

## **SCRUTINY COMMISSION REPORT 2008**

The role of the Commission is twofold. Firstly, it has the responsibility for providing direction to the scrutiny process, and to that end, has looked carefully at the focus of scrutiny and ensuring that it looks at issues of concern to the people of Leicestershire as well as the support available to do this effectively. The second role, as the corporate scrutiny body, is to focus on those issues which cover the whole organisation. In discharging this part of its role the Commission has:-

- Monitored the overall performance of the County Council. This was done both through the CPA process and by examining in detail the progress being made in achieving the key performance targets as well as receiving quarterly reports on the revenue and capital expenditure to ensure that the County Council was providing the right services in a cost efficient way. The Commission has recommended that in future committees take more ownership of the key performance targets for services delivered within their remit;
- Examined the planning process for 2008/09 corporate policies and reviewed progress on the implementation of the Corporate ICT Strategy.
- Reviewed the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy and examined the LAA - Key Performance Indicators
- Made recommendations to the Cabinet regarding Transit and Stopping Place Provision for Gypsies and other Travellers
- Made recommendations to the Cabinet regarding the proposals for the review of the Post Office network

The Medium Term Financial Strategy was examined in detail and a number of observations and recommendations made. The Committees and Commission have recommended that Scrutiny be involved at an early stage in developing future efficiency savings with a view to making a positive contribution to the process.

Climate change is a major issue facing the world today. A Panel of members was established to examine the County Council's use of energy. The Panel has divided its work into various themes and these are now being reported to the Environment Scrutiny Committee, the Commission and where appropriate to the Cabinet.

The Commission discussed one 'Call-In', a rare occurrence in Leicestershire, regarding the purchase the implementation of Oracle E Business Suite and Consultancy Support

An increasing amount of significant activity is undertaken by the Chief Executive's Department, much of this is discussed by the Commission in terms of the LAA etc. Arrangements are being made to discuss the other work of the department by the Commission.

Increasingly, the County Council is required by Government to work with partners (District Councils, Health bodies, the Police and the voluntary sector) to deliver services through arrangement under a Local Area Agreement. The members of the Commission have been concerned about accountability of partnership bodies and have now put in place arrangements for scrutinising performance of partners in the Local Area Agreement process. Though this has worked relatively well at a County level, it is unfortunate that District Councils have yet to take up the offer of involvement in scrutiny work in partnership with the County Council. The emerging Multi Area Agreement will make this joint working of increasing importance.

The recent bill regarding Local Government will expand the role of Scrutiny within the County Council and in respect to public services and local partnership working. The Commission will be reviewing its role in the light of the Bill's provisions.

A major aspect of this year's work on Scrutiny is the Review of Scrutiny requested by the County Council. The review led by Jessica Crowe and Steve Nicklin has worked in considerable depth on current practice within Scrutiny. Their report has finally been published and its recommendations and an action plan in response are being discussed.