

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Item No.</b>
Open	

<b>Meeting:</b>	Health Scrutiny
<b>Meeting date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> June 2026
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Development of a work programme for 2025/2026</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Josh Ashworth</b> Senior Scrutiny Officer
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Ward(s) to which report relates</b>	<b>All</b>

## Health Scrutiny Committee – Forward Plan 2026/27

### 1. Purpose

This report sets out the proposed forward plan for the Health Scrutiny Committee for 2026/27. It ensures that statutory responsibilities continue to be fulfilled, core areas of focus are maintained, and previous commitments are progressed. It also draws on learning from the 2025/26 municipal year to help shape a focused and effective work programme.

### 2. Statutory Responsibilities

The Committee will continue to discharge its statutory functions, including:

- Scrutiny of NHS and Public Health services
- Consideration of any substantial variations or developments in health services
- Oversight of complaints, service user experience, and patient feedback

### 3. Ongoing Commitments and Partnership Working

The Committee will maintain its established partnerships and areas of focus, including:

- Engagement with Healthwatch to ensure the patient voice is represented
- Monitoring delivery against local Public Health priorities
- Collaborative working with Adult Social Care, Integrated Care System (ICS) partners, and wider stakeholders

#### **4. Review of Activity in 2025/26**

During 2025/26, the Committee considered a broad range of issues relating to health and care services, including:

- Health and Care system updates
- Elective Care performance
- Health Inequalities strategy and delivery
- Workforce challenges and development
- Urgent Care provision and Winter planning
- Adult Social Care provider workforce support
- Bury ICP locality performance
- Healthwatch updates and community insight
- Adult Social Care developments
- Women's Health priorities
- Local Government Association (LGA) engagement
- "Your Medicines Matter" campaign
- Locality Plan progress
- Pharmacy First implementation

In addition, the Committee strengthened its links with Greater Manchester governance arrangements. The Chair introduced a standing agenda item providing updates from the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the GM Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. This has enhanced oversight of developments at a Greater Manchester level and will continue into 2026/27.

The breadth of these discussions provides a strong foundation for shaping priorities in the coming year.

#### **5. Proposed Priority Areas for 2026/27**

Building on the previous year's work, the Committee may wish to prioritise the following areas:

- **Access to Services**  
Access to primary and urgent care services, including GP provision, dentistry, NHS 111, and urgent care pathways
- **Health Inequalities**  
A more detailed exploration of local disparities, with a focus on measurable outcomes and delivery of the Health Inequalities Strategy

- **Workforce Pressures**  
Recruitment, retention, wellbeing, and capacity challenges across the health and social care system
- **ICS Governance and Locality Performance**  
Oversight of decision-making, transparency, integration, and delivery at a locality level
- **Public Health Priorities**  
Focus on prevention, including mental health, substance misuse, and wider determinants of health
- **Women's Health and Maternity Services**  
Follow-up work to assess progress and identify further areas for improvement

## 6. Terms of Reference

The Health Scrutiny Committee is established to hold partner organisations to account on matters affecting the health and wellbeing of borough residents. Its remit includes:

- Adult Social Care, including safeguarding
- The Health and Wellbeing Board
- Housing and its impact on health outcomes
- Public Health responsibilities
- The Adults and Communities budget and policy framework
- Statutory health scrutiny powers, including the review of planning, provision, and operation of health services for all age groups, including children, young people, and transitional services

The Committee may make reports and recommendations to influence service improvement and decision-making.

## 7. Work Programme 2026/27

### 7.1 Development of the Work Programme

The Committee is required to agree a work programme for 2026/27 that reflects its statutory duties, local priorities, and available resources.

### 7.2 Principles of an Effective Work Programme

A well-designed work programme will:

- Be outcome-focused, realistic, and measurable
- Ensure appropriate scheduling of key items
- Support effective use of Member and officer capacity

### 7.3 Flexibility and Responsiveness

The work programme must retain sufficient flexibility to:

- Respond to emerging issues and urgent matters
- Scrutinise key executive decisions as they arise
- Adapt to changes across the health and care system

#### **7.4 Prioritisation Approach**

To support the development of a balanced and deliverable programme, a prioritisation protocol will be used. This will:

- Assess the relevance and impact of proposed topics
- Consider the potential for added value through scrutiny
- Ensure alignment with Council priorities and resident needs

#### **8. Conclusion**

This report provides an updated framework for the Health Scrutiny Committee's role in 2026/27. It outlines statutory responsibilities, highlights key learning from 2025/26, and identifies priority areas for future focus.

Together with the prioritisation protocol, this will support the development of a structured, outcome-focused, and responsive work programme that reflects the priorities of Bury Council and delivers improved outcomes for residents.

## Appendix 1

### 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.

---

**Report Author and Contact Details:**

***Josh Ashworth***

***Senior Scrutiny Officer***

***Democratic Services***

***[J.R.Ashworth@bury.gov.uk](mailto:J.R.Ashworth@bury.gov.uk)***

---