



BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET

Overview & Scrutiny

Annual Report

2004 - 2005

Overview & Scrutiny

Annual Report

November, 2005

Contents

- ❖ **Foreword**
- ❖ **How Overview and Scrutiny Works in Bath & North East Somerset**
- ❖ **Overview & Scrutiny and the Executive**
- ❖ **Purpose of the Annual Report**
- ❖ **Overview & Scrutiny Management and Resource Arrangements**
- ❖ **Overview & Scrutiny Highlights 2004/5**
- ❖ **Looking Forward to 2005/6**
- ❖ **Conclusions**
- ❖ **Contact Us**



Foreword

This is the fourth annual update on Overview & Scrutiny (OS) in Bath & North East Somerset Council. It builds on the format of last year's Plan, covering a summary of notable activities and issues of the past year, the management arrangements for OS at Member and Officer level and looking forward to key issues for the coming 12 months.

This report:

- identifies the present structure of Overview and Scrutiny (OS)
 - explains the management arrangements for OS
 - features key events of each OS Panel over the past year, including health scrutiny
 - explains what will be used to inform the emerging OS programme of work for the year;
- and
- identifies specific and general developmental needs for the OS function and the members involved in it

The Council is highly regarded for its OS work. Networking with other local authorities confirms this as does the level of interest shown by all types of other Councils in learning from our experiences.

We have an internal recognition of the value of OS in both supporting executive activity and acting as a robust critical friend. It is the primary mechanism for engaging with the public on key community issues and informing the policy making / service review processes of the Council.

We as the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Panels commend this report to the Council and in so doing would like to express our appreciation to all the Members, Officers and community representatives who have worked with us over the year to enable us to focus on and represent what is important to local people.

Overview & Scrutiny Panel Chairs



Cllr David Bellotti Chair of Resources Panel

Email: bellotti@cix.co.uk
Tel: 01225 427560



Cllr David Dixon Chair of Planning, Transportation,
Economy and Sustainability Panel

Email: david_dixon@bathnes.fsnet.co.uk
Tel: 01225 462590



Cllr Andrew Furse Chair of the Education, Youth,
Culture and Leisure Panel

Email: Andrew_furse@bathnes.gov.uk
Tel: 01225 483218



Cllr Charles Gerrish Chair of the Major Projects and
External Bodies Panel

Email: charles_gerrish@bathnes.gov.uk
Tel: 01779 868426



Cllr Steve Hedges Chair of the Housing and
Community Safety Panel

Email: stevehedges@blueyonder.co.uk
Tel: 01225 358622



Cllr Martin Veal Chairman of the Health and Social
Services Panel

Email: martin_veal@bathnes.gov.uk
Tel: 07976 858285



Cllr Chris Watt Chair of the Corporate Issues and
Partnerships Panel

Email: chris.watt@efeedback.co.uk
Tel: 01761 408165



How Overview and Scrutiny works in Bath & North East Somerset

Overview & Scrutiny is a legal function of the Council. Every local authority is required by legislation to have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Primarily, the function is to

- monitor executive level decisions and activity (i.e. those Councillors appointed to our “Cabinet” with the power to make decisions collectively or individually)
- contribute to the continuous improvement of the Council and its services
- investigate matters of community interest or concern and report with recommendations
- review corporate and service specific policies and work with the Executive to develop new policies or services
- examine executive decisions before they are implemented, when a validated request from councillors to do so is received.

Overview and Scrutiny is an engaging process on both service specific and cross-cutting issues. Most OS Panel meetings are held in public whether considering routine business or acting as a review body. The Panels will often hold open events so that individuals’ comments as well as those of established representative groups can be heard and taken into account during reviews.

In this Council, the overview and scrutiny function is carried out by the 7 Panels indicated in the foreword, on which elected members of the Council serve. There is provision for any Panel to co-opt expert or outside representatives if it chooses. This is however a requirement for the Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure Panel which must have Parent Governor and Church Education Authority representatives co-opted to contribute to the education aspects of the Panel’s work.

There are various types of business undertaken by OS Panels. When undertaking policy or issue reviews, Panels can choose to do the job together as a full Panel and conduct the review over several programmed sessions. Alternatively, they may appoint a smaller number of members to meet as a “Task and Finish” group. Such groups of interested members meet over a relatively short period, focusing on the issue in hand, and submitting their findings to the main Panel for consideration.

Either method requires full engagement with the local community in gathering evidence and reaching conclusions.

An important collective and individual role for Councillors is in community leadership. This role envisages the directly elected Council/Councillors having a mandate to act in the best interests of the community; to speak for the community and to engage with the community on important local matters. This engagement can be about Council services but may also be linked to services from other providers, eg health trust, housing associations etc.

The overview and scrutiny process is the principal mechanism open to the Council for sustained community involvement. In addition to citizens' rights to attend formal meetings to express their views, all Overview and Scrutiny Panels will hold what are termed "Contributor Sessions" from time to time. These are open opportunities for individuals, partner bodies and local groups to come and tell Councillors what they feel about particular issues that are being reviewed. This evidence is valuable to the Panels in exerting their influence over those within the Council or outside who make decisions that affect the community.

Panels will also act as catalysts for calling other public bodies to account for their actions.

For information about how you can get involved in the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels email: scrutiny@bathnes.gov.uk

In addition, Panels have some routine but nevertheless important business to deal with on a regular basis. Primary among such business is examining performance material from services and agreeing their own rolling work programme.

Overview & Scrutiny and the Executive

Effective overview and scrutiny relies in this Council on a good working relationship with the Executive – i.e. the formal Council Executive comprising the Leader of the Council and 8 Executive Councillors with portfolios – and with individual Executive Councillors.

The overview and scrutiny role complements that of the executive, particularly in the field of developing new policy and reviewing existing services. This does not detract from robust scrutiny of decisions and critical appraisal of existing policy and practice which is part of the bedrock of OS.

The requirement on the Council to publish a forward plan of decisions to be taken by the Executive is helpful to OS Chairs who may select items from that forward list for pre-decision scrutiny.

In the Autumn 2004 the OS Chairs discussed the need for a tracking system to be developed that would monitor Overview & Scrutiny Review recommendations once they had been passed to the Executive. A small group of Chairs with Officers developed a process using the existing mechanisms for reporting to the Executive, but allowing them 6 weeks to respond to the Panel's recommendations. The final part of the system is to close the loop on the OS review process by the Panel inviting the Executive member to attend a public meeting to discuss the detail of the responses.

The system has proved successful, with every OS review completed since October 2004 receiving considered responses to its recommendations from the relevant Executive member(s). It is hoped that this system will contribute to measuring the effectiveness of OS reviews within the authority and in the wider community.

❖ Purpose of the Annual Report

The Annual Report has been prepared in order to ensure that the work of the Council's OS Panels is shared with the wider Council and the community and that it is properly focused on its agreed key areas. It is designed to assist the public in identifying the range of issues dealt with by OS bodies and to enable councillors and officers to plan ahead and to ensure that the work priorities agreed by the Council are properly resourced and considered.

The Annual Report is not itself a detailed work plan for the future. It provides a more general account of the approach employed by Panels, the OS process and how Panel activity has contributed to and will contribute to the delivery of the Council's key priorities.

The Report also provides an opportunity for the Council Meeting to focus on overview and scrutiny issues and to satisfy itself that what is in place is operating effectively and is resourced to deliver what is required.

❖ Overview & Scrutiny Management and Resource Arrangements

Overview and Scrutiny is a member-led function.

This functional lead role operates at 2 levels. Collectively, the role is delivered through a quarterly meeting of all the OS Panel Chairs, with the Directors' Group. This meeting, chaired by the Head of Democratic Services

- co-ordinates Panels' programmes and resolves conflicts
- strives for consistency in the delivery of this Council function where this is helpful and relevant
- champions the OS process within the Council and outside
- plans strategic involvement of OS Panels in supporting the Council's budgetary and service planning and performance management processes
- determines overall training requirements for members on OS
- directs key functional aspects of overview and scrutiny;
- monitors the overall budgetary provision for OS; and
- gives advice to the Council on OS matters, primarily through the Annual Report process.

There is also an individual leadership role of each OS Panel Chair in

- agreeing with his/her Panel a programme of work that takes account of member and officer capacity;

- approving spending against the specific budget allocated for review and other costs of his/her Panel
- liaising with Project Officers, Heads of Service and Directors to progress agreed reviews and advise on programme planning
- assessing training needs of the Panel; and
- liaising with other Panel Chairs on joint Panel activity.

Budget: The overall budget for overview and scrutiny includes a sum specifically allocated to each Panel (currently £2,000 per Panel). This meets the cost of Panel activity over and above the normal meeting costs which are met from within the mainstream Democratic Services budget. These specific budget allocations have been used to finance for example:

- visits to other local authorities
- expert advisers
- contributor expenses
- additional catering
- room hire etc.

The OS Chairs receive accounts of the spend level against their Panel allocations.

There is an unallocated sum set aside by the OS Chairs as a contingency for meeting Panel costs arising from unplanned OS activity (e.g. call ins – a challenge to a decision taken but not yet implemented) or additional support costs.

Staff: The lead Officer for the overview and scrutiny function in the Council is the Head of Democratic Services. Each Panel is supported by a senior level Project Officer within the Democratic Services team whose role is to manage the work of the Panels and in particular to guide Panels through the processes of detailed reviews, applying project management techniques to ensure the process is robust and meets the objectives set for each piece of work.

The Chief Executive has nominated a Director who will support each Panel in a service lead role, liaising with and advising the appropriate Panel Chair on the services covered. Individual Heads of Service will support Panels in specific reviews.

Following a management level restructuring within Democratic Services, a new post of Democratic Services Manager (Overview, Scrutiny and Engagement) was created within existing establishment levels. Initially, David Langman was appointed to that position but in early July 2005 he moved on within the Council to a new senior post within the Major Projects team.

Alix Boswell, formerly a Change Manager at Swindon Borough Council, took up her appointment to this post on 30th August 2005. This provides a new focus for the overview and scrutiny function within the Council. Alix is committed to working with members to keep the OS function in this Council at the cutting edge of good practice around the country.

The restructuring also created the 2 Project Officer posts referred to earlier, again within existing establishment. Alison Enever and Anna Burgess were appointed to these posts. These appointments have been welcomed by the OS Chairs and together they provide a robust senior project lead role in support of Panels.

The restructuring has also looked at options for administrative support for the overview and scrutiny Project Officers. At the time of writing this is a matter to be determined.

The absence of an operational manager has placed great pressure on the support team. That there has been no breakdown in the support that Panels have received as they advance their programmes is due to the integrity and hard work of the Project Officers and other democratic Services staff for which the OS Chairs have expressed their appreciation.

David Langman's departure was a great loss to the OS team. David was instrumental in developing the Council's high profile approach to overview and scrutiny, making us one of the leading local authorities in the country in this regard. The OS Chairs have expressed their deep gratitude for David's dedicated lead role on overview and scrutiny and wished him well in his new senior position.



Overview & Scrutiny Team



Overview and Scrutiny Highlights during 2004/5

Meetings of the OS Panels have covered a wide range of issues over the past 12 months, including regular business items at bi-monthly meetings, reviews of specific issues and call-ins* of Executive decisions.

** a "call-in is a challenge to a decision made by the Executive but not yet implemented. 10 or more councillors must sign the call in request and, if validated, an OS Panel will investigate and decide if the decision needs to be reviewed. The call-in arrangement is used sparingly and is balanced with the need for effective decision making by the Executive. Call in does however remain an important part of calling the Executive to account for their decisions and how they reached their conclusions.*

From September 2004 to September 2005, the seven Overview and Scrutiny Panels have held more than 70 meetings, including the usual scheduled bi-monthly meetings, and other meetings such as informal and special ones, joint meetings (for example, for the Passenger Transport Review, and looking at the Elderly People's Homes), call-in meetings and contributor sessions. This does not include any of the Panels' more informal review steering group meetings.

–	Since April 2005 – September 2005, the following reviews were conducted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Review • Urban Public Realm, • Short Breaks for Adults with Learning Difficulties, • Supporting People. • Passenger Transport Review • Combe Down Stone Mines • Horseriding Strategy • Parking Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste, recycling and street cleansing • Primary School Meals • Urban and rural regeneration • Review of Full Council (still ongoing) • Employer Travel Plans (still ongoing) • Developing a Sustainable Economy • Bath Western Riverside • Public engagement on the Council's Budget

The reviews varied from in depth examinations of the issue, to quick "mini-reviews", or were completed by Task and Finish Groups. In addition, there were 5 call-ins of Executive Decisions.

The following pages show the highlights of Panels work, and discuss some of the reviews and other activities of the Panels in more detail.

❖ Corporate Issues & Partnerships (CIP) O&S Panel

The Panel completed a review of Council Communications with the public in September 2004. The recommendations arising from this were among the first to go through the Overview & Scrutiny Tracking Process referred to earlier. The Panel received a response back to their recommendations from the Executive Member for Communications in February 2005.

From January to July 2005 the Panel embarked on a significant review of the Full Council Meeting. This review was quite unique in local government circles both in terms of the subject matter of the review and the use of overview and scrutiny to conduct it. The review examined ways in which the full assembly of local councillors (i.e. the Council Meeting) could be more engaging for councillors and for the public who attend.

During their investigation they received a 94% response rate to a questionnaire sent to all Members of the Council. They also visited Kirklees Borough Council to observe their newly modernised Council Meeting.

The Panel have made a series of robust recommendations including creating capacity on the agenda to engage with community focused issues. Council debated the recommendations in October 2005 and pending the outcomes of further consultation changes will be implemented from the AGM in May 2006.



The Guildhall Bath

Other Panel activity during the year has been

- presentations from Bristol Airport concerning their expansion and discussing concerns about the high price of parking, infrastructure links and attracting tourism to Bath from the airport
- presentation on rural renaissance and ways in which the Council is working to promote rural tourism and economic revival in rural areas
- the issue of urban post office closures.

❖ Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure (EYCL) O&S Panel

This Panel has undertaken a high profile review of Primary School Meals, which began in July 2004. The Panel have now reached their final recommendations, submitted their report to the Executive Member for Children's Services and received the response at a public meeting.

The Review generated a great deal of interest in the media and amongst parents, schools, and governors. A consultation exercise with schools, governors and parents generated over 300 responses. Consultation was also undertaken with Council catering staff and the Panel heard from other Local Authorities, a senior dietician, PCT staff, local school children, Head Teachers, Governors and parents.

Members of the Panel also sampled school meals for themselves. Their recommendations are wide-ranging and should help to secure ongoing improvements in school meals for primary school children across the authority.

The programme of primary school reviews has progressed smoothly during the year and the Panel's good reputation amongst schools for the considered and honest way they work has been maintained. This will stand them in good stead as they embark on the review of education in the Autumn 05.



❖ **Health & Social Services (H&SS) O&S Panel**

In addition to having the remit of the Council's housing and social services functions, this Panel carries out the local authority statutory function of health scrutiny.

Health scrutiny enables the local authority to undertake a review of any health service or institution which impacts upon its area or its inhabitants. A main element of health scrutiny work is the review of NHS proposals for changes to their services, known as "substantial variations".

The Council has played a leading role in developing an approach to health scrutiny supported by our local authority neighbours and by the various Health and Primary Care Trusts with whom the Council works closely.

There are many important issues emerging on the health scrutiny front and this is placing pressure on the team at a time when the resource level is reduced. A principal issue to be addressed soon is the future of services at Keynsham Hospital to be conducted through the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. Three Members of the Health and Social Services Panel from Bath and North East Somerset are sitting on this Joint Health Scrutiny Committee, joined by Members from Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire.

Reviews undertaken by the Panel over the past year have included one on short breaks for adults with learning difficulties and one on changes to mental health services at Miles House Day Centre.

Short Breaks for Adults with Learning Difficulties

The Panel reviewed the level of provision of short breaks for adults with learning difficulties. One focus of the review was services offered to young people, as they move from childhood to adulthood, taking over rights and responsibilities for themselves from their parents and carers. The review also looked at the difficulties which can arise when short term emergency care is needed. It also looked at black & ethnic minority issues in this overall context.

To achieve its objectives the panel undertook a series of research and fact finding activities to expand their knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding the provision of short break services for adults with learning difficulties:

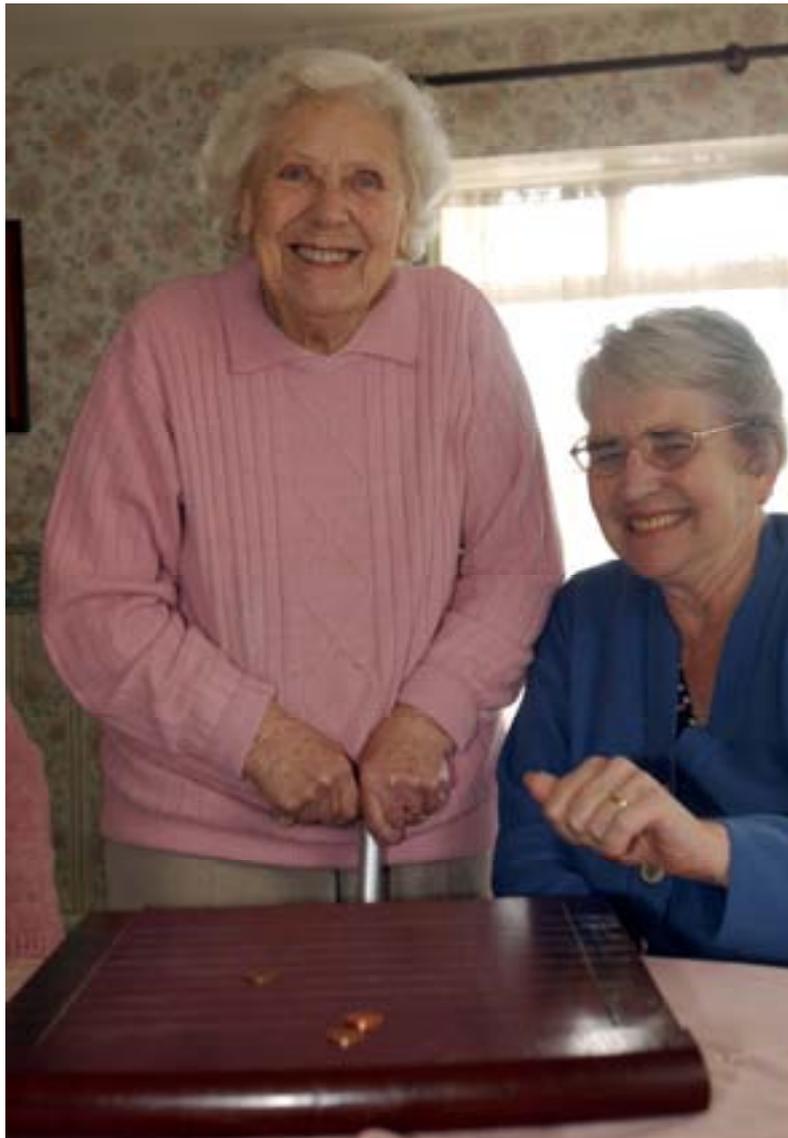
The Panel's final report went to the Executive Member for Social Services in February 2005, who responded favourably to most of their recommendations. An Easy English version of this report was also produced.

Miles House Day Hospital, Bath

The Panel also undertook a short Health Scrutiny review of proposed changes to Miles House Day Centre during November and December, 2004. The Panel heard that Avon & Wiltshire Partnership (AWP) proposed to change the way services are provided at Miles House Day Hospital in order to make a saving of £100,000. The AWP's preferred choice for change was to reduce the operation of Miles House Day Hospital from 5 days a week to 3 days a week, providing a range of 6 sessions per week to clients.

The Panel recognised the financial constraints faced by Avon & Wiltshire Partnership and endorsed their proposed option for change, they also raised some concerns. These issues included additional funding needs for the Home Treatment team; that the changes are communicated clearly to clients and carers and; that the existing skill base in staff is used effectively elsewhere within Bath & North East Somerset.

These recommendations were favourably received and endorsed by the Joint Commissioning Board in February 05.



Citizens of Bath & North East Somerset

Housing and Community Safety (H&CS) O&S Panel

The Panel recently looked at the issues around street trading licences and are about to start a comprehensive review of Temporary Accommodation.

In the past they have reviewed the impact of extending nightclub hours in the city and gave considered input to the affordable housing strategy.

One of the key activities undertaken by the Panel was a review of the Government's "supported people" programme in Bath & North East Somerset. This was in the context of Government savings targets and the significant risk to funding levels in the future.

This programme brings together a number of funding streams for supported housing and other support including the support element of housing benefit.

The Panel undertook a number of research and fact finding activities to expand its knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding the provision and commissioning of "supporting people" services.

Important to this review were the opinions of users and providers. Workshops held during the review included:

- An event for people with mental illness at Mulberry House, Bath
- An event for young people/care leavers at Pathways hostel
- A facilitated event for people with learning difficulties

The review findings were made available to the Supported Living Service for them to incorporate in the final version of the service strategy before it was presented to the Executive.

The Panel intends to revisit this matter at a later stage in its work programme.



Community Wardens

❖ Major Projects & External Bodies (MP&EB) O&S Panel

In the past year the panel have mainly received update reports on some of the Council's major projects. In November 2004 they undertook a short review of the Project Management arrangement surrounding Combe Down Stone Mines. This involved a day long session talking to officers, stakeholders and partners as well as the Executive Member for economic development. The review was a referral from Council and the Panel's recommendations were reported back to Council in January 05.

The Panel have just completed a review of the proposals for Bath Western Riverside. This has been conducted in private session due to the commercially sensitive nature of the information. This is a complex development and the Panel process has been used as a means to engage with elected members as this project takes shape.



Bath Western Riverside

❖ Planning, Transportation, Economy & Sustainability (PTES) O&S Panel

A review of the Council's Parking Strategy was completed in September. The review looked at car parking provision in the area in order to determine if it met the needs and wants of users as well as investigating its affects on residents, tourism and the local economy.

A thorough review of the Council's role in managing and developing the Urban Public realm of the district was completed in November, 2004. Benchmarking visits to a London Borough, Bristol and the historic City of Wells gave the Panel an insight into other local authority approaches and solutions. Panel members also involved national experts and practitioners as well as representatives of the local community via presentations, discussions and detailed debates.

The Council Executive asked the Panel to undertake a review and provide recommendations on equestrian access to cycle paths. The Executive Member agreed with the Panel's recommendations. This was a good example of the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny working together to develop new policy.

More recently in July, 2005, the Panel completed a review of waste services during which Panel members considered a strategy and future development options for the Council's waste management and recycling operations.

During the year the Panel has had a number of high profile call-ins.



Midsomer Norton
High Street



Park and Ride



Keynsham High Street

The Panel is currently reviewing employer travel plans. This review will run from July until November and will look at how the Council can promote Employer Travel Plans amongst local employers and make improvements to the way in which they are produced. It will look at the Council's own provision as a local employer and will look at best practice and guidelines for other local employers.

❖ **Resources O&S Panel**

The Resources Panel undertook a review of public engagement on the Council's budget, exploring how the Council could better engage with and inform the public during the budget setting process. The Review was run as a Task and Finish Group. The Executive Member for Resources has responded to the Task and Finish Group's recommendations, and the Panel will be considering the Executive Response at their December meeting.

The Panel made a major contribution to a review of the Council's overall financial exposure in the context of its Capital Programme. The Panel identified issues that should be addressed in order to secure continuous improvement in the way major projects were managed, financial probity and stakeholder participation.

The Panel has also been monitoring some key systems, processes and services throughout the year. These include:

- (a) the ongoing improvements identified in the Finance Service 5 year Improvement Plan, prepared following a Best Value Review of the service;
- (b) the management and operational roll out of a new financial management system delivered through a partnership with HBS, with clear benefits to the Authority;
- (c) the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act and its impact on the Council;
- (d) the Council's long-term office accommodation strategy, and
- (e) the Council's approach to Council expenditure on external consultants

❖ **Passenger Transport Review - Joint Panel**

Councillors formed a special Overview & Scrutiny Panel to investigate the Council's transport services. They:

- looked at how the Council currently manages these services;
- considered best practice examples from around the country;
- reviewed the changes in government legislation and how they apply to Bath & North East Somerset;
- talked to stakeholder organisations to understand the needs of user groups;
- listened to individual service users about their experiences and improvement suggestions; and
- held a special overview & scrutiny meeting in public to consider all the information received.

The Councillors took account of all information received and made an independent report to the Council Executive to be used as a basis for future development of transport services.

Although the majority of public transport is provided by commercial bus operating companies, Bath & North East Somerset Council manages a number of specialist passenger transport services including school transport and dial-a-ride services.



Park and Ride to Bath City Centre

❖ Looking Forward to 2005/6

Capacity and priorities: It is important that the Council is aware of the capacity it has at Member and Officer level to undertake in depth reviews and other work during the year.

The human and budgetary resources are finite and, together with the OS Chairs, the Head of Democratic Services must prioritise the allocation of those resources to deliver what the Council requires.

There is an accepted priority for OS work. This is

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Priority 1 | call in of decisions made but not implemented |
| Priority 2 | requirements of full Council (as parent body) |
| Priority 3 | requirements of the Executive |
| Priority 3 | responding to health scrutiny initiatives notified |
| Priority 5 | choices of the Panel in its own work |

The service and resource plan for Democratic and Member Services for 2005/06 contains the objective of setting in place a capacity statement for overview and scrutiny activity. This will complement that which exists already for the meetings administration function within the service.

This capacity statement will inform officers, members and partners of:

- the staffing resource (productive hours) available identified against various aspects of OS activity
- the standards of support that Chairs can expect in given circumstances
- as assessment of triggers for managing additional human resources or a decision about reduced activity or seeking costs from elsewhere

This document will be developed in consultation with OS Chairs

On performance management, the OS Chairs have agreed with the Chief Executive a more robust process for the future. This will enable OS Panels to have much earlier information about service performance against national and local indicators and a more timely opportunity to influence executive consideration and action.

Now that the Council has agreed a Corporate Plan on a 3 year rolling basis, the overview and scrutiny workplan will play its part in contributing to the achievement of the Council's agreed priorities outlined within that plan. Certain Panels will take the lead role in pursuing the following priorities:

<i>Lead Panel</i>	<i>Improvement Priority</i>
CIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve customer satisfaction
EYCL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the environment for learning • Improving the life chances for disadvantaged teenagers, through improvements to their education, training and support
H&CS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase availability of affordable housing • Reducing the fear of crime
H&SS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the independence of older people
PTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the quality of public transport, roads and pavements and easing congestion • Reducing landfill • Improving the urban public realm ('liveability') • Develop a sustainable economy for Bath and North East Somerset
Resources, Major Projects and External Bodies Panels take an overview position on such matters.	

Continuous Improvement: The Council seeks continuously to improve its services and processes. The overview and scrutiny process is no exception. There are 2 new initiatives planned for the near future in progressing Member and Officer knowledge about best practice.

One is a package of skills development specifically targeted at members who are leading the OS process in the Council.

The other is a significant piece of work focussing on health scrutiny and in particular the identification and understanding of health inequality issues. This will be facilitated by the Improvement and Development Agency and will in effect enable the Council to undertake a self assessment of its understanding of these issues and its capacity to deal with them. This initiative will develop in the Autumn and will involve member representatives of all Panels.

◆ Conclusions

The year to date has posed many challenges for the overview and scrutiny process and demonstrated many successes as described in this report.

The new and integrated team which will support the overview and scrutiny process, and the ongoing commitment of the Chairs of the Panels, will ensure that we continue to provide the best opportunities for the local community to engage with the Council on a wide variety of matters.

Full information about the Council's overview and scrutiny function and how the public can help us in our work can be found on the Council's website:

[BathNES/councilinformation/howthecouncilworks/overviewandscrutiny/default.htm](https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/councilinformation/howthecouncilworks/overviewandscrutiny/default.htm)



Bath Abbey at night

Contact Overview & Scrutiny Team

For further information about Overview & Scrutiny or the content of any of the issues covered in this report please contact:

Overview & Scrutiny Team
The Guildhall
High Street
Bath BA1 5AW

Tel: 01225 396410 / 396053

Email: scrutiny@bathnes.gov.uk

What Overview & Scrutiny does do:

- ❖ Considers issues of real public concern that affects a group of people either living or working in the Bath & North East Somerset area;
- ❖ Investigates issues that relate to a service, event or issue in which the council has a significant stake;
- ❖ Develops ideas for new policies.

What Overview & Scrutiny does not do:

- ❖ Scrutiny is not a complaints system that deals with individual issues, grievances and areas of concern;
- ❖ Scrutiny does not consider planning issues or other matter dealt with by another council committee except where the issue relates to process.





Produced by Overview & Scrutiny Team, Guildhall, Bath

Printed by Linear Way Industries

(November 2005)