

## **Foreword by Cllr Gill Mitchell**

Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

I am very pleased to introduce the 2010/2011 Scrutiny Annual Report. Another busy year for scrutiny members has seen the quality of work recognised by the Centre for Public Scrutiny; the scrutiny function has been shortlisted for two 'Good Scrutiny Awards 2011' – Team of the Year and Innovation. *(we will know the result shortly...)*

Highlights from the year include the detailed work into services for adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions, the review of the in-year budget cuts and work relating to letting agents. This report provides a succinct summary of scrutiny activity over the year, and detailed information can be found at <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1243614>

Whilst there have been many excellent pieces of work during the year, the scrutiny function is continuing to develop and respond to the challenges we face as a council and city. This will include providing training for new members, moving to a partnership based scrutiny function and enabling members to contribute to the development of services under Intelligent Commissioning.

Once again it is necessary on behalf of all members involved in scrutiny to thank residents, local partners and witnesses who have freely given their time over the course of the year. Without their input we could not undertake the work we do.

# Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11

Welcome to the third annual report of Brighton & Hove's scrutiny function. This report highlights the recent improvements in the city as a result of scrutiny's reviews.

## What is scrutiny?

Scrutiny works in four ways to drive forward improvements to the council's policies, procedures and service delivery:

### Policy Development

The focus of our panel work is policy development. Examples include services for adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions, renewable energy and private sector lettings agents.

### Decision-making scrutiny

Holding the executive to account is a key part of our role. This is done through reports to committee, Call-in and questioning of Cabinet members at scrutiny meetings.

### Pre-decision input

Input on draft policies and strategies before they have been agreed by Cabinet or Council helps ensure they are more robust. It also provides an opportunity for cross-party consensus to be developed on an issue.

### Monitor and track recommendations

Ensuring that panel work results in service improvements is an essential part of the process. Six monthly and annual reports are produced to show committees what outcomes are being achieved.

The work of the Scrutiny Team includes promoting member workshop sessions, using university expertise to guide our work, asking residents what they want scrutinised, and bringing cabinet members, scrutiny chairs and senior officers together through tripartite working.

## Shortlisted for the 2011 Good Scrutiny Awards

These awards were established by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) to:

*'... celebrate good practice in public scrutiny and the contribution that non-executives make to achieving transparency, involvement and accountability.'*

Our scrutiny function has been recognised in the shortlist for this year's awards, in the following categories:

- **Team of the year** – for tackling major local issues
- **Innovation** – for our report on climate change adaptation

According to CfPS:

*'Brighton and Hove was a late adopter of the Cabinet and Scrutiny model but in the last three years has developed a reputation for innovation and high quality scrutiny. A key focus has been to improve the way they work, moving towards partnership based scrutiny, complementing rather than duplicating workstreams.'*

The awards will be announced on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011.

# 1. Enterprise and learning

**Scrutiny Review - [Cultural Provision for Children and Young People](#)** *How can children and young people be helped to access the arts?* The Panel praised what was on offer in the city and suggested how to publicise events better, improve venues and include marginalised young people.

**Completed November 2010 - key recommendations and achievements:**

- ✓ **In March 2011 an apprentice began a 6 month post to work on delivering key recommendations of the Panel.**

*Each school should identify a lead person for arts and culture.*

- ✓ **Now a list of arts contacts at most schools.**

*There should be a single point of contact within the council regarding arts and cultural activities for young people.*

- ✓ **These activities made a priority for the Commissioner for Culture.**

*The council should set up a dedicated website with information about projects, events and funding opportunities.*

- ✓ **The council is working with partners to build on Viewfinder - a web based visual arts resource for young people. Continuing work to develop the *Express* blog, whose users include schools, artists, youth centres and community centres.**

*The council should work with venues in the city to find ways to enable young people to perform in venues with professional type facilities.*

- ✓ **Subject to funding – developing a training package for venues on working successfully with young people.**

**Scrutiny Review update – [School Exclusions](#)**

**Completed June 2010**

- ✓ Schools, and council officers working with schools, have been provided with a document which provides advice and guidance in relation to unofficial exclusion and the use of part-time timetables. The Children Missing Education Officer, within the Attendance Strategy Support Team, monitors 4 weekly those pupils on part time timetables to ensure these are used appropriately as outlined in the guidance.

### **Bright Start nursery Call-in**

*Call-ins are a way of challenging decisions taken by the council's executive before they are implemented.*

This request for a Call-in was made in October 2010 on the point that the decision was concerned only with whether or not to consult on the future of Bright Start, rather than being an outright decision about the nursery's prospects and viability.

The [Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee](#) (CYPOSC) resolved not to refer the decision back to the Children and Young People Cabinet Member for reconsideration.

[Culture, Tourism and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee](#) (CTEOSC) held a workshop in July 2010 on the sports facilities management contract. Members were consulted on the tendering process and their input informed both the specification and the contract. Freedom Leisure was awarded the contract from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.

## 2. Crime and improving safety

### **Scrutiny Review update - Children & Alcohol**

#### **Completed May 2009**

- ✓ The Young Persons Alcohol post has continued to develop early intervention work, including the police developing links with the ambulance service.
- ✓ Work has been recognised by Alcohol Concern as a case study for a simple cost effective referral process.
- ✓ The Alcohol Worker from the Health Promotions team has worked closely with the council training team to develop and deliver training to staff across the council as well as the wider statutory and voluntary sector.

**Scrutiny Review update - Sexual violence** investigated the level of support provided in the city for victims of rape, sexual assault and other serious sexual offences, identifying current support services and gaps in the provision of support.

#### **Completed June 2010**

TBC – awaiting final text

### **IC Pilots on Domestic Violence, Drugs and Alcohol**

Scrutiny workshops have been held on each of the intelligent commissioning pilots. The needs assessments on each of the three studies were presented to scrutiny members.

The most advanced of the pilots, domestic violence, has been subject to a further detailed workshop prior to its presentation at Cabinet. Scrutiny members

### 3. Health and well-being

#### Scrutiny Review - Services for Adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC)

*How should we respond to the first National Autism Strategy? How can we improve our services?* Local services currently provided for adults with ASC were reviewed, including the transition from children's to adult services. The Panel listened to service users, parents and carers of people with ASC, service providers, third sector organisations, health and criminal justice colleagues.

#### **Completed March 2011 – key recommendations**

- Training on ASC awareness should be given to as many frontline council staff as possible.
- There are currently two pathways to diagnosis, either through Mental Health services or Learning Disabilities services, which are not always as well linked as they should be. The Panel would like to see clear and accessible pathways, which work together where appropriate.
- Families and carers need to be kept more informed about the transition from children's to adults' services. Joint working is needed to manage the change as smoothly as possible.
- Encouraged health colleagues to explore the diagnostic model used in West Sussex.
- A dedicated team of professionals to support adults with ASC should be set up.
  - ✓ An ASC stakeholder group has been set up, including council officers, police, education, and health. This will develop the local response to the National Autism Strategy using the work of this Review as a starting point.

*“Other local authorities should see this innovative piece of work as a model for the inclusive re-design of major strategies.”*

**Professor Jeremy Turk, Consultant in Development Psychiatry, Maudsley Hospital; Professor of Developmental Psychiatry, University of London.**

*“The panel provided an opportunity to explore in depth concerns with fairness, transparency and without censure. As a result, locally we are now better informed and more able to develop the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a local autism strategy.”*

**Diana Bernhardt, Lead Commissioner, Learning Disabilities, NHS Brighton & Hove and Brighton & Hove City Council**

**Scrutiny Review update - Dementia**

**Completed September 2010**

- ✓ City partners are currently revising the city's dementia strategy, and the Panel's recommendations have been included in the evidence being considered.

**Scrutiny Review update - GP Health Centre**

**Completed July 2009**

- ✓ Following the publication of the scrutiny report, NHS Brighton & Hove has ensured that details of all major procurements are available on its website, which will allow concerned members of the public to make their views known about particular plans.

**Scrutiny Review update - Dual Diagnosis** looked at services for people who have both serious substance misuse and mental health problems.

**Completed April 2009**

- ✓ Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has developed its own strategy using the Panel's report as its fundamental building block. This strategy has just been approved by the Trust's executive board and will shortly be rolled out across the Trust.

This year the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee worked closely with NHS Brighton & Hove to help it develop its annual operating plan, identifying areas of particular concern in terms of the city's healthcare needs

*"We have a very positive relationship with the Brighton & Hove scrutiny team. They provide a constructive challenge to the PCT and continue to develop their services in innovative ways."*

**Claire Quigley, Director of Delivery, NHS Brighton & Hove; Director of Delivery and QUIPP, Sussex PCT Cluster**



## 4: Community involvement

### **Working with the local third sector**

- ✓ Scrutiny has developed a stronger relationship with the local third sector, resulting in The Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF) being represented in service commissioning scrutiny workshops and having a co-optee in the scrutiny of the 20011-12 budget setting process.

### **Scrutiny Review update - Staff Disabilities**

#### **Completed in May 2010**

A Disabled Workers Forum (DWF) Annual Report is being produced for the first time.

- ✓ Recommendations used to inform e-learning packages; 'Attendance Management' (launched), 'Recruitment and Selection' (being developed) and e-induction (being revised).
- ✓ Training workshops and courses being run on this issue.

*'I think that the process was very worthwhile. The recommendations were very useful and it was a wonderful opportunity to enable us to communicate our needs to improve our working environment at the council. The recommendations have given us support for improving practices when issues around disability arise for staff. I particularly like the recommendation of acquiring a disability champion which should help us trouble shoot problem areas more swiftly.'*

**A member of the DWF talking about this Panel**

### **Scrutiny Review update - Older People and Community Safety**

#### **Completed in August 2009**

- ✓ The Draft Community Safety Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy 2011 – 2014 includes a new section and action plan on older people.
- ✓ Intelligent Commissioning Pilots on Domestic Violence and Alcohol takes elder abuse and older people's specific needs into account.

In 2010-11, Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ASCHOSC) invited the CVSF to talk about their experiences of personalisation and problems that they've experienced, on two occasions. On the second occasion, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and key officers were in attendance and committed to meet with the Head of the CVSF to address the issues raised.

## 5. Housing and affordability

### **Scrutiny Review - Letting Agents**

*What extra charges might Lettings Agents make tenants pay for?* Charges can be made for getting references, carrying out credit checks, providing an inventory and renewing tenancies. Some of these charges were seen as hidden and not providing value for money.

**Completed in March 2011** - the key recommendations for the council include:

- Developing a local letting agents' accreditation scheme.
- Launching an information pack for private sector tenants, highlighting letting agents' good practices and procedures.
- Ensuring that the current landlords' accreditation scheme provides advice on choosing letting agents. To include an explanation that letting agents deriving most of their income from tenant charges may not be in the best interests of landlords.
- Consider including details of homes to let by accredited letting agents in its Homemove lettings scheme web pages/ magazine alongside council and housing association properties.

### **Scrutiny Review update - Students in the Community**

**Completed in February 2009**

- ✓ The council has developed a detailed Student Housing Strategy which addresses the majority of the recommendations to come out of the scrutiny study. It sets out a strategic approach for the supply and management of student housing in the city, to ensure that students are integrated into established residential communities in ways that do not unbalance local population structures and housing markets.

## 6: The environment

**Scrutiny Review - Renewable Energy Potential** *What can be done to encourage the growth of renewable energy in the city?* The Panel found that growing this sector would retain money in local economy, tackle fuel poverty, create jobs and improve skills.

The report of the Panel was approved in April 2011 and the key recommendations include:

- Develop a city wide sustainable energy programme.
- Establish a team or agency to focus on sustainable energy.
- Carry out a heat mapping exercise to identify opportunities for District Heating.
- A sustainable energy publicity campaign.
- A programme to enable community based sustainable energy.

### **Scrutiny Review update - Climate Change Adaptation**

#### **Completed in July 2010**

- ✓ The findings of this Panel are being fed into the city's revised Climate Change Action Plan.
- ✓ A Local Climate Impact Profile has been undertaken.
- ✓ Work on the city's Surface Water Management Plan is progressing.
- ✓ The City Sustainability Partnerships 'Big Asks' of the Strategic Director of Place and the new council administration included: "Leadership on climate change adaptation planning, including and beyond public services, with an emphasis on community engagement to improve resilience to severe weather impacts."
- ✓ Climate Change impacts and adaptation feature in the imminent "State of the City" and "State of the Local Environment" reports.
- ✓ Active consideration is being given to updating the council's Strategic Risk Register to include a new risk on severe weather.

*'Chairing [this] ... panel for Brighton and Hove City Council was a valuable and rewarding experience'*

**Professor Gordon MacKerron, Director of the Sussex Energy Group – University of Sussex**

**Scrutiny Review update - Environmental Technologies**

**Completed January 2010**

- ✓ Officer appointed and began in .....
- ✓ Recent updates of strategies including the City Employment and Skills Plan have taken account of this sector.
- ✓ The city's successful Future Jobs Fund apprenticeship scheme included 100 recycling and environmental jobs.

To be updated.

**Scrutiny Review update - Winter service plan**

**Completed March 2010**

- ✓ Communication with residents during the severe winter weather during 2010/11 was vastly improved compared to 2009/10.
- ✓ Scrutiny recommendations regarding up-to-date information and guidance regarding the liability of residents clearing paths and pavements also helped ensure that the city was better able to cope with the snow.

## 7: Sustainable transport

### **Local Transport Plan (LTP3) workshop**

Transport came under scrutiny at an informal workshop for the [Environment and Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee](#) (ECSOSC) on 31 January. Members received copies of the LTP3 strategy and delivery plan in draft form and heard a presentation from senior officers.

LTP3 is based on LTP2 which ended on 31 March 2011, also on the city's other plans and strategies and considerable experience within the council.

The Committee made their views known and asked for further information on key issues such as road safety, vehicle speeds, air and noise pollution, response to severe weather, smart ticketing (Oyster cards), street lighting efficiency, freight operations, bus route maps and the new responsibility for road classification.

Cabinet considered the final version LTP3 on 17 March, for agreement at 24 March full Council.

### **Scrutiny Review update - Street access**

#### **Completed April 2010**

- ✓ The Citywide Speed Limit Review (Non A&B Class Roads) pilot study on three trial areas in different parts of the city is now complete. Officers are preparing to present the report at July Cabinet Member Meeting (CMM) seeking Cabinet Member approval to consult on implementing its recommendations within those areas. At that meeting approval is also being sought to continue the review using the same methodology.

### **Scrutiny Review update – 20mph speed limits/zones**

#### **Completed April 2010**

- ✓ Progress in implementing the recommendations is tied into the development of the LTP3 which is currently being finalised.

### **Parking Call-in**

This Call-in was held to determine whether to ask the Environment Cabinet Member to reconsider the decision in relation to the Hanover & Elm Grove Resident Parking Scheme Review Community Consultation which was taken at the Environment Cabinet Member Meeting on 16 September 2010. The decision was made to neither refer the decision back nor make recommendations to the Environment Cabinet Member.

### **Pedestrian Crossings**

Following concerns from residents, the [Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) (ECSOSC) pushed for a more transparent and easier to understand method of prioritising pedestrian crossings.

A more robust and up to date scoring system has now been developed that takes into account residents' fear of crossing busy roads and public perception of dangerous roads; a report with the revised methodology will be taken for the approval of the Cabinet Member for Environment.

## 8: Quality advice and information services

**Scrutiny Review - In-Year Budget Reductions** *How might the planned in-year budget reductions affect council services?* The aim was to help improve how future budgets are set.

**Completed in December 2010 and main recommendations** related to

- Consulting on service changes.
- Agreed priorities for services.
- Partnership working.
- Monitoring the on-going and longer-term impact of budget reductions.
- Closer working with the city's Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF).

**Outcomes achieved to date**

- ✓ Council maintaining close links with the CVSF.
- ✓ For future years – assessing the equality impact, as well as consultation and engagement, will be part of the commissioning process.
- ✓ Consultations on risk and opportunity management will be included in relevant committee reports.
- ✓ Recommendations taken into account in partnership working re: Collective financial challenges (eg joint use of building, collaborative procurement)
- ✓ Recommendations taken into account in the Intelligent Commissioning Framework and partnership working.

**Engaging with the community**

We have been expanding the ways our team/service communicate and engage with residents. This includes:

- A scrutiny Twitter account has been created to promote scrutiny committee and panel work and receive suggestions for scrutiny topics.
- A quarterly newsletter on scrutiny activity which goes to all Members, senior officers and partner organisations.
- All Overview and Scrutiny Commission (OSC) meetings are webcast and stored on the website.
- Website improvements and up to date information about the progress of panels and all scrutiny committee meetings can be found on [our webpages](#).

**Planned panel – information sharing on vulnerable people**

TBC

# The Scrutiny Team

## Who are we?

- Tom Hook, Head of Scrutiny (01273 29-1110)
- Giles Rossington, Senior Scrutiny Officer, HOSC (29-1038)
- Mary van Beinum, Scrutiny Officer, ESCOSC, OSC (29-1062)
- Julia Riches, Scrutiny Officer, CTEOSC (29-1084) *Jobshare*
- Karen Amsden, Scrutiny Officer, CTEOSC (29-1084) *Jobshare*
- Sharmini Williams, Scrutiny Officer, CYPOSC (29-0451)
- Kath Vlcek, Scrutiny Officer, ASCHOSC (29-0450) *Part time*

## Our achievements in 2010/11

### Tackling the key issues for the city

In the last 3 years the team has undertaken 20 scrutiny reviews, covering a wide range of policy areas and representing some of the major issues affecting the city.

This year we asked the public for suggestions for topics to scrutinise; a total of 69 separate suggestions were received. Our scrutiny committees chose ??? topics, of which ???? were completed in 2010/11.

### Raising awareness of scrutiny

- **A quarterly newsletter** was introduced this year which is sent electronically to all councillors, senior officers and partner organisations.
- Updating **our website**.
- Using **networking** to work intelligently with our neighbours. For example HOSC talk regularly with four neighbouring authorities to co-ordinate their response to emerging health issues.
- Forwarding **summaries of our Reviews to Full Council** to provide them with an easily digestible account of their findings.
- Set up a **Twitter** account [@BHScrutiny](#).
- **Webcasting** our Overview & Scrutiny Commission meetings.

### Working with our Universities

The 'University Challenge' a study by the Centre for Public Scrutiny will include the recent collaboration between us and the city's universities as a case study This work includes:

- Dr Adrian Smith, from University of Sussex, who brought his knowledge of community energy to chair a Panel on realising the potential for renewable energy in the city.
- A final year student undertaking an internship in the Team.



## Our focus for 2011/12

### Member induction and training

TBC

### Partnership working

We are moving towards a partnership based scrutiny function - building on the ways we work with the City's Strategic Partnership. This will complement, rather than duplicate, work streams. It will ensure that the council is plugged into the decision making processes of the city's key public sector organisations. The aim is to:

- Increase democratic accountability and input to organisations within the city.
- Result in reviews of service provision in areas of weakness/priority areas for intervention.
- Act as a mechanism for innovative policy development.
- Provide a means for increased community involvement in decision making and service review.
- Offer a mechanism for the independent review of issues of contention between organisations.

An example of this work was the involvement of the local third sector in examining the council's 2011-12 budget proposals.

*'CVSF believes the scrutiny process is a key mechanism for influencing decision making and for enabling the voice and experience of CVSF members to be heard. It has been an absolute privilege to work with the Scrutiny Team and CVSF hopes to continue its involvement in scrutiny on behalf of its members.'*

**Sally Polanski, CEO, Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF)**

### Intelligent Commissioning

Members of the [Overview and Scrutiny Commission](#) attended informal scrutiny workshops on each of the Intelligent Commissioning Pilots; Drug-related Deaths, Domestic Violence and Alcohol-Related Harm.

Members asked questions, commented and made suggestions for developments in these areas. Feedback from the workshops is being used in making decisions on commissioning services in these areas.

# Get involved

There are many ways in which you can get involved in Scrutiny. This can be done by:

1. **Attending a meeting** – All Scrutiny Committee Meetings are open to the public. Please look at our website to see the dates, times and venues of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1211354>
2. **Consultation** – During the evidence gathering stage of a review a range of stakeholders will be consulted with in order to gain evidence. Details of such consultation will appear on the web pages or in a variety of other formats such as in the local newspaper.
3. **Tell us your views** – Please contact us if you have an idea for a Scrutiny review or if you would like to contribute to a current review.

## Suggesting a topic for scrutiny

If you have an issue that you think we should look at, or suggestions for future work, there are different ways to tell us about them. These include:

- Contact the scrutiny team
- Speak to your local councillor
- Look out for our

To help you when thinking of suggestions, we have listed some questions for you to think about.

- Is this an important issue for local people?
- Are there new laws or rules that might affect a service?
- Is this a poorly performing service? Have there been complaints about the service?
- Has the service overspent or underspent its budget?

## How to contact us

Email us at [scrutiny@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Follow us on Twitter at [@BHScrutiny](https://twitter.com/BHScrutiny) to find out about our meetings, give evidence to us, suggest reviews or tell us what you are up to.

### Write to us

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Or telephone us on 01273– 291084

Visit our website

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1247215>