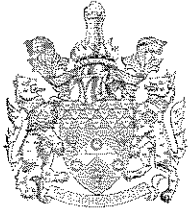


**South
Derbyshire
District Council**

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11

South Derbyshire Changing for the better



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1. Background

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This is the tenth Annual Report to Council from Overview and Scrutiny, as required by Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.

The report outlines how the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has discharged its functions during the municipal year 2010/11 and details the current position and outcomes of its activities.

1.2 Composition of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee has eight Members, being five Members of the Conservative Group and three Members of the Labour Group in accordance with the political balance of the Council. For 2010/11, the following Members were appointed to the Committee:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Jones (Chairman), Councillor Mrs. Farrington (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Atkin, Mrs. Hood and Mrs. Plenderleith.

Labour Group

Councillors Bambrick, Lane and Mrs. Mead.

1.3 Main Purposes of Committee

The main purposes of the Committee are as follows:-

- (a) Make reports and/or recommendations to Full Council, Policy Committees or Area Forums in connection with the formulation of Policy and the discharge of any functions.
- (b) Consider any matter affecting the District or its inhabitants.
- (c) Review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions.
- (d) Exercise the Call-In procedure in respect of decisions made but not yet implemented by any Policy Committee or Area Forum.
- (e) Oversee the Best Value process and report findings to the relevant Policy Committee.



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1.4 Officer Support

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is supported by two Directors from the Management Team and the Principal Democratic Services Officer. Other Officers attend meetings to contribute to specific reviews.

1.5 Meetings

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee usually meets every six weeks, on Wednesday evenings at the Council's Civic Offices. Meetings are held in Open session, unless there are Exempt items for consideration. Additional task groups and special meetings have taken place on certain review areas.

1.6 Call-In of Policy Committee Decisions

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to 'call-in' decisions of any policy committee made but not implemented, as set out in the Local Authorities (Alternative Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2001. During 2010/11, no policy committee decisions were 'called-in'.

2. Specific Areas of Activity and Achievements

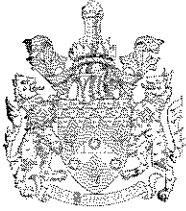
2.1 Scrutiny Focus Session

The Committee held a Scrutiny Focus Session in June 2010, which included a discussion of ongoing reviews, together with a new review area proposed by a Member. The Committee discussed publicity and consultation arrangements, together with required scrutiny areas on crime and disorder, the budget and a new area on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA). Breakout groups then scoped two proposed review areas and the session resulted in a draft work programme being prepared.

2.2 Broadband

The review area from 2009/10 continued into this municipal year, with updates being submitted to several meetings. The activity included research into the availability of funding for infrastructure improvements and continued liaison with BT to seek improvements to broadband speeds. Also considered were how BT could interact in the early stages of development, with regards to infrastructure and BT's production of a troubleshooting guide to assist residents experiencing poor broadband speeds.

In conjunction with BT, successful expressions of interest were submitted seeking funding from the East Midlands Development Agency and the Rural Development Programme for England. This sought to progress an exchange upgrade in Overseal and a wireless broadband scheme for the Hilton area, the latter scheme being in conjunction with the Parish Council and the Village Hall. BT subsequently announced that the Etwall exchange, which covered Hilton, would be upgraded to super-fast broadband. It was noted that the lobbying undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee had contributed to BT's decision to upgrade this exchange.



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2.3 Regulation Of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

A new scrutiny area was introduced this year to monitor the use of covert surveillance techniques. The Committee made recommendations, which were adopted by Council, to amend the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, in line with requirements under a revised code of practice. Council approved the RIPA Policy and Guidance document, authorised the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review annually the use of RIPA and to set the Council's policy and guidance, considering internal reports on the use of RIPA on a quarterly basis.

Revisions to the Policy were reported at subsequent scrutiny meetings, as a result of further guidance and latterly an announcement from the Home Secretary. When brought into force, this will limit the use of RIPA going forward, to cases where the offence carries a maximum custodial sentence of 6 months or more and includes the need to have Magistrates approval to use the powers. Interim arrangements were proposed ahead of this review.

2.4 Licensing

The Committee had identified this review area as part of the previous year's budget scrutiny work. A presentation was received on the work of the Licensing Section, which covered the purpose of the section, staffing, work areas, income and activities. Specific areas were liquor licensing, joined-up working, private hire and the proms initiative.

2.5 Swadlincote Woodlands Scheme

At the Scrutiny Focus Session, the Committee agreed to undertake a review of the Swadlincote Woodlands Scheme. A report was submitted that provided background on the Scheme, its funding sources and aims. The report explained the process leading to the completion of the scheme, the funding agreement for aftercare of the site, which was close to being depleted and Members discussed future management options.

A comprehensive update was provided to the February meeting, which included sections on site management options and costs, grant opportunities and the development of a 10-year site management plan. A review of staffing levels on-site staff resulted in significant savings, which meant that the remaining Section 106 monies would last for a further six years, addressing the immediate concerns over maintenance of the site. The Site Management Action Plan was referred for further consideration by the Housing and Community Services Committee.

2.6 Transfer of Private Sewers

The Committee had undertaken review work on household drainage in 2008/09. It was asked to give consideration to a consultation document from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on proposals for transferring private sewers and lateral drains to the statutory water and sewerage companies. A particular issue highlighted from this review was the lack of DEFRA engagement with Local Authority Building Control (LABC). The Council's Building Control Service would remain responsible for ensuring the proper construction of drains until the point they met the public sewer. It was recommended that the



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Council support the transfer of private sewers to water and sewerage companies, but strongly urge DEFRA to enter into meaningful discussions with LABC in regard to the detailed implementation of the scheme. The Committee's views were submitted to the Environmental and Development Services Committee, as part of the formal consultation response to DEFRA.

2.7 Cultural Facilities and Services

The Committee had undertaken periodic monitoring of the Etwall Leisure Centre and Rosliston Forestry Centre in previous years. In 2010/11, the Committee received an update on the Leisure Centre, considering the financial out-turn figures in June, which had followed the May meeting held at the Leisure Centre. That report comprised an executive summary and overall commentary; with sections on membership and swimming instruction, the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.

The Committee received a number of presentations at its meeting in December. A further update on the Etwall Leisure Centre reported monthly usage statistics and the split between public and educational use, together with information on the clubs and groups that were using the Centre. Details were also provided of achievements at the Centre, the events held and those planned for the future. Additionally, at this meeting an audit report was presented on the assessment of internal control at the new Centre.

A presentation was provided on the Rosliston Forestry Centre, which gave statistics on day visitor numbers, cabin occupancy rates, retail figures and wedding bookings. Information was provided on marketing, recent health and safety audits/inspections and a successful funding application to Community Spaces, resulting in the award of just under £42,000 for the Herbie Project, a sensory garden. Further presentations were also given on the Environmental Education Project and 'Get Active in the Forest' initiative. In addition to receiving further monitoring reports, the implementation of the new joint leisure management contract would be a potential future review area.

2.8 Funded Voluntary Organisations

A review area was proposed at the Annual Focus Session, and following the approval of a scoping document, it was agreed to undertake this review using a task group, comprising Councillors Atkin, Bambrick and Mrs. Hood. The first task group on 27th October 2010 involved a presentation by Officers, to provide background on the current arrangements.

NEEDS AN UPDATE FROM THE 23RD MARCH MEETING

2.9 Health Scrutiny

Following the 2008 scrutiny review of NHS dentistry and out of hours services delivered at the Health Centre in Civic Way, Swadlincote, the Committee revisited this area in 2010/11. At the Focus Session and subsequent Committee Meeting an update was requested and reports were submitted to two Committee Meetings. The Committee's main focus was to ascertain detailed information on the range of services delivered from the Centre and numbers of patients using it. This led to health sector representatives attending a special meeting of the



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Committee in January 2011. A series of questions were submitted ahead of the meeting to enable responses to be provided, although some information was awaited. There was also recognition of the current review of the NHS and the shift to GP commissioning from April 2012, which will influence the timing of future health scrutiny work.

2.10 Budget Proposals 2011/12 and Financial Plan to 2016

The Committee has a specific role to assist the Finance and Management Committee to develop the budget proposals. The Committee considered the budget at two of its meetings, in January and February 2011. Arising from consideration of the General Fund and specifically a new Government initiative, an area was proposed for further investigation, to bring empty properties back into use, as this carried a financial incentive. The review would be scoped for consideration in the following municipal year.

As the second part of the budget scrutiny process, the Committee gave consideration to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2011/12. There was discussion about the decision taken by the Housing and Community Services Committee, regarding the average rent increase of 5.4% and the implications of this decision for HRA stability, rent convergence and the future self-financing option. A scrutiny review was proposed within the 2011/12 work programme, to look at the increasing costs falling to local authorities associated with the housing benefit system. The two review areas were accepted by the Finance and Management Committee, when receiving the budget scrutiny report.

2.11 Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

TO BE UPDATED AFTER THE MARCH MEETING

The Council has a duty to undertake Crime and Disorder Scrutiny at least once each year. Following consultation, the Committee selected a review for its March meeting on promotion of the Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams. It followed the Police "have your say day" event when South Derbyshire had scored lowest in the County on the question: "Before this event, did you know that you had a Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team in your area?" The Committee met with relevant officers to research this and consider a strategy for improving public awareness.

2.12 Joint Scrutiny Work

The Council has continued its involvement in the Derbyshire Scrutiny Liaison Group and the East Midlands Scrutiny Network. These county and regional groups provide a useful dialogue on the ever changing requirements for scrutiny.



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3. Work Programme 2011/12

Following the District Council elections and the Annual Council Meeting, a half-day focus session is planned. This will be used as an induction process for new Members to Scrutiny. The session will include consideration of the work programme for 2011/12, the scoping and prioritising of review areas and Members will be asked to consider the appointment of task groups for appropriate review areas. Decisions from the focus session will be considered formally by the Committee.

4. Concluding Comments and Acknowledgements

This report has aimed to demonstrate the tangible effect that overview and scrutiny can make towards improving and delivering quality services to the residents of South Derbyshire. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recognises and appreciates immensely the valuable contribution that elected Members, Officers and representatives from partner organisations make towards its work and acknowledges that without this support and co-operation, it could not fulfil its Constitutional remit.

Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Members
of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
March 2011

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ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਸਰੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬ੍ਰੇਅਲ ਜਾਂ ਆਡਿਓ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਉਪਲੱਬਧ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

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