

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

2013 - 2014

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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



In 2013-14 Scrutiny has continued to work effectively with Members, Officers, partners and the community to review, challenge and recommend changes in relation to a host of issues.

It was especially pleasing to see our work complemented in the Local Government Association Peer Review carried out in 2013.

The final report commented on the Scrutiny process as having “many positive aspects to it. This included officers and elected members being afforded good opportunities to inform its work programme and Cabinet valuing the work that it delivers, including carefully considering the recommendations that it makes”.

The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Panels continue to be a very important contributor to the consideration, delivery and review of Council Services in a challenging operational environment.

Furthermore the role of community engagement in the Scrutiny process will be a key consideration in the coming year for both the Committee and both Scrutiny Panels.

This report highlights the activity of Scrutiny in 2013 -14 and includes details of reviews undertaken, organisational considerations, performance challenge and call-in activity.

Furthermore, it also sets out some of the topics and issues that are scheduled to be considered by Scrutiny in the coming year as set out in the Scrutiny Workplan 2014.

The work of scrutiny has been supported by officers, partners external representatives and the community throughout the year and this has helped Scrutiny put forward some evidenced based recommendations aimed at adding value. I would like the opportunity to acknowledge and thank all those people who have contributed to and supported the work of Scrutiny in the last year and look forward to working with you again in the next twelve months.

COUNCILLOR DON DAVIS – CHAIRMAN OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

INTRODUCTION

Ashfield District Council has an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and two Scrutiny Panels (A and B). The Scrutiny function has an essential role in the democratic process. It was introduced under the Local Government Act 2000 which placed a requirement on all local authorities to have an Overview and Scrutiny function to hold Cabinet to account.

It is also about listening to the concerns of local people and can review how external partners are performing, recommending improvements where necessary.

The aim of the work of Scrutiny is to ultimately improve services and the quality of life of Ashfield residents. This is achieved in the following ways:

- Monitoring Council Performance;
- Developing and Reviewing policy;
- Reviewing issues of community concern;
- External Scrutiny

The Council's Constitution states that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must report annually to Council on its workings and make recommendations for future work programmes (workplan). The workplan is developed in consultation with all elected Members, officers and the community. It has also recently been agreed that it become a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda to ensure that Members are updated on the progress of the reviews and

allowing flexibility for additional items to be added if necessary.

Recent national legislation to strengthen the Scrutiny process has included the following which have been recognised by Scrutiny in Ashfield;

- The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 includes requirements for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive certain petitions and review the Council's responses to petitions at the request of the petition organiser in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme.
- The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduced requirements in April 2009 that all local authorities have in place arrangements, either individually or jointly with other local authorities, for committees which will review, scrutinise, and report on the decisions made and actions taken by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.
- "Councillor Call for Action" (CCfA) was introduced under Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the Act), and came into force on 1st April, 2009. The statutory requirement applies to all Councils in England (with the exception of Parish Councils) regardless of their Executive arrangements. The Act enables any Member of the Council to refer to an overview and scrutiny committee any local government matter which affects their ward or division. The power to refer a matter is available only where the matter is of direct concern to the ward or division which the Councillor represents.

Overview and Scrutiny Activity

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's main role during 2013/14 has been to oversee, challenge and address performance issues of the Council, manage the Scrutiny workplan and the overall activity of the Scrutiny process.

Scrutiny has considered a number of key issues throughout the year from both the scheduled workplan, issues raised throughout the year by residents of the District and through performance matters.

These include:

- **Empty Homes**
- **Car Parking**
- **Use of Agency & Consultancy Services**
- **Procurement**
- **Supermarket Levy**
- **Leisure Facilities**
- **Anti-Social Behaviour**
- **Economic Regeneration**

Those issues considered include issues raised by the community, Councillors and Officers and are aimed at adding value to both the community and quality of services delivered by the Council.



Scrutiny Panel A Chair – Councillor Tim Brown and Vice Chair – Councillor Ian Morrison



Scrutiny Panel B Chair – Councillor Keir Morrison and Vice Chair – Councillor Linford Gibbons

SCRUTINY OF EMPTY HOMES

A Scrutiny review on empty homes was undertaken following its addition to the 2013/14 workplan. The item was added for review following concerns from Elected Members and the public regarding the impact that empty homes has on communities.

In considering this topic, Members of the Panel began the review by raising a number of issues relating to empty homes. These included

- How the Council is proactively addressing empty homes and the social and financial impact these have in the community
- The use of the various options available to the Council to tackle empty homes such as selective licensing
- How the Council can learn from other Councils who are seen as exemplar authorities in tackling empty homes and the initiatives that they use to be successful.

Members were informed that 572 properties had successfully been brought back into use in the last 10 years. Much of this success was attributed to effective working with mortgage companies and property owners.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2013/14 places a priority on "ensuring availability of appropriate, affordable housing". Within this, the focus for 2013/14 is;

- Understanding housing needs across the district
- Enabling more affordable homes
- Bringing empty homes back into use

The key things that the Council is doing to achieve this are;

- Progressing major housing developments at Warwick Close, Darlison Court and Sutton Pools sites
- Identifying key development sites
- Developing a HRA 30 Year Investment Programme
- Developing a holistic approach for reducing empty homes
- Developing a holistic approach for influencing affordable housing



Members were further informed that delivering services and improvements through this would be monitored by;

- Increasing the number of long term empty private sector properties brought back into use
- Reducing the number of non decent homes

In considering the issue Members spoke to a whole range of witnesses including officers and members of the public. They were informed that As in many parts of the country, the private rented sector in Ashfield makes a very valuable contribution to the supply of affordable housing. In recent years officers in both the Private Sector Housing Team and the Housing Options Team have worked to develop a positive working relationship with landlords who want to deliver good quality housing. This is predominantly through the sub regional landlords forum.

Members also heard evidence from a homeowner who detailed his experience of living in a row of terraced properties, of which three were empty and derelict. In addressing the Panel he described how living in this type of environment had very serious health and well-being effects on him and his family. These included;

- Stress
- concerns with regards to home security,
- Negative effects on street scene
- anti-social behaviour on the street,
- hygiene issues (syringes/food and household waste)
- safety and well-being of children playing in the vicinity.
- Problems with trying to sell a property

Panel Members were informed that the whole experience had had greatly affected the lives of himself, his wife and his neighbours and as a consequence they had suffered anxiety and stress living in this environment. This had ultimately resulted in them feeling forced to move house and try and sell the property.

The Panel also received information from the Senior Environmental Health Officer (Private Sector Enforcement) to explain the process for bringing empty homes in the District back into use.

In concluding this review the Panel emphasised the importance of dealing effectively and efficiently with empty homes and that the council's Corporate Plan 2013/14 places a priority on 'ensuring availability of appropriate, affordable housing'.

Members of the Panel agreed that there should be a continued focus on understanding both the housing needs across the District and proactive action to bring empty homes back into use. They further highlighted that communities benefit greatly from the reoccupation of long-term empty homes. The health and well-being of residents is improved together with a reduction in anti-social behaviour.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

Recommendation 1 - That a business case is explored to ascertain the set up costs of introducing licensing of private landlords and reported back;

Recommendation 2 - That Partnerships with housing associations and the voluntary sector be further enhanced as this can also be an opportunity to regenerate empty homes, and bring about some wider social benefits;

Recommendation 3 - That the role of Ashfield Homes Ltd in the role of private sector housing is reviewed to explore management and repair options for Private sector landlords.

Recommendation 4 - That the Private Sector Renewal Strategy is reviewed;

Recommendation 5 - That reflected in that strategy is continued targeted action to proactively address tackling empty homes;

Recommendation 6 - That hot spots of empty homes and progress on reducing these be reported to members on a quarterly basis;

Recommendation 7 - That an analysis of enforcement action and outcomes be reported to members on a quarterly basis;

Recommendation 8 - That the Panel is updated on progress of the recommendations in 6 months time.

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF CARPARKING

Scrutiny Panel A undertook a review of car parking following its addition to the 2013/14 workplan. The item was added for review following concerns from Members regarding the impact that capacity issues with car parking were potentially having on town centres.

Car parking is of interest to most residents and businesses of Ashfield. In reviewing this topic, Members of the Panel discussed a number of issues associated with parking from a range of stakeholders. The Panel agreed that the development of a Car Parking Strategy was needed to ensure that parking issues are considered as part of any economic regeneration activity of the District's town centres.

Members of the Panel were informed that the Council was part of a wider partnership called the Notts Parking Partnership. The Partnership was formed to ensure that parking enforcement is provided consistently and fairly across the County.



The Partnership employs NSL Services to supply Civil Enforcement Officers (formerly known as Traffic Wardens) to enforce parking restrictions in the County. They provide approximately 20 officers across the County. The District and Borough Parking Managers manage parking enforcement in their respective areas. This consists of allocating daily patrol 'beats', issuing daily parking dispensations (permits), informing

Enforcement Officers about reported parking issues and resolving formal appeals.

The County Council operates a single Penalty Charge Notice (parking fine) processing centre which ensures that all correspondence relating to Penalty Charge Notices is fairly and consistently responded to within set timescales.

In discussing the partnership, Members were enthusiastic that the issues currently being faced in the District should be considered appropriately to ensure that action is taken to address topics such as the length of stay and parking permits and how these are affecting visitors to the Districts town centres.



As part of the considerations of the review Members discussed the option of developing a Parking Strategy. They considered that the Council, with involvement from the Notts Parking Partnership, should consider what the objectives for a Parking Strategy for Ashfield should be. To assist this process a number of Parking Strategies from other local authorities were reviewed by the Panel to assess the value and impact of such a document.

To deliver cost effective car parking to ensure available and suitable car parking for both shoppers, commercial users and residents.

The proposal for the development of a Parking Strategy is to provide a framework and to define the role of parking in the overall transport and regeneration strategies of the Council. Any Strategy should be developed in partnership with key stakeholders in the area to ensure that our policy contributes to the success of the local town centres and provides a first class facility for visitors and local users of the car parks as well as residents.

Members agreed that it is important to take a planned and proactive approach to the exploration of current car parking facilities and capacity to meet the demand for existing businesses; to remain ahead of demand for car parking and provide the right amount of provision of the right type in the right place.

During the review the Panel were also informed that any amendment to a Road Traffic Order i.e. changing the waiting times, did have an associated cost attached and this would need to be considered as part of any review of waiting times.

Consideration of any changes to this would need to be reflected in any proposed Strategy document. The Panel have concluded that effective parking management is important for a variety of reasons, these include:

- for the local economy, to encourage visitors and shoppers;
- for residents, who need to have access to parking near their homes and at the places they visit, and for those living outside of the main towns who need to use their cars to access goods and services

- for businesses, who need access to essential car parking and loading facilities;
- for special needs groups, such as people with mobility difficulties. who need to access goods and services by car:
- for commuters;
- for reducing congestion and improving road safety; and for dealing with demand for parking

The Scrutiny review of car parking concluded by highlighting the important role that effective car parking policies play in town centre economic regeneration. The development of a car parking strategy is considered an important step in further enhancing and improving the capacity and operation of car parking in town centres.

Furthermore, the Councils role within the Notts Parking Partnership should be strengthened and improved to ensure that Ashfield District Council further enhances and improves effective working relationships and is able to inform and influence parking matters that effect the area in a constructive way.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

Recommendation 1 – That a Car Parking Strategy be developed that incorporates an action plan with measurable milestones and clear links to the economic regeneration of the town centres;

Recommendation 2 - As a result of (a) above, suitable consultation on the draft Car Parking Strategy be carried out with Town Centre Regeneration Working Groups;

Recommendation 3 - Council officers be requested to work with the County Council to continue to consider the impact of residential parking permits on town centre economy;

Recommendation 4 - Council officers be requested to liaise with the County Council to identify and review the length of stay for earmarked on-street parking zones to endeavour to make them more functional for shoppers (i.e. 1-2 hours);

Recommendation 5 - To continue to work towards strengthening the relationship and joint working arrangements with the County Council;

Recommendation 6 - That signage for parking times and restrictions be improved and made clearer;

Recommendation 7 - Communication and partnership working is carried out with private car park suppliers to ensure the needs of the town centre economy (both shoppers and workers) are met;

Recommendation 8 - disabled car parking bays to be reviewed as soon as practicably possible to ensure they remain fit for purpose;

Recommendation 9- to consider the possible development of a Car Parking Monitoring Working Group with the membership to include Councillors, Council officers and local business representatives;

Recommendation 10 - That Cabinet explore the options for trialling parking promotions/incentives (such as 'free after three' to encourage town centre regeneration and local trade;

Recommendation 11 - In conjunction with the above, to undertake a cost appraisal of trialling parking promotions/incentives to develop and understand the potential financial impacts on the Council;

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF USE OF AGENCY AND CONSULTANCY STAFF

Following consultation on the Scrutiny workplan, agency / consultancy fees were highlighted as an area that Members are interested in considering in further detail. It was agreed the review was prudent in order to ensure that the Council make effective use of public money.

Scrutiny Panel A have undertaken 2 meetings on this subject and thus far heard from both the Service Director - Corporate Services and the Service Lead for Waste and Environment. At these meetings, Members have discussed a range of issues relating to the use of agency and consultancy staff. These have included;

- What is the extent of the usage of consultancy and agency staff at the present time?
- On what basis, where and by whom is any decision made to use consultancy and agency staff?
- What procurement arrangements does Ashfield District Council have in place associated with the engagement of consultants?
- What is the risk associated with not using consultancy staff (i.e. cost, services, specialised knowledge etc)?
- in relation to how the Council currently reports the use of consultancy and agency staff, has any reparation work been undertaken in relation to the cost codes that were

causing confusion during recent data extraction and analysis?

Panel Members agreed unanimously that the aim of the review was not to stop the appropriate use of agency and consultancy staff but to ensure that the Council had 'fit for purpose' guidelines and policies in place to ensure that when these types of services were engaged they were done so consistently and appropriately.



In considering this issue, members reviewed various data and approaches from other local authorities which included:-

- Internal solutions and long term planning - requests for agency workers were vetted against a council talent pool. To widen the supply of internal candidates, a series of resourcing solutions projects were undertaken to up-skill staff and help staff to consider career plans and paths to reduce the reliance on agency workers;

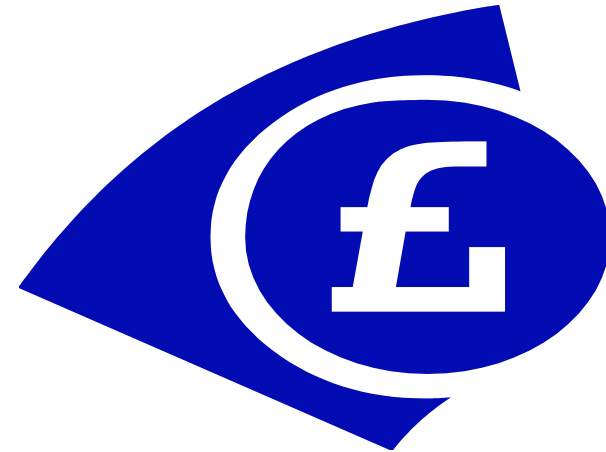
- Gateways for assessing need for agency consultancy use – some Councils had established specific groups with the purpose of assessing the needs of individual services to consider a range of options for resourcing requirements for all consultants/agency staff prior to any procurement activity taking place.

As part of the review process, Members also looked at the risk in not using consultants. This included possibilities that a Local Authority may have to recruit a more substantial and specialised workforce at a greater expense. This is the only real alternative to using consultants, apart from the Council possibly being unable to carry out certain schemes and projects in the future in a timely manner.

The risks involved in not employing agency labour are very similar to those of not employing consultants. Again the Council could decide not to employ agency labour but this would mean that many services (including statutory services) may not be able to function effectively during peak times, times of reorganisation or during recruitment difficulties.

The other alternative is that Councils could employ more staff to cover those areas where agency labour is highest. This could be expensive to carry out, not only in terms of the recruitment process but also in terms of the Council paying employers National Insurance and pension contribution, as well as sickness and holiday benefits.

Members also considered a detailed breakdown of professional and consultancy fees including a cumulative pay summary. They were further advised that the schedules would now be continually updated and presented to Managers on a monthly basis, Corporate Management Group quarterly and to each meeting of the Local Joint Consultative Committee as a standing item.



As part of the review, Members heard evidence from senior officers across the Council. Further considerations included;

- concerns regarding the number of vacancies and the reasons as to why they were not being recruited to;
- the current climate of austerity and the impact it was having on officers managing budgets and making operational decisions in relation to the engagement of agency and consultancy staff;
- the delay in implementation of Job Evaluation and its effect on pay and grading opportunities for vacant posts;
- the history surrounding consideration of this issue via the Local Joint Consultative Committee and its escalation to the Scrutiny Panel for review;
- acknowledgement that the data was now being presented in a more detailed and transparent format and the progress

that has been made to monitor the agency/consultancy spend in the future;

- the requirement to ensure managers were properly trained to implement the Council's procedures for the recruitment of agency and consultancy staff;
- the benefits of training and developing Council staff and offering opportunities to increase their knowledge and expertise as and when the situation arose;
- acknowledgement of the Council's commitment towards developing apprenticeship opportunities.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- the work being undertaken to monitor and improve the management of agency staff and consultants by the Council be fully endorsed;
- it be agreed that Members are updated on a quarterly basis in relation to the use of agency/consultancy staff;
- the Council be requested to explore the expertise within the shared procurement service to further enhance best value in the use of agency and consultancy engagement;
- a skills audit register be considered to help encourage the use of staff pooling wherever possible;

- managers be encouraged to consider alternatives to external consultants such as using internal staff wherever possible and this be achieved through training and exploration of the development of a toolkit;
- the Council's Finance Management Team provide clarification on use of correct coding for consultants to improve assessment and monitoring of spend on consultancy across the Council;
- the current Policy for use of agency staff be updated to also reflect procedures for use of consultants;

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a follow-up review of the Council's approach to anti-social behaviour. This topic was considered at two meetings of the Committee in late 2013

In 2012, Scrutiny undertook a short review on the Anti Social Behaviour Case Management approach. The issue was reviewed as part of the wider crime and disorder role scrutiny undertakes.

In reviewing this area Members were updated on the Anti Social Behaviour White Paper and asked to consider appropriate mechanisms and reinforce an integrated approach to ensure the powers available are utilised effectively to manage and reduce anti social behaviour in Ashfield.

The Committees conclusions were inline with the proposals put forward by the Service Director- Environment in a report to Cabinet in 2012. They agreed that an integrated Case Management Team within Ashfield District Council would result in a better and more responsive approach to anti-social behaviour, benefitting both victims and communities. This decision was based on both current information and previous evidence gathered during the Scrutiny Review of Community Protection.

At the end of last year (2013) the Committee held a number of meetings to consider both the review of Community Protection and Environmental Health and the pilot for tackling anti-social behaviour

The meetings outlined the effectiveness of the relationship with Ashfield Homes in dealing with ASB issues and communication issues affecting tenants and key stakeholders including information sharing and access to information. A number of case studies were considered which highlighted some of the outcomes achieved.

During the considerations a number of concerns were raised by Members in relation to the following:

- Capacity issues in respect of the number of cases each case worker has to deal with

- The number of Community Protection Officers “on the street”
- The need to give greater support to victims of anti social behaviour in gathering evidence

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on 10th September 2013, the Committee received a presentation outlining progress of the integrated case management pilot launched on 1st January 2013.

Members concluded by acknowledging the risks associated in relation to the capacity issues faced by the current case workers and the increasing demands of supporting victims to gather evidence.

The Committee supported proposals to mainstream the resources required for the Council to continue delivering case work for housing-related ASB and recognised this would need to be part of the wider service review. The Committee made 2 recommendations. These are detailed below.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

Recommendation 1 – Cabinet be requested to fill the vacant post of Community Protection Officer (Kirkby) as soon as is possible;

Recommendation 2 - that Cabinet acknowledge the outcomes of the service review but note the concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to any potential reduction in high visibility patrols or distraction work

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT

The issue of procurement was added to the workplan to enable Members to discuss the effective procurement practices that are required to purchase and deliver value for money on goods, works and services bought by the Council. The Panel have thus far held 2 meetings on the issue. A summary of those considerations so far is detailed below

Procurement covers all of the supplies, services and works needed to deliver services. The rules by which Ashfield District Council spend money on goods, services and works, are set out in the Contract Procedure Rules.

Members agreed to undertake the review for the following reasons;

1. To enable the Scrutiny Panel to acquire an understanding of procurement practices and procedures;
2. To understand and evaluate the Council's systems for communicating procurement policies and procedures;
3. To assess knowledge and understanding within the organisation of the Council's policies and procedures
4. To identify examples of good practice in Ashfield and in other Local Authorities to support the achievement of efficiency savings;

Effective procurement practices are required to acquire and deliver value for money on goods, works and services bought by Ashfield District Council. To achieve this, Members were informed that The Council has entered into a shared service arrangement with Bassetlaw, Mansfield District Council and Erewash BC. The aim is to standardise procurement processes across the unit.

The Shared Procurement Unit organises tender processes leading to the establishment of contracts and framework agreements for the provision of goods, services and works. Individual services section then uses these contracts on a day to day basis to place orders and make purchases.

Members have so far met with Council officers and the the Lead Service Procurement Manager at Bassetlaw District Council to understand good practice in procurement, current arrangements and future plans.

Further considerations of the Panel as part of the review process has included;

- Use of the Procurement Unit across the Council;
- Areas for improvement;
- Use of Living Wage in procurement tenders;
- Use of Apprenticeships in tenders;
- Blacklisting.

The Panel will be holding one more meeting on the issue before it agrees and makes its recommendations to Cabinet in November 2014.

SCRUTINY OF SUPERMARKET LEVY

In 2014, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were introduced to the topic of “the supermarket Levy”. This issue has been placed on the workplan following national interest and discussions between many Council’s on this topic.

In 2013 a number of Ashfield District Councillors were contacted with regards to exploring the potential of a levy that could be placed on some large retail units. ‘Local Works’, an organisation set up by ‘Unlock Democracy’, is campaigning for local authorities to have the power to put an 8.5% levy on large retailers, called the ‘Supermarket Levy’.

The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 provides an opportunity for local people to ask central government via local government to remove legislative or other barriers that prevent them from improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area.

The Sustainable Communities Act enables local authorities to be able to ask the Secretary of State if they can charge a levy to large retailers in their area. It is suggested that this be those with a rateable annual value not less than £500,000; and requires that the revenue from this levy go directly to the Local Authority in order to be used to improve local communities in their areas by promoting local economic activity, local services and facilities, social and community wellbeing and environmental protection.

Local authorities do not currently have the power to levy this tax, hence the call under the Sustainable Communities Act for Government to grant this power. As a power, the local authority can then decide whether it wishes to make use of that power or not. If powers were granted, then further detailed consultation would need to be carried out if the Council were to consider using the powers to implement a levy.

Currently Northern Ireland operates a large retail levy. There has been a 15% retail levy on properties with a rateable value of £500,000 or more since April 2012. Scotland has recently introduced a ‘public health supplement, a 9.3% levy on retail outlets with a rateable value over £300,000 that sell alcohol and tobacco.

Derby City Council along with Local Works on behalf of a growing number of local authorities, sought support for a proposal to give councils powers to introduce a levy on the rateable value of large retail outlets. It was agreed at a Cabinet meeting in December 2013 to support the campaign and to submit a proposal to central government under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007. Derby are the host authority and currently have the support of 23 other local authorities in their submission.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have acknowledged the both the pro’s and cons of the debate, these have included the following-

For the Levy

- (1) To provide a fairer marketplace for local retail.
- (2) To use the revenue from this rate to assist smaller local businesses, for example independent shops, and the local services that support the smaller businesses, for example local bus services or support independent retailer initiatives.

- (3) The report 'High Street Britain: 2015' by the All-Party Parliamentary Group found that over 3 million people were employed in retail, accounting for one in nine of all jobs. It showed that small, family owned retail businesses create more jobs, in terms of sales, than the big stores.
- During 2013-14 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitored the performance of an agreed list of priority areas to assess where problems were arising and which aims and objectives were being achieved.

Against the Levy

- (1) The risk that implementation of a supermarket levy could place the borough at a competitive disadvantage versus its neighbours leading to a potential impact on investment, jobs and spend.
- (2) Exact financial benefit is unclear and there would also be a cost involved in collecting and distributing the levy.
- (3) Could create a confusing two-track system with CIL (new) and supermarket levy (existing).

Members will be considering this issue in further detail in October 2014.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance management is one of the key roles of Overview and Scrutiny and provides Scrutiny Members with the opportunity to proactively review and challenge performance, add value to the Council's services and monitor functions delivered with and by the Council's partners that add quality of life to the citizens of Ashfield



Scrutiny Members held a number of meetings to discuss performance issues with relevant service lead officers and Portfolio holders to actively challenge where outcomes have not been achieved.

This has led to the establishment of a number of working groups, additions to the workplan and targeted considerations and further investigations of issues including economic regeneration and leisure facilities.

The Committee have been pleased to note that the level of achievement against priorities identified within the Corporate Strategy has improved significantly

Scrutiny of Performance is additionally supported by the Corporate Performance Manager. Issues raised during performance considerations has also been used to inform the 2014-15 Scrutiny Workplan.

FURTHER SCRUTINY ACTIVITY – WORKPLAN TOPICS 2014

The Scrutiny workplan is a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Agenda. Ongoing consultation on the 2014-15 Scrutiny workplan will continue to be undertaken with Service Directors, Third Tier Officers and Members. Community engagement will also form part of an ongoing consultation process.

The Scrutiny Work Plan outlines the areas of work which are expected to be scrutinised over the coming months / year by or on behalf of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panels A and B. Topics added to the workplan should have expected outcomes to add value to the services delivered by the Council and it's partners and/or improve the quality of lives of Ashfield residents.

It is recognised that there is a need for flexibility in the work plan so as to allow relevant issues to be dealt with as and when they arise.

Topic suggestions that have been submitted and agreed for discussion for the Overview and Scrutiny Workplan for 2014/15 are detailed opposite.

SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

Economic Regeneration of Town Centres

Attendance Management – Reasons behind absenteeism

Councillor Surgeries – How can we make these more effective

Impact of Welfare Reform – follow up

Dog Fouling – Impact of changes to dog bag procedure

Write Offs and debt collection;

Ashfield Homes – customer service standards

Planning - to consider if current policy and procedures are having an impact on local economic climate;

Fly-tipping

Shared Services Agenda

Budget Scrutiny

Getting Involved

There are a number of different ways in which members of the community can get involved in Scrutiny. These are:

1. Attend A Meeting - All Scrutiny meetings are open to the public to come and listen to the debate. There may also be a chance to speak at the meetings at the discretion of the Chair. The meetings are publicised and can be found at :

http://www.ashfield-dc.gov.uk/cfusion/councillors/local_democ/meetings.cfm

2. Put Forward A Suggestion For A Topic To Be Considered By Scrutiny - Any topic can be suggested for consideration for the Scrutiny workplan. Topics put forward can be based on;

To put forward a topic does not mean that you will have to become directly involved in the review if you do not wish to be.

<http://www.ashfield-dc.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/council--government-and-democracy/scrutiny/>

or by emailing the Scrutiny team at:

scrutiny@ashfield-dc.gov.uk

3. Speak To Your Local Councillor - Your local Councillor details are located on the Council's website at;

http://www.ashfield-dc.gov.uk/cfusion/councillors/contact/contact_your_councillor.cfm

or you could attend one of the Councillor Surgeries which are listed on the above web address.