

Overview and Scrutiny Newsletter

Issue 3 July 2005

Work Programme Event

A slightly different approach to developing the overview and scrutiny work programme was taken this year, commencing with an afternoon session held at the Swinton Park Golf Club.

Councillor Dawson, chair of the Scrutiny Chairs Group welcomed around 40 people to the event, which included representatives from voluntary and community organisations; partner agencies; council members and officers.

The event provided an opportunity for an open discussion on suggested issues which overview and scrutiny could focus on in the coming year. These were then "mapped" against the Council's 7 Pledges, before the delegates spent more time prioritising issues by scoring them using a number of key questions.

Councillor Dawson commented, "We were pleased with the excellent discussion which took place and are very grateful to those who took the time to attend. This process has highlighted some interesting issues and further public consultation will now take place to find out what people's priorities are."

Have your say in Salford

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to look at the quality of service provision and other related issues that affect the lives of people in Salford. There are 6 Scrutiny Committees which listen to the comments of local people to check how the council and its partners are performing and where necessary seek improvement.

Scrutiny Committee	Chair
Strategy and Regeneration	Alice Smyth
Environment, Housing and Planning	Roger Lightup
Community, Health and Social Care	Joe Kean
Children's Services	Bernard Pennington
Customer and Support Services	James Dawson
Budget and Audit	David Jolley

We want to know what is important to you?

The following are topics under consideration for this year's work programme:-

- Improving the environment
- Public transport issues
- Literacy levels in Salford
- Housing and health issues
- What is being done for older people in Salford
- Alcohol issues
- Youth Service provision

Please refer to the page inserted in the newsletter to find out more about the issues that were identified and how you can put forward your point of view by completing the questionnaire.

Access to Primary Care

The Community, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee have established a sub-group to undertake a review of Access to Primary Care. Made up of Elected Members, representatives from the voluntary sector and the Primary Care Trust Patients Forum and assisted by an independent Health Scrutiny Advisor, the group has decided to focus on the access to General Practitioners (GP's) in Salford. In order to discover the current standard of access and any examples of best practice, the group will seek evidence from the Primary Care Trust, health centres, and Doctors surgeries as well as the general public.

At the completion of this piece of work, the sub group hope to be able to make recommendations to secure improvements to the access to GP's.

We would welcome information or comments on your experiences of making appointments with health care professionals in Salford.

For information on the review please contact Peter Kidd on 0161 793 3322

Corporate Parenting

The work of the Corporate Parenting Commission is now coming to a close and the commission have received evidence from a wide range of sources. Evidence is still to be heard from looked after children themselves and from Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. Common themes which have emerged from the evidence to date include:-

- Improved provision of education to looked after children and greater support
- Employment/training opportunities – in particular a more proactive approach by the local authority
- The need to sustain and try to increase the number of foster carers, particularly in the light of competition from the private sector
- Improved support package to foster carers and valuing of the foster carers role
- The need for consistency in approach
- The need for stability of placement and knowing who to contact
- Staff recruitment and retention

An interim report was submitted to Cabinet in April 2005 and was well received. The final report is expected to be ready in August 2005.

For a copy of the interim report or for further information please contact Amanda Carbery on 0161-793 3316.

Air Quality in Salford

The Environment, Housing and Planning Scrutiny Committee and the Community, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee raised the issue of air quality in terms of roads, new developments and the impact on health.

An event was organised to which representatives from the Highways Agency, The North West Development Agency and the Director of Public Health were invited to talk about the impact of new developments in the city, the motorway networks, increasing number of vehicles and how we could balance this against the impact on air quality. The Director of Public Health also talked about the link between poor air quality and ill health. A number of important issues were raised on the day, which will be considered by scrutiny, along with any issues raised by the public.

Councillor Lightup has written a letter to The Advertiser, which has already had responses, asking for comments from members of the public. If you have any further comments in terms of air quality in Salford in relation to any of the above issues then please contact Linda Sharples by email or telephone 0161 793 3324.

Attendance Management

The Customer & Support Services Scrutiny Committee has always maintained an overview on the progress on the city council's efforts to monitor and reduce levels of staff sickness absence. Following the introduction of the revised Attendance Management Policy the committee are devoting time to consider closely its implementation and its impact across all Directorates. In particular they are keen to ensure examples of best practice are shared internally and that overall the council continues to reduce absences levels and improve its already favourable position when compared with other local authorities.

For information on the review please contact Peter Kidd on 0161 793 3322

Budget & Audit

The Budget and Audit Scrutiny Committee have a monitoring role over the City Council's finances. Recently the committee has received reports on the final outturn position for the last financial year and were pleased to note that forecasts were on target, and efficiencies required by the Gershon Review secured. Looking to the future the committee is keen to ensure that the government's proposals for free public transport for the over 60's are implemented, without increasing the burden on Local Authorities. The committee is also keeping a watchful eye on the proposals to change the way schools are funded, trying to ensure that there is no detrimental effect on the provision to Salford's schools.

Infection Control

Members of the Community, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee paid a visit to Hope Hospital on 19 May, to see for themselves the work being done to manage infection control.

The hospital's Director of Infection Control, Dr Maeve Keaney, had presented a report to the committee at a meeting in the Autumn. Members were keen to follow up on this and see for themselves the practical measures which the hospital has introduced in respect of Infection Control.

Members agreed the visit was very informative and allowed them to see first hand what was happening on the wards and the actions of staff. They intend to make future visits to check on progress around this important issue which is of great public concern.

Recycling, Waste Management and Green Procurement

The Recycling Commission have met with representatives from the Waste Resource and Action Programme (WRAP). This is a government-funded agency that will work with local authorities to help them achieve sustainable procurement. The commission has been looking at the stationery contract and how to take forward the purchasing of recycled paper for the authority.

A report will be going to Cabinet in August 2005 outlining recommendations to date.

The commission in partnership with Envirowise; an organisation that will work with small businesses to identify how they can green their supply chains, organised an event on the 22nd June, 2005 which was attended by many local businesses.

It is important that local authorities, businesses, schools and the general public, look to improve recycling and the purchase of recycled products, to ensure a favourable impact on the local environment and to reduce the amount of goods sent to landfill, as many existing sites will be full within ten years.

The commission is likely to continue after August 2005 due to the amount of work to be carried out in respect of recycling and green procurement.

For further information please contact Linda Sharples on 0161-793 3324

Crime and Disorder Sub Group

Achieving a reduction in crime is one of the biggest challenges facing Salford. It is recognised that crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime have a significant and damaging impact on our city and its various communities.

The sub group is presently considering anti-social behaviour and initiatives for young people. A report of the sub group's findings will be available from July 2005.

If you are interested in becoming involved in this sub group or would like further details please contact Karen Lucas on 0161-793 3318

Homelessness

The commission have been looking at services to survivors of domestic violence, as they are one of the highest groups who present as being homeless. Members have met with a number of officers and representatives from other agencies to establish what the issues are for this group of people and the issues they face in terms of homelessness. A report will be going back to Environment, Housing and Planning Scrutiny Committee in September.

If you are interested in becoming involved or would like further information then please contact Linda Sharples on 0161 793 3324

Overview and Scrutiny

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to look at the services and issues that effect the lives of people in Salford.

Its about listening to the concerns of local people and checking how the Council and other organisations are performing and where necessary seeking improvement.

General enquiries can be e-mailed to:

scrutiny.support@salford.gov.uk.

Or write to Overview and Scrutiny Support, Salford Civic Centre, Chorley Road, Swinton, Salford M27 5BN.

Jenna Lancaster 0161 793 3538 or Janet Taylor 0161 793 3515

Fax: 0161 794 2027

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, 0161-793 3322

Strategy and Regeneration

Working to make Salford a safer place to live, work and visit

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 Directorate, and are overseeing the development of the new Children's Services Directorate

amanda.carbery@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, 0161-793 3322

Community, Health and Social Care

Working with the Community & Social Services Directorate and NHS organisations to help make Salford a healthier city in which to live

karen.dainty@salford.gov.uk, 0161-793 2513

Environment, Housing and Planning

Works with the Environment Directorate and Housing & 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, 0161-793 3324