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Overview and Scrutiny in Bradford



Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017-18

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Welcome from the Chairs

We have the pleasure of presenting the 2017-18 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 and Scrutiny Committees is a very important contributor to the delivery of Council Services in a challenging operational environment.

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.

Finally, we are pleased to note the positive results of the latest Overview and Scrutiny Annual Survey which continue to show high levels of satisfaction in the overall operation of the scrutiny function. The survey is carried out in March each year and full details can be found on page 5.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs 2017-2018



Cllr Dale Smith
Children's Services



Cllr Vanda Greenwood
Health and Social Care



Cllr Arshad Hussain
Corporate



Cllr Adrian Farley
Regeneration and
Economy



Cllr Martin Love
Environment and
Waste Management

Overview and Scrutiny in Bradford

Bradford Metropolitan District Council has five Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Two of the Committees also have additional “co-opted” members.

The Committees are:-

- Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Corporate 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;

And their role is to:-

- act as a “critical friend” to the Council’s leadership (the Executive) 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.

A total of 43 members and 13 Co-opted members were engaged with Overview and Scrutiny.

The Committees take a thoughtful, 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 and / or concern 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.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Survey 2017-18

Question (1 & 2)	Very Satisfied		Fairly Satisfied		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied		Fairly Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
<i>Overall, how dissatisfied or satisfied are you with the general operation of overview and scrutiny in Bradford District?</i>	19%	19% (0%) ↔	56%	50% (-6%) ↓	13%	19% (+6%) ↑	12%	8% (-4%) ↓	1%	3% (+2%) ↑
<i>How dissatisfied or satisfied are you with the level of public involvement in the scrutiny process?</i>	10%	11% (+1) ↑	41%	35% (-6%) ↓	34%	39% (+5%) ↑	13%.	14% (+1%) ↑	3%.	2% (-1%) ↓

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know	
	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018
<i>O&S effectively acts as a critical friend to the Council's leadership, senior officers and partners.</i>	25%	21% (-4%) ↓	59%.	66% (+7%) ↑	9%.	6% (-3%) ↓	1%	2% (+1%) ↑	6%.	6% ↔
<i>O&S contributes to improving services in Bradford District*</i>	21%.	19% (-2%) ↓	62%	61% (-1%) ↓	9%	7% (-2) ↓	1%	1% ↔	8%	12% (+4%) ↑

Responses – survey carried out Feb/March 2018 (2017 results in brackets)

Overall response rate: 55% (58%)

Total surveyed: 280 (256)

Total number of responses: 155 (148)

Councillors (all): 38 (43)

Co-opted Members and officers (Council and external): 118 (103)

Number of O&S Committee meetings attended by respondents: 0-3 meetings = 68% (59%); 4+ meetings = 32% (42%)

Comment

This year's survey received 155 responses, the largest number since the annual surveys began in 2012. As in previous years, the overall results are very positive: 70% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the overall operation of overview and scrutiny and well over 80% of respondents agreed that Overview and Scrutiny is an effective 'critical friend' and contributes to improving services in the District. While these results do provide reassurance that Overview and Scrutiny is operating well in the District, it is the case that fewer than half of respondents (46%) are satisfied with the level of public involvement in the scrutiny process.

N.B. due to a technical issue, it has not been possible to provide accurate comparison data from 2017 for Statements 1 and 2, so data from the 2016 survey has been used.

Examples of work undertaken in the past municipal 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 during the municipal year 2017-18.

Anti-Poverty Strategy

Following the detailed Scrutiny Review into Poverty across the Bradford district, in 2016. Members of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny have continued to play an important policy development role in the progress of an Anti-Poverty Strategy for the District.

Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring

Monitoring Finance, Performance and Risk across the Council is and remains key for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Here members will be considering budget and performance pressures and the effectiveness of steps being taken to address them. For instance, there have been detailed discussions and recommendation made relating to the areas of Waste Management and Children's Social Care.

Young Carers

Young carers attended a meeting and explained that many young carers went unrecognised by schools. As a result the Strategic Director of Children's Services is currently working with GPs to develop methods of identifying and referring young carers, so they can access the services they require.

Biodiversity Scrutiny Review

Members of the former Environment & Waste Management Committee undertook a detailed Scrutiny Review into Biodiversity across the District. Members engaged with a wide range of interested parties and developed recommendations for improvement. Members of the Regeneration & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee will at its meeting on 26 March 2019, be considering the progress made against the Scrutiny Review recommendations.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

This remains a key area of work. The former Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny and Environment and Waste Management Committees, met jointly (due to overlapping priorities), to discuss developments around the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, but with particular reference to Transport links and the Strategic Transport Infrastructure Priorities for the District, along with skills and governance arrangements. The Combined Authority will continue to be scrutinised in the new Municipal Year by the merged Regeneration and Environment scrutiny committee. Members of the Corporate

Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also in attendance, due to the Governance aspect.

Renewable Energy

Reports were 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 have asked for further information.

Arrangements for dealing with obstructions on the highway (advertising 'A' boards)

Following a referral from the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on 18 July 2017 Full Council resolved 'to ask the Council's Executive to implement a full ban on A-boards across the district'. The Executive approved the ban on 7 November 2017 with an implementation date of 1 April 2018. The Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been asked by the Executive to consider the effectiveness and financial costs of the ban 12 months after implementation.

Non Residential Contributions Policy and Adult Safeguarding

On 16 November 2017 the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on adult safeguarding and passed a recommendation that, due to safeguarding concerns associated with the introduction of Universal Credit, consideration be given to appointing a representative of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) on to the Adult Safeguarding Board. It was reported on 6 September 2018 that this recommendation had been accepted and that a DWP representative was being appointed to the Board.

'Non-residential contributions' is the amount the local authority requires people to financially contribute for the non-residential services they receive. On 25 January 2018 it was reported to the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee that its recommendation of 8 September 2016 that a phased, incremental approach to introducing the policy be considered, had been accepted and was being implemented.

City Centre Regeneration

The Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed a report on the ever changing landscape that is Bradford City Centre, following a number of key developments that will help regenerate the City centre, including the former Odeon building and "One City Park".

Call-In

"Call-in" is an important way Scrutiny Councillors can hold the Council's Executive to account. A call-in delays implementation of an Executive decision until a Scrutiny Committee has had a close look at the decision. The Scrutiny Committee may choose to ask the Executive to reconsider its decision. There were three call-ins of Executive decisions in 2017-18:

- Tuesday 25 July 2017 – Environment & Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Bradford Canal Road Corridor Cycleway Scheme.
- Wednesday 20 December 2017 – Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – The Odeon.
- Thursday 25 January 2018 – Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Strategy for Growth income from Council Tax, Business Rates and Investment.

Engaging the Public

As well as publishing our agenda and reports on the internet, we now also:

- Tweet regularly about scrutiny (@Bfd_Scrutiny);
- Promote our work through local media.

When scrutiny meetings are considering controversial subjects or matters of public interest, we often get several members of the public attending.

Complete Work Programmes for each Committee are available by contacting the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Lead.

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Looking Ahead

It is important that we consider the Overview and Scrutiny activity carried out this year, in order to continue to improve the way 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

Members of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny have been concerned at the sickness absence levels within Bradford Council and have subsequently decided to undertake a Scrutiny Review into this area.

Safer and Stronger Communities within the District will also be the subject of another detailed Scrutiny Review, by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny.

Following a recommendation from Council, the newly formed Regeneration & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be undertaking a detailed Scrutiny Review into Single Use Plastics across Bradford Council and its Partners.

Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny members have increasingly become concerned over the levels of air quality across the District and subsequently agreed to undertake a detailed Scrutiny Review into this area, pending the outcome of the feasibility study into air quality across the District

Income Streams

Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee are keen to explore income streams into the Council and how these be further improved, in light of the current financial climate.

Integrated Communities Strategy

Following work planning discussions, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny members will be involved in the development of the Integrated Communities Strategy for the District.

Universal Credit

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny members will be keeping an overview of the implementation and impacts of Universal Credit across the District.

Libraries and Museums

The future provision of Libraries and Museums in the Bradford District, is likely to be a key area of work for members on the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Education

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee plan to hold an education themed meeting, discussing issues including raising standards in the district, Post 16 provision, Pupil Referral Units and the Education Covenant.

Health and Social Care

Priorities for the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the 2018/19 Council Year include: autism, mental health (adults and young people), cancer and housing for older people and people with dementia. Bradford Council also continues to be a member of the West Yorkshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and will host a meeting of the Joint Committee in December 2018. Priorities for the Joint Committee during 2018/19 include: acute stroke services, access to dentistry and the next steps for the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership.