

# **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**

A major 'in-depth' review of "The Outcomes for Children in Foster Care" was completed by a small panel of members. Evidence was gathered from a wide number of sources including interviews with young people, foster carers plus social care and education professionals, in addition to written evidence. The final report, which was widely welcomed, has led to many of the recommendations being supported by the Cabinet.

A second 'in-depth' panel review has been commenced by the Committee. This review, into "the Youth Outreach Service", is due to report during the summer of 2008. Again, evidence has been gathered through interviews with key officers as well as several visits onto the streets with the outreach workers. In addition, visits have been made to youth clubs and a voluntary organisation which offers outreach work to young people.

Committee has received reports including the following:

- The admissions process for primary and secondary schools
- Progress on the Children's and Young Peoples Plan 2006-8
- An evaluation of the Annual Performance Assessment
- An evaluation of the standards and achievements in Wirral schools
- A review of the Complaints procedure operated by the Children's and Young Peoples department
- An update on the School Improvement Strategy

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

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY**

- The Fostering Service of the Council has, hopefully, been improved through many recommendations from the Fostering Review being implemented.
- Many service users (including foster carers, young people in care and professional staff) have been engaged during the Fostering Scrutiny Review.
- Members of the Older Peoples Parliament were included as part of the Youth Outreach review panel. This was done to give a non-council perspective to the review.
- Young people as well as staff have been engaged during the Youth Outreach review.
- Contribution to the scrutiny process has been widened by the Committee including two diocese representatives and two parent governor representatives.
- The 'in-depth' panel reviews have been carried out in a non-party consensual environment.

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

The Youth Outreach review will be concluded.

In addition, a work programme for the new municipal year has been agreed and includes:

- Committee organisation and governance arrangements within Children's Services
- Literacy levels in schools at the end of Key Stage 2
- Transition from Children's Services to Adult Social Services
- NEETS (Not in Employment, Education or Training)
- Update on Special Schools
- Behavioural Issues and Exclusions

An 'in-depth' panel review will be undertaken into Literacy levels in primary schools at the end of Key Stage 2.

Regular reports regarding both Performance and Financial Monitoring will be reviewed.

**Councillor Frank Doyle**  
**Committee Chair**  
**2007-8**

**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 review of the operation of the Customer Call Centre was commenced by the Committee. The review included visits by members to two other Call Centres; one operated by another local authority and a second in the private sector.

Committee has received reports including the following:

- Customer Services Annual Report for 2007
- Revised Customer Access Strategy
- A review of the operation of Bebington One Stop Shop and Pennant House
- Annual Report of the Citizens Panel
- Progress of the Housing and Council Tax Benefits Service
- Monitoring of the proposed roll-out of Local Housing Allowance
- Scrutiny of the proposed Customer Care Guidelines

The Committee reviewed and commented upon the proposed changes to the Post Office Network during the review of the post office service in Wirral.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY**

- By meeting with representatives of the Post Office, the Committee has engaged with an important partner organisation. This resulted in a meeting that enabled possible future mutually beneficial developments to be discussed.
- The visits to other call centres enabled the Committee to establish some valuable benchmarking criteria and learn from the experiences of other organisations.

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

A work programme for the new municipal year has been agreed. This includes:

- Equality and Diversity
- Comprehensive Engagement Strategy
- Customer Care Standards
- Area Forums

**Councillor Jean Stapleton**  
**Committee Chair**  
**2007-8**

**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**

Committee has received reports including the following:

- A report on the progress made in implementing the Investment in Energy Efficiency Programme
- A review, including the financial consequences, of the Coroner's Service in Wirral
- A presentation on Communications. This resulted in further work being done, which led to the formation of a centralised marketing team
- A presentation on Accommodation Strategy and Asset Management
- Presentations on matters relating to staff retention
- A report on initial information regarding the introduction of the Government's Carbon Reduction Commitment in 2010

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**

- An invitation to the Coroner to attend a Committee meeting led to a better understanding of issues regarding the Coroners service

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

A work programme for the new municipal year has been devised. It will include:

- Human Resources
- Asset Management
- Planned Maintenance
- Emergency Planning and Resilience
- Performance and Financial Monitoring

**Councillor Chris Meaden**  
**Committee Chair**  
**2007-8**

**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**

Committee has received reports including the following:

- Regular reviews of the Implementation Plan for the Wirral Tourism Strategy
- A review of Park Management Plans
- Producing a response to submissions arising from the Youth Parliament regarding Cultural Services facilities
- Respondes to a number of petitions on matters relating to the remit of the Committee. These included: Vehicular access to Leasowe Common, Landican Cemetary, Allotment provision and the Children's Play Area in Lime Kiln Lane, Seacombe.
- A review of the "Get Into Reading" project
- An evaluation of the Allotment Strategy 2007-12

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

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY**

- The Committee holds its meetings in a variety of locations in order to improve accessibility to the public.
- 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.

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

A work programme for the new municipal year will be devised. This is likely to concentrate on the Strategic Forward Plan for Cultural Services

Regular reports regarding both Performance and Financial Monitoring will be reviewed.

**Councillor Sue Brown**  
**Committee Chair**  
**2007-8**

**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:

- Reports on the ongoing work being undertaken by the Council in response to the Nottingham Declaration and the threat of climate change
- A report on the impact of variable rainfall in Wirral
- An evaluation of the impact of Smokefree Wirral
- A presentation on the Waste Strategy by the Director of Waste Disposal at MWDA (Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority)
- Endorsement of the Trading Standards Service Delivery Plan
- Response to the petition regarding the request to return to weekly residual waste collections. The petition was organised by the Wirral Globe newspaper.
- An evaluation of the implementation of a previous policy (“Don’t give a dog a bad name”) in an attempt to tackle the nuisance of dog fouling
- Review of the proposed “Household Waste Collection and Enforcement Policy”
- A report on initial information regarding the introduction of the Government’s Carbon Reduction Commitment in 2010
- Progress report on Fly Tipping
- A report on the actions being taken by the Council regarding the Sale of alcohol and tobacco to under 18’s
- Healthy Eating campaigns and Takeaways
- A report on Cockling on the River Dee
- A report on the introduction of the Animal Welfare Act which came into force on 1st April 2007

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.

The Committee again reviewed the proposed “Household Waste Collection and Enforcement Policy” following the Call-In of the Cabinet decision.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY**

The proposed Recycling Enforcement Policy was debated prior to a Cabinet decision. This was a good example of pre-determination scrutiny.

The Committee reacted to public concern by responding to the petition regarding the return to weekly residual waste collections.

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

A work programme for the new municipal year is being produced. Topics are likely to include:

- Carbon Footprint Reduction
- Recycling and waste reduction
- Trading standards in relation to off-licences and under-age sale of alcohol
- Inspection of food premises
- Dog fouling
- Performance and Financial Monitoring reports

**Councillor Denise Roberts**  
**Committee Chair**  
**2007-8 and 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**

A special Finance Scrutiny meeting was held at which Chief Officers explained the position regarding the production of a balanced budget for year-end and in achieving the service re-engineering savings for their department.

Committee has received reports including the following:

- Projected Budget 2008-11, including the budget for 2008-9
- Updates on progress on the Use of Resources Action Plan
- Monitoring of progress with meeting service re-engineering targets
- Update on the Medium-term Financial Strategy 2007-10
- Review of the draft Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Strategy
- Housing and Council Tax Benefits - Annual Report
- Monitoring of the proposed roll-out of Local Housing Allowance
- Report on the Audit Commission 2007 Comprehensive Performance Assessment Use of Resources judgement for Wirral.

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

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY**

- The Committee has tried to review budget savings and service re-engineering savings on an impartial all-party basis. This demonstrates a good degree of independence and is exemplified by the Committee requesting service directors to attend special meetings to discuss specific budgetary issues.

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

The work programme for the new municipal year will include:

- Monitoring the current position of the Authority revenue accounts and General Fund balances
- Review action plans to improve the Authority's CPA score and Use of Resources Assessment
- Review areas of the budget that are causing concern
- Achievement of savings targets
- Performance and Financial Monitoring reports

**Councillor Chris Teggin**  
**Committee Chair**  
**2007-8**

**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 the Audit Commission Inspection (2007) of Wirral's Strategic Approach to Housing
- Monitoring of the progress of the Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) in Wirral
- Review of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and its impact upon some processes within Wirral Council.
- Review of the use of Dispersal Orders as applied from Section 30 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Review of Stock Transfer Monitoring reports
- Scrutiny of proposed budget savings
- Review of the Empty Property Strategy in Wirral
- Consideration of the draft Homelessness Strategy for Wirral
- Review of the Strategic Market Housing Assessment for Wirral

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

The Committee reviewed the proposed "Newheartlands HMRI Business Plan 2008-2011" following the Call-In of the Cabinet decision. The original Cabinet decision was supported.

## **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 review of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act resulted in changes to training of new staff and the consideration of crime and disorder matters within the Planning (Development Control) process.

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

A work programme for the new municipal year has been agreed and will include:

- Housing Market Renewal Initiative
- CCTV Control Room

- Monitor the impact of the previous review of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- Empty Property Strategy
- Discussion with the Area Commander of Merseyside Police regarding policing and community safety issues
- Review of the Family Intervention Project
- Discussion with officers of Wirral Partnership Homes
- Homelessness, with specific reference to rough sleepers and street drinkers
- Housing Restraint policy, Section 106 policy and the provision of affordable housing

Regular reports regarding both Performance and Financial Monitoring will be reviewed.

A joint meeting comprising Housing & Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee plus Regeneration and Planning Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee will take place to initiate a review of the interaction of planning and housing policies in the borough. Among the issues to be covered will be the Housing Restraint policy, Section 106 policy and the provision of affordable housing.

**Councillor Alan Taylor**  
**Committee Chair**  
**2007-8 and 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**

Committee has received reports including the following:

- Scrutinized proposed budget savings
- Retained an overview of current Regeneration issues over the year in the borough
- Responded to a petition on the Telecommunications mast in Moreton
- Commenced the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Wirral
- Considered Conservation Area appraisals

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

The Committee reviewed the report into the “T-Mobile Telecomms Masts” following the Call-In of the Cabinet decision.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY**

- The Committee provides a “sounding board” for major proposed developments within the Regeneration portfolio.

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

A work programme for the new municipal year has been agreed and will include:

- Working Neighbourhoods Fund
- ‘Aftercare’ for companies setting up new businesses in Wirral
- Consideration of the most appropriate location for Development Control within the Council’s management structure
- Regular reports regarding both Performance and Financial Monitoring will be reviewed.

**Councillor Alan Jennings**  
**Committee Chair**  
**2007-8**

**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**

An in-depth panel review into the Hospital Discharge process has been initiated. A workshop was held on this issue and subsequently the scope for the review has been agreed. The review is being led by a panel of three members plus a representative of the Older Peoples Parliament. There will be a particular focus on “the patient’s experience”. Plans for the review are now in place and include interviews with key officers, the holding of Focus Groups with patients and carers who have recent experience of the discharge process, as well as visits to the Discharge Lounge at Arrowe Park hospital.

Committee has received reports including the following:

- Reports on the national GP survey “Your Doctor, Your Experience, Your Say”.
- North West Ambulance Service and the Wirral pilot
- Annual Health Check
- Presentation regarding the Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology NHS Foundation Trust
- Hospital Discharge process
- Transition from Children to Adult Social Services
- Audiology Services in Wirral
- Developing Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) in Wirral
- Transforming Equipment Services and “The Retail Model”
- Individual Budgets and Self Directed Care
- Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy
- Report on the “Valuing People Now” consultation process

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

The Committee reviewed the proposed “Meals on Wheels contract 2008-14” following the Call-In of the Cabinet decision.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY**

- The Committee enabled the Wirral Patient and Public Involvement Forum to influence the provision of audiology services in Wirral. It is now recognised that the service is much improved comparative to 2006, when the issue was first raised with the Scrutiny Committee by representatives of the Forum.

- Scrutiny of partners has been embraced through the constructive work undertaken with Wirral PCT and Wirral University Hospital Trust.
- The contribution to the scrutiny process by the Committee has been widened by including a representative from the Older Peoples Parliament.
- The panel managing the review into the Hospital Discharge process includes a member of the Older Peoples Parliament.
- The Hospital Discharge review, due to take place during the second half of 2008, will encourage involvement of the public as the panel researches views of “the patient’s experience” of the service.

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

The in-depth panel review into the Hospital Discharge process will be concluded.

A subsequent in-depth panel review is also likely to develop during the year from the remainder of the work programme.

The work programme for the new municipal year will also include:

- Regular updates on the Transforming Adult Social Care Agenda
- Regular updates on the Departmental Plan
- Support for Carers
- Progress reports on the creation of the LINKs (Local Involvement Networks) Forum
- Progress report on the Wirral Respond & Convey Pilot scheme (ambulance service)
- Occupational Therapy
- Reducing Alcohol Abuse
- Children’s Transition to Adult Social Services
- Feedback from the Older People’s Parliament survey of patient’s hospital stay / discharge experiences
- Review of Meals on wheels contract
- Health Inequalities across the borough
- Performance and Financial Monitoring reports

Once the Hospital Discharge Review has been concluded, it is planned for another topic to be chosen from the above work programme to form the subject of an ‘in-depth’ panel review.

**Councillor Ann Bridson**  
**Committee Chair**  
**2007-8 and 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:

- Review of Merseyside Congestion Target Delivery Plan
- Review of Wirral Hospital's Travel Plan
- Public consultation on proposed gating orders in a variety of locations
- Consultation on several proposed traffic calming schemes and local safety schemes
- Review of Local Transport Capital Programme 2007-8
- Consider objections to proposed pedestrian crossings at two locations
- Sponsorship on the highway
- Review of a proposed Home Zone scheme (New Ferry)
- Review of the Highway Structural Maintenance programme 2007/8
- Scrutinized proposed budget savings
- Procedures for monitoring, regulating and co-ordinating the work of Utility companies in Wirral
- Consultation on proposed car park charges

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

The committee reviewed the proposed "Community Road Safety Initiative" following the Call-In of the Cabinet decision. As a result, a further (seventh) pilot area was added to the trial.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVED SCRUTINY**

- Effective public consultation has been ensured regarding a number of specific local issues.
- The Committee responded to the "Community Road Safety Initiative" Call-In by altering the original Cabinet decision. (The amendment was subsequently agreed by Cabinet).

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

A work programme for the new municipal year has been agreed and will include:

- A review of road safety in the borough
- The approach to maximising benefits from new developments to maintain and improve the highway network, particularly via the section 106 process.

Regular reports regarding both Performance and Financial Monitoring will be reviewed.

**Councillor Harry Smith**  
**Committee Chair**  
**2007-8 and 2008-9**