



# Scrutiny Matters

Scrutiny Annual Report  
2010/2011

# Contents

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 3  | Foreward   |
| 4  | Scrutiny arrangements in Sunderland                    |
| 5  | Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee |
| 6  | Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee     |
| 7  | Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee                |
| 8  | Management Scrutiny Committee                          |
| 9  | Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee |
| 10 | Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee            |
| 11 | Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee             |
| 12 | The year ahead   |
| 13 | The scrutiny team                                      |
| 14 | Membership of scrutiny committees 2010/11              |



# Foreword



**Councillor David Tate**  
**Chair of the Management Scrutiny Committee**

Once again it gives me great pleasure to introduce the City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

It is interesting to reflect that it is nearly ten years since the overview and scrutiny function was first introduced in Sunderland. And as a Committee Chairman for most of this period, I have personally seen it evolve and develop - establishing new ways of working and helping to drive through improvements in service delivery. I hope that this report provides a useful snapshot of the work and achievements of the scrutiny committees during the last 12 months and an indication of the challenges facing us in the year ahead.

Clearly, this year has been a challenging one - with the scrutiny function looking to build upon the improvements of recent years against the backdrop of an economic recession and severe financial restraint. This backdrop has made it all the more important that the work of scrutiny adds real value and contributes to an improvement in the services delivered to the people of Sunderland.

To this end, the decision to align the remits of the scrutiny committees with the priorities contained in the Sunderland Strategy has been an important one - helping our committees to adopt a more focused and cross cutting approach to the delivery of scrutiny. Particular emphasis has also been placed on encouraging a more outward looking approach to our work - looking at the issues that are a priority for the people of the city.

A key to this approach has been refining the content and format of the Annual



Scrutiny Conference. This event, which brings together council members, officers and our partners, was this year focused on the major challenges facing the city. The event proved of critical importance in helping to ensure greater input from our partners into our policy reviews and work programmes. As a result, the committees have carried out policy reviews across a broad range of key issues including; the development of the low carbon economy; malnutrition in hospitals; the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities; alcohol and violent crime in the city centre and the promotion of Sunderland "the place".

As result, I feel that the greater level of cooperation and involvement from partner organisations has been reflected in a significant improvement in the quality of our policy reviews and the value of the recommendations we have made. As well as including a stronger contribution from our partners, this years reviews have also adopted a number innovative and improved working practices; with for example two of our reviews receiving evidence from local Members of Parliament and overall a greater degree of involvement from the general public.

The year has seen the continued development of positive and constructive working relationships with the City Council's Cabinet and Area Committees. This reflects the recognition of the important contribution that scrutiny can make to good governance - through in depth policy review; providing challenge

to decision making and monitoring performance. In terms of performance management, we have also improved our system for following up on agreed scrutiny recommendations, through the integration of our recommendations within the council's corporate performance management framework.

We have also taken action to raise the profile of scrutiny within the city - as well as regionally and nationally. Closer links have been developed with the council's communications team which has resulted in a higher profile for scrutiny in the local press. Over the year, we have also played a more active role in the regional scrutiny networks - helping to design and share good practice among local authorities in the region.

I would therefore like to thank everybody who has played a part in a very exciting year in overview and scrutiny in Sunderland. Our committees have often had to deal with complicated and sensitive issues and I am pleased that members of different political persuasions have worked together so positively and maintained the integrity of the scrutiny process. I would also like to thank the Leader, Cabinet colleagues and officers for the high degree of cooperation and support we have received. Finally, I would also like to thank those members of the public, co-opted members and partner organisations for the invaluable contributions made throughout the year to the various policy reviews and other work undertaken by the scrutiny committees.

We know that next year will be a very difficult one for the council. The turbulent economic situation combined with severe cuts in local government funding will all contribute to the most challenging environment faced by the council for many, many years. However, I am sure that with the continued drive and commitment of our members, officers and partners, scrutiny will continue to play an important role in ensuring the efficient and effective delivery of public services within the city.

# Scrutiny arrangements in Sunderland

The political management structure in Sunderland consists of the Leader of the council and his Deputy, a Cabinet of eight councillors (who each have responsibility for a portfolio of services that are provided by the council), seven Scrutiny Committees and five Local Area Committees.

## What is scrutiny?

Simply put, scrutiny committees ensure that the council and its partner organisations are accountable for their actions and promote open and transparent decision-making.

It aims to make sure that services and policies best meet the needs of the residents of the city. It does this through:

- Policy review and development;
- Holding the Council's Executive and its partners to account;
- Investigating issues of local concern; and
- Working with our partners to improve services to the local area.

Scrutiny is not new and arrangements have now been in place in Sunderland since 2002. We are committed to an inclusive and effective process that represents the people of Sunderland and in doing so encourages the involvement of local residents and partner organisations.

## Who does scrutiny?

Scrutiny Committee Members are Ward Councillors who are not Members of the Executive (Cabinet). The Children, Young People and Learning Committee also has a number of co-opted members, people (other than Councillors) who represent other authorities, organisations or groups.

## How is scrutiny carried out?

Within Sunderland there are seven Scrutiny Committees which mirror the key priorities for the city, as laid out within the Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025.

Each Scrutiny Committee is responsible for a number of areas that are wide-ranging, some examples of which include:

- 1 Management Scrutiny Committee**  
The role of this committee is to coordinate scrutiny business and manage the overall scrutiny work programme. It also considers the council's corporate policies, performance and financial issues.
- 2 Children Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee**  
This committee considers issues relating to children and young people and life long learning including the health, safety and well-being of young people. It also considers adult learning and the library service.
- 3 Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee**  
This committee considers issues relating to community safety, including crime and anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, licensing and community inclusion and equalities.
- 4 Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee**  
This committee considers issues relating to environment including planning, local transport, roads, waste, recycling and grounds maintenance.
- 5 Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee**  
This committee considers issues relating to health and adult services, including scrutiny of health services, social care, public health and external inspections.

- 6 Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee**  
This committee considers issues relating to the economic prosperity of the city, including inward investment, the city centre, tourism and employability.
- 7 Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**  
This committee considers issues relating to sustainability and maintains an overview of each of the Sunderland Partnership's cross cutting priorities, including housing strategy, culture, arts, museums and heritage.

Scrutiny Committees call upon council officers, cabinet members, partners, expert witnesses and service users (members of the public) to answer questions and give evidence about the issue being investigated.

Committees will collate as much evidence as possible within the time available. Our committees will then produce a report containing our recommendations and any proposed improvements for the executive, full council and partner organisations to consider.

## How does scrutiny make a difference?

Evidence shows that successful scrutiny has a positive impact for the people it serves - you! Indeed, we have local evidence of scrutiny having real outcomes for residents, for example in the case of the proposed Gillas Lane Primary School closure and parking issues around Doxford International Business Park.

# Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Paul Stewart**  
Chair of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee

It has been another busy and productive year for the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee, during which time we have delivered a work programme that has been diverse, ambitious and challenging for the committee, the council and the city.

Our major policy review this year has looked into the role of work based learning and apprenticeships in tackling youth unemployment and particularly the issue of those young people not in education, employment or training. This comes at a time when the latest employment figures show that long-term youth unemployment (six months or more out of work) has exceeded 400,000 and where it is not unusual for young people to take up to six months to find work. In gathering evidence for the review we held a number of our meetings in schools across Sunderland finding out firsthand the work being undertaken to help young people make the transition from full time education into further training or employment.

The committee also had the opportunity to visit Nissan, Sunderland ITeC, Connexions and Springboard as part of the review process to gather evidence, opinions and the experiences of employers, training providers and young people. We also held an expert jury event where a number of witnesses were invited to give evidence to the committee and this has also added to the evidence base of the review. To compliment this we also arranged a 'big brother' style diary room for young people to provide their own personnel accounts of looking for employment, training or further education which was very enlightening.

The review has highlighted a number of key themes and the committee has developed recommendations based on the evidence gathered. It is hoped that this can help the council, its partners and employers within the city to consider the importance of apprenticeships and work based learning in providing a platform for young people to move into the world of work, develop new skills and contribute to society as a whole.

The effects of child poverty are monumental and the experiences we have in our childhoods can lay the foundations for later life. As part of the committee's work programme we received progress updates on the council's Local Child Poverty Strategy. The Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee were able to provide useful comments and suggestions to help support the development of this important strategy.

The committee, as part of its remit, receives a yearly review of the key achievements and performance of Sunderland Libraries Service. The committee also has the opportunity to look at the services priorities for the coming year.

An important aspect of any scrutiny committee's role is to act as a critical friend and provide challenge to policies

and strategies ensuring they are robust and suit the needs and requirements of Sunderland. In undertaking this role the committee has, throughout the year, requested a number of reports on issues ranging from the number and nature of fixed and permanent exclusions in schools across the city, the admissions arrangements operated within the city and OfSTED inspection reports for schools.

The active and valuable role played by our co-opted members can not be underestimated as they bring an important insight to the committee through their own experiences and expertise. This year has seen a number of newly appointed co-opted members join the committee and I feel sure that their involvement will only help to strengthen the committee.

Again the committee has had another full and productive year covering a wide range of themes and priorities reflective of the Children and Young People's Plan that underpins the committee's work programme. I am sure that the coming year will be equally challenging and rewarding for the committee.

Finally I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee for their hard work, support and dedication throughout the year.





# Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Graeme Miller**  
Chair of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee

This year the committee wanted to look at Sunderland 'the place' as its main piece of work for the year.

As the title suggests the concept of 'place' involves many areas of the council and its partners. As the review has progressed we have become more aware of just how significant this issue is for Sunderland's future.

The city is now operating in a global context at a time when cities are competing for investment at an international level. If Sunderland does not have a raised profile, positive image and strong sense of who it is then we may not be able to effectively compete on a global stage with much larger cities. We also feel it is vital to get people into the city; to live, study and visit, and also provide sufficient opportunities to stop people leaving to live elsewhere.

The committee took a wide range of evidence for the review including; SAFC, the University of Sunderland, the BBC, Royal Mail and officers of the council. The committee also spoke with the council's portfolio holder for Safer City and Culture. We were particularly pleased to have the opportunity to meet and receive the views of one of the city's MPs, Sharon Hodgson, about Sunderland's national profile.

The final report gives a number of recommendations that we all feel will strengthen Sunderland's identity, pride and sense of place going forward. Some of the things we have suggested include ensuring the city's history plays a significant role in its future; promoting a shared vision with residents, using new and existing ways of sharing information;



improving the existing ambassador programme to promote Sunderland; and ways in which to support the aims of the Economic Masterplan.

Other issues the committee have considered during the year include ongoing work with Nexus regarding the Bus Network Redesign and a discussion with CE Electric regarding its targets for street light repairs in the city; as well as providing comment on the draft Local Transport Plan 2011-2021 and the framework for the Green Infrastructure Strategy for the city, which will open up green spaces and allow movement around the city without cars or public transport.

Extensive work with partners has produced some pleasing outcomes this year; including CE Electric reducing its in-house target for street lighting repairs as a result of the committee's concerns, and the editor of the Sunderland Echo agreeing to ensure a balance of news stories across all of the different areas of the city and beyond.

Another productive year for the committee and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for their ongoing commitment and enthusiasm to looking at some of the issues that are vitally important for the city. I look forward to another successful year in 2011/12.

# Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Peter Walker**  
**Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

The year began with news of the launch of the Health White Paper - a major restructuring of health services and councils' responsibilities in relation to health improvement.

The Scrutiny Committee contributed towards a North East Joint Scrutiny response expressing serious reservations about the proposal to transfer scrutiny powers away from health scrutiny committees. These concerns were mirrored by many other consultees resulting in revisions to the proposals which instead propose to extend councils' formal scrutiny powers to cover all NHS-funded services.

The transfer of public health responsibilities to the council will allow scrutiny to have an 'overview' of health improvement and the Scrutiny Committee will be well placed to help to draw together the cross cutting issues such as education, transport, housing, leisure, planning.

Old relationships will need to be developed with the new players, including all the partners on the Health and Wellbeing Boards, and the GP consortia and this is a challenge for all of us. The Scrutiny Committee is eagerly anticipating the developing new relationships, being involved in the transition and taking forward the enhanced scrutiny role.

Our main project this year was an investigation of hospital food and the avoidance of malnutrition. The Age Concern campaign Hungry to be Heard was a key driver in taking forward this investigation. We were fortunate in being able to co-opt the Director of Age UK

Sunderland onto the committee to work with us on this review. We have been impressed the dedication of the staff to patient care and providing the best nutritional support and hopefully our recommendations will assist with improving and enhancing the service to patients.

The North East region has operated strong regional scrutiny arrangements and this past year the 12 local authorities' scrutiny committees worked together on a project to examine the broad health needs of the ex-service community. This was an innovative project involving all health scrutiny representatives from across the region and will be used to seek improvements in service delivery in each local authority.

There are some cases that impact widely on service delivery across the country. The impact of the Francis Report published in February 2010 regarding the failings of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust was such a case. The action and governance arrangements undertaken at City Hospitals Sunderland to ensure the trust learns from the report were considered by the committee. Scrutiny functions can also take lessons from such cases and take a more robust and proactive role in respect of scrutinising local health services. An example of this would be health scrutiny being more aware of complaints, serious untoward incidents and issues raised with patient liaison and advisory services.

The committee was consulted on a number of service changes during the

year including a new model of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Pharmacy Services, Model of Mental Health Care, and Transforming Community Services (TCS). The South Tyneside Foundation Trust has been chosen as the management partner for TCS. Services include district nursing, health visiting, supporting patients with diabetes and community dentistry. The services to be affected are extremely important and the committee was keen to point out that it is imperative patients do not notice any adverse changes in the services they receive.

The personalisation agenda highlights the importance of putting people centre stage of social care and it sets a challenge for the council to provide a personal budget for everyone who is eligible by April 2013. The scrutiny committee asked challenging questions about meeting the milestone of 'everyone who is eligible' to have a personal budget, and indeed how do we know everyone who is eligible. We were also interested in the feedback from service users, and how has this been used to develop the system. Ultimately, service users must feel their lives have improved from having this budgetary freedom.

This provides a summary of the scrutiny and review undertaken during the year, and I feel that along with the hard work of my colleagues we have had another successful year. I am looking forward with some eagerness and trepidation to the challenges that 2011/12 will bring, involving as it will a major transition for all of us in the health arena and beyond.





# Management Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor David Tate**  
Chair of the Management Scrutiny Committee

This year has again seen the Management Scrutiny Committee develop its role further with the inclusion in the committee's membership of the chairs of the six standing scrutiny committees.

This has given the committee a greater overall perspective of the scrutiny function and enhanced the coordinating role. Once again the committee has undertaken an ambitious and varied work programme mainly due to its wide ranging remit that includes consideration of financial issues, corporate policies performance and a co-ordinating role in relation to the remaining six scrutiny committees.

The need for greater efficiencies and continued service delivery has never been at a greater premium, for both private and public sectors, as it is in these times of austerity. With this in mind the focus of the committee's policy review this year has been centred on the Smarter Working Project of the council's Business Transformation Programme, which looks to deliver efficiencies from operational property over the next four years. The committee has held a number of evidence gathering meetings with key officers within this project, as well as undertaking the smarter working workshop that many employees have already and continue to go through.

The committee has also had the opportunity to look at a number of case studies from around the country in relation to smarter working which have illustrated the variety of ways many organisations have looked to make



savings while still delivering key functions but in a smarter and more efficient way. The policy review has highlighted a number of themes and through our recommendations it is hoped that this review will help to promote smarter working even further within the council and strengthen the project as a whole.

The committee has also throughout the year received a variety of reports, policies and strategies as part of our work programme. The committee has looked at and discussed a range of issues including the Community Assets Policy, an update on attendance management and a look at service planning arrangements for the coming year. It is hoped that the committee's involvement has provided sufficient challenge and allowed service areas to further develop policies and strategies.

Continuing the work undertaken in previous years, the committee has again taken a keen interest in the City Council's budget process and continues to examine variations to the budget. The committee also continues to respond to a number of financial reports brought to the committee for consideration and these comments are reported back to cabinet or full council respectively. Once again as part of the budgetary process we have provided the critical friend challenge to Cabinet Portfolio Holders on their key priorities

and approaches to budget setting for the year ahead, which formed part of the budget consultation process for 2011/12.

Committee members have attended a select number of conferences throughout the year which have been important to the scrutiny role in Sunderland. As always we have attended the Centre for Public Scrutiny run Annual Scrutiny Conference which provides an opportunity for scrutineers from across the country to get together, discuss best practice and find out what about new developments within the scrutiny sphere.

I am sure the coming year will present a number of challenges and rewards and I feel sure that scrutiny will play its part in helping the Council to deliver quality services for the people it serves. As chair of the Management Scrutiny Committee I have attended the other scrutiny committees at various times throughout the year and I can only commend the work and policy reviews that have been undertaken by each individual committee. This only leaves me to thank my fellow chairs and member colleagues who sit on the Management Scrutiny Committee for their hard work, dedication and commitment not only to the Management Scrutiny Committee but also to the scrutiny committees they chair and serve on themselves.



# Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Michael Mordey**  
Chair of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

At the start of the year when the committee was considering which issues to include in its work programme, we had pretty much unanimous support to focus on the development of a low carbon economy in Sunderland.

For this reason, and in view of the breadth of the issues involved, the committee chose to make this the subject of its policy review for the year.

The development of the low carbon economy is a central component of the Sunderland Economic Masterplan - the document that sets out the blueprint for the future economic development of the city.

The Economic Masterplan identifies a number of important challenges that the city must overcome, in particular that Sunderland's economy remains too reliant on a narrow range of industries. The city has successfully moved from ships and coal to cars and contact centres, but does not have the variety of industries and career opportunities, nor the volume of well-paid jobs necessary to retain more of the younger population and to ensure a resilient economy.

The committee chose to divide its policy into two main themes:

- the low economy place - which encompasses the physical infrastructure and local projects aimed at reducing the city's carbon footprint and:
- low carbon business - comprising ultra low carbon vehicles, offshore wind/energy generation and software city.

The policy review has involved the committee taking evidence from and visiting some of the key players in the field - including Nissan, the University of Sunderland, the Chamber of Commerce, a number of the local IT firms based at the council's new Evolve Centre and the Managing Director of the Port of Sunderland. We have also visited NAREC based at Blyth which is the national centre for the development and deployment of low carbon technology.

Our policy review has shown us that there are new opportunities for Sunderland in the low carbon economy, particularly given the identification of Sunderland as the focus for the North East low carbon economic area for ultra low carbon vehicles. This provides Sunderland with potential economic opportunities for the development and manufacture of new local carbon technologies (including electric vehicles) and low carbon building design and construction, sustainable transport choices and the development of new low carbon energy sources, particularly in terms of the national drive to develop offshore wind energy.

However, much still needs to be done and it is important that the impetus is maintained into the future in order that Sunderland can take full advantage of the potential benefits for the city.

Last year, the committee was regularly consulted on the progress being made on the council's Economic Masterplan.

The Economic Masterplan was formally approved by the council in July 2010 and once again the committee had the opportunity to be consulted on its contents prior to its final approval.

A unique selling point for Sunderland is being a city by the sea. The committee was therefore consulted on and endorsed the draft Seaburn Masterplan. The masterplan sets out key principles and parameters to guide the future redevelopment of Seaburn as a family focused resort offering high quality indoor and outdoor facilities for both residents and visitors.

The committee has also monitored the progress being made in establishing the North Eastern Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This body will bring together businesses and local authorities in order to set the strategy and vision of economic growth in an area. The North Eastern LEP proposal sets out a vision for the LEP area to become Europe's premier location for low carbon, sustainable, knowledge-based private sector growth and jobs. Again, we intend to closely monitor the development of the LEP in the year ahead.

All in all, another very busy and productive year for the committee. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking my colleagues for all their hard work and enthusiasm and I feel sure that the progress we have made can be built upon in the year ahead.



# Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Robert Heron**  
Chair of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee

City Centre nightclubs at one o'clock in the morning... perhaps not somewhere you would expect to see the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee, but this year the committee have been active in the community, collecting evidence for their policy review; Alcohol, Violence and the Night Time Economy.

We've all heard the phrases binge drinking and alcohol fuelled violence in the national press and it comes as no surprise that a number of alcohol-related violent incidents occur in city centres across Britain. When deciding the work programme for the year, the committee felt this issue warranted scrutiny at a local level. The committee have investigated the work of the council and partner organisations to ensure that Sunderland's city centre continues to be a safe place to enjoy a night out.

Alongside the city centre visits with the Police and the street pastors, the committee have received evidence from a wide range of organisations including; The Home Office, Victim Support, Northumbria Probation Service, NHS South of Tyne, Northumbria Police, City Hospitals Sunderland and Balance. These organisations have made significant contributions to the evidence gathering process. Council officers have also outlined some of the vital work that is underway to ensure a safe city centre and we have considered best practice from other areas to assess whether we can be doing anything more.

Licensing policy and enforcement action was an area that the committee considered to be important in maintaining a safe drinking environment and ensuring violent incidents were at a



minimum. Therefore a task and finish group was set up to investigate this issue in depth. This involved speaking to the police and council officers as well as the chair of Pubwatch. Members recognised the importance of hearing the views of licensees and completed a consultation to establish what they felt were the main issues in maintaining a safe city centre.

Our work has reflected national priorities and the committee have given careful consideration the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. This bill was introduced with the aim of improving democratic accountability and tackling alcohol related violence. The committee have contributed to the council responses to the consultation process, following detailed consideration of the issues in question. Members also met with Sunderland MP Bridget Phillipson. Her detailed knowledge of the bill and relevant issues was an invaluable part of the evidence gathering process.

The committee are confident that the recommendations in the final report will

lead to improved outcomes for residents of Sunderland by encouraging greater information sharing across organisations, strengthening of preventative schemes and promoting a proactive approach to recent policy changes.

At the beginning of the year the committee considered the impact of poverty of place and they have visited a number of locations in the city to observe where poverty of place is evident and what work is being undertaken to address this. As this is a cross cutting issues members of the Environment and Attractive and Sustainable Scrutiny Committees also attended this visit.

Members are proud to say that this has been another year of successful Scrutiny and partnership working has certainly been key in this success. The committee are pleased with how all agencies have worked together in the city and believe that this is vital in maintaining a safe city which all residents are proud of. We look forward to another successful year of scrutiny.



# Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Susan Watson**  
Chair of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee

It gives me great pleasure to present the annual report of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee - the second since its establishment in 2009/10.

Once again it has proved to be a busy year for the committee and one in which we have looked to build upon the work and progress made last year.

For our policy review, the committee agreed to look at the role of culture in supporting sustainable communities, reinforcing community identity and combating social exclusion. This has proved to be an extensive piece of work and has been the primary focus of the committee during the year. This has involved the committee examining the cultural offer available to residents of the city across a range of services including libraries; museums and archives; heritage and built heritage; sport development; tourism and leisure attractions.

The committee has looked at the contribution of culture to a number of key elements that make a sustainable community. For example:

- Economic development – a vibrant local culture attracts investors and a skilled workforce, particularly within the knowledge-based economic sectors. It can also help people to develop new skills and retain graduates. Tourism remains an important part of the economy, while the creative industries are one of their fastest growing sectors.
- Community cohesion – cultural activities such as festivals and sports tournaments build local pride and



often provide a focus for local volunteering. Cultural facilities often provide neutral meeting ground for groups experiencing conflict.

- Education – cultural activities help people to find ways into lifelong learning and to acquire transferable skills. For example, museum and library professionals provide some of the most inventive ways to engage excluded and at risk groups.
- Health – cultural activities positively affect health outcomes. Participating in sport directly improves health and combats obesity, while participating in many cultural activities is linked to increased physical and mental wellbeing.

Our policy review has highlighted the breadth and high quality of cultural services on offer within the city – from high profile high profile facilities such as the Aquatic Centre, Empire Theatre, Monkwearmouth Station Museum to work going on at a more grass routes level. Certainly, the review has been a reminder that culture should not be confined to dedicated cultural facilities and the people who use them. Just as important are the less professionalised and less formal cultural activities in which everyone from all communities takes part, in homes, pubs, public spaces, schools, places of worship, and so on.

Among its many recommendations, the committee has suggested that the council should investigate ways of further involving the voluntary and community sector to support the development of cultural services and to ensure there is no

duplication in the services provided to the public. The committee also recommended that the council should further explore ways of working with the private sector in order to support the concept of making use of unused or underused space in the city as a home for gallery space or mini art centres.

I feel the review has proved a very worthwhile piece of work to undertake. With the invaluable contribution from my colleagues on the committee we have highlighted a number of issues and recommendations. Clearly we face difficult times ahead in relation to the future funding and delivery of cultural services within the city. However, I feel that with the enthusiasm and commitment shown by staff and service providers we will as a city do our utmost to continue to provide a cultural offer of the highest quality.

As well as looking at culture, the committee has also looked at a range of housing issues – reflecting the importance of housing to the people of Sunderland. This has included consideration of the council's Housing Priorities Plan; a document that will form the basis for future housing investment decisions and the economic viability of affordable housing in the city. We have also been consulted on the draft Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Enforcement Policy and the draft Enabling Independence Delivery Strategy. On both of these documents, as with the Council's Volunteering Strategy we felt that it was important that we as a committee had the opportunity be consulted prior to its approval by the Executive.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee for the support and assistance during the year and also thank those officers and partners who have assisted the committee in its work. I feel that a great deal has been achieved during the year and that this will place us in a strong position to face the challenges of the year ahead.

# The year ahead

Hopefully, this year's Annual Report has done justice to the ground covered by the Scrutiny Function and fully reflects its many successes and achievements. And once again, a sincere thanks to all those members, officers and partners who contributed.

However, it is important at this point to highlight the very considerable challenges we face in the year ahead – not least the severe financial constraints within which the council will operate. As we are all well aware, the cuts in public spending announced by the Government will have major implications for the council's budget for 2011/12 and the delivery of public services in the city. With financial resources so constrained, it is vital that the council does all it can to protect the delivery of quality services to the residents of the city. Due to many years of sound financial management, the council is fortunate to be entering this period of financial uncertainty from a position of relative strength. It is important that the council continues to show such sound judgement into the

future and rises to the challenge of providing services with fewer resources.

Clearly, the scrutiny function has an important role to play in helping the council to achieve this goal; by actively contributing to the good governance of the city; through in depth policy reviews which add value to the delivery of improved public services; providing a constructive challenge to decision making and monitoring the performance of the services we offer.

However, the challenges facing scrutiny in the year ahead are not purely financial in nature. A number of new government initiatives will also have major implications. For example, the Localism Bill is likely, among other things, to result in a greater fragmentation in the delivery of public services – presenting us with a real challenge in securing proper political accountability.

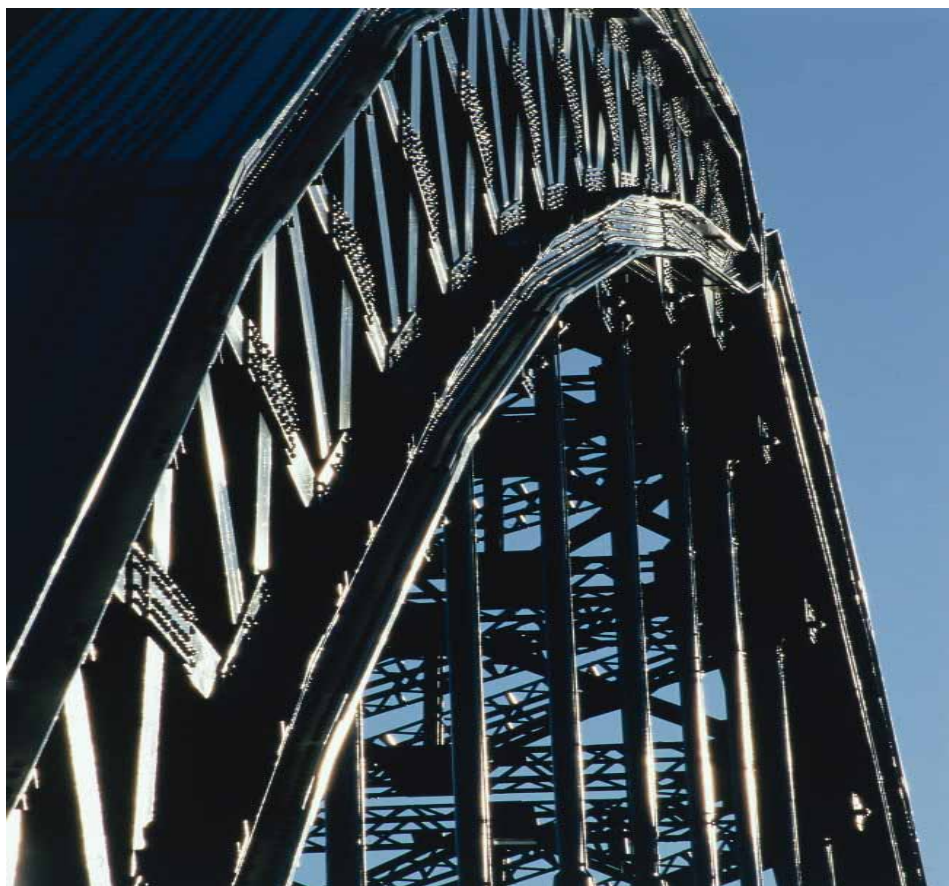
In response to the localism agenda, steps are currently being taken to amalgamate the Scrutiny and Area Support Teams.

This should help to ensure that consideration of issues takes place at the most appropriate level of the council's governance structure and also that we make the best possible use of available skills and resources.

Likewise, the Health White Paper and the establishment of the Health and Well Being Boards make it important that we work to retain adequate transparency and accountability in the new system and ensure that the scrutiny function is properly equipped to scrutinise the new health commissioning arrangements. We must ensure that there is a voice and adequate representation of local interests and that this voice is given proper recognition by the primary and secondary care sectors. The success of this will largely depend upon our ability to continue to develop our partnership scrutiny activities, building on existing working relations through maintaining an open and constructive dialogue with our partner organisations, whilst holding to account and focusing on the delivery of value for money and outcomes for local residents.

To reflect these changes, we will continue to look to develop new and innovative ways of working. We will also look to continue raising the profile of scrutiny within Sunderland and beyond, by networking with other local authorities, the Centre for Public Scrutiny and the local and regional media.

The emergence of the new localism agenda and other government initiatives to restructure public service provision coupled with severe budgetary restraint on local government presents a major challenge for the scrutiny process. However, where there are challenges there are also opportunities. It is important that over the next 12 months we react to the changing political and social landscape facing local authorities and find how best scrutiny might focus on addressing these challenges. Nevertheless we remain confident that the scrutiny function will continue to play its part in helping the city through this challenging period.





# The scrutiny team

The scrutiny team provides independent and professional support and advice to the City Council's scrutiny committees and consists of:



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# Membership of scrutiny committees 2010/11

## Management Scrutiny Committee

|                                |              |                  |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Chair: Cllr David Tate         | Labour       | Hetton           |
| Vice Chair: Cllr Kathryn Rolph | Labour       | Houghton         |
| Cllr Margaret Forbes           | Conservative | St. Michael's    |
| Cllr Robert Heron              | Labour       | Copt Hill        |
| Cllr Graeme Miller             | Labour       | Washington South |
| Cllr Michael Mordey            | Labour       | Hendon           |
| Cllr Anthony Morrissey         | Conservative | Barnes           |
| Cllr Robert Oliver             | Conservative | St. Chad's       |
| Cllr Paul Stewart              | Labour       | Redhill          |
| Cllr Peter Walker              | Labour       | Washington North |
| Cllr Susan Watson              | Labour       | St. Annes        |

## Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee

|                              |              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Chair: Cllr Paul Stewart     | Labour       | Redhill            |
| Vice Chair: Cllr Graham Hall | Conservative | St Peters          |
| Cllr Richard Bell            | Labour       | Redhill            |
| Cllr Steven Bonallie         | Labour       | St Peters          |
| Cllr Robert Francis          | Conservative | Fulwell            |
| Cllr Doris MacKnight         | Labour       | Castle             |
| Cllr Tom Martin              | Labour       | Hendon             |
| Cllr Robert Oliver           | Conservative | St. Chad's         |
| Cllr Dennis Richardson       | Labour       | Houghton           |
| Cllr Dorothy Trueman         | Labour       | Washington West    |
| Cllr Linda Williams          | Labour       | Washington Central |

## Co-opted members:

Church of England Diocese: Vacant  
 Roman Catholic Diocese: Malcolm Frank  
 Free Churches' Council: Christine Hutchinson

## Parent Governors:

Rose Elliott, Janice Bell, Hayley Harper

## Teacher Representatives:

Marilyn Harrop  
 Howard Brown  
 City of Sunderland College: Suzanne Duncan  
 University of Sunderland: Ken Morris  
 Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust: Vacant  
 Chairman of Governors of a school maintained by the council: Dorothy Butler  
 Diversity and Inclusion: Vacant  
 Non-teaching employees in schools and social care: Vacant

## Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee

|                                     |              |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Chair: Cllr Robert Heron            | Labour       | Copt Hill          |
| Vice Chair: Cllr Bernard Scaplehorn | Labour       | Washington West    |
| Cllr Ellen Ball                     | Labour       | Ryhope             |
| Cllr Rosalind Copeland              | Labour       | Southwick          |
| Cllr Sheila Ellis                   | Independent  | Houghton           |
| Cllr Alan Emerson                   | Labour       | Ryhope             |
| Cllr Paul Maddison                  | Conservative | St. Michael's      |
| Cllr Kevin O'Connor                 | Labour       | Millfield          |
| Cllr John Scott                     | Labour       | Shiney Row         |
| Cllr Eric Timmins                   | Labour       | Washington Central |
| Cllr John Walton                    | Conservative | Fulwell            |



### **Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee**

|                              |              |                  |
|------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Chair: Cllr Graeme Miller    | Labour       | Washington South |
| Vice Chair: Cllr Alan Wright | Conservative | St Chad's        |
| Cllr Ellen Ball              | Labour       | Ryhope           |
| Cllr Steven Bonallie         | Labour       | St Peters        |
| Cllr Elizabeth Gibson        | Labour       | Doxford          |
| Cllr John Kelly              | Labour       | Washington North |
| Cllr Neville Padgett         | Labour       | Washington East  |
| Cllr Phillip Tye             | Labour       | Silksworth       |
| Cllr Lillian Walton          | Conservative | St Peter's       |
| Cllr Colin Wakefield         | Independent  | Copt Hill        |
| Cllr Peter Wood              | Conservative | St. Michael's    |

### **Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

|   |              |                    |
|---|--------------|--------------------|
| Chair: Cllr Peter Walker                      | Labour       | Washington North   |
| Vice Chair: Cllr Christine Shattock           | Labour       | Southwick          |
| Cllr Kathryn Chamberlin (up to December 2010) | Conservative | Washington South   |
| Cllr Jill Fletcher                            | Labour       | Washington North   |
| Cllr Anne Hall                                | Labour       | Shiney Row         |
| Cllr Paul Maddison                            | Conservative | St. Michael's      |
| Cllr Sylvia Old                               | Labour       | St. Anne's         |
| Cllr Neville Padgett                          | Labour       | Washington East    |
| Cllr Derrick Smith                            | Independent  | Copt Hill          |
| Cllr Dianne Snowdon                           | Labour       | Washington Central |
| Cllr Norma Wright                             | Labour       | Southwick          |
| Cllr Tony Morrissey (from January 2011)       |              |                    |
| Co-opted Member Alan Patchet                  |              |                    |

### **Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee**

|                                 |              |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Chair: Cllr Michael Mordey      | Labour       | Hendon             |
| Vice Chair: Cllr Dianne Snowdon | Labour       | Washington Central |
| Cllr Richard Bell               | Labour       | Redhill            |
| Cllr Ian Cuthbert               | Conservative | Washington East    |
| Cllr David Forbes               | Labour       | Sandhill           |
| Cllr Peter Gibson               | Labour       | Silksworth         |
| Cllr George Howe                | Conservative | Fulwell            |
| Cllr Sylvia Old                 | Labour       | St. Anne's         |
| Cllr James Scott                | Labour       | Sandhill           |
| Cllr Alan Wright                | Conservative | St. Chad's         |
| Cllr Thomas Wright              | Labour       | St Anne's          |

### **Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**

|                                |              |                 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Chair: Cllr Susan Watson       | Labour       | St. Annes       |
| Vice Chair: Cllr Michael Dixon | Conservative | St Chad's       |
| Cllr David Errington           | Labour       | Doxford         |
| Cllr Michael Essl              | Labour       | Barnes          |
| Cllr Thomas Foster             | Labour       | Castle          |
| Cllr Iain Kay                  | Labour       | Millfield       |
| Cllr Paul Maddison             | Conservative | St Michael's    |
| Cllr Barbara McClennan         | Labour       | Hendon          |
| Cllr Ivan Richardson           | Conservative | Washington East |
| Cllr Kathryn Rolph             | Labour       | Houghton        |
| Cllr Amy Wilson                | Labour       | Pallion         |



This information can be made available in large print, Braille, audio and other languages. Please contact the Scrutiny Team on 0191 561 1230 or email [overviewandscrutiny@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:overviewandscrutiny@sunderland.gov.uk) for help.

All information correct at time of going to press.  
Published April 2011.



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