

# SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



Bury Town Hall, Knowsley Street, Bury, Lancashire BL9 0SW Tel: 0161 253 5000

Emergencies/Out of Office Hours: 0161 253 6606 [www.bury.gov.uk](http://www.bury.gov.uk)



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## **FOREWORD**

**Bury Council's Scrutiny Committees have continued with the role of scrutinising and reviewing the work of the Executive and services of the Local Authority. The work of these bodies has ranged from pre-scrutiny of new policy initiatives prior to consideration by the Executive, monitoring and holding departments to account on aspects of service provision including Ofsted findings and regeneration work and gathering information from Departments about their work and resources.**

**During the past 12 months the three Committees have undertaken thematic and in-depth reviews that have provided positive, and effective Scrutiny in terms of policy development, service reviews and service development. For example, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have reviewed the developments of local regeneration work and will continue to see progress on future reports from the Executive. They have also provided effective Scrutiny of the Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth during the development of the Regeneration Plan's; this again demonstrates the Committee holding to account the Cabinet Member in real time on issue's which was important to the Public. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has reviewed the Improvement Plan following the Ofsted Report and requested regular updates on the recruitment and retention of Social Workers and improvement to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Teams through increased capacity. The Health Scrutiny Committee has been well briefed on the response to the Elective Care waiting list and GP Access. The Committee has also established a sub-group to look at access to support for Carers and Social Isolation and Loneliness.**

**During the year, steps have been taken to encourage greater collaborative working across the three Scrutiny Committees and a dedicated meeting for the three Scrutiny Chairs has been continued and embedded. An example of the good practice this has achieved is that the Health Scrutiny Chair attended Children and Young People Scrutiny to discuss Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). In addition, both Chair's from Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and Health Scrutiny Committee attended Overview and Scrutiny (Budget) Committee.**

**We would like to thank the Elected Members, Education representatives and Co-opted Members of all the Scrutiny Panels and Commissions and the Sub-Groups, and also the Directors, Officers, Internal and External Partners and Community Representatives involved in the Scrutiny process, for their hard work over the past 12 months, and look forward to the challenges ahead.**



Councillor Dene Vernon,  
Chair for Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Ciaran Boles,  
Chair for Children and  
Young People Scrutiny  
Committee



Councillor Elizabeth FitzGerald  
Chair for Health Scrutiny  
Committee



## BACKGROUND

This Annual Report summarises the activities of the Council's Scrutiny Committees and reports on some of the highlights and achievements of the last year.

Throughout the year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has tackled a wide and varied work programme cutting across all Council Departments. The Committee has engaged with Cabinet Members and other external partners prior to decisions being taken and held them to account on service areas and policy development.

All the Scrutiny Committee's this year have been thematic covering areas in depth and allowing a full meeting to be dedicated to one themed topic which has streamlined focus and improved impact.



## **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 does allow Members to explore issues in depth and help to influence decisions through recommendations to the Cabinet or Full Council.

In Bury, the role of scrutiny bodies can be broken down into these two main functions: -

### **HOLDING THE CABINET 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 Cabinet.

### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

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





## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

This Committee is set up to scrutinise Cabinet decisions and Council performance, the Overview & 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 set up, appoint and monitor Overview Project Groups (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 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.

As well as:

- Budget and policy framework matters
- Statutory flood risk management scrutiny powers
- Statutory community safety and policing scrutiny powers
- Services within the business and regeneration directorate
- Services within the corporate core/Corporate performance





### **HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

A dedicated Health Scrutiny Committee was set up to scrutinise partner organisations on issues relevant to the residents of the Borough. Full terms of reference are;

To review the policies and performance of the Council and external organisations in relation to the following areas:

- Adult social care (including adult safeguarding)
- Health and wellbeing board
- Housing
- Public health
- Adults and Communities budget and policy framework
- Statutory health scrutiny powers including the review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning provision and operation of health services for children and young people, including transitional health care services, affecting the area and to make reports and recommendations on these matters





## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

A dedicated Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee was set up to scrutinise children and young people issues relevant to the residents of the Borough. Full terms of reference are:

To review the policies and performance of the Council and external organisations in relation to the following areas:

- Education and Schools
- Children and Young People Support and Safeguarding Services
- Children and Young People Specialist Services
- To scrutinise individual Cabinet decisions relating to the above areas.
- To monitor the Council's performance in the above areas.

To scrutinise statutory inspection reports and oversee the implementation of any recommendations arising from such reports:

- Transitional arrangements between children and adult services
- Statutory education scrutiny powers

## OVERVIEW PROJECT GROUPS

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is responsible for setting up and monitoring reviews carried out by 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.

During the municipal year three project groups have been established. Health Scrutiny has established a Support for Carers Sub-Group and a Social Isolation and Loneliness Sub-Group. The Carers group has been established to look at support for carers and accessibility of such support. The Subgroup is inclusive of the Chair of Health Scrutiny; and two opposition members. In addition, the Social Isolation Sub-Group has been established which has looked at support available following the pandemic. The Subgroup is inclusive of the Chair of Health Scrutiny; and two opposition members from the Health Scrutiny Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has re-established the previous year's sub-group to focus on the Performance and Finance of the Council. The group is responsible for doing in-depth scrutiny of the Corporate Performance and Finance reports for the Council. The group was developed as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt they did not have sufficient time within the usual cohort of meetings to provide rigorous scrutiny of these topics.





## KEY OUTCOMES

During 2022/2023 the Council's Scrutiny Committees 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.

- **Performance and Finance Sub Committee**

This was established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members of the group supported by Strategic Leads within the Department have met on four occasions and interviewed two Cabinet Members; the Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities and the Leader, Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth and discussed 9 different reports with ten different Officers.

During this municipal year the Committee agreed that the focus for 2022/23 would be:

**Corporate Performance** – The Committee received regular updates from the Performance team and choose areas to do a deep-dive of the data.

**The Council's Financial Position** – The Committee has received reports on the Council's Financial Position.

**Customer Service update including** – Members received an update on the Corporate Approach for how Bury Council deals with the public including casework, response times, timescales, complaints and Transformation work.

**Sickness Level and Data** – The Committee received in depth analysis on sickness levels and reasons across the departments.

**Project Safety Valve**– Scrutiny of Project Safety Valve has taken place at the Committee. Discussions took place regarding the emerging proposed new schools, the rising demand for in borough specialist provision and the demand pressures for Education, Health and Care Plans.

**Performance Monitoring** – Updates were received on the evolution of Corporate Performance monitoring.

**Budget Papers** – The Committee discussed the Finance Budget papers the day before Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Local Government Finance Settlement** – Updates on the local government finance settlement were considered at the sub-group

**Business Rate and Council Tax Recovery** – As part of the budget reports this was presented to the sub-Group

Members have continued to hold the Corporate Core and other Council Services to account by providing continued, effective, and constructive scrutiny of performance and finance within the Council.

It is envisaged that the work to date can be built upon during the forthcoming Municipal Year.

#### ♦ **The Carers Sub-Group**

The Health Scrutiny Committee noted that some Carers were not aware of the Bury offer or may not think they are a carer. Therefore, it was agreed that the sub-group be established so Councillors could work together on exploring all pathways for carers and what elected Members could do to help promote the services available. During this municipal year the Committee agreed that the focus for 2022/23 should include the following:

- Promotion of the Adult Hub - The group agreed that the work of the Hub and n-compass and the services and support offered should be promoted as much as possible. They also noted that not everyone accesses this information digitally.
- Promotion of the volunteer offer - The group agreed that the role of volunteers within the service should be promoted to help grow the volunteer offer for both early help and young carers services.

Members used the group to seek assurances on the work being undertaken to support carers including specifically the work surrounding young carers.

The group agreed that the actions and recommendations from the group would be:

- To visit a coffee morning or listening café to meet with carers and have photographs taken for a press release which will highlight and promote the services
- To have a meeting with the Cabinet Members for Adult and Children's Services to discuss the work of the T & F Group and next steps which could include:
  - All Councillors to undertake awareness training of the service and what it can offer. This will enable Councillors to be able to recommend and promote the offer to constituents.
  - All Councillors to be invited to become 'Friends of Bury Carers' which will then give them access to regular information and news.
  - To discuss how the offer is communicated to those who are digitally excluded.



- To look at the widening of a befriending service in Bury to support families where children are carers but to consider for both cohorts.
- All schools be asked to provide their governors with information relating to young carers within their schools.

#### ♦ **Social Isolation & Loneliness Sub-Group**

During this municipal year the Committee agreed that the focus for 2022/23 should include the following:

- Which demographics of people now identify as socially isolated or lonely.
- Following on from the pandemic what work needs to take place on people who may feel lonely or socially isolated as there was a worry of people being withdrawn from society.
- Schemes to prevent social isolation and loneliness - Members discussed the good schemes which are run by different groups to see what they could learn
- Members sought assurances on the work being undertaken to identify and support the reduction of residents who identify as socially isolated or lonely.

The conclusion of the group was that the general assumption that only older people are lonely is too narrow and we should recognise and support other groups. That all the groups spoken to said the opportunity to be part of something was important to them and in person was more favourable.

The sub group made the following recommendations:

- For members of the Health Scrutiny Committee to note the progress made by the task and finish group
- For a councillor to become part of the Social Isolation and Loneliness Steering Group
- For the Council to consider the impact of further cuts to Youth Services and how services can be increased.
- To review the Steering Group's Terms of Reference and to understand what cohorts are being supported and considered.



## **DECISIONS CALLED IN 2022/23**

Under the Council's Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee and Health Scrutiny Committee has the power to call in decisions made by the Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members and key decisions made by officers. In 2022-23 there were no decisions called in the Scrutiny Committee's.

## **SCRUTINY CHAIR BRIEFINGS**

During the municipal year 2021/22 a networking group of the three Scrutiny Chairs was established. This group continued in the year 2023/23 and built on the good work already established. This group brought together the Children and Young People Scrutiny Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Chair, Health Scrutiny Chair the Senior Scrutiny Officer and the Monitoring Officer. These meetings took place quarterly and covered the following topics: Scrutiny Training, the Annual Report, Budget Briefings and joint working between Committee's.

The group is an opportunity for the Chairs of each Committee to share in successes and problems whilst promoting good practice and support to one another. During the municipal year of 2022/23 the group discussed the following topics:

- Chair and Cabinet Member relationships
- Cross-Scrutiny work
- Budget Papers for Overview and Scrutiny
- Joint work between Children and Young People Scrutiny and Health Scrutiny
- Key items considered at respective Committees
- Forward Planner's attached and Training and Support
- Scrutiny Annual Report





## SCRUTINY TRAINING

The Scrutiny Committee's were invited to attend multiple offers of Scrutiny Training over the municipal year. Scrutiny Members were invited to take part in Scrutiny Specific training:

- Health Scrutiny Training delivered by The Kings Fund (Health Scrutiny)
- Children's Scrutiny Training delivered by the LGA (Children and Young People Scrutiny)
- General Overview and Scrutiny Committee Training delivered by the LGA (All Committees)
- Health Scrutiny Overview of the Health and Care Landscape Session delivered internally at Bury Council (Health Scrutiny)
- Finance Training delivered internally through Bury Council (All Committees)
- Adult Safeguarding Training (Health Scrutiny)

The sessions were delivered in partnership with external training sessions available through the LGA and Northwest Employers the sessions explored common challenges, issues as well as shared opportunities. The health sessions looked at the evolving role of health scrutiny, the relationships with local partners and the opportunities that the Health Scrutiny Committee could consider in supporting impactful scrutiny of health and care especially the complexity of exiting a health pandemic.

## FURTHER WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested updates from the relevant Cabinet Members in respect of the following Council services and themes:

- Corporate Performance Updates
- Corporate Peer Review Challenge
- The 'Lets Do it' Strategy
- Environmental Updates
  - Poverty Strategy Update
  - Clear Air Zone update
  - Carbon Neutral Strategy
  - Air Quality
  - Environment and Climate Change
- Operations updates
  - Highways and fleets update
  - LGA Review on Highways
- Economy and Community Safety
  - Update on Night-time Economy
  - Community Safety Plan
  - Crime and Disorder
- Regeneration
  - Bury Town Centre Regeneration Project
  - Bury Mill Gate
  - Prestwich Flexi Hub
  - Radcliffe Business improvement district
  - Ramsbottom town centre
- Finance Updates
  - Budget Monitoring Quarter 3 2022/23
  - The Council's Budget 2023/24 And The Medium Term Financial Strategy
  - Dedicated Schools Grant And Setting The Schools Budget 2023-24
  - Capital Budget 2023/24
  - Housing Revenue Account
  - The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts
- Housing Updates
  - Homelessness Strategy
  - Tackling Fuel Poverty
  - Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Initiatives

In addition to the above, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee invited Chief Superintendent Chris Hill attended to inform the Committee on Crime and Disorder within the Borough including plans for tackling continued issues within local areas. In relation to regeneration, Sir Howard Bernstein attended to provide assurances and transparency on Radcliffe regeneration programme. This highlights how Overview

and Scrutiny has been proactive in its engagement with relevant partners and stakeholders within the Scrutiny process.

## **PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

As part of its performance monitoring role, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Performance and Finance Sub-Group has received regular reports in relation to Corporate Performance; Financial Monitoring; Treasury Management; and all the 2022/23 draft Budgetary reports.



## **NEXT STEPS**

**Moving into the new municipal year of 2023/24 there are several new or improved processes which will take place to improve transition into a new Committee year and ensure members are well briefed on items scheduled for the year ahead.**

**Firstly, where possible and if required Chair's of the respective Scrutiny Committee's will be involved in a hand over meeting to support the new Chair in holding Cabinet Members, officers and partners both external and internal accountable for any actions expected.**

**Secondly, Chairs, lead officers and the respective Cabinet Members of all three committees will be invited to participate in the forward planning meetings for each Committee so to avoid duplication and encourage collaborative working.**

**Thirdly, agenda and papers will be sent to all Scrutiny Chairs for information on upcoming discussion items.**

**Finally, more Committee specific training will be opened to all Committees and the respective members to support networking and shared learning.**

## **CONCLUSION**

The Scrutiny function is well established in Bury, with good examples of in-depth reviews and partnership working. The Scrutiny Committees will continue to work thematically with 'spotlights' on areas of particular interest to develop and provide effective Scrutiny.

The Scrutiny functions are continuing to see improvements and relationships are continuing to be built.

Appendix 1 - Agenda Plan 2022/23 – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	Deadline for submission of advance questions from Members	Agenda Publication Date	Deadline for reports to DS	Agenda Set Meeting	Items for the Meeting/Theme	Officers / Cabinet Member
30.06.2022	28.06.2022 (10AM)	22.06.2022	17.06.2022 (12 NOON)	14.06.2022	Overview on SEND Green Paper Progress update on Service Delivery for Education, Health and Care Plans Children Social Care Improvement Plan	JR MK  JR/IB
22.09.2022	20.09.2022 (10AM)	14.09.2022	12.09.2022 (12 NOON)	06.09.2022	Improvement Plan, including Ofsted Monitoring Visits and update from the DfE Social Care update – progress of plan to recruit staff High Level Attainment report Foster Carers – LA Approved and IFA's	JR JR JR IB JC
24.11.2022	22.11.2022 (10AM)	16.11.2022	11.11.2022 (12 NOON)	08.11.2022	Improvement Plan School Readiness Attendance report (Data/statistical analysis covering exclusions) Foster Carers – LA Approved and IFA's – invite Brian – Chair of FCA	JR SB IB  JC/JR
02.02.2023	31.01.2023 (10AM)	25.01.2023	20.01.2023 (12 NOON)	17.01.2023	Improvement Plan Schools Systems Update CAMHS Update	JR IB WB
07.03.2023	03.03.2023 (10AM)	27.02.2023	23.02.2023 (12 NOON)	20.02.2023	Improvement Plan Update Foster Carers Update SEND Report Attainment Report – Verbal Update	JR JR IB IB

### Health Scrutiny - Work Programme 2022-2023

Date of Meeting	Deadline for submission of advance questions from Members	Agenda Publication Date	Deadline for reports to DS	Agenda Set Meeting	Items for the Meeting/Theme	Officers/Cabinet Member
22.06.2022	20.06.2022 (10AM)	14.06.2022	10.06.2022 (12 NOON)	06.06.2022	Lead Officer Overview Health Scrutiny Overview	WB
21.07.2022	19.07.2022 (10AM)	13.07.2022	07.07.2022 (12 NOON)	04.07.2022	Dentistry ® Healthwatch overview Bury Care Organisation and Northern Care Alliance overview	Ben Squires Adam Webb WB
20.09.2022	16.09.2022 (10AM)	12.09.2022	09.09.2022 (12 NOON)	05.09.2022	Single gender mental health wards within the Pennine footprint Mental Health Strategy and delivery plan Support for Carers  Social Isolation and Loneliness	Dr N Perera Adrian Crook, Director of ASC Adrian Crook, Director of ASC Cllr FitzGerald
09.11.2022	07.11.2022 (10AM)	01.11.2022	28.10.2022 (12 NOON)	24.10.2022	Overview of elective care waiting position® Urgent care system ® Adult Social Care reforms Update on Task and Finish Groups	Ian Mellow Kath Tickle KWJ AC Cllr F
25.01.2023	23.01.2023 (10AM)	17.01.2023	13.01.2023 (12 NOON)	09.01.2023	Winter Pressured update Health and Care staff wellbeing and retention service reconfiguration GM Mental Health Trust Update Northern Care Alliance CQC report	WB Caroline Bierne. MI WB/Dr Clair Carson/H.Caudle
16.03.2023	14.03.2023 (10AM)	08.03.2023	03.03.2023 (12 NOON)	27.02.2023	Adult Care Annual Complaints Report Health Watch Update CAMHS update (following Nov Meeting)	Adrian Crook Adam Webb Will Blandamer



## Agenda Plan 2022/23 - Overview and Scrutiny

Date of Meeting	Deadline for submission of advance questions from Members	Agenda Publication Date	Deadline for reports to DS	Agenda Set Meeting	Items for the Meeting/Theme	Officers/Cabinet Member
15.06.2022	13.06.2022 (10AM)	07.06.2022	01.06.2022 (12 NOON)	30.05.2022 12:00	Sub-Group covering Performance and Finance topics 1. Quarter 4 Corporate Performance Update 2. Poverty Strategy Update 3. Agree the Workplan for the Committee For Information: 1. Terms of Reference	Councillor Rafiq and Kate Waterhouse Cabinet member for Communities and Finance and Lynne Ridsdale Chair, Councillor Vernon
19.07.2022	15.07.2022 (10AM)	11.07.2022	07.07.2022 (12 NOON)	04.07.2022 11:00	Environment Update including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear Air Zone update</li> <li>• Carbon Neutral Strategy</li> <li>• Plan for ops in relation to highways and fleets</li> </ul> 2. Update on Economy (especially night-time economy)	Cabinet Member for Environment  Cabinet Member for Culture and the Economy
06.09.2022	02.09.2022 (10AM)	29.08.2022	25.08.2022 (12 NOON)	22.08.2022 11:00	1. Community Safety Plan - <i>Chris Hill</i> <i>GMP - KW</i> Bury Town Centre Regeneration Project including: 1. Bury Mill Gate	<i>Lynne Ridsdale</i> <i>Chris Woodhouse</i> <i>Paul Lakin</i> <i>Steven Manifold</i> <i>Cllr O'Brien</i>
01.11.2022	28.10.2022 (10AM)	24.10.2022	20.10.2022 (12 NOON)	13.10.2022 11:00	Finance Update (Quarter 1 and Medium Term Financial	Sam Evans Sarah Poruu

					Strategy) Regeneration: Prestwich flexi hub Ramsbottom Radcliffe; Business improvement district	Cllr O'Brien Rober Summerfield
12.01.2023	10.01.2023 (10AM)	04.01.2023	23.12.2022 (12 NOON)	20.12.2022 11:00	Housing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness Strategy</li> <li>• Tackling Fuel Poverty</li> </ul> LGA Review on Highways.	Cllr Cummins
09.02.2023 (BUDGET)	07.02.2023 (10AM)	01.02.2023	27.01.2023 (12 NOON)	23.01.2023 11:00	Budgetary Items: Budget Monitoring Quarter 3 2022/23 The Council's Budget 2023/24 And The Medium Term Financial Strategy Dedicated Schools Grant And Setting The Schools Budget 2023-24 Capital Budget 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account The Flexible Use Of Capital Receipts	Sam Evans Cllr O'Brien (All Executive Directors to be invited)
23.03.2023	21.03.2023 (10AM)	15.03.2023	10.03.2023 (12 NOON)	07.03.2023 11:00	Corporate Performance Update  Transport Strategy Highways Improvement Plan	Kate Waterhouse/ Lynne Ridsdale