

AGENDA FOR

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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To: All Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillors : R Caserta (Chair), R.Cathcart,
T Cummings, E Fitzgerald, M Hankey, J Harris, M James,
J Lewis, R Skillen, S Smith, J Walker and S Wright

Dear Member/Colleague

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will be held as follows:-

Date:	Tuesday, 6 June 2017
Place:	Council Chamber - Town Hall
Time:	7.00 pm
Briefing Facilities:	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
Notes:	

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider whether they have an interest in any matters on the agenda and, if so, to formally declare that interest.

3 MINUTES *(Pages 1 - 4)*

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the last meeting, held on 29 March 2017

4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of 30 minutes has been set aside for members of the public to ask questions on matters considered at the last meeting and set out in the minutes or on the agenda for tonight's meeting.

5 CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING OVERVIEW PROJECT GROUP - UPDATE *(Pages 5 - 12)*

The Chair of the Group, Councillor Susan Southworth, will attend the meeting. Report attached.

6 DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18 *(Pages 13 - 18)*

Report attached.

7 URGENT BUSINESS

Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair agrees may be considered as a matter of urgency.

Minutes of: **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 29 March 2017

Present: Councillor Smith (in the Chair);
Councillors R Cathcart; T Cummings; E Fitzgerald; M Hankey; M James; R Skillen; J Walker; R E Walker and S Wright

Public in attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Also in attendance: Councillor Tariq –Cabinet Member for Communities and Safer Neighbourhoods

Councillor Walmsley– Cabinet Member for Strategic Housing and Support Services

Apologies for absence: J Black

OSC.655 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Wright declared a personal interest in any matter relating to staffing as his wife is employed in a Bury School

OSC.656 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the meeting, held on 16 February 2017, be agreed as a correct record.

OSC.657 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting.

OSC.658 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present at the meeting to ask questions under this item.

OSC.659 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT – CHILDREN’S SERVICES

A report from Jane Whittam, Assistant Team Manager – Information, was submitted looking at complaints related to Children’s Social Care Services. The report covered the period April 2015-March 2016 and provided Members with the opportunity to see the extent and complexity of Children’s Social Care Services span of activity and to receive information relating to the quality of the services delivered.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

OSC.660 LIBRARIES CONSULTATION

Klare Rufo Assistant Director of Learning - Children, Young People and Culture and Councillor Sandra Walmsley, Cabinet Member for Strategic Housing and Support Services attended the meeting to report on the second stage of the libraries consultation which was running until 26 April 2017.

It was explained that the first part of the consultation had been held from June 2016 and had concentrated on the principles that a library service should provide. The consultation asked for residents' input on the principles to ensure that they were in line with service requirements.

Principle 1 – To provide a Library Service across the borough which provides all residents with access to libraries and electronic services sufficient in number, range and quality to support reading for pleasure, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and the effective use of information.

Principle 2 – To ensure that the needs of more vulnerable residents and groups protected by Equalities legislation are taken fully into account in the provision of these services.

Principle 3 – To ensure that the resources committed to the library service are used as efficiently as possible by exploring options to reduce running and maintenance costs and to share premises with other Council services.

Principle 4 – To explore options for investing in technology to improve access to the library service for example, by extending opening hours, increasing digital services and enhancing provision for those with sensory impairments.

Principle 5 – To welcome the contribution that members of the community can make to the borough's library service as volunteers, supporting both traditional and digital services, including training to promote digital inclusion.

Principle 6 - To meet local aspirations for a network of community spaces across the borough in which the council and local communities can work together as partners in meeting local needs.

It was explained that the Council had had its budget cut by £65m to date with a further £32m of cuts up to 2020 at which point the Council will have to be self sufficient. The libraries budget was reduced by £870,000 in 2013/2014 with a further reduction of £1m up to 2018/2019.

Following the initial consultation a number of options were developed for the future delivery of a library service in the borough consistent with the Council's statutory duties.

The current consultation is asking residents to consider 2 options:

Option 1: Retain Bury, Ramsbottom and Prestwich Libraries plus a service wide team.

Option 2: Retain Bury, Ramsbottom, Prestwich and Radcliffe Libraries plus a smaller service wide team.

During discussion of this item, the Assistant Director reported that to date over 2000 responses and 850 comments had been received as part of the consultation process.

Questions and comments were invited from those present and the following issues were raised:-

- Members highlighted the importance of working with the community to source alternative venues for community groups and organisations to meet. It was reported that work was well underway to develop a comprehensive mapping exercise to identify community venues.
- Councillor Fitzgerald stressed the importance of ensuring access to socially isolated residents within communities.
- In response to a question concerning retention of book stock, the Cabinet Members gave a commitment that all stock would be assessed with the best and most appropriate stock being retained within the service as a whole.
- In response to a question from Councillor Hankey, the Cabinet Member explained that any offer by Groups to take over the running of a local library had to be cost neutral to the Council although help would be made available to assist with business plans.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

OSC.661 PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK IN BURY INCLUDING A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR INVESTING GRANT FUNDING IN NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Cabinet Member (Communities and Safer Neighbourhoods) submitted a report introducing a proposal for a new Neighbourhood Engagement framework for Bury including a new framework for investing grant funding in Neighbourhoods. The proposal was developed to support Neighbourhood Working which will mobilise the whole scale system wide transformation required as part of Greater Manchester Devolution between now and 2020 (and beyond).

The new Neighbourhood Engagement Framework will replace the existing Township Forum meetings to offer a new way of engaging the public in a number of different ways to suit them.

During discussion of this item, Members acknowledged the importance of increased partnership and community engagement to empower individuals. However some concerns were raised in relation to the loss of Township Forum and democratic accountability challenges around the issue of participatory budgeting.

OSC.662 VOTE OF THANKS

The Chair, Councillor Smith, thanked all Committee Members for their hard work during the Municipal Year. Committee Members thanked the Chair for her commitment to the role during the Municipal Year.

COUNCILLOR S SMITH
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7pm and ended at 9.20pm)

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL	ITEM No.
REPORT OF: Children's Safeguarding Overview Project Group	
CONTACT OFFICER: Julie Gallagher Principal Democratic Services Officer	
TITLE: PROGRESS REPORT – June 2017	

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the work of the Children's Safeguarding Overview Project Group over the last Municipal year.

2.0 BACKGROUND

As part of its work programme for 2014/15 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that an Overview Project Group be established to review and consider the issue of Children's Safeguarding.

The Membership of the Group comprised of Councillor Susan Southworth (Chair), Councillors R Caserta, M Hankey, D Jones, S Kerrison, N Parnell and M Whitby.

Interim reports were presented to the Committee in March 2015 and March 2016 setting out the findings and recommendations of the Group, one of which was for the Group to remain and continue its work as an ongoing Sub Committee.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The Group has met on the following occasions:-

7th April 2016
 23rd May 2016
 15 September 2016
 27th February 2017
 26th April 2017

Members also visited and meet with staff from the Victoria Family Centre in Radcliffe.

Members were supported in their work by Martyn Burrell Strategic Lead Safeguarding and Bart Popelier Strategic Lead Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.

During this municipal year the Group agreed that the focus of the Project Group (OPG) for 2016/17 should include the following:

Ofsted Inspection Report - Examination of the Ofsted report and the subsequent action plan would be the primary focus for the OPG.

Social Worker Recruitment Process – Follow up Staff Interviews
- Arrange for Group to speak to staff in the workplace.

Phoenix Team and Child Sexual Exploitation – Receive briefing on the work of the team across Greater Manchester with focus on the awareness raising work undertaken and areas of concern within the Borough.

Performance Monitoring - Continue to receive quarterly monitoring reports in relation to safeguarding children

Oasis Team – Examination of the non statutory support and early intervention provide by the team.

Home Education – Following the significant rise in the numbers of children choosing to Home Educate members agreed to invite Debra Wood, School Attendance Manager and Susan Morris, Home Education Officer to a meeting of the OPG.

Education Achievement at KS2 and KS4 – Klare Rufo, Assistant Director Learning and Culture will report.

4.0 WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE GROUP

4.1 OFSTED Inspection Report

Jackie Gower Assistant Director Safeguarding and Social Care attended the meeting to present the Ofsted inspection report.

The Ofsted inspection report concluded that Children's services in Bury require improvement to be good.

12 inspectors carried out their inspection over a four week period and the focus was on the following areas;

Frontline case practice

Children and Young People's own experiences

A greater emphasis on the outcome of the needs of the child

Early identification and help for children, young people and their families
A greater emphasis than in previous inspections about how partner agencies work together to protect children and young people
Services for LAC (including Fostering, Adoption and care leavers)
A review of the LSCB

Members of the Group placed on record their thanks and appreciation to all staff for their hard work during the Ofsted inspection.

Members discussed the cost of implementing the Ofsted Action Plan; concerns raised in respect of care leavers, the non-attendance of police officers at Child Protection Conferences, children living out of area and the role of the Independent Reviewing Officers.

The OPG have received regular updates in respect of the Ofsted action plan and continue to hold the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Quality assurance to account in respect of all areas of the plan. Members wanted to ensure that the document continues to be relevant and there is no room for complacency. This will continue to be an area for further scrutiny in the forthcoming municipal year.

4.2 Social Worker Recruitment Process – Follow up Staff Interviews

In attendance were newly qualified and experienced social workers from the Children's advice and assessment team and the safeguarding team. The social workers were given the opportunity to explain their roles within the team, their previous experience, the support and mentoring available and highlight any areas of concern.

Members of the Group were given the opportunity to ask questions of the social workers and the following points were raised:

- The newly qualified social workers are supported in the role by mentors. The support provided is good, accessible and helpful.
- The caseload has increased since their initial appointment, the level is still manageable and there is a wide range of support available.
- The majority of care proceeding cases are being dealt with within the recently introduced 26 week timeline.
- There is a good open relationship between social workers and middle/senior management.
- Social workers highlighted duplication and high levels of paperwork as pressure points/area of concern.
- Relationships with other partner agencies has improved, social workers feel respected, there is however sometimes problems with information sharing with partners from the NHS.
- The social workers reported that they felt the recent Ofsted report accurately reflected the work being undertaken across the Department.

Members of the Group agreed that meeting with front line staff enabled them to get a more rounded picture of child safeguarding issues within the Borough.

4.3 Phoenix Team and Child Sexual Exploitation

Members considered this item at two separate meetings of the OPG. Susan French and Kath Thomas attended the most recent meeting to provide Members of the group with an update in respect of the work undertaken to tackle child sexual exploitation following concerns raised by Elected Members. Their update included the following information:

- Phoenix team staffing details
- The profile of CSE work in Bury
- Demographic information
- Number of CSE crimes recorded
- Use of the CSE Risk Measurement Tool

Members sought assurances from the officers present in respect of information they had received with regards to problems in the Clarence Park and Whitehead Gardens areas of the Borough. Members were informed that the Phoenix team were aware of potential issues in these areas and a multi-agency approach had been taken to address and alleviate some of these concerns.

The Assistant Team Manager reported that there continues to be a significant problem with exploitation via the internet/mobile phones, often in the form of image sharing. This accounted for 39% of all CSE Risk Measurement Tools completed between April 2016 and March 2017.

4.4 Performance Monitoring - Key Performance Indicators

A large part of the work of the Group has continued to be around monitoring and examining performance data. Regular updates have been received in respect of key performance indicators for children's safeguarding. The Group have had the opportunity to monitor and examine performance data relating to the following areas:

- Referral/Conversion rate
- Contacts and Conversion to Referrals
- Contact Outcomes Breakdown
- Conversion rate of Referral to Assessments
- Re-referrals
- Assessment Timescales
- Section 47 Enquiries
- Child Protection Plans Data

- Numbers of Looked after Children

Quarterly updates will continue to be received at meetings of the Group. Members of the Group have asked that the formula for presenting the reports be revised to enable Members to better understand the demographics and also the personal stories of those accessing the service.

4.5 Elective Home Education

Following a reported 100% rise within the Borough (111 children are now educated at home) members invited Debra Wood, School Attendance Manager and Susan Morris, Home Education Officer to a meeting of the OPG. The purpose of their attendance was to ensure that children that opted out of main stream education system did not fall through the net in respect of child safeguarding.

The School Attendance Manager reported that there is a mixed age range of children currently being home educated, the majority are of primary school age. There is number of different reasons as to why parents choose to educate from home, these can include; problems with bullying, breakdown of the relationship between school and parents, poor communication or dissatisfaction with the support given to SEN pupils.

A member of the home education team will conduct regular visit to parents to offer support and guidance.

With regards to concerns raised in respect of the Council's powers, the School Attendance Manager reported that the Council has the power to issue a School Attendance Order if it is believed the child is not receiving an appropriate level of education.

Members of the Group expressed concern that issues within schools are quickly exacerbated and too easily escalated, parents then feel they are left with no other option but to home educate. Better pastoral support and more inclusive attitude within schools would help to alleviate some of these problems.

In respect of pupils on a child protection plan, these children can still be educated at home. The information and concerns contained within the plan would be shared with the elective home education team to ensure that the child's wellbeing is still safeguarded.

Members have asked that Debra Wood attends the first meeting of the next municipal year and provides members with information in respect of the following areas:

- Is there evidence of any themes emerging that could explain the dramatic rise in the number of parents choosing to home educate
- Evidence of good or poor practice in particular schools.

- Is the growth of those children being home educated confined to a particular area of the Borough?
- What is the gender and age split of the children?
- Any other demographic information that the officer thinks relevant.

4.6 Education Achievement at KS2 and KS4

Klare Rufo, Assistant Director Learning and Culture reported that there had been changes to the system for reporting measure at Key Stage 4, Progress 8, the new system will take effect from 2016.

The Assistant Director reported that the new system for assessing education achievement will in her opinion place greater emphasis on academic achievements and will be less inclusive.

The Assistant Director reported that in respect of the most vulnerable pupils there is no "closing the gap" group established within Bury. Such a group would be able to share good practice within the Borough and undertake more forensic analysis of the issues and concerns affecting those most vulnerable.

Members agreed that Councillor Susan Southworth as Chair of the Safeguarding Overview Project Group would contact elected members asking them to highlight through their roles as school governors, the following;

- Ask/remind schools to inform the Local Authority if a child is to be home educated especially if there is a safeguarding concern.
- Governing bodies to be mindful of the educational achievement and all encompassing support, social and emotional, available to the most vulnerable pupils.

4.7 Visit to the Victoria Family Centre, Radcliffe

Following high praise of the facility by the Ofsted Inspection team, members agreed to visit the service to meet with staff and observe the services provided onsite.

The Centre provides contact for children and Young People in Care in accordance with Section 34 of the Children's Act 1989 and its primary purpose is to preserve and develop family relationships.

Members discussed capacity, ease of referral, risk assessments undertaken in advance of contact sessions, support available for staff, staff retention and sickness absence rates, as well as scope for income generation.

Members of the Group commended the staff for the praise they have received from the courts in respect of the quality of the assessment work undertaken.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Members of the group supported by Strategic Leads within the Department

have meet on five occasions, interviewed 17 different Council Officers and visited the Victoria Family Centre and the Kershaw Centre.

The work of the group was highlighted in the most recent Ofsted report: "Clear political scrutiny is evident through a Children's Safeguarding scrutiny board and strong political attendance at the Corporate Parenting Board. There are sufficient checks and balances in the governance system holding the leadership of children's services to account, providing coherent political and strategic oversight".

'It was recognised by Ofsted that the expertise and knowledge of this group was one of its strengths. However, it needs to be accepted by anyone who is on the group that meetings start at 5-00/30, and that attendance at 4 meetings each year is a basic requirement. When Members are appointed to this group by their respective political group, this needs to be taken into account. Consistency is vital'

Looking forward, it is hoped that the work to date can be built upon during the forthcoming Municipal Year. At an early stage Members of the Group recognised the complex multi agency approach to safeguarding meant that to treat the review as a time bound self contained piece of work would not do justice to the critical nature of the subject matter.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the work of the Overview Project Group be carried over into the new Municipal Year 2017/18.
2. That, in order to retain the expertise and knowledge developed throughout the review, where possible the existing membership be retained and meeting dates be held quarterly and scheduled in advance. (See above)
3. That regular updates be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Group.
4. That the group in consultation with Klare Rufo Assistant Director Learning and Culture examine the feasibility of establishing a a Borough wide "Closing a Gap" Group in respect of Educational Achievement.

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Scrutiny Report

Agenda Item	
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MEETING: **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **6 JUNE 2017**

SUBJECT: **DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017/2018**

REPORT FROM: **LEIGH WEBB, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER**

CONTACT OFFICER:

1.0 SUMMARY

This report sets out details the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee along with a Work Programme Prioritisation Protocol to assist in the development of a Work Programme for 2017/2018.

2.0 MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to:

Agree and set an Annual Work Programme for the 2017/2018 Municipal Year, in accordance with Committee's remit, previous work and the Work Programme and Prioritisation Protocol.

3.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

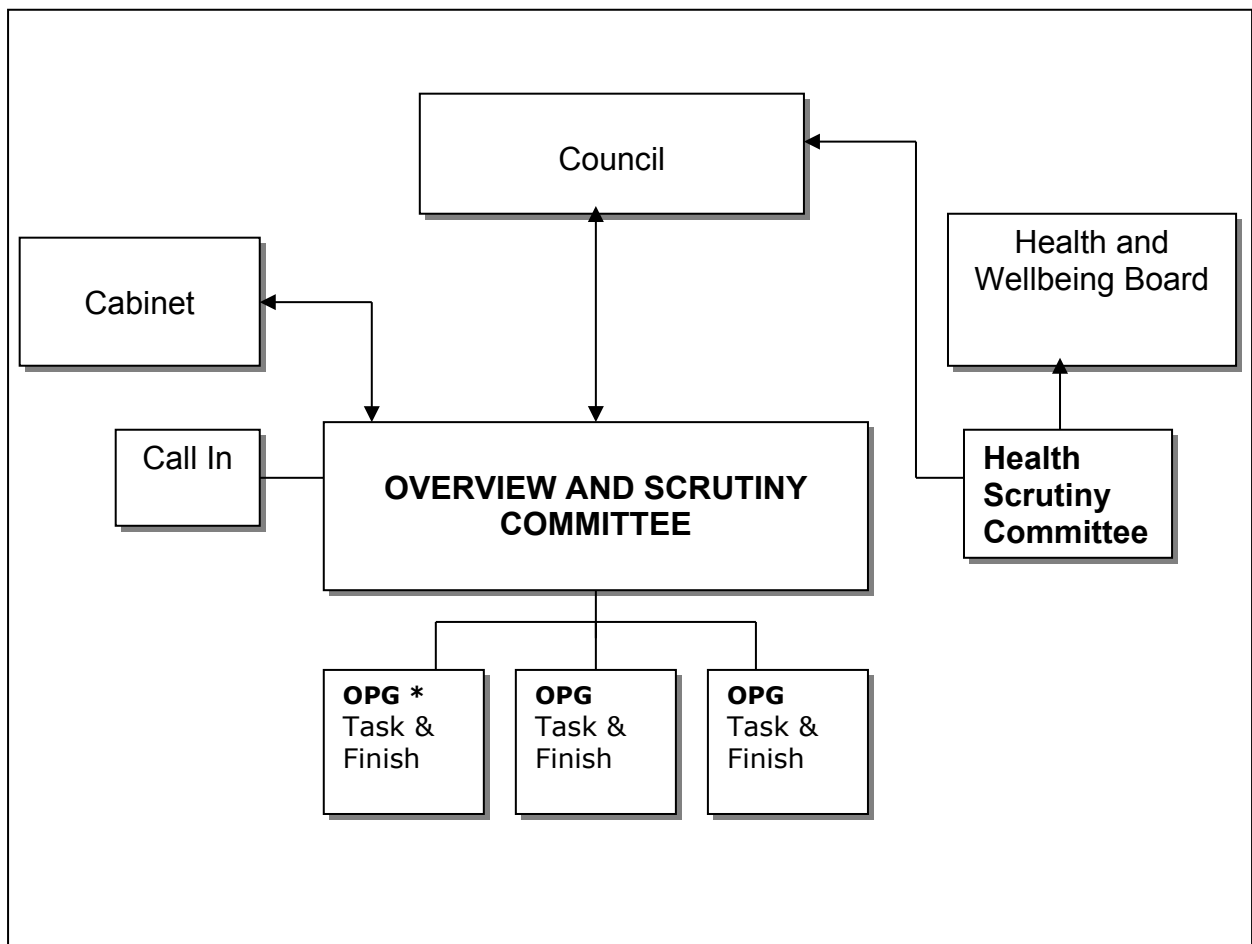
3.1 Terms of reference

- 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 set up, appoint and monitor Scrutiny Panels (set up to carry out reviews of policies, services or the impact of decisions).
- To make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or appropriate Committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the Scrutiny process.
- 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.

- 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 scrutinise outside bodies and partners relevant to the Council.
- To receive all reports from external inspectors.

3.2 Scrutiny Structure

The current scrutiny structure was adopted by Full Council on 28 March 2012, based on the findings of a review carried out by the Overview Management Committee. The structure makes provision for the setting up of time-limited task and finish Scrutiny Panels to carry out detailed work into specific topics. These Panels will be set up and monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with membership drawn from all backbench Councillors. The diagram below sets out the current scrutiny structure.



* Overview Project Group

4.0 WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to set a work programme for 2017/2018.
- 4.2 A well thought out and effective Work Programme will allow work to be time-tabled to ensure completion and help determine when and what resources may be needed.
- 4.3 Within the Programme it is important to ensure that there is the capacity to provide an urgent response to issues that arise during the year and need to be dealt with at short notice. Scrutiny of Key Executive decisions will form a large element of the Committee's work during the year and it is important that flexibility is built into the Work Programme to allow for this to take place.
- 4.4 To assist in the development of an outcome focussed, measureable, realistic and timely Work Programme, a Prioritisation Protocol is set out below. The Protocol sets out some initial questions to be asked of proposed topics and includes further questions and filters to help achieve a prioritised and deliverable work programme.

4.0 SUGGESTED ITEMS ARISING FROM LAST YEAR

During last year's work, the Committee's work programme included the following items:

Corporate Financial Monitoring Reports
Performance Progress Reports
Treasury Management Reports
Highways Maintenance
Children's Safeguarding (OPG)*
Library Review
OFSTED - Safeguarding
Academisation of Schools

Some of the above, particularly the financial and performance reporting mechanisms, will form part of this coming year's programme as a matter of course. All other items listed above were looked at with the exception of Highways Maintenance. Members may wish to consider this item being including in the programme for 2017/18. The above list does not represent all the issues looked at during the year as consideration was also given to the issues of recycling, welfare reform and Children's Services complaints

5.0 CONCLUSION

The information contained in this report provides an outline of the terms of reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee along with a Work Programme Prioritisation Protocol to assist in setting an outcome based, focussed, balanced and deliverable work programme based on the priorities of Bury Council and its residents.

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Date: 1 June 2015

Prioritising Topics for Scrutiny

When deciding which items to include on the Scrutiny Work Programmes it can sometimes become confusing and difficult to identify the topics which are most important or worthy of scrutiny.

Section 1 - At the outset

When topics have been identified as possible Scrutiny Work Programme items, Members and their support Officers should ask the following of each topic identified;

- **Does the issue have a potential impact for one or more sections of the population?** Yes – Leave on Work Programme
- **Is the issue strategic and significant?** Yes – Leave on Work Programme
- **Is there a clear objective for scrutinising this topic?** Can objective be identified – Yes leave on Work Programme
- **Is there evidence to support the need for scrutiny?** Yes – Leave on Work Programme
- **What are the likely benefits to the Council and its customers? What do we hope to achieve?** If identifiable – Leave on Work Programme
- **Are you likely to achieve a desired outcome?** Can benefits to Council and customers be achieved?
- **What are the potential risks?**
- **Are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?**
- **Is the Scrutiny activity timely?** Yes – Leave on Work Programme

Section 2 – Criteria to Reject

Once the questions above have been answered and the topics are still included on the Work Programme, Members should move onto the following rejection filters:-

Reject if;

- The issue is being examined elsewhere e.g. officer group, other Councillor group.
- Issue was reviewed less than 2 years ago
- New legislation or guidance expected within the year
- No scope for scrutiny to add value/make a difference
- The objective cannot be achieved in the specified timescale
- Changes are currently being /have recently been implemented

Section 3 – Prioritisation of Topics

The following questions should be asked when looking to prioritise potential work programme items.

Public interest

- Has the issue been identified by Members through surgeries and other contact with constituents?(on how many occasions – more occasions warrants a higher score).
- Has a user dissatisfaction with the service been identified? (complaints).
- Topic identified through Market Surveys/Citizens Panel.
- Has the issue been covered in the local media?

Internal Council priority

- Council Priority area?
- There is a high level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area (as percentage of total expenditure)
- There has been a pattern of budgetary overspends
- The service is a poor performer (evidence from performance indicators/benchmarking).

External Factors

- Central Government priority area
- Issues raised by External Audit Management Letter/External Audit Reports.
- Key reports or new evidence provided by external organisations on key issue.