

## **CITY COUNCIL – 14 DECEMBER 2009**

### **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

#### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09**

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Nottingham's Overview and Scrutiny faced some major changes during the last Municipal Year. Following an independent review a new committee structure was introduced to enable us to better meet the challenges posed by new legislation and ever expanding scrutiny in the partnership arena. However our aim to support the priorities of the Council and the City and to make recommendations which will result in positive outcomes and improvements remained constant.
- 1.2 I would like to record the Council's thanks to the following individuals, organisations and groups who supported Overview and Scrutiny during the last Municipal Year:
- Our partners and Executive Councillors who have been involved in overview and scrutiny work, both in providing the evidence that underpins our reports and in responding to our recommendations;
  - The many community representatives, voluntary and community sector groups and individual citizens who have contributed to and supported Overview and Scrutiny; and
  - Officers of the Council who support our work.
- 1.5 I am pleased to present to Council the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2008-09.

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report has been circulated as a separate document with the Full Council agenda.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2008-09 be accepted.

**3. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN  
PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING  
CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

None.

**4. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING  
THIS REPORT**

Reports, agenda and minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Select Committees produced during the municipal year 2008-09.

**COUNCILLOR EMMA DEWINTON  
CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

# **Nottingham City Council**

## **Overview and Scrutiny in Nottingham**

### **Annual Report 2008 - 2009**

**Spotlight on the City**  
**Focus on improvement**

**September 2009**

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## **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2008 - 2009**

### **Foreword from the Chairs**

Following an independent review, last year saw some major changes to Overview and Scrutiny in Nottingham. We began the year by introducing a new structure for our Committees. This was designed to support Overview and Scrutiny Councillors in meeting the challenges of legislation which introduced new powers to scrutinise Crime and Disorder Partnerships as well as extending existing scrutiny powers. The legislation didn't commence until the end of 2008/09 but we feel that, with a year's experience of our new Committees, we are well placed to take it forward next year.

As always, our thanks goes to members of the public, partners from other organisations, the Scrutiny staff team, fellow Councillors and Council Departments, for supporting the scrutiny process. We could not achieve what we have without your help – and, in particular, appreciate those colleagues in the Statutory and Third Sector who have worked with us as members of Review Panels. This year though, particular thanks must go to Barbara Cast, our former Head of Overview and Scrutiny who retired in December. Barbara was a staunch champion of Overview and Scrutiny who supported us right from the start. Her hard work and dedication contributed a huge amount to the success scrutiny has enjoyed in Nottingham and we wish her well in her retirement.

This report summarises our activity during 2008/09, reporting on some of the year's highlights and achievements. We have worked within our new structure and have reviewed how we go about Overview and Scrutiny. However, as you will see later in the report, this has not distracted us from our task of helping the

Council and its partners to achieve the best possible services for the people of Nottingham.

Next year looks set to be another interesting one for Overview and Scrutiny with the implementation of new powers and new ways of working alongside further legislative changes on the horizon. This combined with a tough financial climate and the opportunities offered by a new Sustainable Community Strategy and refreshed Council Plan for Nottingham will make the year to come a demanding one. We look forward to meeting this challenge.

## Introduction

This annual report provides an overview of the key scrutiny work carried out by the City Council in 2008/09.

All local authorities have small Executives made up of no more than ten councillors. They are responsible for making decisions in line with agreed Council Policy. Non-Executive Councillors (Backbench Councillors) can still influence and be involved in the decision making process of the Council through their role on Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees.

In Nottingham, many Backbench Councillors sit on one or more Overview & Scrutiny Committees and are responsible for:

- Supporting the achievement of the best possible services for the people of Nottingham; and for those working in and visiting the city.
- Contributing to policy development and helping to shape major plans and strategies.
- Publicly holding the Executive to account for delivering on the Council's priorities and for the decisions they make.
- Reviewing issues that are important to the people of Nottingham.
- Examining any matters of wider public interest (not just Council Services) which affect the well-being of the city and its people.
- Having a statutory role in scrutinising substantial developments or changes to National Health Services in the area and in scrutinising crime and disorder issues.

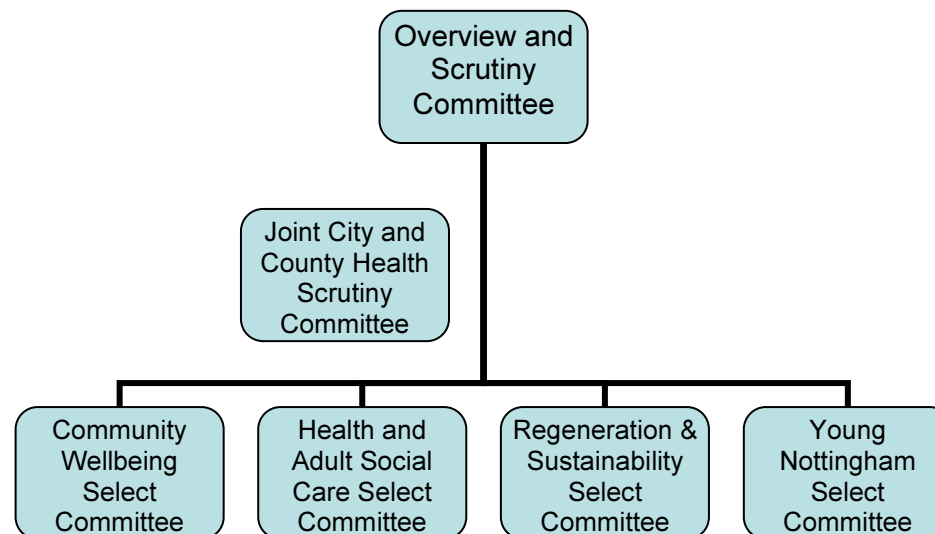
O&S committees can work on anything within their remit which impacts upon the wellbeing of the city and its citizens. They try to make sure that the services delivered by the Council and its partners are the best possible. They do not make decisions

themselves but make Recommendations to the Executive of the Council and relevant Partners, to support improvements in service or Policy Development.

O&S works in a number of ways:

- **Major Reviews** – in-depth reviews of services or policies which can take several months to complete.
- **Spotlight Reviews** – short, sharp reviews, usually taking one or two meetings and focusing on a particular aspect of a service or a policy.
- **Policy Development** – contributing to the development of all major Council policies and strategies and often to those of partner organisations as well.
- **Performance Monitoring** – monitoring the performance and financial management of Council services and following up on recommendations made in major and spotlight reviews.

A new structure for Overview & Scrutiny (illustrated below) was established in May 2008, following a review.



## Highlights and Achievements of 2008/09

### Major Reviews

#### **Dual Diagnosis: Co-existing mental health and substance misuse problems (Supporting Nottingham People)**

##### Why we did it

Councillors wanted to look not just at the services for people with extremely complex and enduring problems in Dual Diagnosis but to address the need for effective intervention at an early stage, and hear from service providers and community partners regarding their involvement. Councillors went out to meet with a service users' group and the umbrella group for housing and support in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector. They heard evidence from, and discussed issues with, partners in the Health Sector, Crime & Drugs Partnership and relevant City Council Departments.

##### What we did

Councillors looked at services for those whose lives had completely broken down due to these problems, but also at what is available for those whose problems are often not seen as being so serious, but who experience difficulties and still need support. It was clear that there was a lot of good work and commitment in both the statutory and voluntary services, but that there was room for improvement.

##### What we learned

Councillors were impressed by good services and great commitment in both statutory and voluntary services. However they identified that there was a need for better communication and clearer referral pathways. They also felt there was a need for training across different areas of speciality within the different agencies. For example they recommended training on mental health and Dual Diagnosis in 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector housing and training on

domestic violence and community impact in the Statutory Sector. During the Review, we worked with partners as issues arose, in appropriate Forums, e.g., liaising with Nottingham University Hospitals regarding blockages to service at the discharge from A & E. Our Review process brought together colleagues from Nottingham City Homes, the Police and Health partners, to address more joined-up services and actions to deal with problems within the community.

##### Outcomes

The findings of the review and recommendations have helped to encourage partners to work together in a better way and to consider meeting needs together, for example, the Police are now represented on the Dual Diagnosis Steering Group. They also focussed on the interface between service users and communities and improving the response from agencies to community concerns. We look forward to hearing how our recommendations to improve outcomes have been implemented in 2009/10.

#### **Economic Activity (Choose Nottingham)**

##### Why we did it

The review was prompted by concern about the level of unemployment in the city and about what support was offered, especially for those who had been out of the job market for some time and those who were more vulnerable than others. Councillors were also interested to know what was planned to meet new government targets related to getting people into work. The Committee was keen to clarify what the Council's role was and how it worked with its partners.

##### What we learned

Councillors concluded that there is a lot of good work taking place across the city, with the Council taking a leading role in partnership working to increase employment. Concerns remain regarding support for vulnerable service users, the need to address life-skills

issues and the need to retain skills in the voluntary and community sector.

#### Outcomes

The review concluded in 2009 with recommendations to improve partnership working, reduce duplication of services, deliver continuing support and focus on more outreach work in communities. While the impact of the review has been tempered by the economic downturn, which began just as the review was concluding, there have still been some positive impacts as a result of its recommendations. In particular, the review raised the profile of the role of the voluntary and community sector in the provision of support to unemployed people. It also drew attention to the need for agencies to have awareness of the needs of vulnerable groups, particularly people with mental health problems, lone parents and those with childcare needs.

### **Neighbourhood Policing (Respect for Nottingham)**

#### Why we did it

Councillors decided to review this priority area under Respect for Nottingham, to assess the early outcomes of the Neighbourhood Policing Pilots and contribute to the sharing of learning from these across the city.

#### What we did

Councillors investigated the extent to which neighbourhood policing in Nottingham contributed towards community safety, reduced crime and fear of crime. We had discussions in committee and in local communities with area representatives, local councillors, police and residents in three police beats. The review also included local and national research, government drivers and crime data.

#### Outcomes

Recommendations focused on

- better co-ordination of Neighbourhood Management, Nottingham City Homes and other Council services with neighbourhood beat teams;
- broader involvement of ward councillors in neighbourhood policing;
- and joint training between councillors, Police, housing and other neighbourhood staff.

When recommendations were reviewed in March 2009 it was clear that the review had provided a sound basis on which to continue building our relationship and better partnership working with the Police and the Crime and Drugs Partnership. Joint training of Neighbourhood Management with Police has been improved and Neighbourhood Management's role is firmly embedded in Neighbourhood Policing. Councillor involvement has progressed but scrutiny continues.

### **Youth Provision (Supporting Nottingham People/ Respect for Nottingham)**

#### Why we did it

The 2007 Joint Area Review inspection had identified youth provision as an area for improvement for the city and the Committee agreed that youth provision needed revisiting following its last review of the Youth Service in 2004. Councillors were also aware that since their last review significant changes had been made to service provision for young people in response to the Government's drive for more integrated working with partners, with the aim of providing a good universal offer as well as targeting delivery at more specialist needs. They were also concerned that there was a disparity in Council youth provision across the City's nine areas.

#### What we did

It included looking at gaps and barriers to provision, young people's involvement in shaping services and the roles of



volunteers and mentors. The Committee consulted widely on the issues, including young people themselves by involving the Youth Council (see below for further details). Other contributors to the review included Council officers and partners, the Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency and Leeds City Council.

#### Outcomes

Recommendations requested that the Council worked more closely with partners and other Council departments towards:

- better marketing and promotion of the 'youth offer';
- exploring the issue of 'territorialism' among Nottingham's young people and providing a 'neutral' city centre youth facility;
- ensuring more praise and celebration of the City's young people;
- finding more innovative ways to engage young people in service delivery: and
- marketing and promoting volunteering to young people.

When the Council's Executive responded in December 2008 almost all of the recommendations were accepted although it was outlined that implementation would also require the co-operation of partners.

## **Spotlight Reviews**

### **Closed Circuit Television (Respect for Nottingham)**

#### Why we did it

Following a presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Housing and Health outlining his priorities, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to scrutinise CCTV provision to support work being done in this area to improve siting and operation of CCTV.

#### Outcomes

The Committee made recommendations relating to the operation of CCTV which were accepted and have been acted upon. Actions

taken as a result of the recommendation include the development of a protocol for the siting of cameras and training for new CCTV operators to help them get to know the areas they'll be keeping under surveillance.

### **Influencing Decision Making (Serving Nottingham Better)**

#### Why we did it

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee chose to look at two targets within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to examine more closely whether people felt able to influence decision making in their areas. Scrutiny felt their input could improve the chances of meeting the targets.

#### Outcomes

As a result of the Committee's consideration of this issue a question was included in the Mori survey on people's understanding of 'influencing'. A question was also included on people's preferences regarding engagement. This helped to clarify measurement of the targets.

### **Libraries (Choose Nottingham/ Transforming Nottingham's Neighbourhoods)**

#### Why we did it

Following a presentation by the Portfolio Holder on the development of libraries and their integration with other council services as a priority the Committee decided to carry out a spotlight review on the subject. Councillors felt their cross cutting remit could encourage departments to work together through libraries for the benefit of our communities.

#### What we did

As well as the Council's own officers, a library services volunteer and a service user (conversation class attendee) contributed to the review.

### Outcomes

The recommendations included:

- encouraging the Library Information Service and Children's Services to work together to maximise libraries' offer to children and young people;
- pursuing opportunities to make libraries into one stop multi-agency shops with access to various services including benefits, citizens advice health and housing;
- ensuring libraries meet the needs of their own individual communities by involving local residents in shaping the services on offer at the library; and
- ensuring a focus on providing training to enable staff to meet the demands of 21st century modern multicultural libraries.

We look forward to receiving the response to our recommendations.

### **Smoking Cessation (Supporting Nottingham People)**

#### Why we did it

Nottingham has one of the highest rates of smoking in the country and smoking is the biggest contributor to Nottingham's low life expectancy. It is therefore a high priority in our LAA.

#### What we did

Councillors looked at actions in place to reduce smoking levels and gaps and improvements to services that could reduce the harmful effects of smoking and its prevalence among local communities.

#### Outcomes

Committee had already recommended that funding for the Tobacco Alliance Co-ordinator, employed by the City Council, be made permanent to support this work.

## **Performance Monitoring**

### **Scrutiny of the LAA**

Scrutiny has an expanding role in relation to partnership working and Nottingham is ahead of the field in its comprehensive scrutiny of the LAA.

Overall LAA performance is reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee alongside reports on the Council's own performance against the Council Plan. This enables the Committee to scrutinise performance and planned actions to reach targets and refer areas of concern for detailed scrutiny, for example, smoking cessation and "influencing decision making" (see above). Scrutiny's role has contributed to public accountability in this area for the Council and our partners, and has influenced prioritisation within action plans.

## **Working with our Partners, Stakeholders and the Community**

Good scrutiny relies on good relationships with our colleagues, partners and our local communities. As the policy context for scrutiny turns ever more towards a) the partnership arena, b) the interface between commissioners, providers and service users, and c) the involvement of our communities, we will need to examine and change the way we work to ensure that scrutiny continues to add value. Some of what we have done already to develop our partnership working is described below.

### **The Joint Health Scrutiny Committee**

We have continued to work jointly with our County Council colleagues on scrutinising health issues which impact on the Greater Nottingham area. Scrutiny has covered a range of issues, such as hospital acquired infections, services offered at the new Treatment Centre, day services for older people with mental health problems and patient transport services, as well as significantly influencing governance arrangements and monitoring consultations on major changes such as NHS Trust applications for Foundation Trust status.

### **One Nottingham**

One Nottingham (ON) is the Local Strategic Partnership for the city and brings together public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to tackle disadvantage and champion a long term vision for Nottingham. Regular liaison between Overview and Scrutiny Councillors and ON partners was initiated this year to increase awareness of each others work and of scrutiny.

## **The Community Equality Forum**

O&S has an effective relationship with the Community Equality Forum. The Forum is made up of representatives of a range of organisations who have come together to make sure that equality and diversity is at the heart of the Council's work. O&S keeps the Forum informed of what work it is doing to improve services and outcomes and also regularly consults the Forum to find out what people think of policies and services.

### **Listening to local communities and local people/ Equalities**

While we have carried out reviews this year we have tried to engage with local communities to hear their views about the issues under scrutiny. The Review of Neighbourhood Policing and the Review of Youth Provision (completed in 2008/09) both involved talking to local people in different parts of the city to find out their views, experiences and ideas. The review of Dual Diagnosis involved service users, providers and community representatives. All Area Committees were consulted on youth provision and the Youth Council carried out a survey on behalf of the Committee to gather the views of other young people in the City.

When we carry out a review we often ask people from outside the Council to sit on the relevant Committee for the duration of the review. This can bring valuable expertise to a committee but is also a way of ensuring that the voices of Nottingham's diverse communities are heard throughout the review. For example, when we reviewed the city's Economic Activity Rate, representatives of the voluntary and community sector and community groups sat with the Committee to give their advice on the issues and representatives of third sector providers also participated and

contributed their views. Youth Councillors also attended meetings of the Young Nottingham Committee to give their views while the review of Youth Provision was carried out.

## **The Local Involvement Network**

We began to build our relationship with the City Local Involvement Network (LINK) this year. The LINK replaced the Patient and Public Involvement Forums in April 2008. It is made up of local people, community groups and organisations and aims to give local people a stronger voice in how their health and social care services are delivered. A member of the LINK has been taking part in a study group of councillors which has started a review of Dual Diagnosis, due to be completed in 2009/10.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in O&S for their contributions in 2008/09.

## The future – building on lessons learned

Having identified some lessons learned in 2008/09 we have some key areas of work to develop in 2009/10 to make O&S even better. These must all be implemented within the context of the new 2030 Vision, Sustainable Community Strategy, Council Plan and the CAA.

- **Recommendations from the review of O&S**

A key message of the review of O&S was the need to ensure that we are working as effectively and efficiently as possible. This has become all the more important in light of the current difficult economic circumstances as all council services, including scrutiny, must provide value for money. We will continue to make sure that our work contributes to positive outcomes for the city, its neighbourhoods and our citizens.

One conclusion of the review carried out this year was that more could be done to embed overview and scrutiny across the Council in a more cross cutting way to increase its effectiveness.

We plan to build on the current practice of appointing opposition councillors who are experienced and committed to scrutiny as vice chairs of Select Committees and identifying champions in Council departments to help promote overview and scrutiny.

- **Developing relationships for effective scrutiny with partners**

We learned that when reviews involve several partners we need closer working arrangements and better communication if

recommendations are to be directed appropriately and partners are to work together to respond to them.

In 2009/10 we need to continue to build and improve our relationships with key partners and to ensure their full involvement at all stages of our reviews. In addition, new powers have been introduced which mean that O&S now has a statutory role in scrutinising crime and disorder issues. We need to work with partners, such as the Police and the Crime and Drugs Partnership, to find the best way to carry out this scrutiny.

- **Acting on feedback**

This year we looked at a different way to consult with key officers from within and outside the Council to see what improvements can be made to overview and scrutiny. Instead of sending out a questionnaire as in previous years, the O&S Team, which supports councillors in their overview and scrutiny role, carried out its own scrutiny health check. They asked officers how they think contributing to overview and scrutiny could be improved.

We showed we were not afraid to be put under the spotlight ourselves and the Team will work with O&S councillors using this feedback to develop the way we work.

- **Tackling wider scrutiny issues**

Changes in legislation and an increased focus on regional arrangements for scrutiny have alerted us to the need to be more outward looking.

While continuing to work with the County Council on joint health issues, we will also be part of a new East Midlands Regional Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. This Committee will be

looking at significant changes to health services which are delivered at a regional level.

- **Celebrating our success**

As part of our drive for effectiveness and efficiency we have to demonstrate our achievements to a wider audience. We will be focussing on raising a positive profile of O&S within the Council, with our partners and with our communities. By focussing on the outcomes from our work we will demonstrate the value scrutiny is adding to the city.

## Contact details for more information

**We are always happy to speak to local people and community groups / organisations about what the committees do. If you have any comments or queries, or would like to suggest topics for future work please contact the Overview and Scrutiny Team.**

**Phone:** 0115 9154511

**Email:** [overview.scrutiny@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:overview.scrutiny@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

Our website contains up-to-date information about the work of O&S Councillors. You can also look back at previous work and download copies of published reports.

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