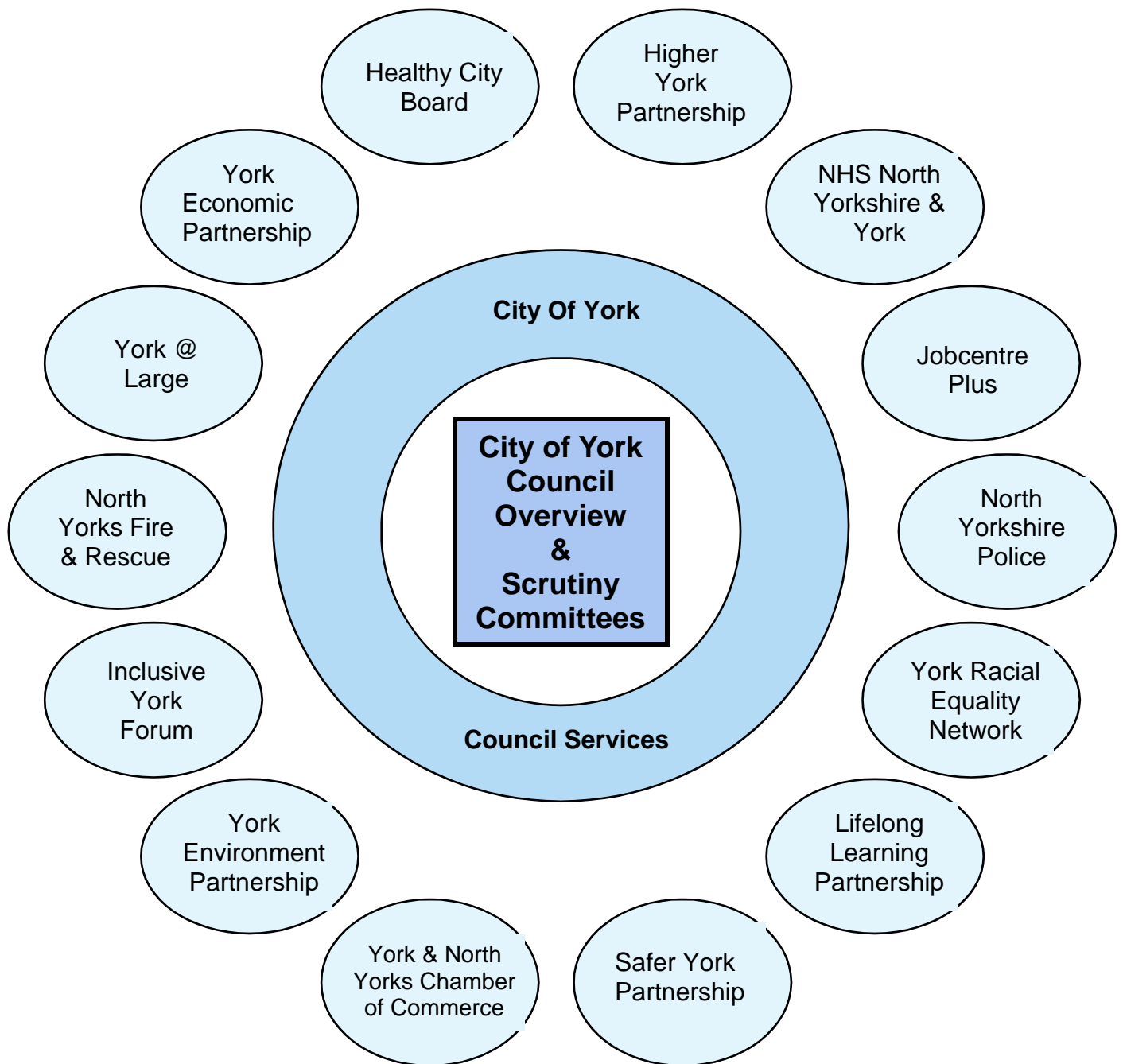


# Scrutiny Annual Report 2009-10

Scrutinising the work of the Council & its Partners



CITY OF  
**YORK**  
COUNCIL

# Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2009-10

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# Introduction

I am pleased to introduce our new Annual Scrutiny Report, covering the work scrutiny has done during 2009/10. In the last year, we have modernised our Scrutiny Committees to allow us to get more involved with the work of our partners and to look into issues of wider public concern. We have achieved this to some extent but there is much more to be done yet and at the end of this report, we look ahead to what needs to be done in the coming year.

In reading this report you will see that our various Scrutiny Committees have undertaken a number of wide ranging reviews. They have also looked into some specific 'Councillor Calls for Action' (CCfA). This is a new legal provision allowing Councillors to ask Scrutiny Committees to look in more detail at some local community issues which have not, in their opinion, been satisfactorily resolved. In its first year of CCfA in York, our Scrutiny Committees have looked at two such concerns: one relating to junction alterations at Water End and Clifton Green in York; the other relating to a range of maintenance, safety and parking problems at a parade of local shops. In addition, the Scrutiny Management Committee itself has considered a significant number of decisions made by the Councils Executive but 'called-in' by Elected Members under our 'calling in procedures'. In 2009/10, the Committee asked the Executive to rethink its decisions on a number of those referred to it. This process gives scrutiny the power to challenge and question decisions taken by the Executive.

Scrutinising on our own services and decisions and the work of our partners across the city all helps to make sure locally the Council and other key service providers across the city deliver, within available budgets, the best services we can for our communities. We can all help with this by getting involved in scrutiny: local residents can register a scrutiny topic with City of York Council; partner organisations can themselves bring forward issues they would like our Scrutiny Committees to look at; and Elected Members can challenge Executive decisions or call upon scrutiny to investigate specific concerns raised through CCfAs.

Scrutiny is at its best when it works with others - the Executive; partners; residents; community groups and Ward Members - to improve services and practices and drive forward positive, meaningful change.

So, I welcome this Annual Report in the continuing spirit of working together in providing and developing honest, decent and effective services and policies in the future."

*Councillor Paul Healy*  
*Chair of Scrutiny Management Committee*

# The Role of Overview & Scrutiny

## What is Overview & Scrutiny?

Overview & Scrutiny plays a central role in ensuring that Councils have open and accountable democratic arrangements in place.

The Local Government Act 2000 set out to modernise local government by ending the traditional committee system and replacing it with a system where decisions are taken by a small group of councillors known as Executive Members - similar to the Cabinet in central government.



Councillors who are not members of the Executive are known as non-executive members. They act as 'watchdogs' by examining Executive decisions and the policies and performance of the Council. They look at where they think things could be improved for residents and make recommendations to the Executive - this function is called 'Overview and Scrutiny'.

Overview & Scrutiny is designed to be non-party political - all Overview & Scrutiny Committees must be politically balanced and chaired by a member of one of the opposition parties.

## Overview & Scrutiny Committees in York Scrutiny Management Committee

The Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) is responsible for managing and co-ordinating the overview & scrutiny function. It meets periodically throughout the year to:

- consider proposals for corporate priorities
- receive bi-annual reports from the Scrutiny Committees on progress against their workplans
- consider and comment on any final reports arising from completed reviews produced by the Scrutiny Committees, prior to their submission to the Executive
- advise the Executive on the development of the Sustainable Corporate Strategy and monitor its overall delivery
- provide an annual report to the Council on the work of the overview and scrutiny function
- periodically review the overview and scrutiny procedures to ensure that the function is operating effectively and recommend any constitutional changes, to Council
- Consider and recommend to Council a budget for Scrutiny and then monitor the allocated budget on a regular basis
- Allocate responsibility for issues which fall between more than one of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees
- consider any pre or post Executive or Executive Member decisions, or key decisions delegated to an officer that are 'called-in'

### Call-in

Any three councillors can 'call-in' an Executive Member/ Executive decision or officer 'key' decision either pre- decision or post-decision (no later than 10 am on the day before the decision or up to two working days after the publication of the decision).

Once submitted, a meeting of the Scrutiny Management Committee will be held to consider the call-in.

### Overview & Scrutiny Committees

In addition, there are five Overview & Scrutiny Committees with remits designed around the 'Local Area Agreement' themes:

- Effective Organisation
- Economic & City Development
- Learning & Culture
- Community Safety
- Health



Each committee is supported by a Scrutiny Officer and receives technical advice from senior officers within Council Directorates.

In carrying out their individual remit, each Overview & Scrutiny Committee must ensure their work promotes inclusiveness and sustainability, and the priorities identified in the Council's Corporate Strategy.

### Ways of Working

At the beginning of every municipal year, each Overview & Scrutiny Committee agrees an annual work programme, and throughout the year, they monitor finance and performance within the service areas specific to their individual remits, and carry out scrutiny reviews on agreed topics.

Formal meetings and reports are an important part of the Overview & Scrutiny function, but where appropriate the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will often adopt less formal methods e.g.:

- Carry out site visits
- Attend/observe other group's meetings e.g. Nuisance Action Group, Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations

- Hold informal discussions with residents and/or officers e.g. 2 councillors visiting a resident, or meeting with an officer
- Create a 'Task Group' from its members to discuss a particular issue and report back to the full Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Hold open 'drop in' sessions
- Invite external witnesses to inform and widen the perspective
- Invite experts to give presentations / host seminars

Each committee can choose to 'co-opt' extra members if they have particular expertise (either on a permanent basis or for the duration of a specific scrutiny review), except in the case of the Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee, for which it is statutory to have co-optees representing parents and religious groups.

For each scrutiny review undertaken, the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee monitors the implementation of the recommendations approved by the Executive, until such time as they are fully implemented.





# Getting Involved

Possible topics for scrutiny review can be submitted by members of the public or by a Councillor.

## Topics

It is important to recognise what kind of topics are appropriate for Overview & Scrutiny.

A number of factors need to be considered before a Committee makes their decision to carry out a review. These might include:

- How the issue was brought to the attention of Overview & Scrutiny e.g. through Members surgeries or other constituency activities, an unresolved 'Councillor Call for Action' (CCfA), through external audit or an Inspectorate Report e.g. 'Best Value', or by a member of the public who has been unable to resolve an issue by other means e.g. the complaints procedure
- The importance of the issue to the people of York e.g. public interest highlighted in local media or a high level of public/user dissatisfaction with a service
- The potential benefits of carrying out the review
- The urgency of the topic (see below), and whether it:
  - a) highlights a pattern of budgetary over / under spending
  - b) supports a CYC corporate priority
  - c) provides policy development opportunities

## Urgency

A topic is considered urgent if there is a strict time constraint i.e. an event about to occur or presently occurring, or if it is of high visibility, such as an issue that has strong media interest or public pressures to respond.

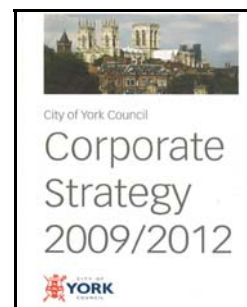
## Submitting a Topic

In order to submit a topic, a topic registration form must be completed, either on-line or by completing a paper copy. To request a form, please contact Scrutiny Services on Tel No. 01904 551088.

The registration form is designed to help the person proposing the topic to develop a clear and concise description of the topic, give their view on its importance, and provide all the relevant background information needed - the more detailed the information provided, the easier it will be for the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee to decide to carry out a review and agree a purposeful remit outlining the objectives and scope for the review.

Once received, a feasibility report will be produced, summarising the topic, explaining how it fits with the following eligibility criteria:

- i. Public Interest (ie. in terms of both proposals being in the public interest and resident perceptions)
- ii. Under Performance / Service Dissatisfaction
- iii. In keeping with the priorities within the **Corporate Strategy**
- iv. Level of Risk
- v. Service Efficiency



As a general rule, topics will only proceed to review if they meet three of the eligibility criteria. However, where it is adequately demonstrated that a topic is of significant public interest and fits with the first criteria but does not meet three, the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee may still decide to allocate the topic for review.

“ I attended Monday night’s meeting expecting to be highly critical of the proposals, but was pleasantly surprised at the thought and consideration the committee gave to the matter, and by the measured and analytical response”  
*Participant in Traffic Congestion Review*

If the topic doesn’t fit easily into the scope of a single committee, the topic registration form will be considered by the Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) who will decide which Committee should receive and consider it.

## Carrying out a Review

An Overview & Scrutiny Committee may choose to carry out the review as a whole or create a ‘Task Group’ from within their membership, to carry out the review on their behalf.

Alternatively a Task Group can be formed to examine specific aspects of a review and report back its findings to the Committee.

A Committee may also appoint non-voting co-optees for the duration of a review. Such co-optees will be chosen for their relevant professional knowledge and expertise, or to ensure that the views of local residents or interested parties are represented.

## Public Participation

City of York Council has adopted a public participation scheme which encourages residents to attend its meetings and participate.

Residents are welcome to come along and observe any public meeting and may choose to contribute to the debate and express their views by registering to speak.

To register to speak at a meeting, contact Democratic Services on 01904 551088 by 5pm on the (working) day before the meeting.

## Consultation

A committee may choose to carry out a consultation exercise to gather relevant views from interested parties.

They may also ask any relevant external consultants / witnesses to attend to address them on any matter under consideration .

Attending a Scrutiny Committee meeting as a witness is voluntary and often a new experience for people. The City of York Council recognises the need to support witnesses and will keep witnesses informed throughout the scrutiny process to try and ensure that the experience is as stress free as possible. With this in mind, the Council has in place a ‘Witness Charter’.

### Witness Charter

The Council will:

- 1 inform the witness of the time, date and place of the scrutiny meeting at which their evidence is to be taken.
- 2 inform the witnesses of the matters about which the scrutiny committee wish to ask them. Inform the witnesses of any documents that the scrutiny committee wish to have produced for them.
- 3 provide reasonable notice of all of the requirements of the scrutiny committee to enable the witness to respond in full at the earliest opportunity.
- 4 provide copies of all relevant reports, papers and background information.
- 5 arrange for the Chair of the scrutiny meeting to introduce him/herself to the witness prior to the proceedings.
- 6 ensure that all witnesses are treated with courtesy and respect and that all questions to witnesses are made in an orderly manner as directed by the Chair of the meeting.
- 7 ensure where appropriate that the witness is provided with information about claiming witness expenses.
- 8 following the proceedings, write to the witness and where appropriate, inform them of the outcome.
- 9 the Council’s protocol on Officer/Member relations will apply to all internal witnesses.

# Effective Organisation Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## Introduction

This new scrutiny committee was formed as part of the process to replace the executive members' advisory panels. The committee members quickly adapted to their new role and worked well together to help promote improved organisation within the Council. Only a few topics were covered in depth during this first year, which was a deliberate aim in order to ensure that 'less was more'.

Cllr Watt, Chair

## Committee's Remit

**The Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee was set up to promote a culture of continuous improvement across all Council service areas. It monitors efficiency across organisational/service boundaries to promote a seamless approach to service delivery.**

## Annual Work Programme

Throughout the year, the Committee received quarterly finance and performance monitoring reports, identifying issues specific to their remit for closer inspection, and resulting in a number of key reports relating to:

- CYC's Improvement Plan for 2009/10
- Risk Management
- Annual Audit for 2008/09
- CYC's 2010/11 Budget Strategy & Medium Term Financial Planning for 2011/12 to 2013/14

During the year, the Committee were pleased to meet with the Executive Leader and the Executive Member for Corporate Services, and received training on Local Government Finance to enable their effective scrutiny of financial management within the council. They also carried out a number of scrutiny reviews.

## The Effectiveness of the Executive Forward Plan Review

For some time, Councillors had been expressing concern about their inability to identify suitable topics for pre-decision scrutiny in order to help shape future council policy and practice.

Members decided to review the use of the Executive Forward Plan and as a result, identified a number of legal requirements that needed addressing and a number of format changes that would make the plan



more accessible and user-friendly to the organisation and the public.

Finally, the Committee recognised there was a general lack of awareness of and support for scrutiny across the organisation, and identified that an effective support system was required in order to raise its profile. As a result, they therefore recommended improvements to the level of appropriate engagement between overview & scrutiny committees, Executive Members and the council's corporate management team.



"It's been a great opportunity to experience many areas of Council business and get my teeth into some interesting projects. I fully expect to be able to apply the learning from the scheme in every job I subsequently have"

*City of York Council Graduate Trainee*

**Councillor Watt**

Chair of the Effective Organisation  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Committee Members

Councillors Watt (Chair), Horton (Vice-Chair), Boyce, D'Agorne, Firth, Gunnell, Hyman, R Watson



## CYC Apprenticeships & Other Work Based Learning Opportunities Review

The Committee recognised the demographic of the council's workforce was not representative of the community of York, with only around 337 employees under the age of 25. With that in mind, they looked at the arrangements currently in place within CYC for offering work experience and apprenticeships to young people, and the external funding opportunities that could be accessed to increase their numbers.

As part of the review, the Committee considered the draft of a Corporate Workforce Plan for 2010-12, and were pleased to find the plan included a diversity objective 'to help build an inclusive culture in which all are treated with dignity and respect', together with supporting actions to :

- increase the number of young people under 25 years old working for the council:
- increase the number of apprenticeships offered to young people,
- to develop a programme of short internships for local young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).



## Key Outcomes

- The council's Executive Forward Plan now reflects the full requirements of the legislation
- The profile of scrutiny across the council has been raised and each scrutiny committee now receives dedicated senior officer support
- The Council now has an effective workforce plan, which recognises the need to increase the number of young people being employed by the Council, and will ensure the right staff with the right skills are employed in the right places to deliver the right services to customers
- A reporting structure to measure the effectiveness and outturn of apprenticeships and other work based training is now in place.

The reviews completed by this committee in 2009-10, have supported the council's Corporate Strategy in a number of ways by aiming to:

- improve the Council's organisational effectiveness i.e. 'to be a modern council with high standards in all it does, living up to its values and being a great place to work and;
- Ensure employment rates remain high and that local people benefit from new job opportunities

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## Chair's Conclusion

With the Committee now firmly established and experienced in the role of scrutiny, it will move forward in this period of economic difficulties with increasing effectiveness to ensure that the City of York Council's organisation meets the expectations of York's citizens.

Cllr Watt

# Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## Introduction

The Committee's first year under the new Council scrutiny arrangements presented challenges and opportunities. The work programme has been varied and we have continued to raise our public and media profile by looking at medical related casework and working well with regional health providers. I personally have welcomed the new structures, providing even greater opportunity for Health Scrutiny Chairs to work together across the region.

Cllr Alexander , Chair

## Remit

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertakes all of the Council's statutory functions under section 7 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001, and section 244 of the National Health Service Act 2006. These include:

- appointing members, from within the membership of the Committee, to any joint overview & scrutiny Committees with other local authorities, as directed under the National Health Service Act 2006.
- reviewing & scrutinising the impact of the services and policies of key partners, on the health of the city's population
- reviewing the arrangements made by the Council and local NHS bodies for public health within the city.

As well as reviewing and developing relevant Council policies, it reports and makes recommendations to the local NHS body or other local providers of services

It can also report to the Secretary of State for Health;

- a. Where the Committee is concerned that consultation on substantial variation or development of service has been inadequate
- b. Where the Committee considers that the proposals are not in the interests of the health service

## Annual Work Programme

Throughout the year, the Committee received quarterly City of York Council finance and performance monitoring reports, covering:

Adult Social Services i.e.

- Adults (older people, people with physical disabilities & sensory impairments)
- Adults' mental health
- Adults' learning disability



During the year the, Committee were pleased to receive a presentation from the Executive Member for Housing & Adult Social Services on safeguarding, personalisation and the outcomes of, and progress in relation to, the CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) 2008 report., and to learn about his forthcoming priorities.

The Committee also received the following reports on :

- Relevant Key Performance Indicators to this Committee's remit
- Updates on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the dementia review
- The Care Quality Commission's new arrangements for registration
- Updates on dental services in York

“LINKS welcomes the opportunity provided by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to refer matters to it for further action.”  
Member of the LINKs Steering Group

Councillor J Alexander  
Chair of the Health  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee



## Committee Members

Members: Councillors Alexander (Chair), Wiseman (Vice-Chair), Aspden, Fraser, S Galloway, Simpson-Laing, Sunderland

- an Executive referral on overspends in Adult Social Services. After considering detailed information on this, the Committee decided a full scrutiny review was not required.

Finally, they received presentations from NHS North Yorkshire and York on ‘Transforming Community Services’, the Individual Funding Request Panel and ‘A Child’s First 6 Months: their expected health input both now & in the future’.



## Childhood Obesity Review

In July 2009, a report on the Corporate Strategy Key Performance Indicators relevant to the Committee’s remit, raised concern about the levels of obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year, and among primary school age children in Year 6. As a result, the Committee agreed to undertake a review to look at whether current service provision was effectively reducing childhood obesity in the city.



This review is still ongoing and is likely to be completed early in the 2010/2011 municipal year.

**The key outcomes arising from the Childhood Obesity Review are expected in early 2010/11**

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The Obesity Scrutiny Review supports the council’s Corporate Strategy by aiming to encourage people to make healthier choices and ensuring that health and social care services are quick to respond to those that need them.

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## Other Issues Considered

The Committee also received information on a proposed scrutiny topic regarding the care of new mothers and their newborn children. They deferred the decision on whether to proceed with this topic until 2010/11.

The Committee also continued its work on understanding its relationship with Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

*LINKs are the independent, formally constituted bodies that have replaced the Patient and Public Involvement Forums, previously attached to all local NHS Trusts. They have been established within each local authority area in the country.*

It received a number of update reports which outlined the steps and measures needed, and the progress made to ensure that LINKs establishes an effective working relationship with the Council via this Committee.

## Chair’s Conclusion

2011-12 will be an interesting year for the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee will continue with and bring to a conclusion its work on Childhood Obesity and hopefully have enough capacity to pursue its involvement with the regional health scrutiny agenda.

Cllr Alexander



# Learning and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## Introduction

It was a privilege but a challenge to take on the role of Chair of a brand new Scrutiny Committee - namely the Learning and Culture Scrutiny committee. To get our heads round the brief we had several introductory sessions with both officers and Executive members to try and assess the nature and width of our brief. The Committee recognised it was an important part of our work to talk to the Executive members, the Chair of York at Large and other partners. Cllr Looker, Chair

## Remit

The Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors the performance, achievements and developments of the service plan areas shown below:

- Early Years
- Schools & Communities
- Education Development Services
- School Governance Service
- Special Educational Needs
- Young People's Service
- Libraries & Heritage Services
- Parks & Open Spaces
- Sports & Active Leisure
- Arts & Cultural Services
- Adult Education, Access Education Planning & Resources



And, it identifies aspects of the Council's operation relating to delivery of the above services in need of review.

Externally, the Committee scrutinises the services provided to York's residents by other service providers, as appropriate.

## Annual Work Programme

Throughout the year, the Committee received quarterly finance and performance monitoring reports specific to their remit, and following a referral from the Executive, they considered detailed information on an overspend on 'Looked After' children.

They also received bi-annual reports from York Theatre Royal and the Yorkshire Museums Trust Partnership giving performance updates for 2009/10, together with a number of key reports relating to:

- The Renaissance Team
- York's Play Policy 'Taking Play Forward' & the Playbuilder Initiative
- A Draft Heritage Strategy
- The Refurbishment of the Main Library



In addition, the Committee were pleased to meet with the Executive Members for Children & Young People's Services and Leisure, Culture & Social Inclusion, and the Chairs of Learning City and York@Large.

The 'Casual Play' review provided a real understanding of the issues and barriers that affect children's play at a local community and strategic level, as well as appreciating the importance and benefits of play to children within the council's wider thinking including planning, transport and health *Head of Play, CYC*

**Councillor J Looker**  
Chair of the Learning & Culture  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee



## Committee Members

Councillors Looker (Chair), Brooks (Vice-Chair), Aspden, Crisp, Douglas, Hogg, Taylor, Waudby

The Committee also monitored the implementation of recommendations arising from a previously completed scrutiny review on a proposed Cultural Quarter for the City, and carried out a review of 'Casual Play Opportunities'



### Casual Play Opportunities Review

For a number of years there has been a growing focus on the importance of children being able to play. The Committee were

therefore keen to look at casual play opportunities across the city to assess if there was any potential for improvements .

The review focussed on comparing the play opportunities for 5-13 year olds, within a number of residential areas; one city centre, one suburban and one village.



As part of the review, the Committee carried out site visits to consult with local parents and were pleased to meet with representatives of York Playspace.

The findings showed that despite the type of residential area, the perceived barriers to play were the same – traffic, stranger danger, parents anxiety, space and quality of facilities.

It was recognised that in some areas of the city there was zero tolerance towards children playing in open spaces near homes, and that a more positive attitude towards play was needed within communities.

## Key Outcomes

A pilot scheme involving all relevant parties i.e. Play, Police, Housing, Parks & Open Spaces, Transport, Planning and the voluntary sector, was recommended to :

- trial ways of making a residential neighbourhood more child-friendly offering access to somewhere to play in freedom and safety and;
- identify a suitable strategy for the provision of casual play opportunities,

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The Casual Play Review supported the council's Corporate Strategy by aiming to make York a safer city, providing opportunities for children to develop their skills and for communities to grow and thrive.

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## Conclusion

I am looking forward to continuing the work of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny committee, with such a lot of change coming forward from a new government as well as the Council's own reorganisation it will be an opportunity for members to focus on how best to ensure real value for our York citizens - especially the children and young people in our communities - and work hard to ensure that we get the most out of our resources and our partnerships.



# Traffic Congestion Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee

## Introduction

It was always going to be a challenge taking on a review of this size and nature, but the Committee acknowledged the continuing priority that York residents place on tackling congestion and so worked hard to understand the potential future problems, what may or may not work, the scale of benefit and what the appropriate policy trade offs may be. As part of the review, the Committee involved all relevant parties and carried out a city-wide consultation to gather residents views.

Cllr Merrett, Chair

## Aim of Review

To identify ways of reducing present levels of traffic congestion in York, and ways of minimising the impact of the forecast traffic increase.

## Remit

Having regard to the impact of traffic congestion, the Committee were charged with recommending and prioritising specific improvements to:

- Economic Performance
- Quality of Life
- Road Safety
- CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions
- Air Quality, in particular looking at the five hotspots identified in the LTP2
- Journey times & reliability of public transport
- Accessibility to services, employment, education and health
- Alternative environmentally viable and financially practical methods of transport



The Committee carried out a comprehensive review of the Council's current transport policies, as expressed through the authority's 2nd Local Transport Plan and the 'Access York' initiative.

They also looked at their impact on meeting the anticipated traffic growth from the city's continued economic success and housing expansion in York, against the objectives of the review and the views of York residents.



The Committee found that 56% of York's commuting journeys were less than 3 miles, and therefore there was lots of room for improvements, in terms of undertaking more journeys by green and environmentally less damaging modes, car sharing and reducing congestion.

Notwithstanding the many positive initiatives and measures being undertaken by the Council, the Committee recognised they would be insufficient to avoid significantly worsening traffic and congestion problems over the next decade or so, even with the short term effects of the current recession, which could both adversely affect quality of life in York and undermine the City's future economic success and well-being.

Also, the anticipated growth in motorised traffic and congestion, despite vehicle efficiency improvements and modal shift, would lead to continuing air quality problems and increases in greenhouse gas emissions.

The Committee identified that as a 'Smart Choices' approach had proven effective elsewhere and was high in value for money terms, there was a need to persuade individuals to make socially informed choices, requiring specific on-going public engagement and promotional strategy around 'Smart Choices', including reinvigorating the Green Travel Plan approach with York employers and organisations.



## Committee Members

Councillors D Merrett (Chair), Hudson (Vice-Chair), Holvey, Orrell, Pierce, Simpson-Laing, Vassie



The Committee agreed that the broad overall solution to both congestion and the climate change challenge was a concerted approach using the hierarchy of measures outlined below:

- Reduce the need to travel, and the length of journeys (through IT, land use planning policies and other solutions)
- Undertake the maximum proportion of journeys by green and environmentally friendly modes
- Optimise the uptake of car sharing
- In short term, switch to lower carbon emission fuels, maximise engine efficiency and lower embedded carbon model
- In medium term switch to non-carbon based fuels (although need to be mindful of recent evidence that suggests growing crops for bio-fuels may be contributing to third world deforestation and food shortages, hence affecting food prices)
- Improve driving standards / training (for fuel efficiency and safety, and to make roads safer and more attractive to green travel modes)
- Reduce congestion delays and engine idling in traffic queues to reduce fuel wastage

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The Traffic Congestion Review supported the council's Corporate Strategy in a number of ways:

- by making York a cleaner and greener city and reducing the impact on the environment
- By making the city a healthier, more sustainable and thriving city, where residents have improved access to education, employment and health services.

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## Key Outcomes

Many of the recommendations arising from the review were fed into the city's third Local Transport Plan draft (LTP3) which will address the city's transport needs for the period 2011-2016, including:

- An urgent review of the Council's bus strategy, taking into account the new powers in the recent transport act, so as to move towards a bus network that is completely integrated from the bus users point of view, including integrated ticketing and day round services
- Funding the development of a comprehensive 'Smart Choice' package including personalised journey planning to maximise modal shift together with a re-invigoration of 'Travel Plans', ensuring they are implemented, monitored and periodically updated

**More information on this review and a full list of the recommendations made, can be found at:**

[http://democracy.york.gov.uk/scrutiny\\_services/congestionreview](http://democracy.york.gov.uk/scrutiny_services/congestionreview)

## Conclusion

The review highlighted the Committee's view that a major attitudinal change in the city is required if the massive challenge of rising traffic and congestion levels is to be addressed for the benefit of residents, visitors, and businesses.

Cllr Merrett

# Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## Introduction

This Overview & Scrutiny Committee has devoted its first year under our new scrutiny arrangements to look at good practice elsewhere and forge links with various strategic partnerships. Throughout the year, the Committee looked at a wide range of issues and gathered lots of information, helping it to learn and appreciate its craft. A busy year, during which it was the only Committee to consider and deal with two new Councillor Calls for Action (CCFA).

Cllr Pierce, Chair

## Remit

The Economic and City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors the performance, achievements and developments of the service plan areas shown below:

- Economic Development
- Planning
- City Development & Transport
- Housing Landlord
- Housing General
- Building Maintenance

And, it identifies aspects of the Council's operation relating to delivery of the above services in need of review, and scrutinises the services provided to the residents of York by other appropriate service providers.

## Annual Work Programme

Throughout the year, the Committee received quarterly finance and performance monitoring reports, identifying issues specific to their remit for closer inspection. This resulted in a further report on the distribution of travel tokens being presented to the Committee for information.

During the year, the Committee were pleased to hear from both the Leader of the Council and the Executive Member for City Strategy.

The Committee also received reports on the following:

- Open letter from the York Environment Forum
- Updates on recommendations arising from previous scrutiny reviews
- The Economic Development Programme

## Newgate Market Review

The Committee undertook a review on Newgate Market (York's daily market area) after a shortfall in income had been reported to them through a finance and performance monitoring report.

The overall aim of the review was to investigate possible ways of improving the existing stall market and its surrounding area currently occupied by Newgate Market. This was as a contribution to the Renaissance Team's work and the Footstreets Review, enabling them to recommend new designs and roles for Newgate Market and the associated public realm.



The Committee visited the market during operational hours and in the evening when the market traders had left for the day.

The Committee received information on the Market from the City Centre Management Team. They have also received evidence on what constitutes a good market from a representative of the National Association of British Market Traders.

This review is still ongoing and will be completed in 2010/11.



'Officers and the Committee work closely together to address issues of major economic significance.'

*Assistant Director—Economic Development*

Councillor R Pierce

Chair of Economic and City Development  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Committee Members

Councillors Pierce (Chair), Hudson (Vice-Chair),  
D'Agorne, Holvey, Hyman, Kirk, Potter, Scott



The key outcomes arising from the Newgate Market Review are expected early in 2010/11

## Other Issues Considered

During the year, the Committee considered a number of other possible topics for review i.e.:

- Implementation of Planning Conditions & Adoption of New Housing Estates
- Acceptance of Euros by York Businesses



At the time, the Committee decided not to proceed with either of those reviews and agreed to reconsider them both at the beginning of the municipal year 2010/11.



The Committee also received a report and presentation on 'Safe Access to Schools & School Travel Plans'.

Having agreed the review would need to look at some services outside the committee's remit, they requested that Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) set up a cross-cutting ad-hoc scrutiny committee to carry out the review.

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The Newgate Market Review supported the council's Corporate Strategy by supporting York's successful economy to make sure that employment rates remain high and that local people benefit from job opportunities.

It also touches on elements of the Sustainable City and Effective Organisation themes in the Corporate Strategy 2009/2012.

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SMC agreed with this approach and as a consequence, an Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee was formed, made up of members from three of the standing Overview & Scrutiny Committees. The review will be commenced at the start of the new municipal year 2010/11.

Finally, in the past year there have been two Councillor Calls for Actions (CCfAs) in York, both resulting in scrutiny reviews, which were carried out by this Committee - information on these can be found at pages 18-19.

## Chair's Conclusion

This Committee has had a very active year. We have worked together on small Task Groups to look into issues in more detail. We have worked with local residents to bring about hopefully positive change for them and been to see how Newgate Market operates and what concerns have been caused by the junction changes at Water End. Next year, the Committee will take forward some of the investigations it started in 2009/10 and continue its work in the spirit of active involvement.

Cllr Pierce

# Councillor Calls for Action

Ward Councillors play a central role in the life of a local authority, as a conduit for discussion between the Council and its residents and as a champion for local concerns. To strengthen a Councillor's ability to carry out this role the Government enacted in the Local Government and Public Health Act 2007, provisions for a 'Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)'. This provides Councillors with the opportunity to ask for discussions at Scrutiny Committees on issues where local problems have arisen and where other methods of resolution have been exhausted.

In 2009-10, there were two CCfAs which resulted in scrutiny work being undertaken. Both of these were dealt with by the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee and are detailed below:

## Broadway Shops CCfA Scrutiny Review

Ward Councillors raised this in relation to ongoing problems around maintenance, parking and safety issues at Broadway Shops. The problems were historic and the fact that the land in front of the shops was not owned by anyone complicated matters.

The aim of the review was therefore to define a safe pedestrian route across the shop frontages which was acceptable to all parties, and to investigate the possibility of removing/remodelling the traffic island in order to put a designated parking area in place, in the long term.

In an effort to find a solution to the problems, a nominated Member of the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee facilitated a number of meetings between the Council, local retailers, the Residents' Association and the Ward Councillors.

As a result it was agreed that a safe pedestrian walkway would be created in the area by painting a white line approximately 2m from the store fronts and strategically placing large flower tubs and cycle hoops to stop people parking too close to the shop fronts.



## Key Outcomes

The Residents' Association offered to pay for the works and an onsite meeting between all parties was arranged regarding where the items should be placed.

A further facilitated discussion will take place this summer to discuss whether the works undertaken have improved pedestrian safety and if further alterations will be needed.



“We have made more progress in the last fifteen months than in the last fifteen years “  
*Broadway Shops Residents Association Member*

## Water End CCfA Scrutiny Review

Following alterations to the junction at Water End and Clifton Green, Ward Councillors for Clifton responded to significant resident dissatisfaction by registering a CCfA.



The changes to the junction were made as part of the implementation of the orbital cycle route for the city.

However, residents felt they had resulted in additional congestion in the area and an increased use of Westminster Road and The Avenue by through traffic.

The aim of the review was therefore to determine the best solution for the problems experienced by local residents, and to look at what lessons could be learnt in order to inform the implementation of similar schemes in the city, based on the following key objectives:

- To establish whether local concerns still exist in the light of the Executive Member's decision
- To explore whether further improvements could be made to address the traffic issues
- To identify those measures or actions that could be taken to assist in the smooth implementation of similar schemes in the city
- To understand the context of the Land Compensation Act 1973 in relation to this CCfA

The Task Group gathered information and held an event to listen to the public's views.

It became clear that despite prior consultation, the consequences of the alterations had not been foreseen. The traffic modelling used had not incorporated side streets and the increased use of residential streets by through traffic had not been predicted.

*It was recognised, that as a consequence of the changes to the junction at Water End, traffic levels in Westminster Road and The Avenue had increased substantially.*

So, whilst cycle usage had increased, the changes to the junction had caused an exceptional set of circumstances for local residents.



Residents in the side streets believed that a point closure would be the best solution, but the Task Group recognised that this alone would not solve the problems and could lead to increased congestion on the main highway.

There were also geographic constraints at the junction making widening difficult.

## Key Outcomes

The Executive were asked to endorse:

- That Council Officers urgently develop new, comprehensive proposals for the Water End junctions to improve the current junction and reduce greatly traffic flows in Westminster Road/The Avenue
- That the Council should, in future, use traffic models which incorporate side streets when assessing and designing junction improvements
- That the present policy of reviewing new highway schemes only after a period of twelve months should be modified to enable a review after three months when unforeseen consequences have arisen and when Ward Members request.

# Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## Introduction

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has had a productive first year, getting to know its key partners and looking at a number of policies specific to its remit. The statutory crime and disorder function of this Committee is a new area but one which it takes very seriously and for that reason has spent time in 2009/10 establishing relationships with North Yorkshire Police and the Safer York Partnership.

Cllr Bowgett, Chair

## Committee's Remit

The Community Safety and Overview Committee reviews the performance, achievements and development of the following council service plan areas :

- Safer City
- Environmental Health & Trading Standards
- Street Scene
- Cleansing Services
- Waste Collection Services
- Waste Management Strategy (Client)
- Building Cleaning Services
- Highways Maintenance Services
- Street Environment
- Bereavement Services
- Licensing & Regulation
- Youth Offending Team

It also identifies aspects of the Council's operation relating to delivery of the above services in need of development and/or review.

## Annual Work Programme

At the beginning of the year, the Committee received training on its new role of scrutinising crime & disorder issues affecting the city.

It also received quarterly CYC finance and performance monitoring reports, and quarterly reports from the Safer York Partnership identifying issues specific to their remit for closer inspection, and resulting in a number of key reports on the following:

- The Council's Alleygating Policy
- CYC's Drug Action Team
- The Re-structure of the Police Force in York

During the year, the Committee were pleased to meet with the Executive Leader & Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, and they received a presentation by North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service on their role within the local Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).



Finally during 2009-10, the Committee also carried out the following scrutiny review .

## The Review of City of York Council's Winter Maintenance Policy

This subject proved to be very important to residents as York suffered the worst winter for a number of years, with a prolonged spell of snow and ice in December 2009 and January 2010.



“ It would be helpful if the Council could prioritise **one** really good route into town from N, E, S & W and give it really high priority ”  
*Feedback from staff member at York Hospitals Foundation Trust*

**Councillor D Bowgett**  
Chair of the Community Safety  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Committee Members

Councillors Bowgett (Chair), Gillies (Vice-Chair),  
S Galloway, King, Orrell, Vassie, B Watson,



The Committee chose to carry out a review of the council's Winter Maintenance Policy after many ward councillors received complaints, particularly about the treating of footpaths throughout the city.

They also received complaints about some roads and cycle paths which the public perceived had not been gritted despite the long period of bad weather. Concern was also expressed about the positioning of salt bins in the city.

## Key Outcomes

In times of severe weather:

- up-to-date information on the gritting of 'main' cycle access routes into the city will be provided via the council's website and in other ways, to allow cyclists to make an informed decision on whether or not to use their bicycle and which route to take
- Based on an agreed criteria, a list of secondary roads has been identified for gritting

In addition, it was recommended that a public information leaflet be produced containing information on (or pointers to) all the services residents may need to be able to function in times of severe weather or emergency situations.

## Other Issues Considered

2009-10 was the first year this Committee took responsibility for the Council's statutory functions relating to the scrutiny of crime and disorder matters (in line with Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act (2006).

This has enabled it to scrutinise the provision of services by other external service providers such as North Yorkshire Police.



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The review of CYCs Winter Maintenance Policy supported the council's Corporate Strategy by aiming to provide an environment which allows workers and visitors to travel freely and safely around the city in times of severe weather, thereby maintaining the city's economy. This supports the council's strategic aim to make the city safer and enabling it to thrive.

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The Committee considered carrying out a review of CCTV in York, as in recent times the use of closed circuit TV (CCTV) has become a key concern within communities, and has prompted many local authorities to focus on its associated benefits and problems.

Since the introduction of new local government arrangements, independent scrutiny reviews and investigations have been a popular way to address these concerns.



However, having been informed that a report on CCTV was scheduled to go to the Executive in Spring 2010 addressing the concerns raised, the Committee chose not to proceed with a review.

## Chair's Conclusion

In the coming year, I am hoping the Committee will continue to strengthen its external relationships and look at further opportunities to improve our own Council services in this area.

Cllr Bowgett



# Scrutinising Crime and Disorder Issues In York

Community safety is not just an issue for the Police. Like every challenging outcome local authorities and their partners care and deliver for their communities, it needs a wide range of people and organizations to be involved and contribute to addressing crime and it's causes.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) were created by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to develop and implement strategies to reduce crime and disorder. They exist to ensure that a number of prescribed 'responsible authorities' work together to jointly agree and deliver community safety priorities. These responsible authorities, who have a long history of working together and getting results, are:

- The local authority
- The police force
- The police authority
- The fire and rescue authority
- The primary care trust

## Safer York Partnership

In York, the CDRP is known as the **Safer York Partnership**.

In order to identify and deliver on the priorities that matter most to the local community, it is required to carry out a number of main tasks, including:



- Preparing an annual strategic assessment identifying the crime and community safety priorities in the area, through analysis of information provided by partner agencies and the community
- Producing a partnership plan, laying out the approach for addressing those priorities
- Undertaking community consultation and engagement on crime and disorder issues
- Sharing information among the responsible authorities within the CDRP

## Scrutinising the work of the local CDRP

Every local authority is required to have an Overview & Scrutiny Committee that is responsible for scrutinising the decisions made and the actions taken by the local CDRP.

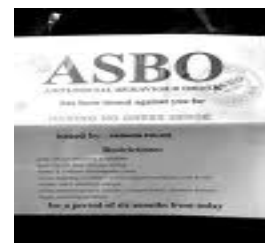
In York this responsibility lies with the **Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee**.

The role of the committee is one of a 'critical friend' of the CDRP, i. e. they provide it with constructive challenges at a strategic level, rather than looking to find fault at an operational level. Its aim is to:

- Enhance existing partnership arrangements
- Create a clearer link between the partner agencies and the public on community safety.
- Develop a clear structure for overseeing and reviewing the delivery of joint responses on community safety

The scrutiny of crime and disorder issues is an important tool for community safety partners to work together to resolve crime and disorder problems, in a forum which is open to the public. It's aim is to boost the public's confidence that police and local authorities are acting on crime and anti-social behaviour issues.

The committee considers actions undertaken by the responsible authorities on the CDRP and reports or makes recommendations to either the local authority, or direct to one of the responsible partners.



# Overview and Scrutiny - the next twelve months.....

The new Overview & Scrutiny Committees worked hard in 2009/10 to establish what they wanted to do and achieve and are planning to build upon their experiences over the next 12 months. Some Committees will be taking forward commitments to looking at issues they identified in 2009/10. In particular Scrutiny Management Committee will oversee the work of a joint ad-hoc committee it established to look at 'Safe Access & Travel to School'.

From July 2010, all Committees will be setting their work programmes for the year ahead, identifying key areas they would like to look at in more detail. Following on from that, they will meet with Executive Members and partners to learn about their plans. Those discussions will shape further the direction of scrutiny over the year ahead.

As in 2009/10, the Scrutiny Committees will continue to build in capacity to deal with matters 'called in' by other Members for their consideration or referred to them by Ward Councillors under the, still relatively new, '*Councillor Call for Action requirements*'.

For the first time, scrutiny will be inviting local residents to suggest areas they think warrant the attention of scrutiny. Also, a new corporate petitions scheme will be introduced which may well result in some petitions being referred for further investigation to scrutiny.

Finally, but by no means least, scrutiny will be reviewing its own processes to make sure it responds flexibly to local needs and priorities.

**For more information about Overview & Scrutiny in York, or for more detailed information on any of the completed reviews outlined in this Annual Report, please contact one of the Scrutiny Team:**

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Economic & City Development  
Health