



Overview and Scrutiny in Bradford

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Chairs' Foreword

Dear Resident

We have the pleasure of presenting the 2014-15 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. This report summarises the achievements and contributions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees over the last 12 months.

The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is a very important contributor to the delivery of Council Services in a challenging operational environment.

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny has also been undertaking a detailed Scrutiny Review into the approaches being used by Bradford Council and its Partners to address Poverty across the District. The Committee is now coming towards the end of its investigations.

Managing Attendance across Bradford Council has also been a key scrutiny area for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Welfare Reforms, Performance Management, Educational Attainment, Equalities and Financial Monitoring, the regeneration of the District along with other important issues of local concern, have also been key areas of work for Overview and Scrutiny.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Safeguarding Children is not only a national issue of concern but regional as well and as a result, the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee have undertaken some work in this area.

Improving educational attainment across continues to be a challenge for the Council and will continue to be a key area of work for Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Environment and Waste Management work programme continues to be varied and includes some very good news issues where the Council and its partners have had positive outcomes, along with ongoing problems to which solutions are still being sought.

The Health and Social Care Overview Scrutiny Committee which is now in its second year and a key area of work has been the Scrutiny Review into Domiciliary Care.

We would like the opportunity to acknowledge and thank all those people who contributed to and supported the work of Overview and Scrutiny and look forward to working with you during the upcoming year.

We are also very appreciative of the Bradford District Councillors and Co-Opted Members, who sat on our Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the year.

Cllr Rizwan Malik, Corporate.

Cllr Malcolm Sykes, Children's Services.

Cllr Martin Love, Environment and Waste Management.

Cllr Vanda Greenwood, Health and Social Care.

Cllr Ghazanfer Khaliq, Regeneration and Economy.

Overview and Scrutiny in Bradford

Bradford Metropolitan District Council has five Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Five Committees have nine members and one has eight members.

Four of the Committees have additional members of the public, as “co-opted” members.

The Committees:

- act as a “critical friend” to the Council’s leadership and senior officers;
- drive improvement in public services;
- enable the concerns of the public to be heard;
- consist of independently minded people who decide their own agenda and how they will do their work.

In total, the Committees met 58 times during the year and include:

- Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, (also has a co-ordinating role);
- Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Listed below is a breakdown of the number of times each Overview and Scrutiny Committee met:

Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Formal Meetings	Scrutiny Hearings
Corporate.	12	5
Children’s Services.	15	0
Environment & Waste Management.	9	0
Health & Social Care.	13	2
Regeneration & Economy.	9	0

Furthermore, there were a total of 57 members and 15 Co-opted members who were engaged with Overview and Scrutiny.

The Committees take a considerate and evidence based approach to the areas of work they address, which also includes listening to different officers, organisations and the public on topics that are of interest to them.

Our meetings are open to the public and we always welcome contributions from people who attend our meetings or send us their views. We are delighted that a number of you came to several of our meetings to tell us what you think.

For example on one occasion, a group of residents attended the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny. This was in relation to odours and smells emanating

from an animal rendering plant. Residents and a representative of the animal rendering plant were able to express their views with regards to the odours and smells emanating from the plant and this assisted the members of the Committee in their deliberations over this how to progress with this issue.

Examples of work undertaken in the past year

During the year, the Committees have looked at a wide range of issues which have been of interest and concern to a wide ranging audience. Set-out below are some examples of the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in Bradford.

Poverty Scrutiny Review

Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny agreed to undertake an in-depth Scrutiny Review, into the effectiveness of Bradford Council and its Partners to address poverty across the District.

The Committee has held a number of information gathering sessions related to the low income, children and families, fuel and health and housing.

The key findings of the review are currently being pulled together, with a view to a report containing recommendations for improvement being considered by the Committee in the new Municipal Year.

Call-in – Allocation of Community Centre Core Cost Grants and Community Development Grants for 2015-17

A decision of the Shipley Area Committee was called in and subsequently considered by member of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. After considerable debate, members did express their concern over the levels of deprivation in the areas of Windhill and Wrose and referred the decision back to the Shipley Area Committee; for them to reconsider in light of the comments and concerns raised.

Finances and Resources

Under the current economic climate, this has been a significant area of work for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Subsequently, the Committee has routinely maintained an overview of the Financial Position Statements of the Council, along with the resources for Crime and Community Safety.

Safer and Stronger Communities

This is a key area of work for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members have rigorously scrutinised and kept an overview of performance in this area and where appropriate have challenged performance and suggested areas for improvement.

Welfare Reforms

With the significant changes in Welfare Reforms and the impact that this has on the lives of the citizens of the Bradford District, the Committee decided to also continue its involvement in the key areas of, Discretionary Support Payment Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments and Council Tax Reduction monitoring.

Managing Attendance

Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, have continued to scrutinise and challenge the measures that are being taken to improve attendance at work.

Moreover, Members agreed to focus on the service area of Adults and Community Services, where the levels of sickness absence were particularly high. Here, members of the Committee considered and made comment on the measures that were being taken in this service area.

Members also expressed concern at the level of sickness absence in Environmental Protections and Waste Management and this is likely to be an area that the Committee focuses on in the new Municipal Year.

Petition – Laisterdyke Business College

The Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a petition (referred from Full Council) requesting an investigation into the removal of the Governing Body of Laisterdyke Business College. This issue was considered at a very well attended meeting held in the Council Chamber, where the Committee resolved that the Executive be requested to set up a working group with an independent Chair to examine all the relevant evidence.

Educational Attainment

The Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee last year continued to monitor the recommendations resulting from its detailed investigation into Educational Attainment in the district. The Committee also received a report from Professor David Woods on the effectiveness of the District’s arrangements to support School Improvement. The recommendations from both these reports will be monitored closely in the coming year.

Workloads of Children’s Social Care Services

The Committee received three reports during the year detailing the workloads of Children’s Social Care Services. Members were keen to understand the pressures on the service and also what systems were in place to address any concerns.

In the new Municipal Year, a priority for the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be to continue monitoring the work of the Children’s Social Care service. In addition to this reports on Child Sexual Exploitation will be presented to the Committee.

Schools Forum

The primary function of a Schools Forum is to recommend to the Council’s Executive Committee how the funding, which the Government provides for schools and individual pupils (known as the Dedicated Schools Grant), is managed.

The Committee built a good relationship with the Schools Forum, and received regular updates on the work of the forum throughout the year, as well as making referrals to them on various issues such as additional funding for Outdoor Education Centres.

The Odeon

The Committee received several reports during the year regarding issues key to the regeneration of the District. One of which, was the potential redevelopment of the Odeon building. In the coming municipal year, the Committee will receive regular updates on milestones in the development plan.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA)

Members received a report giving an overview of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the work of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and its delivery to date. Members were concerned about the level of involvement they would have as a local authority scrutiny committee, and as such it is intended that the Committee will receive a report on the WYCA scrutiny work programme in the new municipal year.

Sports Facilities Investment Plan

The Committee received two reports during the year regarding the Sports Facilities Investment Plan which involves the development of new swimming pools and sports facilities across the District. The Committee referred its concerns to the Executive regarding borrowing and usage projections. In view of their concerns Members will consider update reports on the plan during the new municipal year.

People Killed and seriously injured on the Districts Roads

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny undertake an in-depth investigation, into people killed and seriously injured on the Districts roads and to report the findings of that investigation back to them.

Members of the committee gathered the information, analysed the key findings of the review and developed recommendations for improvement. These recommendations have been approved by both the Corporate and Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Key areas of improvement focused around improved education and awareness, resources for Road Safety and clearer and meaningful performance reporting mechanisms.

Transportation and Rendering of Animal by-products at Omega Proteins

Residents of the Thornton area continue to experience odour-related problems emanating from the Omega Proteins plant and the committee has received further reports on this issue, without any appreciable decrease in problems caused.

Subsequently, members of the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee have continued to keep an overview and where necessary challenge the approaches being used in the Transportation and Rendering of Animal by-products at Omega Proteins.

This is a significant issue of local concern, where local residents have become increasingly frustrated at the level of noise and pollution levels, along with the traffic

movements of heavy goods vehicles. Members of the Committee are working with residents, the Council and Omega Proteins to find an amicable solution to all concerned.

Petition – Ban Bloodsports on Ilkley Moor

At its meeting in September 2014, members of the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a petition relating to banning bloodsports on Ilkley Moor.

This was another issue of local concern and members heard from Council Officers and local residents. It was recommended to the Councils Executive that shooting agreement be allowed to continue to its end of date in 2018.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Another key area of work which has been considered by the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been the developments around the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, but with particular reference to Transport links and the Strategic Transport Infrastructure Priorities for the District. Members have agreed to keep an overview of this.

Low Moor Station

The Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny committee keeps a watching brief on the long-running project to develop Low Moor Station and has received update reports on progress, which is now on target for an opening date of December 2015.

Public Health Outcomes Framework

Members of the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report from officers in Public Health regarding their Outcomes Directive, focusing specifically on areas that are within the remit of this Committee. Members have agreed to keep an overview of this important area.

Transport

The Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received a number of reports concerning transport, including the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2, Transport and Highways Performance, Bradford Cycle Strategy, Highways Asset Management and the Long Term Rail Strategy.

Renewable Energy

A report was received from the Environment and Climate Change Unit regarding renewable energy in the district. This has raised a number of further issues to be included in our work programme and members of the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee have asked for further information, including timeframes and costings, about biomass supply chains, viability of a solar PV farm, solar PV in schools and the Council's vehicle fleet.

Scrutiny Review: Domiciliary Care

Over 7 and 9 January 2015 the Committee carried out a detailed investigation into the impact of the Council's £12.50 fee for standard domiciliary care. Over the two days, the Committee heard evidence from, and asked questions of, Healthwatch Bradford and District, Age UK, UK Home Care Association, the Bradford Care Association (local care providers' organisation) and the Department of Adult and Community Services. The Committee then made seven recommendations to the Council's Executive. These included that the Council should establish the actual costs of domiciliary care in the District and that it should also, through its commissioning processes, reduce the number of 15 minute care visits and the use of zero hours employment contracts. The Committee is currently awaiting confirmation of when these recommendations will be considered by the Executive and has requested a report back in June 2015.

Regional Health Scrutiny

At a regional level, the Committee has taken part in a Yorkshire-wide scrutiny of NHS England proposals for national congenital heart disease standards and service specifications. A response to the public consultation was submitted in December 2014 with final proposals from NHS England likely to come forward after the general election. Other joint health scrutiny work, this time on a West Yorkshire basis, is currently taking place looking at sub-regional programmes on cancer, paediatrics, stroke and urgent and emergency care.

Oral health and dental services in Bradford District

This issue was considered in September 2014 at a special meeting of the Committee attended by representatives from NHS England, Public Health England, the Council's Department of Public Health and the Local Dental Committee. In addition, local Ward Councillors and the Chair of Children's Services Overviews and Scrutiny Committee also attended. Recommendations for action were made and a progress report is due to be presented in July 2015.

Other priority issues considered by the Committee this year included access to GP services, some aspects of mental health services, and cancer screening rates, all of which have been a cause for concern in the District. The Committee will continue to scrutinise these issues during 2015/16.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Survey 2014/15

Question	Very Satisfied		Fairly Satisfied		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied		Fairly Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
<i>Overall, how dissatisfied or satisfied are you with the general operation of overview and scrutiny in Bradford District?</i>	15%	20% (+5%) ↑	59%	56% (-4%) ↓	14%	12% (-2%) ↓	7%	9% (+2%) ↑	5%	3% (-2%) ↓
<i>How dissatisfied or satisfied are you with the level of public involvement in the scrutiny process?</i>	10%	11% (+1%) ↑	38%	44 (+6%) ↑	33%	32% (-1%) ↓	17%.	13% (-4%) ↓	2%.	1% (-1) ↓

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
<i>O&S effectively acts as acts as critical friend to the Council's leadership, senior officers and partners.</i>	30%	31% (+1%) ↑	56%.	51% (-5%) ↓	13%.	9% (-4%) ↓	2%	4% (+2%) ↑	0%.	6% (+6%) ↑
<i>O&S contributes to improving services in Bradford District.</i>	29%.	35% (+6%) ↑	53%	50% (-3%) ↓	8%	7% (-1%) ↓	2%	2% (-) ↔	8%	6% (-2%) ↓

Responses – survey carried out Feb/March 2015 (2014 results in brackets)

Overall response rate: 33% (42%)

Total surveyed: 269 (267)

Total number of responses: 89 (111)

Councillors (all): 21 (24)

Co-opted Members and officers (Council and external): 63 (87)

Number of O&S Committee meetings attended by respondents: 0-3 meetings = 56% (56%); 4+ meetings = 44% (44%)

Comment

By comparison with the last survey in 2014, there has been a reduction in both the number of responses received and the response rate*. The response rate from Councillors has also dropped to 23% (down from 27% last year). Once again the results are broadly positive, with only 12% of respondents expressing a degree of dissatisfaction with the overall operation of overview and scrutiny. However, although there has been a continued improvement, it is still the case that only just over half of respondents are satisfied with the level of public involvement in the scrutiny process.

*This may in part be explained by technical difficulties experienced by some people using Council computers. Strategic Support is aware of this issue but unable to resolve it at this time.

Looking ahead

It is important that we consider the Overview and Scrutiny activity carried out this year, in order to continue to improve the manner in which Overview and Scrutiny operates in Bradford.

Furthermore there are some big challenges in the upcoming year and set-out below are some of the key areas of work for Overview and Scrutiny.

Detailed Scrutiny Reviews

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee are keen to undertake a detailed Scrutiny Review into Domestic Violence.

As well as this, the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee are considering in undertaking a Scrutiny Review into Energy and Carbon Management.

Risk Management

Keeping an overview and scrutinising the Risk Management approaches within Bradford Council, will be a key areas of work for the members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Prevent Strategy for the Bradford District

Following discussion around the area of Stronger Communities, the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee have agreed to have detailed look into Bradford approach to the Prevent agenda.

Equalities

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the Councils Action Plan should be a priority area of work for each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Subsequently, each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will now keep an overview of the aspects of the Equalities Action Plan that are within their remit.

Bradford District Community Strategy 2014-20

All the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be continuing to oversee the development of the Bradford District Community Strategy 2014-20, along with the relevant Delivery Plans.

Information Technology

As well as scrutinising the revised Information Technology Strategy, members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue to oversee the transition of the Information Communication Strategy from the Strategic Partnership back to in-house provision, including details of key milestones within the process and an appraisal of costs.

Renewable Energy

Renewables Energy has been a key area of work for the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and will continue to do so in the new Municipal year.

Transport and Highways and Waste Management

Members of the Environment and Waste Management Committee, will continue to have an overview and scrutinise the performance in Transport and Highways and Waste Management.

Improving Waste Management and the Environment

This will be achieved through continuing to scrutinise environmental performance, key waste management projects and examining ways in which Bradford Council can achieve its carbon reduction targets for 2020, as part of the Districts carbon reduction targets for 2020.

Health and Social Care

Key areas of work that the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee are likely to focus on include the implementation of the Care Act, Dementia (particularly social care aspects) and the sustainability of residential care services.