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1 Introduction from the Scrutiny Board

Chair

This is the Council’s sixth Annual Scrutiny Report which is produced each year to set out the work, achievements and impact of the Overview and Scrutiny function at Chesterfield. It is hard to cast your mind back when dealing with an annual report as we do get consumed by the current issues that we are dealing with, but it is always important to reflect and take stock of our achievements and also to assess any lessons learnt from that activity so that we can build on our achievements.

This report is a reflection of the work undertaken in the Council year 2010/11 and all the issues covered along with the detail of our work is provided in the following pages. We would usually have included some of our plans for the forthcoming year but we are coming to the end of an independent review of our Scrutiny function at Chesterfield and whatever the outcome of this review we are still looking forward to strengthening our role in local governance through:

- ensuring accountability through challenge of decisions and actions;
- influencing policy development and service delivery;
- challenge of providers of public services external to the Council;
- ensuring best quality and value through good performance and finance management.

As you will see there have been a number of key and very different pieces of scrutiny work undertaken during 2010/11, this work is lead by back bench members of the council and I would like to thank them all for the part that they have all played within each piece of work. I do feel that I need to point out that we have also gained National recognition for the Health Inequalities work included in the report.

The work of Scrutiny continues to evolve taking ever different approaches to its work to help ensure the best decisions are made for, and services delivered to, the Chesterfield community. As last year we are still proud to help lead the way for change in Chesterfield both within our own organisation and also with our partners, and to help promote and strengthen the role of the Council as community leader. Again our thanks and appreciation must go to all those individuals and organisations we have worked with during the year and we look forward to working with you again in the future.

Councillor Vicki Lang
Chair of the Scrutiny Board
Comments from the Chief Executive

I am very pleased to have been asked to add my comments to the 2010/11 Annual Scrutiny Report. The Report is well written, a good read and an accurate reflection of the Scrutiny Board’s work and achievements over a busy 12-month horizon.

There is no doubting the massive contribution that the Board’s members, under the stewardship of Councillors Denise Hawksworth and Vicki Lang, have made to the work of the Council and, more particularly, in improving the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the services that we deliver to our residents and businesses.

I had occasion in July to visit the Centre for Public Scrutiny’s exhibition stand at the Local Government Group’s Annual Conference. It was great to see Chesterfield’s health inequalities scrutiny work showcased on the stand and also reflected in the national toolkit publication, ‘Peeling the Onion’. To be awarded ‘National Scrutiny Area Development Status’ is a significant accolade in its own right; to apply a new and untested technique and to deliver what is now regarded as a national best practice case study takes leadership and resolve. If you haven’t had the chance to look at it yet, I commend to you the ‘Rother Matters’ DVD.

What is particularly impressive is the breadth and depth of the work that has been completed by the Scrutiny Board and its various “task and finish” Review Panels. It is very evident that the Scrutiny Board has sought to follow best practice in aligning its work programme to the aims and priorities set out within the Council’s Corporate Plan. Reviews have been commissioned, developed and signed off on issues that really matter to local people – taxis and town centre safety, alcohol and young people, grit bins provision and maintenance – the resulting reports (and recommendations) provoking much debate and directly influencing changes to Council policy and practice. The Scrutiny Board’s members have again demonstrated their competence to deal with requests made by non-executive members for decisions of Cabinet to be reconsidered and, where it has made sense to do so, members have come together with colleagues from neighbouring Councils to work effectively on joint reviews of shared services and other matters of mutual interest. It is also pleasing to note the good progress that the Scrutiny Board has made in the performance of its role as a statutory crime and disorder committee. Through their effective questioning and challenge, Scrutiny Board members have also brought about changes to the way that the Council manages its budgets and performance.

It would be remiss of me not to also mention the continuing good work of the Council’s Best Value and Efficiency Scrutiny Panel. We will certainly miss the energy and passion that the late Councillor Nicky Qazi brought to the role of Panel Chair. With the ever tightening financial position facing local government, the Panel’s members have worked very effectively with officers on the Council-wide roll out of a new “value for money” methodology. We are now starting to see the fruits of this labour coming through as more and more financial efficiencies are delivered but, importantly, without detriment to the quality of the facilities and services that remain on offer to our residents and businesses. The Panel’s members have also continued to fulfil that critical role of ensuring that when the Council commits to improving the way that facilities are run and services are delivered that these changes are implemented on budget and to time.

I do believe it right that the Council steps back at times and reviews how particular functions are operating for the benefit of the people that it serves. I was therefore very supportive of the decision taken to invite Inlogov to progress an independent review of
the Council's present scrutiny arrangements. I am excited by what I am seeing coming forward in terms of a new structure and changes to the way that scrutiny presently operates, and I look forward very much to working with Council members and senior officers to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements.

By way of conclusion, I would like to express my thanks and congratulations to all Scrutiny Board and Panel Chairs and members, and also to the Council’s Scrutiny Officer, Mrs. Anita Cunningham, for all their hard work and the productive outcomes achieved in the financial year 2010/11.

Huw Bowen
Chief Executive
The Scrutiny Board’s Work and Achievements

The Council’s Scrutiny Board may undertake its work as an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or it may appoint Scrutiny Review Panels to undertake specific task and finish projects before reporting back to the Board. Detailed below is the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Board and its Review Panels throughout the year.

Corporate Services Public Private Partnership (PPP) Proposals, Scrutiny Review Panel

Councillor Bridget Dunks – Review Panel Chair

In December 2008 a request was received to call-in (challenge) the Cabinet’s decision which supported proposals to procure a public/private partnership (PPP) to deliver some of the Council’s corporate services. In considering the call-in request the Scrutiny Board did not ask Cabinet to reconsider its decision, but did appoint a Scrutiny Panel to oversee the procurement process (see Annual Scrutiny Report for 2008/09). The Scrutiny Panel’s remit was to:

- Further examine and investigate the existing proposals, as considered achievable and beneficial;
- Monitor and scrutinise further actions and decisions made as proposals move forward and consider whether long term benefits continue to be worthwhile;
- Examine whether the transfer of employees and services to a private sector deliverer would detrimentally affect the quality and standard of service delivery;
- Put forward any alternative options that the panel feels warrants further formal consideration and make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet based on that evidence;
- Raise issues and concerns identified with the executive for consideration and response throughout the review;
- Ensure that individuals affected by the proposals have had the opportunity to raise issues and concerns and feel they have been answered in the interest of transparency and the public interest.

The Scrutiny Panel monitored and scrutinised the procurement project as it moved forward during 2009/10. To ensure good transparency and accountability the Panel felt it was necessary, given the very technical and specialist nature of outsourcing services, that it needed to commission expert advice to support the scrutiny process. The Panel was successful in securing expert support and advice from the Local Partnerships group and the Improvement and Development Agency, negotiated via funding from the East Midlands Region Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.

Review Panel Conclusions and Recommendations:

The Review Panel’s conclusions and recommendations were reported to and endorsed by the Scrutiny Board on 17 June 2010. The Review Panel’s report concluded:

1. “The review panel is satisfied that a robust and comprehensive approach to the executive project and the procurement exercise has been achieved.”
2. This has been an extremely complex procurement exercise difficult to scrutinise, however the scrutiny panel is also satisfied that transparent and impartial scrutiny, with the support of external expertise, has also been achieved.

3. The review panel does acknowledge that such a public/private partnership could bring future opportunities for Chesterfield particularly in the current economic climate where funding pressures are being faced. Members are satisfied that the proposals made are in the best long term interests of service recipients, the council and its employees.

4. The review panel also accepts that things have moved on from the time of agreeing the initial proposals in 2008. The Panel has been kept informed of and considered the changes since that time and this report and its recommendations are based on proposals at the time of finalising this report.

5. There is some disappointment however that intended visits have not yet taken place to local authorities receiving Arvato’s services at the time the Panel met to finalise this report. This is because it is considered that i) information from the visits should have informed this panel’s scrutiny work, and ii) should have informed the process itself and consideration of the final Cabinet decision.

6. Though Audit Commission performance information about local authorities receiving Arvato’s services show good performance results, members felt the intended visits would have enabled scrutiny to examine more carefully whether the transfer of employees and services to Arvato could potentially have affected the quality and standard of service delivery.

7. The review panel did not receive any evidence to show that a detailed governance structure had been proposed at the time the Panel met to finalise this report. There is some concern about the potential absence of scrutiny member and union representation from the governance structure.

8. Finally, there is disappointment that the review panel felt it could not fully complete its work and this report because some members of the panel, at the time of meeting to finalise this report, had not been provided with the ‘best and final offer’ details from Arvato. That said, the panel wish to put forward in this report its observations about matters which unfolded as the process proceeded and the criteria by which Cabinet may wish to decide on whether the ‘best and final offer’ is acceptable to the council.”

The Review Panel’s report recommended:

1. “That the Council proceeds with the transfer of a range of Corporate Services to the arvato partnership in accordance with the Cabinet report dated 29th June 2010 to achieve the necessary savings, investment and job security for the Council.

2. Careful consideration be given to finalising the governance structure. The panel strongly feels that the Lead Member with responsibility for matters relating to the partnership and two elected members should sit on the operational board within the partnership governance structure.”

In addition, the Council’s constitutional procedures for its Overview and Scrutiny function allows for a ‘minority report’ to be made when the Scrutiny Board / Scrutiny Panel cannot agree on one single, final report. The following Minority Report was also therefore made alongside the above recommendations:

“That some panel members do not believe the proposals are in the best long term interests of service recipients, the Council and its employees.

We believe that savings can be made with a restructuring of existing staff.
We do not believe there will be an incremental improvement in services. We believe that services will in fact decline.

We have concerns that membership of Derbyshire County Council pension scheme may not be achieved.

Following submission of the reports to Cabinet on 29 June 2010, Cabinet agreed that;

(1) The Corporate Services Scrutiny Review Panel’s report be noted and reference be made to the Review Panel’s conclusions and recommendations when considering the main report on the Corporate Services PPP.

(2) That the “Minority Report” be noted.

At that meeting Cabinet agreed to move forward with the proposals to enter into a Public/Private Partnership with Arvato. The Scrutiny Board will continue to monitor performance of the contract.
Health Inequalities Scrutiny Review Panel

Councillor Jane Collins - Review Panel Chair

In January 2010 the Council submitted a bid for support to the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) to undertake a scrutiny review into health inequalities, through a LGID (Local Government Improvement & Development) initiative funded by the Department of Health. The successful application brought us expert advisor support and funding for a year long scrutiny project.

As a result Chesterfield Borough Council was also awarded CfPS Development Area Status 2010. This means the learning from this Council’s scrutiny project will be used to develop a national scrutiny toolkit to enable other councils to undertake reviews into health equity.

The review project has a specific focus on influencing improved health in the Chesterfield Ward of Rother, which includes the areas of St Augustines, Birdholme and Boythorpe, and falls within the top 10% of most deprived areas in England and the most deprived in Chesterfield.

Alongside the Council’s own services and community residents, the project was supported by, and involved, the following partners and community groups:

- Adult Care and Social Services (Derbyshire County Council)
- Boythorpe Community Association
- CHART Local Strategic Partnership (for Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire)
- Citizens Advice Bureau, Chesterfield
- Communities that Work! (Chesterfield)
- Community Forum for the Rother Ward
- Community Safety Partnership (Chesterfield)
- Connexions
- Derbyshire Community Health Services
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Hunloke Adult Education Centre (Derbyshire County Council)
- Hunloke Community Garden
- Job Centre Plus
- ‘Links’ Council for Voluntary Service
- NHS Derbyshire County (Primary Care Trust)
- Parkside School
- Police Community Safety (Derbyshire Constabulary)
- St Augustines Church
- Surestart Children’s Centre (Derbyshire County Council)
- The Free from Addiction Project
- Youth Service (Derbyshire County Council)

Key aims for the project were:

- To gather information about behaviour and lifestyles in Rother to enable better targeted and prioritised service provision to improve health and wellbeing that is needs based.

- To enable Rother residents alongside the organisations which support them to influence appropriate service redesign to improve health and wellbeing by:
  - Gathering information about existing strengths or assets in the area, the building blocks for health and wellbeing, alongside information about behaviour and lifestyles; and
  - Identifying a shared vision for health and wellbeing.
Conclusions and Achievements:

The following scrutiny recommendations were approved by Cabinet in March 2011:

(a) That partners and community representatives involved in the project form a Rother Action Group, as a Sub-Group of the Holmebrook and Rother Community Forum, to lead delivery of the review recommendations and to support, encourage and motivate event participants to continue to help, support and encourage the residents of Rother. The Council and the NHS Derbyshire County (Primary Care Trust) together will play a key role in ensuring leadership for the Action Group.

(b) That the Action Group maps, indexes and publicises the public services and projects being delivered in Rother to provide a comprehensive catalogue to:

(i) improve the availability of community information, and improve access to and use of services;

(ii) help build on what works by facilitating better links and co-ordination of services moving forward.

(c) That the Action Group sets up and promotes a Pride of Rother awards to recognise and celebrate what’s working in Rother, and to acknowledge and reward those who deserve recognition, working with Holmebrook and Rother Community Forum and community groups.

(d) That the Action Group sets up and supports a Community Buddies Service comprised of community volunteers to:

(i) provide a signpost to guidance, information and access to help and services;

(ii) provide a skills and support exchange for community needs.

(e) That the Action Group provides ongoing communication updates to the Rother community about services, projects and events happening in Rother.

(f) That the Scrutiny Panel produces a newsletter to residents of Rother informing them of the detail and outcomes of the scrutiny project and of next steps commitments.

(g) That the Scrutiny Panel presents event to which all Council Members and event participants be invited.

(h) That, although responsibility for progress will ultimately rest with the Rother Action Group, the Scrutiny Panel/Board monitor and measure success, initially six monthly, to ensure community and organisations continue to dialogue and work together to realise actions and develop the future vision.

(i) That the Scrutiny Board agrees, subject to agreed additional resource support as required, for the Health Inequalities Scrutiny Panel to use the experience gained, alongside the developed national scrutiny toolkit, to redeliver the scrutiny project for Loundsley Green Ward and then other Chesterfield areas as needs require.

(j) That the report and its recommendations be taken into account by the Council when developing and delivering its ‘Tackling Health Inequalities Plan’.

(k) That Derbyshire County Council be made aware of the work undertaken, and of the resulting recommendations.

It is intended that progress and outcomes from the project will be included in next year’s annual scrutiny report.
A Scrutiny Review Panel was appointed to look into issues associated with Grit Bins and their maintenance. The issue was brought forward by Community Forums as a community issue for the Scrutiny Board’s attention. The Grit Bins Scrutiny Review Panel agreed to investigate the various issues raised and differing views of Community Forums relating to the provision and maintenance of grit bins across the borough, associated policies, financial implications and snow clearing service and advice. The Panel’s aims were to:

1. Clarify the legal obligations of the Council relating to the gritting / grit bin provision service.
2. For scrutiny recommendations to be included in any adopted borough wide policy on the service.
3. Ensure the provision of clear and consistent guidelines and advice for residents including advice on liability for snow clearing.
4. Subject to the final policy adopted, propose an equitable and sustainable system of financing grit bins maintenance and grit provision.
5. Consider and propose alternative support options for snow clearing in emergencies.

Achievements:

An initial report was concluded in March 2011 and supported by the Scrutiny Board making the following recommendations to Cabinet:

1. That Cabinet consult and involve the Scrutiny Board on Derbyshire County Council proposals regarding collaborative working with District Councils at times of adverse weather.
2. That, following Council discussions at 1 above and the development of this Council’s own emergency winter weather strategy, the Council draw up consistent guidelines for public guidance and advice purposes, as those provided by Derbyshire County Council, to include the public information issues raised in this report.
3. To apply notices to this Council’s grit bins to make clear the purpose of grit use, the contact of this Council together with the Call Derbyshire hot line number, and to recommend that Derbyshire County Council do apply a similar notice to their grit bins.
4. That Community Forums be recommended to consider delegating responsibility for agreeing urgent grit bin refills to Forum Chairs as elected representatives of the Community Forum.
5. That all Community Forums be encouraged to introduce their own local arrangements for a volunteer ‘Snow Patrol’ / ‘Community Buddy’ service to provide help and support to those in need - Snow Patrols to be provided with appropriate advice and emergency contacts to support them in their role.
6. That all Community Forums that choose to refill grit bins according to their own
Forum spending priorities, ring fence funds to ensure money for agreed grit bin refills is always allocated.

7. That Cabinet do not make further reductions to Community Forum budgets which would only reduce the ability for Forums to help and support themselves and to prioritise better for their local areas.

8. That Cabinet consider introducing a fairer method to allocate Community Forum budgets in line with greater need for grit bin provision and filling based on recent need and demand of the different Forum areas.

At the time of writing this report, the scrutiny report and recommendations above have not yet been considered by Cabinet.

**Scrutiny Board Inquiry into the Eviction of Tenants regarding Water Rates Payments**

In February 2011 the Scrutiny Board commenced an inquiry into the eviction of tenants regarding water rates payments. The Scrutiny Board had concerns that council tenants could be evicted solely for the non-payment of water rates rather than for rent arrears. The Board gathered evidence from the Council’s Lead Member for Housing, Head of Housing and other officers regarding the benefits and disadvantages of collecting water rates payments on behalf of the Water Authority, and ways the Council might avoid evictions for the non payment of water rates.

At the time of writing this report the work is ongoing. It is intended this work would continue to be finalised in the new civic year 2011/12, and that the Board’s conclusions would be reported in next year’s annual scrutiny report.

**Scrutiny Board Power of ‘Call-in’**

Scrutiny legislation allows for an Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to investigate, make reports and recommendations on Cabinet decisions that have been agreed but not yet put into action. Legislation allows for action on these decisions to be suspended pending such a Scrutiny inquiry. This process is referred to as Scrutiny ‘Call-in’.

The Council’s Constitution allows for Scrutiny Councillors to make a ‘Call-in’ request to the Scrutiny Board. The Scrutiny Board considers the Call-in request and decides whether to accept or refuse the request. If a Call-in request is accepted the Board can require the Cabinet to reconsider its decision on the basis of the evidence gathered and reasons given by the Scrutiny Board. If a Call-in request is not accepted by the Scrutiny Board, the Cabinet may continue to action the decision as originally made. This year the Scrutiny Board received and considered the following Call-in’s :-

**Call-In re: Equalities Impact Assessment for the Council’s Corporate Services Review Proposals**

On 29 June, 2010 the Council’s Cabinet considered the final report regarding the entering into a Public / Private Partnership to deliver some of its corporate services functions. The decisions were made to ensure the ‘must have requirements’ were met as set out in the report; to support delivery of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan; and to enable some re-investment of cashable savings in the Council’s priority front line services. Amongst other things, Cabinet agreed that the proposals to transfer certain corporate services to the Arvato Partnership be approved (see Cabinet report and minutes on the council’s website for the full decision and Section 3 of this report for related information).
Subsequently a request was received to Call-in-the Cabinet decision stating “We are concerned that the Equalities Impact Assessment fails to meet the legal duties in respect of disability, gender and race. No evidence is provided in the Cabinet report of consultation with either stakeholders or affected groups, or of involvement and engagement of individuals and groups on whom the Public Private Partnership will impact. No details are provided about affected employees explaining how the proposals might impact on issues relating to disability, gender and race. We believe the failure to address these issues could open the process to legal challenge”.

The Scrutiny Board considered the matter at two public meetings and received information and evidence from Call-in Councillors. The Board also received submissions, questions and responses from the Lead Member and Chief Officers. The Unions and employees were included in the scrutiny process.

The Scrutiny Board concluded:

1. “That Cabinet not be asked to reconsider its decision of 29 June 2010 concerning the Corporate Services Public Private Partnership.

2. That the importance and the need for robust Equalities Impact Assessments and the need for more awareness training for both members and officers, be highlighted.”

Call-In re: Community Rooms

In December 2010 the Council’s Cabinet made the decisions below regarding the conversion of community rooms to elderly persons’ bungalows. The reasons for the decisions were: to support the Council Housing Stock Retention Strategy; increase the Council’s housing stock; ease pressure on the housing waiting list; and reduce the necessary subsidy from the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund.

(1) That the closure of the following seven community rooms and their conversion to bungalows be approved:

- Blandford Drive
- Chantrey Avenue
- Glossops Croft
- Monkwood Road
- Newland Dale
- Wimborne Crescent
- Burns Close

(2) That the subsidy that the Council provides for use of the 5 retained community rooms be appropriately apportioned between the HRA and General Fund, based on usage.

(3) That the fees and charges structure for the hire of the five retained community rooms, as outlined at paragraph 7.2.12 of the report, be agreed.

(4) That the Head of Housing implements a robust management plan for the five retained community rooms.

(5) That the Head of Housing submits a further report on the staffing required to deliver an adequate inspection regime in respect of the 5 retained community rooms. “

A call-in request was received requesting the decision be reconsidered ‘to ensure that it is in full accord with the best interests of the community / residents and Council Members, and to further consider the alternatives discussed at the Cabinet meeting.’

The Scrutiny Board held two public meetings to consider the matter receiving the evidence brought forward. The Board concluded:

1. “That the closure of Monkwood Road community room be suspended to allow a 12-month monitoring period, with improved publicity, to assess actual usage.

2. That users and tenants be consulted about the possible closure of Bonsall Court and its conversion to housing suitable for elderly people.
3. That Cabinet give consideration to keeping open and monitoring usage at Wimborne Crescent community room and closing an alternative community room.

4. A Scrutiny Review Panel be established to assess need and availability of alternative community meeting places, in Brimington, where there were both Regeneration and Housing community rooms, and to consider the possible closure of one or more of these rooms, subject to consultation with users.

5. All community rooms managed by the Regeneration Department are reviewed by a Scrutiny Review Panel to consider their need and use to ensure that they represent good value for money.

The Scrutiny Board’s conclusions were reported back to Cabinet in December 2010 where Cabinet reconsidered its decision on the basis of the Scrutiny Board’s recommendations. Accordingly, Cabinet revised its decision in line with Scrutiny recommendations, agreeing:

“(1) That the closure of the following 5 community rooms and their conversion to bungalows be approved:

- Blandford Drive
- Chantrey Avenue
- Glossops Croft
- Newland Dale
- Burns Close

(2) That the closure of Monkwood Road and Wimborne Crescent community rooms be suspended to allow a twelve month monitoring period with improved publicity to assess actual usage.

(3) That the subsidy that the Council provides for use of the 7 retained community rooms be appropriately apportioned between the HRA and General Fund, based on usage.

(4) That the current fees and charges structure for the hire of the 7 retained community rooms be extended for a period of 6 months, and a decision taken by Cabinet at that time about whether or not to apply the increases originally proposed to the fees and charges structure for the hire of community rooms.

(5) That the Head of Housing implements a robust management plan for the 7 retained community rooms.

(6) That the Head of Housing submits a further report on the staffing required to deliver an adequate inspection regime in respect of the 7 retained community rooms.”

Forward Plan, Scrutiny Board Pre-Decision Scrutiny

A standing item on the Scrutiny Board meeting agenda is the Council’s Forward Plan. The Forward Plan is a public document which contains details of the key decisions the Cabinet and Executive Councillors will make over a four month period, and is updated each month. Receiving and considering the Forward Plan provides the Scrutiny Board with the opportunity to undertake ‘pre-decision scrutiny’, scrutiny of a matter before a formal decision is made upon that matter, and to then make recommendations to influence the decision. The Forward Plan must also contain reference to key decisions to be made which are exempt from public access and are to be made in private.

During the year the Board requested progress information on the following Forward Plan decision entries:

- Heritage Lottery Funding for Eastwood Park
- Park and Walk, Hasland Road / Clayton Street
Scrutiny Board Budget and Performance Scrutiny

The Board undertakes regular budget and performance scrutiny receiving and scrutinising comprehensive budget and performance Cabinet reports on a quarterly basis when available. Throughout the year, the Leader, Lead Members, Chief Executive and Chief Officers are questioned on performance of their service areas and the budgets they are responsible for and on how they contribute to priorities for the Chesterfield community.

In particular this year the Board has:

- Scrutinised progress against actions to deliver the adopted Equalities Framework and contributed towards the Council being awarded the ‘Achieving Level’.

- Scrutinised performance progress in relation to the Corporate Services Public / Private Partnership contract for the Council’s Corporate Services functions (relating to the Board’s work as detailed in Section 3 of this report).

Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

The Scrutiny Board has programmed to meet as the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee twice each year. The Committee met in February and October this year to:

- Receive and scrutinise progress against the Chesterfield Community Safety Partnership Plan 2008-11, specifically plans and actions taken to reduce Anti Social Behaviour, Violent Crime and Acquisitive Crime.

- Receive and scrutinise an evaluation of the operation of the existing Designated Public Places Order (a mechanism to control alcohol consumption in a public place) covering Chesterfield town centre. The Board agreed to support continuation of the Order.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire and Bolsover

During the year the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) met twice to consider joint scrutiny working arrangements and to scrutinise and monitor joint services delivered between the three Councils of Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire, following agreement by the Councils to continue the JOSC pilot for another year. The Committee received and scrutinised reports from the Head of Internal Audit Consortium, Head of Shared Procurement Unit and Business Manager for the BCN (Building Control) Consultancy, regarding the effective and efficient operation of their services.

The Committee also monitored progress of the implementation of approved scrutiny recommendations arising from its ‘spotlight’ review into the Joint Procurement Service. Progress made is detailed at Section 4 of this report on impact and outcomes.
4 Impact on Service Delivery and Outcomes

The Scrutiny Board monitors progress of the implementation of all scrutiny recommendations approved by decision makers requesting regular 6 monthly updates on progress. This follow up procedure is essential to ensure that once the recommendations are approved they are put into action. Ultimately this will ensure that the work of Scrutiny impacts on service delivery and that the benefits of scrutiny work are received by people in our community. This year the Scrutiny Board has continued to monitor progress on approved scrutiny recommendations from its:

- Alcohol and Young People Scrutiny Review
- Exit Interview Procedure Scrutiny Review
- Healthy Eating Scrutiny Review
- Sheltered Housing Scrutiny Review

Other, more specific, progress in actioning approved scrutiny recommendations is given below.

Taxis and Town Centre Safety Scrutiny Review Panel

The Scrutiny Board appointed the Taxis and Town Centre Safety Scrutiny Panel to look into:

- communication and consultation issues with Chesterfield taxi trade; and
- the current council policy of delimitation of the numbers of Hackney Carriage Vehicles to ensure that Chesterfield residents are receiving the best possible service within existing budget restraints.

The Panel report was endorsed by the Scrutiny Board in February 2010. The scrutiny recommendations were subsequently supported by the Council’s Appeals and Regulatory Committee, Cabinet and Full Council. The recommendations and more detail can be found in the Annual Scrutiny Report 2009/10.

Progress to date has resulted in the following impact and outcomes:

1. A Consultative Committee to consult with the taxi trade on taxi matters has been established with adopted terms of reference and memberships including 3 hackney carriage and 3 private hire trade representatives. The first meeting of the Consultative Committee took place on 24 March 2011.

2. An Unmet Demand Survey was commissioned in June and completed in November 2010. In December 2010, having considered the Unmet Demand Survey, the Council’s Appeals and Regulatory Committee agreed to introduce a cap on the issue of hackney carriage licences. The limit for hackney carriages has been set at 110 hackney vehicles (the Council currently having 175).
Alcohol and Young People
Chesterfield Scrutiny Review Panel

To compliment the joint scrutiny work formerly undertaken with Bolsover, North East Derbyshire District, and Derbyshire County Councils, the Chesterfield Alcohol and Young People Scrutiny Panel also conducted a review with a Chesterfield focus - the town having an attractive night time economy and being a hub to access alcohol for the other surrounding areas. Alongside the wider aims of the joint review the main objectives of this review were to:

- Examine actions specific to, and within the power of, Chesterfield Borough Council that could be taken to help address the issues associated with alcohol and young people.

- Make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet, Licensing Committee, Council and Chesterfield Community Safety Partnership.

Through the Scrutiny Board the scrutiny review panel made 7 further recommendations which were approved by Cabinet on 6 May 2009. The recommendations and more information can be found in the Annual Scrutiny Reports 2009/10 and 2008/9.

Progress to date has resulted in the following further impact and outcomes:-

- Consultation with the Scrutiny Board, amongst others, on the introduction of a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) for the south area of Chesterfield has been completed. With approval of the Council’s Appeals and Regulatory Committee the DPPO has been adopted.

- Performance appraisal has been undertaken for the existing DPPO covering the Chesterfield town centre and proposals agreed for improved monitoring of the DPPO’s effectiveness.

- Consideration is being given to the introduction of a Cumulative Impact Policy (a similar control mechanism to a DPPO) to cover the whole of Chesterfield.

- To reduce cost pressures on the Council’s Licensing Service resulting from the Licensing Act 2003, communication has been sent to the Government highlighting the need for direct grant and for increased fees for licensing applications. Reforms are expected in the Police and Social Responsibility Act to include a ‘late night levy’ to allow Local Authorities to add a surcharge to the cost of enforcement / policing.

- Review of licensing section to strengthen the enforcement role is ongoing.

Any further outcomes will be included in next year’s Annual Scrutiny Report.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Chesterfield Borough, North East Derbyshire and Bolsover District Councils’ Spotlight Review on the three Councils’ Joint Procurement Service

The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established in 2008 to monitor and scrutinise joint services delivered between the three Councils of Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire.

In October 2009 it concluded its review of the Joint Procurement Service. A ‘spotlight’ approach was used to undertake the review (this technique is explained in last year’s report).

The review of the Procurement Service aimed to:

- Establish the awareness of the shared
procurement unit and use of the service
- Measure the satisfaction of users of the service
- Measure the effectiveness of the service
- Review the robustness of the processes used
- Measure whether equality, sustainability and accessibility were embedded within the service
- Establish whether the section provided value for money.

The scrutiny review recommendations were supported by each Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the three Councils’ Joint Executive Board. The scrutiny recommendations can be found in the Annual Scrutiny Report 2009/10.

**The following progress has been made in implementing the recommendations:**

- The Strategy for the Procurement Service is contained within a variety of documents: the original business case, Procurement Strategy Service Plan and Procurement Toolkit which are available for use by staff and have been discussed and reinforced at training sessions.

- A review of the vision for the unit has been superseded by proposed service expansion to include Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils.

- Investigations to reduce the end to end time in the life of a contract by ensuring all service areas support the process with plans to publicise success stories to all departments to raise awareness, is ongoing work.

- An ‘end of tendering process’ satisfaction survey has been introduced and is available on the Ask Derbyshire website.

- A review of documentation and process with users is ongoing – an annual revision has been completed to ensure documents comply with the Remedies Directive.

- Training and development of managers to support effective operational contract management is being delivered to be completed December 2011.

- Conditions of contract have been standardised across the three authorities using a version provided by the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.

- Guidance has been produced clarifying roles and responsibilities of the Procurement Unit and officer users, via a revamp of the intranet site and use of the webform service request facility.

- Development of a mobile, rather than office based service delivery culture, is ongoing.
5 Efficiency and Best Value Scrutiny Panel

The Panel received monitoring reports on the progress made and showed particular interest in the proposed redevelopment of the Market Hall, the venues review and the commissioning project (leisure and waste collection).

**Procurement**
The Panel continued to show interest in the work of the Shared Procurement Unit (SPU). The Head of the SPU presented a report on the work of the Unit and their involvement in the major commissioning projects on leisure services and waste collection.

Monitoring of Service Improvement Plans
The Panel continued to monitor and work with service managers on their improvement plans. This work included discussions with the Spire Pride service and the Customer Service Centre.

The Panel provided invaluable insight into the customers’ viewpoint on both of these areas.

**Summary**
The Council faced a difficult year in 2010/11 and the Efficiency and Best Value Scrutiny Panel continued to provide challenge to the major projects and the efficiency agenda. The members of the Panel sat on a number of significant working groups and review groups and helped the authority strengthen its medium term financial position.

In 2010/11 the Efficiency and Best Value Scrutiny Panel continued its focus on value for money work which was appropriate in a fiscal year that included the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).

Nationally, the new government announced deep cuts in the public sector funding, abolished many national performance targets, the CPA Framework and, locally, the Council set a new Corporate Plan. These set the context in which the Panel operated.

**VFM Studies**
During 2010/11 the Council completed fifteen studies, using the VFM diagnostic tool, on Council services. These ranged from front line services to the Policy Service and other more internal facing areas. The Panel received updates on these studies and will continue to monitor the associated action plans.

**Corporate Plan**
In 2010 the Council developed and approved a new style of corporate plan. This was a document that focused on six key aims with associated projects and measures.
6 Scrutiny Developments during the Year

National Scrutiny Area Development Status 2010 for Chesterfield

In last year’s report we detailed our huge achievement in gaining national Scrutiny Development Area (SDA) status, awarded to the Council by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). Overview and Scrutiny at Chesterfield is continually trying to develop and improve its effectiveness and we considered this award a major achievement in our work and development. CfPS were commissioned by Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID) under its Healthy Communities Programme funded by the Department of Health. The CfPS supported us, along with nine other appointed SDA’s, in undertaking some important health inequalities scrutiny work in our area and in contributing to the development of a national health inequalities scrutiny toolkit for others to use.

‘Peeling the Onion’ is the name of the now completed toolkit publication which shares the experiences, the learning and the outcomes from the work of each of the SDA’s involved in the CfPS Inequalities Scrutiny Programme and can be found at www.cfps.org.uk;.

For Chesterfield, it includes the learning taken from using a technique called Appreciative Inquiry. This technique required a focus on ‘what works’ instead of ‘what’s not working’ and took a very positive and different approach to policy and service delivery and improvements which engaged community involvement, interest, commitment and energy in finding sustainable solutions for health improvement and health equity.

Also resulting from Chesterfield’s involvement in the CfPS Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme, Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID, part of the Local Government Group) used Chesterfield’s learning as a best practice case study for inclusion in its national publication on using data to inform development of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The publication is called ‘Understanding Local Communities and Health Data’ and can be found at www.idea.gov.uk; The LGID project sits along side the Department of Health’s National JSNA Dataset project and is intended to bring good examples to life through case studies to demonstrate to other local authorities the value of local data in the JSNA.

More specific details of the ‘Rother Matters’ health inequalities project work we undertook, are provided in Section 3 of this report.

Overview and Scrutiny Legislation: Localism Bill 2010

As briefly referred to in last year’s report, a new coalition government was formed following the General Election in May 2010 bringing with it new legislation potentially affecting the Overview and Scrutiny role in local government. The Localism Bill was introduced to parliament in December 2010 and continues its passage through the parliamentary process.

The government’s intention is for Local Government to have the choice as to whether to retain an Executive and Scrutiny political decision making system. As it stands the existing legislation for Scrutiny (ie that which has been introduced since the Local Government Act 2000 which first introduced Executive arrangements and Scrutiny to Local Government) has been
included within the new Localism Bill and, at the time of writing this report, remains relatively unchanged. You can find details of existing Scrutiny obligations and powers in our Annual Scrutiny Reports for previous years and by visiting the CfPS website www.cfps.org.uk;

The Localism Bill is scheduled to become law and in force by April 2012. Further progress and impact on the development and/or changes to the Scrutiny function will be included in next year’s report.

**Evaluation / Review of the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Function**

Following the Council’s decision last year to review the operation of its Overview and Scrutiny function, INLOGOV at Birmingham University were appointed in January 2011, in an independent capacity to undertake the review work. It is hoped this review will shape and further improve the scrutiny service for the future.

The review remit requests consideration of the following areas:

1. The corporate position of Scrutiny within the Council and its relationship with Cabinet

2. Member development, protocols and structural changes.

3. Actions to address:

   (a) The adjustment to an environment of more partnership and joint working.
   (b) A growing expectation for Scrutiny to help the Council improve both effectiveness and efficiency through aligning its work and recommendations where possible with corporate priorities;
   (c) New statutory roles in relation to Crime and Disorder, Councillor Call for Action, Petitions and Partners.
   (d) The emerging concept of resident/tenant led self regulation.

4. The effectiveness of Scrutiny’s existing joint and collaborative ventures.

5. The review and clarification of roles and responsibilities of all officers in supporting and working with Scrutiny.

6. Building upon existing strengths and experience of our councillors, officers and structures and being inclusive as possible in terms of front-line councillors’ involvement in Scrutiny.

7. Attitudes and aspirations of stakeholders including the Public, Cabinet Members, Scrutiny and non Scrutiny Committee Members, Officers and Partners.

8. The review will have regard to:

   (a) The Centre for Public Scrutiny’s principles of effective scrutiny,
   (b) The Council’s equalities and diversity policies
   (c) The need for officer support for Scrutiny.
   (d) Resource implications of the recommended actions.

Further progress on the review will be included in next year’s annual scrutiny report.
Looking forward to 2011/12

Each year the Scrutiny Board would normally plan and agree its Work Programme of planned items of business for the forthcoming year.

The Work Programme would include issues agreed for Scrutiny Board consideration and Scrutiny Review Panels, ongoing priorities such as budget and performance scrutiny, scrutiny of the Council’s Forward Plan of key decisions, and the monitoring of implementation of approved scrutiny recommendations and other corporate improvement plans. There is usually other unplanned business the Scrutiny Board will decide to deal with as and when it arises.

Scrutiny aims for its work to have a strategic and community focus, and to involve stakeholders where possible. Consultation with the Public, Partners, Councillors and Officers is normally undertaken to inform contents of the Scrutiny Work Programme.

However, as detailed in the previous section, in January 2011 the Council appointed INLOGOV, at Birmingham University, to undertake an independent review of its scrutiny function. Commencement of Work Programming therefore is currently on hold pending completion and outcomes from this review.

The Overview and Scrutiny function is a continually evolving and growing role, requiring ongoing learning and development. Much of the developments this year are detailed in the previous section of this report. It is anticipated further development plans for 2011/12 will emerge from the Council’s independent review of scrutiny when completed.
8 Scrutiny Structure and Membership 2010/11

Scrutiny Board Councillors:

Denise Hawksworth – Chair
Vicki Lang – Vice Chair
Peter Barr
Sharon Blank
Jane Collins
Alan Craw
Bridget Dunks
Adrian Mather
Keith Morgan
Roy Pastoll
Nicky Qazi
John Haywood

Efficiency and Best Value Scrutiny Panel Councillors:

Nicky Qazi – Chair
Bridget Dunks – Vice Chair
Margaret Arnold
Glenys Falconer
Vicki Lang
Chris Ludlow
Nicholas Redihough
Paul Stone

For further information contact:
Anita Cunningham
Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 01246 345273
anita.cunningham@chesterfield.gov.uk; scrutiny@chesterfield.gov.uk;
or visit the Council’s website at:
http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk

All reports referred to will be accessible from this Council’s website.
How Scrutiny Works in Chesterfield

STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL

COUNCIL
48 Members

Planning Committee
Licensing Committee
Appeal & Regulatory Committee
Employment and General Committee

CABINET
Leader & Deputy
(Lead Members)

Scrutiny Board & Efficiency and Best Value Scrutiny Panel

Standards Committee

8 Community Forums
CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
ARE WE ACCESSIBLE TO YOU?
IF NOT ASK US!

- We want everyone to be able to understand us
- We want everyone to be able to read our written material
- We aim to provide what you require to enable you to read, talk and write to us

On request we will provide FREE -
✓ language interpreters, including for sign language
✓ Translations of written materials into other languages
✓ Materials in braille, large print and on tape

Please contact us -
General enquiries 01246 345345
Mobile text phone 07609 10264
Fax 01246 345252

Czy łatwo jest skontaktować się z nami? Jeżeli nie, powiedz nam o tym!
Siamo accessibili nei vostri riguardi? In caso contrario rivolgetevi a noi!

你可觉得易於与我们接触？若不的话，请提出要求。