

# Overview & Scrutiny



## SEFTON COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

Sefton Council 



# Overview & Scrutiny

**‘Valuing  
Improvement’**

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# Overview & Scrutiny Management Board 2009/10



**Councillor Richard Hands**  
*Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board*

Eight meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board took place during 2009/10. The Board was consulted on issues such as the Council's Media Protocol, Political conventions, the draft statutory guidance on the Duty to Respond to Petitions and the Performance Management Framework.

The Board also developed protocols for non-Working Group Members attending meetings of Overview & Scrutiny Working Groups, a protocol for dealing with representatives from partner organisations attending meetings of Overview & Scrutiny Committees and the Councillor Call for Action. Regarding this final point, no Calls for Action have been received to date.

Members of the Board met with representatives of the Audit Commission, to discuss the Comprehensive Area Assessment and issues of concern. Members also considered the reporting of improvement targets to Overview & Scrutiny Committees with regard to the Local Area Agreement.

During 2009/10, the Board received regular update briefings on developments regarding the Strategic Budget Review and the Transformation agenda. Members were particularly pleased that the relevant trade unions had worked with the Council in order to achieve considerable savings and that redundancies made during 2009/10 were achieved voluntarily.

Issues surrounding the Council's Key Decision Forward Plan were addressed throughout the year in that the template used was revised, resulting in greater clarity of the information provided. Following comments by Members, further training on Key Decisions was provided to Council Departments on their requirements. The Board also took the decision to submit only relevant Key Decisions to the appropriate Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which has assisted Members in focussing on those decisions under their Committee's remit.

Communication has always been a key consideration for the Management Board and during the year the Board agreed that Cabinet Member reports should be submitted to the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee, in order to contribute towards the relationship between the Executive and Overview & Scrutiny Members.



In addition, the Board took the decision to have the Minutes from meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board circulated to all Members, to encourage communication and good relationships. 2009/10 also saw the production of the first Scrutiny newsletter, outlining the reviews being carried out by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, together with work undertaken in conjunction with partner organisations.

Health Inequalities became a major issue of concern for the Board this year and Members recognised the link between health and general well-being, with other areas of strategic importance, such as employment, education, housing and environment. During the year, Sefton succeeded in a bid to become a Scrutiny Development Area, in a programme organised by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, to raise the profile of overview & scrutiny as a tool to promote community well-being and assist Councils & Partners in addressing health inequalities within their local communities. To support this achievement, the Board has established a cross-cutting Working Group, comprised of the four Chairs of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees, plus an additional 2 Members, to scrutinise health inequalities within the Borough. This work will continue into 2010/11.

Last autumn, the Board initiated a visit to Tameside MBC, which is considered to be a beacon Council in terms of overview & scrutiny, in order to experience the function at Tameside first hand. This proved to be a highly successful visit and prompted various suggestions for improvement at Sefton.

The Overview & Scrutiny Away Day event will be held during June 2010 in order to develop the future function of Overview & Scrutiny at Sefton and 2010/11 may hold many changes in store for scrutiny.

I would like to thank Debbie Campbell, Overview & Scrutiny Officer for all her hard work during the year in supporting the Management Board. She has done a superb job.

I envisage the forthcoming year to be extremely busy for Overview and Scrutiny in coordinating our prioritisation of Council services.

**Councillor Richard Hands**  
**June 2010**



# Performance and Corporate Services



**Councillor Les Byrom C.B.E**  
*Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee*  
**Performance and Corporate Services**

**On behalf of the Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Performance & Corporate Services) it gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2009/10 Annual Report.**

The year has seen the Committee continue to develop its focus on the Communities agenda within the Council and build on the positive working relationships established with both Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.

Both of these key partner agencies now meet with the Committee on a regular basis and engage Elected Members in shaping service provision across the Borough for the benefit of residents. As part of this process the meeting of the Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009 took place at the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle. In conjunction with our ongoing work around the Safer, Stronger Community agenda this relationship will continue to help make Sefton a better, safer place to live.

In a similar vein the Committee has also continued to focus on assessing the performance of both the Council and partner agencies in achieving our Local Area Agreement targets and in ensuring we are all meeting our duties under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment framework.

Throughout the year the Committee has continued to monitor progress on important issues such as the Council's Governance Review, the Transformation Programme and the Performance Management Framework. The Committee has also dealt with issues arising from Notices of Motion to the Council, and a number of "called-in" items.

## **Equalities Working Group**

The Committee has also continued its work in supporting the development of the Equalities Agenda within the Authority and during the year an Equalities Working Group was established to consider the equality of access to services provided to members of the public.

The working group commenced in November 2009 and its final report was submitted to the Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010.



Can I thank Cllr Papworth for taking the lead on the Equalities Working Group and Councillors Hardy, Byrne and Shaw for their input into the review.

The Committee has continued to play a key role in supporting the Medium Term Financial Plan, helping to keep the Authority's finances on track and building cross-Party understanding and consensus which helped the Council agree an all-Party budget.

Our corporate responsibilities have also included undertaking a review of the service areas for which we have a responsibility including the Personnel Department and the Legal and Administrative Services Department.

We are also continuing to help develop the Council's Governance Review, shaping the future of the Council as a whole.

### **The Year Ahead**

The Committee will continue to make progress on the following set of priorities over the coming year:

- The continued review and development of the LAA which should help build effective relationships between non-executive members and partner agencies such as Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service;
- The continuing review of the Medium Term Financial Plan to ensure our future financial security;
- Continuing our work on the Safer, Stronger Communities agenda within the Authority and the work started in our Perception of Crime Working Group;
- Continuing our work in embedding the Equalities agenda in the Council.

On behalf of the Committee I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work over the past year.

Councillor Daren Hardy has been chair of this Committee for several years, having to stand down as a Councillor this year. I pay tribute to his leadership and foresight as committee chair over this time.

And finally, as Chair I would like to express my thanks to all Members and to the Overview & Scrutiny Team for their hard work, commitment and real sense of partnership which has made the Committee such an honour and a pleasure to Chair.

**Councillor Leslie Byrom**  
**June 2010**



# Children's Services



**Councillor Richard Hands**  
*Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee*  
**Children's Services**

## **It gives me great pleasure to introduce Sefton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (Children's Services) Annual Report.**

This year, the Committee has continued to fulfil all of its functions in scrutinising and reviewing the Council's activities in relation to the following five positive outcomes for Children and Young People: That Children and Young People in Sefton:-

- Are healthy;
- Are safe;
- Enjoy their learning opportunities;
- Reach their goals;
- Make a positive contribution.

During the course of the year one Working Group and one Focus Group have carried investigations into particular areas of the Children's Services Portfolio. The Committee has also considered numerous reports and pre-scrutinised several key decisions.

### **The Corporate Parenting Working Group**

The above Working Group set about scoping its review towards the end of Summer 2009. Members agreed that there was a requirement to narrow the gap of understanding, in relation to Corporate Parenting, between Members, Officers and Partners.

Working Group Members gathered an immense amount of information to assist them throughout the Review. They met and interviewed Social Workers, Officers from Children's Services, representatives from the Children's Trust Board, the Council's Child Care Solicitor and a representative from Connexions. It became apparent, from those witness interviews, that some fundamental changes were required and Officers addressed some of those issues as they emerged which were welcomed by the Working Group. The Corporate Parenting Board was set up in September 2009 and the Corporate Parenting Strategy was agreed shortly after.



The Review took nine months to complete and this illustrates the complexity of the service area we were reviewing. I think all Members would agree that it was a piece of work that required a great deal of sensitivity whilst arriving at the right conclusions with sound recommendations for the Children and Young People of Sefton.

The Review resulted in 20 recommendations and will be considered by the Corporate Parenting Board, Cabinet Member - Children's Services and the Cabinet. The Committee will monitor the progress of the recommendations through regular update reports from the Strategic Director for Children, Schools and Families.

### **Youth Centre Visits Focus Group**

The Committee agreed, after receiving reports from the Youth Service and Members raising concerns regarding Youth Worker vacancies, that Members would visit staff and young people at Youth Centres across the Borough.

I along with various Members of the Committee found the visits beneficial, it was an excellent way for Members to engage with the young people visiting them and interacting with them in their environment.

The Committee will continue to carry out the visits to Youth Centres in the forthcoming year.

In addition to the above Working Group and Focus Group the Committee carried out its important function of examining services that had received an inadequate rating from Ofsted and challenging the Departments readiness for inspection.

The following topics were identified for review by Members and were the subject of reports to the Committee:

- Sefton Schools Admissions Statistics for 2009/10 Allocations (including Hightown Area);
- Building Schools for the Future: Readiness to Deliver;
- Children's Social Care Information Sharing Protocol;
- Young Carers;
- Funding of the Young Carers Organisation;
- Children's Home Strategy;
- CAA Red Flags (Areas of Concern) and potential Green Flag;
- Fostering Service Working Group Report update;
- Quarterly Briefing – Risk and Performance;





- Annual Report of the Director of Public Health;
- Joint Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children – Preparations;
- Serious Case Reviews;
- Youth Offending Team – Progress made since the Inspection;
- Fostering Strategy.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services) has also considered an item, which had been called in – Kirwan House and Springbrook Children’s Home.

Throughout the Year the Committee received reports from the Cabinet Member - Children’s Services, which informed Members of the work he had undertaken.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also been given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise items from the Council’s Key Decision Forward Plan. The Forward Plan is submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the Work Programme update. The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet and Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.

### **The Year Ahead**

The Committee and I look forward to the new Municipal Year and the challenges ahead. We look forward with working as “critical friend” to our Cabinet Member and partners. The Committee will be examining key priorities for the Council and examining areas for us to investigate in order that the services we provide are continually improved to benefit all who live and work in Sefton.

As Chair I would like to thank the Officers who have contributed to this Committee specifically for their assistance and support whilst conducting the reviews. In particular I would like to thank all the people who contributed to the Working Groups and Focus Groups. Also, many thanks to our support officer, Mrs Ruth Harrison and the rest of the Overview and Scrutiny Team.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Committee Members for their hard work throughout the year and in particular Councillor Cummins, the Lead Member of the Corporate Parenting Working Group.

**Councillor Richard Hands**  
**June 2010**



## Regeneration and Environmental Services



**Councillor Peter Papworth**  
*Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee*  
**Regeneration and Environmental Services**

**It gives me great pleasure to introduce Sefton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (Regeneration & Environmental Services) Annual Report.**

During this second year of my Chairmanship the Committee has continued to fulfill its functions in scrutinising and reviewing the wide and diverse range of services within the remit of the Regeneration and Environmental Services Portfolio, comprising the responsibilities of four Cabinet Members.

During the course of the year a number of Working Groups have completed in-depth reviews, some of which were carried over from previous years. There has also been considerable activity undertaken during the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings.

The Committee has continued to develop the scrutiny role, involving contributions from partner organisations such as Sefton Chamber of Commerce and the Mersey Partnership and we spent some time considering innovative items such as the development of a low carbon economy in response to climate change.

The Committee has also taken steps to engage with the public in specific areas; in April a meeting was held in Hightown, where the Environment Agency gave a detailed presentation in respect of the Alt Crossens Catchment Flood Management Plan. Local organisations and residents were able to attend and contribute to the discussion.

The commitment towards developing the relationship between the work of this Committee and our Cabinet Members and involvement of the Committee Members in the policy development process has also continued and we hope to maintain and develop this even further in the year ahead. To this end, I have attended a number of Cabinet Member meetings (usually by video conference).



## **Community Involvement - Licensing Act:**

This Working Group started as part of the Committee's 2007/08 Work Programme but, being of a particular technical and complex nature, the review took some time to complete and following consultation with all those who had participated in the review the Committee received the final report and recommendations at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

Following its submission to the Committee the report and recommendations were referred to the Public Engagement and Consultation Standards Panel, the Licensing and Regulatory Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Performance and Corporate Services) and finally to the Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009. Having accepted the report the Cabinet subsequently referred one of the recommendations to all of the Council's Area Committees where it was welcomed.

I extend my thanks to the Lead Member, Councillor Cliff Mainey, for the commitment demonstrated in completing this review.

## **Watercourse Maintenance and Flooding:**

The Watercourse Maintenance and Flooding Working Group was another review which had been carried over from the 2007/08 Work Programme. It proved to be very timely with the publication of the Government's response to the Pitt Review in December 2008, and the Flood and Water Management Bill, which identified the new role and responsibilities of local authorities as the lead partner in dealing with local flood risk management.

In January 2009 the then Vice-Chair (Councillor Griffiths) and I visited Carlisle to look at the flood protection works which were then in hand.

During 2008/09 the Working Group undertook site visits, met with partner organisations (including the Environment Agency and United Utilities) and engaged with all the Parish Councils across the Borough. There was also significant contribution from officers within the Council, including the Drainage Services Manager, Planning Department, Coastal Defence Officer and the Emergency Planning Team. Following consultation with all those who participated in the review the final report was submitted to the Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009 with a number of recommendations for the Cabinet to consider.

Following consideration of the final report by the Cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009, a further report was submitted to the Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009, setting out a proposed way forward to address the recommendations arising from the final report and subsequently a 'Sefton Flooding Group' has been established to take forward and monitor progress on the recommendations.

As Lead Member for this Working Group I would like to extend my thanks to the Members of the Working Group for their dedication and knowledge which has contributed to what we consider to be a robust and timely report, and particular



thanks to John Baker, the former Drainage Services Manager (now retired) for sharing his expertise and detailed knowledge, which will be much missed.

### **Libraries Assets Management:**

This Working Group started the first stage of its review during 2008/09 and a final report was taken to the Committee on 14th April 2009. The recommendations from stage 1 included an early continuance into stage 2, and this was included in the Committee's work programme in 2009/10. The thorough work done during stage 1 ensured that stage 2 of the review was conducted in a robust manner.

This year Members visited a number of libraries across the north west to examine examples of innovation and good practice and met on a regular and intensive basis during a six month period. The Working Group collected and considered extensive information regarding the Council's libraries and the areas which they serve. This is reflected in the final report and will provide important background to inform future progress. The recommendations from the review have been approved by the Committee and include a further stage 3 which will form part of the Committee's work programme in 2010/11, with a commitment to reach a conclusion by October 2011.

I would like to extend particular thanks to the Lead Member, Councillor David Pearson, for the work carried out.

### **Alternate Weekly Refuse and Recycling Service**

The Committee established a Working Group (consisting of the whole Committee), which had a small number of meetings, playing an important role in informing the process for negotiating the new contract for the service and in particular, how future recycling will be developed. Members have also received regular updates concerning the progress of the Alternate Weekly Refuse and Recycling Service. These meetings took place whilst I was away ill and I am grateful to those who took part.

### **The Year Ahead**

The Committee will monitor the progress of the recommendations made by these Working Groups through regular update reports during 2010/11. In addition to the Working Groups, the Committee has received numerous reports throughout the year on a variety of issues falling under its remit and has taken a particular interest in the impact of global economic events upon Sefton residents. The Committee has sought to engage with organisations outside of the Council and there was a particularly useful dialogue with the Environment Agency, the Sefton Chamber of Commerce, the Mersey Partnership and the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority.



This Committee is looking forward to the new Municipal Year, and the challenges that it will bring. We are working to further develop our involvement with Council officers and partners in the policy development process and to strengthen our role as a 'critical friend'. Our main concern continues to be achieving improvement in the delivery of services for the benefit of the people who live and work in Sefton.

We hope to continue the progress we have made towards more dynamic meetings with more face to face discussions and less written reports. (The Committee's June 2010 agenda was only 6 pages!)

I would like to thank all Members of the Committee and officers who have contributed to the work of this Committee throughout the year. Also particular thanks to our Support Officers within the Overview and Scrutiny Team.

**Councillor Peter Papworth**  
**June 2010**



## Health and Social Care



**Councillor Anthony Hill**  
*Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee*  
**Health and Social Care**

**I am delighted to introduce the 2009/10 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Health and Social Care).**

The Committee met on ten occasions and this Report is presented to the Council and a wider audience beyond, in the hope that the information it contains will contribute to debate and discussion about the provision of health and adult care, social services for Sefton residents and their development, improvement and access.

The Committee received presentations from our health partners including Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust, Mersey Care NHS Trust, North West Ambulance Services NHS Trust, Aintree University Hospitals NHS Trust and Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Trust.

At each meeting the Committee received updates and presentations from Sefton Primary Care Trust (NHS Sefton). These included Swine Flu, Children's Walk in Centre for Southport. Phlebotomy Services, Bowel Cancer Awareness, Healthy Sefton Services, Litherland Town Hall Health Centre, Burns Care, G.P. Practices, Alcohol Awareness, The Lighthouse Project, Dental Provision, the New Chlamydia Website, Primary Health Care in Maghull, Cervical Screening, Admission of Children to Hospital in Critical Cases, Helping People to Stay Warm in Winter and Lifestyle Checks for Residents.

The Committee received reports and heard presentations on a wide range of other issues affecting Sefton residents, including Private Sector Housing Assistance, Affordable Warmth Strategy and Fuel Poverty, Homeopathy, an Active Workforce and the Sefton Public Health Annual Report. Members also considered performance by the various Trusts which offer services to Sefton residents, as requested under the new arrangements required by the Care Quality Commission.

Palliative care and end of life services featured during the year and representatives from NHS Sefton, Jospice and Queenscourt Hospice attended to give presentations on their work.



The Committee wishes to emphasise the importance of, and paid tribute to this service.

The provision of Adult Social Care was served by the attendance of officers from the Council's Health and Social Care Directorate. Their reports and presentations included the Annual Assessment of Adult Social Care, the Quality of Independent Care, Transforming Community Services and the Supporting People Inspection.

Working Groups on Dementia and Access to Social Care Services examined these topics in some depth and made recommendations that were accepted by the Cabinet and the Council.

I would like to thank the Working Groups and particularly the Lead Members Councillors Webster and McGuire for all their hard work. We welcome the establishment of a Cross-cutting Working Group to look at Health Inequalities in Sefton. Members have continued to sit on a Joint Health Scrutiny Committee with Knowsley and Liverpool Members, examining the North Mersey Future-Healthcare Programme.

Members visited Liverpool Women's Hospital, Aintree University Hospitals, Ashworth Hospital and the Hesketh Centre, Southport. These provided the opportunity to see health services in action, to meet and take part in discussions with our health partners and to learn about the development of health services and their development in Sefton and beyond.

The Committee continues to develop strong working relationships with all our health partners. We believe that we are recognised as a "critical friend" and will continue to work with them to monitor and develop health services for the benefit of all Sefton residents.

We benefit from access to our own "in-house" Doctor Janet Atherton, the Director of Sefton Public Health and particularly appreciate the regular attendance at the Committee of representatives of many health organisations and partners including senior officers and members of Hospital and Primary Care Trusts, Sefton C.V.S. Sefton LINKS as well as members of the public.

The attendance of the Cabinet Member - Health and Social Care has been particularly useful when Cabinet Member Reports have been on the Agenda and the regular presence of senior officers from that Directorate has been welcomed as has the attendance of officers from other Council Departments including Finance, Leisure and Environment and Public Protection, as appropriate.

I would like to thank the Members of the Committee for the enthusiastic way that they have contributed to our work. My special appreciation goes to Debbie Campbell, Overview & Scrutiny Officer for her commitment, advice, support and above all her enthusiasm and hard work.

## **The Year Ahead**

The next year will be particularly challenging with likely changes in the way that Scrutiny operates and the financial pressures facing the Council and our health partners. We will continue our work scrutinising necessary, and often challenging health and adult social care services affecting Sefton residents.

**Councillor Anthony Hill**  
**June 2010**





During 2009/10, the following Members served on the Committees indicated:-

### Overview & Scrutiny Management Board

Councillor Hands (Chair)  
Councillor Bigley  
Councillor Byrom  
Councillor Gibson  
Councillor D.Hardy  
Councillor Hill  
Councillor McGuire  
Councillor Papworth  
Councillor Pearson  
Councillor Tweed

### Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services)

Councillor Hands (Chair)  
Councillor Gibson (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Bradshaw  
Councillor Byrom  
Councillor Byrne  
Councillor Connell  
Councillor Cummins (Spokesperson)  
Councillor Cuthbertson  
Councillor Dodd  
Councillor Hough  
Councillor T. Jones (Spokesperson)  
Councillor Larkin  
Father D. Seddon - Church Diocesan Rep  
Mrs S. Cain - Parent Governor Representative

### Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Health & Social Care)

Councillor Hill (Chair)  
Councillor McGuire (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Barber  
Councillor Fenton  
Councillor Gustafson  
Councillor D. Hardy  
Councillor Howe  
Councillor Ibbs  
Councillor Larkin  
Councillor McGinnity (Spokesperson)  
Councillor Pearson (Spokesperson)  
Councillor Platt  
Councillor Webster



## Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Performance & Corporate Services)

Councillor Byrom (Chair)  
Councillor Tweed (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Bigley  
Councillor Byrne (Spokesperson)  
Councillor Fenton  
Councillor Gibson  
Councillor D. Hardy  
Councillor Howe  
Councillor McGinnity  
Councillor Papworth (Spokesperson)  
Councillor Storey  
Councillor Weavers

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration & Environmental Services)

Councillor Papworth (Chair)  
Councillor Pearson (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Barber  
Councillor Bigley  
Councillor Booth  
Councillor Cluskey (Spokesperson)  
Councillor P. Hardy  
Councillor C. Mainey (Spokesperson)  
Councillor S. Mainey  
Councillor Roberts  
Councillor Weavers  
Councillor Webster





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## Overview & Scrutiny



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