

## **Report to Council**

# **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/2020**

### **Report of:**

Cllr Colin McLaren, Chair of Overview & Scrutiny

Cllr Riaz Ahmad, Chair of Performance and Value for Money Select Committee

Cllr Eddie Moores, Chair of Health Scrutiny

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**Ext. 5151**

**9 September 2020**

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### **Reason for Decision**

To provide Council with an overview of the contribution made by Overview and Scrutiny during the 2019/2020 Municipal Year as required in line with the Council's Constitution.

### **Executive Summary**

The report outlines the purpose of overview and scrutiny, the roles and responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Performance and Value for Money Select Committee and the Health Scrutiny Committee, a summary of the work undertaken by overview and scrutiny during 2019/20 and an outline of how individuals can get involved in overview and scrutiny in Oldham.

### **Recommendations**

Council is asked to note the contribution of Overview and Scrutiny during the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

## 1. What is Overview and Scrutiny?

1.1 All local authorities operating an executive form of governance must by law have an Overview and Scrutiny function. The function was introduced in the first instance by the Local Government Act 2000 and has been subject to legislative change and development over the years. The current principal legislative sources for overview and scrutiny functions and responsibilities are:

- Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) – powers for the overview and scrutiny function to:
  - Review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, related to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Council's Executive.
  - Report or make recommendations to Council or the executive in respect of the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive.
  - Review or scrutinise decision made, other action taken, related to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive.
  - Report or make recommendations to Council or the executive in respect of the discharge of any function which is not the responsibility of the executive.
  - Report or make recommendations to Council or the executive on matters which affect the Council's area or residents of that area.
- Police and Justice Act 2006 – powers for the overview and scrutiny function to:
  - review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by those bodies responsible for crime and disorder strategies in the Borough of their crime and disorder functions;
  - to report or make recommendations to the Council with respect to the discharge of those crime and disorder functions.
- National Health Service Act 2006 (as amended) (and with specific reference to The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013) – the Council has powers, delegated to the Health Scrutiny Committee, to:
  - review or scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the Borough area, including health related services of the local authority;
  - respond to a statutory consultation from an NHS body or a health service provider and, if considered appropriate and necessary, to report to the Secretary of State.

1.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committees therefore have the statutory powers to scrutinise those decisions that the Council's Executive is planning to take, those decisions it has taken but not yet implemented, and to review the effect of those decisions that have already been implemented. Overview and Scrutiny can also play a valuable role in developing policy. Recommendations following scrutiny considerations can enable improvements to be made to policies and how they are implemented.

1.3 Overview and Scrutiny bodies are made up of Elected Members (Councillors) who are not members of the Executive (or 'Cabinet') but who instead hold those Executive decision makers to account. The Overview and Scrutiny process is not political – it is driven by the interests of the residents of Oldham.

1.4 Overview and Scrutiny bodies cannot make decisions, but instead examine policies, decisions and areas of work in order to make recommendations to the Cabinet. It

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acts as a “critical friend” to the Council and its partners around the decision-making process and uses informed debate and evidence to make its recommendations.

1.5 Scrutiny works to drive forward improvements to the Council’s policies, procedures and delivery.

1.6 There are three components of good scrutiny and good governance which are necessary in order for democracy at a local level to be participative - these are Accountability, Transparency and Involvement.

## 2 Policy Development

2.1 The key focus of overview and scrutiny work is to influence and develop policy. Overview and Scrutiny can do this through the following ways:

- Decision-Making Scrutiny - Holding the Executive to account is a key part of the Overview and Scrutiny role. This is done through receiving reports at Committee, Call-in and questioning of Cabinet Members at scrutiny meetings.
- Pre-Decision Input - Input on draft policies and strategies before they have been agreed by Cabinet or Council helps to ensure they are more robust and that a check and balance process is in place. It also provides an opportunity for cross party consensus to be developed on issues such as the Corporate Plan, Education Strategy and Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Overview and Scrutiny can act as a consultee in respect of such policies and potential new legislation.
- Monitor and Track Implementation of Recommendations - Ensuring that the views and contributions of Overview and Scrutiny have been considered when work is undertaken to improve services – an essential part of the scrutiny process.

2.2 Full Council may refer matters to Overview and Scrutiny for examination of the viability of implementing proposals contained in submitted Motions and the appropriate Committee will report back to the Council on their findings.

## 3 Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny Board

#### 3.1.1 Membership

- Councillor McLaren (Chair)
- Councillor Price (Vice Chair)
- Councillor Jacques
- Councillor Surjan
- Councillor Taylor
- Councillor Toor
- Councillor Harkness
- Councillor Curley
- Councillor Hulme (Substitute)
- Councillor Alyas (Substitute)
- Councillor Akhtar (Substitute)
- Councillor Cosgrove (Substitute)
- Councillor Ibrahim (Substitute)
- Councillor Hamblett (Substitute)

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3.1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Board leads the development of the Overview and Scrutiny process in Oldham. The Board chooses issues and topics to look at during the year, be it reviewing a proposed policy in advance of decision or considering the impact of a key decision made by the Council.

3.1.3 The Board is also responsible for:

- Publicly holding the Executive to account for delivering the Council's priorities and for the decisions they make.
- Examining any matters of wider public interest (not just Council services) which affect the wellbeing of the Borough and its people.
- Having a statutory role scrutinising substantial developments and Crime and Disorder issues.

3.1.4 During the last year, the Chair also continued to meet with the senior managers in each of the Council's Directorates. At these meetings, the Chair and Officers considered issues where Overview and Scrutiny could potentially add value to the development of Council services, policies and the decision-making process.

## 3.2 Performance and Value for Money Select Committee

3.2.1 Membership

- Councillor Ahmad (Chair)
- Councillor Stretton (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Haque
- Councillor Hulme
- Councillor Larkin
- Councillor Phythian
- Councillor Williamson
- Councillor Byrne
- Councillor Alyas (Substitute)
- Councillor Salamat (Substitute)
- Councillor Surjan (Substitute)
- Councillor Ibrahim (Substitute)
- Councillor Brownridge (Substitute)
- Councillor Al-Hamdani (Substitute)

3.2.2 The Performance and Value for Money Select Committee considers how the Council and its partners are performing and whether value for money is being provided for the people of Oldham. It also monitors the implementation of recommendations which Overview and Scrutiny has had accepted by the Council's Cabinet.

3.2.3 One of the most important aspects of the Select Committee's role is to examine the Council's budget proposals each year. This involves considering both the administration's budget and any alternative budget proposals put forward by the opposition. The Select Committee also monitors the revenue and capital expenditure throughout the municipal year.

3.2.4 The Select Committee also examines the Council's corporate performance report on a quarterly basis and considers the performance and value for money of the Council's work undertaken with partners.

## 3.3 Health Scrutiny Committee

3.3.1 Membership:

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- Councillor Moores (Chair)
  - Councillor McLaren (Vice Chair)
  - Councillor Alyas
  - Councillor Davis
  - Councillor Ibrahim
  - Councillor Toor
  - Councillor Hamblett
  - Councillor Byrne
  - Councillor Iqbal (Substitute)
  - Councillor Larkin (Substitute)
  - Councillor Malik (Substitute)
  - Councillor Haque (Substitute)
  - Councillor Salamat (Substitute)
  - Councillor H. Gloster (Substitute)

3.3.2 The Committee was established as a full Committee from May 2019 to discharge the responsibilities of the Council for health scrutiny functions, to receive and respond to referrals from Healthwatch Oldham, and to scrutinise the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board, including development of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

3.3.3 The Committee reviews and scrutinises matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service and makes reports and recommendations on any such matters that the Committee has reviewed and scrutinised.

#### 3.4 **Work Programmes**

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee maintains a work programme for the Municipal Year and the Committee Chairs meet to review them on a regular basis. This allows for co-ordination of the work programmes, ensuring the best use of resources and avoiding duplication. The work programmes allow for flexibility within the wider overview and scrutiny function to accommodate any urgent and/or short-term issues that may arise.

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## **Where Overview and Scrutiny has contributed in 2019/20**

### **4.1 Overview and Scrutiny Board**

#### **4.1.1 Key Plans and Strategies**

- a) Clean Air Update – The Board gave consideration to a report which advised on the key features on Greater Manchester’s (GM) feasibility study and the Clean Air Plan Outline Business Case for the reduction of nitrogen dioxide exceedances in Oldham and across Greater Manchester for submission to the Government’s Joint Clean Air Unit. Alongside the objectives of the Clean Air Plan was a co-ordinated GM approach to develop a common set of minimum licensing standards for taxis and private hire vehicles. The measures included a proposed Clean Taxi Fund. Members expressed concern as to how the fund would be supported without additional government support. Two issues were raised related to idling zones and the impact of the proposals on buses. Questions were asked related to engine idling in car ranks outside schools.

A second report was received later in the Municipal Year which provided an update on progress that had been made following the Government’s response to GM’s Outline Business Case to tackling nitrogen dioxide exceedances and statutory consultation. The Council had been developing the study collectively with the other nine GM authorities and GM Combined Authority (GMCA) coordinated by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) in line with Government direction and guidance. Members sought and received clarification on EU standards, consultation format, fines for clean air zones, breaches of air quality and the timeline.

- b) Alexandra Park Eco-Centre and Northern Roots – The Board were advised of developments in respect of the projects which had been developed out of the co-operative borough ambition and developments in community growing, horticultural skills and training, renewable energy and the local food economy through a series of linked initiatives. The new Eco-Centre facility built upon and provided a place for a wider range of activities which included education, enterprises and community engagement. Northern Roots was a proposal to develop the UK’s largest urban farm and eco-park. Members sought and received clarification that retention and improvement of sports pitches remained part of the vision. A suggestion was made for an animal petting farm or similar venture. It was also suggested by members that the establishment of mini-hubs in communities might be considered as a spin-off activity. It was proposed that Board members make a site visit. This took place on 15 June 2019.

The Board received a further update in the Municipal Year regarding technical options. Members sought and received clarification on accessibility and public transport links, the Biomass unit, rainwater harvesting from the lake, revenue and green waste capacity. Members also sought and received clarification on communications and advertising of the project and how success would be measured.

- c) Thriving Communities and Placed Based Integration – The Board were provided updates through the Municipal Year. Members were informed of key projects and updates, support in the care pathway to prevent high levels of need and a positive trend in reduction of the attendance at A&E. Members commented on the good work and results in the reduction of GP visits.

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Members were made aware of the Fast Track Grants. A further report on Place Based Integration was received by the Board and members were informed about the twin track approach to people, place and prevention. It was envisaged that services from health and social care, Children's, Housing, Policing, Districts and Environment would be in scope for place-based integration. Members recommended further discussion between members, district teams and placed based teams to share information.

- d) Oldham Work and Skills Strategy – The Board were provided with an update on the progress related to the key components of the Work and Skills Strategy. The Strategy sought to improve population skills outcomes which supported Oldham's strategic goals. The strategy was organised around four strategic goals supported by a new outcomes framework for work and skills. The strategy would complement the new regeneration framework by focussing particularly on 'social regeneration' objectives and a developed shared ownership across all partners and providers. The Board queried the increase in no-education qualification, what was being done about long-term unemployment and work in terms of apprenticeships. Members also queried the low take up on the advanced learning strategy, performance data and the Area Based Review. Members questioned employment for young people, the Working Well Early Help and investment.
- e) Business and Investment Review – The Board looked at how the Council could optimise business engagement and provided a competitive business support offer. Members commented on the work with start-ups and queried European funding and the effect of Brexit. Members also asked about work undertaken with the third sector and work with the Oldham Enterprise Trust and noted that Oldham's survival rate had increased.
- f) GM2040 Delivery Plan Update and Transport Capital Projects – The Board were provided an overview of the three-year transport capital programme approved as part of the Council's wider Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2019/20 – 2023/24. Securing additional external funding was a priority. The programme was fluid as it was dependent upon bids to be successful. Members were informed that the GM2040 Delivery Plan was being refreshed in response to changes in the transport opportunities and challenges which faced GM, such as the declaration by GMCA of a Climate Emergency, the development of the GM Spatial Framework and the GM Mayor's priorities. Funding for the strategy was outlined in the report with particular focus on capital investment. Members sought and received clarification on 'Streets for All', Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund, Future High Streets Fund, Bus Reform, New Bike Hire Scheme and charging points to meet the carbon neutral challenge.
- g) Advertising A-Boards and Sign Policy Review – The Board were provided within an update on the policy.
- h) Green New Deal Strategy – The Board received a summary of work being undertaken on the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy which included targets for the Council and Borough to be carbon neutral by 2025 and 2030 respectively. The strategy and delivery plan set out how carbon neutrality targets would be met as well as initiatives aimed at maximising the economic benefit. The Board were also provided information on energy supply and housing policies linked to the strategy. Members queried the deliverability and informed that it was important to manage expectations. Members noted the

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breadth of the pledges and for them to be incorporated into future Board Work Programmes.

The Board also received an update on the General Oldham Community Energy Programme which included the Interreg Europe COALESCCE project. Members were reminded of the establishment of Oldham Community Power. The Council had won the national Community Energy Local Authority Award in 2018. Members sought and received clarification on the effect of Brexit on the partnership, the savings, the officer for small community groups and how elected members could assist.

#### 4.1.2 Internal and External Consultations

- a) Selective Licensing – The Board gave consideration of an update on the scheme. An independent review of the scheme had been undertaken which examined the impact in the current schemes. Members reviewed the report, noted the cost of the service, requirements for consultation, route for scheme approval and case studies presented. The Board supported the continuation of the Selected Licensing Scheme.
- b) Care Leavers Housing Commitment – The Board were provided the proposals to ensure that Oldham care leavers who became homeless received the support of full rehousing duties up to the age of 25 years. The proposal had been raised following the review of the Council’s Corporate Parenting Strategy. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 had introduced a new duty on local authorities to provide Personal Adviser Support to all care leavers up to the age of 25 years. The Greater Manchester Care Leavers Trust also worked to develop a ‘core offer’ across GM. Members queried and received information on assistance for those who were unable to live on their own or lacked a support network. Members also received information related to the financial implications of the provision. The Board endorsed the proposals.

#### 4.1.3 Services Monitored

- a) Children’s Social Care ‘Getting to Good’ Implementation Plan – The Board continued to receive updates in respect of improvements to Oldham’s Children’s Services. A Structural Investment Plan and Transformation Programme to be delivered throughout 2019/20 had been developed along with a new operating model and additional investment to support the transformation journey. The Board were apprised of governance arrangements, particularly relating to Task and Finish Groups established for major projects. The Board revisited the provision of safeguarding training for elected members and it was confirmed that the nature and content would be different from previous years as a result of the new arrangements. The Board were advised of a sustainable staffing structure. The Board were advised of work with the Children in Care Council. Members asked questions related to performance related to children in need and early intervention, out of borough placements and projects associated with the improvement journey.

A further update was received which provided an update on progress against the plans, demand, caseload and workforce.

- b) Libraries Update – The Board were provided an update on the service and highlighted outreach work for non-users and disengaged readers. The service was committed to being open and accessible to all residents and users. The



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impact of the removal of fines would be monitored and early indicators showed there had been an increase in library membership. Some provision could be accessed without a card and trail-blazing activities included reaching out to the homeless, development of 'Libraries of Sanctuary' in addition to those tackling loneliness and social isolation. Members sought and received information related to buildings being fit-for-purpose, technology, plans for an 'At-Home' Service, welcoming refugees, engagement of older groups and encouragement to local writers and artists.

- c) Heritage, Libraries and Arts Offer to Schools – The Board were provided an overview of the services provided which included collaborative approaches and new initiatives which included Story Walks and Poverty Proofing Schools Project. Members asked about the challenges related to transport for the events and the funding strategy which had links to the Heritage Schools Programme and the Princes Trust.
- d) Local Government Ombudsman and Review of Complaints System – The Board were informed of the Council's performance related to enquiries received from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). Since 2014, the LGO also publicly reported on Local Authority complaints performance. During 2018/19 the Council had 80 cases reviewed by the LGO of which only 17.5% were investigated and 12.5% upheld. The low number of cases reviewed by the LGO, and ultimately investigated, suggested that the Council was willing to take responsibility when things went wrong and work with residents to resolve the issue appropriately. The Council was undertaking a root and branch review of the service. Members sought and received clarification on the nature of complaints.
- e) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – The Board gave consideration to the development and key highlights of Oldham's new SEND Strategy. Consultation and engagement sessions had been held as well as a series of stakeholder events. The ambition and outcomes of the strategy had shaped and directed the Development Plan. The Board were informed of the considered approach undertaken following the Ofsted/CQC inspection and consultation process. Members raised issues related to exclusions, links with the voluntary and community sector, home-educated students and safeguarding issues. The Board endorsed the strategy.

Performance Report – Further updates were received related to the SEND improvement journey during the municipal year. The board noted progress made against the expectations as set out in the Written Statement of Action which had contained five key priority areas and recommendations. A revised SEND action plan and strategy was due to be launched in September 2019.

- f) Oldham Care Commissioning Arrangements – An update was received on the arrangements for health and social care services as well as an overview of the future direction of travel. Work had been ongoing related to learning disability, mental health, care home and care at home commissioning, dementia, continuing health care, safeguarding policy and policy work identified in a Section 75 agreement between the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The Board queried staff in 'hubs' and were informed services were developing in a more co-ordinated manner with an absolute commitment to improvement. The Board were apprised of funding as budgets were dependent upon government announcements of grants, etc. The Board also gave consideration to staff turnover, changes in population profiles and different recording and operating systems used within the sector.

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- g) Adults Safeguarding Board Annual Report – The Board gave consideration to a report of the Independent Chair which provided information from April 2018 to March 2019. The Board was a partnership of organisations whose role was to strategically lead adult safeguarding within Oldham. The Annual Report evaluated the effectiveness in achieving aims and identified future plans. Two important issues were outlined which involved substantive reviews of the quality of deployment of staff and the continuing business demand to be met. Members sought and received clarification on work in progress and the impact of the lack of Deprivation of Liberty safeguards signatories.
  - h) Children’s Safeguarding – Members were presented with the proposed new arrangements for Oldham Children’s Safeguarding. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 required the local authority, police and local CCG to implement new arrangements by 29 September 2019. Proposed arrangements comprised a Safeguarding Children Strategic Partnership, Children’s Safeguarding Executive Group and sub-groups to undertake detailed work on implementation of the business plan. New arrangements would provide challenge, scrutiny and commitment to continuous improvement among partners and agencies.
  - i) Virtual School Annual Report and Term Update – The Board gave consideration to the scope of work undertaken by the Virtual School which had developed significantly under new leadership and reported outcomes for children who were looked after compared favourably with national averages. The themes had emerged in the Ofsted report of the inspection of the Local Authority’s Children’s Services (ILACS) which had included the Virtual School in January 2019. Members sought and received clarification on absences, exclusions, training and the priorities for 2019/20.
  - j) SEND Inspection Revisit – The Board were provided an update on the outcome of the SEND revisit. Members were provided an update on progress made on the original written statement of action. Members sought and were provided clarification on managed moves, improvements in Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans, increased exclusions at Key Stage 4, minimising disruption, speech and language therapy, support for parent and children with new languages and bringing children who were permanently excluded back into the school system.
  - k) The Board were also provided an update on the Oldham Opportunity Area Funding.

#### 4.1.4 Motions Referred to Overview and Scrutiny Board

The following motions were referred to Overview and Scrutiny for investigation:

- a) ‘Improving Public Safety in Oldham’s Night Time Economy’ – a motion was referred to the Board on 12 December 2018. An update was received on the work which had already been undertaken and the Board would seek further information during the 2019/20 Municipal Year. Members were informed that the ‘Ask for Angela’ Scheme was already in operation with localised material being developed. The Street Angels has also been established in the Town centre. Work was to be undertaken by Licensing Officers with private hire operators and the licensed trade. With regard to the potential ‘safe havens’ potential significant safeguarding issues had been identified. A suggested scheme that taxi companies carry identifiable students and bill them later via

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college or university authorities had been investigated and was considered to be beyond the powers of the local authority to implement.

- b) 'Tackling Dog Fouling and Nuisance' – a motion was referred to Board on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019. An update was provided to the Board which included opportunities provided by potential stakeholders such as behaviour change campaigns and educational material. The Board were asked and provided a representative from the Board to work with officers to explore the material and initiatives promoted by charities.
- c) 'Tackling Speeding' – a motion was referred to Board on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019 which sought to identify locations not currently equipped with a speed camera, availability of funding for mobile speed cameras, establish Community Speed Watch schemes and explore the merits of establishing bus gates. A workshop was convened on 24 September 2019 with options to be investigated by Highways and reported back.
- d) Youth Council Motion: Knife Crime – a motion was brought to the Board by the Youth Council which asked for an overview of the current youth offer across Oldham to ensure a broad range of high-quality activities available to all young people. The Youth Council were invited to attend a meeting of the Board to discuss the motion. The Board were informed of activities of the Youth Council which included the 'Make Your Mark' vote, youth offer available and mapping of activities undertaken.
- e) Making A Commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (referred jointly to Overview and Scrutiny Board and Health Scrutiny Committee) – it was requested that the relevant bodies identify work that was already being done by the Council and its partners, what more can be done and report back to Council. A report was submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Board and Health Scrutiny and it was agreed to be commended to Council.
- f) Clean Air Outside Schools – the key points of the motions were considered in the GM Approach to Air Quality to which the Council was signed up to. An update would be brought back to Board.
- g) A Sensible Approach to Firework Displays – The Overview and Scrutiny Board gave consideration to the motion as referred to the Board on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The recommendation was agreed that officers from Public Protection would work in partnership with GM Fire and Rescue Services and the Council's Community Safety Team to develop an action plan which would be reported back to Overview and Scrutiny.

#### 4.1.5 Task and Finish Groups:

- a) Community Assets – The Board Members along with other members and officers undertook a Task and Finish Group on extending the Cooperative Approach to the use of Council Assets Policy.
- b) Poverty Working Group – The Board Members agreed to look at helping to update the Council's Poverty Strategy (from 2010), taking into account the four main points suggested by the Joseph Rowntree Trust, UK Poverty Report 2019/20, information from the LGA, what the Council was doing and how the Council can work with partners in the clusters.

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## 4.2 Performance and Value For Money Select Committee

### 4.2.1 Finance Scrutiny

- a) Scrutiny of Budget Proposals – The Council's overall budget proposals for 2020/21 were considered by the Select Committee. The Administration's proposals were presented to the Committee during January 2020 and the Opposition's proposals were presented in February 2020. This included the Medium-Term Finance Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25, Housing Revenue Account Estimates for 2020/21 to 2024/25 and proposed outturn for 2019/20, Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25, Treasury Management Statement 2020/2021, Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2020/21 and the Statement of the Chief Financial Officer on Reserves, Robustness of Estimates and Affordability and Prudence of Capital Investments.

Scrutiny of the Liberal Democrat Budget Amendment Proposals 2020/21 – The Select Committee examined the saving, investment and proposals in detail. The Select Committee suggested areas to be investigated further by Cabinet and the Select Committee.

- b) Local Government Financial Resilience – The Select Committee were provided information related to the financial sustainability of Local Authorities and highlighted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's efforts to ensure attention on financial sustainability through the development of a financial resilience index. The Select Committee were informed that members and officers worked together to ensure current financial and demand pressures were managed in line with the Council's governance arrangements. The Select Committee were informed that despite significant financial challenges, Oldham Council's financial position remained strong as demonstrated within an increase in both balances and earmarked reserves. Members sought and received clarification on control of social care budgets, the situation in Northamptonshire and Brexit.
- c) Review of Financial Performance: Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme 2019/20 – The Select Committee were provided quarterly updates on the forecast revenue position and the revised capital programme. An overview of variances was provided. Members noted pressures related to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and informed that a recovery plan had been submitted to the Department for Education. On Quarter 1, members reflected on the deficit, the budget reduction in recent years and the pressure from Brexit.

The Select Committee received the Quarter 2 update which stated action would be taken for the remainder of the financial year to address variances and take mitigating actions. No significant issues were reported related to the Housing Revenue Account. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) continued to be a financial challenge. The Select Committee noted that regular budget updates were provided to respective management teams. The Select Committee also received the Month 8 revenue budget position as well as an update on the revised capital programme. The Select Committee were advised of continued action taken to address variances.

- d) Finance Performance of the MioCare Group – The Select Committee were provided with the annual updates on the financial performance of the group during the financial year 2019, an overview of business developments and an outline of the issues for the budget for 2020.

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- e) Children's Services – Financial Performance – an overview of the financial performance of Children's Social Care and measures being taken to balance the budget in 2019/20 and future years was provided. A dramatic increase in cost had been noted but this was not unique to Oldham. The overspend in 2018/19 occurred in Children in Care, Children's Safeguarding and Fieldwork & Family Support. The Children's Social Care budget had increased by £4,611k in 2019/20 to respond to spending pressures and to support the implementation of the Children's Services Operating Model and Structural Resource Plan. The largest factor in the reduction of the budget was the implementation of the Operating Model.

A further update was received which detailed the allocation and use of resources which supported spending pressures, areas of overspend, underspend and targeted management actions. Progress on the implementation of the Improvement plan and progress against key indicators were noted. Members also noted that a Financial Recovery Group had been established with an associated action plan. Members sought clarification on issues around the Regional Adoption Agency, the number of referrals and out of borough placements. Members asked that the financial position be kept under review.

- f) Street Cleansing Service: Clean Street Initiative – the Select Committee were provided information on the provision that the additional investment to the Street Cleansing Services Clean Street Initiative had made. The approach was designed around clear messaging and information followed by intervention and enforcement. A proposal had been developed and resources identified which supported the approach. Additional staff had been recruited and complemented the existing workforce which allowed a more flexible and proactive approach covering 7 days a week. An independent audit had credited Oldham with a 'Passing Grade'. The Government had requested detailed on the Council's approach as they examined examples of good practice. There had also been an increase in the number of formal legal enforcement actions.
- g) Levy Allocation Methodology Agreement (LAMA) - The Select Committee were provided an update on the LAMA which was a proposed six-year agreement between nine District Authorities that were subject to Combined Authority waste disposal arrangements. The Select Committee gave consideration to the proposed apportionment of costs, cost implications for delivering more or less and issues related to recycling. The Select Committee commended the report to Cabinet as the new agreement.

#### 4.2.2 Performance Scrutiny

- a) Quarterly Council Performance Report and Challenge – Reports were presented to the Committee in terms of how the Council was performing against its key local and statutory priorities. Members highlighted issues to be addressed in the Committee's Work Programme.
- b) Delivery of Additional School Places – The Select Committee were provided an update on the current position regarding school places and school admissions for September 2019 which included current context and position, Education Provision Strategy and Current Expansion Projects and Admissions – Parental Preference Performance. The number of children seeking places had risen. Members noted information related to where places were available and the effect of the sudden closure of Collective Spirit. Members were

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informed that a revised strategy of place planning would be put into place including prediction and modelling for places needed for SEND pupils and other in need of alternative provision. There was considerable activity to enhance provision of places at good and outstanding schools. Members were informed of figures related to school preference and the plans to improve parental choice. Members sought and received clarification on the number of pupils not being offered a place at their first preference secondary school, admissions criteria of faith schools, market and the continued expansion in the primary sector.

- c) Waste Management Position Statement Including Recycling – The Select Committee gave consideration to a position statement. There were three basic indicators, all of which were linked to be used to judge Waste Management Service (WMS) performance which were: Operational Performance, Disposal Performance and Environmental Performance. WMS had made significant operational efficiency savings by changing to a 2-weekly and then a 3-weekly collection system. Changes to the collection systems had also produced significant cost saving in the disposal budget as residents managed waste more efficiently and had the household recycling rate had improved from 28.88% to 44.65% over four years to 2018/19. Efficiency savings had been made with collection rounds at full capacity and the fleet included the cleanest and most full efficient vehicles available. Continued improvement in the trade waste service was considered vital as budget remained under continued pressure.
- d) Medium Term Property Strategy – The Select Committee were provided with an update in respect of the Council’s Medium-Term Property Strategy (MTPS) which outlined the plans, actions and approach that was being undertaken to meet the objectives as set out in the strategy. The corporate estate was classed into six categories: Service Delivery – Direct; Service Delivery-Indirect; Regeneration; Co-operative Property; Surplus / Vacant; and Income Generation. The Select Committee was advised of further work on efficiency targets linked to alignment of Council and CCG structures.
- e) Improving Attendance and Health and Wellbeing – an update was provided on the position related to improving attendance activity for the financial year 2018/19, sickness absence per directorate, levels of compliance and top reasons for absence. The outturn had shown an average of 9.611 working days lost per employee, the target was 6 working days. The compared with other GM local authorities of 10.35 days and the Nationwide local authority average of 9.8 days. The principal reasons for time lost were mental health (including stress) and musculo-skeletal. The Committee was advised of support available and staff were advised to seek support through work and participate in preventative activities. Members were advised of managerial compliance with return to work interviews. Members queried the use of disciplinary action and were advised that action would be taken if sickness was proven not to be genuine or if clear patterns emerged. The Fit for Oldham Programme delivered a variety of activity across several locations and responded to how health and wellbeing could be enhanced. This included ‘Supporting Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace’ and the offer of regular Health checks for employees. A suggestion was made related to the promotion of breast checks to support the early identification of breast cancer. Members noted that the Council performance well against other authorities but requested future reports contained previous years statistics for comparison.

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- f) Position Statement on Education Standards 2019 – The Select Committee gave consideration to the statement on education standards in Oldham in 2019 as indicated by outcomes across key stages and in Ofsted inspections. Members commented on sustainability of performance and improvements, support for higher ability students, ‘A’ level performance and vocational qualifications.
  - g) Housing Strategy – The Select Committee reviewed the 2019 Delivery Plan that had been developed in order to meet the objectives of the strategy. There were four themes within the Housing Strategy and a delivery plan broke these down into a series of actions as well as short, medium and long-term goals. Initiatives outlined in the strategy were highlighted. The very ambitious programme was noted to address the identified problems in the housing market and the capacity of the service was recognised.
  - h) Regeneration - the Select Committee were provided an update on the progress of a number of projects.

### 4.3 Health Scrutiny Committee

4.3.1 The Health Scrutiny Committee has met four times since June 2019 with an additional two development sessions and workshops, receiving a number of reports from across the Health and Care Sector in Oldham.

4.3.2 The focus of the Committee was on the impact of plans for the devolution of health and social care responsibilities to GM. Additionally, the implementation of the Healthier Together reforms of the provision of acute services across GM which will impact on the service offer available at the Royal Oldham Hospital and across North-East of Greater Manchester, for Oldham residents.

4.3.3 The Committee addressed the following areas:

- a) Urgent Primary Care – The Committee were provided with an update on the implementation of the new model of Urgent Primary Care in Oldham. The proposed model included the establishment of an A&E primary care stream and sharing of medical records between health and social care professionals. Patient safety was important when services were changed and would not be implemented unless the change provided a better experience for patients.

The Select Committee were also provided an update on work which had commenced to develop a Primary Care Strategy which would identify priorities to address the known challenges in primary care. A new model was required to provide assurance on the sustainability of the primary care offer. Oldham CCG aimed to enable general practice to play a stronger role at the heart of more integrated out of hospital services.

- b) New Safeguarding Arrangements – The Committee were provided with an overview of the new arrangements for Oldham’s Children Safeguarding and an update on the safeguarding training. The arrangements were revised under the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Training sessions were developed and planned for September 2019.
- c) Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing – The Committee were provided with an overview of the current offer with the annual refresh of the CAMHS Local Transformational Plan which focused on changes and impacts that additional investment had brought about and developed in

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accordance with local needs and priorities. The Oldham Whole School Approach had proved to be successful with schools engaged and producing better partnership working. Members queried any focus on for young parents and under-5's and informed that this was ongoing.

- d) Integrating Community Health and Adult Social Care Services – the Committee were provided an update on service integration. The emphasis on Phase 2 was focused on design and implementation of an integrated community service. Other key areas of development were highlighted including community enablement, embedding integration, Adults Targeted Model, streamlining governance and decision-making and operational reform of services. The budget availability was also acknowledged and that service redesign was about managing resources effectively and identifying different ways of working.
- e) Thriving Communities – The Committee received an update on the programme and, in particular, around the initial phase of the Social Prescribing Innovation Partnership. The Oldham Model was outlined whereby the Council and its partners were committed to a cooperative future and the Oldham Plan which set out the Oldham Model for delivering tangible and sustained change. The Social Prescribing Network was highlighted which bridged the gap between medical care and the community. Members were provided information related to the Innovation Partnership, Fast Grants and the Social Action Fund. Members sought and received clarification on the primary care referral route, the role of the voluntary sector and health and wellbeing outcomes.
- f) Choice and Equity Policy – The Committee received outline consultation that would gather views of patients. The NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) referred to packages of continuing care arranged and funded solely by the NHS. The report set out how the CCG would implement CHC in accordance with the National Framework. The Committee were informed how the policy would be implemented. Members sought and received information as to how resources would be used, how current patients would be affected, budget implications and adequacy of providers.
- g) North West Ambulance Service – information was provided related to the current performance, position and initiatives of the service. Performance information related to level of activity, hospital conveyances, treatment and new initiatives and projects. Members sought information related to the use of private ambulances and performance indicators around reducing turnaround time.
- h) NHS Health Checks Programme – The Committee received a report which provided an update on the programme that was a national health risk assessment programme looking to help prevent vascular disease, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease. On completion of an assessment, feedback and advice on achieving and maintaining healthy behaviours was given. The Committee were provided performance information and outcomes. A key focus going forward would be in improving the outcomes of the programme. Members sought clarification on data presented, responding to referrals, hidden health conditions, the number of pharmacies included in the programme, and follow up assessments.
- i) Mayor's Healthy Living Campaign – the Committee received updates on the campaign and what activities had been undertaken throughout the year.

#### 4.3.4 Motions referred to Health Scrutiny Committee



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Motions which had been referred to Health Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Making a Commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goal's – also referred to O&S Board – this was the same as that provided to Overview and Scrutiny Board; and
- b) Ban on Fast Food and Energy Drinks Advertising.

## **5. Overview and Scrutiny and Procedural Arrangements**

5.1 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, or the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs more generally, have certain procedural responsibilities within the Council's Constitution. These are:

- General Exception – where 28 days' notice of the intention to take a Key Decision is not or cannot be given, 'General Exception' procedures apply. These include a requirement to obtain agreement in writing from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (or nominee) that the matter about which the decision is to be made is urgent and cannot be deferred;
- Special Urgency – where General Exception procedures cannot apply and a decision is needed urgently, 'Special Urgency' procedures apply. These include a requirement to obtain agreement from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (or nominee) that the matter about which the decision is to be made is urgent and cannot be deferred;
- Decisions contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework - should such a decision be required urgently, and it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the full Council, the decision may be taken if the Chair of a relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees that the decision is a matter of urgency.
- Executive business in private – where 28 days' notice of the intention to take an executive decision at a meeting in private is not or cannot be given, the matter can be considered in private should the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board agree that the matter is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.

5.2 In 2019/20 there were seven instances of General Exception, ten instances of Special Urgency, no instances requiring agreement to the consideration of matters outside the Budget and Policy Framework, and two instances of agreement to the consideration of business in private.

## **6. Council Support for Overview and Scrutiny**

6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny structure is supported by all Officers of the Council. The Overview and Scrutiny function should expect all Council Officers to provide the same level of support as those Officers provide to the executive, regulatory and other functions within the Council's decision-making arrangements.

6.2 The Overview and Scrutiny function received the following specific support during 2019/20:

- Statutory Scrutiny Officer – the Council is required by the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) to designate a statutory Scrutiny Officer with the functions of:
  - (a) promoting the role of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees,
  - (b) providing support to the Council's overview and scrutiny committees and the members of those committees,
  - (c) providing support and guidance to all Members and Officers of the Council in relation to the functions of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees.

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The Statutory Scrutiny Officer from March 2019 was Dami Awobajo, Head of Business Intelligence, who left this post in November 2019. A replacement designated Scrutiny Officer had not been identified within the 2019/2020 Municipal Year.

- Committee Lead Officers – the Council had identified ‘Lead Officers’ for each Committee in 2019/20 as follows:
  - (a) Overview and Scrutiny Board - the Lead Officer was Dami Awobajo, Head of Business Intelligence who left this post in November 2019. The lead role was thereafter assumed by Constitutional Services.
  - (b) Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee – the Lead Officer for 2019/20 was Mark Stenson, Head of Corporate Governance.
  - (c) Health Scrutiny Committee – the Lead Officer was Andrea Entwistle, Principal Policy Officer who left this post in September 2019. The lead role was thereafter allocated to Constitutional Services on an interim basis.
- Constitutional Services undertake general governance activities in support of the overview and scrutiny function. Beyond ensuring that the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committee meetings are convened and held in accordance with relevant legislative and procedural requirements, Constitutional Services undertake further activities including maintenance of the Committee Work Programmes, ensuring and chasing up actions, and co-ordinating scrutiny activities held outside of the formal Committee meetings.

6.3 The scrutiny function also benefits from the active support given by the Council’s partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors who prepare reports for consideration and attend Committee meetings to assist Committee members in their scrutiny considerations.

## **7. A New Structure for Overview and Scrutiny**

7.1 As part of the Council’s Constitution refresh exercise undertaken during the 2019/2020 Municipal Year, the Chairs were involved in discussions around options for the future of the Council’s overview and scrutiny function, including a possible new Committee structure. A proposed structure which would see the following Committees established was submitted to the Council in March 2020:

- Policy Overview Committee – to consider policy, annual budget setting, big corporate issues and programmes and high-level partnership issues;
- Performance and Value for Money Overview and Scrutiny Committee - to consider implementation and to review both budget and operational performance of Council and partners’ services; and
- Health Scrutiny Committee – to undertake the statutory health scrutiny role, to scrutinise integrated health and social care arrangements and to have oversight of the work of the health and Wellbeing Board,

7.2 Following cancellation of the March 2020 Council meeting, the Chairs await confirmation of a new date for the consideration by Council of the proposed arrangements, though acknowledge that the timing of implementation will need to be set against other corporate priorities at this time.

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7.3 These other priorities include the COVID-19 pandemic and the vital responses being made by the Council and its partners. The Chairs consider that overview and scrutiny has an important role to play in this process and can provide an invaluable contribution that scrutiny can bring to this process.

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## 8. **Ways to get involved with O&S?**

8.1 Overview and Scrutiny Board, Performance and Value for Money Select Committee and Health Scrutiny have rolling work programmes. These can be found as part of the meeting's agendas.

8.2 If you are interested in attending a meeting of any of the Scrutiny Committees, meeting dates can be found on the website at: <https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=366>

8.3 Contact and speak to your local Councillor about issues you feel have an impact on your local community in Oldham. Overview and Scrutiny will consider issues raised by Councillors.

8.4 You can contact Constitutional Services on 0161 770 5151 or email to [constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk) to ask Overview and Scrutiny to consider an issue which has an impact on Oldham and local people. This could be a problem, Council service or an issue which you think the Council should take in lead in improving.

## 9. **Legal Services Comments**

9.1 n/a

## 10. **Co-operative Agenda**

10.1 The Annual report contains examples of work aligned to the Council's co-operative approach in relation to issues that have an impact of local communities.

## 11. **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

11.1 None

## 12. **Equality, Community Cohesion and Crime Implications**

12.1 None

## 13. **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**

13.1 No

## 14. **Key Decision**

14.1 No

## 15. **Key Decision Reference**

15.1 N/A

## 16. **Background Papers**

16.1 None

## 17. **Appendices**

17.1 None