

# Scrutiny Committee Annual Report May 2011-May 2012

## **Chairman's Foreword**

Following the election in 2011, 7 out of 11 Committee members had never been involved in Scrutiny before. There has been a steep learning curve for the committee and in December 2011, we benefited from an excellent training session that we found very useful and has significantly influenced how we work.

The Committee has looked at a wide range of topics with the support of Council officers and external visitors. We have also received input from some of our Portfolio Holders. We are very grateful to all the people who have taken the time to talk to us and answer our questions.

The Committee's largest undertaking this year was its first in-depth review on Procurement Lincolnshire. The Committee was very proud of the final document and a lot of hard work went into its production.

We expect the work of the Committee will develop further during 2012/13 as we gain in experience. We have put together a work programme with some projects that take us to the end of this term and are encouraged by the greater powers awarded to scrutiny in the new Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

*Councillor Reg Howard  
Chairman, Scrutiny Committee*

## **Introduction**

Overview and Scrutiny was introduced as part of the modernisation agenda for Local Government in the Local Government Act 2000. The Overview and Scrutiny process influences decisions but does not make them.

## **The role of scrutiny**

- To provide a "critical friend" challenge to the Executive as well as external authorities and agencies
- To reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- Scrutiny members should take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public
- Scrutiny should make an impact on the delivery of public services

The Scrutiny Committee is politically balanced, comprising 11 non-Executive members of the Council. It provides an opportunity for Members to challenge decisions made by the Executive.

The Scrutiny Committee has a responsibility to monitor the performance of the Council, consider its decisions, to question how those decisions are made and to recommend improvements.

The Scrutiny Committee also undertakes external scrutiny to examine the wider issues that affect people living within the district. The Council is required to have a Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee; the Constitution allows the Scrutiny Committee to fill this role.

# SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Chairman – Councillor Reg Howard  
 Vice-Chairman – Councillor Mrs Judy Smith

| <b>Meeting Date</b>     | <b>Commentary</b>  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 14<br>June<br>2011      | <p>This was the first meeting of the Committee following the quadrennial elections. The Committee received reports from Councillors who represented the authority on outside bodies including the Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee, Bourne Youth Centre Management Committee and the Lincolnshire Flood and Drainage Management Committee.</p> <p>The Committee also considered ideas for its annual work programme. Suggestions included further reports from the Council’s representative on Lincolnshire County Council’s Health Scrutiny Committee, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill and further scrutiny of Council performance against its priorities.</p>   |
| 30<br>August<br>2011    | <p>The Committee considered the 2010/11 quarter four performance report on the ‘Quality Organisation’ priority. Members recognised the importance of the theme in ensuring the Council delivered a high quality service. To help improve the effectiveness of any future scrutiny of performance issues, the Committee requested it receive data in a format that would allow the Committee to compare year-on-year progress and that showed the direction of travel. It also recommended that contextual information to support any charts and graphs would further help the Committee in its Scrutiny.</p> <p>The Community Safety and Licensing Service Manager gave a presentation on the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. Consequently a representative from Lincolnshire Police Authority (and chairman of the Community Safety Partnership) and the Chief Inspector with responsibility for the district were invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.</p> |
| 27<br>September<br>2011 | <p>Representatives from Procurement Lincolnshire made a presentation to the Committee, which formed the basis for a report on the role of Procurement Lincolnshire and the service it provided for South Kesteven District Council. As part of the review, the Committee agreed to invite SKDC officers for their perspective on working with Procurement Lincolnshire.</p> <p>The Head of Finance gave an update on the Bourne Community Access Point project, on which SKDC was working with Lincolnshire County Council.</p> <p>The Committee also considered its draft annual report for 2010/11, which was presented to Council at its meeting on 20 October 2011.</p>  |

| <b>Meeting Date</b>             | <b>Commentary</b>  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <p>29<br/>November<br/>2011</p> | <p>John Atter from the Lincolnshire Police Authority and the Chairman of the South Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership talked to the Committee about the role of the police authority and the changes that would occur as a result of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act.</p> <p>Chief Inspector Mark Housley, who was responsible for neighbourhood policing in the South Kesteven district area gave an update, summarising changes to Lincolnshire Police's structure.</p> <p>As part of its review of Procurement Lincolnshire, members of the Committee reviewed a number of background papers (Lincolnshire Joint Scrutiny Committee review of Procurement Lincolnshire, the Procurement Lincolnshire Annual Report and the Procurement Lincolnshire structure chart) and asked the Head of Finance and the Property and Facilities Service Manager about the Council's relationship with Procurement Lincolnshire.</p> |
| <p>24<br/>January<br/>2012</p>  | <p>The Committee received a presentation on S.106 Agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy from the Planning Policy and Partnerships Service Manager.</p> <p>The Committee convened a working group to consider the draft report on Procurement Lincolnshire, which contained a number of recommendations. The draft report was referred to the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 February 2012 for formal consideration.</p> <p>A presentation was given on the impact of new legislation on scrutiny provisions. The presentation considered the Localism Act, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act and the Health and Social Care Bill.</p>   |
| <p>21<br/>February<br/>2012</p> | <p>The Committee considered its draft report on Procurement Lincolnshire. The contents of the report were finalised and the Committee agreed the report should be presented to Cabinet. The Cabinet considered the report and recommendations made by the Committee at its meeting on 5 March 2012 and supported the progression of the report to those bodies considered appropriate for the actions within the report to be undertaken.</p> <p>A brief update was given, which provided the latest information in respect of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act.</p>  |
| <p>10<br/>April<br/>2012</p>    | <p>The Committee considered recent media articles on the provision of services at Grantham hospital, specifically in respect of accident and emergency and mental health services. The Committee agreed to invite representatives from relevant bodies (including the chairman of the Joint Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee) to answer questions about future provision of health services in Grantham.</p>   |

| <b>Meeting Date</b>  | <b>Commentary</b>  |
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| <p>3<br/>May<br/>2012<br/>(adjourned<br/>from 10 April<br/>2012)</p> | <p>The Committee asked questions of the Economic Development Portfolio Holder. Topics covered included Gravity Fields Festival, measuring the success of Economic Development work, potential opportunities through which the Scrutiny Committee could support the Portfolio Holder, training and briefings received by the Portfolio Holder on appointment (and ongoing), sustainable villages, the Grantham Area Action Plan and the Site Allocations Development Plan Documents, and Local Enterprise Partnerships.</p> <p>As a result of discussions with the Portfolio Holder, the skills agenda for young people was added to the Committee's work programme as a possible topic, as was the relationship between Portfolio Holders, policy development groups and council officers. Councillor Mrs Cartwright also circulated a list of her Portfolio responsibilities.</p> |