

# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/2012



## **Foreword**

As Chairman of the Overview Management Committee, responsible for overseeing the Overview and Scrutiny process in Bury, it gives me pleasure to present this Annual Report for 2011/2012. The report summarises the activities of the Council's Scrutiny Committees and reports on some of the highlights and achievements of the last year.

The Internal Scrutiny Committee has continued to scrutinise the performance of the Council and hold decision makers to account, with the External Scrutiny Committee examining the work of the Council's Partner organisations. In addition to these standing committees, dedicated Overview Project Groups have been set up during the year to undertake detailed reviews and develop policy. As Chairman of the Committee tasked with setting up and monitoring these Groups, it has been pleasing to have received evidence based reports from three of the Project Groups accompanied by detailed recommendations focusing on improving services.

It is my hope that in the coming year the positive elements highlighted within this report serve to further develop the role of overview and scrutiny in strengthening the decision making process and improving services to the residents of Bury.

The Council has continued to take the lead role in administering the two Joint Health Scrutiny Committees established in January 2004, which review the work of the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and the Pennine Care NHS Trust. Excellent working relationships have continued with Members and Officers in both the NHS and in the partner Local Authorities of Manchester, Stockport, Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

Looking forward, a new scrutiny structure will be introduced from May 2012. The new structure has been developed as a result of a detailed review undertaken by the Overview Management Committee. I believe the new structure will build on the current positive aspects and streamline the current committee structure to encourage detailed reviews and reporting mechanisms.

As always thanks go to the Chairs and Members of all the Scrutiny Committees and Overview Project Groups. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Executive Directors and their staff, for supporting the scrutiny process, as we look forward to the challenges of the coming year.

**Councillor T Tariq**  
**Chairman of Overview Management Committee**  
**May 2012**



## **Overview and Scrutiny in Bury**

Overview and Scrutiny Committees are an important part of the way we make decisions. Although they have no Executive powers, the scrutiny process allows Members to explore issues in depth and help to influence decisions through recommendations to the Executive or to the Full Council.

In Bury, the current scrutiny structure clearly defines the role of the Council Committees in terms of a dedicated Overview role and a Scrutiny role. The role of scrutiny bodies can be broken down into these two main functions:-

### **Holding the Executive to Account**

This involves scrutinising decisions before they are implemented by way of 'Call-in' to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for debate. The effect of a 'Call-in' is to suspend the decision until the Scrutiny Committee has had the opportunity to consider the implications of the decision and, where appropriate, to offer comments back to the Executive.

### **Policy Development**

This involves Scrutiny Committees undertaking reviews of functions within their individual remits leading to recommendations to the Executive, and to assist in the development of future policies and strategies.

Under the current arrangements the following committees are constituted to carry out Overview and Scrutiny in Bury:

### **Internal Scrutiny Committee**

- Set up to scrutinise Cabinet decisions and Council performance, the Internal Scrutiny Committee operates within the following terms of reference:
- To review and scrutinise the decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions.
- To review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and all particular service areas.
- To report outcomes to the Overview Management Committee unless the Committee determines otherwise for expediency.
- To make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or appropriate Committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the Scrutiny process.
- Oversight of the provision, planning and management of the Council's resources including its budget, revenue borrowing assets and audit arrangements.

- Oversight of the Council’s corporate plans and strategies and the monitoring of the corporate plan and departmental plans.
- To receive all reports from external inspectors.

### **External Scrutiny Committee**

An External Scrutiny Committee was set up to scrutinise partner organisations on issues relevant to the residents of the Borough. Full terms of reference are:

- To scrutinise relevant aspects of the community strategy.
- To scrutinise outside bodies and partners relevant to the Council.
- To carry out the Council’s statutory obligations in relation to reviewing and scrutinising any matters relating to the planning provision and operation of health services in the area of the Council.
- To review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.
- To monitor the implementation of any scrutiny recommendations accepted by the Cabinet.
- To scrutinise the results and issues arising from any external inspections of the Council’s partnering arrangements.

### **Overview Management Committee**

The Overview Management Committee is responsible for the management and monitoring of the work programmes of both the Internal and External Scrutiny Committees. In addition the Committee is responsible for setting up and monitoring of Overview Project Groups. These Groups are tasked with reviewing particular policy areas with a view to making recommendations that will ultimately result in service improvements. In 2011/2012 Overview Project Groups were set up to undertake reviews into the following areas:

<b>Changing Population (meeting the housing needs of the elderly)</b>
<b>Medium Term Financial Strategy</b>
<b>Engagement</b>
<b>Care Standards</b>

## KEY OUTCOMES

During 2011/2012 the Council's Scrutiny Committee's and Overview Project Groups have looked at a wide range of topics and issues. Various methods have been used to examine and investigate issues which have resulted in positive outcomes in terms of policy development and holding decision makers to account.

### Changing Population

Following a request from the Overview Management Committee, the Changing Population Overview Project Group was set up to examine the Council's response to an increase in the number of people over the age of 65 in the Borough. During initial considerations the Group recognised the potential wide-ranging scope of such a review and the large number of policy areas which are impacted by the issue of changing population and the wider Ageing Well Agenda. The Groups initial focus looked at how the Council meets the needs of older people with specific regard to housing provision in the Borough.

In carrying out the review the Group were given a tour of provision in Bury where they were able to speak with frontline staff, managers and residents. The visits allowed Members of the Group to look at the different types of sheltered provision available within Bury including the development of Extra Care Schemes within the Borough.

The Group also visited the Reeve Court retirement village in St Helen's. The village is the result of a 5 year collaboration between the Extra Care Charitable Trust, St Helens Housing Association and St Helens Council. This detailed review took evidence from a varied range of sources and resulted in the following outcomes:

#### Key Recommendations

*The Group reaffirmed the Council's commitment to sheltered housing and its role in providing housing options for older people and recognised the steps currently underway to improve the quality and range of sheltered housing in the Borough including the development of extra care facilities.*

*That the Executive Member for Adult Care, Health and Housing examine the feasibility of a Care Village being developed with potential external partners as a means of increasing the number of Extra Care Units provided.*

*The Group noted the good progress has been made against the objectives of the Housing Strategy for Older People and highlighted the importance of this momentum being continued and monitored in the coming years.*

*With regard to the provision of a specialist dementia unit in Bury, the Group expressed regret over the slippage of this development and requested that the Executive Member explore all means of delivering the unit or alternative options that would in turn deliver the objectives of the Joint Commissioning Strategy for People with Dementia and their Carers in Bury 2010-2015*

## **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy Overview Project Group was asked to review the process of producing the Medium Term Financial Strategy from the consultation carried out to the contents of the Document. The research carried out involved a large amount of technical information and required in-depth explanation from the officers. The Group received information setting out the work that was being carried out by the Council to assist with the production of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and further on into the budget setting process.

The review highlighted a strong example of pre-decision scrutiny, with all recommendations being welcomed and accepted by the Executive and ultimately included in the final Medium Term Financial Strategy document and consultation process.

### **Key Recommendations**

*That the order of the statements be altered during the course of the consultation to ensure that the consultation is fair and that all of the statements are considered equally.*

*That both the Choices Consultation and the Savings Consultation be promoted through Schools using the courier facility and at a local football match at Bury Football Club (Gigg Lane).*

*Include a statement to explain the removal of ring fencing and the effect of this to the Council's finances.*

*Acknowledge the possibility of Quantative Easing and the effects this would have.*

*Ensure that the Strategy is a living document which is updated as required to reflect national changes.*

*That the monetary impact of a Council Tax raise is included within the document. This should include the impact to all bands.*

## **Corporate Parenting**

The Internal Scrutiny Committee have taken a keen interest in the role of all Councillors as Corporate Parents. The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel was analysed and evidence was taken from the Assistant Director of Social Care. The Executive Member for Children's Services was questioned by the Committee and assurances were sought relating to the robustness of the policies and processes in place for children and young people in care. Key outcomes related to the importance of individual Councillors being fully aware of their critical role as Corporate Parents.

## **Key recommendations**

*That a bi-annual newsletter be produced for all Elected Members, setting out the latest news and information in relation to corporate parenting issues.*

*That a Corporate Parenting Training Event be arranged for all Elected Members.*

## **Engagement**

The Engagement Project Group was asked to assess how the Council engages residents, staff and staff organisations to ensure that Bury Council is fit for purpose. A key task undertaken by the Group was to examine and comment on the draft Employee Engagement Strategy in advance of it being adopted by the Executive on 21 December 2011. During the course of its deliberations the Group had sought and received commitments on the effectiveness of the Strategy in terms of the following:

*We need to ensure that information reached those staff without access to email.*

*Managers need to effectively cascade information to staff.*

*Whilst technology provided an effective means of engaging with large numbers of staff, there was great value in face to face events such as the recently held Plan for Change consultations.*

*Steps will be taken to ensure that the Authority engages with employees irrespective of their trade union membership.*

*Steps will be taken to ensure that shift-workers and those employees who work irregular hours are not excluded by being flexible with timings and venues for face to face consultation briefings.*

*Steps will be taken to respond to views and suggestions received through a "You said/We did" approach.*

*The Council will adopt varied methods of communication which would reach out to different age groups etc.*

## **Recycling**

2011/2012 has seen the Council introduce new refuse collection and recycling services aimed at increasing recycling rates and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill. Through a working group and the main committee the Internal Scrutiny has been appraised of preparations, new technology and communications associated with the new services. A visit was also undertaken to a major recycling facility in Sharston. Throughout the year, the Committee have overseen an improvement in performance which has seen the average recycling rate for the 4 months following the service changes rise to 43.19%, exceeding the target of 40% by some margin.

## **Work of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committees (JHOSC)**

### **Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Pennine Care**

The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established jointly by Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport and Tameside councils, to consider issues affecting the health of local people (the overview role) and to call the NHS into account on behalf of the local communities (the scrutiny role).

Each of these Councils has appointed 3 representatives to sit on the Committee. Bury Councils representatives on the committee are; Councillor Campbell, Councillor Grimshaw and Councillor Walker.

The Joint Committee continued to work well with the newly expanded Pennine Care Foundation Trust.

The issues for particular focus for the Joint Committee included:

- A reduction in the size of Community Mental Health service caseloads
- Access to talking therapies
- Psychological support for Military Veterans
- Suicide prevention
- Budgetary information
- Health and Social Care Bill

The Joint Committee undertook to review several topics during the municipal year 2011/12 and interviewed a number of witnesses as part of this process, these included:

<b>Witness</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Dr Aneez Esmail Professor of General Practice	Manchester University
Bob Mercer Chairman Tameside and Glossop District	Tameside and Glossop Mind – Mental Health Charity
Mr Paul Foley Regional Officer	Unison
Mr Robert Ainsworth Non - Executive Director : Vice Chair	Pennine Care Foundation Trust Board
Ms Lesley Smith Chief Pharmacist	Pennine Care Foundation Trust



Dr Henry Ticehurst Medical Director	Pennine Care Foundation Trust
Steven Flack Advocacy Worker	Rochdale and District Mind – Mental Health Charity
Ms Chris Phillips Clinical Risk Manager	Pennine Care Foundation Trust
Mary Hooper South Service Director	Pennine Care Foundation Trust
Gwyneth Jones North Service Director	Pennine Care Foundation Trust

### **Key Recommendations**

As a result of the scrutiny work undertaken, the following recommendations were agreed by members of the Joint Committee:

*In light of the reduction in the size of Community Mental Health service caseloads, the Joint Committee would want to ensure that;*

*The Trust would seek to further enhance the Review and Recovery Teams and engage better with GPs.*

*There is an established transition protocol between Pennine Care Foundation Trust and GPs. Members of the Joint Committee wanted to ensure continuity and consistency of care for patients when discharged from the care of the caseworker.*

*With regards to the redesign of adult acute services (mental health).The Joint Committee were asked to be kept informed of the progress of the reconfiguration and that essential care pathways were established between the relevant stakeholders, including, GPs, Community mental health teams and the acute sector.*

*The Joint Committee also received information that there would continue to be inequity in service provision of psychological therapies across the Boroughs, a lack of clear clinical pathways, increasing demand and long waiting times. The Joint Committee wanted to express their support for service users being able to access psychological therapies.*

*The Joint Committee expressed concern regarding a reduction in the provision of mental health advocacy services and the use of language interpreters without a basic knowledge of mental health issues, the Joint Committee have committed to keep this topic under review and lobby within their individual councils for funding for mental health advocacy support.*

*The Joint Committee will establish written protocols with the local Health-watch and the Health and Wellbeing Boards within the Pennine Care Foundation Trust footprint.*

The Joint Committee has also provided a commentary on the Trust's Performance as part of the Trust's Quality Account, highlighting areas of concern, but also commending the Trust on the transition from a Mental Health Trust to a Trust incorporating the provider services for Bury, Oldham, Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale.

## **Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Pennine Acute**

In 2010/11, the JHOSC undertook a review of the Pennine Acute NHS Trust's communication with patients. The review report recommended:

- A trust wide policy for communication with individual patients.
  - A quality assurance system for individual letters.
- A quality assurance system for verbal communication with patients, their families and carers.

The Pennine Acute NHS Trust Board accepted the JHOSC's recommendations in July 2011. The JHOSC is now monitoring the Trust's implementation of the recommendations, but have some concerns about the time being taken to introduce new policies and systems.

This year, the JHOSC has undertaken a review of bed closures and bed occupancy rates within the Pennine Acute NHS Trust. The JHOSC recognises the multiple and complex reasons for reducing the number of hospital beds including:

- Less hospitalisation
- Shorter stays in hospital
- Increased day cases
- Less commissioning of services
- The need for efficiency savings

The report will recommend that:

*The Trust develop a strategy and policy for bed closures across the Trust, taking into account all the different reasons for reducing the number of beds in the future.*

*The Trust should introduce clear, open and transparent procedures for informing staff, the JHOSC and the public about proposed bed closures.*

*The Trust provide more information about proposed bed closures and explain the reasons for the closures through 'positive publicity'.*

*The Trust review the patient experience in the Medical Assessment Unit at the Royal Oldham Hospital, given the very high bed occupancy rates and the effects of the closure of the A&E department at Rochdale Infirmary on the use of the Royal Oldham Hospital services.*

The JHOSC will monitor the Pennine Acute NHS Trust's response to this review over the next year.

The JHOSC has been the statutory consultee for the review of cardiology and stroke services across the North East sector of Greater Manchester. The Committee has been able to influence the final recommendations about transport arrangements following service changes and about rehabilitation care for stroke patients on their return home. The implementation of this service re-configuration will be closely monitored by the JHOSC.

Higher than expected mortality rates, within Pennine Acute NHS Trust hospitals, concerned the Committee throughout the previous year. The JHOSC monitored the mortality rates over the last year and have been pleased to see that the Trust is now delivering care with fewer than expected deaths across its hospitals.

The privacy and dignity of patients having scans at Fairfield General Hospital and Rochdale Infirmary has been questioned by the JHOSC. As a result, changes have been made at Fairfield General Hospital and arrangements are being reviewed at Rochdale Infirmary.

The North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) introduced changes to patients' eligibility for its Patient Transport Service. Although the JHOSC is not appointed to scrutinise the work of NWAS, it decided to take up the issues about the implementation of the new criteria because of the effect on patients attending appointments at Pennine Acute NHS Trust hospitals. Patients were being assessed, by telephone, for eligibility for the Patient Transport Service and many were being told they were not eligible. The Committee felt that the telephone assessment questions did not give a true picture of patient need and called NWAS to account about the implementation of these changes. The JHOSC is now monitoring the way in which the new criteria are applied.

The JHOSC informed the Pennine Acute NHS Trust that 'Some patients are experiencing problems with the 'Choose and Book' system and are finding it difficult and frustrating to get appointments after they have received a letter telling them how to make an appointment.' The JHOSC recommended that the Trust may wish to consider what action it could take to help improve the patients' experience of using 'Choose and Book'. The Trust responded that it would review 'Choose and Book' process in order to improve the patients' experience of the system. The JHOSC will monitor the outcome of this review in 2012/13.

The Joint Committee also continued to monitor the implementation of two major health service reconfigurations (Healthy Futures and Making it Better) across the area. These reconfigurations will be completed by the end of 2012 and the JHOSC is focussing on improvement of transport arrangements and information for patients.

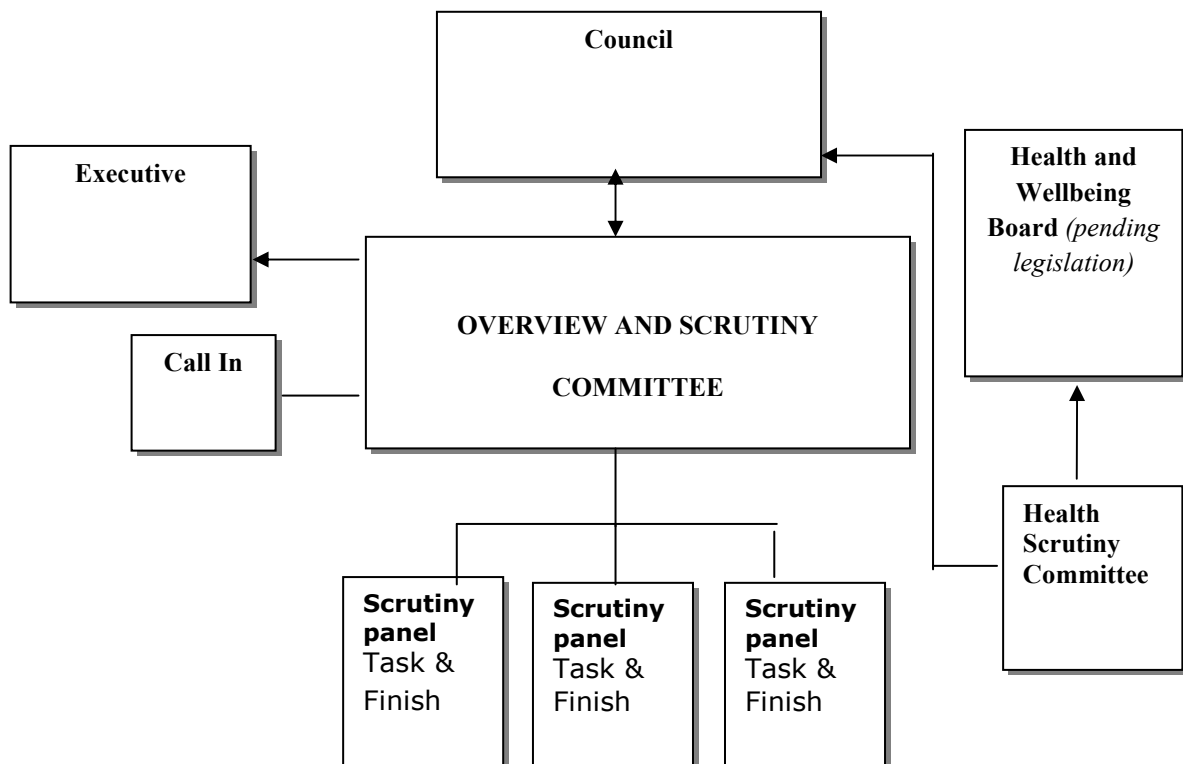
## LOOKING FORWARD.....

Through the Overview Management Committee a review of the current Overview and Scrutiny structures in Bury was undertaken during 2011/12. As part of its evaluation of the current scrutiny structures in Bury, the Committee considered the work done, and outcomes achieved, from the existing Scrutiny Committees and Overview Project Groups during 2010/11. In addition, interviews were carried out with current and past Scrutiny Chairs to examine the effectiveness of the current arrangements resulting in the identification of strengths and weaknesses.

In looking to identify an alternative structure that will improve Overview and Scrutiny in Bury, the Committee resolved that the following key features were critical:

- Members who are engaged and committed to the process (recognising that the role extends beyond attending scheduled meetings)
- Engagement between Executive Members and Scrutiny Committees (at an early stage in the decision making)
- Clear structures in place to manage statutory functions
- Strong support required from Chief/Senior Officers
- Reduce politicisation
- Manageable Work Programmes

The following agreed model looks to address the weaknesses within the current arrangements and meet the key features identified as part of the Review. The new arrangements will be introduced from May 2012.



**Contact Us:**

For further information on the content of this report or about overview and scrutiny work in Bury, please contact us through the following methods:

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