

ANNUAL REVIEW OF SCRUTINY BY THE  
COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR FOR 2018/19

I am pleased to provide this brief overview of scrutiny activity at Halton Borough Council for 2018/19 and to commend to you the individual Annual Reports of each Policy and Performance Board (PPB). These reports provide many examples of the excellent work our PPBs do in holding the Executive Board to account, developing policy and reviewing performance. The detailed work done through the individual topic groups makes a significant contribution to developing new approaches and new ways of working to many of our activities.

The PPB meetings that took place over the last Municipal Year covered issues ranging from reviewing services and financial performance, undertaking pre scrutiny of items in advance of Executive Board consideration and the development of recommendations to the Executive Board through the topic Group work each PPB engages in.

It is very clear to me that where pre scrutiny takes place the added value provided by our PPBs is very much appreciated by Executive Board colleagues.

The involvement of PPB Chairs in the Budget Working Group has continued to ensure that PPB views and concerns are well represented in the budget process. A process that, as all Members are well aware of, is getting more and more challenging each year. PPB involvement in focusing and reviewing the Council's priorities will remain an extremely important role.

The scrutiny of external bodies continues to be important and the Council's representatives on the Police and Crime Panel and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee regularly report on the work of those bodies to the Chairs' Group. This is also complemented by the work the Council's Health PPB undertakes in relation to the holding to account of relevant NHS bodies and relevant health service providers in Halton. These are key roles for locally elected representatives, ensuring the community of Halton's interests are listened to and properly represented in these important areas.

The Chairs' Group carried out a review, at the request of the Leader, of the arrangements contained in the law and the Council's Constitution in relation to access to part 2 reports and attendance by members at Board meetings when part 2 matters are under consideration. This resulted in revised and simplified guidance being prepared and distributed to all members of the Council. The feedback has been that the guidance has been helpful in clarifying Members' rights in this important area.

The Chairs' Group has also had a watching brief on the Local Government Boundary Commission's review of Ward Boundaries in Halton.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Chairs' Group for the support they have provided me in carrying out the role of Scrutiny Co-ordinator over the past 12 months.

Cllr Tony McDermott

Scrutiny Co-ordinator