

Brighton & Hove  
**Scrutiny Service**

# Annual Report 2010/2011



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

# Foreword by Cllr Gill Mitchell

Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

I am very pleased to introduce the 2010/11 Scrutiny Annual Report. In what has been another busy year for scrutiny members, I was delighted that the quality of our work has been recognised by the Centre for Public Scrutiny; the scrutiny service won the Good Scrutiny Award 2011 for Innovation and was runner up for the national Team of the Year Award.

Highlights from the past year have included detailed work looking into services for adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions, the review of the in-year budget reductions and work relating to letting agents. This report aims to provide a succinct summary of scrutiny activity over the year, and looks back over previous years to monitor the impact of previous scrutiny reviews.

Whilst there have been many excellent pieces of work during the year, scrutiny is continuing to develop and respond to the challenges we face as a council and city. This will include providing training for new members, moving to a partnership based scrutiny function and enabling members to contribute to the development of services under Intelligent Commissioning.

Once again it is important, on behalf of all members involved in scrutiny, to thank residents, local partners and witnesses who have so freely given their time over the course of the year. Without their input we could not undertake the work we do.



Cllr Gill Mitchell

# Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11

Welcome to the third annual report of Brighton & Hove's scrutiny service. This report highlights how scrutiny has worked to tackle the major issues facing the city.



## What is scrutiny?

Scrutiny works to drive forward improvements to the council's policies, procedures and service delivery:

### Policy Development

The focus of our panel work is to develop policy. Examples include children and young people's access to culture, renewable energy and support services for victims of sexual violence.

### Decision-making scrutiny

Holding the executive to account is a key part of our role. This is done through reports to committee, Call-in and questioning of cabinet members at scrutiny meetings.

### Pre-decision input

Input on draft policies and strategies before they have been agreed by Cabinet or Council helps ensure they are more robust. It also provides an opportunity for cross-party consensus to be developed on an issue.

### Monitor and track recommendations

Ensuring that panel work results in service improvements is an essential part of the process. Six-monthly and annual reports are produced to show committees what outcomes are being achieved.

The work of the Scrutiny Team includes promoting member workshop sessions, using university expertise to guide our work, asking residents what they want scrutinised, and bringing cabinet members, scrutiny chairs and senior officers together through tripartite working.

## Winner of the 2011 Good Scrutiny Award for Innovation

The national Good Scrutiny Awards were established by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) to:

"...celebrate good practice in public scrutiny and the contribution that non-executives make to achieving transparency, involvement and accountability."

Brighton & Hove's Scrutiny Team won the Good Scrutiny Award for Innovation. CfPS were impressed by:

- Extending the use of academic experts within scrutiny reviews
- Developing a partnership based 'pan-public sector' scrutiny approach
- Non-executives have thought about how to work differently to influence decision-makers

The Scrutiny Team was also runner up in the Team of the Year Award for tackling major local issues.

The CfPS said that:

"Brighton and Hove was a late adopter of the Cabinet and Scrutiny model but in the last three years has developed a reputation for innovation and high quality scrutiny. A key focus has been to improve the way they work, moving towards partnership based scrutiny, complementing rather than duplicating workstreams."

## Cultural Provision for Children and Young People

### Completed November 2010

#### How can children and young people be helped to access the arts?

The Panel commended what was on offer in the city and suggested how to publicise events better, improve venues and include marginalised young people.

#### Key recommendations and achievements:

- ✓ In March 2011 an apprentice began a 6 month post to work on delivering key recommendations of the Panel.
- ▶ Each school should identify a lead person for arts and culture.
- ✓ Now a list of arts contacts at most schools.
- ▶ There should be a single point of contact within the council regarding arts and cultural activities for young people.
- ✓ These activities made a priority for the Commissioner for Culture.
- ▶ The council should set up a dedicated website with information about projects, events and funding opportunities.

- ✓ The council is working with partners to build on Viewfinder - a web based visual arts resource for young people. Continuing work to develop the Express blog, whose users include schools, artists, youth centres and community centres.
- ▶ The council should work with venues in the city to find ways to enable young people to perform in venues with professional type facilities.
- ✓ Developing a training package for venues on working successfully with young people, subject to funding.

## School Exclusions

### Completed June 2010

- ✓ Schools, and council officers working with schools, have been provided with advice and guidance in relation to unofficial exclusion and the use of part-time timetables.
- ✓ The Children Missing Education Officer, within the Attendance Strategy Support Team, monitors those pupils on part time timetables to ensure these are used appropriately as outlined in the guidance.



## Bright Start Nursery Call-in

**October 2010**

Call-ins are a way of challenging decisions taken by the council's executive before they are implemented.

The request for a Call-in was made on the decision to consult on the closure of the Bright Start nursery and whether sufficient consideration had been given to alternative options.

The **Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee (CYPOSC)** resolved not to refer the decision back to the Children and Young People Cabinet Member for reconsideration.



## Sports Facilities Management Contract Workshop

**July 2010**

Members of the **Culture, Tourism & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee (CTEOSC)** were consulted on the tendering process and their input informed both the specification and the contract. Freedom Leisure was awarded the contract from 1st April 2011.

## Children & Alcohol Related Harm

### Completed May 2009

- ✓ The Young Persons Alcohol worker has continued to develop early intervention work, including the police developing links with the ambulance service.
- ✓ Work has been recognised by Alcohol Concern as a case study for a simple cost effective referral process.
- ✓ The Alcohol Worker from the Health Promotions team has worked closely with the council training team to develop and deliver training to staff across the council as well as the wider statutory and voluntary sector.

## Support Services for the Victims of Sexual Violence

### Completed June 2010

Investigated the level of support provided in the city for victims of rape, sexual assault and other serious sexual offences, identifying current support services and gaps in the provision of support.

Recommendations have been taken forward as part of the Intelligent Commissioning pilot into domestic violence.

- ✓ Supporting networking of agencies in women's services sector.
- ✓ Ongoing funding for domestic violence advisor within A&E.

## Intelligent Commissioning Pilots on Domestic Violence, Drugs and Alcohol

### December 2010 & March 2011

Scrutiny has an important role to play within Intelligent Commissioning. Scrutiny Members held workshop sessions on all three pilot areas, discussing the evidence base presented within the needs assessments.

A further session was held on the domestic violence pilot looking at the service priorities, and how the council and partners were intending to respond to evidence of need.

Looking forward, scrutiny involvement in the other two pilot areas will continue - as it will for those areas identified within the city commissioning plan as priorities for action.



## Services for Adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC)

### Completed March 2011

#### How should we respond to the first National Autism Strategy? How can we improve our services?

Local services currently provided for adults with ASC were reviewed, including the transition from children's to adult services. The Panel listened to service users, parents and carers of people with ASC, service providers, third sector organisations, health and criminal justice colleagues.

#### Key recommendations:

- ▶ Training on ASC awareness should be given to as many frontline council staff as possible.
- ▶ There are currently two pathways to diagnosis, either through Mental Health services or Learning Disabilities services, which are not always as well linked as they should be. The Panel would like to see clear and accessible pathways, which work together where appropriate.
- ▶ Families and carers need to be kept more informed about the transition from children's to adult services. Joint working is needed to manage the change as smoothly as possible.
- ▶ Encouraged health colleagues to explore the diagnostic model used in West Sussex.

- ▶ A dedicated team of professionals to support adults with ASC should be set up.
- ✓ An ASC stakeholder group has been set up, including council officers, police, education, and health. This will develop the local response to the National Autism Strategy using the work of this Review as a starting point.

**“Other local authorities should see this innovative piece of work as a model for the inclusive re-design of major strategies.”**

Professor Jeremy Turk, Consultant in Development Psychiatry, Maudsley Hospital; Professor of Developmental Psychiatry, University of London.

**“The panel provided an opportunity to explore in depth concerns with fairness, transparency and without censure. As a result, locally we are now better informed and more able to develop the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a local autism strategy.”**

Diana Bernhardt, Lead Commissioner, Learning Disabilities, NHS Brighton & Hove and Brighton & Hove City Council



## Dementia Strategy

### Completed September 2010

- ✓ Our partners are currently revising the city's dementia strategy, and the Panel's recommendations have been included in the evidence considered.

## GP Health Centre

### Completed July 2009

- ✓ Following the publication of the scrutiny report, NHS Brighton & Hove has ensured that details of all major procurements are available on its website, which will allow concerned members of the public to make their views known about particular plans.



## Dual Diagnosis

Looked at services for people who have both serious substance misuse and mental health problems.

### Completed April 2009

- ✓ Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has developed its own strategy using the Panel's report as a fundamental building block. This strategy has just been approved by the Trust's executive board and will shortly be rolled out across the Trust.

This year the **Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee** worked closely with NHS Brighton & Hove to help it develop its annual operating plan, identifying areas of particular concern in terms of the city's healthcare needs

**"We have a very positive relationship with the Brighton & Hove Scrutiny Team. They provide a constructive challenge to the PCT and continue to develop their services in innovative ways."**

Claire Quigley, Director of Delivery, NHS Brighton & Hove;  
Director of Delivery and QUIPP, Sussex PCT Cluster

# Community involvement

## Working with the local third sector

- ✓ Scrutiny has developed a strong relationship with the local third sector, resulting in the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF) being represented in service commissioning scrutiny workshops and having a co-optee in the scrutiny of the 2011 budget setting process.

## Older People and Community Safety

### Completed in August 2009

- ✓ The Draft Community Safety Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy 2011 – 2014 includes a new section and action plan on older people.
- ✓ Intelligent Commissioning Pilots on Domestic Violence and Alcohol take elder abuse and older people's specific needs into account.

## Staff Disabilities

### Completed in May 2010

A Disabled Workers Forum (DWF) Annual Report is being produced for the first time.

- ✓ Cllr Stephanie Powell, the Chair of CYPOSC, has been appointed as a disability champion.
- ✓ Recommendations used to inform e-learning packages: [Attendance Management](#) (launched), [Recruitment and Selection](#) (being developed) and [e-induction](#) (being revised).
- ✓ Training workshops and courses being run on this issue.

**"I think that the process was very worthwhile. The recommendations were very useful and it was a wonderful opportunity to enable us to communicate our needs to improve our working environment at the council. The recommendations have given us support for improving practices when issues around disability arise for staff. I particularly like the recommendation of acquiring a disability champion which should help us trouble shoot problem areas more swiftly."**

A member of the DWF talking about this Panel

In 2010-11, the [Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee \(ASCHOSC\)](#) invited the CVSF to talk about their experiences of personalisation and problems that they've experienced, on two occasions. On the second occasion, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and key officers were in attendance and committed to meet with the Chief Executive of the CVSF to address the issues raised.

## Letting Agents

### Completed in March 2011

#### What extra charges are Lettings Agents making tenants pay for?

Charges can be made for getting references, carrying out credit checks, providing an inventory and renewing tenancies. Some of these charges were seen as hidden and not providing value for money.

#### Key recommendations for the council include:

- ▶ To develop a local letting agents' accreditation scheme.
- ▶ Launching an information pack for private sector tenants, highlighting letting agents' good practices and procedures.
- ▶ Ensuring that the current landlords' accreditation scheme provides advice on choosing letting agents. To include an explanation that letting agents deriving most of their income from tenant charges may not be acting in the best interests of landlords.
- ▶ Consider including details of homes to let by accredited letting agents in its Homemove lettings scheme web pages/ magazine alongside council and housing association properties.

## Students in the Community

### Completed in February 2009

- ✓ The council has developed a detailed Student Housing Strategy which addresses the majority of the recommendations to come out of the scrutiny study. It sets out a strategic approach for the supply and management of student housing in the city, to ensure that students are integrated into established residential communities in ways that do not unbalance local population structures and housing markets.



## Renewable Energy Potential

**Completed April 2011**

**What can be done to encourage the growth of renewable energy in the city?**

The Panel found that growing this sector would retain money in local economy, tackle fuel poverty, create jobs and improve skills.

**Key recommendations include:**

- ▶ Develop a city wide sustainable energy programme.
- ▶ Establish a team or agency to focus on sustainable energy.
- ▶ Carry out a heat mapping exercise to identify opportunities for district heating.
- ▶ A sustainable energy publicity campaign.
- ▶ A programme to enable community based sustainable energy.

## Climate Change Adaptation

**Completed in July 2010** – the work of this Panel won the CfPS 2011 Good Scrutiny Awards for ‘Innovation’

- ✓ The findings of this Panel are being fed into the city's revised Climate Change Action Plan.
- ✓ A Local Climate Impact Profile has been undertaken.
- ✓ Work on the city's Surface Water Management Plan is progressing.
- ✓ The City Sustainability Partnership's ‘Big Asks’ of the Strategic Director of Place and the new council administration included: “Leadership on climate change adaptation planning, including and beyond public services, with an emphasis on community engagement to improve resilience to severe weather impacts.”
- ✓ Climate Change impacts and adaptation feature in the ‘State of the City’ and ‘State of the Local Environment’ reports.
- ✓ Active consideration is being given to updating the council's Strategic Risk Register to include a new risk on severe weather.

**“Chairing [this]... panel for Brighton & Hove City Council was a valuable and rewarding experience”**

Professor Gordon MacKerron, Director of the Sussex Energy Group – University of Sussex

## Environmental Technologies

### Completed January 2010

- ✓ Officer appointed in 2010 to encourage business growth and retention in the key local sectors of Environmental Industries and Creative Industries. Working closely with partners and businesses, this officer has helped the Brighton and Hove Chamber of Commerce to establish a Green Business group. An action plan is being developed, using the findings of the Scrutiny Panel, which includes the formation of an Environmental Industries Partnership.
- ✓ Recent updates of strategies including the City Employment and Skills Plan have taken account of this sector.
- ✓ The city's successful Future Jobs Fund apprenticeship scheme included 100 recycling and environmental jobs.

## Winter Service Plan

### Completed March 2010

- ✓ Communication with residents during the severe winter weather during 2010/11 was vastly improved compared to 2009/10.
- ✓ Scrutiny recommendations regarding up-to-date information and guidance on the liability of residents clearing paths and pavements also helped ensure that the city was better able to cope with the snow.





## Local Transport Plan (LTP3) workshop

January 2011

Transport policy was considered at an informal workshop for the Environment and Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee (ECSOSC). Members received copies of the LTP3 strategy and delivery plan in draft form and heard a presentation from senior officers.

The Committee fed comments into the strategy development process, focussing on key issues such as road safety, vehicle speeds, air and noise pollution, response to severe weather, smart ticketing (Oyster cards), street lighting efficiency, freight operations, bus route maps and the new responsibility for road classification.



## Street Access Issues

Completed March 2010

- ✓ Licensed premises have to leave a minimum agreed pavement width for pedestrian access. A rule of one A-board per business has been enforced. Licensing zones extended to London Road and Church Road for 2011-12.
- ✓ A trial programme of marking the positions of tables, chairs and A-boards started in May and it is planned to have the majority of licensed sites marked by October 2011.
- ✓ Met with police, Cityclean and civil enforcement officers. Agreed to produce a data sheet so that any officer can check extent of each licensed area. Data sheets can be accessed by members of the public as well as council officers.
- ✓ Where traders' items are in breach of licence conditions two written warnings should be issued. Upon the third occasion of breach of licence, immediate confiscation by council officers should be undertaken. Since July 2010:
  - 84 first warnings have been issued
  - Seven second warnings
  - Four A - Boards have been confiscated

## 20mph Speed Limits/Zones

### Completed April 2010

- ✓ Progress in implementing the recommendations is tied into the development of the LTP3.
- ✓ Citywide Speed Limit Review (Non A&B Class Roads) pilot study on three trial areas in different parts of the city is now complete.
- ✓ Officers are preparing to present the report seeking Cabinet Member approval to consult on implementing its recommendations within those areas. At that meeting approval is also being sought to continue the review using the same methodology.

## Parking Call-in

### October 2010

This Call-in was held to determine whether to ask the Environment Cabinet Member to reconsider the decision in relation to the Hanover & Elm Grove Resident Parking Scheme Review Community Consultation. The decision was made to neither refer the decision back nor make recommendations to the Environment Cabinet Member.

## Pedestrian Crossings

Following concerns from residents, the **Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ECSOSC)** pushed for a more transparent and easier to understand method of prioritising pedestrian crossings.

An up to date scoring system has now been developed that takes into account residents' fear of crossing busy roads and public perception of dangerous roads; a report with the revised methodology will be taken for the approval of the Cabinet Member for Environment.



## In-Year Budget Reductions

### Completed in December 2010

How might the planned in-year budget reductions affect council services?

The aim was to help improve how future budgets are set.

### Key recommendations include:

- ▶ Consulting on service changes.
- ▶ Agreed priorities for services.
- ▶ Partnership working.
- ▶ Monitoring the on-going and longer-term impact of budget reductions.
- ▶ Closer working with the city's Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF).

### Outcomes achieved to date:

- ✓ Council maintaining close links with the CVSF.
- ✓ For future years – assessing the equality impact, as well as consultation and engagement, will be part of the commissioning process.
- ✓ Consultations on risk and opportunity management will be included in relevant committee reports.

- ✓ Recommendations taken into account in partnership working about collective financial challenges (eg joint use of buildings and collaborative procurement).
- ✓ Recommendations taken into account in the Intelligent Commissioning Framework and partnership working.

## Engaging with the community

We have been expanding the ways the Scrutiny Team communicates and engages. This includes:

- ▶ A scrutiny Twitter account has been created to promote scrutiny committee and panel work and receive suggestions for scrutiny topics. [@BHScrutiny](#)
- ▶ A quarterly newsletter on scrutiny activity which goes to all Members, senior officers and partner organisations and is on our webpages.
- ▶ All [Overview and Scrutiny Commission \(OSC\)](#) meetings are webcast and stored on the website.
- ▶ Website improvements and up to date information about the progress of panels and all scrutiny committee meetings can be found on our webpages.

# The Scrutiny Team

## Who are we?

- **Tom Hook**  
Head of Scrutiny (01273 29-1110)
- **Giles Rossington**  
Senior Scrutiny Officer, HOSC, ASCHOSC (29-1038)
- **Mary van Beinum**  
Scrutiny Officer, ESCOSC, OSC (29-1062)
- **Julia Riches**  
Scrutiny Officer, CTEOSC (29-1084) Part time
- **Karen Amsden**  
Scrutiny Officer, CTEOSC (29-1084) Part time
- **Sharmini Williams**  
Scrutiny Officer, CYPOSC (29-0451)
- **Kath Vlcek**  
Scrutiny Officer, ASCHOSC (29-0450) Part time

## Working with our Universities

The 'University Challenge' a study by the Centre for Public Scrutiny has included the recent collaboration between us and the city's universities as a case study. This work includes:

- Dr Adrian Smith, from University of Sussex, who brought his knowledge of community energy to chair a Panel on realising the potential for renewable energy in the city.
- A final year student undertaking an internship in the Team.



# Looking forward to 2011-12

## Review how we work

We will be reviewing the scrutiny structure and ways of working, in order to:

- Become more partnership focused.
- Increase resident involvement in the work of scrutiny.
- Streamline but increase the value added by scrutiny.

The aim is to:

- Increase democratic accountability and input to organisations within the city.
- Review service provision in areas of weakness or priority areas for intervention.
- Act as a mechanism for innovative policy development.
- Provide a means for increased community involvement in decision making and service review.
- Offer a mechanism for the independent review of issues of contention between organisations.

“CVSF believes the scrutiny process is a key mechanism for influencing decision making and for enabling the voice and experience of CVSF members to be heard. It has been an absolute privilege to work with the Scrutiny Team and CVSF hopes to continue its involvement in scrutiny on behalf of its members.”

Sally Polanski, CEO,  
Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF)



## Get involved

There are many ways in which you can get involved in Scrutiny. This can be done by:

- 1. Attending a meeting** – All Scrutiny Committee Meetings are open to the public. Please look at our website to see the dates, times and venues of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting:  
<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1211354>
- 2. Consultation** – During the evidence gathering stage of a review, a range of stakeholders will be consulted with. Details of the consultation will appear on our web pages or in a variety of other formats such as in the local newspaper.
- 3. Tell us your views** – Please contact us if you have an idea for a Scrutiny review or if you would like to contribute to a current review.

### Suggesting a topic for scrutiny

If you have an issue that you think we should look at, or suggestions for future work, there are different ways to tell us about them. These include:

- Contact the Scrutiny Team
- Speak to your local councillor
- Look out for our annual consultation programme, where you can suggest a topic for a future scrutiny review

To help you when thinking of suggestions, we have listed some questions for you to think about.

- Is this an important issue for local people?
- Are there new laws or rules that might affect a service?
- Is this a poorly performing service? Have there been complaints about the service?
- Has the service overspent or underspent its budget?

### How to contact us

Email us: [scrutiny@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Follow us on Twitter: [@BHScrutiny](https://twitter.com/BHScrutiny) to find out about our meetings, give evidence to us, suggest reviews or tell us what you are up to.

Write to us:

Scrutiny Team, Room 128 King's House,  
Grand Avenue, Hove BN3 2LS

Telephone us on 01273 291084

Visit our website:

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1247215>

# Brighton & Hove Scrutiny Service

■  
124



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**