



# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2008-09

## **Councillor Liza McKinney**



This has been the first year for Overview and Scrutiny under the Cabinet system and joint working with Worthing Borough Council. It has resulted in an incredibly heavy workload for the members of the committee as well as the officers that support us, one of whom was new to the post. Above all, however, the programme of work has proved interesting as well as extremely challenging.

The Committee has not only dealt with Adur Council's agenda but has also partnered Worthing Borough Council colleagues as the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I am extremely proud at the way in which we have all coalesced into an apolitical, working group totally mindful of what is the best way forward for the residents of both areas.

Despite the fact the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has, for most of the year, worked with only six members out of eight, we have successfully completed the agreed programme of work. Dividing into small working groups, O & S has produced reports on such diverse subjects as the Electoral Cycle, the protocol for public representations at the Development Control Committee and Council Civic Awards.

Altogether a successful year for the Committee and a big thank you from me to my deputy, Debbie Kennard, the members of the Committee and the officers who have supported us both efficiently and enthusiastically.

## **Introduction**

In May 2008, Adur District Council converted from the Committee system to the Cabinet system of local government. The Council had also agreed to joining the staff of Adur and that of Worthing Borough Council under a single Chief Executive and the drive towards joint services began in earnest.

As part of the political management arrangements, which were revised under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Council established the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2008. The Members of Adur's Overview and Scrutiny Committee also sat with Members of the Worthing Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Adur's Overview and Scrutiny Committee has just completed it's first municipal year. The workload for the Committee has been heavy and lessons have been learnt along the way. This report outlines the work that has been completed by the Committee and suggests improvements for next year.

## **What is Scrutiny ?**

Whereas the Cabinet exercises the executive decision making and policy formulation functions, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's function is to review and scrutinise decisions made, consider the reports within the Forward Plan, conduct Best Value reviews and carry out policy development. The Committee can advise or make recommendations to the Cabinet, or Council on specific matters.

## **The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as outlined in the Council's Constitution, is:

- (i) to scrutinise the decisions and policies of the Council and the Executive with regard to the policy framework and budget set by full Council
- (ii) to undertake the development of specific policies on behalf of the Council;
- (iii) to review policies of the Council often in new or specialist areas, particularly in regard to new legislation;
- (iv) to make recommendations to the appropriate decision making body on any policy development as requested;
- (v) to review policies of the Council as requested by Council and/ or on behalf of the Executive or a Regulatory Committee;

- (vi) to scrutinise decisions which have been made and implemented and to measure the effect of those decisions;
- (vii) to undertake reviews of services or parts thereof to ensure continuous improvement in the delivery of Council services and monitor any action plan arising from such a review;
- (viii) to monitor the Council's performance and seek to secure continuous improvement through challenge of the Executive;
- (ix) to hold decision makers to account by determination of valid call-ins

Overview and Scrutiny Committee can form working groups to undertake a specific task, enquiry or review. The working groups do not have to be politically balanced. Each working group will have three or more members.

### **Current Membership**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has eight members as listed below:-

Councillor Liza McKinney (Chairman)  
Councillor Debbie Kennard (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Carson Albury  
Councillor Emma Evans  
Councillor Laura Graysmark  
Councillor Rod Hotton  
Councillor Janet Mockridge  
Councillor Tony Nicklen

The Adur Consultation Forum (ACF) has the right to attend and provide evidence to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when considering Housing related matters. The appointed representative is Paula Kinsella.

Cabinet Members are not eligible to sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In October 2008, three of the original members of the Committee, Councillors Ann Bridges, Carl English and Norman Wright were replaced with Councillors Emma Evans, Laura Graysmark and Tony Nicklen.

### **Review of work for 2008-09**

The Council agreed the work programme for the Committee at its Annual meeting on 20 May 2008. The work programme has been regularly reviewed by the Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and the Chairman. The programme is split into a number of categories; policy development, performance management, service reviews, scrutiny reviews, monitoring outcomes of scrutiny reviews, forward plan as well as specific reports by the individual working groups. This report does not cover the immense work load

undertaken as members of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee which is the subject of a separate report.

### **Adur Homes High Level Business Case**

The Committee received the High Level Business Case for the Adur Homes Service Block. The report included suggestions and proposals for members to consider, there were some savings outlined and it was noted that the Council is committed to providing an in-house service until 2013.

The Committee recommended to the Cabinet:-

- (i) that the Local Area Offices should be retained,
- (ii) the Sheltered housing provision be kept with Adur District Council
- (iii) the level of maintenance service be retained at the same level.

Cabinet felt that they could not endorse recommendation (i) as the future of the Council's satellite offices is subject to ongoing consideration. In relation to Sheltered Housing provision and recommendation (ii), it was clarified that the Sheltered Housing stock is to be retained but that the contract for support staff, currently funded by Supporting People, would be tendered for in two years and may not necessarily be won by the Council's internal service providers.

Cabinet agreed that recommendations (ii) and (iii) from Overview and Scrutiny be agreed but with the wording amended to:

- (ii) that the Council will do its best to retain the provision of core and support services for Sheltered Housing in house;
- (iii) that the housing maintenance service be maintained at the current level.

### **Space standards for Residential Units and Amenity Space**

The Committee received a report that tried to address concerns that had been raised that some of the new homes being built by developers in the district are inadequate in terms of both dwelling and room size as well as in the provision of outdoor amenity space. The Committee had some options outlined for producing different forms of guidance, with advantages and disadvantages given, these were:-

1. Rely on using existing but up-to-date guidance produced by the government and other agencies to use in negotiation with developers;
2. Produce new informal guidance as an interim measure prior to adopting formal Supplementary Planning Document;
3. Produce new formal guidance as part of the Local Development Framework to support a saved policy in the Local Plan;
4. Produce new formal guidance as part of the Local Development Framework to support a new policy in the Core Strategy

Members recommended the following to the Cabinet for their consideration:-

- (i) To approve the production of a new supplementary planning document on housing design standards/ guidance supported by a new policy in the Core Strategy, as outlined in option 4 (produce new formal guidance as part of the Local Development Framework to support a new policy in the Core Strategy) of the report;
- (ii) That the supplementary planning document be included in the Local Development Scheme to be approved by Cabinet following consultation with the Government Office and ensuring it is well justified;
- (iii) That in the interim, until a new policy and supplement planning document is approved, that Option Two within the report (produce new informal guidance as an interim measure prior to adopting formal supplementary planning delivery) be approved;
- (iv) That the financial implications are supported within the planning delivery grant.

The Cabinet approved option 4 for the long term, with option 1 in the interim, and it was suggested that the temporary Planning Officer could use their remaining time to look at the existing guidance available.

### **Performance Management**

The Committee received quarterly monitoring reports outlining details of the Councils performance on corporate priorities, performance indicators, financial savings and strategic risks. The Council is required to monitor and report progress to Members and the Audit Commission considers that it is best practice to report on a quarterly basis.

The Committee has commented on the following performance indicators:-

- The required target for BV11(b) (*the percentage of top 5% of LA staff from ethnic minorities*) was not being met, this was felt by the Committee to be unfair based on the ethnic diversity in the Adur District;
- Members raised their concerns over the ranking of BV82a (ii) (*total tonnage of household waste arising recycled*) that despite the Council exceeding its recycling target for the year when this is compared nationally, Adur's performance is in the bottom quartile at 5686.83 tonnes.
- The Committee asked for information on how BV205 (*Quality of planning service checklist*) had been measured. The report was received by the Committee at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008.
- The Committee queried why National PI 157a and PI 157b were labelled as red, when the targets were being met.
- The Committee raised concerns over tax collection rates (Corporate PI19 and PI10).
- Raised concerns regarding the high levels of sickness absence.

### **Financial Reports**

The Committee received regular reports on actual revenue expenditure against the budgets approved and projected outturn for the financial year. The following comments/ concerns were raised:

- The Committee noted that the cost of homeless families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation is a growing problem;
- That there is a downturn in ordinary planning applications being received.
- The potential negative effects that may come from the 'credit crunch' including reduction of fees from land charges and fees from the Development Control service.
- Issues surrounding the pay award 2008/09,
- The problem of increased fuel costs;
- The effect of the recent interest rate drop on the Council's capital receipts.

The Committee also received a progress report on the Community Strategy action plans in July 2008. The action plan was noted and no comments were made to the Adur in Partnership. In March 2009 the Committee received a report advising them of the status of the Action Plans in the light of work that has taken place on the feasibility of preparing a joint Sustainable Community Strategy across Adur and Worthing areas. The Committee requested further training on the functions and strategy action plans of the Local Strategic Partnership's.

### **Service Review – Cleaning**

A service review of the cleaning services at the Civic Centre was undertaken by the Council's Development and Scrutiny Committee 2 during 2007 and early 2008. At the conclusion of the review it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would note the results of the tendering process for the Civic Centre cleaning once it was completed. The Committee heard that the contract would be retained in-house and have now signed off the review as complete.

### **Scrutiny Reviews**

The Committee has undertaken three scrutiny reviews during the year. These were undertaken initially through small working groups and their recommendations were agreed by the main Committee.

### **Review of the protocol for public representations at the Development Control Committee**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of the protocol for public representations at the Development Control Committee. The protocol was originally introduced in July 2003 for a six month trial period and reviewed in May 2004. It having been in place for over four years it was determined that the protocol could benefit from being reviewed to ensure that it still represented best practice and met the requirements of the public, officers and members.

The Committee set up a working group of Councillors Kennard, McKinney and Mockridge to consider the evidence and produce recommendations. The whole committee heard verbal evidence from:-

- The Chairperson of the Development Control Committee;
- Vice-Chairperson of the Development Control Committee;
- The Executive Head of Planning, Regeneration & Wellbeing;
- The Planning Services Manager;
- Three objectors

The group received written submissions from the Planning Services Manager, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Development Control Committee and the Democratic Services Supervisor. As background reading the group also received the protocols for Chichester District Council, Crawley Borough Council, Guildford Borough Council, Brighton & Hove Council and Worthing Borough Council.

The Working Group's recommendations below were accepted by the O & S Committee and forwarded to the Development Control Committee:-

1. To consider and adopt the amended speaking protocol for the Development Control Committee,
2. To adopt a revised leaflet;
3. The contents and number of letters sent out to applicants and neighbouring properties be revised.
4. That all Councillors receive training on the speaking protocol and how they can support their constituents.
5. That the Schedule of model planning reasons for approval conditions and reasons for refusal be provided to all Councillors.
6. Where there is considerable public interest in a particular item the management of the speakers at the meeting should allow an appropriate number of people in the gallery, the rest of the public should remain outside during the item.

Initially this report went before the Development Control Committee in September 2008, the Committee referred it back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to re-consider.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed the Development Control Committee at its meeting in December that the report stood as their final findings and asked them to consider each recommendation in turn and determine whether to accept, amend or reject.

The Development Control Committee accepted recommendations 3-6 above and deferred 1 and 2 to allow further investigation of the time allowed for speakers at Development Control Committees for objectors, supporters and Councillors.

### **Four Yearly Elections ?**

The review looked into whether Adur District Council should move to four yearly elections. A working group was appointed comprising, Councillors Albury, Graysmark and Hotton.

The Working group consulted with all Members, the Council's Viewpoint Panel and placed an article in the Adur Outlook. The working group heard evidence from:-

- The Executive Head of Legal & Democratic Services,
- The Financial Services Manager,
- The Leader of the Council,
- The Electoral Services Manager

The working group received written submissions from:-

- The Executive Head of Financial Services,
- The Returning Officer,
- Executive Head of Legal & Democratic Services,
- The Electoral Services Manager,
- Lancing Parish Council,
- Two members of the public

The Group's recommendation to the Committee was the retention of the present election cycle by halves every two years to maintain continuity and experience. Council considered the report at their meeting on 21 April 2009 and agreed the recommendations.

### **Civic Awards**

The Chairman of the Council asked if he could set up an 'Adur Residents Civic Award'. The Leader of the Council asked that Overview and Scrutiny carry out an investigation into the criteria for entry, who should judge the award and the prize.

The Committee set up a working group comprising Councillors Albury, Evans and Nicklen.

The group heard from three witnesses;

- (i) the Executive Head of Legal & Democratic Services,
- (ii) the Chairman of the Council
- (iii) the Chief Officer, Adur CVS.

The Committee concluded that

- (i) an informal 'Chairman's award' should be introduced with a maximum of one recipient per year;
- (ii) that the Chairman should determine the recipient;
- (iii) Should the Chairman require assistance to determine the recipient this should be sought from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (iv) The recipient should receive a parchment certificate at the next available Council meeting and an invitation to the Chairman's Civic Event.

The recommendations were considered and accepted by the Leader of the Council.

## **Monitoring outcomes of previous scrutiny reviews**

### **Anti-social Behaviour – What are we doing to prevent it ?**

There were no reports received by the Committee this municipal year. The Committee is to receive the end of year Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) report and next year form a working group to be established to monitor the topics on the CDRP.

### **Review of the Housing Strategy**

The Committee receive a monitoring report every six months. The Committee received a monitoring update report on 27 May 2008 and appointed Councillor Hotton to represent the Committee on the Housing Strategy Working Group. The Committee received a further report updating the members with the on-going monitoring of the Housing Strategy, the amendments were agreed and it was agreed that there is a need for a complete overhaul of the strategy.

### **Review of Transport –Bus Services**

A report was received by the Committee as to the progress made in relation to recommendations arising out of the review of bus provision in the Adur District. The Committee suggested possible locations for real time information as Southlands Hospital and Shoreham High Street, future location of bus service information were suggested and it was felt that sources of alternative funding should be sought regarding the production of a District wide bus service map. The Committee has asked to monitor the actions on a six monthly basis.

### **Review of the Political Management Structure**

On their work programme the Committee had a review of the political management structure item listed. A report from the Executive Head of Legal & Democratic Services was received that advised that the current arrangements appear to be working well and without any major problems it was agreed that no formal review of the structure would be carried out. The Committee agreed to review their Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as part of their work programme for 2009-10.

## **Interviews with Cabinet Members**

All members of the Cabinet were interviewed on the progress of their portfolios.

### **Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council reported to the Committee on 'the state of the area' and the Executive priorities for year 2008/09.

### **Cabinet Member for Improved Customer Services**

At the meeting held on 11 November 2008, the Cabinet Member gave a briefing of her work to date, the details of the following current work was as follows:-

- High Level Business Cases;
- Business Transformation;
- CENSUS;
- Housing Revenue Account;
- Ropetackle;
- Concessionary Fares

Members raised the following concerns:-

- If alternatives to free bus passes under the concessionary fare scheme were currently at risk. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the situation would remain, it was noted that there is very little take up of taxi vouchers or train concessions.
- It was queried as to whether government rules regarding the spending of rental income was a method of incentivising Councils to give up their housing to housing associations. The Cabinet Member stated that this was felt to be the case and the Council was losing approximately £3M annually to the Government, money that could be spent on building new Council housing.
- Are absconders from rental payments being tracked down and payments recovered. The Cabinet Member advised that they were being tracked down through interagency systems and there was a good deal of success in that particular area.
- The significant drop in the performance indicators for Development Control particularly the time taken to process Major Planning applications was discussed. The Executive Head of Planning, Regeneration and Wellbeing answered on behalf of the Cabinet Member. It was explained that the drop in the performance was due in part to the cessation of the Planning Delivery Grant. The end of the Planning Delivery Grant meant that Development Control had lost the financial incentive to concentrate on the time taken to process applications and could instead focus on the quality of work put into each application.

- The disparity between local authorities with reference to the Housing Planning Delivery Grant was queried. The Executive Head advised that Adur had been awarded £72K. The grant was awarded on the basis of strategic housing plans, the rejection of Adur's Core Strategy by the Government earlier in 2008 had affected the grant.
- The incompatibility of ICT systems and general ICT problems was noted as a reoccurring theme of the High Level Business Cases. It was questioned as to whether the CENSUS partnership was fit for purpose. The Cabinet member accepted that there had been technical problems in the past but assured the Committee difficult questions were being asked of service providers and solutions were being sought.

### **Cabinet Member for Resources**

At the meeting of 25 November 2008, the Cabinet Member for Resources provided a briefing of his work to date, current work is detailed as:-

- Budget / Local Taxation;
- Treasury Management;
- ICT;
- Personnel and Staffing;
- Property Management

Members made the following comments:-

- that the joint working arrangements could cause stress and queried with the Cabinet Member as to whether the implementation of the single officer structure was responsible for high levels of sickness absence. The comments were noted, the committee were advised that the statistics relating to sickness absence were currently being looked at and a more detailed study will be available in the near future.

### **Cabinet Member for Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

At the meeting on 22 January 2008, the Cabinet Member for Health, Safety and Wellbeing gave a short presentation to members on the areas of his portfolio, the key areas of work were outlined as:-

- Local Strategic Partnership (LSP);
- Equalities;
- Wellbeing;

The Committee raised the following concerns:-

- During the cross questioning a Councillor stated that under the current economic climate, crime was set to increase, what contingency plans were being made to tackle any increase that may occur ? The Cabinet Member stated that unusually in Adur a rise in crime had not necessarily followed

areas of increased deprivation. Details of successes in this area were outlined.

- The status of the situation with the LSP was queried. The Cabinet Member expressed that the LSP was effective and it was hoped that past success could be built upon for the future.
- The situation regarding the vacancy of the Community Wellbeing Manager was discussed with the Cabinet Member. It was felt that the vacancy should be filled as a matter of urgency.

The Committee considered the appointment of a Community Wellbeing Manager a priority and recommended that the Cabinet ensure this important post is filled without further delay.

The Cabinet considered at their meeting on 26 February 2009 a report which raised the concerns of the Committee with regard to the delay in filling the Community Wellbeing Manager vacancy, it was noted and the Cabinet Member for Health, Safety & Wellbeing advised that the recruitment was underway.

### **Cabinet Member for Regeneration**

At the meeting on 22 January 2009, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration talked through his portfolio areas. The Committee was informed that there is a need for an Economic Development Officer at Adur, this could help address the needs created by deprivation and the current economic crisis.

The Committee raised concerns about:-

- the provision of social housing within the District.
- That some residents in temporary accommodation were being placed in band C instead of band A and questioned the Homelessness department's capacity to cope with the current and possibly increased future levels of homelessness.
- The negative effect of the Credit Crunch upon development projects within the District, particularly council owned buildings earmarked for development that had been boarded up. They asked whether there is a contingency plan in the event of boarded up buildings not being purchased.

That Committee requested that the report on choice based letting comes before the Committee before being sent to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

### **Cabinet Member for Clean, Green and Environment**

At the meeting on 3 March 2009, the Cabinet Member for Clean, Green and Environment talked through his portfolio areas. The Cabinet Member went through each area of his portfolio in turn:-

- Refuse collection and Recycling;
- Street cleaning;
- Street scene;

- Highways liaison;
- Parks and grounds maintenance;
- On and off street parking;
- Public conveniences

The committee raised the following concerns;-

- The percentage of household waste which is still not being recycled. The Cabinet Member explained that the figures did not highlight the large numbers of householders taking part in a highly successful home composting scheme.
- The recycling rates for commercial businesses whose waste accounted for 80% of all refuse. The Cabinet Member relayed to the Committee that the Council collected commercial waste but had no duty to separate recyclables. The Council has begun a pilot scheme to look into the issue but more capital funds were needed to spread the scheme.
- The education of children in schools relating to litter, waste and recycling. The Cabinet member advised that the Council is working with schools to educate children and there was an education centre at the material recovery facility in Ford.
- Whether funds would be made available for the improvement and maintenance of children's play areas within the District. The Cabinet Member commented that a children's play area cost outweighed the Capital budget for the year, the lack of funds would make the update difficult.
- The poor state of the public conveniences in the District. The Cabinet Member stated that although some toilets had been closed due to excessive vandalism, existing public toilets in the District would be maintained on a more regular basis due to the newly signed cleansing of public conveniences contract.
- The Committee questioned on how the new dog control order legislation was going to be enforced. The Cabinet Member noted that the Council is need of an enforcement officer to help prosecute the orders.

## **Other Items**

### **Budget – Finance**

A series of clear and concise reports on the Budget 2009-10 were received by the Committee from the Executive Head of Financial Services. During their consideration members commented on the increase of energy costs and the costs of concessionary fares, especially with visitors coming into the area. The Committee expressed their gratitude for the clear and concise nature of the reports.

The Committee asked the Cabinet to approve a £1,000 budget for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to take meetings out into the community.

## **Dog Fouling – Dog Control Orders**

The Committee received two reports, the first contained the details of the investigation undertaken by the Street Scene Working Group and informed the Committee of the consultation process that was to be undertaken. The second report outlined the outcomes of the informal consultation process carried out and attached a copy of the draft dog control orders. The orders were agreed and referred to the Cabinet Member for Clean and Green to make a decision.

## **The Asset Management Plan**

The Committee received a report asking for comments on the proposed Asset Management plan. The Executive Head of Technical Services advised the committee of the Audit Commission comments relating to the production of Adur's Asset Management Plan and was informed that it was their intention to produce an Asset Management Plan on an annual basis.

Members raised the following concerns:-

1. That there was no quantification of the level of backlog maintenance required;
2. That the new Joint Property Working Group only contained two Councillors;
3. The Council had taken responsibility for allotments in Lancing and Sompting that should be the responsibility of the relevant Parish Councils.

The committee recommended to the Cabinet:-

- (i) That the Council should seek to carry out an initial conditional survey on all of its assets and where necessary take immediate action to resolve any serious maintenance issues;
- (ii) That the relevant Ward Member be invited to any meeting of the Joint Property Management Group in regard to any issues relating to assets in their ward;
- (iii) That Cabinet question the provision of allotments where it is the responsibility of Lancing and Sompting Parish Councils to do so.

The Cabinet noted the recommendations from the committee.

## **The Forward Plan**

At every meeting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the latest edition of the Forward Plan. The contents are noted and should the Committee wish to examine any of the reports prior to a decision being taken on them.

The Committee requested to see two reports during this municipal year:-

- Sheltered Housing Review

- Development Principles Guidance Note for Pond Road

There were other items that were received by the Committee from the Forward Plan:-

- Planned Maintenance Programme;
- Additional Funding for Adur Community Leisure;
- Approval of the Council Corporate Priorities

### **Sheltered Housing Review**

The Committee received a report outlining the modernisation of the Sheltered Housing Service and were asked to make recommendations to the Cabinet.

The following comments were made:-

- The Supported Housing Manager was praised for the good service currently enjoyed by Sheltered Housing residents;
- Concerns were raised over sickness cover under the new proposals. The Manager advised that it was unlikely that a problem would occur and this had been taken into consideration when drawing up the proposals.
- The future financial position of the Scheme managers was discussed. The manager commented that staff will be fully supported with re-accommodation and staff would be paid on a higher scale to balance the loss of non-taxable rent and Council tax free accommodation.
- The Committee proposed that accommodation vacated should be re-absorbed into the sheltered housing scheme and not be considered as general housing stock where possible and practicable.

The following recommendations were made to Cabinet:-

1. that option 2 of the report be adopted;
2. that accommodation vacated by managers within the sheltered housing scheme should be re-absorbed into the Sheltered Housing Scheme and not be considered as general housing stock where possible and practicable;
3. that present Sheltered housing scheme managers should be re-housed unless they wish not to be;
4. that salaries should be of a level to allow a decent wage;
5. that assistance should be given to those scheme managers without their own transport;
6. that the Government be written to detailing expressing concerns regarding future changes to the administration of Sheltered Housing Schemes.

The Cabinet considered the recommendations from the meeting of the Committee and discussed recommendation 2 regarding the use of former scheme manager accommodation. It was felt that, as some of the properties are family sized houses and may be difficult to convert, these should be

reabsorbed into the general housing stock to help meet demand for family homes.

### **Development Principles Guidance Notes for Pond Road**

This item has been delayed and will be received in the municipal year 2009-10.

### **Planned Maintenance Programme**

The Committee considered a report that proposed a five year property, land and equipment plan of maintenance programme commencing in 2009-10.

The Committee felt that it was important that the planned maintenance programme was progressed as soon as possible and that they were kept up-to-date on the progress of the programme. The Executive Head of Technical Services advised that a report would appear before the Committee on an annual basis.

Members queried whether the quotes given within the report were inflated and asked if the Council was getting good value for money. The Executive Head advised that the work is being carried out by contractors. Minor maintenance would be carried out by 'term contractors' who had already competitively tendered for routine maintenance work and been selected based upon price and quality. Larger projects would go out for tender and Officers would seek to get the best deal possible.

The report was recommended to Cabinet, with the inclusion of the Committee being kept up to date on timescales and priorities relating to the planned maintenance programme. This was noted.

### **Additional Funding for Adur Community Leisure**

The Committee received a report asking them to advise Cabinet on their views regarding a request from the Adur Community Trust for additional funding to cover an increase in utility prices.

Members commented on the financial plans not being robust enough at Adur Community Leisure and they had not factored in the likely price rise of a finite resource this was supported by the rest of the Committee. It was commented on that the Council was under no obligation to pay the utility bills of Adur Community Leisure, this was confirmed by the Executive Head of Leisure and Cultural Services.

The Committee recommended to the Cabinet that the Council only agree payment for one year only and in instalments, given the following concerns:

1. that the Council in view of the payment, request full access to the accounts of Adur Community Trust;
2. that the Council has a right to inspect the services provided by Impulse Leisure to make sure that they are in the spirit of the original contract;

3. that the Council take a closer look at the Adur Community Trust's business plan;
4. that the Committee notes the request for funds to hire an external consultant;
5. that the problem of structural integrity of Adur Community Trust buildings be investigated and sensible investments into structural maintenance be explore.

The Cabinet were minded to refuse the request for additional funding for Adur Community Trust and noted the comments made within the report in regard to maintenance.

### **Approval of the Council's Corporate Priorities and Council Corporate Plan**

The Committee received a report that presented to the Committee refreshed corporate priorities. Members heard that the production of the proposed Council's corporate plan had taken into account previous comments made by the Committee and they were congratulated for it's contribution.

Members discussed the priorities and the conversation covered areas such as public art and sustainable transport. The report was noted and observations in relation to priorities 2.3, 1.3 and 3.4 were noted to be included within the action plan for the Corporate Plan.

Cabinet noted the contents of the report and the comments from Overview and Scrutiny and agreed the recommendations.

### **Members Training**

Members of the Committee have been provided with a full training programme, delivered in conjunction with Worthing Borough Council and with particular relevance to Joint Overview Scrutiny Committee work. The programme comprised:

- Module 1 – High Level Business Case and Performance Management
- Module 2 – Introducing Joint Overview and Scrutiny
- Module 3 – Partnership Scrutiny
- Module 4 – Leadership
- Module 5 – Strategies for influence and effective relationship with the Cabinet
- Module 6 – Public, partner and Media Engagement
- Module 7 – Defining Work Programme Priorities

I am delighted to report that the sessions were well attended by eighty percent of Adur's Overview and Scrutiny members and the feedback has been positive for a majority of the modules. Module 6 is to be repeated with an experienced member of the media.

Prior to their meeting on 27 May 2008 the Committee received a briefing on the Overview and Scrutiny function and how the Committee fitted within this.

The Committee received a briefing by the Community Wellbeing Manager prior to their meeting on 15 July 2008 on the Local Area Agreement (LAA) arrangements.

Future training sessions will be looked into and delivered in conjunction with Worthing Borough Council.

### **Work Programme 2009-10**

The Work for 2009-10 will be agreed by Annual Council at its meeting May 2009. The Chairman in consultation with the Executive Head of Corporate Strategy will manage the work programme. This will be done through regular meetings.

The work programme has been drawn up in consultation with all members of the Council and senior officers.

There are plans to get a greater public awareness of the Scrutiny function this will be done through regular e-briefs by the Communications Officer to the press and taking meetings out into the community.

### **The Way Forward 2009 - 2010**

The Overview and Scrutiny has completed a demanding work programme in it's the first municipal year of operating under a Cabinet Political Management Structure.

There have been some areas identified for improvement to enhance the success of Adur's Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

1. Late Reports – late reports unacceptable except in the case of urgent items
2. Agendas – avoid agendas being too lengthy
3. Working Groups – there have been some specific improvements identified in relation to Working Groups, these will be reported separately to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
4. Attendance – the low attendance records of two members of the committee has meant extra workload for the rest – hopefully it should improve in the year ahead.