

# Annual Report 2016/2017



## Foreword

It has been a busy year for the overview and scrutiny team. I would like to thank all those Members of the Board and the other Councillors who have played their part. In particular, I would like to thank the Vice Chairman and Overview and Scrutiny Lead Members who have worked so hard during the year chairing the task and finish groups, review panels and other meetings.

I would also like to thank the officers who have supported the Board over the past twelve months. A special thank you to Kate Spencer for all her hard work and dedication to the role of lead officer for overview and scrutiny.

Once again it has been a challenging time for the Council with the difficulty of finding millions of pounds worth of savings in the budget. The Board has played a valuable role in scrutinising the proposals for these savings. The Board has also been involved in the changes taking place in the health service locally. I would like to thank Councillors Bent and Barnby for the lead they took on this important issue. They had a number of vital meetings with the CCG both locally and at a regional level.

In August, the Board took a lead role in developing the Efficiency Plan holding meetings in August and providing advice to officers and the Executive. The delivery of the Plan continues to be a priority for the Board going forward. Therefore, the Board's Work Programme for next year will be focused around the numerous Transformation Projects detailed within the Plan.

The following twelve months will continue to be challenging both for overview and scrutiny and the Council as a whole. We will continue to play our part and work with the Executive and officers to create a prosperous and healthy Torbay, meaning that our communities are able to thrive.

Councillor Chris Lewis  
Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator

## **Introduction**

Overview and scrutiny...

- is one of the ways the Council improves services and the quality of people's lives in Torbay
- acts as the Council's "watchdog" and challenges decisions taken by the Mayor and looks at decisions in more detail
- reviews existing policies and issues of concern
- is a constructive and independent way of looking at an issue, highlighting areas that work well and suggesting where improvements can be made.

The Council agreed that the overview and scrutiny should operate in accordance with following principles:

- Focusing on the issues which matter:
- Policy Development is of equal importance to "holding to account"
- The Forward Plan is the key tool for managing the decision making process
- The relationship between overview and scrutiny and the executive should seek to complement one another
- All Councillors should have the opportunity to help shape policy decisions at an early stage

This report gives details of the work which has been undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Board over the course of 2016/2017.

### **The operation of overview and scrutiny**

The Council re-appointed Councillor Lewis as the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator in May 2016. He is supported by Councillors Barnby, Bent, Doggett and Stocks as Overview and Scrutiny Lead Members.

The membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Board comprised Councillors Barnby, Bye, Bent, Doggett, Lewis, Stockman, Stocks, Tolchard and Tyerman.

### **Focusing on the issues which matter**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board has continued to undertake its healthy scrutiny duty and established a review panel to consider the Clinical Commissioning Group's proposals to reconfigure community services in Torbay and South Devon. The Board has also scrutinised the development of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan and the merging review of acute services.

The Board has worked closely with the Director of Children's Services and the Executive Lead for Children's and Adults Services on the development of the Children's Services Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Board will continue to monitor the implementation of the Strategy over the coming year.

### **Equal importance placed on policy development**

The Board provided feedback during the development of a number of policies over the course of the year, including:

- Parking Strategy
- Destination Management Strategy
- Healthy Torbay Supplementary Planning Document

In accordance with the Constitution, the Mayor also referred other policy framework documents to the Board to review (such as the Local Transport Plan Implementation Strategy). Members of the Board reviewed these documents before determining that no formal response should be submitted to the Mayor as part of the consultation process.

New policies, including the Capital Investment Fund and the creation of a Housing Company, were considered by the Board and recommendations made to the Council for consideration as decisions were made.

### **Complementing the work of the executive**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board continue to seek to complement the work of the Mayor and his executive. The Board has held discussions with executive members on issues such as the lease of Torre Valley North playing fields, the creation of a Youth Trust for Torbay and the amendments to the Council Tax Support Scheme.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board also held a series of meetings to discuss the Mayor's proposals for the budget for 2017/2018.

### **Shaping policy decisions at an early stage**

Early debates have been held by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on issues such as the development of the Efficiency Plan and the progress of implementing the Masterplans which will see the redevelopment of Torbay's town centres.

### **Call-ins**

The call-in process is one of the mechanisms which can be used to hold the Mayor to account.

The purpose of call-in is to examine the decisions reached by the Mayor (or other decision maker) and the reasoning behind those decisions. The process enables further public debate to be held on the subject. The Overview and Scrutiny Board can then consider whether the decision was appropriate and make recommendations accordingly.

Over the course of the year, the Overview and Scrutiny Board have considered three call-ins.

## **Moving Forward**

The structure that has been in place for overview and scrutiny during the course of the year has been refined based on discussions with the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator. The establishment of the two Monitoring Working Parties for Children's Services and Adults and Public Health will replace the Liaison Group for the Joint Commissioning Team. The Liaison Group for the Joint Operations Team will continue.

Feedback from the Monitoring Working Parties and the Liaison Group will be provided at the Overview and Scrutiny Briefings. The Overview and Scrutiny Board will continue to meet on a monthly basis. By having earlier discussions, the annual review of the Mayor's budget proposals is expected to be more focused and, as a result, take place with fewer meetings.

Task-and-Finish Groups will continue to be established to review specific issues with formal reports and recommendations being agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

The structure of the Council's overview and scrutiny function for the coming year is shown at the end of this document.

## **Future Work Programme**

The Board will continue to set its Work Programme with the Forward Plan being the key tool for managing the decision making process. In focusing on the issues that matter, the Board will take an active role in ensuring that the Council's Transformation Programme is delivered. The Board will continue to respond to the Mayor's consultations on his proposals for the Policy Framework.

The Council continues to be in a financially challenging position and the Board will maintain its focus on ensuring that prioritised action continues at pace to deliver the changes that are needed to be made. In accordance with the Principles of Overview and Scrutiny, the Board will seek to involve all members in forthcoming issues from an early stage and to complement the work of the executive. It hopes that the Mayor and Executive will abide by these Principles as well.

The formal Work Programme will be agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its first meeting in 2017/2018 although it will continue to have the flexibility to react to issues as they arise, including holding the Mayor and Executive to account for their decisions and performance.

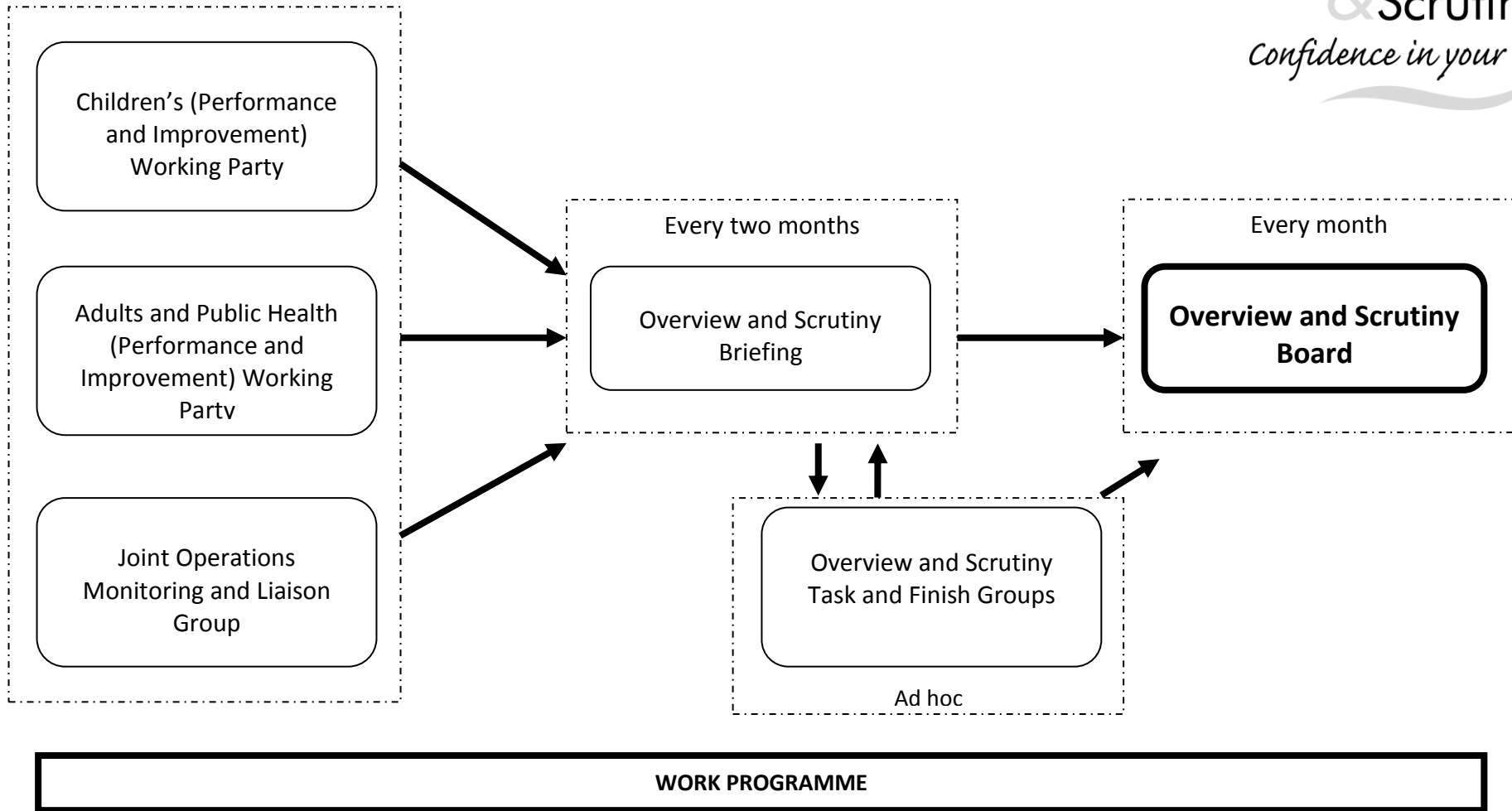
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## Operation of Overview and Scrutiny in Torbay



## Review of Priorities and Resources

