

# Overview and Scrutiny Newsletter

Issue 1 November 2004

## Welcome from Cllr Dawson

I am pleased to introduce the first Overview and Scrutiny Newsletter, which I hope you will find useful in bringing you up to date with latest developments.

We hope to produce an edition 3 or 4 times a year, to let you know about the type of work we are involved in and how the various items on the work programme are progressing.

As well as keeping you informed, we hope that you will use this as an opportunity to give us some feedback on how we can make Scrutiny more effective.

Now that the role of Scrutiny has become more established, it is our aim to see Scrutiny fully integrated and used to be of benefit by all, and that means not just Councillors and Senior Officers but Citizens of Salford, Businesses, Service partners, and Council employees.

I hope that this newsletter will raise awareness of the valuable role which Overview and Scrutiny plays and how we are continually striving for improvements.

Councillor Dawson is Chair of the Scrutiny Chairs Group.

## Scrutiny Chairs Group

The six scrutiny chairs meet on a monthly basis to act as a co-ordinating body across the committees and to ensure they:

- Maintain effective communications with the Executive via the attendance of the Leader/deputy Leader
- Oversee and lead on the continued development of the Overview and Scrutiny function within the City Council
- Discuss the Cabinet Workplan and Forward Plan
- Determine the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s) for any cross-cutting/thematic work programme issue
- Agree the establishment of any Scrutiny Commissions
- Monitor and evaluate outcomes from Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- Share good practice between the Scrutiny committees

## How does it work?

Six Overview and Scrutiny committees have been established to oversee the work of the Cabinet, Lead Members and other agencies and importantly to ensure that the Council's performance is monitored and that the policies, plans and practices are developed properly and carried out effectively.

The Scrutiny Committees normally meet once a month. They are made up of 13 elected members and they can enlist the assistance of co-opted members who are able to give advice and share specialist knowledge.

Committees may appoint sub-groups or Scrutiny Panels to look at specific items. Cross cutting issues, which could involve two or more committees, can be examined by Scrutiny Commissions, or reviews, which involve members from different committees.

Scrutiny is also about helping the Council to work with local people, service partners, other businesses, organisations and voluntary/community groups, to improve the quality of life in Salford.

# New Structure

Following a recent review of governance, there have been some slight changes to our Overview and Scrutiny Committees, to ensure alignment with our Directorates and make more explicit our links to the Council's 7 Pledges. These are explained in the table below:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Pledge(s)	Directorate(s)
Budget and Audit Chair - Cllr David Jolley	All	All
Children's Services Chair - Cllr Bernard Pennington	Investing in Young People Encourage Learning and Creativity	Children's Services
Community, Health and Social Care Chair - Cllr Bernard Murphy	Improving Health Promoting Inclusion	Community Health and Social Care
Customer and Support Services Chair - Cllr James Dawson	All	Customer and Support Services
Environment, Housing and Planning Chair - Cllr Roger Lightup	Enhancing Life	Environment Housing and Planning
Strategy and Regeneration Chair - Cllr Susan Slater	Creating Prosperity Reducing Crime	Chief Executive's

**Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will take the lead in undertaking the overview and scrutiny function in respect of**

- The City Council Pledges
- Services provided within the relevant directorate.

## Scrutiny Conference

This year's scrutiny conference will take place at the Monton House Hotel on 23 November. Delegates include colleagues from partner agencies, as well as elected members and Council colleagues from a range of services. In addition to input from the Leader and Chief Executive on their vision for Scrutiny, we are pleased that several guest speakers from external agencies will be relating their experiences of their involvement with Scrutiny.

## Member Training

Training for members within scrutiny is important, as this is still a fairly new role and requires members to deal with issues in different ways to the previous committees.

As part of the Member Training Programme a session has been organised on the 29th November, at the Civic Centre Swinton commencing at 2.00pm. This session is being run by North West Employers and will cover the following:

- Planning and scoping the work programme to make the process more effective
- Identifying different ways of working
- How to manage and research information

Further sessions on e-learning have also been arranged with staff in the Centre of Excellence for an hour before each of the Scrutiny meetings in December.

# Work Programmes 2004/05

Each committee will develop its own work programme for the year, taking information from a variety of sources to focus on issues of priority. Some of the key issues we will be looking at this year include:

- The Council as a Corporate Parent
- Recycling
- Access to GPs
- Crime and Disorder Issues
- Young People and Bullying
- Budget Consultation
- Young People and Obesity

## Corporate Parenting

A Scrutiny Commission is to be established, with membership across a number of Scrutiny Committees, to investigate the Council's response to Corporate Parenting

"Corporate Parenting" emphasises the collective responsibility of Local Authorities to achieve good parenting for all children in their care - an essential part of which is to safeguard and promote education. The Commission will benefit from an "expert adviser" from the School of Community, Health Sciences and Social Care at Salford University.

For further information please contact Carole Chapman on 793 3316.

## Budget Consultation

The committee has an important role to play when the city council's budget for the coming year is developing. They are concerned that public consultation on the budget is a robust and worthwhile exercise, for the public and for the City Council. For the 2005/06 budget the committee has asked that in addition to public meetings, consultation be incorporated into the meetings of the Community Committees. This is an ongoing piece of work. The committee will continue to review and improve the exercise each year.

For further information please contact Peter Kidd on 793 3322.

## Young People and Bullying

A special meeting has been organised in relation to Young People and Bullying and will take place on Friday 26th November 2004.

The aim of the meeting is to share good practice with other external agencies therefore representatives from the NSPCC, Manchester Education Partnership and Wigan Behaviour Support Team will be attending.

If you would like further details of this meeting please contact Carole Chapman on 0161-793-3316

## Recycling, Waste Management and Green Procurement

The Scrutiny Committee has set up a group to start to look at recycling within Salford. The first meeting is on the 24th November 2004 at the Civic Centre.

As recycling is such a big area of work, it is likely that the group will choose specific areas of recycling to look at, especially in terms of the purchasing of recycled goods.

Once the scope of the work has been agreed at the first meeting, members of the forum will consult existing groups to talk about recycling in order to gain the perspectives and experiences of the public.

If you are interested in contributing to this work and would like any further information, then please contact Linda Sharples on 793 3324.

## Commission on Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Salford City Council carried out a scrutiny commission in 2003 to investigate the experience of the city's growing population of asylum seekers and refugees.

The Commission - one of the first of its kind - has been established to look into what services are provided to asylum seekers and refugees. The commission produced recommendations as to how the City Council and other agencies can work together to ensure that the best services are provided and that any negative impact on existing services in the City is minimised.

On Tuesday 30 November 2004, Members and officers will meet to review progress on the recommendations made by the commission.

# Positive Reports from the Professor

Professor Steve Leach of De Montford University was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of specific aspects of the Council's political management structures and processes, which included:

The effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny.

The linkages between Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive.

The role of Community Committees in Overview and Scrutiny.

The review took place at the beginning of 2004 and involved observation of a number of Overview and Scrutiny and Community Committee meetings, focus groups and individual interviews with relevant chairs, members and officers and a review of various literature, such as agendas, reports and press coverage.

We were pleased to welcome Professor Leach to the Civic Centre on 22 October, where he presented his findings and took part in an interesting and wide ranging discussion with members.

An action plan is now being developed in response to the report's recommendations. This will address issues including

- the relationship between the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny.
- officer support.
- member training
- The role and function of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- public involvement in scrutiny.

## Scrutiny makes the Big Screen

We are pleased to report that Overview and Scrutiny will be featured in a one-minute advert on the new plasma screen in the Treasury Building. This is helping us work towards our objective of raising awareness and understanding of Overview and Scrutiny and increasing public involvement.

## Contact details

### General enquiries can be e-mailed to:

[scrutiny.support@salford.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny.support@salford.gov.uk).

Alternatively, if you wish to raise a specific matter with a particular scrutiny committee, the individual committee contacts are:

### Budget and Audit

Monitoring the council's budgetary processes  
[peter.kidd@salford.gov.uk](mailto:peter.kidd@salford.gov.uk), 0161-793 3324

### Strategy and Regeneration

Working to make Salford a safer and more prosperous place to live and work  
[karen.lucas@salford.gov.uk](mailto:karen.lucas@salford.gov.uk), 0161-793 3318

### Children's Services

Aiming for every child to get the best possible start in life, as well as supporting young people, they work closely with the Education and Leisure Directorate to oversee service delivery  
[carole.chapman@salford.gov.uk](mailto:carole.chapman@salford.gov.uk), 0161-793 3316

### Customer and Support Services

Working with council directorates to measure efficiency and statutory compliance, making sure that public money is spent effectively by providing value for money services  
[peter.kidd@salford.gov.uk](mailto:peter.kidd@salford.gov.uk), 0161-793 3322

### Community, Health and Social Care

Working with the Community, Health & Social Care Directorate and NHS organisations to help make Salford a healthier city in which to live  
[karen.dainty@salford.gov.uk](mailto:karen.dainty@salford.gov.uk), 0161-793 2513

### Environment, Housing and Planning

Works with the Environment and Housing and Planning Directorate to ensure that Salford is a clean city and that every person has a quality home. They also ensure that city planning is carried out effectively  
[linda.sharples@salford.gov.uk](mailto:linda.sharples@salford.gov.uk), 0161-793 332

[www.salford.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.salford.gov.uk/scrutiny)

Salford City Council