

Nottingham City Council

# Overview and Scrutiny in Nottingham

Annual Report 2006 - 2007



Spotlight on the City  
Focus on Improvement



Safer, cleaner, ambitious  
**Nottingham**  
A city we're all proud of



**Nottingham**  
City Council

What is

# overview & Scrutiny

overview

**general survey**

scrutiny

**critical gaze; close examination  
or investigation of details**

Oxford English Dictionary

# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2005 - 2006

## Foreword by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

I am pleased to say that our fourth Annual Report indicates that Overview and Scrutiny in Nottingham continues to make progress in the way it carries out its function and in what it achieves. We are not complacent and continually review our own practices and processes in order to ensure that we do add value to the services of the Council. We are also keen to support our partners in the City in the services they provide and I am impressed at the fruitful relationship built up between health scrutineers and NHS Trusts across the conurbation.

We are already planning for new roles and responsibilities coming out of legislation, not least from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill scheduled to be enacted in the autumn. This will bring us into a new realm of activity where we will be able to focus even more on those things which are so important to Nottingham's communities.

Again we have increased our library of major reports this year, adding a further five in the period covered by this report. We are gratified to note that the large majority of recommendations are taken on board and we are assiduous in monitoring progress. As ever I thank those involved in this work, Members, officers from across the Council, expert witnesses and the O&S Team, all of which enable such progress to be made.

This year has seen our major Corporate Performance Assessment and I am convinced that O&S has shown itself to be dedicated to supporting the Council's improvement programme and that of its partners.

I anticipate further progress over the coming year and look forward to fresh challenges as we move into a new era for overview and scrutiny

### **Councillor Malcolm Wood**

Lead Member for Overview and Scrutiny



# Introduction

## **Our vision for overview and scrutiny – providing a spotlight on the City of Nottingham, a focus on improvement**

Overview and Scrutiny Members and their officer support team work to promote the principles of good public scrutiny and to continue the development of a robust and effective overview and scrutiny function focused on adding value to the work of the Council and the life of the City and all its communities.

Overview and scrutiny (O&S) activities spotlight areas of concern and focus attention on ways in which services can be improved. Through this kind of work, Councillors can get to the heart of an issue, learn from experts and best practice, gain understanding from practitioners and service users and then devote time to deliberating on the evidence in order to make recommendations aimed at improvements.

According to the Government's 2006 White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, O&S Committees were created through the Local Government Act 2000 to scrutinise and make recommendations about executive decisions. Councils were also encouraged to use the committees as part of the policy development process – undertaking studies of local issues and making recommendations to the executive and others in the local area. This is what we in Nottingham have attempted to do with our O&S activities.

This year O&S Members and officers have been scanning the horizon to see what will be coming forward in the new legislation heralded by the White Paper. There are implications for the role of O&S in the Police and Justice Act 2006 and in the forthcoming Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill which is expected to be enacted in the autumn of

2007. It is significant that both these pieces of legislation build on the solid foundations which have been laid by local authorities in developing their overview and scrutiny work and signifies a recognition by the Government of the useful role it plays.

## **And the role of Overview and Scrutiny is . . .**

Overview and Scrutiny members:-

- Support the achievement of the best possible services for the people of Nottingham and for those working in and visiting the City
- Contribute to policy development and help to shape major plans and strategies
- Publicly hold the Executive to account for delivering on their priorities and for the decisions they make
- Review issues of concern or particular interest to the people of Nottingham
- Examine matters of wider public interest which are not necessarily the responsibility, or sole responsibility, of the Council, but which affect the well-being of the City and its people
- Have a statutory role in scrutinising substantial developments or variations in National Health Services in the area - for NHS issues that affect the wider conurbation there is a Joint Health Scrutiny Committee, with members drawn from the City and County Councils and the four neighbouring District Councils.

## **Overview and Scrutiny – adding value to the work of the Council**

O&S adds value because members devote the time to look at issues and problems in depth, to bring in all the necessary people to speak to them so that they can get a rounded understanding and to use all the evidence they receive to try to come up with solutions.

Although not a decision making function, O&S has influence across the Council and with partners through the detailed work it undertakes and the evidence based recommendations it makes. Outcomes of O&S can be directly attributed to action taken to implement its recommendations, but there are also outcomes which arise through members' investigations and interest whilst undertaking a piece of work, through influence and through raising the profile of services.

To ensure the greatest value arises from the activities of O&S, the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Standing Panels is aligned to the Council's corporate priorities and those shared with its partners in the City. It also aims to reflect concerns and issues identified through Members' constituency work, consultations, surveys and complaints and the outcomes of external or internal inspections.

## And its ways of working are . . .

It very much depends on the topic to be scrutinised or the piece of work in hand – here are some of the ways:-

- Major Reviews – these are in depth investigations into specific issues or services and may take several months to complete. This kind of review usually involves inviting a wide range of experts to give information, including hearing from Council officers and as often as possible from service users, undertaking site visits and focus groups to ensure members have a full picture of the issue. The evidence collected forms the basis of the report and recommendations made to improve ways of working. The report, with its recommendations, is presented to the appropriate member of the Executive or, in some instances, to the Executive Board or full Council or, in the case of services or responsibilities of other City organisations, to non-Council bodies.
- Short Term Investigations or Spotlight Reviews - these are less wide ranging than major reviews where members choose focused topics from performance or other information to conduct a spot check and this usually requires officers to provide information and explanations about the service's performance. Members will normally make recommendations to assist improvement.
- Monitoring Activity - monitoring is an important part of O&S work; this is often the regular monitoring of the performance and financial management of Council services; it can be of action planning following inspections and also of progress in the implementation of recommendations made in O&S members' own reports.

- Holding to account - Overview and Scrutiny members do not make decisions themselves but their role includes satisfying themselves that the decisions taken by the Executive are in the best interest of local communities, council tax payers and other key stakeholders and in line with approved policy.
- Call-in – through this non-Executive members can require the Executive Board or one of the portfolio holders to give further consideration to a decision which they have made: this will be if a number of non-executive members are not entirely satisfied with the decision or feel there is information which hasn't been taken into account. If there is a call-in, the decision will not be implemented until further deliberation has taken place by the decision makers in light of the representations; but so far call-in has not been used in Nottingham.

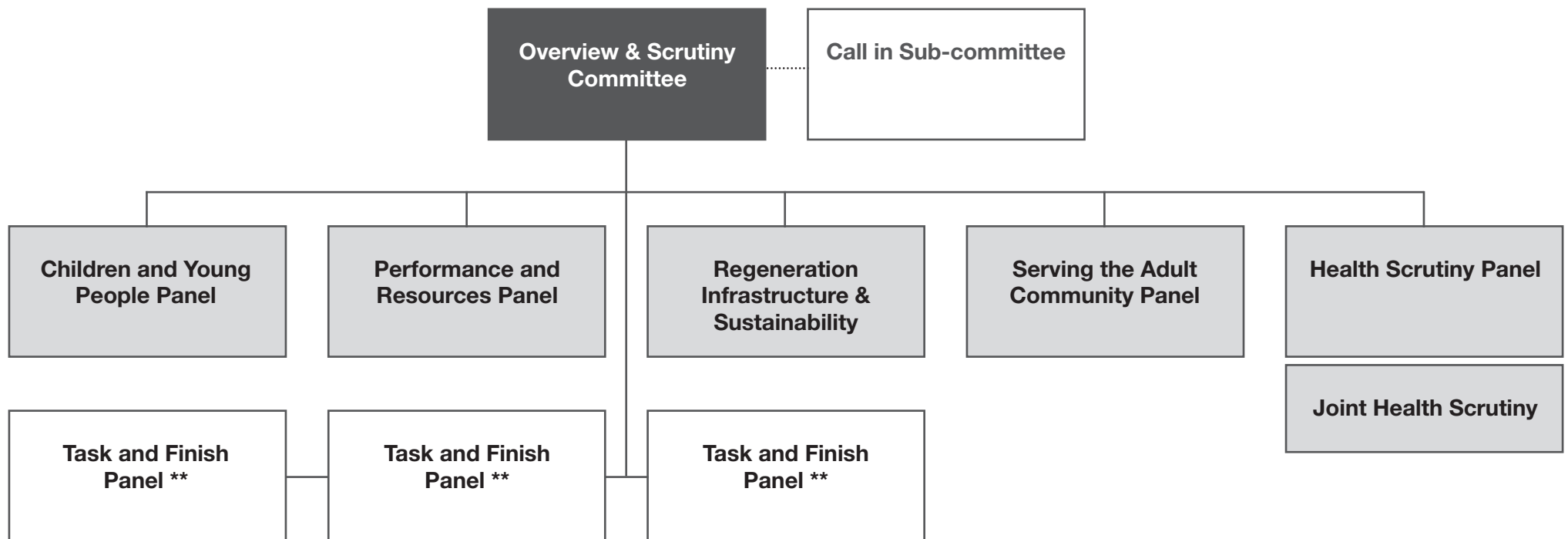
All non-executive members have the opportunity to take an active part in the O&S activities and, in line with the spirit of overview and scrutiny, members in Nottingham aim to carry out their activities in a consensual environment where party politics take a less prominent role. There are many ways in which individual members can participate – by making suggestions for topics to be scrutinised, by contributing to the questioning of witnesses as a member of an O&S panel and suggesting and debating recommendations. Members of all the three main political parties have at some time chaired panels which gives them an extra, in depth involvement in the work in hand.

## Expert witnesses and officers of the Council

Overview and Scrutiny Members are always grateful for the advice and evidence given by experts in the fields which have been reviewed and to those who have taken part in reviews, in particular representatives of voluntary sector organisations, some of whom have joined members in their deliberations. The Council's own officers are a fundamental source of information and their contributions are greatly appreciated.

It is extremely satisfying to learn that many who take part in our activities find the process useful and interesting. This year once again we have benefited from the input of many local organisations and thanks are extended to all of them.

## The 2006-2007 Structure for the Overview and Scrutiny Function



\*\* ad hoc panels

You can find out in more detail what each of these panels did, and what they have achieved this year, in the next section of this report.

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Foreword by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has been involved once again with key issues for the Council and City as well as continuing its role of co-ordinating and managing the whole function and work programme.

There have been highlights over the year and I have been particularly pleased to have welcomed senior personnel from the Crime and Drugs Partnership and look forward to a productive relationship over the coming months. Our involvement in the development of the LAA, and indeed the Local Strategic Partnership, has been useful and we anticipate a growing relationship with One Nottingham. Another area of major interest is Neighbourhood Management and this, I feel sure, will be a focus for our activity this coming year.

**Councillor Malcolm Wood**



## What we do

The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee undertakes the management of the whole function and coordinates the work of all the panels by overseeing the programme for the year. This work programme is reassessed at the beginning of each municipal year to ensure that remaining work is still relevant and that new work is included as necessary. The work programme is flexible to allow new items to be introduced at any time, whether at the suggestion of a member or through concerns coming up from our communities: these could be expressed directly or by analysis of consultation or surveys. The committee may set up task and finish panels to undertake discrete pieces of work from time to time: this is a very focused and intensive way of working which has proved to be very effective.

Members of the O&S Committee keep an overview of the development of major corporate plans and strategies such as the Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy, and they may make suggestions for improvements. The Committee will also have overall consideration of the development of the Local Area Agreement and will be involved in programmes of improvement such as Serving Nottingham Better. It keeps a monthly check on the Executive Forward Plan and members are briefed on other key areas of importance. Apart from the management and monitoring role, it is also responsible for scrutinising issues relating to community safety, crime and anti-social behaviour and strategic housing.

## Work this year

As well as the development and management of the overall process of overview and scrutiny, the Committee has been involved in a number of interesting areas this year as outlined in the next sections.

## Improving Performance

In November, the Committee was pleased to welcome Andrew Blackburn, the Audit Commission Relationship Manager for the City, who outlined the O&S role in performance improvement. At the same meeting Michael Frater, the newly arrived Chief Executive, set out his view of overview and scrutiny. The whole tenor of O&S work is about supporting improvement, so both these presentations were extremely interesting and helpful.

## Strategy for Supporting Improvement and Serving Nottingham Better

The Committee adopted a strategy of monitoring and supporting improvement programmes as part of the continuous improvement of the Council and also in preparation for the Corporate Performance Assessment scheduled for early in 2007. As the year progressed it also was kept informed about, and commented on, the Serving Nottingham Better programme, which followed on from the Gearing Up management change programme. The Committee kept an overview of preparations for the Corporate Assessment and, during the inspection period, were pleased to be able to showcase a meeting and also three other O&S panel meetings to the inspectors.

## Policy development work undertaken by the Committee

The Council's strategic planning, and that of its partners, has again been under the O&S spotlight. Together with all the panels, the Committee has been engaged in the refresh process for the Local Area Agreement and, for this Committee in particular, assessing progress against the targets in the LAA Safer and Stronger Communities block.

## **Development input and monitoring by the Committee**

This year the Committee has again kept an overview of the most important projects undertaken by the Council: these include NET Phase 2, which will provide further lines to the very successful tram system, and Building Schools for the Future, a project set to achieve a new generation of secondary school buildings. Keeping this overview gives members the opportunity to comment on progress or make recommendations which may assist in the development of such projects.

## **Engaging with the people of Nottingham**

The Committee had an early opportunity to comment on the proposed Customer Contact Centre which aims to make contacting the Council an easy, efficient and quick experience. It has since followed up that early work with updates on progress.

## **Community Safety, Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**

Crime, anti-social behaviour and community safety have received a high profile this year. Starting with the Executive's full response to the recommendations within the Task and Finish report on Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour in June 2006 and an update in January 2007, this was followed by an update on the Safe for Nottingham and Respect for Nottingham initiatives in July. Following this it was decided to hold a special meeting at the beginning of September to look

in more detail at targets and performance relating to the work of the Crime and Drugs Partnership with the Chief Executive of the Partnership in attendance. And in January '07, Chief Superintendent Marcus Beale and the Leader of the Council also attended a meeting to talk about progress to date in achieving community safety targets and also an evaluation of the neighbourhood policing pilot and plans for its development.

## **Strategic Housing**

The Committee has continued its interest in the improvement plans for Nottingham City Homes and has considered and made detailed recommendations on its delivery plan.

## **Preparing for new legislation and future challenges**

Following the publication of the Government's White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, and the subsequent draft Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill, the Committee considered a paper in March setting out the implications of this and other new legislation on the O&S function in order to be ahead of the game in its planning for new responsibilities. The prospects, although exciting, will be challenging and careful consideration is to be given to ensuring that overview and scrutiny continues to remain focused on those areas of most importance to Nottingham's communities.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Reports**

Once a report is completed, it is this committee which presents it to the relevant Executive Member, with the Chair of the author panel giving a brief introduction. On presentation it is usual for the Executive Member to give an initial, very general, response to the findings and recommendations and then undertake to return to the panel which carried out the review to give a full response and action plan setting out those matters which are to be implemented and when this is to be done.

If the report has been prepared by a task and finish panel the response comes back to the O&S Committee and several of these full responses received this year have been from reviews undertaken in 2005-06. These have related to reports on the Authority's Relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector, Area Working and Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour.

In most cases the majority of recommendations are accepted. Details of outcomes are set out further on in this report.

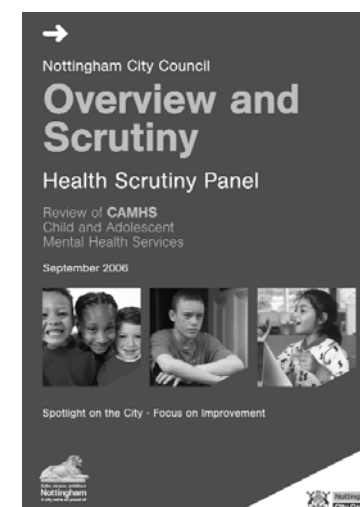
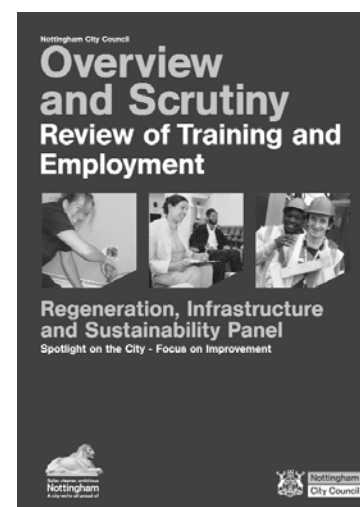
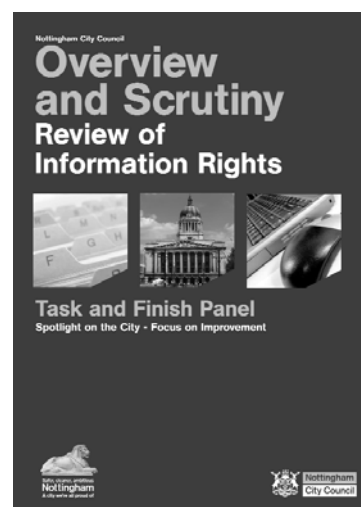
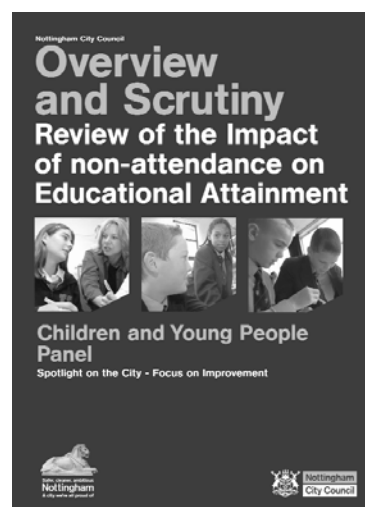
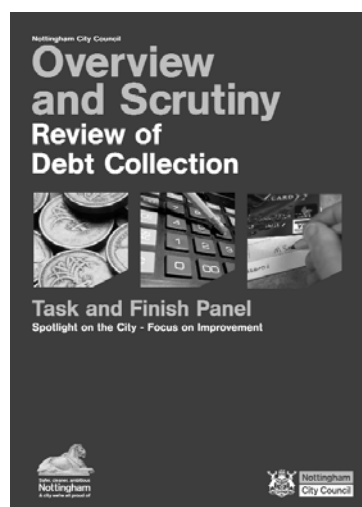
## **Task and Finish Panels**

Task and Finish Panels have again made excellent contributions to overview and scrutiny work this year. Small groups of members are brought together to undertake a specific piece of work within a short time frame. This year topics have been Debt Collection and Information Rights, both of which have produced excellent reports with useful and practical recommendations that have been welcomed by portfolio holders.



# Reports presented to the Executive this year

- Training and Employment in Nottingham – a report of the Regeneration, Infrastructure and Sustainability Panel presented to Councillors Eunice Campbell, Alan Clark and Graham Chapman in December 2006 and responded to in March 2007
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - a report of the Health Scrutiny Panel presented to Councillor Graham Chapman and local NHS Trusts in December 2006 and responded to in March 2007
- Debt Collection a report of the Debt Collection Task and Finish Panel - presented to Councillor Michael Edwards in January 2007 and due to be responded to in June 2007
- Information Rights - presented to Councillor Eunice Campbell in February 2007 and due to be responded to in July 2007
- Impact of non-attendance on educational attainment - presented to Councillor Graham Chapman in March 2007 and due to be responded to in July 2007



# Children and Young People Panel

## Foreword by the Chair of the Children and Young People Panel

Ensuring the Council is enabling the children and young people of Nottingham to achieve their full potential is a key priority for the City and the Panel has played its part in working towards this aim. Panel members have been dedicated to improving outcomes for children through detailed scrutiny of the work of the Portfolio Holder and of services provided to children.

This year has been busy, not only in terms of a steep learning curve getting to grips with the newly structured Children's Services and in monitoring the restructuring process to ensure continuity of service, but also undertaking the programmed review and monitoring activity. Additionally Members have

embarked on a programme of front line service visits - visiting children and young people's services to see what actually happens on the ground. This has proved invaluable in giving members the opportunity to learn more about the breadth of services provided and also to engage with staff providing these services.

The opportunity has also arisen on a number of these visits to talk directly with the children and young people receiving the services and the benefit this has to the scrutiny process cannot be overstated. Giving young people a voice and influence on the design and delivery of services they receive is central to the Government's Every Child Matters agenda.

The views of young people have also been taken into account in the panel's major review this year of 'The Impact of Non-

Attendance on Educational Attainment' by receiving a presentation from a group of youth councillors about why some young people become disengaged from education or training. The Panel felt it so important to listen to young people's views on this issue that it recommended that more work be undertaken by the portfolio holder.

The Panel will continue to engage with younger citizens on issues to do with services provided for them and will aim to design scrutiny activity to include their input wherever possible.

## Councillor Jane Urquhart



## What we do

The panel's remit is to review, monitor and scrutinise all services for children and young people provided within the city. This includes education, services for children in care, youth services, the youth offending team and any other service delivered by the authority and its partners for and on behalf of children and young people in the city.

This year the panel invited the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services to outline his priorities for the year and subsequently aligned its work programme to them to ensure that the panel's activity contributed to the continual improvement of children's services. The following section gives a flavour of some of the panel's main activities during the year.

## Work this year

### The Impact of Non-attendance on Educational Attainment

This major review accounted for a large part of the panel's work this year. It was chosen as a result of monitoring the educational attainment figures which demonstrated that a significant proportion of young people were leaving school with no qualifications. The panel surmised that this was likely to be linked to disengagement from school and decided to investigate whether non-attendance did impact on attainment and, if so, what measures could be introduced to encourage young people to attend and stay in school.

Early in the investigation the correlation between attendance and attainment was clearly demonstrated. The panel then sought evidence from a range of sources, including

representatives of Nottingham City Council's Youth Council, to better understand the services being delivered to encourage young people to attend school, to assess good practice from other authorities and to help the development of recommendations for initiatives that could be implemented in Nottingham to address some of the issues raised.

The panel's final report contained eleven recommendations for improvement. These included steps to encourage curriculum diversification, ideas from other authorities which could benefit Nottingham and a desire to see a whole Council, whole City approach to the issue of attendance and of raising awareness of the importance of ensuring young people stay in school and complete their education. The report was presented to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services in March and a full response, with actions planned, is anticipated in July 2007.

## **Spotlight Review of Foster Care and Placement Stability**

This spotlight review was selected by the panel following regular monitoring of Children's Services social care performance information. Members were concerned that unstable placements impacted adversely on children in care and wanted to ensure that the foster care service had the necessary resources and capacity to support children and young people across the city.

The request for a spotlight review coincided with the publication of a report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection on the foster care service, which included a number of recommendations for improvement. As a result of this inspection the department developed an action plan, which members considered at their meeting in January. All actions were scheduled to be completed by June 2007 and the panel agreed to revisit this work in September 2007 to assess the impact of actions taken before deciding whether further recommendations were required.

## **Quarterly Monitoring of Children's Social Care Performance**

The panel has continued to receive quarterly updates on social care performance which present performance against a range of indicators, together with comparative information from similar authorities, so that members of the panel understand how the authority is performing and whether there are issues warranting further investigation. The panel also monitors the completion of Regulation 33 Inspections to ensure that these are being undertaken as required by legislation and members were pleased to note that 100

percent of inspections were completed this year, thanks to the introduction of a new procedure as a direct result of the panel's focus on this issue in the previous year.

This year performance information was used to select the foster care service and placement stability, as mentioned above, for more in-depth review and the panel has also focused its attention on the educational attainment of children in care – an issue which was referred to this panel following monitoring by the Performance and Resources Standing Panel.

## **Consideration of the Results of Ofsted Inspections of Nottingham City Schools**

A new item was included in the work programme this year to enable members to monitor the outcomes of inspections of Nottingham schools. A termly report is received highlighting the outcomes of all inspections which took place the previous term so that panel members can focus on schools in need of further support and also to celebrate the achievements of City schools. In time a wealth of information will be available to enable members to identify trends or focus on specific issues meriting closer attention.

As part of this process the Chair of the Panel and the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services meet with the Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors of all the schools inspected each term to discuss the process in more detail.

## **Visits to Frontline Children's Services**

Introduced to the work programme in 2005, members of the panel continued their monthly visits to frontline children's services this year. Two members of the panel will visit one of a range of children's services, meeting those responsible for their delivery and, on some occasions, meeting with children and young people receiving the service to discuss any issues or matters of concern that the panel could help to highlight or resolve. Visiting members are provided with a pro-forma to complete, which is handed back to the department so that issues can be addressed, and members report on the results of their findings to the next meeting of the panel. This year visits undertaken have included: a Sure Start Children's Centre; the Travellers/ Asylum Seekers Team; a number of Locality Social Work Teams and the Disabled Children's Social Work/ Occupational Therapy Team.

## **Other activity**

In a busy year for the panel, further items considered and commented on have included: input to the delivery of Wave Two of the Sure Start Children's Centres Project; consideration of the draft Parenting Strategy in advance of its presentation to the Executive Board; input to the process for delivering Locality Based Services; consideration of a report detailing the services delivered for children and young people with disabilities; input to the draft Children and Young People block of the Local Area Agreement; and consideration of and contribution to the preparations for the Joint Area Review inspection in March 2007, including consideration of the self-assessment document produced by this authority and its partners in relation to the services provided for all children and young people across the city.

# Health Scrutiny Panel

## Foreword by the Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel

This year has been one of major change in the NHS and as a result it has been another busy year for the Health Scrutiny Panel. The Panel has carried out a series of short term investigations into dentistry, pharmacy and practice based commissioning. As a result Members' knowledge and understanding of the rapidly changing NHS has developed significantly. Throughout all of our work we have remained focussed on the priority of tackling health inequalities and I hope this will be continued into the next Municipal Year.

Thanks to the initiative of our health scrutiny officers, we were delighted this year to be awarded £20,000 by the Centre for Public Scrutiny to carry out an Action Learning Project on the NHS Walk-In Centre. This project, expertly chaired by Councillor Dave Liversidge, was extremely interesting and allowed us to reflect upon the way we carry out scrutiny reviews in addition to learning a great deal about the very valuable service provided by the Walk-in Centre. Throughout the project we worked in partnership with the Patient and Public Involvement Forum whose input was extremely valuable to the process. I sincerely thank the Forum for their hard work and hope that the foundations laid will prove fruitful following next year's changes to patient and public involvement arrangements.

This year's agenda has been challenging and indications suggest the coming years will offer further and greater challenges. Therefore the role of health scrutiny will become ever more important. I would like to thank all of the Members on the Panel who have risen to this challenge, as well as Nancy Watson, our scrutiny officer, and all other staff of the Council, NHS and other partners who have assisted us in doing so.

**Councillor Gill Haymes**



## What we do

The Health Scrutiny Panel is responsible for examining issues relating to health which affect the people of Nottingham. The Panel has a duty to examine proposed major changes to NHS services but the Panel also takes a wider view of health and carries out in depth topic based reviews. Key themes of the Panel's work are addressing the health inequalities between the most deprived and least deprived areas of the city, ensuring that all communities have equal access to health services and the promotion of healthy life choices.

## Work this Year

### Major Review: Action Learning Project on the NHS Walk-in Centre

This year the Panel has been involved in an exciting piece of work examining the NHS Walk-in Centre for which it received an award from the Centre for Public Scrutiny following a bid for funding submitted in April 2006. This award was to enable the Health Scrutiny Panel to carry out an action learning project based upon a topic covered by the Department of Health White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say". As the bid was successful Nottingham became one of only nine areas selected to carry out a project this year.

The Panel began its review of the Walk-in Centre in June and a small group of Members took the project forward, reporting back regularly to the Health Scrutiny Panel. The review

focussed on public awareness of the centre, accessibility, patient satisfaction, improving access to primary care and developing services for the future. Members spoke to staff from the Walk-in Centre, senior management from the Primary Care Trust (PCT), a GP, a consultant from the Emergency Department at Nottingham University Hospital and patients' representatives. The Panel found that the centre was on course to treat 60,000 people this financial year and that capacity was becoming an issue. A high proportion of the centre's patients accessed emergency contraception and many parents took their children there when they were ill. Many patients also used the centre if they could not get an appointment with their own GP.

A significant part of the project involved partnership working with the City PCT Patient and Public Involvement Forum. The PPI Forum provided invaluable support to the review. They carried out patient interviews with 66 Walk-in centre patients

and provided Members with feedback from their site visits. This evidence gave the panel an insight into services from a patient's perspective which the Councillors could not otherwise have obtained. The work of the PPI Forum led the Panel to make seven recommendations to the PCT on how they might improve their services.

Another important element of the project was action learning. This was used to draw out lessons about the way the project was carried out, to capture information needed to take the project forward, to identify gaps in understanding that needed to be filled and to develop lines of thinking. The Members were supported in this by Lesley Cramman, an Action Learning facilitator who at the beginning and end of each meeting encouraged Members to discuss what they wanted to get out of the meeting and what they had learned from it. This way of working helped Members to create the right atmosphere at meetings, to gather the information they needed and to discuss what they had learned. The process was extremely helpful and the Panel have made recommendations as to how it could be used by other Overview and Scrutiny bodies.

The Panel's final report was agreed in February. Overall, the report concluded that the Walk-in Centre provided an extremely valuable service. The anonymity and reassurance the centre offers to patients and its open access, appointment free policy was of particular importance. The training available to staff was also of great value. Members were impressed with the friendly, welcoming atmosphere created within the centre. The panel concluded that the city would be impoverished if the centre did not exist.

The report was welcomed by PCT and Walk-in centre staff and a high profile publicity campaign is already underway to

try to increase public awareness of the centre. A full response to the recommendations will be requested during the next municipal year.

### **Other Work**

Whilst a small study group carried out the review of the NHS Walk-in Centre, the main Panel had plenty of business examining some of the many changes that have taken place in the NHS recently and how these have impacted upon Nottingham. They also monitored the implementation of the recommendations made by the Panel in previous years.

### **Monitoring Past Reviews**

#### **Avoidable Injuries**

In June Barrie James, Head of Public Health, and Andy Chick from Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue updated Members on the progress that had been made in implementing the Panel's recommendations. The Panel heard that a toolkit had been developed to inform front line staff who might be going into people's homes about accident prevention. Members also heard that a regional strategy for reducing avoidable injuries was soon to be launched.

#### **Coronary Heart Disease and Leisure**

The Panel also received an update on their work on Coronary Heart Disease and Leisure. Members heard that there had been a significant culture change since the Panel's report was published and that partnership working had come a long way. Staff were working hard to encourage people into leisure centres and were particularly targeting 'hard to reach' groups.

### **Teenage Conception and Sexual Health**

The third update to the Panel covered the progress made in implementing the recommendations made in its report on Teenage Conception and Sexual Health. The update was welcomed by Members who heard that work was progressing towards ensuring there was a high standard of age appropriate sex and relationships education in schools. They were also shown a directory of Teenage Sexual Health, Pregnancy and Young Parent Support Services which will enable any front line worker who comes into contact with young people to find out what support is available for them.

### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services**

The Panel's review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services was completed at the beginning of this Municipal Year and the report was published in September. The review had focused on the provision of services and looked particularly at the provision of locality based services. In March Councillor Graham Chapman, the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services, presented his response to the recommendations made in the report which incorporated the responses of the Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust and Nottingham City PCT. Councillor Chapman welcomed the report and updated Members on progress that had been made since the recommendations were made. The Panel were informed that a new commissioning contract for CAMHS was under consideration, that a separate CAMHS Partnership had been created for the city and that leaflets are being prepared for staff who work with children and young people to help them signpost CAMH services to those who might need them. The Panel requested a report back to monitor progress in the new Municipal Year.

## Short Term-Investigations

### The PCT's Annual Delivery Plan

Each year Samantha Milbank, Chief Executive of the City's Primary Care Trust, has attended a Panel meeting to discuss the PCT's Local Delivery Plan which outlines priorities and plans for the coming year. On the Annual Delivery Plan, Ms Milbank reported that the PCT were delivering against its priorities, including its work on reducing health inequalities which had been commended by the Government Office for the East Midlands. She spoke about the efforts being put into ensuring the PCT was debt free and identified some of the main areas for investment, including improving access and mental health services.

### Dentistry

Members were told that 23 of the 41 practices in the city were open for new adult and child registrations and that most of the business carried out by those practices was for the NHS. Access issues were identified in St Ann's, Bulwell and the City Centre but, overall, there was capacity for more of Nottingham's residents to register with an NHS dentist.

The PCT raised a difficulty they had with the data they were able to gather on the treatments people were receiving as, under the terms of the new contract, treatments were only recorded as one of three bands. They also informed the Panel of the difficulty in ensuring that children, identified as needing dental treatment during school screenings, did go on to see a

dentist and receive treatment. The Panel were very interested in the subject and requested that Community Dental Services be added to their work programme for future activity in this area.

### Pharmacy

The Panel also discussed the changing role of pharmacies in the City. Members were informed about the number of pharmacies and the range of services that could be offered by them. Members were impressed with the role that pharmacies could play in addressing health issues and how opportunities offered by the new pharmacy contract were being embraced.

### Out of Hours Care

The Health Panel focused on out of hours care at one of its meetings when a presentation on out of hours primary care was received from representatives of Nottingham City PCT. The Panel were informed about the role of the Nottingham Emergency Medical Services which provides emergency GP care on weekday evenings and at weekends and public holidays: the system was established following the introduction of the new GP contract which enabled GPs to opt out of providing 24 hour care which all Nottingham's GPs chose to do. The Panel was pleased to hear that the system was working effectively, with very few complaints about the service which had special triage arrangements in place for those with a clinical need. Members felt that the PCT was travelling in the right direction regarding the development of their out of hours care



### Other Work

Other items considered and commented on have included: the development of practice based commissioning in the city; examination of the supporting people strategy which is a national programme to help vulnerable people live independently and to smooth transition to independence for those who are leaving an institutionalised environment; scrutiny of the healthier communities and older people block of the Local Area Agreement; and the PCT's Fitness for Purpose review.

# Performance and Resources Panel

## Foreword by the Chair of the Performance and Resources Panel

The Performance and Resources (P&R) Panel has had a busy year as it continues to develop the way in which scrutiny can add value to the workings of the Council.

A significant role for this particular panel is to undertake performance and financial monitoring, which has provided the information necessary to identify areas where further work is needed. A key development this year has been the move towards exception performance reporting, which has allowed us to target our work to areas of under or low level performance. The spotlight review into the way

Neighbourhood Services, in particular, are tackling management of sickness absence is a good example of how scrutiny ensures that the focus for improvement is targeted to relevant key areas.

Further work has included a spotlight review of Section 106 money, which has directly contributed to improving the authority's processes to ensure maximum community benefit; and reviewing progress in implementing the Local Area Agreement (LAA), which brought a range of partners together to address areas of risk and under performance. Working positively with partners will no doubt continue into the next year as the LAA progresses and as the panel builds its relationship with the Community Equality Forum to scrutinise

the mainstreaming of equality and diversity in the Council's work.

I would like to thank all the members of P&R for their commitment this year, particularly my Vice-Chair Cllr Darren Mathews for his support and encouragement. My personal thanks also go to the Overview and Scrutiny Team, especially Kim Pocock for her incisive observations, good humour and patience.

**Councillor Penny Griggs**



## What we do

The role of this panel is to scrutinise the financial management and performance of the authority against its agreed objectives and targets. The panel also monitors other internal support functions, such as human resources and internal audit, and keeps an overview of the risks to the business and strategic objectives of the Council, as well as monitoring the Council's response to the developing equalities agenda. This year the panel has developed its work programme to include more scrutiny of partnership activity, for example in relation to the Local Area Agreement.

As a result of monitoring and exploration of specific topics, the panel undertakes investigations into areas of particular concern, interest or development, with the aim of making recommendations for improvements. Work this year has included a spotlight investigation into the use of Section 106

monies and an investigation into the management action being undertaken by Neighbourhood Services to reduce sickness absence, more details of which are given below.

## Work this year

Performance and Financial Management... The panel has continued to monitor performance and financial management on a quarterly basis. This year the panel also scrutinised performance and efficiency targets with Portfolio Holders early in the year to ensure that targets were realistic but challenging and focused on improvement. Following the adoption of a new corporate risk management framework in April 2006, quarterly risk reporting was introduced to the Performance and Resources (P&R) Panel. Initial reports have focused on the establishment of a risk register and the level of risk rating. Consideration of risk and risk management will inform the future work programme of the panel.

The role of scrutiny in monitoring performance has been clearly recognised and focused this year by the development of exception reporting. While the Strategic Management Team and Executive Board receive full quarterly performance data, P&R has elected to receive reports which draw attention to under performing performance indicators and those indicators where performance is in lower quartiles when compared with other authorities. This has allowed panel members to clearly focus their scrutiny role on areas for improvement, which can then be referred to other panels for their consideration or which P&R can itself select for a spotlight review.

Sickness Absence... The panel also continued monitoring sickness absence levels – a piece of work started the previous year when high levels of sickness absence were reported. This year the panel regularly received reports on sickness absence levels and has noted that, one year on from the

introduction of the new Corporate Absence Recording System, the situation has stabilised. However absence levels are still high and the focus is now on the introduction of a new approach to management action, which includes a range of proactive initiatives focusing on health and well-being, as well as action planning and targeting long term absence by each Departmental Management Team. As a result of this monitoring exercise, Members noted that absence levels were improving at a variable rate across the authority and decided to undertake a spotlight review of sickness absence management in Neighbourhood Services, the department with the highest absence rates (see below).

Local Area Agreement... Now that the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) is in place the panel will monitor the progress of its implementation. Members received their first six-monthly progress report in November 2006. Lead officers for all the LAA blocks and representatives of One Nottingham's (the Local Strategic Partnership) Themed Partnerships attended a meeting to discuss areas of under performance and risk. This piece of work provided an opportunity to work together with internal and external partners on a coherent approach to improving services. The panel endorsed the amber rating of the LAA partners' self-assessment, which was then formally agreed by the Government Office for the East Midlands.

## Equalities

The developing equalities agenda continues to be a significant focus for the panel. This year the panel has monitored progress on meeting level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and has received background information on the new duties to produce a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and a Gender Equality Scheme (GES). Panel members have been

building their relationship with the Community Equality Forum and look forward to working closely with its members as the DES and GES action plans are put into place. The Community Equality Forum is made up of representatives of a range of organisations which have come together to ensure the mainstreaming of equality and diversity in the Council's work, including policy development, service delivery and employment, in order to improve services to all communities.

## Spotlight Reviews

Section 106... The panel decided to undertake a review of the use of Section 106 money - funding received from developers as part of planning agreements to ensure that communities are not detrimentally affected by new developments. Members were concerned to ensure that Section 106 money was being used to achieve the maximum community benefit, that decision making processes for the use of the money were transparent and mechanisms for authorisation of Section 106 decisions were robust.

The panel considered this review with officers from Corporate Services, City Development, Neighbourhood Services and Leisure & Community Services over three meetings, focusing principally on the use of Section 106 money to fund developments in relation to open spaces and affordable housing.

Key recommendations from the panel included the need for better co-ordination between departments. This has already been agreed and the Strategic Management Team is to nominate a senior lead officer. The panel also recommended better processes and linking with Area Committees in respect of both open spaces and affordable housing and the need for better linkages with existing plans and the Local Area

Agreement. It is anticipated that the designated lead officer will progress these at the earliest opportunity. Finally the panel emphasised the need for clear adherence to financial regulations and regular reporting of Section 106 agreements to the Executive as well as supporting proposals to introduce index linking to Section 106 agreements from April 2007. A further progress report was submitted to the November 2007 meeting of the Standing Panel to assess the outcomes from the review.

Management of sickness absence in Neighbourhood Services... As a result of monitoring sickness absence levels across the authority (see above) the panel decided to undertake a spotlight review of the management of sickness absence in Neighbourhood Services. This department has experienced high levels of sickness absence, particularly long term absence. Members met with the Corporate Director of Neighbourhood Services and members of her management team to explore the reasons for high levels of sickness absence in Neighbourhood Services and the management actions being undertaken to reduce them, their appropriateness and their effectiveness. It was agreed that now a broad range of essential management action has been put in place, Members would expect to see a positive impact in reducing sickness absence levels and they have requested an update in September 2007.



# Serving the Adult Community Panel

## Foreword by the Chair of the Serving the Adult Community Panel

In May the Liberal Democrat Group was offered the Chair of a newly formed O&S Panel specifically looking at issues affecting adults. This is an enormously wide brief but I was determined with the panel to make a contribution to the way the Council interacts with the people it serves, and to influence the direction of future strategy.

I am particularly proud of our innovative outside visits to open spaces in the City and of our fulfilling meeting with members of the Learning Disability Partnership. We have also begun

consideration of two topics which could fundamentally affect the lives of Nottingham City adults in the future. At our instigation, all Council Departments have been charged to consider how their activities contribute to seven outcomes for adults and to build this into their ways of working.

We have also looked at how changing demographics and an ageing population in the City will impact on the type and amount of services needed in the future. This issue transcends party considerations and we are keen for the full Council to engage with this issue to achieve an effective cross party approach.

The panel is ambitious to make a positive contribution to the authority and are indebted to the support of officers and, in particular, to Kim Pocock for the positive approach to scrutiny and for the depth and quality of the reports submitted.

## Councillor Tony Sutton



## What we do

The role of this panel is to scrutinise issues of special concern, interest or development relating to services for the adult community. This includes targeted services for vulnerable adults (adult services) and universal services for all adults, eg leisure and cultural provision and other services provided for the adult community which are not covered by the remits of the other standing panels. Serving the Adult Community (SAC) is new panel, set up in May 2006, and members spent the first few meetings receiving a range of information to familiarise themselves with relevant issues. This has been followed by some more in depth pieces of work, eg a spotlight review of the future of adult social care and the start of a short-term investigation into access to the leisure and cultural offer for adults with learning disabilities, as well as developing monitoring work.

## Work this year

Serving the Adult Community Standing Panel has received a number of background reports since it first started meeting in June 2006. This has allowed members to understand the relevant issues for the authority in the delivery of services to the adult community. It has also enabled the panel to begin to focus on review work and to start to contribute towards service improvement.

## Open and Green Spaces Strategy

The panel had an opportunity to contribute to the development of the Breathing Space Framework whilst at the draft stage. Members considered and commented on the range of types of open and green spaces and the contribution they make to the city, the quality of provision, how accessible it is to city residents and how local people are being consulted about the strategy. In September panel members had an opportunity to visit a number of open spaces in Area 4 to get a

real picture of the sorts of issues raised in relation to open spaces and the Council's responsibilities. The Framework has now been approved by the Executive Board.

## The Leisure and Cultural Offer

Panel members have been provided with a comprehensive overview of the Council's leisure and cultural offer and have had the opportunity to discuss who the offer is serving, and how effectively, with representatives of the libraries service, leisure centres and museums. The panel also received a report on the good results of the Culture Inspection and followed this by monitoring the action plan developed in response to the inspection outcome. Members concluded that all recommendations have now been properly responded to and congratulated Leisure and Community Services on their progress.

As part of their work to ensure that vulnerable and hard to reach adults are encouraged to use and benefit from services,

members agreed to undertake a short-term investigation into access to the leisure and cultural offer by adults with learning disabilities. The panel had an opportunity to shape the work programme of the Leisure Access Officer for adults with learning disabilities - a new post set up for one year to progress links between leisure and community services and adult learning disability services and to research and develop existing opportunities for adults with learning disabilities to access leisure and community services. The panel will continue to monitor the progress of this piece of work.

### **Adult Services**

The panel received a range of information on the breadth of services provided for vulnerable members of the adult community, including how citizens access social care, the services available to meet the needs of adults with learning or physical disabilities, the management of admissions to residential care and the Community Learning Disability Teams Integration Project.

At its October meeting representatives of the Learning Disability Partnership Board gave a presentation and took part in a discussion with members on how services could be improved to meet their needs. One clear message from the meeting was the need to improve their experiences of using public transport by educating service providers to treat people with learning disabilities with the respect that they deserve. The panel wrote to all the bus providers and taxi associations that serve the city and has received very positive responses from Nottingham City Transport and the Taxi Licensing Team within the City Council on changes they have already made, as well as changes they intend to make, to improve the experiences of service users.

The panel undertook a spotlight review to focus its work on adult social care and, at its March meeting, members reviewed the future delivery of adult social care services. The panel heard about the progress being made to develop a Strategic Needs Assessment in the context of changing demographics, improvements in health care and the expectations of those in need of care, all of which will affect the way in which services will be shaped and delivered in the future. Following a detailed discussion of the issues, the panel recommended that the future of adult social care be discussed at a full Council meeting at the earliest opportunity, and that key partners should be invited to participate. Early and coherent planning, in partnership, will allow the authority to make the changes necessary to ensure a quality social care service to adults in the city now and in the future.

### **Monitoring Activity**

The panel has undertaken a range of monitoring activity, which included the development and implementation of the improvement plan for adult services and actions to improve access to the democratic process by increasing voter registration. The panel has also begun to monitor the authority's response to the Dignity in Care Campaign. Members recently agreed that the work of the panel should be driven by the seven outcomes for adults, as described in the White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care Our Say'. To set this framework in place representatives of all Council departments and Nottingham City Homes attended the panel to report on how their services are contributing to the seven outcomes for adults. The panel hopes that this work will be taken forward in the new municipal year.



# Regeneration, Infrastructure and Sustainability Panel

## Foreword by the Chair of the Regeneration, Infrastructure and Sustainability Panel

This year, the RIS Panel has kept a focus on climate change and sustainability. In considering the Executive's response to our Climate Change report, when almost all our recommendations were accepted, we applauded progress towards integrating climate change considerations in the Council's mainstream policies and plans. We pressed for full engagement with best practice elsewhere in core policies such as procurement, structured engagement with residents, the community and voluntary sector and our own workforce to raise awareness, and for consultation on a "Merton Rule" for 20% renewable energy in large new developments.

Business has reflected a year of increased public awareness about climate change, and this has emerged in our work on the Regional Spatial Strategy, local transport issues and the Waste Management Strategy and this is likely to be a focus for future work.

The Panel has continued to benefit from the input of external partners, not only as witnesses, but also in engaging in panel meetings, resulting in increased expertise and balance and appreciation by external stakeholders of Council policies and process. Recommendations have been agreed unanimously by Panel members, with support from stakeholders as diverse as the Civic Society, Friends of the Earth, the Primary Care Trust, Voluntary Sector Trainers and Social Enterprise.

We were pleased to take part in a waste strategy working group with Executive members to drive forward recycling and other energy use initiatives. This way of working is to be used to take forward the City Cycling Strategy jointly with cyclist group and health colleagues.

We have worked extremely hard this year, sometimes meeting twice-monthly. I would like to thank all Panel members, including representatives from external organisations, and our Officers for their commitment and hard work.



**Councillor Emma Dewinton**

## What we do

The panel, formally the Regeneration and Renewal Panel, has within its remit to review areas of special concern, interest or development relating to the infrastructure of the City, including transport systems, sustainability, the built environment, the commercial sector and inward investment, and Nottingham as a core City, a European City and a regional centre.

Climate change has been a key theme running throughout much of the panel's work this year. During the major review into climate change last year panel members highlighted that Nottingham City Council could and should take direct practical action through its own activities and policies and in its role as a community leader to mitigate, and adapt to, climate change. This includes through development and planning, transport, waste management and energy usage, all

of which lie within the remit of this panel which will continue to assess the Council's progress, along with that of its partners in the City.

## Work this year

### Major review - Training and Employment

Much of the Panel's work this year was focused on examining the training and employment opportunities available for City residents and the City Council's role in developing these. The Panel's approach was to gather evidence in a number of ways, including through desktop research, interviews with expert witnesses, visiting training organisations and inviting representatives of training organisations to sit with the panel and provide their inside knowledge. The Panel worked hard to hear from all the witnesses and, in order to do this, held extra meetings throughout the first part of the year.

The Panel concluded with a clear overview of the extent of quality provision offered by many different providers within the city but also identified gaps in provision, for example for apprenticeships in areas such as construction, and also barriers to employment and training, particularly for the more vulnerable groups of society and those within the benefits system. Another key finding of the review was the need for a Pre-entry/Learning as You Go system, to ensure that lack of academic qualification does not preclude people from accessing vocational training.

The City Council was identified as a key player in bringing the various agencies together to fill the gaps and overcome the barriers, ensuring that all City residents could access appropriate training and employment opportunities. The panel made a significant number of recommendations for partnership working on this.

## Monitoring previous reports

### Climate Change

When the Panel's report on Climate Change was presented to the Executive it contained over sixty recommendations on how the Council could deal with the issue of climate change. These ranged from suggestions for individual departments, to wider strategic proposals such as the recommendation that a Climate Change Strategy be developed. The main thrust of the report is that the Council must reduce its own CO2 emissions if it is to play a lead role in addressing climate change.

The Executive welcomed the report, praising it for its coverage, ideas and ambition and accepting almost all of the recommendations. The Panel is therefore monitoring implementation of these recommendations by the Executive and the first update was received during this year. The Panel welcomed the progress made so far, in particular in relation to the introduction of a corporate climate change strategy with its aims for the Council to be Carbon Neutral by 2016. Members were also encouraged to hear of the work being done to introduce Environmental Management Systems into the Council, including introducing the system into the City's schools, all of which will help control the Council's impact on the environment. Panel Members had questions on target setting and the need to introduce performance management in this area if the Council is to meet its aims.

The debate continues on the how Nottingham City Council can continue to best tackle Climate Change issues and the Panel will contribute to this debate through its monitoring. The Executive is keen that the panel continues to be involved in the development of Council policy within this area and, to this

end, the Panel may include the investigation of new innovative ways being tried to combat climate change and its effects.

### Flooding

The Panel has continued to monitor progress on recommendations made to the Executive and partner agencies, including the Environment Agency, in the report on Flooding published in 2004 and it received the second annual monitoring report at the end of this municipal year. The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport and Street Services, officers from the relevant service areas and from the Environment Agency attended the meeting to give their perspectives on the progress made. Generally the panel was pleased to see that partnership working between the many agencies involved has continued to improve, including improved communications between them.

An area of concern for the panel was limited activity to raise the public's awareness on flooding issues. The Environment Agency explained that this was largely a City Council responsibility but they would be more than happy to be involved. City Council officers informed the panel of a flood fair planned to be held in the Old Market Square for this coming year which would raise awareness and undertook to consider publishing information on flooding in the Arrow, the City Council's newsletter for residents. The panel will monitor progress again in 12 months' time.

## Other work

### The Regional Spatial Strategy

Alongside the major review of Training and Employment the panel conducted a mini review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The aim was to produce a report that would feed into the Executive's response to the East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) consultation on the Strategy. The Strategy, which will provide the strategic spatial planning guidance on matters such as the environment, housing provision, economic development and transport for Councils within the East Midlands, was a lengthy document for the Panel to go through in a short space of time: the Panel spent two months on the review, holding two additional meetings to get the work done in time.

To inform the review witnesses were invited from EMRA and the Council's Development Department as well as the Executive Member for Transforming Neighbourhoods. Members of the Civic Society and Friends of the Earth were also invited to join the panel's discussions and provide their expertise and for this the Panel was very grateful.

The Executive welcomed the Panel's report which made over twenty recommendations on issues including standards for housing development, building sustainable communities, the proposed development to the South of Clifton, climate change, waste, renewable energy, flooding, transport and employment land. Most of the recommendations were accepted to be incorporated into the Executive's response although it was noted that some were beyond the scope of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The review also fulfilled the objective of developing a greater understanding among Members of how regional planning affects the City.

## Transport

Throughout the latter part of the year the panel received reports on various transport issues for the City. This was to enable Members to understand the key issues and identify areas of particular concern or interest to see if there was a need for specific scrutiny activity. The programme on transport started with a look at the outcomes of the first Local Transport Plan (LTP1) and information on the direction of LTP2. Members raised a number of queries in relation to buses, including bus lane enforcement, and on road safety and Nottingham Railway Station: the panel continues to receive information.

Cycling issues have been a strong area of interest for the Panel which received a presentation from PEDALS cycling organisation on issues for them within the City. This debate included input from the Primary Care Trust on the health benefits of cycling. The panel was of the view that provision for cycling needed to be addressed more strategically by the Council and there has been a proposal to form a Cycling Strategy Group consisting of members, officers and stakeholders including cycling organisations and health representatives. The group would review and build on

progress and address areas of improvement and it is proposed that a cycle tour be undertaken to get on-site knowledge prior to the meetings.

Other transport issues will continue to be monitored in the next municipal year.

## The Waste Management Strategy

The Panel is a key consultee in the development of the Council's Strategy for Waste Management. Members of the panel have been co-opted on to the Waste Steering Group, a joint Member/Officer group which is responsible for development of the Waste Management Strategy along with SLR Consulting. The Panel has so far supported the Group's proposal to develop a strategy that is based on achieving a combined household waste recycling and composting target of 50% by 2018. The Draft Waste Management Strategy is due to come to the Panel early in the summer of 2007.



# Joint City and County Health Scrutiny Committee

## Foreword by the Vice-Chair of the Joint City and County Health Scrutiny Committee

I have often said that Health Scrutiny is one of the most interesting jobs on the Council and my experience as Vice-Chair of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee this year has not proved me wrong. The Committee has undertaken a huge amount of work examining, amongst other things, older people's services, reconfiguration of hospital services and changes to mental health services, and our comments and involvement have made a real difference to the services that will be delivered.

Particularly rewarding has been the close working relationships that have developed between the City Council

and our colleagues in the County both on the Member and officer side. This exemplary partnership working has enabled the Committee to add real value to the work of NHS Trusts as they work to meet the many challenges currently facing them. The opportunity to showcase this work at a Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Scrutiny Network event in September 2006 highlighted the achievements of the two authorities.

As Members we particularly value the professionalism and expertise of the health scrutiny officers and I thank Barbara Cast, Matthew Garrard and Nancy Watson for all their support and assistance this year. I would also like to thank the Councillors, other Council officers and NHS Trusts for the work they have put into making Joint Health Scrutiny a real success.

As the pace of NHS change looks set to continue and Trusts face ever more pressing challenges of balancing their finances alongside ensuring improvements in patient care next year looks set to be even busier for the committee. I am therefore sure that Health Scrutiny will remain a fascinating and challenging role.

**Councillor Gill Haymes**



## **The role of the Joint Committee**

The Joint City and County Health Scrutiny Committee draws its membership from the City Council, the County Council and the four adjoining District Councils of Ashfield, Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe. It is responsible for scrutinising proposals made by NHS Trusts which affect the whole conurbation of Nottingham. Generally this relates to proposals of Nottingham University Hospitals Trust, Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust and East Midlands Ambulance Service. However, on occasion, the City and County PCTs take decisions which impact upon the wider conurbation and these too are considered by the Joint Committee. The City Health Scrutiny Panel examines matters which impact primarily on the city whilst the County's health scrutiny function examines matter which impact primarily on the County.

The Chairing and administration of the Joint Committee rotates on an annual basis between the City and County Councils. Since May 2006 the County Council have managed the administration and hosting of Committee meetings and the Committee has been chaired by County Councillor Edward Llewellyn-Jones. City Councillor Gill Haymes has been the Vice-Chair for the year. From May the City Council will host and administer the meetings and a City Councillor will take the Chair.

## **Work this Year**

This Municipal Year has been extremely busy for the Committee. Much of Members' work has focused on the Hospital Trust as it reconfigures its services following the merger of Nottingham City Hospital Trust and Queen's Medical Centre Trust. Consideration has also been given to plans for reducing the Trust's deficit.

Other work undertaken has focused on the plans for modernising older people's services at Highbury and Lings Bar Hospitals and the development of a Social Inclusion and Wellbeing Service proposed by the Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust. The following paragraphs outline these and other major items of business undertaken by the Panel over the last Municipal Year.

## **Reconfiguration of Services across Nottingham University Hospitals Trust**

The Committee has examined a number of issues relating to the reconfiguration of services. The Trust proposes to eventually use the City Hospital Campus as an elective care site with QMC as an emergency care site. This will involve the consolidation of many services on one or other site. This process has already begun with some services such as those for stroke patients moving to the City site. The Trust also held a major public consultation on their plans to develop a dedicated children and young people's unit on the QMC Campus. The Committee made a formal response to this consultation and were pleased to hear that many of its comments, and those of patients, carers and the public, had been taken on board by the Trust. Members expect service reconfigurations at the hospital to continue to make up a large part of the Committee's work programme over the coming year.

## **Modernising Older People's Services**

This piece of work began in 2005-06 and was led by Rushcliffe Primary Care Trust (and continued by Nottinghamshire County teaching PCT) which proposed to consolidate and reduce the number of physical rehabilitation and mental health beds for older people at Highbury and Lings Bar Hospitals and develop community services to enable patients to be treated in their

own homes after a shorter stay in hospital. The proposals were based upon evidence that older people in Nottingham were spending far longer in hospital than patients elsewhere and were not receiving an improved service as a result.

The Committee was concerned at the impact the proposals could have on adult social care and that agreement had not been reached between social care and health organisations. However, following the Committee's representations on this and the commissioning of a Price Waterhouse Cooper report on the impacts of the proposals for all parties, the Committee was pleased to see greater joint working and a shared way forward being developed. This item is scheduled to return to the Committee in September.

## **Social Inclusion and Wellbeing Service**

The Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust held a public consultation on the development of a Social Inclusion and Wellbeing Service. The aim was to develop a service which supported people with mental health problems into training and, eventually, into work. The Trust faced some staunch opposition to some of their proposals, particularly those concerning the Skills and Practical Activities Network, and the Committee itself initially had concerns about the proposals, especially the level of involvement of existing service users, but it was evident that there was more involvement as the consultation period went on. The Committee made a response to the consultation which highlighted members' concerns.

The Committee received a report to its March meeting which showed that the Trust had listened to the results of the consultation and had made significant changes to their proposals as a result of what they had heard.

# Task and Finish Panels

## The Work of Task and Finish Panels

At any one time, there may be up to three task and finish panels in action, working fairly intensively on specific, time-limited reviews. This year, the following have been active.



# Information Rights

## Foreword by the Chair of the Information Rights Task and Finish Panel

Our investigation focused on how the Council could improve its response to people requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act, the Data Protection Act and the Environmental Information Regulations. Over a short but intense period of time the Panel examined a wealth of statistical information relating to the time taken to respond to requests, procedures and practices followed within Council Departments and specific case files. We made a number of recommendations on topics including officer training, document management and the development of corporate procedures.

My thanks go to all of the Councillors on the Panel whose hard work enabled a great deal of information to be analysed in a short space of time, and to the officers in the Information Governance Team who so willingly supported our review by providing the information we requested.

The initial response to the report has been good and we await with anticipation the complete response. There is also some outstanding work to be completed relating to the other ongoing investigations into information rights. We hope that these pieces of work will combine to improve the way in which the Council responds to requests for information and that a more open culture develops throughout the authority.

**Councillor Jane Urquhart**





## The work of the Information Rights T&F Panel

This Task and Finish Panel was established in September following a request by a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Its remit was to review the Council's response to requests for information made since January 2005 under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This was soon expanded to cover requests made under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

The Panel met regularly over a short period of time and considered a large amount of information from the Council's Information Governance Team including statistics on response times, information on procedures and examples of cases. Members also received information from each of the Council's Departments about how officers handled information rights requests, and met with representatives of the Children's Services and Neighbourhood Services Departments to discuss their procedures and practice in more detail.

The Panel accumulated a wealth of information within a short time and by the end of November Members had brought this

together in a report which made sixteen recommendations for improvements. The recommendations covered matters focussing, in particular, on training staff in information rights, developing appropriate practices within departments and improving document management. However, the evidence gathered for this report was largely quantitative and Members agreed to reconvene to conduct a more qualitative analysis of information rights practice and procedure.

In order to gather qualitative evidence, Members analysed twenty four information rights cases which had been randomly selected by the Information Governance Team. The Panel drew up a number of recommendations from this analysis which also supported the conclusions drawn in their earlier report. The recommendations covered improving customer service through including more information in correspondence with people requesting information and offering guidance on the application of certain reasons for withholding information.

The recommendations made in both pieces of work were well received by the Portfolio Holder for Personnel, Equalities and



# Debt Collection

## Foreword by the Chair of the Debt Collection Task and Finish Panel

The Panel has considered the effectiveness of Nottingham City Council in collecting the money it is owed and we recognise and acknowledge the good work already occurring. However, we believe that collection rates can and should be improved.

Panel members were unanimous in their support for a vigorous and robust approach to debt collection, including the use of legal recovery processes where necessary, but do not believe that it is helpful if the Council is perceived as making unjustified and prejudiced assumptions about debtors' motivations.

It is hoped that this report and its recommendations will go some way to ensuring the City Council is able to collect as much of the money that it is owed as efficiently as possible, whilst at the same time ensuring guidance, support and advice for those genuinely in need.

I would like to thank the members of the panel who gave their time and commitment to the review and would like to give my personal thanks for the contributions of those people who have supported the process, provided information or attended panel meetings to give evidence.

**Councillor Tony Sutton**



## The work of the Debt Collection T&F Panel

This task and finish panel was established in May 2006, following a request from a Member, to examine the policies and procedures adopted by the authority to pursue and collect debts and to assess whether procedures were efficient and effective as well as economic. In addition the panel was to review the arrangements and effectiveness of support provided to customers in debt to the City Council.

The panel considered a range of evidence, obtained through discussions and consultation with internal and external witnesses, focusing on Council Tax debt and rent arrears. Officers from the Council Tax and Housing Benefits Teams, as well as from Nottingham City Homes, regularly attended meetings to give evidence. Officers from Adult Services, Housing and Health were also invited to participate to provide information on vulnerable adults in debt and members received a presentation from the Manager for Information Governance on the freedoms and limitations of information sharing to support debt collection.

The panel interviewed representatives of advice provider agencies in the city to hear of their experiences in supporting individuals in debt to the Council: it also received presentations from Leeds and Sheffield City Councils, both of which have high debt collection rates, to compare approaches to preventing and reducing debt. The panel also undertook a visit to Bestwood Housing Office to meet officers involved in the recovery of rent arrears.

The information gathering processes allowed the panel to identify key findings and make recommendations for improvement. Members also recognised the positive work that was already being done to balance the need to recover debt with the need to treat vulnerable people sensitively. The review concluded with a report containing 27 recommendations focused on the areas of Council Tax, Housing Rents, Benefits, Corporate Debt Policy, Joint Working, Awareness Raising and Access to Debt Support. The report was presented to the Deputy Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Adult and Housing Services and the full response is due to be received from them in June 2007.

# So what has been achieved?

## What impact does Overview and Scrutiny have?

- It is not a decision making function, but it has influence across the Council and with partners through the detailed work it undertakes and the evidence based recommendations it makes
- Outcomes can be directly attributed as responses to recommendations but there are also indirect outcomes through members' investigations and interest whilst undertaking a piece of work, through influence and through raising the profile of services
- O&S has been successful in establishing relations with external bodies, most notably NHS organisations, and this is also a positive outcome as is establishing a successful working relationship with other authorities through the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

## Some of the outcomes from our work

- Recommendations following the Action Learning Study of the NHS Walk-in Centre has led to a major promotional campaign to ensure awareness of the facilities and location of the Walk-in Centre is widespread; also to a review by the Primary Care Trust of some aspects of the centre which detracted from its overall excellent service
- Recommendations in the Task and Finish Report on Nottingham's Local Strategic Partnership to improve its functioning were accepted and implemented, leading to a much more effective organisation
- The positive response of Nottingham City Transport to the Serving the Adult Community Panel's recommendation to address the lack of respect shown to adults with learning disabilities by some bus drivers, as described by user

representatives, whereby training was reviewed and changes made to improve new driver and refresher training

- The spotlight review of Section 106 funding by Performance and Resources Panel: one outcome already achieved has been a recognition of the need for departments to work more closely together to ensure better community benefits from the use of S106 money; this is reflected in a group of officers from across the Council which met to address the recommendations that have come out of the review to date and the agreement of the Senior Management Team to appoint a cross-departmental lead officer for Section 106
- From the Avoidable Injuries major review undertaken by the Health Scrutiny Panel: a multi-agency group has been established to co-ordinate activity tackling avoidable injury in order to avoid duplication and share expertise. This group has developed and is rolling out training to frontline staff from a number of organisations across the City who go into people's homes on how to reduce the risk of avoidable injury
- Climate Change major review by the Regeneration, Infrastructure and Sustainability Panel: the authority is now far more conscious of the impact of our activities on, for instance, CO2 emissions; it has increased its leadership role in the City; a climate change strategy is in place; it has initiated actions to reduce impacts on a citywide scale, in each of the Council's own buildings and amongst staff
- Meetings of the full Council are more effective, varied and well managed after a Task and Finish review of the Constitution. Public questions and petitions now have a place on the agenda of these meetings

- The organisations responsible for preventing and responding to flooding events work much more in partnership, recognising each other's areas of knowledge and expertise, following a Task and Finish review of flooding issues in Nottingham
- Development and eventual mainstreaming of the Black Achievement Strategy following the Children and Young People Panel's review of the Impact of Ethnicity and Gender on Educational Attainment
- Children and Young People Panel members raised the issue of Regulation 33 Inspections which resulted in new procedures to ensure statutory obligations are met
- Recommendations by the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee accepted that there should be joint working between NHS bodies and local authority Adult Social Care to ensure that the modernising of services for older people did not result in funding for earlier discharged patients having an adverse effect on Adult Social Care budgets
- Also from the Joint Committee, the Healthcare Trust has opened out its consultation with users and carers and turned around proposals which the committee and users had been most concerned about resulting in the retention of a much valued facility
- The recommendations in the report on the Impact of Non-Attendance on Educational Attainment had an immediate influence on practice in Children's Services in that it had encouraged the setting up of a hotline to report children who were apparently out of school during school hours and consideration is being given to increasing the role of Community Support Officers in dealing with apparent truants.

# Development and support for Members in 2006-07

## The development of the function

This has again been a year in which overview and scrutiny in Nottingham has not stopped still. We started the year with a brand new panel – the Serving the Adult Community Panel – and new names to better reflect the responsibilities of two others – Regeneration and Renewal became the Regeneration, Infrastructure and Sustainability Panel and Performance, Priorities, Personnel and Finance became Performance and Resources.

In addition, there were minor constitutional changes, including provision to make call-in more accessible.

As the year progressed, attention has been turned to the likely new roles and responsibilities for O&S as set out in the Government White Paper and subsequent Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill. This, with other recent legislation, will open up the opportunity for working with the Council's public service provider partners and with our neighbourhood management teams.

## The Overview and Scrutiny Team

The Overview and Scrutiny Team, set up at the end of 2003 with three officers to support members in their role, now consists of the Head of Service, three Review Coordinators and a Research and Support Officer. We said goodbye to Michael Peacock, one of the original team, in March 2007 and welcomed Kim Pocock and Chelsea Coleman-Wood. The network of officers who are involved in O&S in one way or another continues to grow and their support is very much appreciated.

## Champions

Officers at a senior level are nominated to be “champions” of each O&S body. Their role is to promote overview and scrutiny and its work throughout the Council and with partners. They are also charged with ensuring that members and the O&S team are given every support they require to carry out their work and to seek to increase knowledge of the function in the areas for which they have responsibility.

## Communicating the Overview and Scrutiny Function

The O&S Team tries to ensure there is access to information about the function for the public, members, our partners and officers. We have dedicated webpages within the Council's internet site and this is kept up to date with the latest information and our publications. All the reports we publish, our monthly bulletin and guides to O&S are available there. You can find this at [www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/overviewandscrutiny.htm](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/overviewandscrutiny.htm)

The monthly Overview and Scrutiny Bulletin, emailed out to over 140 people each month, brings the latest news about meetings, reports and achievements. All councillors and senior officers receive the bulletin and many more people get copies by request. Many organisations are also on the email list including departments of both universities, the major local government bodies and many of our City partners. To sign up for the bulletin email [overview.scrutiny@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:overview.scrutiny@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

We also have a presentation explaining the role of O&S which the Team is always pleased to bring to those wishing to know more about the function, both in the Council and outside. During this year we were invited to present to Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust and were pleased to be able to do so.

## Training

Although it is the Member Services Section in Corporate Services which is responsible for the development programme for members, the O&S team have a keen interest in the provision of development opportunities for O&S members and work closely with colleagues in member services in the planning of development programmes and, 2007 being an election year, an induction package.

The Team worked with the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Scrutiny Network to organise an event in October 2006 for O&S members and officers. This was entitled “Scrutiny Healthcheck” and included a look at health scrutiny across the two counties' authorities. There was also an interactive learning session which many of those attending found both entertaining and useful. Finally Robin Stonebridge from Rotherham MBC looked into the future to what the Government's White Paper was likely to bring forth for O&S. Nottingham is again in the forefront of planning for this year's event to be held in the Council House on 3rd July which will feature RADA and a focus on O&S skills and behaviours.

# Resourcing the overview and scrutiny function

The Council's budget allocation for overview and scrutiny covers the salaries and on-costs of the Overview and Scrutiny Team, support for reviews, the costs relating to expert witnesses, visits and other special events. Set out below is the expenditure against the budget in 2006-07.

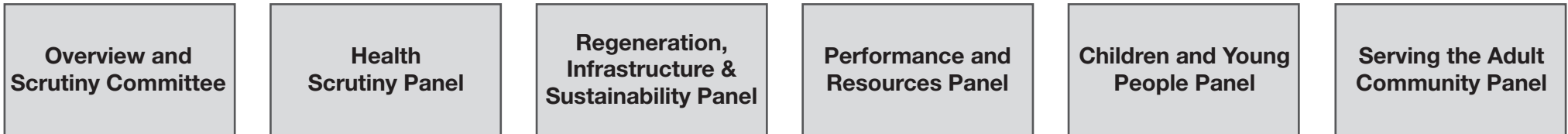
## Overview and Scrutiny resources 2006-07

Description	Expenditure 2006-07	Budget for 2006-07
	£	£
Employee costs	206,439	196,550
Running costs	6,431	9,740
Budget to support the function	4,217	33,700
Totals	217,087	239,990

# And what is planned for the Future?

This year, being an election year, the work programme for 2007-08 is to be drawn up over the first few meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panels and is likely to be approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2007. It is the practice to ensure that the work programme is flexible enough to take in issues or concerns which arise

through the year, so that it may, and probably will, change throughout the year. Further information on the work programme will be available on the website or through the Team in due course.



## Contact details for more information

The Overview and Scrutiny Team is always very happy to speak to local people about the activities of the panels. If you have any comments or queries, or would like to suggest areas which may be appropriate topics for future work, you can speak to one of the team by ringing 0115 9154511 or by emailing [overview.scrutiny@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:overview.scrutiny@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

You can view recent agendas and minutes on the Council's website at [www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk) or by contacting Committee Services.

There is also a dedicated website for overview and scrutiny within the Council's website. The current work of overview and scrutiny and the reports already published are available on this site. The address is [www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/overviewandscrutiny.htm](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/overviewandscrutiny.htm)

The reports and, where available the action plans relating to them, which can be accessed through the website are as set out.



**Views on how our service can be improved are always welcome.**

Barbara Cast, Head of Overview and Scrutiny  
Nancy Barnard, Overview and Scrutiny Team Leader  
Chelsea Coleman-Wood, Overview and Scrutiny Review Coordinator  
Kim Pocock, Overview and Scrutiny Review Coordinator  
Tim James, Research and Support Officer