

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

2018/19



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INTRODUCTION

This is the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2018/19 which summarises the work of Scrutiny and its impact over the municipal year. Scrutiny holds the executive to account but importantly it also works to improve outcomes for Wirral residents. In order to achieve this in 2018/19 the Scrutiny function has developed work in the following key areas:

- Continued and ongoing scrutiny of the Children's Services improvement journey, joint working with the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) and enhanced Member participation via workshops and spotlight sessions.
- Ongoing programme of Reality Check Visits for Members to undertake site visits on specific service areas, speaking to frontline staff and service users with a specific focus on targeted areas in Children's Services as well as Adult Care and Health.
- Strengthening of partner engagement in scrutiny activity including the establishment of the Health and Care Performance Panel. This is an opportunity for health partners to regularly participate in open discussions with Members on performance themes and issues.
- Setting clear objectives for scrutiny work to have the maximum impact.
- Making use of pre-decision scrutiny to influence and improve decision-making. This was exemplified through scrutiny of the Council's Commercial Strategy and a proposal to introduce a 'Dogs Public Spaces' Protection Order.
- Joint working across the Liverpool City Region to scrutinise Combined Authority initiatives and ensuring inclusion of a Wirral perspective.
- Risk training delivered to Committee Members to improve their understanding of risk and support a 'risk aware' approach to scrutiny.

The four committees have undertaken 5 scrutiny reviews, 3 of which has been completed in 2018/19, with the remaining 2 scheduled for completion as part of the 2019/20 municipal year work programme.

There were 10 additional sessions held outside of Committee for the consideration of matters such as Universal Credit and the 2019/20 budget proposals, along with a series of Reality Check Visits and meetings of the Health and Care Performance Panel. Committees also received a total of 136 presentations, reports and updates. Scrutiny had no Notices of Motion and convened 6 additional meetings to review decisions that had either been called-in or where a special meeting had been requested.

Further details of the breadth and scope of the work carried out by the scrutiny function can be found in the appendices to this report.

This report highlights the key successes of 2018/19, setting out the task and finish work completed in-year including the outcomes and impact of this work. The report also outlines key elements for scrutiny in Wirral for the coming municipal year.

CHAIRS REFLECTIONS

Councillor Tom Usher – Chair of the Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

This year the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee continued to monitor and expand its overview of the improvement journey. The committee continued to gain regular updates on progress in the form of a standing item from The Corporate Director of Children's Services, Paul Boyce. The past year saw the inclusion of a 'data tracker' in this standing item in order to provide further information to Committee which allows a more detailed examination of monthly figures and effective monitoring of the effects of recent changes on the service.

The Committee continued to carry out its programme of Reality Check Visits. The work programme of the Children and Families Committee endeavoured to mirror the priorities outlined by Ofsted since the 2016 inspection. The Committee expanded the scope of these visits to partner organisations in recognition of the importance of strong partnership working in order to achieve best practice in Children's Social Services. Reality Check Visits have included a session at Cheshire Lines Building to assess the impact of co-location and agile working arrangements on practice in social care. We have also extended visits to the Police regarding their responsibilities around domestic violence and child exploitation, and to health partners focusing on their responsibilities regarding Looked After Children. In March 2019 this programme of Reality Check Visits was featured in the Centre for Public Scrutiny 'Scrutiny Frontiers 2019' report as an example of scrutiny innovation and best practice (Appendix 4).

In expanding scrutiny to the partnership organisations who have responsibility for vulnerable children and families, Scrutiny also asked for a report on Community Matters, the new initiative between the Council's Early Help Services and the voluntary sector to establish an improved community-based early help offer.

The Children and Families Committee looked at several upcoming items relating to safeguarding and held a workshop to explore the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements that would replace the Wirral Safeguarding Children's Boards (WSCB). This gave the committee an opportunity to ensure that future arrangements were robust and that any risks were explored. A commitment was made to draw up a working protocol similar to that which existed between Committee and the WSCB, that would be relevant for the new safeguarding body.

This year, several members expressed an interest in examining more closely the issue of rising obesity in the borough and of child obesity specifically. As well as bringing several items to Committee to examine statistics on, and the potential responses to, rising obesity rates, the Committee also endorsed the Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight.

Both the education and prospects of young people were a focus for the Committee this year, as well as items exploring the rise in permanent exclusions; an item on the destination of school leavers regarding education, employment and unemployment was also looked at in detail.

There is one Task and Finish Group that is due to be completed in the coming months. The Statutory Care Plan Scrutiny Review has concluded all of its information gathering sessions and in examining the timeliness and effectiveness of care plans, has drawn on housing, legal services,

foster carers and frontline social care professionals to provide an extensive Task and Finish that identifies the strengths and challenges within statutory care planning. I would like to thank all the Members and Officers involved in the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee for their dedication in the busy year that has been 2018/19.

Councillor Julie MacManus – Chair of the Adult Health and Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee

This year has been another busy one for the Adult Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and I would like to thank the Members and Officers that have contributed to the delivery of the work programme. In particular, I wish to extend my gratitude to the Vice Chair of the Committee and the Party Spokespersons; their commitment to cross-party working, alongside close affiliation with the Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee, has meant a real collaborative approach to ensuring the best health and care outcomes for Wirral residents.

Consideration of the Urgent Care Review proposals and public consultation exercise have formed a substantial part of the Committee work programme for this year. A special meeting of the Committee took place in November 2018, along with a joint Health Scrutiny Committee with Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Members welcomed the opportunity to interact with Commissioners on a major issue that has potential to affect residents across Wirral. These meetings enabled lively debate, alongside a number of witness opinions and a considerable turnout from members of the public. Members sought to ensure that the views and needs of residents were properly considered, with the requirement for a further joint Committee to scrutinise the final plans proposed for the 2019/20 municipal year.

The Committee has made further progress in developing its partnership approach to health scrutiny – particularly through the work of the Health and Care Performance Panel. Positive scrutiny relies on the development of good working relationships and the Panel have welcomed a number of health partners to address it over the course of the year; with a particular focus on the CQC Improvement Plans of Wirral Community Trust and Wirral University Teaching Hospital, along with compliance and quality within the care sector, infection control and domiciliary care.

There has also been a valuable body of scrutiny work undertaken outside of formal Committee meetings; notably, Members took part in the pre-decision scrutiny of the Wirral Health and Care Commissioning pooled fund arrangements for 2019/20. Following the called-in decision of the previous year's arrangements, Commissioners responded to the Committee's request for more open and transparent working around the integration of health and social care and the resulting financial implications. Several suggestions were made following this workshop, with all recommendations accepted by the Joint Strategic Commissioning Board in February 2019.

The Committee was pleased to 'close the loop' on a recent scrutiny review into the provision of Continuing Healthcare (CHC) in the Borough. Members received an update report at the end of this year, which provided assurance that significant progress had been made following scrutiny's recommendations; with actions taken including the creation of a CHC phone line for advice and support. There has also been a focus on engaging with stakeholders, service users and frontline staff so that those affected by services play a fundamental role in ensuring legitimate scrutiny and informing change. As part of the pooled fund arrangements workshop, Members were able to

hear directly from integrated care practitioners, which was an extremely useful addition to the Officer briefing. In addition, Members of the Committee visited the Pensby Wood Day Centre, which provided a valuable opportunity to speak with people supported and to see the impact of Council investment first-hand.

Councillor Pat Hackett – Chair of the Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee

It has been a challenging year for the Committee and, as always, I would like to thank the Party Spokesperson, Councillors Steve Williams and Dave Mitchell for their collaborative working on Overview & Scrutiny over the Municipal year. I would also like to extend my thanks to all other Members from all parties for their commitment to delivering the work programme.

Pre-decision scrutiny should be one of the key activities to influence Cabinet, to help improve outcomes for Wirral residents and it is important that scrutiny seizes all opportunities. The Council will continue to face severe financial challenges in the coming years and commercialisation is an aspect that can help the Council reduce the deficit. During the year, a dedicated scrutiny workshop was convened for Members to consider the Council's Commercial Strategy before approval by Cabinet. The workshop helped to develop Members understanding of the approach Wirral Council is taking to become more commercially minded, as the Council looks to capitalise on opportunities as they arise. Importantly, Members have a crucial role to play in the Councils commercialisation approach and Committee recommended further commercialisation training as part of their development. Looking forward, it is important that Members retain oversight and hold the Executive to account to ensure all avenues for income generation are identified.

The establishment of the Wirral Growth Company was a significant area of focus for Members due to the impact that its success will have on regeneration. The implementation of the various projects will need to ensure that the needs of Wirral are being met and scrutiny should ensure that this will happen moving forward. A very well received scrutiny workshop was delivered on the latest developments and it was pleasing to have the key representatives from Muse in attendance as Members also have a key role in holding partners to account. For many Members, this was the first opportunity to consider some of the site development plans and early business cases.

Additionally, Members also wanted to retain oversight on Wirral Waters and a dedicated scrutiny workshop on the latest developments was delivered with representation from Peel holdings and Council Officers. As projects start being delivered, scrutiny should ensure there is a more focused, 'deep-dive' scrutiny approach in place. As with the Wirral Growth Company, the regeneration agenda is too important for scrutiny not to be embedded within this activity.

A Task & Finish scrutiny review to consider issues relating to camper vans in Wirral is progressing following a report presented to Committee which highlighted some of the concerns from Members and residents, particularly in New Brighton and Wallasey. Members also recommended that Officers explore the possibility of introducing an 'Overnight Sleeping' ban on two cul-de-sacs in Wallasey. It is pleasing that this has been implemented through an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and the impact of this will need to be reviewed as part of the ongoing work programme.

Councillor Tony Jones – Chair of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

I would like to thank all Members who sat on the Committee for the work carried out in the year. In particular, I would also like to thank the Party Spokespersons for ensuring that scrutiny was collaborative in setting agendas and discussing wider Council issues.

Two pieces of Task & Finish work were carried out with small panels of Members. Firstly, a review on Modern Slavery was completed which identified the need for a Modern Slavery Strategy to be implemented. Through the review, Members were also able to scrutinise a draft strategy before it was presented to Cabinet. The final scrutiny report was well received at Committee and the implementation of a Modern Slavery action plan by the Council will be closely monitored by Members. Committee also agreed to undertake a review on recycling in response to Wirral's declining recycling rate. This has concluded and a report will be presented to Committee in the new municipal year.

Importantly, scrutiny is now embedded within the Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership to provide member oversight of flood risk. The terms of reference for the Partnership were appropriately updated and agreed by Committee and these now establish a formal link with scrutiny to provide governance and elected member oversight of local flood and costal erosion risk management activities. With agreement from Committee, the Chair and Party Spokespersons will represent scrutiny on the Partnership and will provide any necessary feedback to and from future Committee meetings to ensure there is a two-way dialogue.

Committee also agreed to convene a Special Meeting to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on the Dogs Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) before Cabinet made any decisions. The meeting was highly emotive but was successful in helping Members to understand the wider implications of the PSPO, resulting in Committee agreeing that it should not be implemented.

Members of the Committee also heard a Call-in relating to the Local Plan and a recommendation for the Cabinet Member was agreed at this meeting which included the formation for a cross-party working group to ensure Members were engaged. Members also benefitted from receiving Local Plan updates at Committee as a standing item.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS 2018/19

The key achievements for Scrutiny during the 2018/19 Municipal Year are detailed below:

Commercial Strategy

Members had an opportunity to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on the Council's Commercial Strategy resulting in a better understanding of the Council's commercial approach. An outcome from the scrutiny workshop was the need for Member development to include commercialisation training. This was delivered in December 2018 and it is proposed to deliver another session in the new municipal year.

Risk Management

In October 2018, the Scrutiny Team arranged for risk management training to be delivered as part of the wider Member Development programme. This training was designed to develop Members understanding of risk and how it might play a greater role within overview and scrutiny work. As a result, risk has been incorporated into annual work programming and review scoping documentation to ensure it is considered at all stages of scrutiny.

Wirral Flood and Water Management Partnership

The Scrutiny Team engaged with Council Officers to revise the terms of reference for the Partnership to establish a formal link with Committee for elected member oversight of local flood and coastal erosion risk management activities. A cross-party working group was appointed with representatives from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This fulfils the Legal Requirement for O&S.

Wirral Growth Company

Overview & Scrutiny Members were able to engage with Senior Council Officers and a delegation of representatives from Muse which provided positive feedback from Members on how the Wirral Growth Company will operate, highlighting some of the key developments in the pipeline for scrutiny moving forward.

Clinical Senate

Clinical Senates are multi-disciplinary clinical teams that provide independent advice and strategic guidance to Commissioners to bring about improvement decision making within the health care sector for local populations. In July 2018, a workshop was held for Scrutiny Members in order that they may gain an increased understanding of Clinical Senates and how they can assist Scrutiny in ensuring that informed and effective decisions are made. At the request of the Adult Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the North West Clinical Senate report into Urgent Care proposals in Wirral was added to the work programme.

Joint Health Scrutiny with Cheshire West & Chester

As part of the pre-decision scrutiny process around Urgent Care Review proposals in Wirral, a joint Committee with Cheshire West and Chester Council took place this year, as per the protocol for establishment of joint health scrutiny arrangements for Cheshire and Merseyside. The joint Committee held health partners to account by carrying out in-depth scrutiny into the options considered, demanding further detail and seeking assurance that the proposals would meet the health and wellbeing needs of the people of Wirral and Cheshire. A further meeting of the joint Committee was proposed for the 2019/20 municipal year.

Modern Slavery

A Task & Finish Scrutiny Review was completed on Modern Slavery. This increased understanding of the implications of the Modern Slavery Act for Wirral Council and its partners. Members of the Review Panel were able to influence and review the draft Modern Slavery Strategy prior to referral to Cabinet.

Scrutiny Communications

The 'Scrutiny Bulletin', a bi-monthly e-bulletin providing updates on the latest scrutiny developments at Wirral and across the country, was launched this year. The bulletin is primarily an informational tool for elected Members, but also acts as a communication device to keep Senior Officers and stakeholders updated on scrutiny events, ensuring awareness of scrutiny's role and purpose across the authority. The bulletin has maintained a good engagement rate throughout the year.

Scrutiny Members have access to an intranet page including a set of tools covering all aspects of scrutiny such as a Scrutiny Toolkit, a Scrutiny Library and easy access to published Scrutiny Reviews. A Scrutiny training session on 'Delivering Effective Scrutiny' is provided to all new Members. In addition, regular updates, training opportunities and best practice guides from the Centre for Public Scrutiny and other scrutiny networks are circulated to Members.

<http://wbcnet.admin.ad.wirral.gov.uk/governance/scrutiny>

National Publication

Wirral Overview and Scrutiny was featured as part of a national publication promoting scrutiny excellence and innovation - 'Scrutiny Frontiers 2019'. The Centre for Public Scrutiny, an organisation providing expertise on governance and scrutiny, included Wirral's Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny 'Reality Check Visit' programme, as an example of successful and effective scrutiny (Appendix 4).

Health & Care Performance Panel

The Health and Care Performance Panel was re-established this year as a means of undertaking in-depth scrutiny into the activity of health partners in Wirral. The Panel has supported the Adult Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee by examining and evaluating health and social care performance issues across the Borough. Over the course of the year, the Panel has made a significant impact; including involvement in improvements to suicide reporting processes in Wirral, effectively monitoring the delivery of Wirral NHS Trust CQC action plans and valuable engagement with service users through a Member visit to the Pensby Wood Day Centre.

Children's Services Improvement Journey

Members closely monitor work in support of the improvements within Children Services through the programme of reality check visits and the Director for Children Services improvement journey updates, (which are brought to every Committee). These presentations contain the most recent and up to date information from Ofsted monitoring visits, the improvement board, service changes and information from the 'data book' which is made available to members of the Committee.

Wirral Plan

Scrutiny has maintained a clear focus on supporting the effective delivery of the Wirral Plan. Each Committee reviews performance against the Pledges under their identified Wirral Plan theme with

an opportunity to receive detailed updates from Pledge leads on progress and challenges in specific areas. For example, Children and Families O&S Committee reviewed progress related to Childhood Obesity and the Adult Committee on smoking cessation.

Cross Party Collaboration

Committee Chairs continued with their practice of holding agenda setting meetings with party spokespersons prior to formal Committee meetings. This provided the opportunity for all groups to influence the shape of agendas and the scrutiny work programme throughout the year. Joint Chairs' and Party Spokespersons meetings have also been convened to focus on areas for improvement and development.

Budget Scrutiny

Following a review of the budget scrutiny process by the Scrutiny Team in 2017/18, an improved approach was introduced in order to review the 2019/20 budget proposals – with a series of dedicated workshops taking place in January 2019. Comprehensive pre-decision scrutiny took place around proposals within the remit of each of the four Committees, with several outcomes – such as a request to look in more detail at the cost of placements for looked after children. The Scrutiny Chairs feedback reflected their approval of the improved process for budget scrutiny in 2018/19, and their appreciation at being able to hold effective discussions with Officers around budget options.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wirral has three Members sitting on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee and a work programme was completed in 2018/19. In addition to the Committee meetings, several workshops were undertaken relating to the Housing Strategy, the effectiveness of the Careers Service and Tourism, Culture and Marketing the City Region.

Member Development

A range of member development opportunities for O&S Members were held in 2018/19 including:

- Clinical Senate workshop – 18th July 2018
- National Health Scrutiny & Assurance Conference – 14th September 2019
- Risk workshop – 2nd October 2018
- Chairs Training by the Centre for Public Scrutiny – 31st January 2019
- Newly elected members support – all new members were offered O&S training.

THE IMPACT OF SCRUTINY IN 2018/19

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Scrutiny Committee Meetings	Scope
5 regular Committee meetings	<p>To review and scrutinise the strategies and plans associated with Children and Families within the People theme of the Wirral Plan. To review and scrutinise the commissioning, management and performance of services under this remit. Support/Governance of the Council’s response to the outcome of the 2016 Ofsted inspection and Children’s Services improvement journey.</p> <p>This has included a combination of standing items and items identified by the Chair and Party Spokespersons for Committee agendas. See appendix 3 for the full list of reports received during the year.</p>

Scrutiny Work Outside Committee Meetings	Scope	Outcome
July and August 2018. Mental Health Primary Care Commissioning Workshop.	To review the service specification of the IAPT/Primary Care mental health contract prior to the tendering process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioners noted Member comments to engage more with community links, and to utilise housing associations and employers to maximise the take-up of mental health services at the point of need. A more engaged service specification that ensures Wirral residents have access to a mental health service that they need, when they need it – the new contract is a departure from the idea that there can be a ‘one size fits all’ commissioning approach for Wirral.
July 2019. Clinical Senate Workshop.	Use of Clinical Senates to provide independent, strategic advice to Members of scrutiny.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ongoing</i>– Potential for the local Clinical Senate to be involved a review of health and care service commissioning in 2019/20.
Reality Checks – Visits to a range of services to raise Member awareness of issues and to engage with service users and frontline officers. These visits	<p>The Committee agreed 3 reality checks in priority areas in Children’s Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2018 – Cheshire Lines. December 2018 – St. Catherine’s Hospital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheshire Lines - Member visit to see new co-location of Children’s services and view a demonstration of agile working equipment. Visit to St. Catherine’s Hospital – Members visited safeguarding officers at St. Catherine’s Hospital, Birkenhead · They met with frontline practitioners and toured the facility.

Scrutiny Work Outside Committee Meetings	Scope	Outcome
<p>allow a greater understanding of key concerns.</p> <p>The visits from 2017/18 were followed up with an update report to Committee in November 2018 providing the opportunity to check on the progress of recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2019 - Merseyside Police. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merseyside Police – Visit to Birkenhead Police Station to meet with the Domestic Violence Team, followed by a visit to the Solar Campus to visit the MASH and Early Help Teams.
<p>October 2018 – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Workshop</p>	<p>Members looked at the ‘future in mind’ Mental Health Programme and CAMHS provision in Wirral.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reciprocal arrangement between scrutiny and Wirral CCG to share information that may be of interest to either. The CAMHS quarterly newsletter will be circulated when available.
<p>Budget Scrutiny Workshop</p>	<p>Members were given an overview of the proposed budget saving options for Children & Families for the 2019/20 financial year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All recommended savings were approved by committee.
<p>Future Multi-Agency Safeguarding arrangements.</p>	<p>Members attended a workshop presented by the Business Manager of WSCB to gain an overview of the new statutory arrangements and the future role of scrutiny.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Memorandum of Understanding circulated to members for agreement at Committee. O&S to be included within new arrangements – details of which are to be confirmed.
<p>Joint Pooled funding Workshop with Adult Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>Joint workshop to look at the pooled funding and section 75 proposals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All recommendations were approved by Committee.
<p>Scrutiny Review into Statutory Care Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A member review of care planning within the Borough. Members have undertaken a session where they looked at individual care 	<p>Ongoing. The report and recommendations are due to go to Committee in July 2019</p>

Scrutiny Work Outside Committee Meetings	Scope	Outcome
	<p>plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members have also met with the Children in Care Council and spoke with a group of care leavers. • Members also met with various stakeholders' form Children Services & Partner organisations to discuss Care Planning. 	

ADULT HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Scrutiny Committee Meetings	Scope
5 regular Committee meetings	To review and scrutinise the strategies and plans associated with Adult Health and Care within the People theme of the Wirral Plan. To fulfil the statutory duty to undertake the scrutiny of delivery of local health services. To review and scrutinise the commissioning, management and performance of services under this remit. This has included a combination of standing items and items identified by the Chair and Party Spokespersons for Committee agendas. See appendix 3 for the full list of reports received during the year.
Call-in Meeting – Pooled Fund Section 75 Arrangements 2018/19	To consider the decision taken by the Joint Strategic Commissioning Board (Cabinet Committee) on 16 October 2018 relating to ‘Wirral Health and Care Commissioning Pooled Fund Arrangements’ which had been called-in in accordance with Council Procedure Rule / Standing Order 35.
Special Meeting – Urgent Care Review	To consider Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group’s proposals for Urgent Care Services in Wirral, and to gather information on the public consultation exercise that was undertaken alongside these proposals.

Scrutiny Work Outside Committee Meetings	Scope	Outcome
Continuing Healthcare (CHC) Scrutiny Review	<p>The aim was to evaluate the impact of CHC on clients and their families, focussing on both the process and funding outcomes. The anticipated outcomes were for Members to be assured about the effectiveness of the local service provision.</p> <p>Wirral CCG accepted all 7 scrutiny recommendations, with the CCG Quality and Performance Team using the report as the basis of an action plan. In March 2019, a progress update was presented to Members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication processes between Wirral CCG and partner organisations. • Enhanced performance and cost savings, along with improved end of life care, increased equality for CHC clients with learning disabilities and consistency of application of the CHC framework.

Scrutiny Work Outside Committee Meetings	Scope	Outcome
Workshop - Integrated Mental Health Service Procurement	To review the service specification of the 'Improving Access to Psychological Therapies' (IAPT) and primary care mental health contract prior to the tendering process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working with partners to address challenges of the existing service provision, and design of an effective future service model. • Members suggested further engagement with community links, and utilisation of housing associations and employers to maximise the take up of mental health services at the point of need. These suggestions were included in the finalised tendering document.
Workshop - Pooled Fund Section 75 Arrangements 2019/20	<p>To illustrate proposed pooled funding arrangements for 2019/20 and enable scrutiny of the proposed pooled fund.</p> <p>Wirral Health and Care Commissioning accepted all 6 scrutiny recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved transparency and accountability of health partners, with the introduction of pooled fund budget performance reporting to overview & scrutiny. • Increased scrutiny of the local delivery of the 'NHS Long Term Plan'. • Improved future engagement with service users and external stakeholders.
Reality Check Visit	Member visit to the Pensby Wood Day Centre for people with Profound Multiple learning Disabilities, in order to review the impact of £1.2m capital investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Member awareness and engagement with those receiving care and support. • Greater understanding of key concerns, particularly in the context of Wirral Council's first local authority company (LAC) Wirral Evolutions. • Future reports to overview & scrutiny on high level plans of Wirral Evolutions.
Quality Accounts 2018/19	To scrutinise the draft quality account reports of local health providers; Wirral Community Trust, Wirral University Teaching Hospital, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust and Clatterbridge Cancer Centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced relationships between O&S and local health providers. • Improved accountability and review of key issues within quality of healthcare services. • Members highlighted the need for improved staff engagement at four NHS Trusts.

Scrutiny Work Outside Committee Meetings	Scope	Outcome
Budget Scrutiny Workshop	Dedicated scrutiny workshop for Members to consider a number of budget proposals within the remit of the Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members had the opportunity to consider a number of budget proposals as part of pre-decisions scrutiny. • Members had a better understanding of the business cases for the decisions to be taken. • Cabinet considered the scrutiny work undertaken as part of the decision-making process.

BUSINESS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Scrutiny Committee Meetings	Scope
5 regular Committee meetings	To review and scrutinise the strategies and plans associated with the Business theme of the Wirral Plan. To review and scrutinise the commissioning, management and performance of services under the Business Committee remit. This has included a combination of standing items and items identified by the Chair and Party Spokespersons for Committee agendas. See appendix 3 for the full list of reports received during the year.

Scrutiny Work Outside Committee Meetings	Scope	Outcome
Wirral Waters Scrutiny Workshop	A Scrutiny Workshop was convened for Members of both the Business and Environment O&S Committees. The objective was to scrutinise the latest developments around Wirral Waters. Attendance included key senior Council Officers and representatives from Peel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members provided constructive comments on the developments and were generally assured on the progress of the schemes. • The workshop highlighted the need for regular reporting on the individual projects and the need for timelines to be provided to members to enable scrutiny to be more focussed.
Commercial Strategy Scrutiny Workshop	A workshop was convened to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on the Council's Commercial Strategy. Key Senior Council Officers attended to present the strategy to Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members provided constructive comments on the developments and were generally assured on the progress of the schemes. • The workshop highlighted the need for regular reporting on the individual projects and the need for timelines to be provided to members to enable scrutiny to be more focussed.
Council Company Governance Workshop	Following a resolution passed by the Committee, a workshop session was provided to all Members on Council Code of Practice for the Governance of Council Interests in Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members had the opportunity to understand the principles of good governance. • Members understood how scrutiny can be conducted on local authority interests as part of the future work programme.

Scrutiny Work Outside Committee Meetings	Scope	Outcome
Universal Credit Scrutiny Workshops	Scrutiny Workshops were held for Members to understand the impact of Universal Credit with key external organisations, including Wirral Foodbank, Wirral Citizens Advice and Magenta Living and Council Officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee agreed a recommendation to endorse a series of actions suggested by stakeholders, including lobbying to Government with a number of ‘asks’. • Members highlighted the need for further workshops to gauge the fuller impact of Universal Credit moving forward.
Budget Scrutiny Workshop	Dedicated scrutiny workshop for Members to consider a number of budget proposals within the remit of the Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members had the opportunity to consider a number of budget proposals as part of pre-decision scrutiny. • Members had a better understanding of the business cases for the decisions to be taken. • Cabinet considered the scrutiny work undertaken as part of the decision-making process.
Wirral Growth Company Scrutiny Workshop	Dedicated scrutiny workshop for Members to understand and scrutinise the delivery of Wirral Growth Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members were given the opportunity to meet and engage with key representatives from Muse • Members gained invaluable insight into the governance arrangements and future plans of the Wirral Growth Company.

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Scrutiny Committee Meetings	Scope
5 regular Committee meetings	<p>To review and scrutinise the strategies and plans associated with the Environment theme of the Wirral Plan. To review and scrutinise the commissioning, management and performance of services under the Environment Committee remit.</p> <p>This has included a combination of standing items and items identified by the Chair and Party Spokespersons for committee agendas. See appendix 3 for the full list of reports received during the year.</p>
Special Meeting - Local Plan	<p>Members requested a Special Meeting to discuss a letter received by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government which stated that Government had started the formal process of considering intervention for Wirral Council because of Council's failure to adopt the 2004 Local Plan Act.</p>
Special Meeting - Grass Cutting and Weed Clearance Programme	<p>Members requested a Special meeting to discuss a number of issues raised in relation to Wirral's grass cutting and weed clearance programme and the impact on a number of areas within the Borough.</p>
Call-In of the Delivery of the Environmental Enforcement Contract	<p>Cabinet's decision to approve the appointment of Kingdom Environmental Services for the delivery of the Environmental Enforcement Contract for a period of 3 (three) years with the option to extend the contract (conditional) for a further 3 (three) years was called in by Members.</p>
Special Meeting - Dogs Public Spaces Protection Order	<p>A Special Meeting was convened in order to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the Cabinet Member's proposal to introduce PSPO in Wirral to tackle anti-social behaviour in relation to irresponsible dog ownership.</p>

Scrutiny Work Outside Committee Meetings	Scope	Outcome
Single Use Plastics Committee Meeting Agenda Item	O&S Members to consider proposals for the Single Use Plastic Free Wirral Policy and to provide comments to the Cabinet Member for review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview & Scrutiny helped to inform the SUP Policy, recommending arrangements for consultation and engagement with local supermarkets to encourage the SUP agenda. This was acknowledged by the Cabinet member and added to the Policy.
Scrutiny of Flood Management & Flood Risk	Terms of Reference developed for embedding scrutiny into the Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Terms of Reference developed, embedding scrutiny within the Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership. • Committee agreed for Chair and Party Spokespersons to represent scrutiny on the Partnership. • First Partnership meeting held in February 2019.
Modern Slavery Task & Finish Scrutiny Review	The Review Panel's objectives in doing this work were to understand the implications of the Modern Slavery and the Act for Wirral Council and its partners and to present a series of recommendations designed to shape or influence Council policy on modern slavery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Review Panel influenced the development of the Modern Slavery Strategy through the work it undertook and had the opportunity to consider the final draft strategy. • Members will ensure the delivery of the Modern Slavery Action plan will be monitored on its impact.
Recycling Task & Finish Scrutiny Review (Ongoing)	The Review Panel's objective was to consider how to improve Wirral's current recycling rate which has declined in recent years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Review has been completed and a report will be referred to Committee in July 2019 with a series of recommendations to build on the Council's approach to recycling and look to increase its recycling rate.
Budget Scrutiny Workshop	Dedicated scrutiny workshop for Members to consider a number of budget proposals within the remit of the Committee and report back to Cabinet as part of its budget decision making process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report of the scrutiny workshop was developed and considered by Cabinet as part of the budget setting process. • Future planning will look to further strengthen the quality of financial information presented to scrutiny in the new municipal year.

SCRUTINY IN 2019/20

In 2019/20 developments are underway regarding O&S in Wirral. Scrutiny chairing arrangements were reviewed following the election and scrutiny chairs are now members of opposition parties. A review of Scrutiny is also planned to be undertaken by the Business O&S Committee; due to report in September 2019.

Government Overview and Scrutiny Statutory Guidance was published in May 2019. Local Authorities must have regard to it when exercising their functions, but it does recognise that they are best placed to determine their own scrutiny arrangements. The guidance highlights best practice arrangements for carrying out effective scrutiny. Work is already in place in Wirral in key areas outlined in the guidance including work prioritisation methodology, partnership engagement, pre-decision scrutiny and planning effective reviews and evidence sessions. A review of the guidance has been undertaken by the Scrutiny Team to work with Members to ensure scrutiny practice in Wirral is aligned.

In the coming year the scrutiny function will continue to prioritise supporting the effective delivery of the Wirral Plan, improving outcomes for Wirral residents and maintain a focus on pre-decision scrutiny of major programmes of work.

The scrutiny function will continue to focus on delivering the following outcomes:

- The Council's Executive is held to account.
- Partner agencies are held to account.
- Good governance is maintained.
- Decision-making is improved.
- Policy is developed and enhanced.
- Service improvements are identified and implemented.
- Resident or service user feedback is used to influence change.
- Members are informed about the quality or effectiveness of services.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TABLE OF COMPLETED / INITIATED SCRUTINY ACTIVITY IN 2018/19

Item	Format	Committee	Timescale
Camper Vans	Task & Finish Review	Business	Ongoing. Scheduled to be completed in September 2019
Wirral Growth Company	Workshop	Business	Completed February 2019
Wirral Waters	Workshop	Business	Completed November 2018.
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Regional Committee	Business	4 meetings during 2018/19
Commercial Strategy (Pre-decision Scrutiny)	Pre-decision scrutiny Workshop	Business	Completed August 2019
Universal Credit	Workshop	Business	Completed February 2018. Report to Committee September 2019
Modern Slavery	Task & Finish Review	Environment	Completed October 2018
Recycling	Task & Finish	Environment	Initiated September 2019. Scheduled for completion May 2019
Dogs Public Space Protection Order (Pre-Decision Scrutiny)	Special Meeting	Environment	Meeting convened on 13th January 2019
Continuing Healthcare (CHC)	Task & Finish Review	Adult Care & Health	Report to Committee June 2018
Respite Services	Task & Finish Review	Adult Care & Health	Review suspended June 2018
Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Service Review	Workshop	Adult Care & Health	Completed July 2018

Item	Format	Committee	Timescale
Clinical Senate	Workshop	Adult Care and Health	Completed July 2018
Establishment of the Health and Care Performance Panel	Sub-Committee	Adult Care and Health	Established June 2018 with four meetings in 2018/19 - Ongoing
Urgent Care Review	Special Meeting	Adult Care and Health	Completed November 2018
Pooled Fund Section 75 Arrangements	Workshop	Adult Care and Health	Completed January 2019
Reality Check – Pensby Wood	Reality check	Adult Care & Health	Completed February 2019
Statutory Care Plan	Task & Finish Review	Children & Families O&S	Initiated October 2017. Scheduled completion July 2019
Reality Check – Cheshire Lines	Reality Check	Children & Families O&S	Completed August 2018
‘Future in Mind’ Wirral CAMHS	Workshop	Children & Families O&S	Completed October 2018
Reality Check – St. Catherine’s Hospital	Reality Check	Children & Families O&S	Completed December 2019
Reality Check – Merseyside Police	Reality Check	Children & Families O&S	Completed March 2019
New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements	Workshop	Children & Families O&S	Completed March 2019
Budget Scrutiny	Workshops	All Committees	Completed January 2019

APPENDIX 2: CALL-IN MEETINGS AND NOTICES OF MOTION

Call-In Meetings

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Date
Delivery of the Environmental Enforcement Contract	17/07/2018
The Local Plan	07/02/2019
Adult Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date
Pooled Fund Section 75 Arrangements	27/11/2018

Special Meetings

Adult Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date
Urgent Care Review	12/11/2018
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Date
Grass Cutting and Weed Clearance Programme	05/07/2018
Dogs Public Spaces Protection Order	15/01/2019

Notices of Motion

No notices of motion	
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APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEMS 2018/19

Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Title	Format	Date
Management of Camper Vans at Coastal Locations	Officer Report	04/07/2018
Re-commissioning of Highway Services from October 2018	Officer Report	04/07/2018
Outcomes from China Visit 2016	Officer Report	04/07/2018
Early Impact of Universal Credit	Officer Report	04/07/2018
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Update	Officer Report	04/07/2018
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority - Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Officer Report	04/07/2018
2017/18 Quarter 4 and Year End Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	04/07/2018
Business OSC - Work Programme Update Report	Officer Report	04/07/2018
Appointment of the Highways Representation Panel	Officer Report	04/07/2018
2018/19 Q1 Financial Monitoring Report	Officer Report	09/18/2018
Early Impact of Universal Credit	Officer Report	09/18/2018
Use of Consultants and Interims	Officer Report	09/18/2018
Commercial Strategy Scrutiny Report	Officer Report	09/18/2018
Update on Liverpool City Region Developments	Verbal Update	09/18/2018
2018/19 Q1 Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	09/18/2018
Leader Decision Referral - Code of Practice for Governance of Council Interests in Companies	Officer Report	09/18/2018
Business OSC - Work Programme Update Report	Officer Report	09/18/2018
2018/19 Q2 Financial Monitoring Report	Officer Report	28/11/2018
Wirral Waters Scrutiny Workshop Report	Scrutiny Report	28/11/2018
Use of Consultants and Interims - Further Update	Officer Report	28/11/2018
Update on Liverpool City Region Developments	Officer Report	28/11/2018
2017/18 Quarter 2 and Year End Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	28/11/2018
Business OSC - Work Programme Update Report	Report of the Chair	28/11/2018
Highways Representation Panel Minutes	Officer Report	28/11/2018
Impact of Car Parking Charges in Country Parks	officer Report	22/01/2019
Investment and Change Board and the New Commercial Ideas Panel	Officer Presentation	22/01/2019
Budget Proposal Scrutiny Workshop Report	Scrutiny Report	22/01/2019
Update on Liverpool City Region Developments	Officer Report	22/01/2019
Highways Representation Panel Minutes	Panel Minutes	22/01/2019
Business OSC - Work Programme Update Report	Report of the Chair	22/01/2019
2018/19 Q3 Financial Monitoring Report	Officer Report	05/03/2019
Update on Liverpool City Region Developments	Officer Report	05/03/2019
Absence Management	Officer Report	05/03/2019
2017/18 Quarter 3 and Year End Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	05/03/2019
Business OSC - Work Programme Update Report	Report of the Chair	05/03/2019

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Title	Format	Date
Wirral Core Strategy Local Plan Progress Update	Officer Report	05/07/2018
Wirral View	Presentation	05/07/2018
The extent and impacts of fly tipping on Wirral	Officer Report	05/07/2018
Developing the Single Use Plastic Free Wirral Policy	Officer Report	05/07/2018
2017/18 Quarter 4 and Year End Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	05/07/2018
Environment OSC - Work Programme Update Report	Report of the Chair	05/07/2018
Financial Monitoring Report 2018/19 Quarter 1	Officer Report	20/09/2018
Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership	Officer Report	20/09/2018
2018/19 Quarter 1 Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	20/09/2018
Recycling in Wirral	Presentation	20/09/2018
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work programme	Report	20/09/2018
Wirral Core Strategy Local Plan progress update	Verbal Update	20/09/2018
Kingdom – Performance Update	Verbal Update	20/09/2018
Environment OSC - Work Programme Update Report	Report of the Chair	20/09/2018
Modern Slavery Scrutiny Review Report	Report of the Review Panel	29/11/2018
Financial Monitoring Report 2018/19 Quarter 2	Officer Report	29/11/2018
Kingdom – Performance Update	Verbal Update	29/11/2018
Leisure and Cultural Services Review	Officer Report	29/11/2018
Climate Change Annual Report and Action Plan	Officer Report	29/11/2018
2018/19 Quarter 2 Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	29/11/2018
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work programme	Report of the Chair	29/11/2018
Local Plan Update	Verbal Update	30/01/2019
Overview of Environmental Enforcement Contract	Presentation	30/01/2019
Budget Proposals Scrutiny Workshop Report	Scrutiny report	30/01/2019
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work programme	Report of the Chair	30/01/2019
Local Plan Update	Verbal Update	13/03/2019
Overview of Trade Waste Enforcement	Verbal Update	13/03/2019
Financial Monitoring Report 2018/19 Quarter 3	Officer Report	13/03/2019
Smoke free Wirral	Officer Report	13/03/2019
2018/19 Quarter 3 Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	13/03/2019
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work programme	Report of the Chair	13/03/2019

Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Title	Format	Date
2017/18 Quarter 4 and Year End Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	03/07/2018
Improvement Journey - Update	Presentation	03/07/2018
Wirral Improvement Board Databook	Officer Report	03/07/2018
Children & Families OSC - Work Programme Update Report	Officer Report	03/07/2018
2018/19 Quarter 1 performance	Officer Report	25/09/2018
Summary of standards - provisional outcomes for early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2	Officer Report	25/09/2018
Elective Home Education	Presentation	25/09/2018
Financial Update Q1	Officer Report	25/09/2018
Cheshire Lines Reality Check Update	Officer Report	25/09/2018
Children & Families OSC - Work Programme Update Report	Report of the Chair	25/09/2018
2018/19 Quarter 2 Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	13/11/2018/
Improvement Journey, Data Book & all age disability update	Presentation	13/11/2018
Safeguarding Annual Report	Officer Report	13/11/2018
Future Safeguarding arrangements	Officer Report	13/11/2018
Reality Check Update Reports	Officer Report	13/11/2018
Financial update Q2	Officer Report	13/11/2018
Improvement Journey and Data Tracker Update	Presentation	24/01/2019
Summary of standards provisional outcomes for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5	Officer Report	24/01/2019
Participation and destination analysis of Wirral Young People aged 16 to 19	Officer Report	24/01/2019
Improving Life Chances Strategy	Officer Report	24/01/2019
Local Action to Tackle Obesity	Officer Report	24/01/2019
Reality Check report - St. Catherine's Hospital	Officer Report	24/01/2019
2019/2020 Budget Scrutiny Workshop Report	Officer Report	24/01/2019
Tackling Obesity	Officer Report	27/02/2019
2018/2019 Q3 Wirral Plan Performance	Officer Report	27/02/2019
Financial Monitoring report Q3	Officer Report	27/02/2019

Title	Format	Date
Wirral Fostering Service	Officer Report	27/02/2019
Early Help - Community Matters	Officer Report	27/02/2019
Future Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements - Workshop Report	Officer Report	27/02/2019

Adult Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Title	Type	Date
Performance Monitoring - 2017/18 Q4	Officer Report	27/06/18
Wirral University Teaching Hospitals - Financial Challenges Update	Verbal Update	27/06/18
Urgent Care Review – Pre-Consultation	Verbal Update	27/06/18
Re-Establishment of the Health and Care Performance Panel	Verbal Update	27/06/18
Continuing Healthcare Scrutiny Review	Officer Report	27/06/18
Adult Care and Health Work Programme Update Report	Officer Report	27/06/18
Financial Monitoring - 2018/19 Q1	Officer Report	12/09/18
Wirral University Teaching Hospitals - CQC Inspection	Officer Report	12/09/18
Seacombe Birthing Centre - Impact	Verbal Update	12/09/18
Wirral Community Trust - CQC Inspection	Officer Report	12/09/18
Urgent Care Consultation	Verbal Update	12/09/18
Integrated Social Care Transfer - Staff perspectives 12 months on	Verbal Update	12/09/18
Phlebotomy Service Update	Officer Report	12/09/18
Performance Monitoring - 2018/19 Q1	Officer Report	12/09/18
Health and Care Performance Panel - Terms of Reference	Officer Report	12/09/18
Adult Care and Health Work Programme Update Report	Officer Report	12/09/18
Urgent Care Consultation	Officer Report	12/11/18
Wirral Health and Care Commissioning Pooled Fund Section 75 Arrangements	Call In Meeting	27/11/18
Financial Monitoring - 2018/19 Q2	Officer Report	27/11/18
Musculoskeletal Integrated Triage Service Update	Officer Report	27/11/18
Annual Social Care Complaints Report 2017/18	Officer Report	27/11/18
Learning Disability Commissioning	Verbal Update	27/11/18
Performance Monitoring - 2018/19 Q2	Officer Report	27/11/18
Report of the Health and Care Performance Panel	Officer Report	27/11/18
Adult Care and Health Work Programme Update Report	Officer Report	27/11/18
Pooled Fund Section 75 Arrangements Scrutiny Workshop Report	Officer Report	29/01/19
Winter Pressure Arrangements at Clatterbridge	Officer Report	29/01/19
Local Delivery of the Five Year Forward View	Officer Report	29/01/19
Adults Safeguarding Annual Report 2017/18	Officer Report	29/01/19
Learning Disability Commissioning	Officer Report	29/01/19
Adult Care and Health Budget Scrutiny Workshop Report	Officer Report	29/01/19
Report of the Health and Care Performance Panel	Officer Report	29/01/19
Adult Care and Health Work Programme Update Report	Officer Report	29/01/19

Title	Type	Date
Phlebotomy Service Update	Officer Report	19/03/19
Financial Monitoring Report - 2018/19 Q3	Officer Report	19/03/19
Performance Monitoring - 2018/19 Q3	Officer Report	19/03/19
Extra Care Housing Delivery	Officer Report	19/03/19
Continuing Healthcare Scrutiny Review - Action Plan Follow Up	Officer Report	19/03/19
Review of Draft Quality Accounts 2018/19	Officer Report	19/03/19
Report of the Health and Care Performance Panel	Officer Report	19/03/19
Adult Care and Health Work Programme Update Report	Officer Report	19/03/19

APPENDIX 4: SCRUTINY FRONTIERS 2019 - WIRRAL REALITY CHECK VISITS

[Centre for Public Scrutiny - Scrutiny Frontiers 2019](#)



Councillor Tom Usher

Chair of Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

More than ever, Overview and Scrutiny Committees need to get under the skin of policy and strategic decisions. As Chair of my committee, I understand that the best way to scrutinise our service area is to visit the coalface of practice, meet with frontline staff and, where possible, service users themselves.

Following the inadequate Ofsted inspection of 2016, we considered possible approaches to gain a better picture of our business. Following this consultation, we developed a programme of Children's Services 'Reality Check' visits.

Benefits of the reality checks include improved understanding of services for vulnerable children and families, enhancing engagement with partner organisations and aiding assessment of integrated health and care. The approach enables triangulation of evidence from different sources to ensure scrutiny receives a robust and comprehensive picture on which to base their recommendations.

Visits are planned based on intelligence including Ofsted inspection findings, safeguarding arrangements and integration of health and care services. The visits are focused on the work of relevant stakeholders, including:

- Health Safeguarding Leads for Children Looked After
- Frontline Children's Social Workers across all service areas
- The Leaving Care Team - staff directly supporting young people leaving care
- The Early Help Service
- Children's Centres including a nationally pioneering community birthing centre.

Through the programme, Scrutiny also reviewed the tools and information that social workers access, ensuring case management systems and performance analysis are fit for purpose and used systematically. We also included an assessment of new agile working equipment designed to improve working practices.

Visits are co-operative and health partners have seen the value and invited scrutiny to visit. This is evidence of their real value, not only for members but also frontline staff who have felt their views are under-represented.

Visits seek to improve the effectiveness of services for our children and families. We have highlighted the importance of collaborative working, the wide-reaching role of the Corporate Parent and have sought reassurance that the child's voice is paramount.

Recommendations made include improving pathway plans to ensure care leavers' voices are captured. We have addressed concerns regarding re-referral rates to social services, putting in place an action plan monitored through Committee. We have identified concerns about staff communication and recommended co-location of staff across the borough and this has been implemented across children's services. Development of staff IT training has been endorsed and encouraged by scrutiny and agile working is now being introduced throughout the Local Authority. All recommendations were fully accepted by all agencies and are shared with the Cabinet Member and Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

There is always a risk that once the visits have concluded, services go back to 'business as usual'. I ask for regular update reports, so committee gets the opportunity to check on the status of recommendations. To date everything had been delivered or is on track.

Reality check visits encourage a culture that allows us to gain assurance that children's services are providing the best outcomes for our children and young people. As recommendations and reports are made in partnership with the services visited, it has evolved into a collaborative approach.

Overview and Scrutiny on Wirral has a strong culture of cross-party collaboration, robust pre-decision scrutiny, a clear focus on outcomes for residents and ensuring scrutiny has real impact. Scrutiny is at its most powerful when it is bold, innovative and visible to all parties. It promotes a culture of transparency and openness, embracing different perspectives. I am proud as Chair, to have contributed to entrenching a culture of due-diligence and delivering tangible outcomes for residents.