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee reviews the areas of responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety.

MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE YEAR

Committee has received reports including the following:

- Review of Stock Transfer Monitoring Reports
- Operation of the Council's CCTV Control Room
- Review of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the impact on Development Control. The introduction of Crime Impact statements was endorsed.
- Progress reviews on the Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI)
- Update on the use of Section 30 Dispersal Orders, Closure Orders and Anti-Social Behaviour Watch Schemes in Wirral
- Policing in Wirral – A presentation by Wirral Area Commander, Chief superintendent Jon Ward
- Wirral Family Intervention Project – ‘One Year On’ Update
- Scrutiny of proposed budget savings
- Monitoring of the Empty Property Strategy
- Review of Wirral Partnership Homes Advertising and Allocations Policy
- Scrutiny of plans developed by Wirral Partnership Homes for Sheltered Accommodation and Tower Blocks
- Update on Rough sleepers and street drinkers in Wirral

Performance and Financial Monitoring has been undertaken into those areas within the remit of the Committee.

The Committee reviewed the “Proposed amendments to the Constitution of Wirral Partnership Homes” following the Call-In of the Cabinet decision in September 2008. The original Cabinet decision was supported.

A joint meeting of Housing & Community Safety and Regeneration & Planning Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committees was held in November 2008 to review the interaction of planning and housing policies in the borough. In particular, the meeting scrutinised Section 106 policy, the Housing Restraint Policy and provision of affordable housing. The meeting agreed that the use of Section 106 agreements in the short-term was limited due to the economic downturn. However, it was agreed to review the issue again in the future.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY

- “A community voice” is heard by ensuring that two representatives of Wirral Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations are members of this Scrutiny Committee.
- The joint scrutiny of the interaction of planning and housing policies in the borough undertaken with the Regeneration & Planning Strategy Overview & Scrutiny Committee demonstrated a willingness of two different committees to work together on an issue of joint interest. This work helped to ensure that a Section 106 officer was appointed in order that the Council can maximise planning opportunities in the future.
- The attendance of senior managers from Wirral Partnership Homes to discuss proposals for the Tower Blocks and Sheltered Accommodation in the borough is a good example of partner scrutiny; in this case, a key social landlord in the borough.
- The review of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 by the Scrutiny Committee resulted in a process being implemented to ensure that all planning applications are subject to Section 17 legislation.



**Councillor Alan Taylor
Committee Chair
2008-9**

REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee reviews the areas of responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning Strategy.

MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE YEAR

The Committee resolved that the following topics be included on the work programme for 2008/09 municipal year:

- Working Neighbourhoods Funds – in order to ascertain how the Council could ensure that economic and employment benefits were achieved from the Working Wirral Initiative.
- “aftercare” of companies within the area;
- Consideration of the most appropriate location for Development Control within the Council’s management structure; and
- That performance monitoring reports be considered on a quarterly basis.

The committee reviewed the commissioning process for the appointment of consultants to provide evidence bases for the following:

- Biodiversity Audit, Local sites selection criteria and guidelines;
- Strategy for Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure;
- Landscape Assessment and visual Appraisal.

The findings of these evidence base studies would be used to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy Development Plan, as part of the emerging Local Development Framework.

In November 2008 the Chair invited The Housing and Community Safety OSC to a Housing Policy presentation item in order that an examination of issues relating to affordable housing and the potential use of Section 106 Legal Agreements be discussed. The presentations were structured to provide members with information on current government planning and housing policies, the implications for Wirral, and actions to address these changes.

The Committee also heard how the Invest Wirral team was developing a cluster based approach to all its activities. A request was agreed that issues arising from the cluster group meetings be presented to the committee on an ongoing basis.

The economic downturn and its impact on Wirral were considered in depth and therefore the Committee agreed that this important issue be a standing item on future agendas.

Other issues presented and discussed included:

- An endorsement request from The Church of England on an amalgamation of two parishes, with a disposal of a parish church to the Roman Catholic Church;

- Conservation area appraisals and management plans.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY

- The Committee provides a “sounding board” for major proposed developments within the Regeneration portfolio.
- The joint scrutiny of the interaction of planning and housing policies in the borough undertaken with the Housing & Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee demonstrated a willingness of two different committees to work together on an issue of joint interest.



**Councillor Simon Mountney
Committee Chair
2008-9**

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND INCLUSION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee reviews the areas of responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Social Care Health and Inclusion. The local health services and the NHS are also scrutinised by this committee.

MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE YEAR

The final report of the Hospital Discharge Scrutiny Review Panel was approved by the Committee in March 2009. The panel consisted of three councillors plus a representative of Wirral Older People's Parliament. The review had focussed on an assessment of the 'patient experience' of people aged sixty and over. Evidence was gathered from a variety of sources including:

- Three Focus groups of patients, which were organised by an independent social research company and funded by the PCT;
- 'Interviews' with individual officers from Wirral NHS (PCT), Wirral University Teaching Hospital and the Department of Adult Social Services at Wirral Council;
- Results of a survey undertaken by Wirral Older People's Parliament;
- Visits to Arrowe Park Hospital, including the Discharge Lounge and a Rehabilitation ward;
- Meetings with representatives of four different groups in the voluntary sector;

The report contained fifteen recommendations, to which a joint response from Wirral University Teaching Hospital, Wirral NHS (PCT) and the Department of Adult Social Services has been made to the committee. Subsequent reports to the Committee continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendation through the Wirral NHS Hospital Discharge Action Plan.

A series of reports throughout the municipal year have monitored progress of the 'Transformation' agenda for Adult Social Care in Wirral. The aim is to provide a personalised, integrated and localised service. The role of the Scrutiny Committee has been to challenge the proposals on behalf of residents.

In addition, Committee has received reports including the following:

- Year-end Performance Monitoring Report April 2007 – March 2008
- Annual Complaints report
- Presentation on re-admissions to hospital by Wirral University Teaching Hospital
- Update on Local Involvement Networks (LINKS)
- Wirral Respond and Convey Pilot Mid-project review report by North West Ambulance Service
- Occupational Therapy
- Safeguarding Adults Annual report
- IDEa Healthy Communities Peer Review
- Individual Budgets and Personal Budgets
- Dementia Services in Wirral
- MRSA – by the Chief Executive of Wirral University Teaching Hospital
- Access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities
- Review of meals on wheels contract

- ‘Safe Sensible Social’ – Consultation on the national alcohol strategy
- Progress on the Health Inequalities agenda in Wirral
- Transition from Children to Adult Social Services
- Annual Performance Assessment of the Commission for Social Care Inspection
- A Joint response to extreme winter pressures on Wirral Social Care and Health economy
- Annual Health Check 2008/9
- A series of consultations regarding proposals from Wirral NHS including:
 - Proposed modernisation and development of primary care facilities in Wirral
 - Outcomes of the proposal to relocate Cavendish Medical Centre and Miriam Medical Centre
 - A Primary Care Access Centre for Wirral based at Arrowe Park
 - Improvements in Cancer Services in Cheshire and Merseyside through the development of new radiotherapy services
 - Dental Services in Bromborough
 - GP premises in Heswall
 - Redevelopment of St Catherine’s hospital site to include the relocation of Devaney Medical centre and Victoria Park Health Centre

The Committee reviewed the “Progress towards the Transformation of Adult Social Services” following the Call-In of the Cabinet decision in December 2008. The Committee also reviewed the “Fees for residential and Nursing Homes” following the Call-In of the Cabinet decision in April 2009.

Performance and Financial Monitoring has been undertaken into those areas within the remit of the Committee.

An extremely helpful workshop for members was arranged as part of the Health Scrutiny Support Programme operated by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (cfps). This half-day training session had the theme of ‘making informed and influential recommendations’ and used the Hospital Discharge scrutiny review as a template to illustrate general concepts.

During the year, a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was appointed as Wirral’s first Carers’ Champion, enhancing the relationship with the community.

Six members of Wirral Council are also members of the Cheshire and Wirral Councils’ Joint Scrutiny Committee which scrutinises the mental health services delivered across the area by the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY

- Scrutiny of partners has been embraced through the constructive work undertaken with Wirral NHS (PCT) and Wirral University Hospital Trust, many examples of which exist, not least, the response by the partners to the Hospital Discharge Scrutiny review. A further example includes the joint response to extreme winter pressures on the Wirral Social Care and Health economy, which again demonstrates excellent joint working between the health and social care partners including the Scrutiny Committee.
- The contribution to the scrutiny process by the Committee has been widened by including a representative from the Older Peoples Parliament as a co-opted member of the Committee and as a member of the Hospital Discharge Scrutiny Panel.

- The Hospital Discharge review encouraged the direct involvement of the public as the panel researched views of “the patient’s experience” of the service. This was achieved through the focus groups and survey, as well as through contact with voluntary groups in Wirral.
- As part of the developing relationship between the Scrutiny Committee and Wirral LINKS, a member of Wirral LINKS was also invited to be a co-opted member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chair of Wirral LINK subsequently took up this role.
- An interesting debate on Individual Budgets was led by a member of the public who is Chair of the local Individual Budgets User Group, demonstrating the Committee’s ability to involve service users in their proceedings.



**Councillor Ann Bridson
Committee Chair
2008-9**

STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee reviews the areas of responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services.

MAJOR ACTIONS DURING THE YEAR

Committee has received reports including the following:

- Consultation on several proposed traffic calming schemes and local safety schemes
- Merseyside Pedestrian Strategy and the associated Action Plan
- Review of Local Transport Capital Programme 2008-9 and 2009-10
- Consider the response to petitions regarding highways and road safety issues
- Response to the Council Notice of Motion: 'Involving people in Making Streets Safer'
- Review of the Highway Structural Maintenance programme 2008-9
- Annual Review of Wirral Council Travel Plan
- Public consultation on proposed gating orders in a variety of locations
- Scrutiny of proposed budget savings within the remit of the Committee
- Review of 2008 Progress Report regarding the Merseyside Local Transport Plan
- Annual Review of Wirral Hospital's Travel Plan
- Flooding – Implications of the Pitt report for Wirral
- Progress report on school travel planning

Performance and Financial Monitoring has been undertaken into those areas within the remit of the Committee.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY

- Effective public consultation has been ensured regarding a number of specific local issues.
- The Committee, by creating an active officer and member task group to oversee the work on flooding, has ensured that the management of this high-profile issue has member involvement.



**Councillor Harry Smith
Committee Chair
2008-9**