

Overview and Scrutiny in Bradford



Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23

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Dear Councillor

We have the pleasure of presenting the 2022-23 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 particularly appreciative of the Bradford District Councillors and Co-Opted Members, who sat on our Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the year.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs 2022-2023



Cllr Nazam Azam
Corporate



Cllr Rizwana Jamil
Health and Social Care



Cllr Debbie Davies
Children's Services



Cllr Kamran Hussain
Regeneration and
Environment

Overview and Scrutiny in Bradford

Bradford Metropolitan District Council has four Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

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

The Committees are: -

- Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Regeneration and Environment 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 7 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.

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 four detailed examples of the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in Bradford during the municipal year 2022-23.

Safer and Stronger Communities

In the 2022-23 Municipal Year, the area of Safer and Stronger Communities continued to be area of concern for members and members of the public. This was evidenced by the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee commencing the Call for Action inquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour; as this was a concern raised by local residents.

Moreover, as part of this, Corporate Overview & Scrutiny continued to scrutinise the effectiveness of the approaches being used to promote stronger communities, safer communities and also in how Hate Crime across the District is being tackled by Bradford Council and its Partners.

Children's Services Improvement Plan and Establishment Children's Trust

During the 2022-23 Municipal Year, the activity of Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee was dominated by monitoring the progress being made by the Children's Services Improvement Plan, as well as overseeing the establishment of the Children's Trust for Bradford Councils Children's Social Care.

Scrutiny of Council use of glyphosate weed control

Following two Council motions the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a report that considered the current use of herbicide glyphosate by the Council, potential alternative solutions and the implications of reducing or stopping the use of glyphosate. Following consideration of the report the Committee made the following recommendations to the Executive:

- Officers in the Parks and Cleansing Services work with the Biodiversity Officer to identify critical locations where spraying needs to avoided;
- A trial involving no use (or exceptional use) of glyphosate within 2 parks within the Shipley ward planned for 2023
- Cessation (or very limited use) use on land managed by Parks, Bereavement Services and other Council services maintaining land
- that public engagement and communication regarding the reduced use of glyphosate in some areas be undertaken;
- that Officers continue to engage with other Local Authorities that are also reducing the use of glyphosate.

Outcomes to date:

- Work immediately began to identify areas where the use of glyphosate would be reduced or eliminated prior to the next growing season;

- Joint working was established between the Parks and Cleansing Services and the Biodiversity Officer;
- Increased information sharing and learning from other Local Authorities on this issue;
- Executive support for the above and the trials due to take place in Shipley Ward in 2023, the outcomes of which are due to be reported in January 2024.

Adult Autism Assessment and Diagnostic (BANDS) Service

Following criticism of the performance of BANDS by the Committee over a number of years and complaints from patients, which included the high number of people waiting, the length of time people had to wait and low levels of activity, a review was conducted and an Action Plan was agreed by the Mental Health, Learning Disability and Neurodiversity Partnership Board to address these concerns and improve the service, to be delivered through a multi-agency Neuro Diversity Task & Finish Group.

A new service model has been developed to assess and diagnose adults with autism spectrum conditions and details were reported in depth to the Committee in March 2023. The Committee welcomed and supported the new Pathway and Service Model and will continue to closely scrutinise its very development and implementation.

Darley Street Market Project

The Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee has continued its scrutiny of the Darley Street Market Project and received a comprehensive update including details of the building design, planned market operations on each floor of the new building and the stall application process. A visit by Members of the Committee to the site in September 2022 received positive coverage in the Bradford Telegraph and Argus.



Members of the Regeneration and Environment OSC visiting the Darley Street Market Site, September 2022

Call-In

There have been no Call-Ins.

Engaging the Public

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

One example is that the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be undertaking a Call for Action Enquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour across the District. As part of the consultation for this enquiry, the Committee will be engaging with members of the public across the District through consultation events, on this important matter.

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.

However, 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

Following a member request and concerns raised by residents, Corporate Overview & Scrutiny members agreed to undertake a Call for Action enquiry regarding Anti-Social Behaviour.

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be undertaking detailed scrutiny reviews in relation to Elective Home Education, Child Poverty and Persistent Absence across schools in Bradford.

At the request of Full Council, a review of issues relating to private rented housing will be undertaken by the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Progress made against Scrutiny Review Recommendations

Members of Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee will monitor the progress made against the recommendations that the Committee made in relation to the Scrutiny Reviews of Hate Crime and the anti-social use of Fireworks across the District.

Safer and Stronger Communities

Safer and Stronger Communities across the District continues to be an area of concern for members and this will be continue to be scrutinised by Corporate Overview & Scrutiny. For instance, at the request of Council, Corporate Overview & Scrutiny will be considering the approaches being used to measure and tackle Anti-Social Behaviour across the District.

Ofsted Inspection of Looked after Children

Following the Ofsted Inspection, the Children's Services Committee will be closely monitoring the progress being made against the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

Children's Trust

As the Children's Trust was established on 1 April 2023, The Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be keeping an overview and scrutinising its work, in relation to Children's Services.

Access to Primary Care (GP services) and Dentistry

Access to GP services and dentistry remain of great concern to residents of the District. The Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the West Yorkshire Joint Health Scrutiny Committee will continue their ongoing work of raising these concerns directly with service providers as a priority over the coming year.