

# Scrutiny in Gloucestershire – making a difference

---

Annual report 2008-09



**Gloucestershire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

# Contents



	<b>1 Foreword</b>	3
	<b>2 Our vision for scrutiny</b>	5
	<b>3 Where did scrutiny come from?</b>	6
	<b>4 Making the links – how does scrutiny relate to wider council structures and beyond?</b>	7
	<b>5 Achievements in 2008-09</b>	8
	5.1 Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee	
	5.2 Budget and Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
	5.3 Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
	5.4 Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
	5.5 Great Western Ambulance Joint Health Scrutiny Committee	
	<b>6 Scrutiny task groups in 2008-09</b>	21
	6.1 Ambulance services in rural districts	
	6.2 Civil parking enforcement	
	6.3 Community support to older people	
	6.4 Council plan & budget consultation	
	6.5 Excess winter mortality	
	6.6 Forest of Dean area speed limit	
	6.7 Planning and flood risk	
	6.8 Standards for better health care	
	6.9 Wingmoor Farm	
	<b>7 Taking scrutiny forward in 2009-10</b>	30
	<b>8 Scrutiny support</b>	31

# 1 Foreword

**Councillor Rob Garnham**

Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

As Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee, I am pleased to present the annual report for 2008-09.

We changed the style of our annual report last year and we are following the same approach again this year. Although the report will be presented to the full council meeting on 22 April 2009, I hope that the information will also be a useful guide for members of the public and for the new councillors joining the county council following the June elections. For that reason I have included some background on scrutiny which I hope you will find useful.

Unsurprisingly last year's report was dominated by the Summer flooding and the subsequent scrutiny inquiry into the lessons learnt and what could have been done better. The action plan resulting from the inquiry is being taken forward by a range of organisations including the public utility companies, the emergency services, the county council and the district councils and we have been keeping a close eye on progress over the last year.

I am particularly pleased that public utility companies continue to work with the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee to provide updates on the recommendations made.



Regular reports on the progress of the secondary piped water supply to the county, briefings from the Environment Agency and visits to our electricity supply companies have all helped in ensuring future resilience to emergency situations.

Working with partners is fundamental to strengthening the scrutiny process and it was particularly pleasing that more than 120 people came along to the first county-wide scrutiny conference in October 2008. Members and officers from the six district councils and the county council were in attendance together with representatives from Gloucestershire Police Authority and the Audit Commission.

The joint scrutiny work carried out by our Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee together with other health scrutiny committees in the region again illustrates the success of collaboration in scrutiny.

This year has provided an opportunity for scrutiny to look at a wide range of other issues affecting the lives of people in Gloucestershire. I would like to thank the chairs of the scrutiny committees, Councillors Dennis Andrewartha, Stephen McMillan and Andrew Gravells, and the members of each committee for their efforts during the year. The support, help and yes, challenges, from the lead members on Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee, Councillors Maureen Rutter and Bill Crowther must also be recognised. And I thank them for their work.

The scrutiny team of Simon Harper, Andrea Clarke and Jo Bolton have once again provided an outstanding service and I thank them for another year of dedication, hard work and enthusiasm for scrutiny. I must also pay tribute to Richard Thorn who left the team this year. Richard's work on the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and in the scrutiny inquiries following the Summer emergencies in 2007 was a major contribution to the success of those reviews and we wish him well in his new role. We welcome Elizabeth Power to the team and we send Jo off on maternity leave with our very best wishes.

I must also say thank you to Margaret Sheather who continues to provide wise counsel and guidance to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee.

As we prepare for a new council following the June elections I fully recognise that taking scrutiny forward will not be an easy task. Meeting individual members' wishes and remembering that scrutiny is here to provide both overview and scrutiny will be paramount.

Although there are still matters affecting the scrutiny process to be resolved I believe there have been real successes in the past year and I hope you will agree after reading the following pages that effective scrutiny can make, and indeed has made, a real difference to the lives of people in Gloucestershire.

Finally, the key issues for each committee are set out in the sections that follow but it should be remembered that this is only a snapshot of the work that has been undertaken by councillors and officers during the year.

**Councillor Rob Garnham**

*Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee*

## Our vision for scrutiny

**Peter Bungard, Chief Executive**

**Margaret Sheather, Group Director Community & Adult Care**  
Scrutiny lead on the Chief Officers' Management Team



**In July 2007, Gloucestershire was hit by some of the worst flooding in living memory. Not only were homes and businesses flooded and roads closed but vital services such as water and electricity were seriously disrupted. Gloucestershire County Council along with the emergency services was at the centre of responding to the emergency and, in the months that followed, the council led a scrutiny inquiry into the lessons learnt and what could have been done better.**

The inquiry process was recognised as an example of best practice at the Centre for Public Scrutiny's annual conference in June 2008 and features in their 2008 guide to successful scrutiny.

You will see from the following pages that there have been further examples of outstanding scrutiny during 2008-09.

One such example is the Great Western Ambulance Joint Health Scrutiny Committee involving five neighbouring local authorities. The work of this committee in scrutinising ambulance response times and related issues is led by Councillor Andrew Gravells, Chairman of our Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

We greatly value the role of scrutiny and recognise that it is fundamental to achieving our vision of 'working together to improve the quality of life for Gloucestershire people'. We continually strive to deliver improved services that provide choice and value for money. To achieve our vision and improve people's lives we need to ensure that the scrutiny process:

- :: Provides a strong voice in identifying areas of under-performance or local concern
- :: Focuses on those areas that matter to local people
- :: Holds service providers (including the council) to account for their decisions, actions and policies
- :: Makes recommendations to improve existing policies and influence emerging policies of the council and its partners

We are not complacent about scrutiny and recognise that there are aspects of the present process that can be strengthened. For this reason we are committed to ongoing review of our scrutiny arrangements to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and amongst the best in local government.



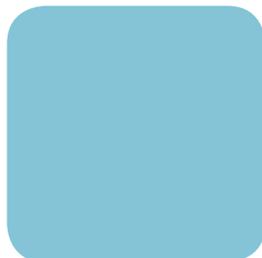
# 3 Where did scrutiny come from?

**Scrutiny resulted from the *Local Government Act 2000* and was part of a series of reforms to the way councils operate. It was intended to strengthen local democracy, bring councils closer to the communities they serve and support frontline councillors in leading and representing their communities.**

Local authorities were required to revisit their existing decision-making processes and reform traditional committee structures to separate the executive (decision-making) and non-executive (scrutiny) roles. This is intended to provide:

- :: **Greater efficiency** – As a direct result of a small executive or cabinet (of no more than 10 councillors) where individuals have executive powers and can therefore act more quickly and respond to the needs of the community.
- :: **Improved transparency and accountability in the decision-making process** – Local people can clearly identify who is responsible and who should be held to account for any decisions taken.
- :: **A stronger role for frontline councillors** – Councillors can review existing policy and the formulation of future policy. They also have a duty to question and evaluate the impact of decisions and actions of the executive.
- :: **Improved community leadership** – As a result of spending less time in committee meetings and more time in their communities, frontline councillors are better able to represent the views of their local communities.

Through the *Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007* and the *Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Bill 2008*, the government has signalled its intention to strengthen the role of scrutiny. A new power entitled ‘councillor call for action’ became effective from 1 April 2009. This allows councillors to request that issues of local concern are considered by scrutiny committees. New powers are also being introduced to allow local authorities to scrutinise the activities of partner organisations to ensure that the scrutiny process is more ‘joined-up’ in addressing the concerns of local people.



## Making the links - how does scrutiny relate to wider council structures and beyond?

**The effects of the actions of Gloucestershire County Council are felt far and wide. In addition, the actions of our partners in turn impact upon us and our ability to deliver services. We therefore recognise that not only do we need to have effective and robust internal systems of governance in place through full council, the cabinet and scrutiny committees, but we also need to be developing clear links and accountability arrangements with our partners.**

### **Local Area Agreement (LAA)**

The Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA) is an agreement between the government and a partnership of local public and voluntary organisations. It is led by Gloucestershire County Council through the Gloucestershire Conference. It aims to make services more effective and efficient by promoting agencies working together, streamlining funding arrangements, simplifying inspection and reducing bureaucracy. The LAA is built around the following five blocks: safer & stronger communities, healthier communities & older people, children & young people, economic development & enterprise and the natural & built environment.

### **Full council**

The council is made up of 63 elected members who are democratically accountable to the people living in the divisions they represent. Full council is responsible for a number of functions including setting the annual budget and council tax. There are seven scheduled meetings each year. These provide an opportunity for both members of the public and elected members to direct questions to the Leader of the Council and members of the cabinet.

### **Cabinet**

Gloucestershire has a single party cabinet made up of the Leader of the Council and nine cabinet members who are responsible for providing the overall policy direction of the council. Cabinet members have areas of responsibility covering community & adult care, services to children & young people, environment & economy, communications, community safety and resources. The cabinet is responsible for taking decisions on the executive functions of the council. It proposes the policy framework and the budget to full council.

### **Scrutiny committees**

Those members of the council who do not serve on the cabinet have the opportunity to sit on scrutiny committees. Scrutiny committees form an integral part of a modern system of local democracy through their specific work in policy development, reviewing under-performance and holding cabinet members to account for their actions. They provide more opportunities for public involvement and are well placed to address issues of local concern, including those relating to services provided by partner organisations.

# Achievements in 2008-09

## Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee



**Councillor Rob Garnham**

Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

Lead members Cllr Bill Crowther  
and Cllr Maureen Rutter



The committee is responsible for coordinating the activities of the three overview & scrutiny committees to ensure the efficient use of time and resources. The committee commissions scrutiny task groups (with the exception of any set up by the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee) and ensures that they have clear terms of reference. It is responsible for receiving and determining responses to call-ins of cabinet decisions.

### Key areas of activity

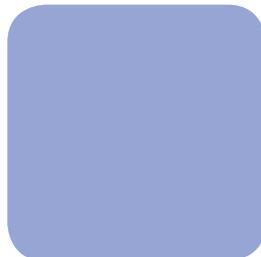
#### Summer emergency 2007

- :: The committee continued to monitor progress against the action plan arising from the scrutiny inquiry:
  - Report summarising progress 'one year on' – July 2008
  - Visit to the National Grid Control Centre – August 2008
  - Update from Severn Trent Water on their plans to provide an alternative water supply for the county – December 2008
  - Report from the Local Resilience Forum Infrastructure Group – December 2008
  - Visit to the Central Networks Control Centre – February 2009
  - Report from the Future Resilience Programme Board on progress – March 2009
- :: **Joint Improvement Board** – The committee invited representatives from the Joint Improvement Board to attend meetings to allow members to understand their work programme and identify risks to the county council.
- :: **Scrutiny task group monitoring** – A new reporting process was introduced for monitoring the recommendations from task groups. In future, progress will be reported against each recommendation after 6, 12 and 18 months. This new process is already providing real benefits in ensuring that recommendations made are actually followed through and not left unadopted. Hopefully members will now see the positive results of their hard work in scrutiny and the successful implementation of their recommendations.
- :: **Call-in** – The cabinet decision to delegate specific matters to the South West Fire Authorities Regional Management Board was called in and after detailed consideration, was upheld.
- :: **Post implementation review** – The cabinet decision relating to the draft outline business case for residual waste procurement was subject to a post implementation review by the committee.

- :: **Local Involvement Network (LINK) protocol** – A protocol was approved for dealing with referrals to the overview & scrutiny committees.
- :: **Scrutiny task groups** – Please refer to section 6 for more detailed information relating to the following reviews:
  - Planning & flood risk – July 2008
  - Community support to older people – September 2008
  - Council plan & budget – December 2008 & January 2009
  - Civil parking enforcement – January 2009
  - Forest of Dean area speed limit – January 2009

### What's coming up?

- :: **The Summer emergency 2007** – A great deal of work has been undertaken but the committee continues to have an important role in ensuring that the council and its partners deliver on future projects to improve future resilience.
- :: **Scrutiny task group monitoring** – Now that a new reporting system has been introduced it is essential that the committee continues to check that action is taken in response to scrutiny recommendations.
- :: **Local area agreement scrutiny** – With new legislative powers introduced to scrutinise the local area agreement from 1 April 2009, the committee will need to consider how these can be taken forward with partners.




---

### Committee membership

**Councillors** – Dr John Cordwell, Bill Crowther, Bill Evans, Rob Garnham, Andy Gravells, Tim Harman, Diane Hibbert, Stephen McMillan, Maureen Rutter, Klara Sudbury & Kathy Williams

### Officer contacts

**Simon Harper, Scrutiny Team Leader**  
 simon.harper@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
 01452 425230

**Joanne Bolton, Scrutiny Adviser**  
 joanne.bolton@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
 01452 425075

# Achievements in 2008-09

## 5.2 Budget and Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Dennis Andrewartha**  
Chairman

Lead members Cllr Tim Harman  
and Cllr Bruce Hogan



**The role of the committee is to ensure that the council is performing as expected against the priorities set out in the council plan, and that the budget is being managed effectively to ensure that resources are used efficiently and that the council is achieving value for money.**

The committee has again had a challenging year given the breadth of its remit, the significant issues that have arisen during the year and the associated large agendas that go alongside this. It did in fact become clear as the year went on that the committee could not do justice to the totality of its agenda. Members have particular concerns with regard to services areas within the Community and Adult Care and Environment Directorates, and that in trying to manage such a wide remit the ability to do in-depth overview has been lost. The committee hopes that its concerns will be addressed within the new council, and the ongoing review of scrutiny.

### Key areas of activity

- :: **Waste management** – This is an area of significant risk to the council and has therefore been a major part of the committee’s agenda this year. The committee spent time both in understanding the impact and process of the residual waste project, and how the council works with the district councils to manage and develop recycling.

We met with representatives from the Gloucestershire Waste Partnership in January 2009 to discuss recycling. Whilst recognising that there is much work in progress, including the application to DEFRA to become a joint waste authority, we do feel that there is still work that can be undertaken with our district colleagues, and hope to take this matter forward in the new council year.

- :: **Joint working** – Aspects of our joint working, not only in the area of waste, may benefit from joint scrutiny task group working with the district councils, and I am pleased to note that the committee’s request for changes to the constitution to accommodate this type of work has been taken forward by the Constitution Committee.
- :: **‘Building our future’ programme** – This project has a pivotal role in how this council manages the funding gap in its budget. The committee received an initial presentation on this matter in March 2009 and in the new council will need to consider how best the overview and scrutiny function can engage with this project.

- :: **Low performing indicators** – Members of the committee expressed concern that some areas which were under performing at the start of this council year are still doing so. Whilst we are confident that senior officers are aware of these issues and have put in place measures to address them, members of the committee are minded to request that in the new council the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee re-commission the Low Performing Indicators Task Group so that members can better support officers in their endeavours to address these issues.
- :: **Safeguarding** – The committee had some concern around performance on ‘safeguarding’ our children and young people and supports the work that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has undertaken to investigate this area.
- :: **Performance and budget reports** – The content of the performance reports has improved considerably, so that we are better able to identify both areas of concern and good practice. However we are concerned about the lack of meaningful up to date budget information the committee receives and in the new council we would wish to see how this can be improved. We concur with the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee’s concerns with regard to the ability of performance indicators to inform on quality rather than just process. The committee would wish to pursue this matter in the new council.
- :: **Community and adult care** – The committee met with the Lead Cabinet Member Community and Adult Care to discuss the one star rating for adult services, and to understand the reasons behind the decision to apply for leave to go to judicial review.

Whilst the committee understood the lead cabinet member’s reasons, members did feel that it is important that the recommendations from the inspection report are taken forward and will be monitoring the action plan that the directorate has put into place. In addition the committee felt that the lack of dedicated overview and scrutiny of this directorate should be of concern to the council.

- :: **Impact of the recession on the local economy** – Members of the committee raised concerns as to what impact the recession could have on the county council and the wider Gloucestershire community, and requested that a seminar for all members of council be held to respond to these concerns. This event took place in December 2008.



## What's coming up?

- :: **Residual waste** – The significance of this waste project for the council means that this will continue to be a significant part of the committee's work.
  - :: **'Building our future' programme** – The potential impact of this project means that the committee will need to include regular monitoring in its work programme.
  - :: **Adult 'safeguarding'** – Members of the committee wish to raise awareness of this among all councillors.
  - :: **Gloucestershire Unified System (GUS)** – The committee needs to continue to track whether this system is achieving the projected level of savings.
  - :: **Procurement** – The committee needs to understand whether the objectives and projected savings are being achieved.
  - :: **Performance indicators** – The committee will advise on how to develop indicators that measure and therefore inform on the quality of service delivery.
  - :: **Budget** – The committee requires far more dynamic budget data in order to fulfil its scrutiny potential in being a critical friend of the cabinet.
- 

## Committee membership

Councillors Dennis Andrewartha, Basil Booth, Mavis Lady Dunrossil, Charles Fellows, Stephen Glanfield, Tim Harman, Bruce Hogan, Steve McHale, Deryck Nash, Shaun Parsons & David Prince

## Officer contact

**Andrea Clarke, Senior Scrutiny Adviser**  
andrea.clarke@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425237

# Achievements in 2008-09

## Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Stephen McMillan**  
Chairman

**Lead members Cllr Charmian Sheppard  
and Cllr Maureen Rutter**



**The committee is responsible for examining specific issues relating to the activities of the Children and Young People Directorate and associated agencies.**

In 2008-09, the committee decided to focus on the outcomes from the joint area review (JAR) regarding our approach to vulnerable children, and our ongoing performance monitoring role. The JAR highlighted specific areas of concern and we wanted to be sure that Gloucestershire was placed to respond to these concerns and help put the council in a position where it is delivering the best services that it can to our children, young people and their families.

Given that 'safeguarding' is always a major concern for elected members and members of the public alike we felt that taking this year to do this detailed work was a valuable investment of our time. We managed this through paring our agenda down to (mainly) single issue meetings around the 'safeguarding' agenda.

I must thank all the officers, both at the director level and the operational level, and representatives from our partners, who took the time to come and speak to us and help us explore these issues. We greatly benefited from their input.

### Key areas of activity

#### What did we find?

- :: It became clear that the council benefits enormously from having dedicated members of staff who are committed to delivering the best services that they can.
- :: There is a huge amount of work underway to ensure that we have a more integrated workforce, and we are moving towards locality hubs where professionals are co-located to enable a more holistic approach to service delivery. These are essentially a one-stop shop to cover the needs of our vulnerable children and their families. This will move the council towards a proactive, as opposed to reactive, approach to service delivery. It supports the ongoing aim of early intervention so that children and families get the right services at the right time and will hopefully give better long term outcomes for everyone. We fully support this approach and suggest that this way of working continues to be pursued.

- :: A key part of achieving early intervention is the ongoing commitment to the implementation of the common assessment framework (CAF) across the county. This is a key tool in the identification of need and the budget holding lead professional work. We saw evidence of how the combination of these two key mechanisms has the capability to dramatically improve people's lives, with the added benefit of not incurring a large financial cost to the council.
- :: Professionals must not lose sight of the need to talk with each other rather than relying on systems. The potential to get more value for money from the budget holding lead professional work is an approach that should be progressed with vigour.
- :: The support to our looked after children has been greatly enhanced by the innovation of the virtual school, where the overarching desire is to raise the aspirations of our looked after children. The committee agreed that exam results are already indicating that the school is having a positive effect. We were pleased to hear that the school has generated a lot of interest both nationally and internationally. Councillors should engage with and actively support the virtual school in their role as corporate parents.
- :: The committee was concerned by the news of the tragedy of Baby P, and agreed that the focus of our last two meetings should be specifically on 'safeguarding' and how Gloucestershire's services are placed. We were disappointed that Lord Laming's report was not available in time for us to see how our services sat against his findings, so instead looked at the outcomes of the stock take work commissioned by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.
- :: The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership stock take was clear that there are key strengths (for example clear leadership and oversight) in the work undertaken to safeguard our children and families. But there are also weaknesses that must be addressed. For example clarification of safeguarding arrangements for services which are commissioned or procured like housing and leisure. The partnership have made a series of recommendations to address these issues, and there is a clear agreement across all partners that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- :: We were very pleased to hear of the work being undertaken to develop the Gloucestershire Public Protection Bureau, which is being led by Gloucestershire Constabulary, which will co-locate agencies, enable multi agency working, and support better information sharing. We agreed that we will look at the bureau again in 12 months to see whether evidence demonstrates that it is starting to make a difference to people's lives.
- :: We do have concerns that the council continues to have problems with the recruitment and retention of social workers, particularly for children. We do not underestimate the level of risk that this situation carries, and will continue to monitor this closely. The committee believes that significant effort should be made to engage with and enthuse potential recruits locally in the county, particularly through the University of Gloucestershire.
- :: Whilst we welcome the move to integrated working it will require not only organisational changes but also cultural changes, both of which carry serious risks.
- :: A concern has been that there are many lessons learned from the serious case reviews carried out in Gloucestershire, but there is little evidence that learning is embedded in working practice. It is imperative that lessons learned are completely embedded within working practice such that they become the norm, and that audit procedures are implemented to test that this happens.

## Performance

- :: On the whole we agree that there is good performance against the majority of the indicators relating to children and young people and where performance may be of concern, we have confidence that officers are aware of this and have put in place appropriate action to address the situation.
- :: Home to school transport and out of county placement costs continue to be of concern from a budgetary perspective and the committee will continue to monitor these closely. We are however pleased to note that the ongoing work to address the number of permanent exclusions is having an effect and they are starting to reduce.
- :: However, the committee has become increasingly concerned that the performance indicators we are required to report on, whilst helping us to understand how robust, or not, our processes are, do not tell us anything about the quality of those services. Members of the committee feel strongly that quality of service is very important and that we should be looking at how we can develop indicators that give a better view of service delivery, one that is more holistic.

## Excess school balances

In November 2008 we held a meeting to look at how the Gloucestershire Schools' Forum implemented 'claw back' of excess school balances. This meeting was held in response to not only our own concerns, but also the concerns of the schools' community.

We found that the process had been flawed and following receipt of our recommendations the Lead Cabinet Member for Services to Children and Young People chose not to 'claw back' excess school balances in this financial year.

We sent recommendations to the Gloucestershire Schools' Forum on how the process may be improved in the future, and also made recommendations to the relevant group directors.

## What's coming up?

- :: The committee must continue to work to ensure that 'safeguarding' procedures are robust.
- :: The post 14 agenda and the impact of the transferring of responsibility from the Learning and Skills Council to the council for 16-19 education is a considerable challenge. It is not clear how the authority will be positioned to deal with this burden particularly the potential added cost of administration.
- :: Ongoing work into the development of integrated working and locality hubs.
- :: Continued monitoring across the board with a particular focus on out of county placements, home to school transport, and the recruitment and retention of social workers.





### **Committee membership**

**County councillors** – Phil Awford, Barbara Cromwell, Graham Dawson, Mavis Lady Dunrossil, Stephen McMillan, Antonia Noble, Brian Oostuysen, Maureen Rutter, Charmian Sheppard, Pam Tracey & Bill Whelan

**Added members** – John Kyffin (Roman Catholic Diocese) & Ian Richings (special schools' parent governor). There are currently vacancies for primary schools' parent governor, secondary schools' parent governor and the Church of England Diocese representative. These positions will be filled in readiness for the new council in June 2009.

### **Officer contact**

**Andrea Clarke, Senior Scrutiny Adviser**  
andrea.clarke@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425237

# Achievements in 2008-09

## Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Andrew Gravells**  
Chairman



**Vice-chairman Ray Apperley**

**The Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee's responsibilities are set out in law, and cover areas related to health services and health issues. It does this by reviewing, constructively challenging, and monitoring local health related services, particularly those provided and commissioned by the NHS.**

The committee also plays an important role in reviewing any proposals for significant changes to NHS services, in order to ensure that adequate consultation takes place, and that the proposals lead to improvements to local services. It is the only council committee which has the legal power to directly refer issues to government for reconsideration.

### Key areas of activity

- :: **Performance** – The committee has monitored the performance of NHS Gloucestershire against a number of key national targets including the 18 week waiting time for inpatient and outpatient treatment, cancer waiting time, 'choose and book' utilisation and ambulance response times
- :: **Support for carers** – The committee has reviewed the implementation of the carers' strategy during 2008, assisting in monitoring the delivery of the strategy through ongoing scrutiny of the agency action plans.
- :: **Transport to NHS services** – The committee reviewed the impact of its 2005 report into transport to NHS services in May 2008. The report brought together responses from NHS Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Hospitals' NHS Foundation Trust and the county council's integrated transport unit. Significant progress had been made against many of the issues highlighted by the committee in 2004. Improvements have been made in partnership working and in bus routes to hospital sites.
- :: **Access to NHS dentistry** – The committee considered the current situation regarding access to NHS dentists in Gloucestershire, including information on variations between districts and NHS Gloucestershire's future programme for improving access.
- :: **Prison healthcare service** – The number of beds at the assessment and treatment unit at Gloucester Prison has been reduced and the committee was concerned at the potential impact this would have on prisoners with mental health needs. A group of councillors visited the prison and met with the governor and prison staff, and found that there was no evidence to suggest an adverse effect on prisoners.

There was however a concern about different types of drug misuse treatment for prisoners from England and Wales, and the committee has taken this up with the Secretary of State for Justice and the Secretary State for Wales on behalf of the prison.

**Scrutiny task groups** – Please refer to section 6 for more detailed information relating to the following reviews:

- Ambulance services in rural districts – September 2008
- Excess winter mortality – March 2009
- Standards for better health – March 2009
- Wingmoor Farm – March 2009

### **What's coming up?**

- :: **Inpatient services for children and young people in Gloucestershire** – NHS Gloucestershire has commissioned an independent review of children's services, and the committee will receive the report in the Summer 2009.
- :: **Specialist commissioning** – A series of changes to around 20 different highly specialised services will begin in 2009. These services are provided on a regional basis. Reviewing these services will mean establishing joint committees, potentially involving all 16 health scrutiny committees in the South West region. This poses significant challenges, and could potentially have some resource implications.
- :: **Wingmoor Farm** – The final report of the task group was delayed whilst NHS Gloucestershire completed a health impact assessment on the site. This was published in March 2009, and the committee will now undertake regular monitoring to ensure that the agencies concerned are carrying out the key actions recommended in the health impact assessment.
- :: **NHS dentistry** – The committee will continue to look at the issues surrounding access to NHS dentistry and plans to look at the developing dental access strategy. NHS Gloucestershire has commissioned a review of NHS dentistry which will be published in the Summer 2009.
- :: **Healthy Gloucestershire** – The committee will examine priority areas of the Health and Community Well-being Strategy and consider how it can actively engage with these issues to deliver improvements.

---

### **Committee membership**

**County councillors** – Mike Collins, Andrew Gravells, Stephen McMillan, Brian Oosthuysen, Mike Skinner, Klara Sudbury & Kathy Williams

**District councillors** – Ray Apperley (Stroud), Margaret Edney (Cotswold), Penny Hall (Cheltenham), Jan Lugg (Gloucester City), Margaret Ogden (Tewkesbury) and Mairilyn Smart OBE (Forest of Dean)

### **Officer contact**

**Elizabeth Power, Senior Scrutiny Adviser (Health)**  
elizabeth.power@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425204

# Achievements in 2008-09

## Great Western Ambulance Joint Health Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Andrew Gravells**  
Chairman

**The Great Western Ambulance Joint Health Scrutiny Committee was established due to collective concerns regarding the performance of the Great Western Ambulance Service (GWAS). There was felt to be a need to improve the effectiveness of the scrutiny of the commissioning and delivery of ambulance services.**

Councillors, GWAS and commissioning primary care trusts agree that the joint committee has significantly improved the effectiveness of the scrutiny of ambulance services and has contributed towards the improvement of services to the public.

At the meeting in January 2009, Councillor Andrew Gravells from Gloucestershire County Council was elected as chairman of the joint committee for a second year.

### Key areas of activity

- :: **Interim report** - The joint committee completed the first phase of its work in October 2008 and published an interim report which included 26 recommendations to improve services. These included:
  - Developing a maximum waiting time target for category A life-threatening calls
  - Monitoring demand for rapid response vehicles and traditional double crewed ambulances to ensure that there is no shortfall in resources
  - Exploring the feasibility of introducing financial penalties for hospital trusts when there are delays in patient handovers at hospitals
  - Comparing performance and expenditure against other ambulance services
  - Recruiting more community first responders
  - Raising public awareness of the changing role of the ambulance service

The Great Western Ambulance Service and NHS Gloucestershire, the lead commissioning primary care trust, supported all but one of the recommendations.

- :: **Terms of reference and work programme** – The members of the joint committee revisited the committee’s terms of reference and agreed a future work programme.
- :: **Ambulance Services in Rural Districts Task Group** – The joint committee supported the work of this task group that was set up by the Gloucestershire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The final report of the task group was received by the joint committee and informed the recommendations in the committee’s interim report.

## What's coming up?

:: In the second phase of its work, the joint committee will meet on a quarterly basis to monitor progress in implementing its recommendations and continue to hold commissioners and providers to account in relation to ambulance services.

---

### Committee membership

#### Bristol City Council

Councillors Lesley Alexander, Bill Payne & Sylvia Townsend

#### Gloucestershire County Council

Councillors Margaret Edney, Andrew Gravells & Brian Oosthuysen

#### South Gloucestershire Council

Councillors Sandra Grant, Sue Hope & Andy Perkins

#### North Somerset Council

Councillors Ann Harley, Anne Kemp & Reyna Knight

#### Swindon Borough Council

Councillors Ray Ballman, Andrew Bennett & Peter Mallinson

#### Wiltshire County Council

Councillors John English, Judy Seager & Roy While

### Officer contact

#### Elizabeth Power, Senior Scrutiny Adviser (Health)

[elizabeth.power@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.power@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

01452 425204



# Scrutiny task groups in 2008-09

## Ambulance services in rural districts



**Councillor Margaret Edney**  
Chairman

**This task group was set up to scrutinise the performance of the Great Western Ambulance Service in the Cotswold, Forest of Dean and Stroud districts. Particular concern had been expressed by Cotswold District Council regarding poor ambulance response times. The Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to carry out a review of response times in the Cotswold District and believed that the work could be usefully extended to the Forest of Dean and Stroud as performance was also poor in those areas.**

### Key findings & recommendations

Three district sub-groups were established to examine performance in their areas and their findings were presented to a core group made up of representatives from the three sub-groups. The final report was presented to the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2008 and included recommendations relating to the following:

- :: The ongoing role of the Great Western Ambulance Joint Health Scrutiny Committee in monitoring response times on a district by district basis
- :: Local targets for response times in rural areas including a maximum waiting time
- :: Increasing the number of community first responders, particularly in those rural areas where there was little or no coverage at present
- :: Extending the co-responder scheme with Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service
- :: Helping the ambulance service in finding suitable standby points in towns and villages
- :: Requesting local authorities to consult with the ambulance service on large scale residential developments, both regarding access for emergency vehicles and the possible provision of standby points
- :: Publicising the role of the ambulance service and explaining to the public why they should consider using other options such as minor injury units rather than calling 999

### Core group membership

Councillors Ray Apperley (Stroud District), Margaret Edney (Cotswold District), Terry Hale (Forest of Dean District), Margaret Ogden (Tewkesbury Borough) & Marilyn Smart OBE (Forest of Dean District)

### Officer contact

**Simon Harper, Scrutiny Team Leader**  
simon.harper@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425230

# 6.2 Scrutiny task groups in 2008-09

## Civil parking enforcement (CPE)



**Councillor Dr John Cordwell**  
Chairman

---

**This task group was set up to contribute to the continual improvement and development of parking services provided by or on behalf of the county council.**

**The work programme of the group included:**

- :: The effect of civil parking enforcement (CPE) in Cheltenham Borough, Cotswold District, Forest of Dean District, Gloucester City, Stroud District and Tewkesbury Borough
- :: Operational policies for on-street parking enforcement, waivers and dispensations, residents' parking schemes, disabled parking & fees and charges
- :: Publication of car parking & enforcement strategies, policies and the annual report

### **Key findings & recommendations**

The task group published its report in January 2009, and following presentation to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee, informed the cabinet of its findings in March 2009. The main recommendations related to:

- :: Clarifying the position of 'blue badge' holders within the residents' parking policy
- :: Ensuring that each dispensation permit application is considered on its merits and due consideration is given to safety aspects
- :: Asking the cabinet to review the dispensations policy to ensure that it is fit for purpose
- :: Revising and updating the CPE policy regarding carers to include the role of family members and friends
- :: Clarifying how/if planning authorities can enforce restrictions on car ownership in 'car free' developments
- :: Ensuring CPE is communicated to the public clearly and purposefully
- :: Presenting the CPE annual report to the council's overview and scrutiny function
- :: Ensuring that the findings of the consultant's report on the application of CPE policy are received by the council's overview and scrutiny function
- :: Extending the enforcement of CPE outside normal working hours

### **Task group membership**

Councillors Dr John Cordwell, Diane Hibbert, Graham Morgan, Sonia Friend, Graham Dawson, Klara Sudbury & Bill Whelan

### **Officer contact**

**Andrea Clarke, Senior Scrutiny Adviser**  
andrea.clarke@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425237

# 6.3 Scrutiny task groups in 2008-09

## Community support to older people



**Councillor Kathy Williams**  
Chairman

---

**This task group was set up to carry out an investigation into the capacity of community organisations across the county to develop more community-based support to older people. Members heard evidence from representatives from a wide range of organisations. These included Age Concern Gloucestershire, Carers' Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and Podsmead Neighbourhood Project.**

### Key findings & recommendations

The task group published its report in September 2008 and, following presentation to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee, informed the cabinet of its findings in October 2008. The main recommendations related to:

- :: Developing a members' involvement campaign to inform members of the way in which social care was changing, with particular emphasis on the three year 'transforming social care' proposals
- :: Using the social care grant to fund a project to identify, recruit and train in advocacy, older persons champions
- :: Retaining and expanding the role of the village and community agents to include more of the urban and suburban parts of the county
- :: Providing identified pilot areas with a small budget to develop community based support that, subject to evaluation, should be rolled out on a countywide basis
- :: Undertaking a more co-ordinated approach to developing community-based support in the form of a preventative services block contract
- :: Further study being undertaken with partners to explore using the planning concept of 'lifetime neighbourhoods'
- :: Carrying out a scoping exercise to determine which assets (including property and mobile), could be better used for community-based support initiatives

### Task group membership

Councillors Bill Crowther, Deryck Nash, Margaret Nolder, Maureen Rutter, Klara Sudbury & Kathy Williams. Margaret Edney, the Cotswold District Council member on the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, was appointed to the group as a co-opted member

### Officer contact

Joanne Bolton, Scrutiny Adviser  
joanne.bolton@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425075

# Scrutiny task groups in 2008-09

## Council plan & budget consultation



**Councillor Tim Harman**  
Chairman

---

**This task group was set up to give feedback to the cabinet on the delivery of the priorities in the 2008-09 council plan and to identify any areas that require significant levels of additional funding. The group received feedback from the public consultation process on the budget and senior managers provided information on performance risks and service pressures.**

### Key findings & recommendations

The task group informed the cabinet of its interim findings in December 2008 and produced a final report that was presented to the cabinet in February 2009. Both reports were also considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee. The key issues identified by the task group included:

- :: Recruitment and retention of social workers
- :: Extending the pilot programmes relating to looked after children and children with complex needs
- :: Importance of 'safeguarding' and the need to maintain funding for preventative services
- :: Closing the educational attainment gap
- :: Increasing number of older people and growing expectations of social care
- :: Providing specific funding to implement the recommendations of the Community Support to Older People Task Group
- :: Funding of additional police officers
- :: Maintenance of unclassified roads
- :: Importance of the 'building our future' programme
- :: Providing adequate resources for the scrutiny process
- :: Pressure on support services as a result of the number of 'change' programmes
- :: Difficulties of estimating future costs as a result of volatility in the national economy

### Task group membership

Councillors Dennis Andrewartha, Bill Crowther, Bill Evans, Tim Harman & Bruce Hogan. Councillors Maureen Rutter & Charmian Sheppard joined later meetings on behalf of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

### Officer contact

**Simon Harper, Scrutiny Team Leader**  
simon.harper@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425230

# Scrutiny task groups in 2008-09

## Excess winter mortality



**Councillor Penny Hall**  
Chairman

---

**The task group examined the extent and causes of excess winter mortality in the county in comparison with national and European statistics. It then considered the action being taken locally and made recommendations with a view to reducing the number of such winter deaths.**

Members heard evidence from the Public Health Information Unit, Action for Affordable Warmth Partnership, Severn Wye Energy Agency and Stroud District Council who lead on the warm and well scheme.

### Key findings & recommendations

The main causes of excess winter mortality are respiratory and circulatory disease. Cold and damp housing can exacerbate such diseases and research shows a strong relationship between excess winter mortality and homes that are hard to heat.

The final report was presented to the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2009 and included the following recommendations:

- :: Further consideration of the important role that housing plays in maintaining health
- :: To spread awareness of the impartial energy advice available through the Energy Saving Trust
- :: That district councils fund the Affordable Warmth Partnership to a level that reflects the level of need in their area
- :: That local area agreement targets should include tackling fuel poverty in all contexts, not just for households on income-related benefits
- :: That funding be directed to measures to improve the energy efficiency of homes that have been defined as 'hard to heat'

### Task group membership

Councillors Penny Hall (Cheltenham Borough), Jan Lugg (Gloucester City), Margaret Ogden (Tewkesbury Borough) & Brian Oosthuysen

### Officer contact

Alison Wantenaar  
alison.wantenaar@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425094

# Scrutiny task groups in 2008-09

## 6.6 Forest of Dean area speed limit



**Councillor Shaun Parsons**  
Chairman

---

**This task group was set up to consider the appropriateness or otherwise of an area speed limit in the Forest of Dean. Detailed consideration was given to the area that should be covered and the potential location of 'gateways'. Members heard evidence from representatives from a wide range of organisations. These included the Forestry Commission, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Royal Forest of Dean College, Time & Place road safety charity and the Verderers' Court.**

### **Key findings & recommendations**

The task group published its final report in January 2009, and following presentation to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee, informed the cabinet of its findings in March 2009. The main recommendations related to:

- :: Introducing a 40mph advisory speed limit in the central forest area which would be known as the 'Forest 40 Zone'
- :: Using seasonal warning signs at appropriate times to highlight the 40mph speed limit
- :: Promoting an educational campaign to highlight the aims of the 'Forest 40 Zone'
- :: Looking for opportunities to work in partnership on the scheme with other organisations including the Forestry Commission, the Forest of Dean District Council, parish & town councils and schools & colleges
- :: Reviewing the appropriateness of the speed limit on the sections of the A4136 running through the forest area
- :: Considering the need for further vehicle activated warning signs on the A4136

### **Task group membership**

Councillors Phil Awford, Bruce Hogan, Ceri Jones, Shaun Parsons & Alan Preest  
Councillor Graham Morgan, chairman of the Forest of Dean Road Safety Liaison Group, was appointed to the group as a co-opted member

### **Officer contacts**

**Joanne Bolton, Scrutiny Adviser**  
joanne.bolton@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425075

**Simon Harper, Scrutiny Team Leader**  
simon.harper@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425230

# 6.7 Scrutiny task groups in 2008-09

## Planning and flood risk



**Councillor Rob Garnham**  
Chairman

---

**The scrutiny inquiry into the Summer Emergency 2007 recommended that a task group be established to look at the impact of land use planning and new developments on flood risk.**

During the investigation, members received written statements and heard evidence from representatives from a wide range of organisations. These included the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water, the Severn & Avon Flood Group and the Lower Severn Drainage Board.

### **Key findings & recommendations**

The final report was published in July 2008 and the recommendations included:

- :: Adopting a long term risk-based approach to planning decisions by following the approach suggested in the draft strategic flood risk assessment
- :: Taking into account any historical evidence about flood risk arising during the consultation process for planning applications
- :: The role of the Environment Agency in pre-planning application discussions
- :: Requiring developers to build sewers to an appropriate minimum design standard
- :: Ensuring that all unadopted roads and drainage systems on existing developments that are up to the required standard are adopted within 18 months
- :: Requesting that overland flood routes are clearly defined on the plans for new developments to ensure that there is a clear route for water to take away from people's homes should the drains be overwhelmed
- :: Ensuring that all appropriate conditions associated with a development are fully implemented by the time new homes are occupied
- :: Finding appropriate solutions to the problems at Cypress Gardens, Longlevens

### **Task group membership**

Councillors Phil Awford (Tewkesbury Borough), Roger Brown, Bill Evans, Rob Garnham, Susan Jones (Gloucester City), Brian Oosthuysen, Bill Whelan & Kathy Williams

### **Officer contact**

**Simon Harper, Scrutiny Team Leader**  
simon.harper@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425230

# 6.8 Scrutiny task groups in 2008-09 Standards for better health care



**Councillors Andrew Gravells  
and Ray Apperley**

---

**As part of the health check process, health overview & scrutiny committees throughout the country are invited to make evidence based comments about the performance of their local NHS organisations against core standards. The core standard areas cover safety, clinical & cost effectiveness, governance, patient focus, accessible & responsive care, care environment & amenities and public health.**

### **Key findings & recommendations**

The task group compiled evidence based on the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee's dealings with the NHS organisations operating within Gloucestershire since March 2008. The final report of the task group was presented to the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2009. This included separate commentaries for NHS Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Hospitals' Foundation Trust, 2gether Foundation Trust and the Great Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust. The commentaries have been forwarded to the chief executives of each trust and are available on request from the scrutiny team.

### **Task group membership**

Councillors Ray Apperley & Andrew Gravells

### **Officer contact**

**Elizabeth Power, Senior Scrutiny Adviser (Health)**  
elizabeth.power@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425204



# Scrutiny task groups in 2008-09

## Wingmoor Farm



**Councillor Mike Skinner**  
Chairman

---

**This task group was commissioned in response to concerns raised regarding the possible negative impact the Wingmoor Farm waste treatment and landfill sites might be having on the health of local residents. The first phase of the task group's work took place between February 2006 and February 2007. This involved gathering evidence from a range of stakeholders about how the site was monitored and possible health impacts. A task group visit was also made which included a guided tour of the hazardous waste disposal site.**

### **Key findings & recommendations**

In February 2007, the task group noted that although there was no strong evidence to suggest that the site was causing harm, this did not necessarily prove that the site was harmless. Further evidence was required to help the group reach a firm conclusion and members looked forward to receiving the findings of a community health impact assessment facilitated by NHS Gloucestershire.

Unfortunately the community health impact assessment was not completed until March 2009 and it could not be considered by the task group before it was presented to the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The report presented to the committee identified key actions for a number of bodies including the Environment Agency, Gloucestershire County Council, Health Protection Agency, NHS Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury Borough Council and the Wingmoor site operators.

The committee identified some areas where more information was required and the committee chairman will be contacting the relevant bodies. Representatives from these bodies will be invited to attend the committee in September 2009 to provide details of progress on the actions included in the community health impact assessment.

### **Task group membership**

Councillors Phil Awford, Bill Crowther, Deryck Nash, Margaret Nolder & Mike Skinner  
Christine Donald was invited to join the group as chair of the Cheltenham & Tewkesbury Patient & Public Involvement Forum

### **Officer contact**

**Elizabeth Power, Senior Scrutiny Adviser (Health)**  
elizabeth.power@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425204

# 7 Taking scrutiny forward in 2009-10



**Councillor Rob Garnham**  
Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny  
Management Committee

---

**All councillors have a vital role to play in scrutinising the actions of the council and helping to formulate policy for the future. This report includes numerous examples of good scrutiny with public sector agencies working together to deliver better services. We need to build on this when we consider the future shape of scrutiny at the county council following the June 2009 elections.**

Through the *Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007* and the *Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Bill 2008*, the government has signalled its intention to strengthen the role of scrutiny. A new power entitled 'councillor call for action' is introduced from 1 April 2009 allowing councillors to request that issues of local concern are considered by scrutiny committees.

New powers are also being introduced to allow local authorities to scrutinise the activities of partner organisations to ensure that the scrutiny process is more 'joined-up' in addressing the concerns of local people. The scrutiny conference in the Autumn 2008 provided the first opportunity for councillors from the seven local authorities in the county to start considering how this could be taken forward. Arising from the conference, it has been suggested that a county-wide scrutiny lead members' group should be set up and I hope that this can be taken forward in 2009-10.

In common with local authorities across the country, the council is facing growing financial pressure with a significant budget gap predicted in future years. The council has established the 'building our future' programme with an ambitious target to save £60 million over three years. The scrutiny process will have a critical role to play in monitoring this programme, not only to make sure that the budget gap is met, but also to ensure that quality services continue to be provided to the people of Gloucestershire.

The current review of scrutiny will continue and build upon some of the measures already being progressed. For example, a new information system for members and the monitoring of scrutiny recommendations.

If you have any comments on how we conduct scrutiny in Gloucestershire please feel free to contact me or a member of staff in the scrutiny team.

**Councillor Rob Garnham**  
rob.garnham@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01242 673325

If you have any queries regarding a scrutiny issue, please contact one of the members of staff in the scrutiny team who are based in Democratic Services at Shire Hall.

**Scrutiny Team Leader – Simon Harper**

simon.harper@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425230

**Senior Scrutiny Adviser – Andrea Clarke**

andrea.clarke@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425237

**Senior Scrutiny Adviser (Health) – Elizabeth Power**

elizabeth.power@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425204

**Scrutiny Adviser – Joanne Bolton (until May 2009)**

joanne.bolton@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425075

**Scrutiny Adviser – Stephen Bace (from May 2009)**

stephen.bace@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01452 425075

**Postal address**

Scrutiny Team  
Democratic Services  
Shire Hall  
Gloucester  
GL1 2TG

*“The scrutiny inquiry led by Gloucestershire County Council following the Summer 2007 emergency in the county is an excellent example of non-executive councillors contributing to partnership working with organisations, such as the public utilities, emergency services and community groups, to address the concerns of local people and improve future resilience. It’s pleasing to see that the council is monitoring the recommendations resulting from the inquiry and has introduced a formal process for monitoring all scrutiny recommendations after 6, 12 and 18 months.”*

**Jessica Crowe**, Executive Director at the Centre for Public Scrutiny

We can produce this document in Braille, in large print, on audio tape and in other languages. If you would like a copy in one of these formats, please phone 01452 426504.