

## ITEM NO:8

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE		
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10		
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	22 APRIL 2010		
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	HEAD OF POLICY AND IMPROVEMENT		
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	Name:	Suki Sitaram	Tel: 023 8083 2060
	E-mail:	Suki.sitaram@southampton.gov.uk	

### STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

### SUMMARY

A draft of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report is attached for the Committee to comment on prior to submission to the Annual Meeting of the Council.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Committee comments on the draft Annual Report attached at Appendix 1.

### REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is a constitutional requirement to submit a report to Council on an annual basis, outlining key overview and scrutiny activities that have taken place in the preceding year.

### CONSULTATION

2. The Committee is being consulted on the content of the draft document prior to its finalisation and submission to Council in May. Scrutiny Panel Chairs and the Chair of this Committee have been consulted on relevant aspects of the attached draft Annual Report.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. None.

### DETAIL

4. Paragraph 2.2.7 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Council constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to submit an annual report to full Council. This enables all Members to receive a summary of the key scrutiny activities that have taken place during the year.
5. A draft report is attached at Appendix 1. Members are invited to comment on the draft document and to identify any additional issues they would wish to see highlighted in the report.

## FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

### Capital

6. None.

### Revenue

7. None

### Property

8. None.

### Other

9. None.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

### Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

10. The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

### Other Legal Implications:

11. None.

## POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

12. None.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

### Appendices

1.	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10
----	---

### Documents In Members' Rooms

	None
--	------

### Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

	None.	
--	-------	--

Background documents available for inspection at: N/A

KEY DECISION? No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Not applicable
-----------------------------	----------------

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10



# CONTENTS

Chair’s Introduction .....	3
2009/10 Achievements .....	4
The Purpose and Functions of Overview & Scrutiny .....	5
Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel .....	6
Economic Well Being Scrutiny Panel .....	8
Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Panel .....	10
Healthy City Scrutiny Panel.....	12
Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel.....	14
Getting Involved.....	17

# Chair's Introduction

---

## Councillor Simon Letts Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee



"During 2009-10 Southampton's Overview & Scrutiny Management and Scrutiny Panels have continued to hold the Executive to account, scrutinised the work of the Safe City Partnership and health agencies in the City and completed Scrutiny Inquiries into a range of issues to inform council policies and actions to improve outcomes and provide value for money. During the year, the Committee has also considered a Councillor Call for Action resulting in the Council reviewing its approach. The work programme of the Committee and Scrutiny Panels is being reviewed in light of the Council decision to reduce the number of Panels from 5 to 3.

My thanks to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, Chairs and members of the Scrutiny Panels, Officers, Partners and others who gave evidence to the Inquiry Panels, for their valuable contribution.

This has been another busy year for Scrutiny both for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Inquiry Panels and a number of excellent pieces of work have been produced. These are detailed in the report that follows.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee have now settled into a steady routine of Executive Decision Scrutiny. We have continued to encourage members of the community to attend where controversial decisions are being actively opposed by the public. We have developed agreed procedures for looking at performance and have looked in detail at all indicators which are under-performing and showing no signs of improvement. We have used the 'new' Councillor Call for Action on the issue of Itchen Bridge Tolls and I would encourage other members to use this mechanism to demand action on other issues of local concern to them.

We have used our power of 'Call In' sparingly this year which I suspect demonstrates two things. Firstly that virtually all decisions the Executive take are 'non party political' and also the tendency of the current administration to back pedal as soon as an issue looks controversial.

Next year we have re-established the principle of regular meetings for our Inquiry Panels which I hope will help Members manage their diaries. Alas, due to budget cuts we will be reducing the amount of Scrutiny we undertake but I hope that we can keep the quality of the work as high as this year."

Cllr Simon Letts (Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee)

### **Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee Membership:**

Councillor Michael Ball

Councillor Stephen Barnes-Andrews

Councillor Jill Baston

Councillor Edwina Cooke

Councillor Gavin Dick

Councillor Gerry Drake

Councillor Simon Letts

Councillor Linda Norris

Councillor Steve Sollitt

Councillor Richard Williams

### **Appointed Members:**

John Bettridge, Parent Governor Representative

Mrs Mandy Bishop, Parent Governor Representative

Tony Blackshaw, Church Representative

Mrs Urzula Topp, Church Representative

## **2009/10 Achievements**

---

The achievements in 2009/10 have included Inquiries which will inform future strategies and policies of the council and scrutinising key issues which have an impact on the quality of life of residents. This comprises:

- completion of NEETs and Crime & Disorder / Absence inquiries from 2008/09
- completion of Full inquiries on:      Night Time Economy  
  District Centres  
  Domestic Violence
- completion of Mini Inquiries on:    Children's Annual Performance Assessment  
  Enforcement
- commencement of a Full Inquiry on Obesity which will be completed by May 2010
- scrutinising the work of the Safe City Partnership and health agencies in the city by the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel and the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel
- Call-In of 2 decisions relating to Bitterne Park School in October 2009 and Sports & Recreation Partnership in March 2010
- consideration of a Councillor Call for Action about tolls for Motorcycles on the Itchen bridge which led to the Cabinet decision 'To approve the introduction of a scheme to offer a 'toll-free' concession at the Itchen Bridge to motorcyclists who reside within the City'
- regular monitoring of performance and financial management of the Council
- agreement with the Chair of the Local Safeguard Children Board to attend quarterly performance monitoring meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to facilitate the review of the Board's Business Plan and Annual Report and to enable safeguarding or child protection issues to be raised with Members and key delivery partners throughout the year.

# The Purpose and Functions of Overview & Scrutiny

---

## Decision making context

The **Full Council** of 48 councillors decides the Council's overall policies and set the Budget each year.

The **Executive** (Cabinet) is the part of the Council which is responsible for most day-to-day decisions. The Executive is made up of an Elected Leader and a Cabinet of Councillors. The Executive has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and Budget.

The **Scrutiny** function helps to improve the way that the council does its work and to make sure it gets its decisions and policies right. They assess what impact the Executive's policies and plans will have on the city and its residents.

Scrutiny is a process for

- Holding the Executive, chief officers and senior members of staff to account for the discharge of its functions by examining, challenging and, if necessary requesting changes to Executive Decisions made but not yet implemented.
- Scrutinising and reviewing policies and practices within a cross-service remit, assisting in the development of such policies and practices and Scrutinising policy outcomes – e.g. the implementation of strategic priorities
- Reviewing decisions and policies made by the Executive and considering whether they are right for the city
- Assessing the council's performance against its planned targets and monitoring critical success factors
- Reviewing the work of other partnerships and public sector organisations in the city, particularly the Safe City Partnership and health agencies.
- Championing issues of local concern to residents and contribute to the policy development and service improvement.

## Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is a parent committee that manages the overview and scrutiny process and meets on a monthly basis. The membership for Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee is appointed for the municipal year at the Annual Council meeting in May.

There are a number of Scrutiny Panels which support the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. These Panels carry out an annual work programme of Scrutiny Inquiries approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. These arrangements allow citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public inquiries into matters of local concern.

These Inquiries lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Executive and the Council as a whole on its policies, Budget and service delivery. Overview and Scrutiny Committees also monitor the decisions of the Executive. They can 'Call-In' a decision which has been made by the Executive but not yet implemented. This enables them to consider whether the decision is appropriate.

**Councillor Call for Action** - enables all councillors to refer single ward issues, or 'Local Government matters', to Overview & Scrutiny Committees.

## Scrutiny Panels

- Children & Young People
- Economic Well Being
- Environment & Sustainability
- Healthy City
- Safer Communities

# Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel

---



**Councillor Daniel Fitzhenry**  
**Chair of Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel**

## **Panel Members**

Councillor Beckett  
Councillor Damani  
Councillor Fitzgerald

Councillor Jones  
Councillor Odgers  
Councillor Stevens

## **Appointed Members**

John Bettridge, (Secondary Parent Governors)  
Tony Blackshaw, (Church of England)  
Mrs Urzula Topp, (Roman Catholic Church)

During 2009/10 the Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel undertook a Mini Inquiry on the Children's Annual Performance Assessment (APA). The 2008 Ofsted APA for Southampton judged the services delivered to children and young people as 'adequate' (APA Grade 2).

The APA identified 23 strengths and 22 "important weaknesses and areas for development". To ensure that the Ofsted judgement returns to 'good' in 2010, Southampton City Council and the Children and Young People's Trust produced a 2 year Action Plan that detailed how improvements will be achieved in each of the 22 weaknesses and areas for development identified in the Children's APA.



The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel undertook a Mini Inquiry in July and August 2009 to examine if, amongst other objectives, the actions in the action plan are appropriate, achievable and will deliver the necessary improvements to overcome the weaknesses identified.

Discussions with the officers, and the endorsement from both the Government Office for the South East and the Children and Young People's Trust, gave the Scrutiny Panel confidence that the Southampton APA Action Plan was appropriate and demonstrated sign up from key partners and partnerships. However, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel agreed 7 recommendations that the Panel believe would contribute to improved outcomes for Children and Young People in Southampton.

## **Inquiry recommendations:**

1. To raise the aspirations of children and young people in Southampton it is recommended that partners from the Children and Young People's Trust develop ways of identifying and promoting the achievements of "successful" young people from Southampton so that they can act as role models to children and young people.
2. To support the drive to further improve school leaders and teachers within schools in Southampton long-term funding should be identified to support initiatives detailed in the APA Action Plan designed to recruit, develop, promote and appoint strong school leaders and teachers in Southampton.



3. To improve data collection and how effectively data is used to help support performance improvement it is recommended that:
  - a. In the short term the City Council and Children and Young People's Trust partners maximise the use of current corporate performance management systems with a view to improving integration with performance management systems used by the council and key partners.
  - b. The Children's Services and Learning Directorate rationalises performance data to ensure that the information obtained is appropriate and relevant.
  
4. To improve the ability to track the development of children and young people in Southampton it is recommended that:
  - a. NHS Southampton City undertakes regular health checks on children and young people in the City as they grow older, and shares appropriate information with Children and Young People's Trust partners through the use of the Council's performance management system.
  - b. Southampton City Council works with secondary schools in the City to encourage the use of best practice with regards to using data to identify the development of children and young people during their school career.
  - c. The City Council, in conjunction with Children and Young People's Trust partners, collects and reviews the information available on the property type that children live in (property type, tenure and ward area) to enable analysis to be undertaken of the relationship between housing, health and well-being and academic attainment. This analysis can then inform the actions needed to improve outcomes for children and young people in Southampton.
  
5. That Cabinet works with the Children and Young People's Trust to identify further opportunities to develop the co-ordination of services delivered to children and young people to ensure that all relevant services are focussed on improving outcomes identified in Every Child Matters.
  
6. That Southampton City Council's Executive congratulates:
  - a. Employees responsible for the improvements in outcomes for children and young people in Southampton for their efforts and achievements.
  - b. Children and Young People in Southampton for their achievements.
  
7. That Cabinet forwards this report to the Children and Young People's Trust and appropriate partnerships to facilitate collective ownership of the issues identified within this report.



### **Cabinet Response**

In January 2010 all recommendations were accepted by Cabinet and the recommendations will be or have been implemented.

# Economic Well Being Scrutiny Panel

---



**Councillor Michael Ball**  
**Chair of Economic Well Being Scrutiny Panel**

**Panel Members:**

Councillor Bogle(Vice Chair)	Councillor Osmond
Councillor Burke	Councillor Sollitt
Councillor Fuller	Councillor Wells

During 2009/10 the Economic Well Being Scrutiny Panel conducted 2 inquiries: NEETs (Not in Education, Employment and Training) and District Centres. The Terms of Reference were agreed and set by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC). I would like to thank the hard work of Council Officers, Members and others providing evidence to the Panel.

## **NEETs**

The Panel undertook the inquiry to address the issue of the higher than national average number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training in Southampton. Reducing young people who are NEET is a strategic objective of the Southampton Partnership and the Local Area Agreement Stretch Target.

The inquiry was held over 8 meetings between January and June 2009 and also consulted with young people outside of the formal committee timetable to take account of the views of the vulnerable young people, who either have become NEET or are at risk of becoming NEET.

The Panel found that the causes and consequences of becoming NEET were extremely complex. Due to the time constraints the focus was on how to better co-ordinate service provision, rather than assess all the underlying factors associated with being NEET.

The 34 recommendations set out themed actions to address the many areas of concern.

The inquiry generated a number of recommendations relating to the following areas:

- Partnership working
- Strategic leadership and Organisational change
- Prevention and retention
- Process change
- Data
- Best Practice
- Safe Environment

In July 2009 the OSMC accepted the report and made one additional recommendation to explore the possibilities of using the “Future Jobs Funds” to develop apprenticeship schemes tailored towards the NEET groups. In September 2009 Cabinet reported back to the OSMC, accepting the majority of the recommendations, with the main exception of item 4 – which recommended that Economic Development take a strategic lead in co-ordinating NEETs. We were pleased that despite the worsening economic climate and declining job opportunities for young people, some of the indicators have been encouraging with more uptakes of higher education training courses.

## District Centres

The Panel undertook the inquiry into Southampton's town and four district centres. The focus of the inquiry has been to develop recommendations that protect and enhance their prosperity.

The inquiry was held over 7 meetings between September 2009 and January 2010. The Panel invited a wide range of interested parties from Cabinet Members, Council Officers, experts on town centre management, ward councillors and local traders/residents.

Southampton's main city-wide planning document, the Core Strategy, identifies that Southampton has 1 town centre, Shirley, and 4 district centres, Bitterne, Lordshill, Portswood and Woolston. The Panel found that our centres are very diverse and face differing challenges.



The Scrutiny Panel concluded that Southampton's town and district centres perform a valuable role as centres of retail, services and as a community focus, and whilst the Scrutiny Panel understand that the City Centre will be the focus for much of the planned development in the City, it is important that the town and district centres receive appropriate levels of support, investment and intervention in accordance with their specific needs, as identified by stakeholders, including local residents.

The 19 recommendations generated by the Panel ranged from quick wins with minimal resource implications to ones that are long-term and have significant capital implications.

The inquiry identified the need to improve the accessibility to Southampton centres, including promoting free parking with better car park signage and increasing 1 hour on-street car parking where possible. The Panel recognised the best practice of having a district centre co-ordinator to act as a link between the Council, traders and community interests. Longer term the Panel recognised that there is a real need to develop a plan for investing in the legible cities programme and the public realm.

The recommendations the Panel felt had the highest priority were:

- Improving the co-ordination and management of Southampton's town and district centres
- Improving understanding of Southampton's town and district centres and to actively promote growth and manage change
- Supporting the vitality and viability of Woolston that is in the poorest health.



The Panel recognised the immediate challenges faced by Woolston District Centre. The economic downturn and the resultant delays in the Centenary Quay site have placed the viability of the centre under considerable strain. Hence it was pleasing to learn that the Administration has sought to divert resources from City Centre Management to help work with local traders and groups, to help develop and deliver a new vision for the centre.

In February 2009 the OSMC accepted the report. The report was then presented to Cabinet in March 2010. Cabinet are yet to respond formally to the Inquiry recommendations, but expressed their thanks for the work undertaken by the Panel.

# Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Panel

---



**Councillor Don Thomas**  
**Chair of Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Panel**

## **Panel Members**

Councillor Drake  
Councillor Galton  
Councillor Jones

Councillor Odgers  
Councillor Payne  
Councillor Willacy

The night time economy in Southampton is a massive and a vital subject involving so many issues. The final report together with its recommendations will give a real chance to change our city night time scene for the next generation.

Southampton City is changing fast, and the need to change is self evident the final report with its ten recommendations needs to be looked at in its entirety, like a jig-saw it needs all the pieces in place to see the full picture.

The night time economy is an emotive subject with many diverse views, we felt the need to be bold and imaginative, we can celebrate we have the people in place for Southampton night time economy to be the finest, vibrant cosmopolitan city on the south coast of Britain.

During 2009/10 the Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Panel undertook a wide ranging complicated and complex inquiry in to the Night Time Economy.

Evidence was gathered from a number of witnesses and sources of information on City Centre Regeneration, Culture, Crime and Disorder, Licensing, Planning, Street Cleansing, Alcohol and Health, Transport. The Panel also received feedback from a variety of stakeholders including ward councillors, representatives from the 2 Universities, Students Union, businesses and Residents Associations. I visited Brighton to observe and learn their night time economy. Another Panel member also had a 'walk about' with the City Centre Manager on a Student Night and spoke with pub and club managers, door staff and owners.

The vision below developed by the Panel is intended to cover the next 10 - 15 years and will only be achieved by joint working between the public and private sectors facilitated by the leadership of Southampton Partnership.

**Southampton will be a regional centre of excellence for evening and night time entertainment, offering a diverse and vibrant choice of activities for all its residents and visitors**

The following aims underpin the vision:

- To provide a clean, safe, welcoming city centre that is accessible to all during the evening and into the night time
- To offer and promote a variety of high quality and sustainable facilities in clearly defined areas which cluster together similar venues to provide a "mosaic" of different types of experience in different zones/areas
- To move away from a linear, late night drinking culture and create a smoother transition between the daytime and night time economy
- To Make the most of our heritage, environment and diversity to provide a varied and innovative programme of cultural events

- To achieve a balance between protecting the amenities and quality of life of residents living in the city centre and promoting an attractive, vibrant but safe night life
- To complement the city centre offer with improved local night time facilities and offer within district centres.

The Panel made 10 key recommendations to the Cabinet on how these aims can be achieved and the Inquiry report also included a series of comprehensive recommendations for each of the key Partnerships under the leadership of Southampton Partnership.



The recommendations are:

1. Nominate a champion/ leader to co-ordinate to promote and build on the NTE vision and aims and implement the quick wins detailed in the report and to seek sustainable funding for this.
2. Examine the effectiveness of planning policy in establishing hubs, creating attractive public open spaces, pedestrianisation of the city centre to deliver the NTE vision detailed in the report.
3. Examine the use of the licensing policy, the Cumulative Impact Policy and licensing powers to discourage the negative impact of drinking, and protect residents in popular residential zones by working closely with Planners within the planning policy context.
4. Make more use of the history and heritage that Southampton has to offer and opportunities presented by future developments e.g. Watermark West Quay and the Cultural Quarter to improve the evening and night time economy.
5. Target effort and focus to grow the early and mid evening offer, make it pleasant and attractive for all people (e.g. jazz bars and clubs, café culture etc) so that people stay on and come into the city centre in the evening.
6. Agree that the NTE champion/ leader will be a statutory consultee for major projects to ensure they do what they can to enhance their NTE offer.
7. Brand the evening and NTE offer, promote and market it including more high profile events in the city (e.g. Light Nights), lighting up public buildings, to draw more people in to enjoy the city centre offer and link each NTE zone using distinctive pathway, unique identify, lighting, seating, etc.
8. Develop, encourage and promote healthy living initiatives in the NTE and in particular, non alcoholic drinks and promotions, encourage responsible pricing and promotion offers e.g. discounts for non alcoholic drinks and pricing of soft drinks below the price of alcoholic drinks and healthy eating.
9. Develop and promote the overall package offered for the NTE by linking the entertainment offer, public transport, including taxis, parking and encourage branding the City Loop so that it is easier for people to come in and enjoy the NTE zones.
10. Enhance safety and perception of safety in the NTE by improving the provision of public toilets and increasing access to them, extending the ICE Bus and providing a safe place for people who cannot look after themselves.



# Healthy City Scrutiny Panel

---



**Councillor Edwina Cooke**  
**Chair of Healthy City Scrutiny Panel**

## **Panel Members**

Councillor Capozzoli

Councillor Daunt

Councillor Drake

Councillor McEwing

Councillor Marsh-Jenks

Councillor Osmond

## **and 3 Co-opted Members from Southampton LINK**

The Health City Scrutiny Panel was established to undertake inquiries relating to any health and well-being issues and respond to proposals and consultations from NHS Trusts and other NHS bodies in respect of substantial variations in service provision and any other major health consultation exercises. It has 2 roles:

- to fulfil the statutory requirement for the council to ensure that its overview and scrutiny structures include the ability to scrutinise key decisions of health agencies in the city.
- to undertake Scrutiny Inquiries.

The Terms of Reference for the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel were therefore amended to include the remit:

- to scrutinise key decisions of the health agencies in the city and progress on the implementation of the Health & Well-being Strategic Plan and joint plans for strategic commissioning by the City Council and NHS Southampton City (PCT)
- to provide a forum for exchange of the work programmes and priorities of Southampton's LINK and the Healthy City Scrutiny Panel
- to provide a vehicle for the City Council's Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee to refer recommendations arising from panel inquiries relating to the City's health, care and well-being to Southampton's LINK for further monitoring.

The Panel agreed that three members of the LINK be co-opted on to the Panel, in a non-voting capacity and have agreed the draft protocols for joint working between Southampton City Council's Scrutiny system for Health and Social Care and Statutory Partners.

The 2nd Quarterly Joint LINK meeting on 11 March 2010 set the scene for the integration between Portsmouth Community and Mental Health Services and Southampton Community Healthcare, a massive response to take Community Services to a consistently high standard. Whilst there have been some issues to resolve, it would appear that the way ahead is towards progress. Decisions have to be made regarding the form this body will take to ensure it is consistent with Principles and Rules of Competition.

## **Obesity Inquiry**

The Panel decided that the inquiry would focus on how *the council* can have an impact on addressing the topic in the following ways:

- as a direct provider of services and as an employer
- as a commissioner of services or an enabling agency
- as a leader of the community and a partner with other key agencies such as the NHS

Also

- To identify the key factors that are producing the rising levels of obesity of children and adults in the city
- To identify any improvements to the way the council can help residents to prevent rising levels of obesity as: a service provider, a service commissioner, and through its ability to influence other organisations to identify strategies and practices that might help address the issue

The Panel will be meeting between March and April 2010 to undertake this Inquiry. Five meetings have been planned to look at:

- Setting the scene and the national and local context-facts and figures including the new Fit4Life Strategy
- Children and young people including the contribution of SureStart
- Adults and older people including workplace initiatives
- Learning from the experience of others including Healthy Towns Initiatives
- Considering all the evidence and the final report



The inaugural meeting on Obesity covered the health of the city, the statistics, what is being done, what should be done and future meetings will find what are we doing right, where we can improve, how we might fund a plan and how soon we will see results.

The Panel proposes to consult a wide range of experts for this Inquiry, including the Public Health Director, senior academics from the University of Southampton and specialists in this field from the NHS Southampton City.

# Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel

---



**Councillor Neil Fitzgerald**  
**Chair of Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel**

## **Panel Members**

Councillor Capozzoli (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Beckett

Councillor Odgers

Councillor Parnell

Councillor Rayment

Councillor Thomas

The Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel was established to undertake inquiries relating to crime and disorder issues. It has 2 roles:

- to fulfil the statutory requirement for the council to ensure that its overview and scrutiny structures include the ability to scrutinise the work of the Safe City Partnership
- to undertake Scrutiny Inquiries.

The Terms of Reference for the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel were therefore amended to include the remit:

- to consider, at least twice a year, the following functions and make reports or recommendations to the local authority with regard to these functions:
- Councillor Calls for Action for crime and disorder matters
- Actions undertaken by the responsible authorities on the Safe City Partnership.

During 2009/10 the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel completed full inquiries into the potential links between crime and disorder and absence from school, domestic violence, and a mini inquiry of enforcement. In addition the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel commenced scrutiny of the Safe City Partnership.

## **The Potential Links Between Crime and Disorder and Absence from School**

From February to June 2009 the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel undertook an inquiry into the potential links between crime and disorder and absence from school.

The inquiry identified that on average 1,960 pupils were absent from Southampton's schools each day in 2007/08. The Panel did not find clear evidence that pupils who were persistently absent from school are committing offences within school hours in Southampton. The Panel did however identify that absence from school is associated with poorer outcomes for young people. Nationally, statistics identify that a reduction of only 2% in students attendance can lead to a drop of 1 grade in GCSE and that pupils who are persistently absent from school are significantly more likely to be NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). This is referenced in the report on NEETS undertaken by the Economic Well Being Scrutiny Panel.



The inquiry's 16 recommendations, a number of which require action from Hampshire Constabulary, set out a number of proposals to help underpin the progress that Southampton's schools are making in tackling levels of absence and will help to address the following issues in the city:-

- To improve the consistency of practice in reducing school absence across Southampton



- To develop the culture of supporting school attendance across Southampton
- To assist the early intervention and co-ordination of support for children and young people who need additional assistance to fulfil their potential.

Key recommendations generated by the Inquiry include:

- That budgets and priorities are reviewed to seek to develop the support available from Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) to schools within Southampton. This review should investigate potential funding streams from schools, partner agencies and voluntary organisations to develop EWO support with the aim of ensuring that there is a full time equivalent EWO to support each school cluster group.
- That Hampshire Constabulary make combating absence from school a higher priority within Southampton and demonstrates this commitment by supporting education led truancy sweeps in conjunction with other service providers.

### **Cabinet Response**

In September 2009 11 of the 16 recommendations were accepted by Cabinet, 3 recommendations were noted with further work to be undertaken, 1 recommendation was partially accepted, and 1 recommendation was not accepted.



### **Domestic Violence**

The Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel conducted a full inquiry into Domestic Violence between January and March 2010. Domestic violence is a significant contributor to violent crime in the city (21.5%), which continues to be an issue and showing an upward trend, especially Assault with Injury.

Domestic violence is estimated to cost a population the size of Southampton over £22M per annum and overall there were nearly 5,000 incidents relating to domestic violence reported to the Police with approximately a quarter subsequently recorded as crimes in 2008/09.

Although significant improvements have been achieved in high risk cases and through multi-agency working across the city, the Scrutiny Panel identified that there are still limited appropriate services for standard/medium risk cases with the level of capacity necessary to deliver services to Southampton.

The Scrutiny Panel identified 8 recommendations and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee added a recommendation.

### **Enforcement**

A review of cross council enforcement was commissioned by the Cabinet and Chief Executive of the Council in 2008. The review examined the multiplicity of enforcement functions carried out by the City Council, including activities carried out by both uniformed and non-uniformed staff.



From August to September 2009 the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel undertook a mini inquiry into the City Council's Review of Cross Council Enforcement. The purpose of the inquiry was to examine what improvements will be delivered through the Council's review.

At the first meeting of the Inquiry the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel were informed that the City Council's Review of Enforcement was a 2 stage process. The first stage had been completed and the Panel were informed about the objectives of the Enforcement Review, progress to date, outcomes and further work to be undertaken at Stage 2.

There was agreement amongst the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel that, given the assessment of the current enforcement activity, and the impact on the City Patrol Service of the changes in Police policy and practice when responding to Anti-Social Behaviour, the recommendations generated by Stage 1 of the Enforcement Review were both necessary and logical.

At the second meeting of the Inquiry members of the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel were, through a facilitated discussion, encouraged to contribute to the development of Stage 2 of the Enforcement Review. The inquiry's 15 recommendations emanated from the discussion identified above.

The Scrutiny Panel made recommendations relating to the following areas:

- Identifying better reporting mechanisms and how they may be implemented.
- Identifying the balance of work of the new team and agreeing specific objectives and performance targets.
- Developing effective working practices, metrics and performance indicators that will demonstrate service delivery, value for money and customer satisfaction.
- Identifying any future trends that can be predicted at this stage.

A key recommendation generated by the Inquiry was the need for the Enforcement Review Project Board to take into consideration when planning the new structure the decision of the Police to relinquish responsibility for special events in Southampton.



## **Scrutiny of the Safe City Partnership**

Following new regulations the terms of reference of the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel have been amended to enable this Panel to undertake scrutiny of the Southampton Safe City Partnership. The first meeting at which the Panel scrutinised the Southampton Safe City Partnership took place in September 2009. To enable the Scrutiny Panel to effectively scrutinise the work of the Southampton Safe City Partnership, and the partners who comprise it, the Panel is scheduled to scrutinise the Safe City Partnership twice a year.

# Getting Involved

---

## *How can I get involved?*

There are a number of ways in which the public and interested organisations can get involved.

- **Attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or a Scrutiny Panel**

Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee and Scrutiny Panel meetings are held in public and anyone is welcome to attend to listen to proceedings. Meetings are usually held in the Civic Centre. Only on rare occasions, when certain types of confidential information is being discussed, are members of the public not allowed to attend.

- Raise issues with your Councillor and request Overview & Scrutiny to consider as part of **Councillor Call for Action**
- Give your feedback to inquiry meetings as part of evidence gathering.

Details of forthcoming meetings, agendas, reports and minutes can be obtained from the City Council's website at [www.southampton.gov.uk](http://www.southampton.gov.uk).

## **Providing Written Evidence**

Scrutiny Inquiries can consider written evidence and members of the public, community groups, or other key stakeholders can write in to bring evidence to the attention of Inquiry Panel members. Inevitably, Scrutiny Inquiries have only a limited amount of time, so they are not able to hear oral testimony from all interested people.

Written evidence provides an alternative way to receive evidence from key stakeholders—policy makers, service providers, service users and community groups. Written evidence may put forward on a particular perspective of the issue being considered or may highlight evidence to help the investigation. It can also put forward questions for witnesses, which may be taken up by Members of the panel during the discussion.

**Address:** Policy & Improvement Team, 1st Floor, Civic Centre

**Email:** [kerry.sillence@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:kerry.sillence@southampton.gov.uk)

Telephone: 023 8083 4433