

**SOCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
LUTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ANNUAL REPORT 2007-8**

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 2007- 08**

1. The Council's constitution introduced in December 2001 requires each scrutiny committee to report once a year to the Scrutiny Board the annual progress of this committee.
2. This is the seventh year of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee. It is one of five Scrutiny Committees. The Committee performed a cross cutting role of monitoring and evaluating service delivery, improving performance, contributing to policy development and investigating specific issues. It made several commendations to the Executive, most of which were accepted. It also scrutinised the decisions of the Executive through the "call in" process.
3. Under the terms of reference the committee covers the following key areas:

Disabilities Exclusion & Disadvantage Anti Poverty Housing Benefits & Welfare	Services to Vulnerable People Elders Mental health Homes & Day Centres
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## **MEMBERSHIP 2007- 8**

4. The Committees Membership is as follows:

Cllr Sian(Chair)  
Cllr K Malik(V Chair)  
Cllr J Davies  
Cllr Bernard  
Cllr J Burnett  
Cllr Q Hussain  
Cllr M Kiansumba  
Cllr Margaret Simons &  
Cllr A. Skepelhorn

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

5. The issue of a wider involvement by the citizens, users of the council's services, partners and providers in the scrutiny process has been a key challenge for Scrutiny Committees on a national basis. It remains a matter of concern for a number of Scrutiny Committees and has been a constant issue. However, the experience of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee in Luton has been distinctly different. There has been an active involvement of our citizens, stakeholders, partners and providers in the scrutiny reviews. This is mainly through the Scrutiny Way Forward Groups and establishing a link with the voluntary sector. Not too long ago the work of this group was commended in one of the Inspectors reports. The efforts and contribution of such groups has enabled the Committee to fulfill its aims of getting feedback from those who are directly affected by the service under review, or are local providers and citizens of Luton.
6. Furthermore, Members of the public have an opportunity to ask questions at Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee meetings. They respond to personal

invitations, personal interests and some are members of the Scrutiny Way Forward Groups. Advertisement in Local newspapers is used to invite participation and comment on the current scrutiny topic that is underway and also to suggest topics for future scrutinies. However, the main motivation to get involved lies in the fact that where people have shown interest to participate in scrutiny they know that they will get a chance to air their views freely and frankly. Their views are taken very seriously and where pertinent taken on board. At Committee meetings, if possible, the Chair brings forward the items that the public wants to contribute to so that they don't have to wait for long before their item is taken up. This is now a commonly recommended good practice.

7. Another way of involving public interest is by giving a voice to the concerns of all the communities in Luton and at the right time e.g. this year the committee agreed to consider the needs of the Polish community at its very first meeting of this Municipal year. It attracted a good response from the academics as well as the local communities. A unanimous decision was recommended to the Executive to assist the community in settling down in Luton. The Executive endorsed the recommendation
8. The setting up of Scrutiny Way Forward Groups<sup>1</sup> has been a key to this level of engagement. The relationship of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee and its Stakeholders has had tangible results in the past and the committee continued to build on its past successes. The most recent example is the setting up of the Sheltered Accommodation Review Group. However, it cannot be assumed that the Executive can always be convinced, the main restrictions being the budgetary responsibilities and the balancing of priorities against competing demands. Sometimes the impediment lies in the delay in implementing those recommendations that are agreed by the Executive.
9. Efforts have continued to increase public awareness of and participation in the work of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee, for instance through the improved content on the Council's website, public participation leaflets and meetings of the scrutiny way forward groups, mostly held at venues convenient to the users. However experience has shown that such interest is often personal or topical.
10. The lack of presence of some of the visible socially excluded groups is evident. This is an area that the committee may wish to prioritise and ensure that impact assessments are made to ensure that none of its processes or practices is directly or indirectly discriminating against any of the groups. A proactive attempt will be made to ensure that the participants are representative of the communities in Luton and that their choice is reflected in the selection of Scrutiny topics. However it needs to be borne in mind that

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<sup>1</sup> The Scrutiny Way Forward Groups are made up of current or potential Users and Carers, Providers, Partners, pressures Groups like Age Concern, Councillors, and Key Officers. The Scrutiny Officer can organise visits to good practice authorities, meetings, help with putting their view forward, select and invite on their behalf relevant speakers etc.

Meetings of the Scrutiny Way Forward Groups are usually held where their places of meetings/interaction are; this could be in Libraries, local community centres, Day Centres etc. Smaller groups of the Scrutiny Way Forward Group are facilitated to visit examples of good practice authority.

nearly all of our topics are most pertinent to those who are classed as socially excluded.

## **A LIST OF THE KEY AREAS CONSIDERED BY THE SOCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2007/8**

11. The Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee has continued to focus on the regular examination of a number of topics as follows:

- a. **Migrant workers need**
- b. **Disability Equality Duty Implications**
- c. **Progress on Day Care Needs of People with a Learning Disability**
- d. **Communities England – Consultation paper**
- e. **Private Sector Housing Condition Survey**
- f. **Draft Housing Strategy 2007-11**
- g. **Housing Allocations Policy**
- h. **Members Rota visits to Care Homes & Supporting People Progress**
- i. **Homelessness and Young people Housing Strategy Statement (Expected in April 2008)**

## **12. EVIDENCE RECEIVED BY THE COMMITTEE**

a.What were the most common source(s) of evidence presented to the Committee?	Primary sources and secondary sources e.g. Primary sources included: Users and all those who are affected, they related their own experiences, and put forward their suggestions through the Sheltered accommodation review and at Bramingham Centre. Secondary sources: Literature research e.g., Government Papers/ articles on new policies and guidance, e.g. The Housing Green paper, presentation on the needs of the polish community. Best practice and Transcript of spoken word e.g. through Users & providers input from the voluntary sector like Age Concern.
b.What data types were used?	Qualitative and quantitative, Data was both primary and secondary. Primary data is collected through e.g. visits to sites to experience and find out first hand information or hear directly from the Users e.g. Sarg members some of whom are affected directly. (Also see above)
c. Who determines the scope?	Elected Members of the relevant Scrutiny Committees determine the scope of scrutinies alongside the stakeholders or their representatives at the Committees e.g. Sheltered accommodation review
d.Who decides the topics?	Members of the council, local citizens, heed is also taken of the 2012 Agenda, or any developments at a central government level that affect the citizens of Luton. Recently cues are also taken from good practice audits
e.How is evidence collected?	Interviews, focus group, hearing at Committees or at service delivery points, inquiry, observation, survey and site visits to authorities with recommended good practice.
f. Where is it collected & Where is it kept	On site, locally
g.How is the Qualitative and quantitative evidence processed?	Summarising, weighting, sorting, merging and interpreting.
h.Is it used	Yes, mostly, e.g. the data on polish communities was considered by the Executive as are all qualitative analysis sent to the Executive as a part of the final report. The recommendations at all levels are made in view of the evidence presented. (See outcomes)

i. Who uses it?	Members, officers and other stakeholders e.g. Users, providers, policy makers
j. Why is it used?	Mainly to improve performance and to inform stakeholders, to inform policy, to adhere to government guidance, good practice, and to help Members arrive at conclusions and recommendations.

## **SCRUTINY MONITORING ROLE**

13. Over the years as scrutiny matures the monitoring role of the scrutiny committees has developed rapidly. Monitoring is mainly related to the implementation of the agreed recommendations of scrutiny, particularly those that are endorsed by the Executive

## **MOST RECENT REVIEW**

14. This year the committee chose to scrutinise the review of sheltered accommodation.
15. A representative scrutiny way forward group, made up of Users, Providers, Partners including the Scrutiny Officer and senior officers from the Community & living Department Officers, Age Concern was set up to oversee the production of a strategy for sheltered accommodation in Luton. It has now met 5 times and is known as the Sheltered Accommodation Review Group. Its meeting times are alternated between afternoon and evenings. This is to ensure that, as many people as possible are able to take part. The key questions that were agreed were:

## **KEY QUESTIONS**

16. Are the current services and sheltered accommodation in Luton fit for purpose?  
Do they reflect best practice?  
Can they be made fit for purpose? If not  
How best they can be disposed off?  
Explore how those older people could be provided for who wish to receive care in their own homes?

## **THE KEY FINDINGS**

17. The review is still going on; its findings will be reported to the Social inclusion scrutiny committee when it has concluded its work. Regular updates on the work of the SARG are reported to this committee.
18. Key recommendations made by the review group will be forwarded to the Executive for consideration and endorsement.

## CALL INS

19. Scrutiny committees an call in the decisions of the Executive. This year there was a single call in as follows:

No	Decision Called In	Subject	Reason	Name of Members Calling In	Date of Executive Meeting	Date on Call In Form	Scrutiny Committee considering Call In
1	EX/211/07	Residential Care Learning Disability for Adults	To allow Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee to examine advantages of commissioning against direct provision by the council.	Councillors Dolling and Franks	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2007	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2007	Social Inclusion – 1.11.07

## 20. KEY OUTCOMES 2007- 8

NO.	DECISIONS OF THE SISC	OUTCOMES
I.	Review of sheltered accommodation (Improving performance role)	Album of good and bad practice produced by the Older people's Working Group will be recommended to those responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Sheltered Accommodation review.
II.	The Day care needs of people with a Learning disability. (Scrutiny Monitoring role (05/06/07)	<p>Users, Providers and key workers in Day Care services are a part of the Partnership Board.</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring reports will be submitted to the SISC. Newsletter turnaround will be improved and published on the website so that Carers, Clients and Staff are better informed.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder for Audit Social Care has been asked to oversee the progress on staffing issues.</p> <p>Progress on work sought for Clients unable get external placements will be monitored.</p> <p>Initiation of a newsletter at Bramingham Centre.</p>
III.	Comments and suggestions were Sent to Govt. on the following	Members comments and suggestions were included in the response to the

	Documents; Communities & England & The Future of Social Housing Regulations Consultation Document.	Government documents on Communities & England & Future of Social Housing Regulation Consultation Document Agreement.
IV.	The draft Private Sector Renewal Strategy is reported back to the Committee and the Executive in the New Year.	Monitoring the development of the private sector renewal strategy.
V.	Budget Executive.	Members had an opportunity to scrutinise the draft Budget and put forward their views to the Executive both in private and public.
VI.	That Members rota visits to Council Adult Social Care Homes, and Residential and Day Care Establishments be reintroduced.	Member's visits re-introduced.  Guidelines for visiting sheltered accommodation to be established.
VII.	That guidelines set out in Appendix 1 Of the report of the Head of Adult Social Care (Ref: 9) be used by the Sheltered Accommodation Review Group (SARG) when visiting Sheltered Accommodation.	Guidelines for visits made by members of the SARG identified.
IX.	Age Concern perspective on Sheltered Accommodation.	An early contribution from Age Concern to the Scrutiny Review on Sheltered Accommodation.
X.	Supporting People Strategy.	Monitoring the progress made in the Implementation of the strategy initially after six months and then on an annual basis.
XI.	Housing Strategy for People with a Learning Disability – Joint Review.	This Strategy was produced with full participation of users, providers and partners. Regular monitoring reports will be received biannually. Executive endorsed the Strategy.