



Review of Scrutiny

Task & Finish Working Group

Background

Sunderland's Scrutiny Conference held on 20th May 2008 highlighted Members' wishes to see scrutiny in Sunderland reviewed. The need identified by Members for an 'ethos of scrutiny' to ensure influential scrutiny, and for this to fully engage with Cabinet and with Directorates, was at the forefront of the discussion. Members identified a need to consider scrutiny in its full context within the Council, including whether it is structured appropriately and adequately resourced, and proposed a 'root and branch' review of the structure and support for scrutiny in Sunderland.

Working Group

The Working Group was established by the Policy & Coordination Review Committee at its meeting on 19 June 2008. The review aimed to respond to the evaluation of scrutiny in the Council's 2007 Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) and to identify the action required to meet the challenges and opportunities offered by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

It was not felt necessary to re-invent the wheel in looking at the fundamentals of good scrutiny. The Working Group carried out its review at the same time as the IDeA supported a self-assessment of scrutiny with use of a self-evaluation tool, questionnaires and members' workshop. A corporate project within the Community Leadership programme has also been launched which will seek to improve, refine and strengthen the processes and operational arrangements that support scrutiny.

The Working Group was uniquely placed to tackle those issues that may be inhibiting the effectiveness of scrutiny and preventing it from reaching full maturity. For that reason the Working Group felt that their time could best be spent focusing mainly on internal practices, before fully considering the external face of scrutiny.

Summary

The Working Group sought to meet the challenges facing it in a way that would raise scrutiny in Sunderland to best practice levels. There is an opportunity to provide an exemplar of scrutiny in Sunderland and that opportunity should be grasped. However, to successfully bring about change will demand time, commitment and enthusiasm from members and officers at all levels across the authority. Without that united approach, it will be difficult for scrutiny to thrive or to make the most of opportunities offered by the current impetus for change and new legislation which enhances the power of scrutiny.

Overall, the Working Group found that:

- Positives – scrutiny can demonstrate many examples of positive outcomes, influence on improved service delivery and innovative scrutiny methods including those which involve stakeholders. It has been the source of creative approaches to problem-solving.
- Challenges – there is a need for better understanding and recognition of the role of scrutiny, and as the outcomes of scrutiny are variable a more consistent level of challenge is required.

A number of the recommendations are intended to address the challenges around the need for a wider recognition and understanding of the unique role and powers of corporate scrutiny. This will be assisted by scrutiny being positioned in the context of the other internal and external controls and “tools of assurance” under which the Council and partners operate.

To provide critical friend challenge, the Working Group considered:-

- A methodical approach to the roles and relationships between scrutiny and cabinet
- Guidance through the use of protocols to communicate the parameters of roles and relationships
- Coordination and collaboration in scrutiny to ensure it adds value to the decision-making process
- Developing new relationships with partner organisations

To lead and own the scrutiny process the Working Group considered:-

- Defining roles for members involved in scrutiny and promoting understanding of those roles
- New ways of working to encourage all members to be engaged
- Support for scrutiny across the council

To contribute to improved services, the Working Group considered:-

- Positioning scrutiny at the centre of the organisation and with a clear strategic alignment to council priorities
- The way information is presented to scrutiny should not be an inhibiting factor
- How scrutiny determines what to look at, the methods it uses and its intended outcomes
- The operation of committee meetings

To reflect the concerns of the public, the Working Group considered:-

- Tools and techniques to enable community engagement
- Annual Reporting
- Communication planning

The findings have been structured around the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) four principles that good public scrutiny should:

1. Provide 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
2. Be carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny process
3. Drive improvement in public services
4. Give a voice to the concerns of the public and its communities

The themes are interrelated with each recommendation contributing to the overall objective of a strong, mature scrutiny function and united support within One Council.

Recommendations

Providing critical friend challenge

1. **Exchange of information** - Scrutiny Chairs and the Cabinet should meet quarterly. [Para 1.6]
2. **Maintain Dialogue** - The Lead Scrutiny Member, the Leader, and Chief Executive should meet monthly. [Para 1.6]
3. **Accountability** - Each Scrutiny Committee should include the planned involvement of the relevant portfolio holder/s in its work programme bi-annually. [Para 1.7]
4. **Quality Assurance** - A monthly meeting of Chairs and Vice- Chairs should have both a coordinating function and be a forum for quality assurance for the implementation of the processes around scrutiny. [Para 1.8]
5. **Guidance and Consistency** - Additional Protocols should be included in the Handbook to introduce quality standards for scrutiny processes,

for example, to guide relationships between overview and scrutiny and partner organisations. [Para 1.9]

6. **Scrutiny of external organisations** - Scrutiny should aim to play a much more active role in scrutinising the contribution of external organisations to service delivery and shared objectives. To develop its external relationships, scrutiny should establish a new dialogue with the Sunderland Partnership with occasional meetings comprising representatives of LSP thematic groups and scrutiny Chairs. [Para 1.11]

Lead and own the scrutiny process

7. **Member Lead** - The Lead Scrutiny Member role should be formally defined with a role descriptor to clarify and embed the role. [Para 2.4]
8. **Other Member Roles** - Role descriptors should be developed for other scrutiny roles to achieve consistency of approach and even-handedness. [Para 2.5]
9. **All Member Involvement** - In carrying out policy reviews and other scrutiny tasks, the use of Working Groups is encouraged as a way of providing positive opportunities for all members to be more engaged with scrutiny. [Para 2.6]
10. **Training & Development** - The council should continue engaging members in suitable training opportunities, and signpost appropriate learning and development to officers and partners. [Para 2.12]

Making an Impact on Service Delivery

11. **A new scrutiny structure** - scrutiny should be aligned directly to the five key priorities of the Sunderland Strategy, with the sixth Committee taking a clear overarching and coordinating role. [Paras 3.5- 3.8]
12. **Planned activities** - Work Programmes should include LAA objectives and targets in work programmes, culminating in the inclusion in the scrutiny annual report of the contribution and scrutiny's findings in relation to the LAA. [Paras 3.5-3.8]
13. **Tailored information** - Reports to scrutiny should normally be tailored specifically to the role and function of scrutiny with brief, succinct, tailored reports and signposting to more detailed background information. [Para 3.15]

14. **Focus and outcomes** - agenda management guidance should be included in the Handbook, specifically that there should be clarity of purpose for each report. [Para 3.18]

Reflecting the voice and concerns of the public

15. **Share & Promote Outcomes** - The Annual Report summarising the work of scrutiny across all committees should be published for wide circulation following submission to Council each year. [Para 4.10]
16. **Shared Understanding of Profile of Scrutiny** - A communication strategy for scrutiny should be developed which includes a re-branding of scrutiny to allow it to deliver the 4th block of good scrutiny. [Para 4.11]

Part 1. Critical Friend

- 1.1 The relationship between scrutiny and cabinet is regarded as a key improvement area. The CPA report December 2007 noted that scrutiny is not providing sufficient challenge to the executive.
- 1.2 The Working Group considered how the scrutiny function in Sunderland should position itself to operate effectively as a 'critical friend'. Scrutiny is part of a wider structure of governance arrangements and decision-making, and there is risk of either duplicated effort or gaps if scrutiny is not clear about its unique role in providing accountability. For example, it can uniquely exercise the power to call-in decisions taken but not implemented to have another look at them before action is taken.
- 1.3 There are other groups and mechanisms for providing 'scrutiny' and checks and balances of delivery of plans and strategies. The Working Group identified the need for a wider recognition and understanding of the unique role and powers of corporate scrutiny and a need to articulate this role in the context of the other internal and external controls and "tools of assurance" under which the Council and our partners operate. Throughout this report, it is intended to set out a framework to implement that unique position for the overview and scrutiny function.
- 1.4 The Working Group set out to define the meaning of 'critical friend' in order to establish a framework for delivery of this role. The role requires scrutiny to take ownership of its own performance and have the maturity to take a stand on those issues that merit open, public debate. This is achieved with an independent-minded approach. All scrutiny members have a contributing role in the success of scrutiny and in ensuring the public interest is served through active engagement in a scrutiny committee in an impartial way.
- 1.5 The Working Group considered that there is evidence in past performance of scrutiny of challenge in some areas leading to new approaches and improved service delivery but that this has not been consistent. Introducing a systemised approach to the scrutiny arrangements would go some way to eliminating variations in standards. This will contribute to an overall methodical approach to the scrutiny function in making a strategic contribution to the policy and decision making of the Council and its partners.
- 1.6 To achieve an open dialogue, and clarity of roles and functions, the Working Group wishes to encourage closer working relationships between scrutiny and the executive. Quarterly meetings between the Chairs and Cabinet members would be a positive step forward. Additionally, arrangements should be in place for the Lead Scrutiny Member, the Leader, and the Chief Executive to meet monthly.

- 1.7 To carry this ongoing dialogue through to the scrutiny function, it is recommended that each committee includes a bi-annual report from the relevant portfolio holder/s to report on strategic outcomes and key priorities from the Forward Plan.
- 1.8 Coordination of scrutiny is the ongoing responsibility of the scrutiny officers in negotiation with members, officers, partners and external witnesses. Members lead this process in two ways, through a monthly coordination meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs and through the Policy & Coordination Review Committee. The Working Group considers the monthly Chairs meeting to be an area for development beyond its current coordinating role so that it can be a forum for quality assurance for the processes, protocols and procedures adopted by scrutiny.
- 1.9 A more systematic approach across scrutiny and greater consistency could be achieved through the extension of the use of Protocols to introduce quality standards, for example, to guide relationships between overview and scrutiny and partner organisations. The intention would be to include this in the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook.
- 1.10 The development of the community leadership role for councils has made it increasingly important to widen scrutiny to include partner organisations which have an impact on the wellbeing of the area. In addition to their existing powers of wellbeing, the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gives scrutiny committees the ability to scrutinise any public service partner signed up to the Local Area Agreement. We recommend fully embracing this responsibility but discharging it by integrating our scrutiny of external bodies into a wider more cross cutting scrutiny process.
- 1.11 As a starting point, scrutiny needs to establish a new dialogue with the Sunderland Partnership. It is proposed that strategic links be established between scrutiny and the Sunderland Partnership through the establishment of a meeting once or twice a year comprising representatives of LSP thematic Working Groups and Scrutiny Chairs.

Part 2. Lead and Own the Scrutiny Process

- 2.1 Scrutiny is a member-led function and works most effectively when the roles of officers and members are clearly distinguished and understood. It is important to define this second principle of good scrutiny and break it down into a role definition. Leading and owning the scrutiny process can be defined as being independent-minded and being impartial 'non-executives' appointed to ensure the public interest is served through the scrutiny function.
- 2.2 To support this principle, in June 2008 the Policy & Coordination Review Committee endorsed the appointment of a Head of Scrutiny and the re-location of the scrutiny function to the Chief Executives department. The Working Group considered the level of authority of the new post and agreed unanimously that the post of Head of Scrutiny should be Head of Service level and report directly to the Chief Executive. While it was recognised that the individual, with the personal traits of relationship building; team building, negotiation skills, strength and confidence would be able to drive this, a level of authority within the organisation was also necessary to leave no ambiguity in the perception of the importance of scrutiny to the authority.
- 2.3 Each individual scrutiny member has a role in ensuring robust scrutiny although it is recognised there are different levels of responsibility and involvement. For example, the role of the Chair of the Policy & Coordination Review Committee is an important one taking the lead in coordinating scrutiny issues, negotiating where problem-solving is necessary, and engaging others in the scrutiny process.
- 2.4 The role is not formally defined and adopting a role definition for the lead scrutiny member would help to clarify and embed this sometimes challenging role and recognise the additional responsibilities. A draft role description is attached Appendix 1 as a guide to the type of role description that may be appropriate.
- 2.5 The Council may wish to consider role descriptors for other scrutiny chairs, vice-chairs and members to complement a role descriptor for the lead scrutiny member and to provide a defined framework that is understood across the Council.
- 2.6 The Working Group considered how all non-executive members could be more involved in leading and owning the scrutiny function. There was agreement that the use of Working Groups can provide positive opportunities for all members to be more engaged in scrutiny in a rewarding way and allow members to use their knowledge for maximum effectiveness. For example, Working Groups provide the opportunity to allow enhancement of the role of the Vice-Chair if

scrutiny wishes to adopt a level of career development within its structure.

- 2.7 Working Groups are distinct from sub-committees which have not to date been used by scrutiny. The Working Group discussed the possible advantages of sub-committees in relation to the regular reporting through scrutiny e.g. a finance sub-committee but concluded this approach should be unnecessary if committees are able to manage their business and do justice to consideration of the topics.
- 2.8 It is recognised that additional meetings whether formal or informal have a capacity requirement for members and officers. The increase in the use of Working Groups, in addition to the current frequency of formal scrutiny meetings has the potential to be overambitious if neither members nor officers are able to sustain support for the delivery of both existing practices and new practices. Scrutiny should be supported in its efforts to fully utilise all resources across the Council in support of the new scrutiny function or to secure new resources to deliver a stronger function.
- 2.9 Scrutiny members can lead and own the scrutiny process through determining their own work programmes, advised by officers. Scrutiny in Sunderland established good practice from its early days of using an annual work programme. Efforts have been made to fully include all committee members in this important planning process. This culminated in the holding of a Scrutiny Conference for the first time in 2008. The conference allowed all members and Directorates to be more involved in scrutiny, particularly in setting out their priorities for the year ahead.
- 2.10 In delivering individual work programmes, committees are encouraged to include expert advice and commentary to assist in arriving at recommendations. This expert commentary and advice fed into policy review work, in addition to robustly project-managed policy review will enhance scrutiny's role.
- 2.11 Flexibility in the work programme is essential; however the work programme set out at the start of the year should be delivered, (with reasonable flexibility for new issues). The problems arising by not implementing the work programme include the risk of scrutiny inadvertently creating confusion around the decision making process rather than adding clarity to it. It is recommended that the scrutiny conference is included in the Council Diary as an annual event at the start of each municipal year to involve all scrutiny members in the planning of scrutiny.
- 2.12 There continues to be a need for learning opportunities and development around scrutiny. This does not just relate to member development. Of equal importance is training for officers and partners.

Partners' involvement in scrutiny is an important development and would be enhanced with a higher level of mutual understanding. A starting point to this would be the signposting of the large number of external training opportunities to officers and to partners.

- 2.13 Development opportunities for members should include skills and opportunities to reflect on and learn from experience so that scrutiny can improve year on year. There have been occasions when creative and innovative methods have achieved robust scrutiny but these have not been embedded as good practice. This is further evidence for the development of the Chairs coordination meeting as a forum for sharing good practice. This learning and sharing process could also be through an annual Scrutiny Conference. The benefit of this to the council is that those investigative, questioning, analytic skills can be transferred to other frontline councillor roles.

Part 3. Improved Services

- 3.1 The six review committees have been in operation since 2002 and they replaced a single scrutiny committee which considered Best Value Performance Reviews. There have been two structural alterations since 2002. Firstly, to account for the amalgamation of children's social services and education services which necessitated the establishment of a Children's Services Review Committee to consider the new joint children's social care services. The second to align committee remits more closely to the Strategic Priorities (June 2008). The original structure has otherwise remained intact.
- 3.2 Each committee functions according to the requirements of the constitution and to the guidance set out in the Handbook, although each committee has developed its own style and approach. Each of the committees can claim success in terms of influencing improved service delivery, mainly through policy review work. This good practice can be capitalised on and shared so that exemplars of good scrutiny are replicated.
- 3.3 Review Committees meet 10 times a year, monthly during the Council year. This amounts to 60 review committee meetings. The annual report from 2007/08 shows 333 reports were discussed at the 60 meetings. There is clearly volume in the scrutiny function. What is not so clear is whether this culminates in any clear improvements linked to scrutiny's consideration of the issues.
- 3.4 The Working Group took the view that this effort by members and officers can be re-focused to working methods which are more productive and more targeted.
- 3.5 The Working Group proposes the establishment of new scrutiny committees with remits based around the Sunderland Strategy themes which will enable members to scrutinise, on a topic basis, the contributions made by our partners alongside the Council's contribution, on key topics within their remit including the achievement of the LAA objectives and targets.
- 3.6 The framework for LAAs includes a 'duty to co-operate' on a list of public services. Those organisations have a 'duty to respond' to scrutiny. The approach proposed is considered a more positive, productive approach than scrutinising the organisations in isolation and would allow them to account for their contribution to joint targets.
- 3.7 Scrutiny in Sunderland must acknowledge and respond to the changing roles and responsibilities of all of the Council's partners including, in particular, those given a 'duty to cooperate' in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. It will be important to talk to those bodies about their responsibilities in relation to the overview and

scrutiny function to explain why co-operation and participation with scrutiny is required and how it could be of value to them.

- 3.8 A revised structure is set out in Appendix 2. This includes a repositioning of the Policy & Coordination Review Committee as a Management Scrutiny Committee to place it at the core of the council's scrutiny function.
- 3.9 As described above, the structure includes a thematic approach intended to assist the committees' focus on detailed scrutiny, LAA priorities and the Sunderland Strategy. In this way scrutiny can begin to play a much more active role in scrutinising the contribution of the Council, external organisations and partners to service delivery and shared objectives. Broad remits are attached as Appendix 3.
- 3.10 As well as the strategic priorities reflected in the themes there are important issues and priorities that cut across these, and need to be considered. Scrutiny across a themed approach reflects the Sunderland Partnership's cross cutting priorities as follows:
- Sustainability
 - Creating Inclusive Communities
 - Housing
 - Culture
- 3.11 A specific area identified for improvement in making an impact on service delivery by elected members is the need to take account of potential scrutiny involvement in corporate project planning, and the need for good use of the statutory Forward Plan to identify issues to be considered at an early stage so that their involvement can be built into appropriate stages of project development. This could be used to better co-ordinate with and inform the annual scrutiny topic selection process. Scrutiny's role in development of policy and early, genuine consultation is crucial if scrutiny is to have value to the organisation. At the same time, committees need to be selective in what to look at to achieve detailed, quality investigation.
- 3.12 Scrutiny will be anticipating the need to adapt to external changes arising from the Local Government Act and the Community Empowerment White Paper. Councillor Calls for Action, Crime & Disorder Calls for Action, public petitions, and scrutiny of services through partners will all be incorporated into the scrutiny framework.
- 3.13 Members have identified that the way information is presented to scrutiny sometimes hinders their ability to properly examine an issue. Limiting factors were reported as:
- Reports overly long and complex
 - Reports written primarily for cabinet and duplicated for scrutiny
 - Reports overly optimistic in describing performance – too much hyperbole

- Performance reports lacking context to judge whether performance is unsatisfactory and hidden by descriptors about trends and improvements.

3.14 Members requested :

- Report formats to be focused and specific, summarising the issue, with signposting to other, more detailed information such as cabinet reports.
- A summary of the background, context and history of the issue to be included.
- Reports to be a realistic and honest account of the issue.

3.15 Officers supporting scrutiny are required to present often complex issues in a straightforward and concise manner. Briefer, succinct, tailored reports are needed for scrutiny and these should include signposting to more detailed background information for each member to choose to read more detail if they wish. Information provided to scrutiny should, where appropriate, be tailored specifically to the role and function of scrutiny. It is not anticipated this will involve any significant degree of additional resources as scrutiny requires concise, factual reporting in a timely way. Authors of reports should be encouraged and offered the opportunity for development in report writing skills.

3.16 To assist scrutiny to further improve its contribution to service delivery, it can be smarter and tighter in the way it functions, specifically around outcome focused objectives and clear purpose. For example, of the 333 reports taken through scrutiny last year, it can be assumed that each one did not have equal importance, although all were clearly considered relevant enough to be given committee time.

3.17 The work programme already categorises items for their purpose for inclusion (scrutiny, performance, references from cabinet, committee business, members items and other items). This attaches some level of priority to each item at the point that it is included in the work programme. This should be refined further by the Chairs as each agenda is compiled.

3.18 Good practice in agenda management includes that there should be clarity of purpose for each report, weighting should be given to each item relative to all of the other reports on the agenda, the intended outcome for each report to be scrutinised should be set out. Methods of scrutiny should also be discussed for each item, for example, could the committee set up a working group, make a site visit or carry out a stakeholder consultation exercise.

3.19 Chairs may wish to consider a priority level for each item on their agendas in order to manage the business and add value to each item. This could be by attaching weighting to items such as ranking or traffic

lights to allow detailed scrutiny of important or urgent topics and give less time and attention to those issues which can be dealt with more quickly or at some other time or in some other way. This would help all members, officers, stakeholders to be aware of the input and resources necessary to support scrutiny.

3.20 Performance management is another function of scrutiny that merits consideration of the structure in support of outcomes. Options include:

1. Performance reporting just to Policy and Coordination
2. Performance reporting to individual Review Committees (present arrangement)
3. Standing performance review committee or sub-committee

3.21 The third option has been demonstrated in other councils to provide joined-up thinking to performance management. Alternatively, the first option further supports the proposal for a Management Scrutiny Committee as already described as an evolved version of the Policy & Coordination Review Committee. The Working Group endorsed the second option on the basis that each scrutiny committee should be fully engaged and involved in the service performance within their remit.

Part 4. Voice of the Public

- 4.1 The Working Group identified the need for wider recognition and understanding of the role and powers of scrutiny and a need to have an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, officers, members, partner organisations and with customers of services delivered by the council and its partners.
- 4.2 Scrutiny can be a powerful mechanism that ultimately may change the direction of council policy and this understanding should be better communicated.
- 4.3 Involvement, representation and consultation of community views have all taken place in scrutiny in Sunderland to a greater or lesser extent across all committees. A number of large consultation events have been held by scrutiny in an attempt to reach out to those with a direct involvement in services. Despite these efforts, scrutiny in Sunderland has not achieved the level of recognition of its role that it needs to have to be fully influential.
- 4.4 There are a number of issues to consider around the tools and mechanisms for achieving a profile and dialogue with stakeholders that were not explored in detail by the Working Group. For example, relationship with the press, use of technology, links to other consultation and community engagement by the council and partners, the opportunities to meet in community venues, different types of meetings such as café type meetings which are more informal and allow people to engage in scrutiny in a less formal way than attending a committee meeting.
- 4.5 The Working Group considered the implications of the government's Empowerment White Paper published on 9 July 2008 which aimed to ensure a higher visibility for the scrutiny function including more creative involvement of the public, for example, through large scale public events, community-based meetings and use of web casting.
- 4.6 The location of scrutiny is another issue to be considered under the umbrella for 'people-friendly' scrutiny. Committee Room 1 is currently being further adapted primarily for scrutiny use. This should not exclude the use of other venues outside of the Civic Centre which may be more people-friendly. The Committee Room 1 modernisation plan includes the addition of virtual meeting technology. This is being considered by a member Working Group and, if implemented, will allow web-casting of scrutiny meetings.
- 4.7 When considering the profile of scrutiny it is relevant to consider image and branding. A key success factor for scrutiny is deemed to be the level of involvement of residents and stakeholders. Other councils have

had success in giving their scrutiny function a distinct image and in changing the language around scrutiny to be more approachable. For example, avoiding council-type language that can be off-putting. It was agreed by the Working Group that a re-branding of scrutiny as a critical friend to the public would be beneficial.

- 4.8 The Council may also wish to consider if the re-branding of scrutiny should include replacing the title 'review' with 'scrutiny'. Overview and scrutiny may be little understood, even throughout the council and other public services, but the label 'review' was felt to be contributing to a level of ambiguity about the role and function. The use of the title 'scrutiny' was felt to encourage further use of its investigative, questioning, and analytical role.
- 4.9 There is an opportunity for scrutiny to publicise its work through its Annual Report. The Annual Report can be used as an outward facing document, but also allows scrutiny to communicate with colleagues within the council and explain to them what the role of scrutiny is and how they can take part.
- 4.10 The Annual Report should explain how scrutiny has performed in holding the executive to account, how it has added value, the impact of in-depth reviews, how it has achieved community engagement and how the work of scrutiny makes a real difference to the people. The Annual Report summarising the work of scrutiny across all committees should be published for wide circulation following submission to Council each year.
- 4.11 The Working Group agreed that a communication strategy for scrutiny should be developed which includes a re-branding of scrutiny.

Role definition: Chair of Management Scrutiny Committee

Key role and duties :

1. To lead the overview and scrutiny function of the Council, ensuring the effective co-ordination and management of that function.
2. To promote the work and independence of the scrutiny process, ensuring that the executive is effectively held to account for its decisions and performance (working with executive members as appropriate).
3. To oversee a programme of work which addresses the key priorities of the Council and that the overview and scrutiny function contributes towards the effective achievement of the Council's agreed policies and improved service performance.
4. To chair meetings of the Management Scrutiny Committee (MSC), and work with other scrutiny members and officers to plan the work programme for the committee.
5. To monitor the exchange of information between overview and scrutiny and the executive and/or Council; and in consultation with Executive Members and officers, to ensure that the outcomes of overview and scrutiny reviews are responded to and taken into account in future policy development and decision making.
6. To chair scrutiny chairs meetings and ensure scrutiny chairs are involved in the scrutiny process and are effectively managing the process within the allocated resources.
7. To ensure that all other scrutiny members are informed of progress and are able to contribute to overview and scrutiny work as appropriate.
8. To ensure that all scrutiny members are able to raise matters of concern for consideration and are able to access the overview and scrutiny process.
9. To liaise with the Executive to ensure co-ordination between the work of the Executive and the programme of scrutiny work.
10. To take part in publicity and promotion of the scrutiny process and oversee arrangements for community engagement in the overview and scrutiny process.
11. To maintain an overview of the Council's consultation and decision-making processes, and to work with scrutiny members and officers to identify matters for scrutiny.

12. To have a monitoring role in the development of training and induction programmes for Members and officers in relation to the development of effective overview and scrutiny.
13. To maintain an awareness of the overview and scrutiny function in Sunderland by attending and observing thematic scrutiny committees as appropriate.
14. To maintain an awareness of overview and scrutiny processes and practice in other councils, and to participate in any review and evaluation of the Council's constitution and protocols relating to overview and scrutiny.
15. To monitor arrangements for the participation of non-Councillor representatives in overview and scrutiny work.
16. To take responsibility for personal and professional development relating to the role, including attendance at conferences and undertaking other development opportunities as available.
17. In carrying out the above duties, to have regard to:-
 - the Council's strategic priorities
 - the promotion of equality and diversity
 - sustainability
 - effective partnership working

Structure Chart



