

Scrutiny Committee

End of Term Report
2011 - 2015



Our vision:

To make South Ribble a great place to live, work, visit and play

Our priorities:

Clean, green and safe environment

Strong South Ribble in the heart of a prosperous Central Lancashire

Strong and Healthy Communities

Efficient, effective and exceptional Council

Our values:

Integrity

Positive attitude

Learning organisation

Teamwork

Excellence



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Scrutiny has a vital part to play in the democratic process and providing the checks and balances required in an elected body. Recent events elsewhere have dramatically highlighted this and all Members should heed the words contained in the Casey Report of Inspection of Rotherham MBC and particularly the extract that said:

“Inspectors saw regular reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny committees, but not the effective challenge we would expect from elected Members. The notion of challenge has been misunderstood and misinterpreted as bullish questioning. Challenge means setting aspirational targets, knowing how far to stretch the organisation, asking searching questions, drilling down into information and data, ensuring targets are kept to and agreed actions implemented. It also means recognising organisational inertia and doing something about it; identifying when people are struggling, finding out why and getting alongside them, overcoming barriers and working out solutions.”

I believe this is a wake-up call for all elected Members and for those of us who are passionate about Scrutiny and recognises its importance and development of a robust and challenging process, with proper support, is essential for the transparency and accountability incumbent upon any elected body.

It would be remiss of me if I did not make a special mention of Darren Cranshaw, Scrutiny Manager. His ability, support, dedication and utmost professionalism has been invaluable to the Committee and I am sure the Committee would want to join with me in publically recording our appreciation of his efforts.

**Councillor Mick Titherington
Chair of the Scrutiny Committee**

What is Scrutiny?

In 2000, the government set a programme for reforming and modernising local government, with new ways of working that put their people and communities first. As there is no agreed definition of Scrutiny, it is best to see it as an umbrella term covering a wide range of roles. It seeks to improve services for the local community by undertaking four roles:

► Holding the Executive to Account

This involves scrutinising Cabinet decisions, the Cabinet Forward Plan and using Call-In or other mechanisms to comment constructively, or intervene in the decision-making process.

► Policy Development and Review

Policy development involves shaping the formulation of key Council policies before implementation. This can take a number of different forms including; proposing new policies and commenting on draft policies and examining which intended policy outcomes have been achieved.

► Review of Council Services

To ensure that Council services are achieving both customer satisfaction and value for money, scrutiny is used to review these functions, monitor Council performance and ensure standards are being met. In addition, the Scrutiny Committee has the provision to oversee external assessments; in particular, the monitoring of action plans to review progress.

► External Scrutiny

Scrutiny Committees are not confined to looking only at Council services. They are able to investigate the actions of other companies and organisations whose actions affect South Ribble residents. The government is keen for Scrutiny to develop a strong outward focus, encouraging participation from partners and the public.

Scrutiny in South Ribble

There are 55 elected councillors in South Ribble, 6 of which sit on Cabinet and 12 of which sit on the Scrutiny Committee. A Cabinet member is not allowed to sit on a Scrutiny Committee.

At South Ribble Borough Council the Cabinet makes decisions about what the Council should do. The Council's employees carry out these decisions and provide services for the people of South Ribble.



The Scrutiny Committees is politically balanced. Part of its strength comes from the ability of councillors on the Scrutiny Committee to work across political boundaries for the best outcomes for all local people. This provides a common-sense, objective approach to reviewing how the council is run and whether policies are right for South Ribble.

The Committee commends areas performing well and make reports and recommendations for change to the Cabinet and full Council concerning the way in which they have exercised their functions. Scrutiny can consider any matter affecting the borough or its inhabitants. This role is supported by the Cabinet which generally has a good working relationship with Scrutiny.

Scrutiny committee meetings are open to the public and press (unless confidential matters are being discussed) and are held on a 6 weekly cycle, usually at the Civic Centre (although depending on the matter being reviewed, meetings can be held elsewhere). All of the meetings are advertised in advance and are published on the Council's website.

Our Scrutiny Committee Members 2014-2015:

- ▶ Councillor Mick Titherington
Scrutiny Committee Chair
- ▶ Councillor Melvyn Gardner
Scrutiny Committee Vice-chair
- ▶ Councillor Colin Coulton
- ▶ Councillor Michael Green
- ▶ Councillor Ken Jones
- ▶ Councillor Sue Jones
- ▶ Councillor Keith Martin
- ▶ Councillor Alan Ogilvie
- ▶ Councillor Mike Otter
- ▶ Councillor Matthew Tomlinson
- ▶ Councillor Frances Walker
- ▶ Councillor Linda Woollard

Previous Scrutiny Committee Members:

- ▶ Councillor Warren Bennett
- ▶ Councillor Derek Forrest
- ▶ Former Councillor Michael McNulty
- ▶ Councillor Mike Nelson
- ▶ Councillor Sue Prynn

Scrutiny in Numbers

Scrutiny in Numbers over the last 4 years:

- ▶ **12** Members of the Scrutiny Committee
- ▶ **29** formal meetings of the Scrutiny Committee
- ▶ **1** call-in by the Scrutiny Committee
- ▶ **99%** of Scrutiny Committee recommendations accepted
- ▶ **90%** of Scrutiny Committee recommendations implemented
- ▶ **95%** of those appearing before the Scrutiny Committee satisfied with the experience
- ▶ **98%** of audience observing Scrutiny Committee satisfied with the experience
- ▶ **9** in-depth Scrutiny Committee reviews
- ▶ **4** specially themed meetings
- ▶ **4** learning hours for all Members of the Council

Key partnerships the Scrutiny Committee scrutinises:

- ▶ South Ribble Local Strategic Partnership
- ▶ Safer Chorley & South Ribble Community Safety Partnership
- ▶ Waste Partnership
- ▶ Leisure Partnership
- ▶ Leyland Board

The Scrutiny Committee challenges performance, monitors progress and encourages these partnerships' to continuously improve.



Our Work Programme

Each year we consult widely and carry out research on the key issues affecting South Ribble and where the Scrutiny Committee could add value. In addition to the regular holding to account meetings we also carry out a number of in-depth reviews. Over the last four years we have carried out 9 reviews. We have summarised the findings in this report and the difference that these reviews have made to the Council and our residents.

Special Themed Meetings

Sometimes where there is a really significant issue that we want the whole committee to look at, along with encouraging residents too, we hold a special themed meeting. This is where we concentrate on one key issue and invite leading people to help us.

We have held the following themed meetings over the last four years:

- ▶ Highways and Transportation
- ▶ Health and Wellbeing
- ▶ Welfare Reforms
- ▶ Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service

Consultations

We are regularly consulted on key issues affecting South Ribble, such as:

- ▶ Lancashire Constabulary's Police station and Counters Review Consultation
- ▶ Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust's Future of Dementia Care Services in Lancashire
- ▶ Lancashire County Council Public Health's Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment
- ▶ Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service's Risk Planning

Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee

South Ribble Borough Council is represented on Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee by Councillor Mick Titherington.

There are representatives from each of the Lancashire district councils on the County Health Scrutiny Committee who are statutorily responsible for scrutinising each Clinical Commissioning Group, Hospital Trust, Care Trust and other health bodies in Lancashire.

Councillor Titherington has regularly reported back on the work of the County Health Scrutiny at full Council and to our Scrutiny Committee.

Sharing and Learning

We were pleased to welcome colleagues from Hyndburn Borough Council and South Lakeland District Council to observe our meetings and share ideas and learning on approaches to Scrutiny.

We have also played an active part in the North West Strategic Scrutiny Network facilitated by North West Employers' Organisation and the North West Scrutiny Support Officers' Network.

Our previous work on appreciative inquiry has been held up in the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) best practice guide and our approach to the new health reforms as a case study in Grant Thornton's annual review.

Training and Development

Being a Scrutiny member is a unique role and one which involves learning a great deal about a wide range of subjects and continuing to develop key skills around questioning, looking at evidence and probing key issues.

We therefore carry out an annual skills audit of Scrutiny members to identify training and development issues. We have worked closely with North West Employers' Organisation to tailor training to our needs.

Scrutiny call-in: Worden Park Ice-cream Kiosk

As well as scrutinising the decisions made at Cabinet meetings, we also look at the decisions delegated to officers in consultation with Cabinet members. We have five working days from the day on which the decision is made to 'call-in' a decision.

Call-in is where Scrutiny is asked to review a decision and the process involved. In the case of a call-in, a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee is arranged and the person making the decision is invited to answer questions on the decision. The Scrutiny Committee can ask for the decision to be re-considered.

In the 15 years that Scrutiny has been in operation, there has just been one 'call-in' taken in March 2012 concerning a delegated decision for a licence to operate the food kiosk and ice cream pitches on Worden Park in Leyland.

The decision had been called in because of concerns that there was limited supporting information on the delegated decision paperwork. The Scrutiny Committee met with Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and went into detail all the key issues surrounding the decision.

The outcome of the call-in meeting was that the decision should be implemented and the Council's standing orders for contracts were updated to reflect the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee around dealing with tenders.

The call-in also sent a powerful message for improving the approach to delegated decisions in providing robust information and allowing sufficient time for the Scrutiny process.



Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service

The reducing funding for this partnership service was highlighted when the Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the work of the Safer Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership. There was a risk that this valuable service could be ended.

Following lobbying by the Scrutiny Committee the issue was taken forward by the Council's Leader with other partner organisations. The Council has continued to fund the service and is actively working with community safety partners to maintain this important service.

South Ribble Local Health Scrutiny Protocol

Our Scrutiny Committee has a long and strong track record in scrutinising health services in South Ribble.

As part of the national reforms to the health service and creation of new organisations, we felt it would be a good time to establish links with the new organisations and agree a common set of principles of how we would work together to scrutinise and encourage continuous improvement in health services in South Ribble.

We teamed up with national experts at the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) to help develop a ground-breaking protocol to scrutinise local health services in a two-tier district area.



Discussions were held with local health leaders on how they see us working together and adding value. These discussions culminated in a roundtable meeting with senior partners to actually write the protocol with our Scrutiny members.

The protocol has been agreed and launched and has already started to be used in some of our reviews.

Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service Consultation on Emergency Cover

We were consulted on Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service's emergency cover review, which is carried out every 3-4 years to ensure the service had the appropriate resources for the levels of risk in the right places. The current economic climate also meant that the Fire & Rescue Service had to save at least £10M by 2016.

Our committee met with the Chairman of the Combined Fire Authority, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Secretary of the Fire Brigade Union. We also encouraged resident to attend and have their say on these important proposals.



We expressed concern at the proposal to remove a whole time fire engine and crew from Bamber Bridge Fire Station because of the disproportionate adverse impact of increased response times in the Bamber Bridge area that would increased risk of fatalities.

We were pleased that the Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service listened to our concerns and retained the fire engine and moved to a day crew plus at Bamber Bridge Fire Station.

Scrutiny Review of External Communications

Chaired by Councillor Warren Bennett

Key findings:

- ▶ Communications should be more embedded into the leadership and culture of the Council
 - ▶ External communications should be a priority in the Council's corporate plan.
 - ▶ At least quarterly meetings should be held between the Public Relations Team and Directors.
 - ▶ Project management should consider communications throughout a project.
 - ▶ Officer communications champions should be appointed, with training/awareness provided and communications form part of everyone's job description.
- ▶ The Council should promote South Ribble as a place.
- ▶ Relationships with traditional media outlets be strengthened further.
- ▶ A proactive social media strategy should be put in place and implemented.
- ▶ Dedicated resources and improvements should be made to the Council's website.
- ▶ Greater use should be made of the e-citizen programme and possibility of webcasting meetings should be explored.
- ▶ Noticeboards should be utilised more effectively in local communities.
- ▶ Councillors should champion communications channels as part of their community leadership role.

Key outcomes as a result of the review:

- ▶ Quarterly meetings now take place between Public Relations and Directors.
- ▶ The project management guidance has been revised to include communications.
- ▶ Press releases are now more aligned to the Council's priorities.
- ▶ Corporate identity and style guide has been reviewed and updated.
- ▶ Communications forms part of all employee job descriptions.
- ▶ Through the City Deal and appointment of an Enterprise Manager a place promotion plan has been developed and is being implemented.
- ▶ Regular meetings now take place between the Leader of the Council and local media editors.
- ▶ FORWARD continues to develop and be delivered to every household in the Borough.
- ▶ A social media strategy has been implemented with the My Neighbourhood pages on Facebook.
- ▶ A brand new accessible website was developed and launched at no cost to the Council, which is now maintained by the Public Relations team.
- ▶ Take-up on the e-citizen programme has now increased to almost 7,000 residents.
- ▶ The Gateway telephone answerphone includes key messages for our residents to promote services.
- ▶ An audit of noticeboards has taken place with new boards installed where necessary, which are maintained as part of My Neighbourhoods.
- ▶ My Neighbourhood Forums and approach has helped councillors champion communications in their areas.

Scrutiny Review of Empty Properties

Chaired by Councillor Mike Nelson

Key findings:

- ▶ The number of empty properties in South Ribble is low compared to other areas, but there are a number of long-term empty properties that should be tackled.
- ▶ A target should be included in the Council's corporate plan for reducing the number of empty properties.
- ▶ Some good practice is in place with regards Methodist Action working in partnership with the Council to bring empty properties back into use.
- ▶ The Council should make greater use of its statutory powers to bring empty properties back into use.
- ▶ Local councillors and intelligence should be used to find empty properties that could be brought back into use.
- ▶ The Council's Housing Team's work working to reduce the number of empty properties was commended and that this be stepped up further.

Key outcomes as a result of the review:

- ▶ The Council has reduced the council tax discounts allowed for empty properties and ring-fenced the income generated for housing issues, including empty properties.
- ▶ Empty properties is being taken forward as a priority by the newly appointed Strategic Housing Manager.
- ▶ The Council was the best performing council in Lancashire for the percentage of properties brought back into use last year.

Scrutiny Review of Worden Park

Chaired by former Councillor Michael McNulty

Key findings:

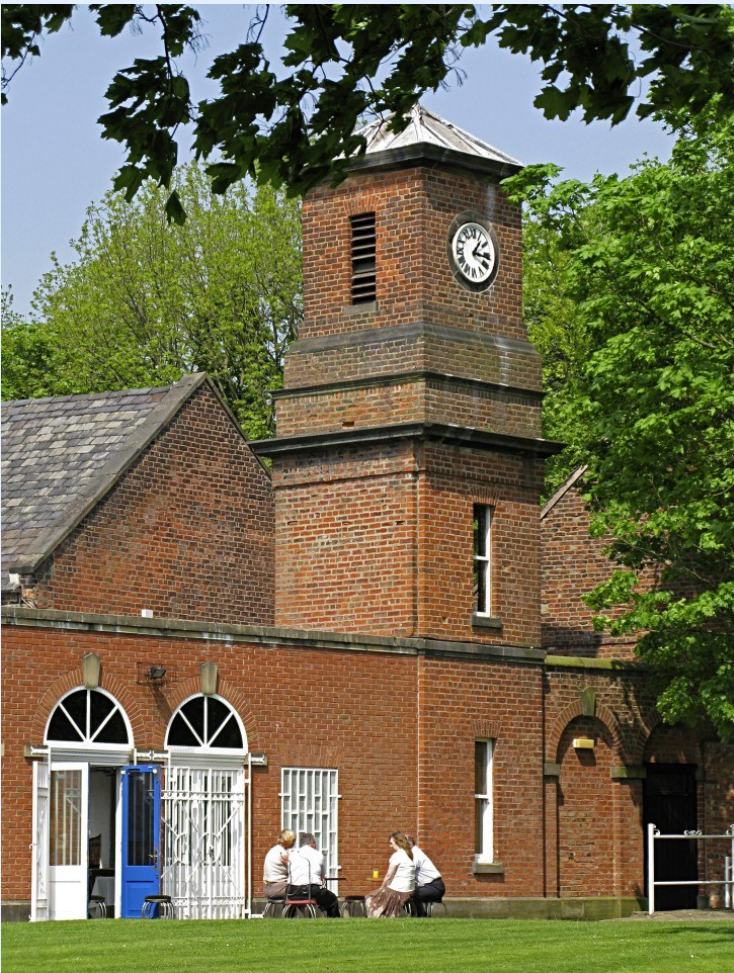
- ▶ Commended the work of the Council in continuing to enhance Worden Park with the limited resources available.
- ▶ A long-term vision and action plan is developed for Worden Park so that all stakeholders can work together towards a common goal.
- ▶ An option study should be carried out into the future use of Worden Arts & Crafts Centre, including the Derby Wing so that it is occupied as soon as possible.



- ▶ There is one designated Cabinet member and lead officer to take responsibility and manage Worden Park to ensure effective co-ordination.
- ▶ More work is done to market and promote Worden Park as a visitor attraction.
- ▶ A regular stakeholder meeting is created for all stakeholders associated with Worden Park to meet with the Council to improve engagement and joint working.

Key outcomes as a result of the review:

- ▶ Worden Park now has an exciting vision and action plan to continue to improve and develop Worden Park as a visitor attraction.
- ▶ This has led to increased capital investment in Worden Park.
- ▶ Councillor Peter Mullineaux has taken on the role as lead Cabinet Member for Worden Park and Mark Gaffney, Director of Neighbourhoods, Public Health and Assets as the lead officer.
- ▶ Regular stakeholder meetings now take place with all those involved in Worden Park to help deliver the Worden Park vision and action plan.



Scrutiny Review of Planning

Chaired by Councillor Michael Green

Key findings

- ▶ The Planning Service is held in high regard with 75% of customers who responded being very or fairly satisfied with the service.
- ▶ The performance of the service in meeting national performance standards around value for money and turnaround time are in the upper 25% of councils when compared with other councils in England.
- ▶ There was felt to be improvements needed with the electronic public access planning software system to make it more user-friendly and easier to read, as well as making more information available on the Council's website.
- ▶ Ward councillors were found to play a key role in the planning process and should receive greater support and training in this role.
- ▶ More information should be provided to Ward councillors as part of their planning role.
- ▶ Whilst the Planning Committee was found to be effective, cross-party Planning Committee briefings would help manage the format of meetings, with site visits being encouraged and video presentations of applications providing more rounded contextual information.
- ▶ Consideration is given to how best community engagement in planning could be incorporated effectively into the My Neighbourhoods approach.
- ▶ Improvements to the public information provided by the Planning Team would help customers understand the process and how to engage better.

Our Scrutiny Reviews

- ▶ Highways issues were an area of concern with more fuller responses needed for planning reports, county councillors receiving the weekly plans list, closer liaison between County Council Highways Officers and county councillors take place. It was felt that capacity should be reviewed to ensure the highways information provided developer is robustly challenged and assessed.

Key outcomes as a result of the review:

- ▶ Discussions have taken place with the provider of the planning software to lobby improvements to the system on a national basis.
- ▶ A re-structure of the Planning Service has taken place with additional resources on enforcement with two officers now including compliance within their job title.
- ▶ Ward councillors now have the automatic right to refer a planning application to the Planning Committee where they have the agreement of another ward or neighbouring ward councillor.
- ▶ A new user-friendly leaflet has been produced and is available for applicants and those consulted on applications to explain the process in more detail.

- ▶ Letters sent out as part of planning consultations now include the local ward councillor contact details and for Highways issues the local county councillor.
- ▶ County councillors now receive the weekly planning list and the County Council are currently reviewing their capacity for dealing with planning applications.
- ▶ Improved training for the Planning Committee and ward councillors is being planned for the new council following May's elections and as part of the planning process.



Mind the Gap – Scrutiny Review of Health Inequalities in South Ribble: a partnership challenge

Chaired by Councillor Mick Titherington

Key findings:

- ▶ Health inequality exists in South Ribble and needs tackling.
- ▶ Wider public health determinants account for 70% of the determinants associated with health and wellbeing – such as: economic, housing, nutrition, environment, leisure alcohol/smoking/drugs.
- ▶ Local authorities across the three tiers of local government, including South Ribble Borough Council, are major players in public health and should take the lead.
- ▶ Health literacy is greater in those areas of affluence compared to areas of deprivation.
- ▶ Greater co-ordination between authorities, agencies and other partners with full exchange of data to maximise integrated delivery of strategies is fundamental to improving outcomes.
- ▶ More work is needed to engage with hard to reach groups.
- ▶ Community champions and local leaders are integral to the effective delivery of health strategies.
- ▶ The increasingly ageing population in South Ribble will cause challenges for service providers in the future.

Key outcomes as a result of the review:

- ▶ Health impact assessments are now required for major sites within the Local Development Framework.
- ▶ A Health Impact Assessment is being carried out on the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal.
- ▶ My Neighbourhood Chairs have committed to helping to tackle health inequalities in their area.
- ▶ Awareness has been raised and information provided to My Neighbourhood Forums.



- ▶ The Chorley and South Ribble Health and Wellbeing Partnership's Framework identifies priorities and actions for improved working on health and wellbeing. The Council has used this Framework to influence and support partners in developing information protocols and care packages. An early success was the Winter Warmth project funded by Public Health Lancashire. The Project has brought over £40,000 into South Ribble to assist vulnerable people to keep warm in their homes.
- ▶ The Scrutiny Committee has agreed a local health Scrutiny protocol with partner organisations providing health services in South Ribble.
- ▶ South Ribble Partnership's Better together in the Home project has been launched targeting aspects of health inequalities with partner organisations.
- ▶ Lancashire County Council's Children's Trust in South Ribble organised a comprehensive programme of activities and events for young people specifically during holiday periods which also involve families.
- ▶ Dementia Friends training has been provided in the Western Parishes by the Council's Older People's Champion.
- ▶ The Scrutiny Committee has carried out a review of loneliness and social isolation affecting older people.
- ▶ Health Champion training has been held at the Civic Centre with over 10 councillors attending from South Ribble.

Scrutiny Review of Welfare Reform

Chaired by Councillor Mick Titherington

Key findings:

- ▶ The welfare reforms have had an initial detrimental impact on a small number of South Ribble residents, which is common across the country.
- ▶ It is too early to measure the long-term impact of the changes and whether the government's objectives will be met.
- ▶ The Council has proactively worked to effectively implement the changes with partner organisations in difficult circumstances.
- ▶ Extended outreach services be provided in more community buildings as part of the Universal Credit transitional work.
- ▶ Clear criteria for when Discretionary Housing Payments will be awarded should be developed and designed to fully utilise the budget available.
- ▶ Information on welfare changes, including discretionary housing payments and impact on our residents should be placed in the Council's newspaper FORWARD and in public areas such as the Gateway reception.
- ▶ The Council should meet regularly with interested partners to share and help co-ordinate the support and information available to our residents.
- ▶ The Department of Work and Pensions should be lobbied to change the national regulations to allow outstanding council tax to be deducted directly from benefits.

Key outcomes as a result of the review:

- ▶ The Leader of the Council has agreed to lobby the Department for Work and Pensions through local MPs and Lancashire Council Leaders' Group to change the national regulations to allow outstanding council tax to be deducted directly from benefits.
- ▶ The Council's debt advice service is set to continue through the Gateway team, including outreach services.
- ▶ Additional information on universal credit and benefits is now available in our Gateway reception.

Scrutiny Review of Drainage and Flooding

Chaired by Councillor Melvyn Gardner

Key findings:

- ▶ There is strong partnership working on drainage and flooding in South Ribble to deal with local issues and concerns.
- ▶ The relationship between the Council's Planning Team and County Council's Flood Risk Management Team should be strengthened and encourage the use of sustainable urban drainage schemes.
- ▶ The Council should continue to provide a drainage service to residents and local communities even though it is a discretionary service.
- ▶ Councillors should be educated in the roles and responsibilities of drainage and flooding so that they can engage and help residents more effectively.
- ▶ An article on the role of the drainage team should be included in a future issue of the FORWARD newspaper and further information be placed on the Council's website to help educate residents about the issues.

Key outcomes as a result of the review:

- ▶ As the review has only just been completed a formal response and progress reports will be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee.



Is anyone there? – Scrutiny Review of Loneliness and Social Isolation affecting Older People

Chaired by Councillor Sue Jones

Key findings:

- ▶ Loneliness and social isolation affecting older people is a major issue affecting our residents and their quality of life, health and wellbeing.
- ▶ The issue is likely to continue to increase as the ageing population continues to increase.
- ▶ A strategic approach is needed to this issue, engaging all stakeholders and older people themselves.
- ▶ More needs to be done to identify those lonely and socially isolated, share data and information between organisations.
- ▶ More tailoring of services is required to meet the individual needs of older people to help identify the issue and prevent it wherever possible.
- ▶ Awareness of the issues and encouraging different ways of thinking is important through neighbourhood action and more targeting partnership working.

Key outcomes as a result of the review:

- ▶ As the review has only just been completed a formal response and progress reports will be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee.
- ▶ The partner workshop held as part of the review brought over 60 partners together to discuss this issue and come up with potential solutions.
- ▶ Over a hundred best practice examples were suggested from which others could learn.
- ▶ Key contacts were made and there was a keynote address by the North West Manager of The Silver Line charity.
- ▶ Feedback from the workshop included:
 - ▶ *“Well thought out, previous work on the subject has been listened to. Please keep up this good work – so valued. Thank you.”*
 - ▶ *“Very well organised with opportunities for meeting and discussions with representatives from a wide range of organisations.”*
 - ▶ *“Enjoyed attending the workshop, brilliant discussions held within the group.”*



Joint Scrutiny Review of NHS Healthchecks

Chaired by Councillor Mick Titherington

Key findings:

- ▶ Joint review with Lancashire County Council Scrutiny Committee.
- ▶ There is variable delivery of NHS Healthchecks by GPs across Lancashire and a feeling that there is an over-complicated bureaucracy with carrying out NHS Healthchecks.
- ▶ Due to the short-term nature of the programme and no ongoing commitment to funding, GPs feel that is not worthwhile investing in the scheme.
- ▶ In the main, GPs do not feel that the fee they are paid adequately covers their costs or encouraged them to champion the scheme.
- ▶ The data collected and monitoring on NHS Healthchecks is not robust enough to make decisions.
- ▶ Where targeting of Healthchecks to certain groups does take place, there is a significant return on investment.
- ▶ Healthchecks should be commissioned from other providers in addition to GPs so that particular groups could be targeting with Healthchecks.
- ▶ Clinical Commissioning Groups should help educate GPs on the role of Scrutiny and we can work in partnership to improve health and wellbeing.



Key outcomes as a result of the review:

- ▶ Employees at both South Ribble Borough Council and Lancashire County Council have received free NHS Healthchecks.
- ▶ Healthchecks are now provided in a range of community settings to help target certain groups of people such as community venues and football games etc.
- ▶ A marketing campaign encouraging people to have a Healthcheck has been carried out across Lancashire using a mix of innovative messages.
- ▶ The number of Healthchecks has increased significantly over the last 12 months.
- ▶ Clinical Commissioning Groups have been promoting Healthchecks with GPs and also the role of Scrutiny.

Checking the Nation's Health - The Value of Council Scrutiny



Our joint review of NHS Healthchecks was externally funded and used as learning in a national publication funded by Public Health England.

Our Scrutiny Chair launched the national best practice guide with Professor Kevin Fenton, Director of Health & Wellbeing at Public Health England at a conference in London.

This was a good opportunity to learn from others and promote the profile of South Ribble and the Scrutiny Committee.

Conclusions and Thanks

As you can see from this report, our Scrutiny Committee plays a vital role in the governance of the Council and in our efforts to improve the quality of life of local people.

The Scrutiny Committee continues to effectively and constructively challenge the Council's Cabinet and other organisations. We have successfully carried out a number of major reviews on a wide range of important issues affecting residents in South Ribble and working closely with partner organisations.

We are particularly proud of the great strides we have made with the health agenda through these challenging times for the National Health Service and health providers. Our joint Scrutiny review of NHS Healthchecks with the County Council received national praise and led to a massive improvement on the take-up of Healthchecks in South Ribble. Our review of health inequalities was well received by partners and the development of our ground-breaking local health scrutiny protocol.

One of the most tangible differences Scrutiny has made was with Bamber Bridge Fire Station and having the proposal to downgrade the fire station reversed and the provision actually increased.

Whilst external Scrutiny and acting as residents' champion with other organisations is important, so too is the work of our own council. In addition to holding individual Cabinet Members to account on their portfolio we have also influenced major policy decisions around empty properties, communications, Worden Park and community safety.

We aren't complacent and realise that there is always more that we can do. It is hoped that Scrutiny continues to build on the successes of the last four years. There is more work to do to ensure more robust and timely responses to our recommendations are provided and as we have also previously said on a number of occasions performance management is an area that should be strengthened further across the Council.

We would like to thank all Members of South Ribble Borough Council, the Cabinet, Senior Management Team and officers, our partner organisations and all those involved in helping us to make Scrutiny in South Ribble effective and continuously improve the quality of life for our residents.

How to Contact us

For further information on our Scrutiny Committee, please contact:

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