



Scrutiny in Bury

Improving services, delivering priorities

Overview and Scrutiny Annual report 2006/07

FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Welcome to our eighth Annual Scrutiny Report. This document looks back over the last 12 months and assesses the effect our Scrutiny Commissions have had on the way Bury Council carries out its business.

Overview and scrutiny plays an important role in the running of the Council. It is how front line Councillors keep a check on the Executive – providing constructive challenge to the way decisions are made, reviewing service delivery and advising on policy. In 2006/07, this work was carried out through five, themed Scrutiny Commissions coordinated by Scrutiny Management Committee.

Working to agreed programmes set at the beginning of the year, our Commissions covered a range of topics – most of which were closely linked to the delivery of our ambitions or implementation of the Council's priorities. The impact of our work can be seen later in the report together with case study examples of where scrutiny has made a difference – including recycling, community transport, anti-social behaviour and the handling of complaints from the public.



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INTRODUCTION

In commending this report we acknowledge that scrutiny is not always an easy or comfortable process. We would therefore like to thank all Elected Members, Co-Opted Members and Lead Officers on Scrutiny Commissions for their support together with all the individuals who have supplied evidence and expert information to help us develop proposals. We would also like to thank Dr Jane Martin of the Centre for Public Scrutiny for her support and professional advice at the beginning of the year in helping us draw together the work programmes for each Commission.

	Councillor John Smith Chair: Healthier Communities Scrutiny Commission and Chair of the Scrutiny Management Committee
	Councillor Wilf Davison Chair: Economy, Environment and Transport Scrutiny Commission
	Councillor Barry Theckston Chair: Safe, Strong and Confident Communities Scrutiny Commission
	Councillor Siobhan Costello Chair: Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission
	Councillor Peter Redstone Chair: Resource and Performance Scrutiny Commission

WHAT DID SCRUTINY DO IN 2006/07?

Five scrutiny commissions were in operation during 2006/07. Four commissions tackled key themes within Bury's priorities – health, environment, safety and children. The fifth commission scrutinised the internal workings of the Council – a key role in ensuring value for money and delivering another Council priority – “**Putting People First**”.

The bulk of our work in 2006/07 had a community focus. Utilising the talents of front line Councillors and co-opted members, we tested the impact of policy, Executive decisions and operational services in meeting needs of local people. This work fell into five main categories:

Holding the Executive to account

- Reviewing Executive decisions – both in advance of decisions being made by monitoring items included on the Forward Plan and using call in powers to review policy decisions (town centre management, proposed school closures)
- Testing the quality of decision making in delivering the Council's ambitions and priorities by questioning Executive Members at Commission meetings

Performance Management

- Monitoring the way resources are being used
- Contributing to improvement by challenging the level of performance being delivered
- Conducting comparative studies and visits to other organisations to evaluate Bury's position in relation to other service providers

Policy Review

- Assessing the effectiveness of existing plans and strategies

Policy Development

- Conducting research / gathering evidence to inform new (or amend existing) policies and strategies of the Council
- Considering proposals for change prior to decisions being taken by the Executive

External Scrutiny

- Considering issues of local concern
- Reviewing the effectiveness of partnership working
- Undertaking the statutory role on Health scrutiny. In Bury this function is carried out on a joint basis with Elected Members from Manchester City Council, Oldham MBC and Rochdale MBC as the local NHS Trusts operate across all these Councils. A Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee covers the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust whilst a Joint Mental Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is in place for Pennine Care NHS Trust.

Case studies set out over the next few pages illustrate how we carried out these functions. A fuller assessment of the impact of scrutiny is summarised at **Appendix 1**.

Some topics remain work in progress and in the coming year further reports will be coming forward to help the Council continue its improvement journey.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

An important role for scrutiny is the ability to test decision making and ensure that the Executive is selecting the best options in the interests of the community.

One way on doing this is for scrutiny members to ‘call-in’ a decision and review the evidence as happened with town centre management.



Job Evaluation

The Director of Personnel was invited to report on the progress of discussions around Equal Pay and the Job Evaluation of all posts in the Authority as part of the Local Pay Review.

Scrutiny Members were concerned with a number of issues:

Impact of the Review on employee relations

Pay Structures and Bonus Schemes

Conditions of Service, particularly employees’ hours of working

Potential settlement costs to the Authority.

At a special session attended by over 20 Members, the Director of Personnel gave a presentation on the current position and answered questions on the various options under consideration. In recognition of the future impact of these issues on the Council’s workforce and the achievement of the Council’s Priorities, it was agreed to keep this matter under review.

It is also important for scrutiny members to keep up to date with issues particularly where they may have a significant and lasting impact on the Borough. Witnesses may be called to explain current thinking and proposals for the way forward.

Town Centre Management

The Resource and Performance Scrutiny Commission 'called in' the decision of the Executive to establish and recruit to the post of Bury Town Centre Manager on the grounds of potential 'inappropriate use of resources'.

The Commission examined the issues, questioned witnesses and reviewed evidence from the Town Centre Developers and owners of the Precinct and the Executive Member for Environment and Transport. It emerged that the post was to be funded jointly by the Council, the developers and owners of the Shopping Precinct.

Following an intense question and answer session, the Scrutiny Commission referred the 'Call-In' Notice to the Council without comment.

The Council at its meeting held on 7 February 2007, after a full debate, resolved not to submit any objections to the Executive in relation to the proposed post.

Members need assurance that services are providing good value for money by delivering Council priorities effectively and efficiently. The Best Value Review Programme is a key device for testing the quality of service delivery and Members play a key role in this process by challenging the robustness of the review and quality of the action plan.

Review of Domiciliary Care

The Best Value review of domiciliary care made proposals to develop a new model of care based on partnership with the Primary Care Trust, the independent sector and a more flexible in-house service. Members, in scrutinising the outcome of the review tested the strength of the action plan by questioning:

- The quality of data used to establish the service costs and evaluate performance
- The rationale for commissioning a growing proportion of care from the independent sector given the relative low cost of in-house provision
- The steps being taken to raise standards across the sector

In the light of service user feedback, performance levels, external assessment and the service's record on efficiency, Members were satisfied that this was a good service and, with the inclusion of the Commission's comments, the action plan would drive further improvement.

An update is due in Autumn 2007 to enable Members to review progress on the action plan.

Homelessness and Housing advice

Not all services make it first time. The review of homelessness and housing advice services exemplifies the level of scrutiny that service managers (and Executive Members) undergo. In the past year, Scrutiny Members have called for changes to action plans:

- (a) Because insufficient progress is being made or
- (b) It is unclear how aspects of the action plan will directly address the issues raised in the review.

The relatively high costs highlighted in the Audit Commission's 2005/2006 Value for Money Profile, prompted a review of homelessness and housing advice services. This review, in addition to costs, examined output levels and working practices to produce an overall view of service.

The review identified several areas for improvement to which service management responded in the form of an action plan. Following rigorous evaluation, the Resource and Performance Scrutiny Commission found the action plan to be insufficiently challenging and tasked the Head of Performance and Corporate Planning to work with service management to produce a more targeted set of proposals. These were subsequently presented to, and approved by, Members on 8 March 2007.

Intervention by the Scrutiny Commission resulted in an improved action plan to cut process costs and deliver a better service in line with the issues identified during the review. An update is due in Autumn 2007 to track progress.



Images from Homelessness Project run in Rachel House, self-contained accommodation offered to single, homeless young people.

POLICY REVIEW

In Bury, non-Executive Members retain involvement in decision making through policy review and policy development. Inevitably there can be some overlap between the two. Perhaps the main difference can be explained by seeing policy review being an assessment of existing practice whereas policy development is the formulation of proposals to enhance existing practice or to develop new ideas.

Policy reviews often cover Council led activities as illustrated in the case studies:

Complaints handling

A Member led review into the way the Council deals with complaints produced a series of recommendations to:

- Improve accountability for complaints
- Distinguish between complaints and service requests
- Increase monitoring and reporting on complaints to ensure the Council learns from citizen feedback and delivers better services

These recommendations were adopted by the Executive. Changes have since been made to improve access to the system and differentiate service requests from complaints, new customer care standards have been introduced and one post has been identified to take responsibility for the complaints system.

Work is ongoing to develop a back office system and improve the formal monitoring systems. Members will receive regular update reports to ensure progress is being maintained.

Recycling

Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill is a major issue for the Council under the '**Cleaner, Safer, Greener**' priority. In 2006/07, the Economy, Environment and Transport Scrutiny Commission tackled this subject by examining options to increase the reuse of materials. The Commission also considered the potential for social enterprises to be involved in collecting bulky waste and visited sites where this already operated.

The outcome of the review was to commend efforts to reduce landfill and encourage the use of locally-based organisations to help meet Council targets. A report along these lines is being submitted to the Executive to instigate a tendering process for the collection of bulky household waste.

In many respects policy review and development is the counter balance to holding the Executive to account.

By taking time to investigate policy issues and researching the range of options (either through taking evidence from expert witnesses or, as in the case of recycling, visiting other areas and service providers) scrutiny Members are able to support and develop the work of the Executive.

Consequently, inclusion of such items on Scrutiny Commission work programmes will continue. As well as making use of the talents of non-Executive Members, it also retains the link between Council priorities and the needs of the community.

Community Transport

This piece of work examined Community Transport in Bury as a means of providing a more inclusive public transport service in remote and rural areas.

Under the guidance of a Member Sub-Group, research was carried out to assess the level of demand for such provision. Questionnaire responses were followed up by public meetings in the three most popular areas before Ainsworth was selected for a pilot scheme.

Throughout the review the Sub-Group took evidence from the Community Transport Association and Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE). As part of this relationship, GMPTE gave an undertaking to match fund the pilot and provide 2 vehicles for the scheme.

Various procurement options to deliver the service were considered but the limited amount of funding and temporary nature of the pilot precluded the establishment of a new organisation. Consequently discussions were held with a neighbouring community transport scheme with a view to them operating the pilot for a 2 year period.

The Executive Member attended the meeting in March 2007 and supported the work undertaken to introduce Community Transport. Progress on the pilot will be monitored with a view to extending coverage to other parts of the Borough should the scheme prove a success.

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

Fairtrade

As the Council is a large consumer and community leader, the Economy, Environment and Transport Scrutiny Commission examined the implications for Bury in becoming a 'Fair trade' town.

This led to research into the approaches taken by other local authorities in order to learn lessons and assess the potential benefits. In summary the benefits were seen to be:

- Encouraging interaction between business / community groups – contributing to the Council priority of **'Strengthened Communities'**
- Improving the image and reputation of Bury
- Endorsing the quality of local retail and catering outlets

In keeping with other events (the drive to make poverty history, the 200 year anniversary of the abolition of slavery) the Commission advocated that the Council should support a strategy to purchase – and promote the purchase – of foods with the Fair trade mark as part of its commitment to sustainable development and to give marginalised producers a fair deal.

All recommendations of the Commission were fully supported by the Executive and work commissioned to extend the coverage by engaging with the Local Strategic Partnership.

It is misconception that scrutiny is only concerned with Council services. As a community leader, Members can – and do – investigate other activities taking place in the Borough. During 2006/07, much of the external focus centred on health issues.

Utilisation of walk-in centres

With an extensive programme of change to primary care in the Borough, Members sought reassurance that the two Walk in centres were utilised to their full potential. In particular, Members wanted to examine whether the right services were on offer, how these supported health promotion/preventative services and diverted people away from Accident and Emergency provision.

Due to the scale of this review, the final report is not scheduled until 2007/08 by which time there will have been:

- Extensive consultation with centre users, staff and Primary Care Trust representatives
- Visits to familiarise Members with the facilities and to meet staff and users

- Research into the core business for such centres to meet the needs of the community

Reviews of external services can take longer than examining Council activities as Members need to become familiar with the topic and gain access to outside bodies. These additional constraints are built into work programmes reinforcing our emphasis on developing quality outcomes.

Government health consultations

For much of 2006/07, the Healthier Communities Scrutiny Commission concentrated on the Government's public consultation across Greater Manchester on:

- 'Making It Better' – Configuration of Maternity, Children's and Baby Services in Greater Manchester, East Cheshire, High Peak and Rossendale.
- 'Healthy Futures' – Configuration of health services in the North East of Greater Manchester.

Having taken evidence from a range of stakeholders including representatives of patients and health providers, Members unanimously agreed to refer the decision to the Secretary of State for Health. The principal concern was the adverse effects on local health services of the proposed closure of the Maternity and Mother and Baby Unit at Fairfield Hospital, Bury and the transfer of services to North Manchester General Hospital. Information on the size of units used to inform this decision had not been included within the consultation documentation.

The Secretary of State for Health has since referred the decision to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) for determination. This body is now considering our views on both the decision and the consultation process.

The decision of the IRP is expected in August 2007.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SCRUTINY

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is continually striving to improve the quality and effectiveness of scrutiny in Bury. Over the past year we have made changes in the way we do business in a number of important ways

Work programme planning

In June 2006, a Scrutiny Work Programme Planning Event was held in the Elizabethan Suite in Bury. The event, facilitated by Dr Jane Martin from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, was attended by approximately 30 Scrutiny Commission Members and started the process of selecting topics for Scrutiny Reviews in 2006/2007.

A series of themes emerged from the discussions which Members ranked according to community importance and links with the Council's Priorities. These themes were then forwarded to individual Scrutiny Commission for consideration within their work programme.

Scrutiny Leaflet



To encourage greater involvement in the scrutiny process, we have produced a guidance leaflet 'Helping to Improve Your Council's Services – A Guide to Bury's Scrutiny Commissions'. The leaflet describes the arrangements for meetings, the role of each Commission and asking for suggestions from the public for scrutiny projects.

The leaflet is available at all Council buildings and has been made available at other outlets including Area Boards.

Outcomes from Scrutiny reviews – reporting mechanisms to the Executive

A protocol has been introduced to provide a consistent mechanism for Scrutiny Commissions to report findings and outline proposals to the Executive.

This mechanism has brought greater accountability to the process as the Executive is required to give reasons for not following Scrutiny recommendations.

Scrutiny review scoping and project planning

The Scrutiny Management Committee introduced a Programme Planning template to be used for scoping reviews. The template will ensure a disciplined approach to selecting topics for Reviews in line with the Council's Priorities.

Scrutiny web pages

This year has seen the development of dedicated scrutiny web pages on the Council's internet site. The pages include details of the remit and current work of all the Commissions along with an interactive facility to encourage the public to get involved in the scrutiny process. The public, through the web pages, are able to ask questions about how scrutiny is conducted in Bury and suggest items for the Work Programmes of the Commissions. All questions and comments receive a response.

The screenshot shows the Bury Metro website interface. At the top left is the Bury Metro logo. To its right is a banner image of yellow daffodils with the text "People at the heart of Bury". Further right are links for "Feedback Help Accessibility", a search bar with "Search Bury MBC" and a "Go" button, and a "Sitemap A-Z Services" link. Below this is a horizontal navigation menu with categories: Business, Community, Learning, Environment, Health & Care, Social Issues, Housing, Jobs, Legal, Leisure, and Transport & Streets. A breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Your Council > Councils > Decision making (council) > Committees > Membership. The main content area features a yellow header for "Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission". Below this is a link to the "e-Meeting Manager System" for Agenda, Minutes and Forward Plan. A "Members" list includes: S Cohen, S Magnall, B Sullivan, R Walker, A S Garner, S D Wright, Vacancy, S Costello (Ch), and another Vacancy. To the right, contact information for Bury MBC is provided: Town Hall, Knowsley Street, Bury, Lancashire BL9 0SW, phone number 0161 253 5000, and emergency/out of office hours 0161 253 6606. A "Contact Us" link is also present. At the bottom of the page is another horizontal navigation menu with categories: Business, Community, Learning, Environment, Health & Care, Social Issues, Housing, Jobs, Legal, and Leisure.

The screenshot shows the Bury Metro website interface for the Healthier Communities Scrutiny Commission. It features the same Bury Metro logo and banner as the previous page. The breadcrumb trail is: Home > Your Council > Councils > Decision making (council) > Committees > Membership. The main content area has a yellow header for "Healthier Communities Scrutiny Commission". Below this is a link to the "e-Meeting Manager System" for Agenda, Minutes and Forward Plan. A "Members" list includes: D Bigg (ch), T Chamberlain, J Grimshaw, R Walker, J Smith, C Berry, M Hankey, S J Southworth, and Vacancy. The "Membership" list on the left is more extensive than in the previous page, including: Audit Committee, Children And Young People Scrutiny Commission, Committee Chairs, Committee membership, Economy Environment and Transport Scrutiny Commission, Executive, Human Resources and Appeals Panel, Joint Authorities, Joint Committees, Joint Scrutiny Panel - Leisure Asset Strategy, and Joint Scrutiny Panel - Supporting People. The horizontal navigation menu at the bottom is identical to the previous page.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Council has nominated these Chief Officers to lead the scrutiny process within the Authority:

Scrutiny Lead Officer	Jayne Hammond Director of Legal and Democratic Services Tel: 0161 – 253 5002 Email: j.m.hammond@bury.gov.uk
Economy, Environment and Transport Scrutiny Commission	Graham Atkinson Executive Director of Environment and Development Services Tel: 0161 – 253 5736 Email: g.atkinson@bury.gov.uk
Healthier Communities Scrutiny Commission	Pat Horan Executive Director of Adult Care Services Tel: 0161 – 253 5405 Email: p.horan@bury.gov.uk
Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission	Eleni Ioannides Executive Director of Children's Services Tel: 0161 – 253 5501 Email: e.ioannides@bury.gov.uk
Safe, Secure and Confident Communities Scrutiny Commission	Ruth Fairhurst Assistant Chief Executive Tel: 0161 – 253 5955 Email: r.e.fairhurst@bury.gov.uk
Resource and Performance Scrutiny Commission	(a) Mike Owen Director Finance and E-Government Tel: 0161 – 253 5002 Email: m.a.owen@bury.gov.uk (b) Harry Downie Head of Performance and Corporate Planning Tel: 0161 – 253 5125 Email: h.downie@bury.gov.uk

Further information about scrutiny can be found in the leaflet ***'Helping to Improve Your Council's Services – A Guide to Bury's Scrutiny Commissions'*** available at any Council office or by email at scrutinise.it@bury.gov.uk

All enquiries about the contents for this Annual Report to:

David Hanson
Head of Democratic Services
Town Hall
Knowsley Street
BURY
BL9 0SW

Tel: 0161 – 253 5131

Email: d.hanson@bury.gov.uk

Appendix 1

TOPIC	COUNCIL PRIORITY	REVIEW OBJECTIVE	REVIEW OUTCOME	ACTION	IMPACT
Economy, Environment & Transport					
Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthened Communities ➤ Cleaner, Safer, Greener Borough 	To enable furniture to be re-used and specifically targeted at low-income households. To reduce the quantity of waste going to landfill.	Develop alternative schemes to divert recyclable waste and provide affordable good quality furniture to low income households.	Examine community managed collection schemes/social enterprise organisations as a means of delivering this service. Undertake a tender process to secure an organisation to operate the bulky waste service and for it to be in place by January 2008.	Only identifiable once the contractor is in place but more furniture will be diverted from landfill and re-used and opportunities for return to work and retraining will be available as part of the social enterprise solution.
Community Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthened Communities ➤ Cleaner, Safer, Greener Borough 	Examine the demand for Community Transport in Bury,	Introduce a pilot scheme for a more inclusive public transport service especially for remote and rural areas	A 2 year Community Transport pilot scheme in the Ainsworth area starting from late June 2007.	Usage figures available from July onwards. Possible to include target figures from the March 2007 report to EE&T Scrutiny Commission.
Public Conveniences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improving Town Centres & Neighbourhoods ➤ Cleaner, Safer, Greener Borough 	Carry out an analysis of the existing facilities and consider means of increasing the availability of conveniences.	A more focused and committed approach to the management and development of Public Conveniences with a willingness to consider radical alternatives.	Expand Community Toilet Scheme. Improving on directional signage To work with the Town Centre Manager to gain access for members of the public to WCs within existing retail outlets	Town Centre Manager post not yet filled - key role in helping to deliver this solution. Project needs to be monitored to identify public reaction to improved provision.
Town Twinning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved Cultural & Sporting Opportunities ➤ Strengthened Communities ➤ Better opportunities for children and 	Review arrangements for Twinning and identify opportunities to sustain the Twinning Programme over the longer term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopt a policy for International Activity ➤ Improve the overall promotion and benefits of Twinning ➤ Establish sustainable budget for Twinning Programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Draw up a policy for International Activity that ensures all groups can participate ➤ Revise communications and organisation of Twinning visit ➤ Secure appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All Twinning groups have access to new agreed protocols to maximise the benefits of Twinning ➤ A new Twinning Web Page established ➤ Improved and expanded funding initiatives identified ➤ Dedicated PR resource identified

TOPIC	COUNCIL PRIORITY	REVIEW OBJECTIVE	REVIEW OUTCOME	ACTION	IMPACT
	young people			funding to support future Twinning visits.	
Fairtrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthened Communities ➤ Promoting Healthier Living 	Review the implications, costs and benefits to the Council in becoming a Fairtrade town.	Fairtrade 'five principles' assessed for relevance and applicability in Bury. Fairtrade experience from neighbouring GM Authorities Audited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Report taken to the Local Strategic Partnership - approval given along with the suggestion that the public sector partners adopt a similar fair trade commitment ➤ Fairtrade audit undertaken ➤ Preparations undertaken for submission of a bid to achieve Fairtrade status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Application for Bury to become a Fairtrade Borough made ➤ Completed audit identifies the products best suited to promote 'Fairtrade' ➤ Raise the profile of Bury and enhanced the reputation of the Council ➤ Meeting public demand for the initiative ➤ Fairtrade products now served within the Council ➤ Greater understanding of the principles of Fairtrade
Healthier Communities					
NHS Walk-in Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Putting Customers First ➤ Promoting Healthier Living 	To assess the effectiveness and utilisation of the two Walk-In Centres provided by the Primary Care Trust (PCT)	The assessment of Walk-in Centres is still ongoing and is due for completion during 2007/08		
Alcohol Abuse in the Borough	Promoting Healthier Living Improving Town Centres and Neighbourhoods	To assess the impact of alcohol abuse in the community	An evaluation of the current Alcohol Strategy and the effectiveness of multi-agency working is due during 2007/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Update and promote new alcohol strategy ➤ Revise, where necessary, the role and functionality of partnership working 	<p>Changes in working practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Alcohol Strategy updated and amended to include new initiatives, particularly within the Young People and Licensing Action Plans ➤ Positive multi-agency working within the borough to provide a holistic treatment service for young people and adults ➤ To ensure commissioning of services are based on a needs basis and within an effective multi agency framework

TOPIC	COUNCIL PRIORITY	REVIEW OBJECTIVE	REVIEW OUTCOME	ACTION	IMPACT
					It is too early to assess the effect this will have on the number of people who drink to harmful levels
Commissioning Process for Adult Care Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Putting Customers First ➤ Promoting Healthier Living 	To ensure the best possible packages of care are delivered with regard to value for money and focusing on prevention and promoting independence	The investigation is still ongoing to enable the Commission to gain a full understanding of how the Commissioning/decision-making process works. The review will be completed during 2007/08		
Changes to Health Service provision in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promoting Healthier Living ➤ Putting Customers First 	<p>Scrutinise the decisions of health bodies on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making it Better - Healthy Futures 	Evidence from a range of stakeholders led the Commission to conclude that the proposals for maternity services would have a detrimental effect on the health and experiences of patients in the Borough	Referral of the decision to the Secretary of State for Health	The Secretary of State has ordered a review of the decision to rationalise paediatric services across Manchester in those at risk at Fairfield Hospital. The Scrutiny Commission together with the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust and local MP have given evidence to the Independent Reconfiguration Review Group
Children & Young People					
Pupil Behaviour – Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better Opportunities for Children and Young People ➤ Promoting Healthier Living 	To review pupil behaviour and the Authority's policy and strategies to combat bullying of pupils in schools	Research, a review of the Council's policy and action plan and evidence from key stakeholders, identified a need for further detailed analysis of the situation and greater awareness of the issues within the community	<p>Commissioning of more detailed analysis on the incidence of bullying</p> <p>Actions proposed to raise awareness of the issue among school governing bodies</p>	Establishment of a specific sub-group to report on the impact of anti social behaviour and bullying on educational standards
Be Healthy Outcomes – Every Child Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promoting Healthier Living ➤ Better Opportunities for 	To establish the health needs of children and young people within the	<p>3 key areas were identified for further in-depth scrutiny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dental checks for 	To review these activities as part of the 2007/08 work programme	Clearer focus on areas for improvement

TOPIC	COUNCIL PRIORITY	REVIEW OBJECTIVE	REVIEW OUTCOME	ACTION	IMPACT
	Children and Young People	Borough based on the Young People's Needs Assessment produced by the PCT	children ➤ Health checks in schools ➤ Sports provision		
Pre-Joint Area Review (JAR) Preparations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better Opportunities for children and young people ➤ Putting Customers First 	To review the preparations for the Joint Area Review (JAR) to ensure that Children's Services are fit-for-purpose.	The Commission were content with the plans being put in place to prepare for the JAR in January 2008	The action plan produced following the pre-JAR assessment be used to monitor progress with the preparations. Progress be used to inform future scrutiny activity	Improved action planning process and increased confidence among stakeholders with preparations for the Joint Area Review
Safe, Strong & Confident Communities					
'No ball games' signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cleaner, Safer, Greener ➤ Promoting healthier living 	To examine the use, effectiveness and enforceability of 'No Ball Games' signs following a number of complaints received by Councillors about 'ball game' nuisance in their wards	Tolerance of the different views and needs within communities is preferable to legal action	Production of a general leaflet to help promote tolerance. The issue also to be promoted in the press and through 'Our Voice' Better recording of incidents to enable progress to be reviewed in 12 months' time	Awareness raising Intent to reduce incidence of complaints through improved relations in the community
Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthened Communities 	Review the extent of anti-social behaviour across the Borough which Members considered most affected the quality of life of residents within their wards	Recommendations to improve the reporting of, and response to, anti social behaviour	A report to Executive early in 2007/08 recommending a 12 point plan that will make reporting easier, extend preventative measures / services and improve the monitoring of activity	
Resource & Performance					
Homelessness & Housing Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Choice of Quality Housing ➤ Putting Customers First 	To scrutinise the Best Value review to ensure compliance with the corporate process and quality of the final report	Changes to the action plan were required to strengthen the focus on cost and performance issues	Revised action plan to exemplify how cost and performance issues would be addressed	Restructuring of the service to improve value for money, streamline processes and develop the preventative agenda
Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved Cultural 	To understand and	Thorough questioning of	Support from the	Review of Civic halls due autumn

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Services – Levels of Subsidy	and Sporting Opportunities ➤ Putting Customers First	review the level of annual subsidy to Leisure Services	the Executive Director for Environment and Development Services) leading to increased awareness of budget hotspots and actions taken to address the annual level of subsidy	Commission for a review of Civic Halls and progression of the Leisure Options Appraisal	2007 Leisure Options Appraisal due to report during 2007/08
Job Evaluation	Putting Customers First	Review the process of Job Evaluation of across the Authority and assess the impact of the Local Pay Review	Thorough questioning of the Director of Personnel to ensure due process and test the actions being taken to safeguard the Council	Feedback on the process around settlement procedures and bonus arrangements given to the Director of Personnel	Views of the Commission taken into account within the Equal Pay / Job Evaluation decision making process
Complaints Procedures	Putting Customers First	To evaluate the Council's methods of handling complaints	Evidence based assessment of the process including clearly identified areas for improvement	Proposals to the Executive to strengthen the procedure and improve the handling of complaints	Changes to the complaints procedure to differentiate complaints from service requests, introduce customer care standards, improve accountability and monitoring, differentiate between complaints and requests for service
Review of Domiciliary Care	➤ Promoting healthier living ➤ Putting Customers First	To scrutinise the Best Value review of Domiciliary Care to ensure compliance with the corporate process and quality of the final report	The Commission were satisfied that the review complied with the process following rigorous examination of the action plan and questioning of key managers	Changes were required to the action plan to reflect concerns about the accuracy of cost indicators and ensure that tasks were operating to realistic timescales	Support for a large scale reconfiguration of the service Improved action plan focusing efforts on cost and performance within realistic timescales