



Title: **Overview and Scrutiny – Annual Report**

Wards Affected: **All Wards**

To: **Overview and Scrutiny Board** On: **24 April 2012**

Key Decision: **No**

Change to Budget: **No** Change to Policy Framework: **No**

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1. What we are trying to achieve and the impact on our customers

1.1 This report sets out the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2011/2012. The Annual Report provides a snapshot of the work of the overview and scrutiny function over the past year and will be circulated to all Members of the Council, key partners, the Community Pool and to members of the public through distribution to key locations around Torbay. The purpose of the Annual Report is to inform the community of the work that overview and scrutiny does and to encourage the community to become involved in future work.

2. Recommendation(s) for decision

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/2012 be approved and forwarded to the Council.
- 2.2 That the Annual Report be published on the Council's website.

3. Key points and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 It is a requirement of the Constitution that the Overview and Scrutiny Board must report annually to the Council on its workings and make recommendations for the future work programme and amended working methods if appropriate.
- 3.2 The draft Annual Report, attached as Appendix 1, gives an explanation of the Overview and Scrutiny function in Torbay and information on the work that has been undertaken over the last year.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the report will be presented to the Adjourned Annual Meeting of the Council. The Report will then be published on the Council's website.

Mark Bennett
Executive Head – Business Services

Supporting information

A1. Introduction and history

A1.1 As set out in main report.

A2. Risk assessment of preferred option

A2.1 It is a legal requirement that the Overview and Scrutiny Board reports to the Council.

A3. Other Options

A3.1 In previous years, printed copies of the Annual Report have been made available. Given the reduction in the Board's budget it is not proposed to print copies this year.

A4. Summary of resource implications

A4.1 There will be no cost attached to publishing the Annual Report on the Council's website. The availability of the report will be advertised via a press release, email to partners and social media – all at no cost.

A5. What impact will there be on equalities, environmental sustainability and crime and disorder?

A5.1 There is no impact on equalities, environmental sustainability and crime and disorder.

A6. Consultation and Customer Focus

A6.1 Each of the reviews undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny function have included consultation with the public and/or stakeholder organisations.

A7. Are there any implications for other Business Units?

A7.1 There are no implications for the other Business Units.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Draft Annual Report

Documents available in members' rooms

Background Papers:

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

Reports and minutes from Overview and Scrutiny Board, Health Scrutiny Board and review panels.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/2012

Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator	Councillor John Thomas
People Scrutiny Lead	Councillor Neil Bent
Place Scrutiny Lead	Councillor Mark Kingscote
Business Scrutiny Lead	Councillor Ruth Pentney
Health Scrutiny Lead	Councillor Jane Barnby

Foreword

I have been privileged to yet again act as Overview and Scrutiny Coordinator and Chairman of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board during 2011/2012.

This is the first Annual Report since the local elections held in May 2011 and, as you may be aware, all local authorities across the country have been subjected to swingeing reductions in their funding from Central Government. Torbay Council is no different and as a consequence, your Council will have to find up to 28% in spending reductions on the services that it provides in the four years commencing 2011.

This has inevitably meant that every one of the different services that your Council provides have inescapably had to come under the microscope. Your Overview and Scrutiny Board represents your interests in the Council and exists to hold the Mayor and Executive Leads to account on all matters including the budgetary decisions that they make. Your Overview and Scrutiny Board has therefore set as a key theme for its review of spending cuts, the protection of the vulnerable and the disadvantaged in the Bay. Your Board has held the "budget makers" to account on every item that has been affected by the inescapable reductions in funding and have managed to reinstate or reduce some of the reductions, or reallocate the reductions to alternative areas of activity that may be considered to have a lesser effect on the public.

This does not make for an easy life as the reality is that there are few areas of Council activity that can escape some reduction in financial support.

Sadly, the cuts that have been made in the past two years are only the start of the journey as further cuts are certain in the two years ahead of us.

I wish to express my appreciation to all elected members who sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Board and for the many reviews that they have undertaken with skill and in forensic detail in a particularly difficult financial environment. This Annual Report gives but a glimpse of the work that has been undertaken by your Board and I commend it to your reading.

Finally, should you at any time have a subject that you feel would be worthy of review by your Board please do contact the Overview and Scrutiny Team at the Town Hall.

Councillor John Thomas
Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator

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

This report gives details of some of the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and the Health Scrutiny Board since May 2011.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Private Sector Housing

A review panel was established with the objectives of gaining an understanding of the anti-social behaviour issues associated with private sector housing, to identify the underlying issues and contributing factors and to examine the range and effectiveness of the policies and initiatives aimed at tackling and reducing anti-social behaviour.

The review panel heard of changes in how anti-social behaviour was tackled in Torbay, the various initiatives which were in place to tackle the issue and the recognition of this work through the award of a Purple Flag for Torquay town centre.

In conclusion, the panel found that there was excellent proactive and reactive work being undertaken to minimise the impact of anti-social behaviour and to tackle poor quality accommodation although the reduced resources available where a limiting factor.

The panel will present a business case to the Mayor for further targeted intervention to address some of the hotspots in Torbay.

Levels and appropriateness of methylphenidate (including Ritalin) prescribed for children and young people in Torbay

The Overview and Scrutiny Board supported a Councillor Call for Action raised by Councillor Parrott on the prevalence of Ritalin prescription in Torbay. The request was made as there was a research proven link between socio-economic group, incidences of ADHD diagnosis and the prescribing of methylphenidate (including Ritalin). The British Psychological Society had stated that poverty and unemployment are amongst the biggest causes in such cases. Councillor Parrott hoped that, given the levels of deprivation in some parts of Torbay, the national correlation between social struggles and Ritalin prescription would not be present within the area.

The Director of Public Health presented a report to the Board which gave background information and answered the specific questions which had been raised. The report concluded that diagnosis of ADHD and treatment is undertaken in Torbay by consultant-level medical staff in line with current national guidelines from NICE.

Treatment may include Ritalin but this is not the only regimen available.

It was noted that there is no data available in Torbay on total population prevalence or numbers diagnosed or medicated that could be used for comparative purposes and that this data is not collected in other areas. A review of the literature had been used to provide potential parameters for the Torbay population and that there was no evidence that Torbay exceeds these parameters.

Budget Scrutiny 2012/2013

The Overview and Scrutiny Board undertook budget scrutiny over a number of meetings in January where Executive Leads and officers were challenged about their proposals for the forthcoming year. Members of the public were also invited share their views at these meetings.

Health Scrutiny

The Health Scrutiny Board continued to monitor the implementation of planned service changes at Ocombe House and the John Parkes Unit. The Board also received reports on the establishment of regional networks for trauma care and the progress of the personalisation of health and social care in Torbay.

Plans for next year

The Work Programme for 2012/2013 will be developed to take account of where overview and scrutiny can add the most value.

The principles of good scrutiny will remain the framework by which the Board operates.

Good public scrutiny:

1. provides “critical friend” challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
2. enables the voice and concerns of the public
3. is carried out by “independent minded governors” who lead and own the scrutiny role
4. drives improvement in public services

Involvement

- Let us know your views – use the contact details below
- Keep up to date – check out our website at www.torbay.gov.uk/scrutiny
- Join our Community Pool – be sent regular news from scrutiny and have the opportunity to become involved with reviews – again, use the contact details below