

# SCRUTINY

## NEWSLETTER

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## Introduction

The January 2013 edition of the Overview and Scrutiny Newsletter is the sixteenth 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 is always keen to receive the public's input into the work that it does and to make this easier for you all Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings are held in public and 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review? The Committee welcomes suggestions for topics of inquiries 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 2013 so please forward your ideas to the Scrutiny Officer by 25th February 2013 or download the Suggest an Item for Scrutiny Form for you future reference.

This issue of the Overview and Scrutiny newsletter provides information about the work of the three Scrutiny Panels.

I hope that you find this newsletter useful and informative. Dates of forthcoming meetings are detailed on the last page of this newsletter.



**Councillor Les Marriott**  
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. The current Overview and Scrutiny work Programme was made up of issues put forward by the public.

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. Details of the final reports of previous Scrutiny Reviews can be located on the Scrutiny webpage.

## Scrutiny Activity for 2012/2013

Three in-depth Scrutiny Reviews are currently mid-evidence gathering: -

### Serious Acquisitive Crime/Violent Crime and Community Safety

To investigate, as a benchmark, Northampton's crime statistics in relation to serious acquisitive and violent crime

To identify 'hotspots' in relation to serious acquisitive and violent crime

To identify the impact that serious acquisitive crime and violent crime has on the residents of Northampton

To identify the serious acquisitive crime and violent crime issues that Northampton Borough Council, in partnership with other Agencies, can have an impact upon

The work of this Panel will come to a close in March 2013 and will report its findings and recommendations to the Committee at its April meeting.

**Further information on the Scrutiny Activity for 2012/2013 can be found overleaf.**



### Retail Experience

To investigate how NBC can support the town centre business community.

To investigate how NBC can support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building projects in and close by to the town centre (i.e. Grosvenor; bus interchange; university accommodation etc).

To identify and examine good practice from other boroughs

To identify ways to develop greater involvement / engagement with local, regional and national businesses in public land improvement initiatives

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

### Infrastructure Requirements and S106 Agreements

To identify the infrastructure requirements to Northampton and the surrounding areas

To evaluate how the infrastructure will be delivered through Section 106 Agreements/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

To identify any funding gaps and how these will be filled

To understand the management of S106 funding

This is also an in-depth Review which is anticipated to conclude in May 2013, reporting its recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its June meeting.

### 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

### Call-In Hearing

At Northampton call-in is used sparingly, and during 2010/2011 the facility was not used at all. A call-in was held in September 2012 regarding the disposal of museum artefact where the check and balance arm of Scrutiny was tested. The Committee considered the concerns from a number of stakeholders and referred its findings to Cabinet.

### Pre Decision Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook in-depth pre decision scrutiny on a number of housing issues prior to their submission to Cabinet:

- Sheltered Housing
- Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Strategy

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee invited all Councillors to attend the meetings when these issues were discussed, so that all Councillors would have the opportunity to hear the debate and put forward any queries they may have.

### Environmental Services Contract

In December, the Committee undertook scrutiny of the Action Plan arising from the Independent Review of the Environmental Services Contract. The Committee will further review the impact of the recommendations contained within the Action Plan at its meeting on 10 June 2013.

### Evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny Process at Northampton

An evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny process at Northampton is currently taking place using the framework devised by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. Councillors and Officers from two other Borough Councils undertook mini peer reviews and their findings will also inform the evaluation.

The purpose of the evaluation is to produce an Excellence Plan for Overview and Scrutiny. A number of our Overview and Scrutiny Reviews, processes and procedures have been noted as examples of good practice and this is something we are keen to build upon in the Excellence Plan. Further details will be provided in the spring 2013 edition of the Overview and Scrutiny newsletter.



## 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 and are normally held at the Guildhall, Northampton.

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2013**
- 31 January
  - 15 April
  - 10 June

Scrutiny Panel 1	Scrutiny Panel 2	Scrutiny Panel 3
Serious Acquisitive Crime/Violent Crime and Community Safety	Retail Experience	Infrastructure Requirements and S106 Agreements
<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 January	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 February	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 January
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 February	<input type="checkbox"/> 24 April	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 March
<input type="checkbox"/> 21 March		<input type="checkbox"/> 16 May
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 April		<input type="checkbox"/> 25 July

## 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 information



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



Copies of all Overview and Scrutiny Review Reports are located at:  
[www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny)