

## Introduction

The June 2014 edition of the Overview and Scrutiny newsletter is the nineteenth 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

2013/2014 was another busy year for O&S with three comprehensive reviews being undertaken:

- Improving the Town's Parks
- Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing (Including HIMO's)
- Impact of the Welfare Reform Act

I have continued to promote the good work of Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton wider, a number of the processes and procedures being noted nationally as examples of best practice.

Again this year, we asked the citizens of Northampton to suggest topics for Scrutiny reviews. There were over thirty suggestions from the public which were considered by non-Executives at a workshop held in March 2014. From these ideas, Cabinet's priorities for the year and suggestions put forward by Councillors, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved its Work Programme 2014/2015 at its meeting on 9 April 2014. I am delighted to report that the public suggestions influenced the entire Work Programme for 2014/2015. Future newsletters will keep you updated on the progress of the work of the Scrutiny Panels.

The Overview and Scrutiny newsletter is published three times a year. If you want more details of how Overview and Scrutiny operates at Northampton please contact the [Scrutiny Officer](#) who will be very happy to arrange a one to one and provide a full briefing.

I welcome your suggestions and comments on what future editions of the Scrutiny E-newsletter could include.

I hope that you find this newsletter useful and informative. Overview and Scrutiny encourages members of the public, groups and organisations to attend its Committee and Panel meetings. Dates of forthcoming meetings are detailed on the last page of this newsletter.

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



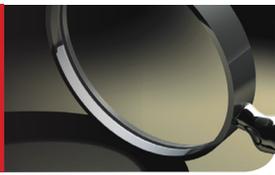
## How are Scrutiny Reviews carried out?

Scrutiny Panel reviews are selected from issues which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers important to the people of Northampton. Scrutiny Panels are led by non-Executive Councillors.

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.

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.





## Scrutiny Activity for 2014/2015

The Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2014/2015 was recently approved and the following in-depth reviews are now underway are: -

### Poverty in the Town

To review poverty in the town to ascertain whether it is a serious issue:

- Whether it growing and more generally what are the trends (including migration)
- What are the causes of poverty locally?
- What can public services do in this time of austerity?
- What can other groups/individuals do to help?
- What the impact is, if any, is there on the economy, crime, health and education?

### Interpersonal Violence

To review Northampton Borough Council's response in addressing issues around interpersonal violence (domestic abuse, sexual abuse and child exploitation), centring on domestic abuse

### Keep Northampton Tidy

- To undertake a review regarding implementing a 'Keep Northampton Tidy' campaign with an accent on preserving wildlife and encouraging children (and adults) to take an interest in their surroundings, to include Community Clean Ups and 'Northampton in Bloom.'
- A review of the problem of littering and fly-tipping, particularly in un-adopted roads and the gateways into the town.
- To explore opportunities to enhance the gateways into the town

## Completed Reviews for 2013/2014 included:-

- Improving the Town's Parks
- Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing (Including HIMOs)
- Impact of the Welfare Reform Act (due to report its findings in September 2014)

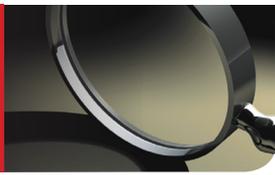
## What happened in Overview and Scrutiny over the last twelve months?

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/2014 will be published shortly and details the good work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees and its Scrutiny Panels last year.

### A snapshot of the good work during 2013/2014: -

- A number of Councillors, who are not members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, joined the membership of the Scrutiny Panels, a key example being the Scrutiny Panel that looked at the town's parks was made up of eight non-Executives, of which four were not O&S Councillors, demonstrating complete involvement of non-Executives in the O&S process.
- Overview & Scrutiny for Northampton Borough Council continues to show great interest and commitment to Community Safety/ Crime and Disorder. Community Safety continues to work closely with Overview & Scrutiny, feeding into their reviews, as and when required. The recommendations and support provided through these reviews continues to add value to the work undertaken by the Community Safety team."
- One in-depth piece of thorough pre-decision scrutiny took place
- A new process enabling the Committee to identify key performance measures earlier on was introduced in 2013/14. The Committee informs the Chair prior to a meeting of the O&S Committee of performance measures that it feels warrant future scrutiny.
- During 2013/2014 there was one call-in hearing which demonstrates that the decision making process is transparent and open to challenge.
- An evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) function at Northampton was carried out in 2012 using the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)'s framework "Accountability Works for You".
- An evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) function at Northampton was carried out in 2012 using the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)'s framework "Accountability Works for You". As a result of the evaluation, an Excellence Plan for O&S was produced and published. This document highlights a number of the processes and procedures that O&S at Northampton follows.
- The O&S Work Programme received extensive press coverage, locally, which over twenty five individuals responded to, suggesting over thirty ideas for future Scrutiny review.
- External Interest in the Paperless Committees innovation has continued this year, with a number of enquiries regarding the success of the innovation.





## 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 Commit

#### 2014

- 9 June
- 8 September
- 10 November
- 26 January
- 23 April
- 6 July

#### Scrutiny Panel 1 –

Interpersonal Violence

#### 2014

- 21 July
- 18 September
- 4 December

#### 2015

- 22 January
- 5 March

#### Scrutiny Panel 2 –

Poverty in the Town

#### 2014

- 17 July
- 11 September
- 19 November

- 8 January
- 12 February
- 11 March

#### Scrutiny Panel 3 –

Keep Northampton Tidy

#### 2014

- 24 July
- 17 September
- 16 October
- 26 November

#### 2015

- 15 January
- 9 March



## To find out more



Visit our [website](#)



[Email](#) to ask for more information



Or call the **Scrutiny Officer, Tracy Tiff**, on **01604 837408**

