

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Council

**DATE:** 19 April 2011

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**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2010/11**

##### **1 Purpose of Report**

To present to the Council the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2010/11.

##### **2 Recommendation(s) / Proposed Action**

The Council is recommended to receive the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2010/11.

##### **3 Key Priorities**

###### **Community Strategy Priorities**

Overview and Scrutiny is a process by which decision-makers are accountable to local people, via their elected representatives for improving outcomes relating to all priorities for the Borough and its residents. Scrutiny seeks to influence those who make decisions by considering the major issues affecting the Borough and making recommendations about how services can be improved. The Annual Scrutiny Report supports the Scrutiny process by providing a record of the work carried out during the year and plans for the future year.

##### **4 Other Implications**

(a) Financial – None

(b) Risk Management – None

##### **5 Supporting Information**

5.1 Annual reports are an opportunity to review the scrutiny work for the previous year and help us to understand the nature of the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny and to assess its effectiveness. It also gives an opportunity to reflect on any lessons learned during the year to help guide future work.

5.2 The production of an Annual Report is a requirement of the Constitution.

5.3 The report provides highlights of the work of the individual panels.

5.3.1 The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was instrumental in ensuring that the Office of National Statistics (ONS) gave proper consideration to the level and deployment of resources in Slough, “The Intervention of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has made a marked difference in the way that the ONS now responds to Slough Council. The additional resources that have been provided by the ONS for Slough although not comprehensive are to be welcomed.”

5.3.2 Health Scrutiny continues to use its statutory powers effectively to hold the PCT and Hospital Trusts to account. In particular the JEBHOS<sup>1</sup> Scrutiny Review on the NHS Car Parking Arrangements in East Berkshire has secured some positive outcomes. Similarly the proposals into the re-siting of Mental Health Inpatient Care have been followed very closely over the year. The Health Scrutiny Panel proposed that further work was necessary on this subject and gained approval to form a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group; work is underway and the results will be published next year.

5.3.3 The scrutiny of local issues such as the Foster Care Allowances and the proposal to close the Wexham Nursery also led to some strong recommendations.

5.3.4 The Neighbourhoods & Renewal and the Communities, Leisure and Environment Panels led to some productive joint working. Combining efforts in this way gave greater awareness on topics such as the zero-carbon homes now completed and on-stream in Chalvey.

5.4 There is scope to build on and develop different approaches to scrutiny next year; continued attention needs to be given to forward planning and appropriate selection of items within the work programme with fewer routine reports for noting and challenging the status quo by making evidence based recommendations.

5.5 The Annual Report concludes with a summary of some of the challenges that lie ahead both externally and internally.

## **6 Conclusion**

The local authority through its Overview and Scrutiny function has an influential as well as a statutory role in scrutinising the activities and performance of the Cabinet and external bodies. The Annual Scrutiny Report 10/11 provides an opportunity to communicate the work the Committee and it's Panels have undertaken, challenges faced and the improvements made as a result of scrutiny.

JEBHOS<sup>1</sup> comprises representatives, including elected members from Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Slough Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. It was established to enable the authorities to meet and jointly respond to health related issues arising in the region.