

## Introduction

The January 2014 edition of the Overview and Scrutiny newsletter is the eighteenth production and in it we would like to update you on the latest developments on scrutiny here in Northampton. We also want to alert you to reports and meetings, which may be of interest to you.

## Chair's welcome

### The chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is always keen to receive the public's input into the work that it does. To make this easier for you, all meetings of the O&S Committee and Scrutiny Panel are held in public. Anyone is welcome to attend to listen to the proceedings. You can speak on any agenda item for a maximum of three minutes per item. You are not required to register your intention to speak in advance but should arrive a few minutes early, complete a Public Speaking Protocol and notify the Scrutiny Officer of your intention to speak.

Is there anything you would like the O&S Committee to review?

Over the next couple of months, the O&S Committee will be considering its work programme for 2014/2015. The Committee welcomes suggestions for topics of inquiry and will consider issues put forward by members of the public, interest groups or businesses.

Suggestions for review must meet the following criteria:

- Affect a group or community of people (Scrutiny will not usually
- look at an individual service complaints)
- Relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a
- significant stake
- Not be an issue which Overview and Scrutiny has considered during the last 12 months
- Not be a planning issue or other matter dealt with by another Council
- Committee, except where the issue relates to a process

Overview and Scrutiny will prioritise all suggestions for future Scrutiny Reviews in March 2014, so please forward your ideas to the Scrutiny Officer by 24 February 2014 or download the Suggest an Item for Scrutiny Form for your future reference.

This edition of the Overview and Scrutiny newsletter includes information about the work of the Scrutiny Panels.

I do hope that you find this newsletter useful and informative.

Dates of forthcoming meetings are detailed on the last page of this newsletter.

**Councillor Jamie Lane**  
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee



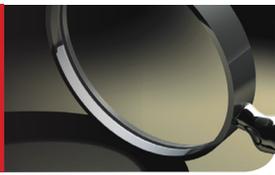
## How are Scrutiny Reviews carried out?

Scrutiny Panel reviews are selected from issues which the O&S Committee considers important to the people of Northampton. The Scrutiny Panels are currently undertaking reviews included within the Overview and Scrutiny work Programme 2013/2014.

Often, individuals and representatives of organisations, who have expertise or have expressed an interest in a particular subject, are co-opted to the Scrutiny Panel for the life of the Review. The membership of one of the Scrutiny Panels this year included four co-optees.

Scrutiny Panels are responsible for managing each review by gathering and taking evidence. At the end of the review they present their findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval. The report is then presented to Cabinet for its consideration and feedback. Details of the final reports of previous Scrutiny Reviews can be located on the Scrutiny webpage.





## Scrutiny Activity for 2013/2014

### Improving the Town's Parks

The purpose of this Scrutiny Review was to improve community engagement within the town's parks. The work of this Scrutiny Panel has come to a close. The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel will report the findings and recommendations to the O&S Committee at its January meeting.

### Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing (Including HIMO's)

The purpose of this Scrutiny Review is to investigate the regulation and management of private lettings, both by landlords and agencies.

This is an in-depth Review and it is anticipated that the conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its June 2014 meeting.

### Welfare Reform Act

This Scrutiny Panel is scheduled to produce its Scope (Terms of Reference) at its January meeting, which will then be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has had a busy year so far, including:

- Fulfilling its performance management scrutiny role
- Monitoring the implementation of accepted recommendations in Scrutiny Review reports
- Monitoring of the Environmental Services Action Plan
- Consideration of progress on the transition from West Northants Development Corporation (WNDC) to Northampton Borough Council
- Fulfilling its crime and disorder scrutiny role
- NBC owned street lighting

### Call-In Hearing

At Northampton call-in is used sparingly. A call-in was held in December 2013 regarding the Disposal Programme 2013/2014 – Sale of Buildings and Land, where the check and balance arm of Scrutiny was tested. The Committee considered the concerns from a number of stakeholders and will refer its findings to Cabinet.

### Budget Scrutiny

At its meeting in January 2014, the O&S Committee will consider the recommendations from the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group (A Group made up of Councillors from the O&S Committee). The O&S Committee finds it helpful for a small Working Group of Councillors to take a brief overview of all the budget proposals and bring a small selection to the Committee for detailed scrutiny. Based on the selection of items short listed by the Working Group, relevant Cabinet Members and Directors will then be asked to attend a meeting of the O&S Committee on 27 January 2014 to answer the questions that the Working Group has put forward on the selected proposals.

## Excellence Plan for Overview and Scrutiny

Following the self-evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny process at Northampton, the O&S Excellence Plan 2013-2015 was approved. The Overview and Scrutiny Excellence Plan is based on the themes set out within the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)'s "Accountability Works for You" framework, which the self-evaluation process was based upon. A number of processes detailed within the O&S Excellence Plan were already in place, with a small number of additional processes that were suggested upon completion of the self-evaluation process.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panel dates for your diary:

Overview and Scrutiny meetings are publicly advertised and everyone is welcome to attend. All meetings start at 6pm.

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2014

- 27 January
- 7 April
- 9 June

### Scrutiny Panel 1 –

Welfare Reform Act

- 9 January
- 3 February
- 20 March
- 14 April
- 8 May
- 30 June
- 21 July

### Scrutiny Panel 2 –

Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing (Including HIMO's)

- 23 January
- 13 February
- 30 April

### Scrutiny Panel 3 –

Improving the Town's Parks

This Scrutiny Panel has concluded its Review. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive the final report of the Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 27 January 2014.

## To find out more



Visit our website: [www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny)



Email: [ttiff@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:ttiff@northampton.gov.uk) to ask for more information



Or call the **Scrutiny Officer** on **01604 837408**

