

South  
Derbyshire  
District Council

# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10

ANNEXE 'A'

South Derbyshire Changing for the better



**South  
Derbyshire**  
District Council

**1. Background**

**1.1 Purpose of the Report**

This is the ninth 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 2009/10 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 2009/10, 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.

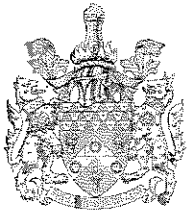
Labour Group

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 Committee or Area Meeting 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 Meeting.
- (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 the Directors of Corporate and Community Services, the Principal Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Assistant. 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. Some meetings are held away from the 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 reviews.

### **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 2009/10, no Policy Committee decisions were 'called-in'.

## **2. Specific Areas of Activity and Achievements**

### **2.1 Peer Review**

During the year, the external Peer Review of the Overview and Scrutiny function was concluded. This review was carried out by James Doble of Cherwell District Council and comprised the submission of documents, initial lines of enquiry and on-site discussions with a number of Members and Officers. The final review report was positive and confirmed the good progress that the Committee had made in undertaking Overview and Scrutiny at South Derbyshire.

The conclusions from the external Peer Review stated "South Derbyshire is an authority that is carrying out good quality, innovative and influential scrutiny. In terms of the impact of its reviews, it is punching above its weight and having a positive impact".

An Action Plan was prepared, to respond to suggestions and recommendations arising from the Peer Review. It resulted in changes to the format of Overview and Scrutiny reports, the alignment of review areas to the Council's corporate priorities, with a slight revision to the scoping document, to highlight the relevance of reviews to corporate priorities. The adoption of a scoring matrix was also approved, to enable Members to compare proposed review areas against the corporate priorities. The Peer Review report included recommendations regarding amendments to the Council's Constitution, to meet new requirements for Crime and Disorder Scrutiny, the Councillor Call for Action and certain matters that were excluded from consideration by Overview and Scrutiny. These changes were approved by Full Council. The final recommendation from the Peer Review concerned Task Group working, which has been trialled in the current year for some review areas.



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### **2.2 Scrutiny Focus Session**

The Committee held a Scrutiny Focus Session in October 2009. It provided the opportunity to consider in detail the final Peer Review report, the recommendations within it and the associated Action Plan. The Focus Session was also used to scope reviews and formulate the work programme for this municipal year.

### **2.3 Presentation on Swine Influenza Pandemic and Business Continuity**

A presentation and discussion took place on this review area, which covered emergency planning and business continuity arrangements. Examples of emergencies that had previously occurred included flooding, the foot and mouth outbreak, loss of gas supply, water supply and the current swine influenza pandemic. The Council used a business continuity plan to quantify and plan for outcomes of various incidents and scenarios. The presentation focussed on the measures the Council had taken to respond to the current swine influenza pandemic. The Committee was satisfied with the business continuity arrangements and no further recommendations were considered necessary.

### **2.4 Rosliston Forestry Centre – Update On Business Plan**

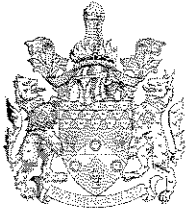
The Committee undertook a single meeting review, to update from the 2008 work on the Rosliston Forestry Centre. This reminded Members of the content of the initial presentation and advised of the subsequent developments and changes that would impact on future business planning. It included funding aspects, reducing subsidy requirements and visitor numbers.

A number of future developments had been progressed and updates were given on:

- The building of wooden constructed business units.
- Improvements, lighting, sound, security, flooring, signage and fit-out to The Glade in the Forest Area, which had also commenced a performance programme.
- A unique crazy golf facility.
- Further feasibility into the potential of a wind turbine.
- A marquee had also been purchased for weddings and other activities in The Glade.

There was discussion about Business Plan performance, the additional income anticipated in future years and potential future costs. The 2010-15 Strategic Vision and Business Plan was discussed. Members questioned various other areas of the Centre's activity.

The Committee was satisfied with the progress made by the Forestry Centre, together with its vision for the future. This review was reported to Housing and Community Services Committee. The Policy Committee agreed with a specific recommendation for a further review in 2010/11 of the Centre's Business Plan and that, in particular, the 'Get Active in the Forest' and Environmental Education work be addressed as part of the review.



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**2.5 Broadband Provision**

Following the earlier review work on Broadband in South Derbyshire, the Committee had agreed to continue to pursue British Telecom and to receive periodic progress reports. At the Committee's meeting in December 2009, representatives of British Telecom and Openreach gave a presentation on the current situation and future plans for Broadband in South Derbyshire. A list of questions had been collated prior to the Meeting, and responses were provided.

The presentation gave details on broadband speeds and various related issues. Several Members were disappointed with BT's proposals for the District and considered that there had been little improvement since the previous presentation received last year.

Subsequently, representatives of the Council (Councillor Mrs. Plenderleith and the Head of IT and Business Improvement) attended the House of Lords, and meetings were arranged with British Telecom and Openreach Management. A commitment was received to undertake a thorough survey of the Etwall exchange and its provision to Hilton. An offer was received for a further meeting with BT.

After the further meeting with British Telecom and Openreach, reports were made to the Committee in March and May, including the submission of the review report for this area. A series of recommendations were made that would be submitted to the Environmental and Development Services Committee.

**2.6 Etwall Leisure Centre – Community Use**

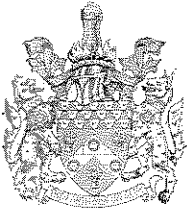
A review was undertaken of the community use of Etwall Leisure Centre, following the opening of the new Centre in August 2009. A report was provided, which covered the swimming programme, the joint use of the facility by John Port School and community access to the pool and health and fitness suite. Other areas covered were the extended opening hours, management arrangements and the significant increase in use of the new facilities. Financial aspects were also covered. It was agreed to revisit community usage, after a six-month period and this took place at the May meeting, which was held at the Etwall Leisure Centre.

**2.7 Shopmobility / Youth Information Shop**

The Committee appointed a task group for this review. A Meeting was held with representatives of the scheme and the task group reported to the Committee. Current issues faced by the organisation were funding, premises and publicity, including website development. At the January Meeting, the Committee discussed the potential financial assistance and other support that the scheme could seek to access.

**2.8 Budget Proposals 2010/11 and Financial Plan to 2015**

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. Two areas were proposed for further investigation, comprising a review of the waste service



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contract, to look at value for money and customer satisfaction and private hire licensing, arising from on-the-spot vehicle testing. Both reviews would be scoped for consideration in the following financial year.

**2.9 Crime and Disorder Scrutiny**

The Council has a duty to undertake Crime and Disorder Scrutiny at least once each year. A special Meeting was arranged for this purpose. Consultation with the Chairman of the Safer South Derbyshire Partnership and the Safer Communities Team led to the identification of potential review areas. A review was undertaken of how Safer Neighbourhood project funding is allocated. This funding is designed to alleviate local crime and disorder problems by supporting community projects. The review involved external contributors, being the Chairman of the Safer South Derbyshire Partnership and a representative of the Youth of Hatton Scheme. Task groups were used to explore further elements on Safer Neighbourhood project funding and these reported back to the May meeting.

Other suggested review areas, for the future were anti-social behaviour and particularly how communities could work more closely with the Partnership, to tackle problems at an early stage and how Section 17 training could be delivered across the Council, so each department is aware of its role in preventing Crime and Disorder.

**2.10 Joint Scrutiny Work**

The Council has continued its involvement in the Derbyshire Scrutiny Liaison Group. This countywide forum was established to meet the new legislative requirements for joint scrutiny, particularly focused on the Local Area Agreement. The Council is also represented at the Local Government East Midlands Scrutiny Network.

**3. Work Programme 2010/11**

Following the Annual Council Meeting, a half-day focus session is planned. This will enable Members to discuss the work programme for 2010/11, scope review areas and consider the appointment of task groups for appropriate review areas.

**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  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
May 2010

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

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