



Oldham
Council

Report to Council

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Report of:

Councillor Riaz Ahmad, Chair of the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2021/22

Councillor Colin McLaren, Chair of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2021/22

Yasmin Toor, Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee, 2021/22

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13th July 2022

Reason for Decision

To provide Council with the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for the 2021/22 Municipal Year as required 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 Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Health Scrutiny Committee in 2021/22; and a summary of the considerations and work undertaken by the three bodies during 2021/22.

Recommendations

Council is asked to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2021/22.

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 2021/22.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

1. What is Overview and Scrutiny?

- 1.1 All local authorities with an executive model of governance established under 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 –

- 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 2021/22

- 2.1 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 of policies and the budget 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.

The full terms of reference for each Committee are appended to this report.

- 2.2 With the agreement of the Chairs of the overview and scrutiny bodies in existence at that time, implementation of this structure was delayed due to the issues presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, with the new structure being agreed subsequently for implementation with effect from the commencement of the 2021/22 Municipal Year. Work programming for the 2021/22 Municipal Year comprised a re-allocation of existing workloads across the new Committees and progressed as familiarisation with the new structures grew, notwithstanding the difficulties still presented by Covid-19.
- 2.3 While the start of the 2021/22 Municipal Year saw the lifting of lock-down requirements, government guidance indicated the restricting of the number of people who gathered indoors. This presented difficulties across the Council’s formal decision-making arrangements, and we were grateful for the assurance given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Arooj Shah that any recommendations made by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting informally and virtually would be received by the Cabinet.

- 2.4 The efforts of Cabinet Members, Officers and representatives from partner organisations who all contributed to the scrutiny function in this challenging period was very welcome, and we express our thanks to all for their contributions.
- 2.5 The work and contributions of each Committee to the business of the Council is considered in turn below.

3 Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2021/22

3.1 Membership

Councillor McLaren (Chair), Councillor Brownridge (Vice Chair), Councillors Alyas Curley, Hobin, K Phythian, Surjan, and Williamson.

Substitute Members - Councillors Cosgrove, Davis, Hamblett, Iqbal, Islam, Salamat and Sharp.

- 3.2 Undertaking the functions as outlined above and as detailed in full in the terms of reference, the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the matters as detailed below.

3.3 Budget, Policy Framework and other major policy items –

- a) Scrutiny of Budget Proposals – The Council's overall budget proposals for 2022/23 were considered by the Committee. The Administration's proposals were presented to the Committee in January 2022 by Portfolio Holders and Chief Officers, with the Committee seeking and obtaining clarification on a number of matters. Related reports considered included the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27; the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23; the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27; the Treasury Management Statement 2022/23; the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2022/23 alongside the strategic estimates for 2023/24-2026/27 and the outturn estimate for 2021/22; and the Statement of the Chief Finance Officer on reserves, the robustness of estimates, and the affordability and prudence of capital investments. In February 2022 the Committee also examined in detail the savings and investment proposals contained in the respective Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups Budget Amendment Proposals for 2022/23.
- b) Gambling Act 2005 Policy refresh - The Committee gave consideration to a review of the Council's Gambling Act 2005 Policy which required a three-yearly review by law. The attention paid within the review to Public Health concerns related to gambling addiction were noted and the Committee sought and received clarifications on the possibility of premises ban requests being made on behalf of the person concerned, the available powers to prevent premises from opening and for the reviewing of applications, and how numbers of problem gamblers are estimated.
- c) Youth Justice Plan – The Committee considered the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2021/22 which had been developed in line with the requirements of the Youth Justice Board and scrutinised detail on the delivery of the service, including 2020/21 performance and the strategic priorities for 2021/22. Further information was sought and received relating to how the good performance of the Service had been achieved with limited funding; the type of work done to reduce offending, including different approaches to therapy; and the wish to spread the good news stories about the Service.

- d) Covid-19 Recovery Strategy - The views of the Committee were sought on the draft Covid Recovery Plan 2021-2022 which would help to shape Oldham's approach and vision for the following 18 months, whilst continuing to respond to the pandemic as an ongoing critical incident. The Strategy would act as an interim Corporate Plan, the development of which had been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee sought and received clarification around matters over which the Council had little or no control; concerns about the delivery of 'quality' employment; the need to ensure Action Plans and performance indicators delivered for local residents; addressing poor standards in the housing stock; the encouraging of the voluntary sector; and the promoting of Oldham as an aspirational place to live.
- e) Equalities Strategy – The Committee considered a proposed new Equality Strategy which would include the adoption of new Equality Objectives to demonstrate the Council's commitment to progressing equality, diversity and human rights and meet the Council's duties under the Equalities Act 2010. The Committee queried and received clarification on matters related to the interaction between the Strategy and Objectives and the Covid Recovery Strategy; the whistleblowing policy and the need to ensure a robust system of reporting to provide confidence in the Strategy; promotion of the Strategy; target setting and the monitoring of progress; engagement with partner organisations; and the availability of funding to support the Strategy.
- f) Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy – The Committee gave a consideration to a draft Strategy, prepared as required by the Homelessness Act 2002, that had been developed in consultation with residents and stakeholders alongside a comprehensive review of homelessness between 2016-2020, with a particular focus on the period since introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Acts between 2018-20 and an in-depth analysis of customer groups that presented to the Housing Options service. Health issues and support needs were considered, along with resource considerations in providing the priorities to tackle homelessness.

3.4 Greater Manchester-wide policies and other issues –

- a) Greater Manchester Minimum Licensing Standards for Taxis and Private Hire – The Committee gave an ongoing consideration to these proposals, initially receiving details of the findings of the consultation on the Minimum Licensing Standards which covered drivers, vehicles, operators, local authorities and a roadmap to zero emission capable vehicles, the Committee noting and seeking clarification on matters including the low number of responses from Oldham; the issue of cross-border Private Hire drivers and vehicles; the intended purpose of anticipated funding linked to the proposal; and the likelihood of changes to vehicle and driver standards. The Committee further received the recommendations being made to address ten policy standards and sought further clarification as to how drivers could be persuaded to make vehicles wheelchair accessible and in respect of issues related to out of area drivers and vehicles.
- b) GM2040 Transport Strategy and draft sub-strategies – The Committee was advised of the approved updated GM2040 Strategy Documents and of a number of sub-strategies being developed which set out more detailed policies, principles and guidance. The Committee gave a particular consideration to the Draft GM Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy with Members raising several queries relating to the provision of vehicle charging infrastructure and to the GM Streets for All Strategy, with members raising issues including funding received from the Quality Bus Transit Scheme, pavement accessibility for those with additional

needs, the need for engagement, and the level of funding already agreed for the Borough and what could be done with those funds.

- c) Joint Places for Everyone Development Plan Document (DPD) – The Committee scrutinized a proposed DPD for jobs, new homes and sustainable growth across much of Greater Manchester. Linked to this consideration was a review of the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement and Local Development Scheme to ensure these were appropriate for the intended development of the Joint DPD. The Committee sought clarification around matters including the building into the process of monitoring to provide a process should it become necessary to change land allocations, the required commitments of the nine local authorities, the Local Implementation Plan which would set out delivery of the DPD, that the Local Plan included obligations for developers to contribute towards infrastructure, the implications of the Mayoral Enterprise Zone, the protection of land, the availability of funding to support brownfield development for industrial or commercial use, and the bringing forward of sites for development, including a balanced approach to the use of mills for employment or housing use.
- d) Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan - The Committee received details of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Final Plan, including responses to consultation exercise which had been undertaken. Members sought and received clarification on matters including the assurance of central government funding; whether standards would apply to the Highways Agency and the strategic road network; whether the Clean Air Zone was to be a temporary measure; whether there would be a limit to the number of roadworks; matters related to the availability of electric vehicles charging points; consultation responses from the Oldham area; and funding issues related to taxis.

3.5 Linked to the ‘crime and disorder overview and scrutiny’ function and considered also as a major issue for the Committee, a presentation was received from and discussions held with Chief Superintendent Chris Bowen who had recently been appointed to lead the police service in Oldham. Crime rates and response times, together with the outcomes of recent actions taken to address criminality, including work being undertaken in our neighbourhoods. The Committee sought and received clarification on matters including how crimes were being tackled with the number of Officers available and response times to queries from elected Members, with a call for a future workshop being agreed.

3.6 Major issues or themed considerations determined by the Committee for consideration -

- a) Young People and Education, Work and Training – the Committee had identified Employment, Work and Training and Youth/Young People as ‘themed’ or significant issue considerations. The focus on Employment, Work and Training was on young people, and the consideration had two major strands -
- An ongoing relationship with the Northern Care Alliance (NCA) NHS Group and their work related to employment support and local recruitment, with a particular focus on work being done to support young people. The NCA had established targets for 2025 and secured non-recurrent funds to support people into work and to provide young people with experience of the NHS, and a detailed report highlighting activities being undertaken was considered by the Committee; and
 - Arising from a Youth Council Motion and a general consideration of the work of the Youth Council, the Committee considered the development of the digital sector in the town and a review of apprenticeships across Oldham, including the offering of digital apprenticeships by the Council.

One of the strategic areas of focus of Oldham's Digital Strategy was a Digital Workforce which would ensure that by April 2024, Team Oldham would have the digital skills and confidence to exploit and deliver digital service improvement. To prepare, Team Oldham had engaged with both Oldham colleges to provide work placements.

- b) Green New Deal Strategy and Generation Oldham - The Committee gave an ongoing consideration to the Oldham Green New Deal throughout the year. The Oldham Green New Deal Strategy had been approved in March 2020 and the Committee received updates on funding arrangements, including both secured funding and progress in securing funding for unfunded projects; sought and considered details on the potential for a strategic partnership to support delivery of the 2030 Net Zero target; and considered and endorsed an approach for senior officers and Cabinet members to engage the private sector.
- c) Creating a Better Place – the Committee determined to scrutinise the progress of the Creating a Better Place strategic framework and capital regeneration programme, the new programme reflecting the priority areas to support the Borough's economic and social recovery. Members sought and received clarification on matters related to the projected and actual costs of schemes; the creation of green jobs; and the creation of Council companies. The Committee received a specific presentation linked to the Northern Roots project which received part funding through the Creating a Better Place framework; Members sought and received clarification on funding and sponsor arrangements.

4. Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.1 Membership

Councillor Ahmad (Chair), Councillor Malik (Vice-Chair), Councillors Alexander, Byrne, Hindle, Iqbal, Islam and Kenyon.

Substitute members - Councillors Al-Hamdani, Brownridge, Ibrahim, K Phythian, Salamat, Sharp and Toor.

- 4.2 Undertaking the functions as outlined above and as detailed in full in the terms of reference, the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the matters as detailed below.

4.3 Finance and Budgetary Scrutiny

- a) Review of Financial Performance: Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme 2021/22 – The Committee was provided with regular updates on the forecast revenue budget position for 2021/22 and financial position of the 2021/22 capital programme, together with the revised capital programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27. Information related to the Dedicated Schools Grant, the Housing Revenue Account and the Collection Fund was also considered.

The Committee took note that the Council was continuing to deal with the financial challenge of Covid-19 which continued to affect nearly all aspects of Council service delivery, particularly with regard to the People and Place, Children's Services and Health and Adult Social Care Portfolios, and further noted actions to address and mitigate variances identified in the budget.

- b) Statement of Accounts and Financial Outturn for 2020/21 – The Committee received and reviewed the Council's draft accounts for 2020/21, including detail

on the Council's financial outturn position for 2020/21. Detail and commentary on the year-end position within each Portfolio area was considered, along with details of government grants received in relation to Covid-19; the position on the Dedicated Schools Grant, Housing Revenue Account and the Collection Fund; reserves; the capital programme; the preparation of Group Accounts; and the Annual Governance Statement.

- d) Financial administration in local authorities – The Committee was alerted to circumstances arising in several local authorities where the respective Chief Finance Officer or external Auditor had considered it appropriate to issue statutory notices concerning the financial positions within their respective local authorities.

4.4 Performance Scrutiny

- a) Quarterly Council Performance Report and Challenge – Reports were presented to the Committee in terms of how the Council was performing against measures and targets contained within the Covid Recovery Strategy. This approach varied from previous years in that measures and targets had previously reflected local and national priorities. However, the service impacts presented by Covid-19 meant that the achievement of those measures now contained in the Covid Recovery Strategy were key and the focus of attention by Portfolio Holders and senior management.

Consideration of the reports allowed Members to seek additional information and to highlight issues for further discussion. Members considered how Covid had particularly affected individual measures and sought clarification as to why certain measures had been suspended. The Committee sought and received confirmation that remedial action was being taken to address those matters coded 'red' in the quarterly reports.

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

- b) Children's Services: update on financial performance and improvement plan - The Committee received a report providing an update on the Children's Social Care improvement plan and financial performance. The Committee noted the good progress on the improvement plan despite the increasing volume and complexity in demand. Developing partnership and multi-agency work was further noted, alongside ongoing inspection by Ofsted.
- c) Repeat Referrals in Children's Social Care – The Committee received a report providing an update on repeat referrals in Children's Social Care, including the conclusions arising from a deep dive review of the issue. Further scrutiny of the rate of repeat referrals was acknowledged and anticipated service developments considered.
- d) Delivery of Additional School Places and Admissions – The Committee was provided with an update on the delivery additional school places and the work of the Admissions Teams. The Committee sought and received clarifications on whether families returning to their home countries due to Brexit had been a factor in relation to changes in admissions, and on the role or influence the Council may have into feeder school arrangements.
- e) Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Inspection Revisit – On receipt of a further progress report, the Committee, on being advised that the DfE and

NHS England considered that formal monitoring via the 6 monthly progress reviews was no longer necessary, was pleased to commend the Local Partnership for achieving and maintaining the significant ongoing improvements to quality and consistency of Education, Health and Care Plans being delivered and quality assured. In turn, the Committee was assured that monitoring of Key Performance Indicators, challenge, support and benchmarking would continue to ensure that the Service keeps improving.

- f) Local Government Ombudsman: Annual Review of Performance – The Committee was updated on Council performance in relation to enquiries received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), considering national, regional and local data. The Committee noted a staffing restructure, work with Services to improve responses, and policy reviews undertaken and planned. The Committee sought clarification on the consideration of complaints before they reached the Ombudsman.

4.5 Partner scrutiny

- a) Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership Board: 2020/21 Annual Report – The Committee considered the Annual Report, the second produced under new arrangements with the local authority, Oldham CCG and Greater Manchester Police as the three statutory partners. The implications of and response to Covid-19 with regard to Children’s safeguarding was considered, along with progression of strategic priorities which had continued despite the pandemic. The Committee sought and received clarification in respect of safeguarding work undertaken with schools and the progression of issues highlighted within the ‘amber’ rated criteria from the Independent Chair Review.
- b) Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board: 2020/21 Annual Report and Strategic Plan – The Committee gave consideration to the Annual Report of the Board, reviewing the implications of and response to Covid-19 in relation to Adult safeguarding, along with the key achievements of the year. The challenges experienced had presented key questions for the Safeguarding Partnership and partners and the Business Plan for 2021/22 outlined the strategic objectives and priorities for that year. The Committee sought and received clarification on implications for adult safeguarding of GP surgeries operating digitally and in respect of responses to increased rates of domestic abuse.
- c) Regional Adoption Agency: Update - The Committee considered the Adoption Annual Report 2021/22 of ‘Adoption Now’, the regional adoption agency that provides adoption services on behalf of a number of local authorities, including Oldham. It was recognized that achieving adoption for children contributes to improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people in line with priorities that are set out in various Council plans. The Annual Report included a statistical review of adoption activity in the year, it being noted that Covid-related court delays had slightly increased numbers dealt with within the year.
- d) Oldham Community Leisure – The Committee considered a performance update on the activities of Oldham Community Leisure for the period April to December 2021, the period covering the recovery period following the Covid-19 related closure of facilities. Prior to Covid-19 the leisure contract had been performing well, with outcomes and outputs specified in the contract being met and overall financial performance being considered positive. Like other leisure providers, significant issues had been presented by Covid-19 due to forced closures and

restricted use of facilities. Notwithstanding, the Committee noted that the Cabinet had agreed an extension of the leisure contract.

More generally, the Committee received a risk dashboard which highlighted potential future risks to the Council from partnerships and other commercial interests. The Committee considered what further information or targeted information might be submitted for consideration.

5. Health Scrutiny Committee

5.1 Membership:

Councillor Toor (Chair), Councillor McLaren (Vice Chair), Councillors Byrne, Cosgrove, Hamblett, A Hussain, Ibrahim and Salamat.

Substitute Members – Councillors Ahmad, Alyas, Davis, H Gloster, Iqbal, K Phythian and Sharp.

5.2 Undertaking the functions as outlined above and as detailed in full in the terms of reference, the Health Scrutiny Committee considered the matters as detailed below.

5.3 Health Scrutiny (including related social care matters)

- a) NHS White Paper/NHS Bill and health and social care integration – The Committee received updates on the passage of the White Paper and Bill through the year, giving particular consideration to local implications and developments arising. The Committee sought clarifications on various matters including the submission and consideration of complaints on an integrated system; budget challenges faced in a time of austerity; confusion about the new system; and patient reliance on Accident and Emergency Services.
- b) High Level Elective Recovery – The Committee received a report outlining the position in relation to recovery of elective activity across Greater Manchester, it being noted that the pandemic had created significant challenges for providers in Greater Manchester in their processing of patients resulting in a substantial increase in waiting lists. The Committee expressed their appreciation of NHS staff in these circumstances and sought clarification as to the maintenance of NHS services and disjointed IT systems which prevented communication and the updating of records.
- c) Pennine Acute Hospitals Trust Transaction – The Committee received updates relating to the process and progress of the transaction of the Royal Oldham Hospital, as part of the Pennine Acute Hospitals Trust, to the Northern Care Alliance, including a consideration of impacts on patients. The Committee sought and received clarification on matters including the separation of services between the Northern Care Alliance and the Manchester NHS Foundation Trust; staff uniforms and branding; sustainability of the new body and services; and various matters related to employment and recruitment of staff.
- d) Urology Services across Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Salford – The Committee received a report outlining the response to significant service resilience issues in urology services in Greater Manchester, being advised of the development of a delivery model aligned to the Greater Manchester Improving Specialist Care Programme and which would support the delivery of a single urology service across Bury, Rochdale, Oldham and Salford.

- e) 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 the availability of health checks as GPs had been instructed to focus on Covid-19; housing shortages and the impact on, particularly, single males; Council employment of those with learning difficulties and autism; the number of staff and their caseloads; transition issues; and work opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

5.4 Public Health

- a) Infant Mortality - The Committee received a report on infant mortality in Oldham, considering the key causes of infant mortality and the actions being taken to reduce the number of deaths. The Committee sought and gained clarification on matters relating to work to address those deaths caused by genetic abnormalities; work being undertaken to address smoking in pregnancy and similar work related to alcohol and drug use in pregnancy; and the implications of poverty for rates of infant mortality.
- b) Healthy Child Programme – The Committee received a report on the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme and progress over the previous year, further noting the opportunities being taken to redesign the service in a more integrated manner which should create better experiences for families and children and make better use of facilities. Members sought and received clarification on matters relating to children attending at Accident and Emergency Departments; the implications for families of a lack of walk-in centres; the small size of the school nurse workforce; and the availability of information as to the appropriate places to seek medical assistance and the over-reliance on Accident and Emergency services.
- c) Women and Disadvantage – The Committee considered a report which outlined a number of issues which disadvantaged women in Oldham, focusing on women’s access to mental health services. Phase 1 of the LIFT project had identified mental health as one challenge to economic empowerment where women reported that they found it difficult to access support, leading to further escalation and additional impacts on family life. Phase 2 of the project would see work to establish childcare facilities, highlighting of the issue to service providers etc, and working with the health system to ensure adequate support, and the Committee received an update on progress in this regard. Members sought and received clarification on the focus of the work being undertaken; the availability of childcare; the impact of mental health on employment rates; the effect of Covid-19 on women’s mental health; the availability of Health Navigators and issues of digital exclusion.
- d) Health Improvement and Weight Management Service – the Committee was reminded of the issues and implications of health inequalities issues in Oldham and were updated on the progress made by the new Health Improvement and Weight Management Service, “Your Health Oldham”, delivered by ABL Health Limited. The identified high-level outcomes relating to smoking reduction, tackling obesity, improving diet, and reducing alcohol consumption were noted and would be further considered by the Committee.
- e) Integrated Sexual Health Service – the Committee were advised of the outcome of a collaborative commission with Rochdale and Bury Councils for an Integrated

Sexual Health Service and updated on the implementation of arrangements established under the new contract. The Service, to be provided by HCRG Care Group, had a clear focus on reducing health inequalities by ensuring targeted provision for those individuals who are most at risk of sexual health related harm or poorer sexual health outcomes. Delivery of the service would be reviewed by the Committee.

6. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming

- 6.1 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, avoid duplication, and allow for flexibility to accommodate any urgent and/or short-term issues that may arise.
- 6.2 Updated Overview and Scrutiny work programmes for each 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 were submitted to the cycle of Overview and Scrutiny Committees meetings in June and July 2022 representing closure of the 2021/22 work programmes.
- 6.3 As indicated above, the work programmes of all Committees continued to be affected by the impacts of Covid-19. 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.
- 6.4 Looking forward, we are keen that work programming is developed in the scrutiny function to deliver the actions identified for overview and scrutiny in response to the Council's Peer Review of January 2020. The Peer Challenge recommendations, considered by the Council in June 2020, included an action to "Review the additional benefits that Overview and Scrutiny can bring in helping to shape and challenge the delivery of the key priorities for the council and the borough". The Council's Action Plan responding to that recommendation, considered by the Cabinet in November 2021 noted that "A review of the role and functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committees has been undertaken. A revised workplan for 2020/21 and future years is in place which provides challenge and input to progress made against the priorities contained within the Covid-19 Recovery Strategy and the future Corporate Plan".

7. Council Support for Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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,

- (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.
- This role is held by Liz Drogan, Head of Democratic Services.
- Constitutional Services undertook lead roles in respect of the 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 Committee meetings were convened and held in accordance with relevant legislative and procedural requirements. The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and Strategic Financial Management provided additional support in respect of the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.3 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

8. Ways to get involved with Overview and Scrutiny

8.1 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.

8.2 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, 2022 \(oldham.gov.uk\)](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/committees/committees-meetings-2022)

8.3 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.

9. Background Papers

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

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 – the terms of reference for the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees working through the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Terms of Reference for Overview and Scrutiny Committees 2021/22

Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee – terms of reference

- a) To lead the development of the overview and scrutiny process in Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, including responsibility for Member development with regard to overview and scrutiny.
- b) To undertake strategic level scrutiny (having regard to the Prioritisation Framework where relating to significant policy/service change or an area of public or local interest) relating to:
 - Oldham Council;
 - Wholly owned Local Authority Companies;
 - Strategic Partners and Partnerships;
 - Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) and the city region generally;
 - Education (ensuring there is appropriate statutory representation of co-opted members);
 - Community issues which would include crime and disorder, cohesion, housing and environment and regeneration issues etc.; and
 - Area based issues.
- c) To develop proposals for submission to the Cabinet and/or to scrutinize proposals of the Cabinet in respect of Policy Framework items, such items being as described at Article 4.1 to the Council Constitution.
- d) To develop proposals for submission to the Cabinet and/or to scrutinize proposals of the Cabinet in respect of the Budget and related strategies etc., such items being as described at Article 4.1 to the Council Constitution.
- e) To be the designated 'crime and disorder' committee pursuant to s19 of the Police and Crime Act 2006.
- f) To establish Task and Finish groups, Inquiries etc to give in depth consideration to issues within the purview of the Committee.
- g) To consider all Call-Ins (with the exception of called in business from the Commissioning Partnership Board) (In the event a call-in related to an education issue, the statutory co-optees would be invited to participate in that matter at the meeting).
- h) To consider relevant matters referred from Council in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.11(g).
- i) To make recommendations to the Cabinet or to any partner organisation on issues scrutinised relevant to those bodies, and where appropriate, direct to Council.

Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee – terms of reference

- a) To monitor and hold to account the performance of service delivery within Oldham Council and of strategic partners such as Oldham Community Leisure Limited (OCLL), Oldham Partnership etc with particular reference to the Corporate Plan and all other strategic plans.
- b) In reviewing the performance of Council and other services, to scrutinise plans for improvement where performance is weak and to maintain oversight until performance improves.
- c) To scrutinise the financial performance of the Council against the approved budget and efficiency savings identified therein.
- d) To scrutinise issues identified as requiring improvement by external assessors (with the exception of social care matters) ensuring that there is appropriate statutory representation of co-opted members in respect of education matters.

- e) To establish Task and Finish groups, Inquiries etc to give in depth consideration to issues within the purview of the Committee.
- f) To consider relevant matters referred from Council in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.11(g).
- g) To monitor the implementation of scrutiny recommendations that have been accepted by the Cabinet.
- h) To make recommendations to the Cabinet or to any partner organisation on issues scrutinised relevant to those bodies.

Health Scrutiny Committee – terms of reference

- a) To discharge all health scrutiny functions of the Council under s 21-23 and 26-27 of The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 including:
 - the review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the Council's area;
 - the making of reports and recommendations to relevant NHS bodies and health service providers;
 - responding to proposals and consultations from NHS bodies in respect of substantial variations in service provision and any other major consultation exercises;
 - referral of comments and recommendations on proposals referred to the Committee by a relevant NHS body or relevant service provider to the Secretary of State if considered necessary; and
 - all matters relating to Healthwatch.
- b) To scrutinise the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board, including the development, implementation, review and monitoring of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- c) To scrutinise the development and implementation of any joint arrangements established under a s75 Agreement between the Council and a relevant NHS organisation.
- d) To scrutinise public health services generally.
- e) To scrutinise issues identified as requiring improvement by external assessors in respect of social care matters.
- f) To establish Task and Finish groups, Inquiries etc to give in depth consideration to issues within the purview of the Committee.
- g) To consider called in business arising from the Commissioning Partnership Board.
- h) To consider relevant matters referred from Council in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.11(g).
- i) To make recommendations to the Cabinet, Health and Wellbeing Board, the Commissioning Partnership Board or to any partner organisation on issues scrutinised relevant to those bodies.
- j) To participate in/and or review the considerations of any joint committee established to respond to formal consultations by an NHS body on an issue which impacts on the residents of more than on Overview and Scrutiny Committee area.