

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13



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# Chair's Introduction

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## **Councillor Jeremy Moulton Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee – (OSMC) 2012/13**

2012/13 saw the re-introduction of Scrutiny Panels with Scrutiny Panel A conducting an inquiry into Welfare Reforms. This involved a thorough analysis of the impact the various welfare changes taking place across the country will have on Southampton, and also a detailed look at Council options for a Local Council Tax Support Scheme and options for the Social Fund. I look forward to receiving the Executive's response to

the Panel's recommendations and to Scrutiny Panel B's Apprenticeships Inquiry that is due to conclude later in 2013.

Whilst undertaking the Council's statutory health scrutiny role the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel (HOSP) worked closely with health service providers scrutinising the significant changes taking place to health services at a local and national level. This included the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. In addition, on a number of occasions members of the HOSP and the OSMC attending joint meetings to discuss key cross cutting issues.

For 2013/14 it is proposed that, given the close links between health and social care and increasing integration of services, scrutiny of all social care, including safeguarding children, is undertaken by the HOSP unless it relates to a forward plan item.

The OSMC has largely focused its efforts during the year on scrutinising the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and its primary role of holding the Executive to account. As well as looking at the Forward Plan, OSMC scrutinised aspects of the Executive's policy, including its approach to joint working with other authorities, the Lordshill Masterplan, and adult social care policy.

The Committee also considered in detail the findings of the 2012 Safeguarding and Children Looked After Services Ofsted inspection. As indicated above the scrutiny function will continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the inspection and the Council's progress.

OSMC looked in some detail at aspects of the 2013/14 budget, including parking charges and savings in Children's Services and ensured that local people and organisations engaged with the democratic process through scheduled discussions on items of public interest such as the allocation of Council grants, and the closure of Oaklands Pool.

Whilst there has been no use of the Councillor Call for Action procedure this year there were two Call-Ins relating to Townhill Park regeneration and adult social care non-residential charging. Details of the outcomes of the Call-Ins are outlined on p5 of this report.

I am grateful to members of the various scrutiny committees and panels for their hard work throughout the year and for their contributions during often very lengthy meetings. I am also grateful to all the various groups, charities, think tanks and individuals who have attended, made presentations and provided evidence at the various scrutiny meetings, and to Council officers and Cabinet Members for their attendance, and for always providing substitutes where attendance was not possible.

# The Purpose and Functions of Overview & Scrutiny

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## Decision making context

The **Full Council** of 48 Councillors approves the policy framework which sets out the key policies and programmes for the main services provided by the Council. In February each year Council meets to set the Council Tax for the following year.

The **Executive** (Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members) make decisions relating to services provided by the Council, except for those matters which are reserved for decision by the full Council, planning and licensing matters which are dealt with by specialist regulatory panels. The Executive is made up of a Leader, elected by Council, and his or her appointed Cabinet Members.

The **Scrutiny** function helps to inform the decision making process and improve the way the Council works. They assess what impact the Executive's policies and plans will have on the City and its residents.

Scrutiny is a process for:

- Holding the Executive, chief officers and senior members of staff to account for the discharge of its functions by examining, challenging and, if necessary requesting changes to Executive Decisions made but not yet implemented
- Scrutinising and reviewing policies and practices within a cross-service remit, assisting in the development of such policies and practices and scrutinising policy outcomes – e.g. the implementation of strategic priorities
- Reviewing decisions and policies made by the Executive and considering whether they are right for the City
- Assessing the Council's performance against its planned targets and monitoring critical success factors
- Reviewing the work of other partnerships and public sector organisations in the City, particularly the Safe City Partnership and health agencies
- Championing issues of local concern to residents and contribute to the policy development and service improvement.

## Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is a parent committee that manages the overview and scrutiny process and meets on a monthly basis. The membership for Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is appointed for the municipal year at the Annual Council meeting in May.

There are a number of Scrutiny Panels that support the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. These Panels predominantly carry out an annual work programme of Scrutiny Inquiries approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. These arrangements allow citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public inquiries into matters of local concern. These Inquiries lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Executive and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

In addition the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertakes the important statutory scrutiny of the operation of health agencies in Southampton.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee also monitors the decisions of the Executive and can 'Call-In' a decision which has been made by the Executive but not yet implemented. This enables them to consider whether the decision is appropriate.

## Councillor Call for Action

Enables all Councillors to refer single ward issues, or 'Local Government matters', to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## Scrutiny Panels

- Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- Scrutiny Panel A
- Scrutiny Panel B

# Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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**Councillor Jeremy Moulton**

**Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 2012/13**

## **Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee Members**

Councillor Jeremy Moulton (Chair)

Councillor John Hannides

Councillor Adrian Vinson (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Paul Lewzey

Councillor Stephen Barnes-Andrews

Councillor Catherine McEwing

Councillor Mark Chaloner

Councillor Keith Morrell

Councillor Daniel Fitzhenry

Councillor Andrew Pope

## **Appointed Members:**

Mrs Urzula Topp, Church Representative

Mr Tony Blackshaw, Church Representative

During 2012/13 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) continued to scrutinise the Executive, holding them to account for decisions planned and implemented.

To inform the decision making process the Executive were, at the monthly meetings of the OSMC, scrutinised over key decisions and policy areas. These included the following:

- 2013/14 Budget
- HMO Licensing
- Safeguarding children and young people
- Early Years Provision

Meetings were rescheduled at the start of the municipal year to occur in advance of Cabinet Meetings. This has enabled scrutiny of Forward Plan decisions to take place in advance of the Cabinet decision. This has worked very well and this way of working will continue into 2013/14.

## **Call-In**

Two forward plan items resulted in Executive decisions being Called-In by the OSMC. In December 2012 the Committee Called-In the Townhill Park Regeneration decision. At the Call-In meeting the OSMC did not request that the Executive's reconsider their decision but they did recommend that further consultation take place with tenants regarding rent levels. I am pleased that this has subsequently been taken forward by the Council.

In February 2013 the Adult Social Care Non- Residential Charging Policy was Called-In by the OSMC. My thanks to all the voluntary sector groups that attended this meeting and made comments and representations. OSMC made a number of recommendations including the recommendation that Cabinet reconsider its original decision and engage in further consultation with those receiving care and their representatives. I am pleased that Cabinet agreed to extend their consultation on the charging policy until 2<sup>nd</sup> of April and to then bring the decision back to Cabinet after this date for further consideration.

## **Scrutiny of the Southampton Safe City Partnership**



In July 2012 the OSMC scrutinised the emerging Safe City Partnership Plan. This discussion enabled the Committee to influence the strategic direction of travel and the priorities of the Safe City Partnership.

During 2013/14 a protocol will be developed to underpin the relationship between the OSMC and the new Police and Crime Panel.

# Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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**Councillor Andrew Pope**

**Chair of Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 2012/13**

## **Panel Members**

Councillor Paul Lewzey (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Matthew Claisse

Councillor Daniel Jeffery

Councillor Brian Parnell

Councillor Matt Tucker

Councillor Eamonn Keogh

In 2012/13 the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel continued to build on work undertaken in previous years in undertaking the statutory health scrutiny function. The Panel continued to work closely with local health services including Southampton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Southampton Hampshire Isle of Wight and Portsmouth (SHIP) PCT Cluster, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust and Solent NHS Trust, as well as the Southampton Link and neighbouring Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees' (HOSC's) in scrutinising these changes. We also worked closely with the Executive and officers of the Council in relation to Adult Social Care.

The Panel held 8 meetings during this period. Key highlights for the year included:

## **Responding to Government Consultations**

The Panel scrutinised several of the changes proposed nationally including:

- **Health Scrutiny:** The Panel responded to the Department of Health's consultation on proposals for local authority health scrutiny. Amongst their points the Panel raised concerns about the need for health scrutiny to remain non political and the role of the National Commissioning Board in relation to health scrutiny.
- **Draft Care and Support Bill:** The Panel scrutinised and responded to the draft Care and Support Bill highlighting that uncertainty over the future funding arrangements weakens and undermines the true effectiveness of those good ideas which are contained in the draft Bill.
- **Consultation on the Fluoridation of Drinking Water:** The Panel responded to the consultation on the arrangements for consideration of proposals on the fluoridation of drinking water. Concerns were raised in the response regarding the need to properly resource fluoridation consultation and consider a range of methods of consultation that encourage democratic involvement of the public and engage with hard to reach groups.

The Panel also scrutinised the local implementation of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 including progress with Healthwatch, the Health and Well-Being Board and new Commissioning Structures.

## **Vascular Services Review**

The Panel continued to work closely with Southampton LINK to scrutinise changes to vascular services in the South Central region. There has been regular engagement with both providers and commissioners and Panel members have attended external events including a meeting organised by the SHIP Cluster, which included national experts, and a Health Scrutiny meeting in Portsmouth. Given the slow progress with the issue earlier in the year the Panel considered the use of the

power of referral to the Secretary of State in regard to this issue. The Panel are continuing to scrutinise this issue and are very pleased that progress is now being made towards the implementation of a sustainable solution.

### **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the draft strategy at a workshop session and fed back a number of detailed comments in response to the draft strategy document. These included making the strategy more focused with a smaller number of actions being required where impact and improvements could be measured and compared with other local authorities; improving the quality of the information cited from the and adopting innovative. The Panel were pleased to note that most of their recommendations had been adopted in the final version of the strategy.

### **Health Service Pressures**

Budget pressures and increasing patient numbers have resulted in strain on local health services. The Panel continue to work closely with providers and commissioners to ensure local services are provided safely. The panel jointly scrutinised all local providers and commissioners in relation to the Emergency Care Intensive Support Team report on the South West Hants Unscheduled Care System and will continue to work with them to ensure all recommendations are implemented.



Recognising the links between the issues, the Panel also scrutinised the University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust over their recent Care Quality Commission inspection report with raised concerns about the level of nursing staff at the same meeting. The Panel have asked for updates on progress against the implementation of the resulting action plan.

### **Public and Sustainable Transport Provision to Southampton General Hospital Review**

As a result of a the request of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport and concerns raised by other members and the public, the panel agreed to undertake a short review into public and sustainable transport provision to Southampton general hospital. As part of the review evidence was gathered from several partners and stakeholders including University Hospitals Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, bus service providers, staff and patient representatives and Council transport officers.

The Panel provided early feedback on the Council's 2013/14 budget consultation. They have since made several recommendations, many of which can be quickly implemented to improve services for public transport users and look forward to hearing the response to these from partners in due course.

# Scrutiny Panel A

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**Councillor Satvir Kaur**  
**Chair of Scrutiny Panel A – 2012/13**

## **Panel Members**

Councillor Catherine McEwing (Vice-Chair)	Councillor Brian Parnell
Councillor Edward Daunt	Councillor Adrian Vinson
Councillor Sharon Mintoff	Councillor Lee Whitbread

## **Welfare Reforms Inquiry**

The Welfare Reform Act (2012) represents the biggest change to the welfare benefit system in 60 years. The Welfare Reforms are being implemented nationally with the aim of creating a simpler and fairer system and providing the right incentives to assist more people into work. The reforms cover a whole spectrum of welfare and housing benefit changes and will pave the way for the introduction of Universal Credit, which will replace means-tested benefits for people of working age from October 2013.

Due to the scale of the changes and new responsibilities in administration of benefits at a local level, it was agreed that a Welfare Reforms Inquiry should be undertaken to consider the potential impact on residents, voluntary organisations and the public sector. The aim was to identify a sustainable way forward to maximise support for those most at risk of falling into crisis whilst helping those who can get back into work.

The Inquiry was undertaken over 6 formal monthly meetings, from October 2012 to March 2013. In addition, the Chair of the Panel also attended a number of meetings at the Job Centre Plus and Southampton Connect. The Southampton Anti-Poverty Network was also involved in responding to the Welfare Reforms ‘Call for Evidence’.

The Inquiry has had a significant interest from a wide range of organisations and services, whose customers may be affected by the Welfare Reforms including a national expert from the Centre for Social Justice, the Department for Work and Pensions, various council departments, voluntary organisations, representatives from interested bodies, businesses, universities and the general public.



During the Inquiry the Panel issued two interim reports to Council to influence the 2013/14 budget. These reports resulted in the full Government grant funding being allocated for Local Welfare Provision, a discretionary fund and transition grant for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and additional funding for the voluntary sector.



The main issues from the Inquiry identified by the Panel were:

- The number and timing of the benefit changes will have a cumulative effect on claimants, the majority of whom live in the most deprived areas of the city. People will be at risk of increasing financial hardship, debt and other problems and stresses on their quality of life and relationships.
- Demand will continue for sustainable and flexible crisis support that can adapt to changing needs. Support needs to lead to self reliance.
- Strong voluntary sector and council services are already overstretched and need increase capacity to manage the demand for crisis support and advice.
- Claimant awareness of the changes and impacts of the reforms is limited. A clear and consistent message is needed to change behaviour and encourage claimants to move from benefits into work. Communications should continue through Southampton Connect Connect's priority project, 'Gateway to a Better Future', led by Jobcentre Plus. The Moneytree magazine which offers guidance on the changes and signposting to support was commended.
- The current economic climate will limit opportunities for work but there are many projects underway working towards increasing local skills and jobs. Business play a crucial role in helping people into work and advising employees on how they can 'make work pay'
- Partnership working is crucial to deal with potential longer term issues from the Welfare Reforms around health, child poverty, economic recovery, community safety, aspirations and inequalities.

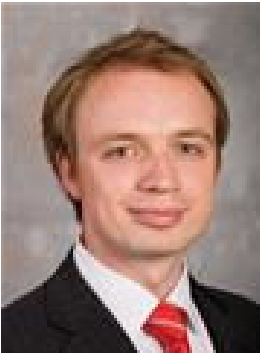
Overall, the Panel have made 11 recommendations from the Inquiry, which include prioritising and supporting voluntary organisations who are offering advice and financial support and establishing a Welfare Reforms Monitoring Group to monitor the impacts of changes and work with partners to encourage a collaborative approach.

The final report of Scrutiny Panel A was submitted to Cabinet on 16 April 2013.



# Scrutiny Panel B

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**Councillor Dr Darren Paffey**  
**Chair of Scrutiny Panel B – 2012/13**

**Panel Members**

Councillor David Furnell  
Councillor Satvir Kaur  
Councillor Dave Shields

Councillor Peter Baillie  
Councillor Linda Norris  
Councillor Maureen Turner

## Apprenticeships Inquiry

The first meeting of the Apprenticeship Inquiry was held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2013, and set the scene for the Panel to consider an overview of the national and local perspective alongside Executives vision for apprenticeships.

Over three subsequent monthly meetings the Inquiry will consider the following key themes:

- May     **Employers Perspective:** an outline of provision, good practice and reasons for and against businesses establishing apprenticeships.
- June    **Providers Perspective:** evaluating the process, partnerships and issues that lead to a successful apprenticeship for employers and students.
- July     **Apprentice’s Perspective:** talking to students about the information, advice and guidance available on apprenticeships and barriers to taking up apprenticeships by students.

The Inquiry will coincide with the launch of an Apprenticeship campaign and through out the meetings the Panel will undertake a governance role for the campaign to assess its reach and impact.

It is proposed that the Inquiry will lead to the launch of a new Southampton Apprenticeship Action Plan, with the final report of the Panel being agreed in September and submitted to the OSMC in October 2013.



# Getting Involved

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## *How can I get involved?*

There are a number of ways in which the public and interested organisations can get involved.

- **Attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or a Scrutiny Panel**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Scrutiny Panel meetings are held in public and anyone is welcome to attend to listen to proceedings. Meetings are currently usually held in the Civic Centre. Only on rare occasions, when certain types of confidential information is being discussed, are members of the public not allowed to attend.

- **Raise issues with your Councillor and request Overview and Scrutiny to consider as part of Councillor Call for Action.**
- Give your feedback to inquiry meetings as part of evidence gathering.

Details of forthcoming meetings, agendas, reports and minutes can be obtained from the City Council's website at [www.southampton.gov.uk](http://www.southampton.gov.uk).

## **Providing Written Evidence**

Scrutiny inquiries can consider written evidence and members of the public, community groups, or other key stakeholders can write in to bring evidence to the attention of Inquiry Panel members. Inevitably, scrutiny inquiries have only a limited amount of time, so they are not able to hear oral testimony from all interested people.

Written evidence provides an alternative way to receive evidence from key stakeholders—policy makers, service providers, service users and community groups. Written evidence may put forward a particular perspective of the issue being considered, or may highlight evidence to help the investigation. It can also put forward questions for witnesses, which may be taken up by members of the Panel during the discussion.

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