



Oldham
Council

Report to Council

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

Report of:

Cllr Colin McLaren, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board,
2020/21

Cllr Riaz Ahmad, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance
and Value for Money Select Committee, 2020/21

Cllr Shoab Akhtar, Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee,
2020/21

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Reason for Decision

To provide Council with the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report for the 2020/21 Municipal Year as require by the Council's Constitution at Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 4.1.

Executive Summary

The report outlines the statutory role of overview and scrutiny; the roles and responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee and the Health Scrutiny Committee in 2020/21; and a summary of the considerations and work undertaken by the three bodies during 2020/21.

Recommendations

Council is asked to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2020/21.

Council is asked to support the thanks of the Chairs expressed to Cabinet Members, Council Officers and representatives from partner organisations for their support and contributions in the delivery of as full a scrutiny function as was achievable during the difficult times in 2020/21.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

1. What is Overview and Scrutiny?

- 1.1 All local authorities with an executive model of governance established under the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) are required to have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 required local authorities to establish or designate a 'crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committee', while health scrutiny functions were introduced in 2002 and most recently defined by the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.
- 1.2 Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution, reflecting both the statutory requirements for, and the Council's approach to, overview and scrutiny describes the general role and function of overview and scrutiny as being to -
- a) play a positive role in assisting the Council and the Executive in the development of the policy framework and the budget by in depth analysis of issues arising;
 - b) conduct research and consultation in the analysis of policy options;
 - c) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options and in the scrutiny process in general;
 - d) question members of the Executive and appropriate Committees and senior Officers about issues and proposals affecting Oldham;
 - e) monitor the performance of partners and of internal and external service providers against standards and objectives, liaising with external and partnership organisations to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;
 - f) evaluate the validity of executive decisions through the call in process;
 - g) contribute to the identification and mitigation of risk;
 - h) examine and review the performance of Committees of the Council over time;
 - i) play a positive role in examining and reviewing the performance of the Executive in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas, investigating and addressing the causes of poor performance;
 - j) question members of the Executive and of Committees and senior Officers about their decisions and performance, in comparison with service plans and targets, or particular initiatives or projects;
 - k) make recommendations to the Council, the Executive or an appropriate Committee arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process; and
 - l) demonstrate an objective and evidence based approach to scrutiny.
- 1.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committees are established and appointed to by the full Council and are made up of elected Members who are not members of the Executive (that is, the Cabinet). While the Committees are required to be politically balanced by law, guidance dictates that the overview and scrutiny function should be approached in a non-political manner.
- 1.4 To deliver the expectations of the Council as to the specified roles and responsibilities, the Overview and Scrutiny bodies operate within a framework defined by the Council's Procedure Rules as set out at Part 4 of the Council's Constitution. The principal sections of Part 4 as they apply to the Overview and Scrutiny function are –

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- 1.4.1 Part 4B: Access to Information Procedure Rules – sets out the procedural arrangements for the granting of exclusion from call-in and the consideration of executive business at less than 28 days notice, the occasions when Overview and Scrutiny can require reports, and the right of access to information by Overview and Scrutiny bodies;
 - 1.4.2 Part 4C: Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules – sets out the procedures to be followed in the consideration of Budget and Policy Framework related business and its passage through the executive and Overview and Scrutiny prior to submission to Council, and for the consideration of business identified as being outside of the Budget and Policy Framework;
 - 1.4.3 Part 4D: Executive Procedure Rules – sets out procedures to ensure consideration of reports submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny bodies to the Executive; and
 - 1.4.4 Part 4E: Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules - sets out the requirements for work programming and annual reports, the ability to establish Task and Finish Groups and other arrangements for consideration of business, for the preparation and submission of reports by overview and scrutiny bodies, the attendance of others at meetings, the ‘call-in’ process, declarations of interest and the ‘party whip’, and procedural arrangements within the Overview and Scrutiny function itself.

2. Overview and Scrutiny in 2020/21

- 2.1 The overview and scrutiny function in Oldham during 2020/21 was delivered by three Committees –
 - the Overview and Scrutiny Board;
 - the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee; and
 - the Health Scrutiny Committee,
- 2.2 The work and contributions of each Committee to the business of the Council is considered in turn below.
- 2.3 The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on Overview and Scrutiny Committee business in the form of revised work programmes, rescheduled business and the convening of a number of joint meetings in the earlier stages of the pandemic. Notwithstanding, the efforts of Cabinet Members, Officers and representatives from partner organisations who all contributed to as full a scrutiny function as was achievable in these difficult times were very welcome, and we express our thanks to all for these contributions in such trying times.

3 Overview and Scrutiny Board 2020/21

3.1 Membership

Councillor McLaren (Chair), Councillor Price (Vice Chair), Councillors Curley, Jacques, Surjan, Taylor, Toor and Williamson.

Substitute Members - Councillors Alyas, Akhtar, Cosgrove, Garry, Hamblett and Ibrahim.

- 3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Board was the lead body for the Overview and Scrutiny function. The Board undertook the statutory consultation on Policy Framework items prior to the Cabinet referring final recommendations to the Council and scrutinised

other policies and major issues, or ‘key decisions’, that it wished to consider. The Board was also the designated Committee for the statutory ‘crime and disorder’ function.

3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Board considered the following Key Policies and Strategies -

- a) Placed Based Integration – The Board was provided with updates and workshops opportunities which also included a focus the contribution of placed based integration to the Covid-19 response which was mobilised with joint leads from the Council and Actions Together to deliver the Council’s statutory duties. The work undertaken by Officers and partners was acknowledged as representing a true Team Oldham approach and that these experiences would provide key learning for the place-based integration approach. Recognising the importance of the voluntary sector as an integral part of the system, including in the Covid response, the Board highlighted issues of support and training for the sector and of the need for advice and assistance required to support funding bids.
- b) Unreasonable Behaviour Policy – The Board were provided with details of a proposed Unreasonable Behaviour Policy, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman having recommend local authorities to adopt a Policy to support employees and members in the management of unreasonable behaviour from customers. A revised Corporate Complaints Policy was also considered. Members sought clarification on vexatious behaviours and dealing with complex issues.
- c) Oldham Work and Skills Strategy – The Board received an update on the key components of the Work and Skills Strategy which sought to improve population skills outcomes to support Oldham’s strategic goals. Members sought and received clarification on apprenticeship low pass rates; acceleration of priority aims; the impacts of Covid and Brexit; education and training in the recovery period; and the impact of ending in-work training fund in the recovery plan.
- d) Youth Justice Plan – The Board considered the Plan for 2020/21 which had been created in line with that of the Youth Justice Board and scrutinised detail on the delivery of the service, including performance and the strategic priorities. further information was sought and received relating to school exclusions, poverty and placements for those young people known to the service as well as young people with special and other needs, the performance of Oldham compared to the rest of Greater Manchester, employment and education for service users and restorative justice.
- e) Green New Deal Strategy – The Board were provided with an update on the Strategy adopted earlier in 2020 and further updated on the Oldham Community Network and Generation Oldham. Members asked questions related to youth involvement and funding streams.
- f) Statement of Community Involvement – The Board were consulted on the update to the Statement of Community Involvement which identifies the community involvement in the preparation and revision of the Local Plan and in the consideration of planning applications. The Board raised issues which included clarification on minor decision making, contact numbers and access to guidance during the pandemic, clarification on the Equality Impact Assessment, support for residents in the new ways of working and the transition from paper to

online. The Board also raised concerns related to accessibility, access to advice and capacity which were clarified.

- g) Local Development Scheme – The Board gave consideration to the Local Development Scheme, which set out details and timetables about the planning documents the Council would prepare for the Local Plan and the Greater Manchester Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment (the GMSF). The Board sought and received clarification that efforts had been made to track development of the Local Plan to the GMSF and that there was a requirement to adopt an updated Local Plan by the end of 2023. The Board queried the undertaking of the consultation during the pandemic and was advised of work was being undertaken with the Communications Team
- h) Covid-19 Recovery Plan – The Board received an update on the the development plan for Oldham’s Covid-19 Recovery Strategy which, it had been proposed, would be developed based on the vision for Oldham outlined in the Oldham Model, with a specific focus on Oldham’s recovery from the pandemic. Members queried and received response with regard to the impact of Covid on school readiness, the closure of libraries and alternate provision, the use of green spaces during the pandemic, and the joint working arrangements of teams withing the Council, noting that Officers were working much more with much less. The Board sought further input into the Recovery Plan and asked for the Plan to be submitted to the scrutiny prior to final approval.
- i) Homelessness Strategy – the Board received an update on the development of the Homelessness Strategy which had been impacted by need to refocus on Covid-related issues including implementing the Government’s rough sleeping directives, moving services online and ensuring temporary accommodation facilities complied with social distancing measures. The Board asked for a further update to be provided in due course.
- j) Review of the Licensing Policy – The Board received the proposed Statement of Licensing Policy that was subject to review. The Board asked the Licensing Manager to give further consideration to content relating to the provision of or signposting to training, particularly around child sexual and/or criminal exploitation issues, any requirement that could be made for the display of certification or confirmation of training provided, and the inclusion of content related to the government’s proposed ‘Protect’ duty.

3.4 Internal and External Consultations

- a) Community Safety and Cohesion Partnership – The Board was provided with an update on the activity to refresh the Community Safety and Cohesion Partnership Plan, such work not being progressed within planned timescales due to Covic-19. The Board sought and received clarification on the correlation between poverty and inequalities and serious crime; the enhancement of the ability to support by working in partnership; social isolation and keeping safe online; voluntary and community sector training and resources; and consultation on the draft plan.
- b) Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) – The Board gave consideration to the GMSF which, at that time, was due to be considered for approval by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for publication and submission to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Members sought and received clarification around how the Plan would be affected by Covid-19; if there was flexibility, particularly around housing and

business accommodation; flexibility across all strands beyond 2023; tackling inequalities; distillation of information to Ward-level; how the policies integrated with each other; and the development of a scrutiny framework. The Board commended the report to Cabinet.

- c) Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, Our Five Year Delivery Plan and Oldham Local Implementation Plan – The Board gave consideration to new and updated transport strategy documents prepared by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) working with the GMCA, the ten Greater Manchester Councils and the Greater Manchester Mayor. The Board sought and received clarification on the flexibilities as priorities developed; the effect of Covid-19 on funding; the rationalisation of bus services across Greater Manchester; balancing different needs in regenerating the town centre; strategies to reduce short journeys such as school journeys; the availability of a Ward-level version of the Plans; and Greenfield Rail Station.
- d) Northern Care Alliance (NCA) NHS Trust – employment support and local recruitment – The Board received details of the ambitions of the NCA to develop local employment and training opportunities, including work undertaken with Oldham College. Members queried and received responses in respect of timelines and publicity and asked for a further update to be provided.
- e) Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan (GM CAP) – The Board considered the development to date of the GM CAP which sought to tackle NO₂ levels which exceeded the statutory minimum. As a linked issue, the developing Minimum Licensing Standards (MLS) for taxi and private hire services was noted. Members had concerns and sought clarification regarding local consultation responses from the taxi trade, implications for owner drivers of delivery vehicles, rising traffic levels as a result of people being less likely to use public transport and being discouraged from car sharing as a result of Covid, and funding assistance for taxi drivers needing to change their vehicles. The Board sought further consideration of issues prior to final decisions being taken on the Plan.

3.5 Services Monitored

- a) Opportunity Area Funding – The Board were provided with an update on the performance of the funding against its publicly stated targets and planned activity for 2020/21. Members queried school readiness and the sustainability of the programme.
- b) Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board: 2019/20 Annual Report – The Board gave consideration to the annual report of the Board which comprised the local authority, Oldham CCG and Greater Manchester Police as the three statutory partners, together with a number of other organisations who work to provide assurance and to protect and enable adults to live safely. Board Members queried the number of Learning Reviews, being informed that recommendations and action plans were developed from each review, with progress monitored and reported back; the role of the police during Covid-19 and the domestic violence element of safeguarding and were advised on the number of referrals; and the ethnicity breakdown and work undertaken with partners and faith groups. The Board, having expressed concern at the number of referrals from care homes and being advised that not all were safeguarding issues, asked that this be clarified in future reports.
- c) Impact of Covid-19 on Unemployment, including Young People and Care Leavers – The Board received an update on the impact of Covid 19 including the

latest data regarding economic inactivity and proposed programmes to address that. The Board sought and received clarification on support in finding jobs for care leavers, increase in the modelling figure, support for people becoming self-employed and the success of grant applications.

- d) Northern Roots – The Board received an update on the project and in progress in meeting set objectives, the Board calling for a further report on achievement of charitable status.
- e) Salary Sacrifice Cycle to Work Scheme – An issue considered arising from the Tax Relief for Public Transport item, the Board seeking further detail on future intentions. The Board noted information provided on schemes including ‘Give As You Earn’ and Salary Sacrifice Share Cost, and sought and received information on the implementation of the new payroll system.
- f) Youth Offer – The Board were provided with an update on the District Youth Work Offer which included an update on knife crime, youth work sessions and the Make Your Mark Consultation. The Board were informed of the impact of Covid-19 on the service and how young people were being supported. Members asked about priorities, mental health, anti-social behaviour, demand on youth workers, interlinking with external partners, tackling drug and alcohol issues, and volunteering by young people.
- g) Thriving Communities Update – the Board received an update on the Thriving Communities Programme funded from the Greater Manchester Transformation Fund and which sought to accelerate the Thriving Communities element of the Oldham Model and to deliver common objectives of health and social care integration. Members sought further detail regarding the ‘Wellbeing Leisure’ Social Action Fund project, being advised of the positive impacts accruing; and the monitoring of success related to the Social Prescribing Network. The non-recurrent nature of the Fund and the evaluation to be undertaken to determine future funding arrangements was noted.

3.6 Council Motions Considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board

A number of Motions were referred from Council to Overview and Scrutiny for investigation. The following were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

- a) Making a Commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goal’s – The Board (and the Health Scrutiny Committee) received and commended to the Council a report that considered the Council’s actions in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- b) Tax Relief for Public Transport Travel - The Motion requested the Government to introduce a tax relief scheme on seasonal travel tickets and asked that the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Mayor of Greater Manchester. The Board received a report and noted several Government-led initiatives to enable employers and employees through salary sacrifice schemes. The Board supported the Motion and that the letters be written as outlined in the resolution. The Board also requested and received information related to the Bike to Work Scheme at a later meeting.
- c) Youth Council Motion: Employment Opportunities - The Motion requested the Council to commit to providing quality job opportunities for young people and develop the digital sector within the town. A workshop was agreed to be convened.

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- d) Let's All Do Our Bit to Tackle Litter – The Motion included a proposal for the Council to become a member of the Keep Britain Tidy Network and the Board gave consideration to information provided by Environmental Services in response to the motion. The Board commended the information received to Council.

3.7 Task and Finish Groups

- a) The Board had agreed a Task and Finish Group to address Poverty to ascertain the nature and extent of strategies and services designed to address poverty as well as inequality and disadvantage. A new Poverty Strategy was intended to take account of four main points suggested by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation which included as many people as possible to be in good jobs; improve earnings for low income working families; strengthen the benefits system and increase the amount of low cost housing available to families. A report prepared and considered by the Board recommending various actions to take forward this issue was referred to the Cabinet.

4. Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee

4.1 Membership

Councillor Ahmad (Chair), Councillor Phythian (Vice-Chair), Councillors Byrne, Haque, Harkness, Salamat, Shuttleworth and Stretton

Substitute members - Councillors Al-Hamdani, Alyas, Cosgrove, Ibrahim and Surjan.

- 4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee considered how the Council and its partners performed in the delivery of services and compliance with agreed budgets, and whether value for money was being provided for the people of Oldham. The Select Committee also undertook the statutory consultation on annual Budget items prior to the Cabinet referring final recommendations to the Council and further considered the performance and value for money of work undertaken with certain Council partners.

4.3 Finance and Budgetary Scrutiny

- a) Scrutiny of Budget Proposals – The Council's overall budget proposals for 2021/22 were considered by the Select Committee. The Administration's proposals were presented to the Committee during January 2021 and reports considered included the Medium-Term Finance Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26, the Housing Revenue Account Estimates for 2021/22 to 2025/26 and proposed outturn for 2021/22, the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26, the Treasury Management Statement 2021/22, the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/22 and the Statement of the Chief Financial Officer on Reserves, Robustness of Estimates and Affordability and Prudence of Capital Investments. The Select Committee also examined in detail the savings and investment proposals contained in the Liberal Democrat Budget Amendment Proposals 2021/22.
- b) Review of Financial Performance: Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 – The Select Committee was provided with regular updates on the deployment of additional revenue and capital grants received in 2020/21 and advised of the financial challenge to the Council arising from the Covid-19

pandemic. The Select Committee were also provided updates on the 2020/21 forecast revenue position and of the capital programme.

The Select Committee noted overspends through the year and the ability to recover these overspends was queried and monitored. The Committee was advised and noted that a number of services were demand led, for example in relation to social care provided by the Children's and Adults' services, and that corporate actions were being taken to alleviate such issues with the Finance Team working to help services manage their budgets.

How the Council was dealing with the financial challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic was considered through the year, Members being variously informed and updated on ringfenced, un-ringfenced, mainstream and Covid-19 specific grant funding, how these were built into the current years budgets, and what the implications for future years might be.

- c) Financial Outturn for 2019/20 – The Select Committee received detail on the Council's financial outturn position for 2019/20 as included in the Statement of Accounts. The Committee considered the budgetary implications of Covid-19 should the Government not provide additional resources.
- d) Creating a Better Place Programme - The Select Committee was asked to contribute to a review of the programme principles and whether these were able to respond to the post-Covid-19 recovery plans, whether the use of public capital funds was justified, and whether the original savings proposals were at risk or could be accelerated or enhanced to reduce the demands and pressures. The Select Committee noted the timescales and opportunities and noted the review.

In a further consideration, the Select Committee received additional information related to the Programme and financial implications, including the town centre vision and new priorities following feedback from local community members and town centre businesses. The Select Committee was informed that, following a review, it had been determined that the Council could still deliver the ambition whilst also providing savings to support post-Covid financial stability with a reduction on the capital programme and a reduction in the amount of prudential borrowing. Members sought and received clarification on progress related to new health centres.

4.4 Performance Scrutiny

- a) Quarterly Council Performance Report and Challenge – Reports were presented to the Select Committee in terms of how the Council was performing against its key local and statutory priorities. Consideration of the reports allowed Members to seek additional information and to highlight those issues which would be addressed in further detail as part of the Committee's Work Programme.

The Committee noted that performance had been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic which had resulted in a number of measures showing declining performance, for example those services which relied on face-to-face interaction had been greatly impacted during lockdowns. A number of measures had also been suspended, for example where these relied on external bodies who had suspended their work for a time. Members queried and sought re-assurance on these instances, querying the status of suspended measures and the development of recovery plans for all areas, and being assured that all performance issues were being monitored by the relevant Cabinet Members and Officers.

The following sections highlight those issues where the Select Committee received detailed performance reports on various matters.

- b) Delivery of Additional School Places and Admissions – The Select Committee was provided with an update on the delivery additional school places and the work of the Admissions Teams. The Committee sought and received clarification on ward preferences, commented favourably on out of borough places which had reduced, and noted reports about the quality of teaching and learning in Oldham, the process of applying for a school place, the appeals process and how late applications were addressed.
- c) Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Inspection Revisit – The Select Committee were provided with updates as to progress on remaining recommendations from the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) that had formed the priorities identified in the Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) monitored by the Department for Education. Despite the challenges of Covid-19, actions related to the preparation of education, health and care (EHC) Plans had proceeded through creative approaches. Considering an example of the work undertaken the Select noted the improvement to EHC plans and the engagement of parents and congratulated the Team for their work.
- d) Unity Partnership Limited Annual Report 2019/20 – The Select Committee gave consideration to service delivery, financial reporting and performance. The Select Committee sought and received an update on the implementation of the new payroll system, sickness due to mental health and stress and the purchase of Unity. The Select Committee noted performance issues related to the collection rates which required collaborative work to put improvements in place.
- e) Employee Attendance, Workforce Covid Response and Fit for Oldham Programme – The Select Committee were provided information related to sickness absence performance, staff turnover and workforce welfare considerations which had been developed in response to Covid-19 and the increased pressures on mental and physical health. The Committee was also advised on risk assessments and future plans including use of buildings and new ways of working. The Select Committee sought and received further information on support for staff, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and home risk assessments.
- f) Highway Capital Programme: Delivery of Highways Capital Programme – The Select Committee were provided with an update on the delivery of the programme which detailed measured outputs and clarification to the Corporate Indicator (M890(CP) Highways, Classified Network Surface Condition (percentage of principal roads which required maintenance) which was above targets for the annual assessment in 2019/20. Members sought and received clarification on the scrutiny of the standard of work, the impact of Covid-19 on the schedule of works, capacity to undertake AEI and assessment of additional schemes.
- g) Planning Performance: Development Management – The Select Committee considered an update with regard to Planning Service performance in processing planning applications measured against national and local performance targets and which further presented an overview of improvements being made to systems, processes and customer engagement which supported those performance measures. The service implications of Covid-19 were also advised. The Committee sought and received clarification as to the impact of Covid-19 on

communications, the resolution of issues with the Planning Portal, and any problems arising with the new systems. The additional measures being taken to improve performance were noted.

- h) Repeat Referrals in Children's Social Care – the Select Committee received a report providing an update on repeat referrals in Children's Social Care and supported a number of recommendations made within the submitted report.
- i) Children's Services: update on financial performance and improvement plan - the Select Committee received a report providing an update on the Children's Services improvement plan and related financial performance and supported a number of recommendations made within the submitted report.
- j) Local Government Ombudsman: Annual Review of Performance – The Select Committee were updated on Council performance in relation to enquiries received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), considering national, regional and local data. While it was noted that the number of cases reviewed by and investigated by the LGSCO was low when compared with the overall complaints caseload, Members sought and received clarification as to any focus on service areas showing a higher number of complaints; circumstances that might generate complaints in a particular area; that complaints did not always mean the Council had acted incorrectly; and that, with regard to the types of complaint, different area of the Council attracted differing types of complaint, for example 'procedural' services against those offering more public contact.
- k) Secondary School and Sixth Form Performance – The Select Committee received data for GCSE and A' level outcomes for Oldham pupils, noting these were below national averages and the gaps between Oldham and national average was widening which was queried by the Committee. Members were informed that Oldham Learning was the Council's approach to creating a sustainable, sector-led school improvement system which involved a range of stakeholders including schools and colleges, academies and multi-academy trusts and that a Covid Recovery Plan was aimed at getting children back to school after lockdown and then working to address the imbalance in performance.
- l) Participation of Young People in Education, Employment or Training - The Select Committee was updated on the current participation and NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) rates, including a summary of activity undertaken during Covid pandemic and work planned for the future. While noting that current circumstances were impacting on young people's participation in EET, the Committee acknowledged the huge improvement in this service which had been of concern to the Committee over a number of years.
- m) Free Early Education Entitlements for 2-4 Year Olds - The Select Committee received a report providing an overview of key trends and developments in the delivery of free early education entitlements for two, three and four-year olds, including benchmarking data, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the availability and uptake of early education, and setting out priority actions to redress a recent decline in uptake rates. Members queried and received clarification with regard to the presentation of take-up data, issues related to the eligibility data available between 2018-20 and provision going forward into the post-Covid period.

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- n) Regional Adoption Agency: Review of Performance and Finance - The Select Committee received an update on matters relating to adoption activity in the period April to September 2020, including measures against performance indicators and examples of the adoption 'journey' for a number of children. The Committee further received the half year executive report of 'Adoption Now', the regional adoption agency. Members queried and received responses in respect of adopter recruitment and the considerations given prior to placements for adoption.
 - o) MiocareGroup: annual update on financial performance - The Select Committee received an update on the financial performance of the MioCare Group Community Interest Company during 2020/21 giving an overview of business developments and considering the current and future operating environments and the issues these presented for the company in 2021/22. The Committee queried and received responses in respect of the reported financial performance and in respect of staffing issues as they affected both the company and the care sector in general.

4.5 The Select Committee did not establish a task and Finish Group or receive a referred Council Motion for consideration during the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

5. Health Scrutiny Committee

5.1 Membership:

Councillor Akhtar (Chair), Councillor McLaren (Vice Chair), Councillors Alyas, Byrne, Cosgrove, Hamblett, Ibrahim and Toor.

Substitute Members – Councillors H. Gloster, Haque, Iqbal, Malik and Salamat.

5.2 The Committee was established to discharge the statutory health scrutiny functions of the Council. The Committee was also charged with scrutiny of the Health and Wellbeing Board (with particular regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy and related matters) and the work of Public Health.

5.3 Health Scrutiny (including related social care matters)

- a) End of Life Services Review - The Committee were consulted on a draft report prepared by Healthwatch following a review to gather the experiences of families and carers who had supported a family member through palliative and end of life care in Oldham. The Committee provided comments to Healthwatch on various matters, including Hospice at Home; Crisis Care; Training; and Bereavement Support. It was commented that there should be a requirement for additional communications and training for those dealing with SEND, and the Committee also addressed the recommendations in general when considering religious and cultural needs. Many of the Committee's comments were adopted for the final report.
- b) Safeguarding Adults Update – The Committee received a presentation providing, in the context of Covid-19, an overview of partnership assurance processes related to adult safeguarding, the Children and Adult Partnership response to Covid-19 across Social Care, Health and the Police, and an update on the Children and Adult Partnership Business Plan. The Committee were advised of progress following from the Adult Safeguarding Review of 2019. The Chair of the Safeguarding Boards commented upon the hard work which had been

undertaken. The Committee suggested that the presentation or similar detail should form part of the Elected Member Development Programme.

- c) Thriving Communities Health Improvement – The Committee was reminded that Thriving Communities Programme was funded from the Greater Manchester Transformation Fund for the delivery of the common objectives for health and social care integration focused on building support in the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector to reduce pressure on primary and acute care. It was noted that some projects had been paused so efforts could be made to support the Covid-19 response. The Committee noted that while entry into social prescribing provision could be made by phone, much information and access was available via websites and email: issues with digital means of communication had been recognised and it was acknowledged to the Committee that further work was needed in this area.

The Committee subsequently received a report providing an update on the digital exclusion challenge both nationally and regionally within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, with future developments and initiatives in Oldham being outlined. Members queried and received clarification with regard to the lack of IT for pupils attending schools and missing out on education, the support available across the Borough to address digital exclusion, the lending of IT from closed libraries and/or recycling of used Council equipment, and the adding of policy as well as digital inclusion as a consideration in Council reports. The Committee asked the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister requesting the urgent delivery of IT to pupils missing education due to need, and this request was undertaken.

- d) Urgent Care Review – The Committee received a report which provided assurance that provision of urgent health care in the community had been maintained through the Covid-19 pandemic period and the offer to Oldham residents had improved. Members noted the need for change but commented on the roll out of digital services and practical experience and older residents who may prefer face-to-face consultations and accessibility issues. Members also queried access to GPs and patient feedback.
- e) Multi-Agency Early Help Strategy – The Committee received updates on the early help offer for children and families in Oldham in September 2020 and March 2021, which included connections to other areas of activity such as place-based working and to a range of work linked to prevention and early intervention. Members noted the linkages to place based working and the District Advisory Boards and that the refresh of strategy was due for completion by the end of 2020.
- f) Primary Care Strategic Priorities 2019/20-2021/22 – the Committee received a presentation that set out the Oldham CCG's vision and ambition for primary care services in Oldham, prepared in acknowledgement that primary care was under increasing pressure and struggling to deliver ever more complex services. The Committee noted that issues of staffing and accommodation were similar to ones reported by the Northern Care Alliance (NCA); in response the Committee was advised of a Workforce Strategy and considered the local accommodation issues in the context of GP practices being individual businesses. Pharmacy provision, the need for health education and the need to understand people's health needs in order to focus on prevention were all examined by the Committee.
- g) Greater Manchester Learning Disability Strategy – the Committee received an update on the implementation of the Greater Manchester Learning Disability

Strategy which set out some of the challenges and successes in implementing the strategy, particularly in light of the Covid-19 situation. Members queried and received responses in respect of various issues including accommodation; training, education and employment; the transfer of care leavers with disabilities to Adult Services; day service provision; and working with carers and parents.

- h) Position of the Royal Oldham Hospital in the Context of Local NHS Trust Re-Organisation – The Committee received updates in October 2020 and March 2021 on the transaction of the Royal Oldham Hospital (ROH) as part of the Pennine Acute Hospitals Trust (PAHT) to the NCA and the benefits and improvements this brought to for the ROH site, the wider development of the ROH site and the next steps and plans for services. Although largely complete, the Committee was disappointed at a reported delay of six months in completing the transaction and some concern expressed as to the implications of the delay. Members sought a further consideration of employment opportunities for the local community and availability of apprenticeships.

This consideration was given at a subsequent meeting, focused on young people but also noting the impact of Covid-19 on the programme. Members sought and received clarification on a number of issues including guaranteed interviews for any learner who has completed a pre-employment course; the number of pre-employment courses; a view as to the development of the scheme; working with schools, the youth service, job centres, other care providers etc.; and access for small businesses to NHS contracts. A further meeting between Committee Members and the NCA Director of Social Value Creation was held to further explore this approach to employment and training.

- i) Progress of Community Health and Adult Social Care Integration – The Committee were provided an update on the integration of the services which had been formed in 2018 in response to local, regional and national drivers for integrated care delivery which looked to realise economies of scale, improve quality of care and enhance the service experience for people with health and care needs. Members queried and received information related to the financial risks both in terms of government funding and potential for demand and mental health provision.
- j) Update on NHS Developments and Planning for 2021/22 – the Committee received a presentation considering winter pressures in the period January – March 2021; national themes and local priorities for the NHS in 2021/22; and the process for developing an integrated model for health and social care in Oldham. The publication and potential implications of the NHS White Paper were noted, and consideration given to the implications of Covid, in particular waiting lists and health inequalities. Further reports on various matters considered were called for.
- k) Covid Vaccinations Update – the Committee received an update in March 2021 presenting the then current position on Covid vaccinations across a wide range of indicators. Members commented on the good attendance at the local clinic which had been provided, received clarification as to those attending vaccination centres, raised issues regarding the operation of both local and national schemes, and suggested further alternate venues for local vaccination clinics.

5.4 Public Health

The Committee noted throughout the year that the Public Health Service was focus on mandated functions related to the Covid-19 pandemic meaning that the public health-related business identified in the Work Programme was regarded as 'pending' until such time as a re-assessment was made of public health activities. The following business from the Public Health Team was considered -

- a) Delivery of the Flu Vaccination Programme 2020/21 – The Committee were provided a briefing on the programme being delivered across the Borough. The flu vaccination programme was known as one of the most effective interventions in the health and social care system but was likely to be more challenging in 2020/21 in view of Covid-19 and additional safety and social distancing measures needed. Members discussed the take-up of vaccinations, financial and staffing support, issues concerning disabled people and carers, and GP surgeries and pharmacies being proactive in the promotion of the vaccinations to target groups.
- b) Childhood Immunisation Programme – The Committee received an update on the local performance on childhood immunisations for 0-5 year olds and the HPV Programme for 2019/20 and gave its support to continued activities to improve immunisation uptake in 2020/21.
- c) Health Improvement and Weight Management Service – the Committee was advised of a collaborative commission by the Council and Oldham CCG for the provider of a new Health Improvement and Weight Management Service and the new Borough-wide service offer, Your Health Oldham, to be delivered by ABL Health Limited, was introduced. Members asked for and received clarification on the experiences of similar projects elsewhere, how the project would connect with Asian communities, support available for people with diabetes, the number of people who could be supported, the numbers of caseworkers and their average caseload, working with employers on prevention, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on outcomes.

5.5 Council Motions Considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board

A number of Motions were referred from Council to Overview and Scrutiny for investigation. The following were considered by the Health Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Making a Commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goal's – The Committee (and the Overview and Scrutiny Board) received and commended to the Council a report that considered the Council's actions in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- b) Ban on Fast Food and Energy Drinks Advertising – The Council Motion sought a number of actions in pursuit of a ban on the advertising of Fast Food and Energy Drinks. The Committee received a report which presented a summary of the evidence base on High Fat, Salt and Sugar (HFSS) Food Advertising and had made recommendations to the Cabinet. Following a response from the Cabinet received at the Committee meeting held in March 2021, the Committee had resolved to report to the Council. This report was submitted to the Council meeting in July 2021.
- c) Chatty Checkouts and Cafes – The Committee had been asked to follow up an action to consider, in consultation with Age UK Oldham and District Teams, the practicalities of introducing Chatter and Natter Tables in Council premises, to identify where they could be established, and to identify how referrals to such

provision might form part of social prescribing. On receipt of an update report, it was agreed that the matter be further considered in updates relating to the Thriving Communities Programme.

- d) Not Every Disability is Visible – The Council Motion sought the provision of specific signage for toilets in the Council’s estate. The Committee received a report which considered the provision of accessible toilet signage as suggested by the Crohns and Collitis UK campaign ‘Not every Disability is Visible’ and the provision of ‘Changing Places’ toilets and had made recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Member and Officer. On consideration of responses received at the Committee meeting held in March 2021, the Committee resolved to report to the Council. This report was submitted to Council in July 2021.

6. Joint Scrutiny Meetings for Covid-19

- 6.1 During the 2020/21 Municipal Year two joint meetings of the three Scrutiny Committees were held in June and September 2020 to consider the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic upon the Council and its partners in relation to the effect on the community, services and finances.
- 6.2 It was recognised that the system response to Covid-19 by the Council and its partners would be a significant activity responding to the pandemic emergency. Scrutiny could consider how partners were working together, overseeing the systems that contribute to smooth, effective decision making. It was acknowledged that there would be particular services exposed to unique pressures as a result of the pandemic.
- 6.3 As time progressed, it became clear that services had actively responded to the emergency as could be evidenced in reports being submitted to all three Committees which reported on the emergency response, reflected on the impact of Covid-19 in terms of performance, and reported on how the individual services had adapted to maintain service provision during the pandemic.
- 6.4 Membership of the Joint Scrutiny meetings comprised all members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee and the Health Scrutiny Committee.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming

- 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 4.1 requires each Overview and Scrutiny Committee to prepare and maintain a Committee Work Programme. These Work Programmes are maintained by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Constitutional Services and are co-ordinated in consultation with the Committee Chairs. This approach can allow for the best use of resources and avoid duplication and allow for flexibility to accommodate any urgent and/or short-term issues that may arise.
- 7.2 Updated Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for each Board/Committee were submitted to each meeting on an ongoing basis, keeping Members and the public informed as to business due to be considered and, through parallel consideration of the Key Decision Document, allowing Members to identify any further items for consideration. Outturn work programmes for Overview and Scrutiny Board, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee and the Health Scrutiny Committee have been submitted to the cycle of Overview and Scrutiny Committees meeting between July-September 2021, representing closure of the 2020/21 work programmes.

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- 7.3 As should be clear from preceding content, the Work Programmes of all Committees were impacted by the pandemic as resources were allocated where needed to address the needs of the residents of the Borough. Despite the pressures apparent throughout the year, Council Officers and representatives from across the public and voluntary sectors continued to contribute to the scrutiny process. We again thank and express our appreciation to all concerned for their contributions which enabled the delivery of a full scrutiny programme.
- 7.4 Moving from 2020/21 to 2021/22 saw the implementation of the new overview and scrutiny structure. As Chairs we worked with Constitutional Services towards the end of the Municipal Year to review Work Programmes and ensure that ongoing work and issues were not lost as the new arrangements took shape.

8. Overview and Scrutiny and Procedural Arrangements

- 8.1 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, or the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs more generally, held certain procedural responsibilities within the Council's Constitution. These were:
- 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.
- 8.2 In 2020/21 there were three instance of General Exception, eleven instances of Special Urgency, no instances requiring agreement to either the consideration of matters outside the Budget and Policy Framework or the consideration of business in private. Several instances of Special Urgency related to expenditure of Covid-related grants and other related funding.

9. Council Support for Overview and Scrutiny

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 The Overview and Scrutiny function received the following specific support during 2020/21:
- 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,

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- (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.

The role was vacant at the start of the year, with Liz Drogan, Head of Democratic Services being confirmed in this role during the year.

- Constitutional Services undertook lead roles in respect of the Board and Committees, maintaining Work Programmes, ensuring and chasing up actions, and co-ordinating scrutiny activities held outside of the formal Committee meetings, in addition to the general governance activities that are provided in respect of all other formal bodies, ensuring that the Board and Committee meetings were convened and held in accordance with relevant legislative and procedural requirements. Mark Stenson, Head of Corporate Governance provided additional support in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee.

9.3 The scrutiny function also benefitted from the active support given by the Council's partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors who prepared reports for consideration and attended Committee meetings to assist Committee members in their scrutiny considerations

10. A New Structure for Overview and Scrutiny

10.1 The Council agreed a new structure for the Overview and Scrutiny function at its meeting held on 17th June 2020. That new structure, in brief, comprised –

- a Policy Overview Committee – to consider policy, annual budget setting, big corporate issues and programmes and high-level partnership issues;
- a Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee - to consider implementation and to review both budget and operational performance of Council and partners' services; and
- a 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

10.2 Implementation of that new structure was delayed given the timing of that approval and the pressures posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the new structure was subsequently agreed for implementation with effect from the commencement of the 2021/22 Municipal Year. As noted previously, the Chairs of the Board and Committees worked with Constitutional Services towards the end of the 2020/21 Municipal Year to review Work Programmes and ensure that ongoing work and issues were not lost as the new arrangements took shape.

11. Ways to get involved with Overview and Scrutiny

11.1 All the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have rolling work programmes which are updated and can be found as part of the agenda for each Committee meeting. agendas.

11.2 Meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees are open for the public to attend, except when a meeting considers confidential or exempt information and the Committee resolves to exclude the public. Agenda are published to Council's website and, along with the dates for future meetings, can be found here [Browse Committee Meetings, 2021 \(oldham.gov.uk\)](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/committees/committees-meetings-2021)

11.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committees provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of a Committee, providing the issue is relevant to the Committee's

terms of reference. Questions should be forwarded to constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk no later than noon on the third working day prior to the meeting. Members of the public can also contact their local Councillor about issues considered to be having an impact on their local community. Councillors also have opportunities to raise issues with Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 There are no background papers as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to this report.

13. Appendices

- 13.1 Overview and Scrutiny Terms of Reference 2020/21.