

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25

Report of: Cllr Colin McLaren, Chair of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board 2024/25.

Cllr Junaid Hussain, Chair of the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, 2024/25

Cllr Eddie Moores, Chair of the Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board 2024/25

Cllr Brian Hobin, Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board 2024/25

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10 December 2025

Reason for Decision

To provide Council with the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report for the 2024/25 Municipal Year as required by the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in the Constitution.

Executive Summary

The report outlines the statutory role of overview and scrutiny, the roles and responsibilities of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, the Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board in 2024/25, together with a summary of the considerations and work undertaken by the Boards during 2024/25.

Recommendations

Council is asked to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024/25.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/2025

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 requires local authorities to establish or designate a 'crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committee', whilst 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 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.

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- 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 (i.e. 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 Boards 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 2024/25**

- 2.1 The overview and scrutiny function in Oldham during 2024/25 was delivered by four Scrutiny Boards:
 - Governance Strategy and Resources
 - Place, Economic Growth and Environment
 - Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board
 - Children and Young People Scrutiny Board
- 2.2 The work and contributions of each Scrutiny Board to the business of the Council is considered in turn below.

3 Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board 2024/25

3.1 Membership

Councillor McLaren (Chair), Councillor Moores (Vice Chair), Councillors Aslam, Azad, Harkness, Hughes, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Lancaster, Rustidge and Williamson.

Substitute Members - Councillors Cosgrove, Kenyon, Marland and Quigg.

The Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board role includes the scrutiny of key policy items, the annual budget proposals, proposals with significant service and/or budgetary implications, and performance. The Board also scrutinises proposals being developed at Greater Manchester level and by the Council's strategic partners, considering the implications for the Borough and for the Council.

The Board monitors and holds to account the performance of service delivery within the Council and of strategic partners with reference to the Oldham Plan and all other strategic plans.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board considered the following Key issues, policies and strategies during 2024/25: –

- a) Health and Safety Policy (updated in May 2024) - this policy identifies the essential elements of the Council's Health and Safety management system and details the commitment the Council has for maintaining and improving the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff, and others who may be affected by our activities.
- b) The Board scrutinised four quarterly reports which presented a review of the Council performance. Scrutiny Board members were invited to examine areas of under performance and where appropriate recommend remedial action. Members were invited to note areas of good and outstanding performance.
- c) The Board scrutinised a report which provided members with an update regarding the Council's performance in relation to enquiries received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2023/24.
- d) The Scrutiny Board received a series of reports throughout 2024/25 on the Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme. The reports provided members with the opportunity to review the budget monitoring process for the financial year 2024/25. Members were therefore able to consider the key information relating to the forecast revenue budget position and the financial position of the Council's capital programme.
- e) The Board received a report detailing the Annual Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement. There was a statutory requirement for councils to review governance arrangements at least once a year. This enabled the authority to monitor achievement of strategic objectives, consider whether those objectives had led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services and demonstrate to the public that it has effective stewardship of the public funds.

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- f) The Board received a presentation on the Oldham Plan, prior to its subsequent approval by Council. The Oldham Plan being a partnership approach to developing a long-term vision for Oldham which reflected the aspirations and priorities of our residents and which would act as a roadmap for delivering the borough's ambitions to 2030.
 - g) Green New Deal Strategy – The Board were provided with an update on the Strategy that had previously been adopted in 2020 and further updated on the Oldham Community Network and Generation Oldham.
 - h) The Board received a report providing details of the number of complaints handled via the Oldham Council Tenants Housing Complaints Policy from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
 - i) The Board received a report which identified the partnerships in which the Council has an interest. The Council has a wide variety of partnerships each of which has its own risk profile. The report set out the assessment of risk for each partnership with an opinion as to whether there was anything which the Scrutiny Board needed to highlight to either Cabinet or full Council. The report did not identify any risk assessments which required a report to Cabinet or full Council.
 - j) The Board considered a report of the Director of Children's Services which gave an update on the progress on the delivery of three new residential children's homes which had been approved by the Cabinet.
 - k) At separate meetings the Board scrutinised the Administration's budget proposals for 2025/26 and the Main Opposition Group's alternate proposals. The Scrutiny Board's various recommendations were subsequently presented to and considered by the Cabinet, prior to Cabinet making a recommendation to Council on the 2025/26 budget.
 - l) The Scrutiny Board received a presentation on staffing trends and workforce retention strategies in the Council, with data benchmarking the organisation against national and sector-wide data.

4. Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board

4.1 Membership

Councillor Junaid Hussain (Chair) McLaren (Vice Chair), Councillors Ghafoor, Kouser, Malik, Moores, Murphy, Sharp, Shuttleworth, Wilkinson and Williamson.

Substitute members - Councillors Harkness, Iqbal and Quigg.

- 4.2 The Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board looks at how the Council fulfils three of its strategic priorities and is also responsible for reviewing and scrutinising the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions which may affect the Borough of Oldham and to exercise the functions of a crime and disorder committee including a review of the exercise of crime and disorder functions by responsible authorities and to review or scrutinise any local crime or disorder matter raised by a Member.

4.3 The Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board considered the following key issues during 2024/25: -

- a. The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Director of Communities and an associated presentation from the Youth Service, which provided an update on Oldham Council Youth Service Performance, highlighting Key work streams.
- b. The Scrutiny Board considered a report that provided an update on Oldham Council Libraries' Performance, highlighting capital and revenue programmes.
- c. The Board scrutinised quarterly reports which presented a review of the performance, relating to service areas covered by this Board's remit.
- d. The Scrutiny Board received a report that updated Members on the emerging Economic Plan for Oldham. The Plan aimed to set out the strategic context for economic growth within the borough covering the period up to 2030. The Oldham Economic Review, (OER), was originally published in March 2022 and was undertaken by an independent panel of experts with a focus on examining the opportunities for sustained and positive economic growth within Oldham. Building on the OER work, the Oldham Economic Board was established in July 2023 sitting within the context of the wider Oldham Economic Partnership. The Economic Board consists of a range of stakeholders from business, education, and wider public sector partners. The board provides a vehicle to drive forward OER recommendations and seeks to ensure that sustained and good growth is achieved across Oldham.
- e. The Scrutiny Board received a report on the High Street Accelerator Programme.
- f. The Scrutiny Board received a report that provided an update on the latest position regarding the national changes that have directly impacted on the Building Control profession and to inform members of how these changes had impacted on the Council's building control service, the current pressures, challenges, and of options for addressing the varying issues.
- g. The Scrutiny Board considered a report regarding the emerging Oldham Town Centre Development Framework ('Creating a Better Place'), the programme to transform Oldham Town Centre, which included the delivery of 2,000 new homes.
- h. The Scrutiny Board received a detailed presentation which examined different approaches to work, with the overall aim of increasing employment and employment opportunities across the Borough of Oldham.
- i. The Scrutiny Board received a report that provided members with an overview of the work areas across Strategic Transport services and functions, including how these fit into the Greater Manchester picture and progress and delivery against Oldham's Transport Strategy aims, including:
 - GM Local Transport Plan (LTP)
 - The Bee Network
 - Bus Franchising
 - Oldham Transport Strategy – Progress & Delivery

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- Schools Active Travel Infrastructure Audit
 - Creating a Better Place
 - Oldham Bee Network Committee
- j. The Scrutiny Board were consulted on a Street Lighting Attachment Policy, for the Borough. Under Section 178 of The Highways Act 1980, there was a legal requirement for any individual who wished to attach signage or equipment to a street lighting asset to obtain a licence from the local highway authority.
 - k. In December 2024, the Scrutiny Board held a special meeting to consider two items (Inclusion of Oldham Mumps, Princes Gate into the Town Centre Development Partnership and Catering Review Implementation) which had been called-in (under the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules) by members of the Council. On this occasion the Scrutiny Board resolved to refer the decisions back Cabinet to determine at its next available meeting.
 - l. The Scrutiny Board received annual reports regarding Community Safety, Licensing and Emergency Planning.
 - m. The Scrutiny Board held a further special meeting, in January 2024, to consider an item (Oldham MBC – Temporary Accommodation Fair Share Policy), that had been called-in by members of the Council, in accordance with the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules. On this occasion the Scrutiny Board agreed to uphold the decisions that the Cabinet had made regarding this matter.
 - n. The Scrutiny Board received a report which provided an update on the Oldham Green New Deal delivery programme and in particular the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership initiative – only the third local authority initiative of its type in the UK and the first to combine a Strategic Energy Partnership approach with the delivery of a heat network zone and Community Led Energy Planning.
 - o. The Scrutiny Board received a report which provided a bi-annual update on the Creating a Better Place Programme. Cabinet approval was first obtained in January 2020 for the Council's 'Creating a Better Place (CaBP)' strategic framework and capital regeneration programme.
 - p. The Scrutiny Board were consulted on a report, prior to Cabinet consideration thereon, which sought approval for the acceptance of £20,100,000, from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on behalf of national government following receipt of grant notification on 21st February 2025.

5. Children's and Young People Scrutiny Board

5.1 Membership

Councillor Hobin (Chair), McLaren (Vice Chair), Councillors Adams, Zaheer Ali, Ball, Bishop, Hughes, Sajed Hussain, Iqbal, Moores and Shuttleworth.

Substitute members - Councillors Ibrahim, Malik, Rustidge and Williamson.

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- 5.2 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Board examines how the Council fulfils its strategic priority of A great start and skills for life. This strategic outcome aims to:
- a. Increase the number of quality school and college places for Oldham's young people,
 - b. Expand youth activities outside of school,
 - c. Improve post-16 education and training, so everyone has options to help them increase their skills and knowledge.

Areas covered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board in scrutinising how the Council meets this strategic outcome include:

- Educational achievement
- School performance
- Healthy lifestyles
- Youth service
- Looked after children.
- Early Help
- Children's Social Care
- Child Protection
- School Attendance and Exclusions
- School leavers' progression to further education and training
- Healthy schools
- Take-up of sporting and cultural opportunities
- Increased involvement of young people in developing services
- Education, employment and training for care leavers
- Children's Centres
- Young people's fear of crime
- Youth Offending
- Freedom from poverty
- Youth Justice Plan
- Children's and Young People Strategic Plan
- Higher Education provision including Oldham College and UCO

- 5.3 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Board considered the following key issues during 2024/25: -
- a. Progress in implementing Oldham's Start for Life and Family Hub transformation programme and next steps in the ongoing development and long-term sustainability planning.
 - b. The Board received a report which outlined the Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan for 2024/25. The Plan was a statutory document that the Scrutiny Board was required to scrutinise prior to its eventual consideration and approval by the Council.
 - c. The Board received an annual report that updated Board members on current participation and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) rates together with a summary on activity during the past academic year and planned in the future to ensure that we are shaping and influencing opportunities where possible for the Borough's 16–18-year-olds.

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- d. The Board received a report that provided an overview of corporate performance against agreed service business plan measures, in respect of Children's Services.
 - e. The Scrutiny Board received a report that provided an update on Children's Services Financial Performance, Improvement Plan and Transformation and Sustainability Programme.
 - f. The Scrutiny Board received a report that provided a briefing and update on the delivery of school places and on school place preference rates within the Local Authority.
 - g. The Scrutiny Board considered the annual LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) report. This was a report that presented an overview of the management of allegations in Oldham, and the role of the Designated Officer's team between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.
 - h. The Scrutiny Board received an Annual Report, which detailed an overview of the Complex Safeguarding Hub and the impact of the work undertaken by the Complex Safeguarding Hub. The report also outlined the different strands of the work the Complex Safeguarding Hub undertakes, and the outcomes achieved over the period of July 2023 – June 2024 and it set out the priorities for the upcoming 12 months.
 - i. In terms of Special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision, the Scrutiny Board received a report regarding the local area progress report joint Ofsted/CQC area SEND inspection of the Oldham partnership, that took place between Monday 26th June 2023 and Friday 30th June 2023. This report summarised the progress and impact of actions since the local area inspection. In doing so, it brought together and captured delivery of the local area partnership's priority action and improvement plan to date.
 - j. The Scrutiny Board received the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report, for the period 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024. The Board heard that the Working Together guidance required the Safeguarding Children Partnership to publish a report on an annual basis. The purpose of this report was to set out what activities partners have undertaken jointly between April 2023 and March 2024.
 - k. The Annual report on key stage outcomes was received by the Scrutiny Board. The Board were provided information from the report including:- Outcomes for our youngest children continue to improve. There are also substantial improvements in pupil progress in the same period, and in pupils achieving grades 9-5 including English and Maths; School level analysis shows improving trends in outcomes at ten of thirteen secondary schools since the 2019.; Gaps between our Disadvantaged and non-Disadvantaged pupils are smaller than national, and in some cases their outcomes exceed national averages.
 - l. Members received a positive update on the rate of repeat referrals in Children's Social Care. The rate was 15% which was below the national benchmark of 22.4%. The next phase of work is to sustain this progress to ensure the rate remains at or below this benchmark.
 - m. The Scrutiny Board received the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) report from the Assistant Director of Education & Early Years. The Board received an introduction and overview of the Work of SACRE.
 - n. The Board received the Corporate Performance Report. The purpose of this report was to provide an overview of corporate performance against agreed service business plan measures for the 2024/25 municipal year.

6. Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board

6.1 Membership:-

Councillor Moores (Chair), McLaren (Vice Chair), Councillors Adams, Hamblett, Maggie Hurley, Junaid Hussain, Ibrahim, Kouser, Malik, Rustidge and Sharp.

Substitute members - Councillors Iqbal, Quigg and Williamson.

- 6.2 The Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board will look at the how the Council fulfils its strategic priority of healthy, safe and well supported residents. Looking after our most vulnerable residents, keeping people safe and healthy are crucial responsibilities of any local authority focusing on services for adults and public health services to monitor progress towards improving health, lifestyles and quality of care across the Borough; and providing oversight of integration and partnership working within and between the council and health bodies. The Board will also oversee the active lifestyle related functions and activity across the Borough. The Board will review and scrutinise the commissioning and delivery of local health and social care services in Oldham to ensure reduced health inequalities, access to services and the best outcomes for local people. The Board will discharge its statutory duties to:
- a. The review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the Council's area.
 - b. The making of reports and recommendations to relevant NHS bodies and health service providers.
 - c. Responding to proposals and consultations from NHS bodies in respect of substantial variations in service provision and any other major consultation exercises.
 - d. 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.
 - e. All matters relating to Healthwatch.
- 6.3 The Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board considered the following key issues during 2024/25: -

- a. A presentation on the Council's preparation for an assessment by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which would take place within the next 18 months - up to December 2025. The CQC was tasked with assessing local health and care systems under the Health and Care Act 2022. These assessments aim to understand how care is improving outcomes and reducing inequalities. The focus is on local authorities' compliance with the Care Act 2014. The assessment period will start with the local authority's receipt of an information request and ends with the final report's publication. It mainly considers evidence from the 12 months preceding the assessment. CQC's Single Assessment Framework, includes nine quality statements across four themes: Working with people; Providing support; Ensuring safety and Leadership.

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- b. The Board received a report and presentation regarding the current market for the provision of care home services. The presentation provided an overview of Oldham's care home sector.
 - c. The Director of Public Health submitted the Public Health Annual Report 2023/24. The 2023/24 report had taken a data led approach to examine the relationship between housing, health, and health inequalities. There was a particular focus and consideration on the cumulative effect of poor-quality housing on those most at risk of experiencing health inequalities and it set out a set of key recommendations in response to the findings. The report acknowledged the many examples of how Oldham was seeking to respond to the challenges it faced.
 - d. The Board received a report of the Director of Public Health which presented an update on Oldham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Health and Wellbeing Board aim to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Oldham and reduce inequalities for all ages.
 - e. The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, which presented an update on the drug strategy milestones and key achievements of Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Service in Oldham. Having a high functioning drug and alcohol treatment and recovery offer was an essential component of the range of activities required to achieve better population health and reduce demand on health and social care services.
 - f. The Board received a regular report detailing the Corporate Performance Report (CPR) which provided an overview of corporate performance against agreed service business plan measures for 2024/25.
 - g. The Board received a presentation on adult social care in Oldham, focusing on commissioning processes, legislative frameworks, demographics, market sustainability, gaps, opportunities, and future priorities. The approach aimed to ensure that care services were high quality, financially sustainable, and designed to foster independence and improve outcomes for service users. Collaboration with providers was a central theme, with a shift towards preventative and strength-based models of care. National frameworks, such as the Care Act 2014, alongside ongoing financial pressures and the integration of health and social care systems, shaped the local agenda.
 - h. The Board received a report of the Director of Public Health, which presented an update on the Health and Wellbeing Board's two-year Health Inequalities Plan 2022-2024. The Plan addressed various dimensions of inequality across the borough.
 - i. A report was presented by the Director of Public Health that provided an overview of the progress made in reducing smoking rates during pregnancy in Oldham. A presentation was also given by NHS Northern Care Alliance Community Care Midwives on how they encouraged mothers and their partners to quit smoking both during and following pregnancy. The discussion highlighted key initiatives, including community-based interventions, smoking cessation programs, and financial incentives for expectant mothers to quit smoking. Members welcomed the progress and discussed the need for further outreach efforts.
 - j. The Board considered proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference following Salford City Council's decision to withdraw from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the NHS Northern Care Alliance. The amendments included reducing the committee's size and revising quorum requirements.

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- k. The Board received the MioCare Annual Review, which provided an update on the operational and financial performance of MioCare Group during 2023/24, along with future business strategy and budget considerations for 2024/25. Members discussed challenges faced in the sector and the role of MioCare in addressing them.
 - l. The Board considered a presentation, delivered by the Director of Adult Social Care, outlining the Adult Social Care (ASC) Target Operating Model (TOM). Key points included: That the model focuses on a strengths-based approach, emphasising prevention, self-help, and independence.
 - m. The Director of Public Health presented a report on the Young People's Sexual Health and substance misuse service. The report highlighted: the integrated service (MYNO) delivered by Early Break in partnership with HCRG Care Group and The Proud Trust; a 40% increase in young people accessing sexual health services; 250 young people engaged in structured substance misuse treatment annually, with an 84% successful completion rate; and collaboration with schools, youth services, and community outreach teams.
 - n. In May 2025, the Board held a special meeting that had been convened to consider an item of called-in business, from the Cabinet's meeting held on 7th April 2025 in relation to Future Commissioning Arrangements for Supported Living Services for People with Learning Disabilities, Complex Needs and/or Autism. After a detailed discussion, the Scrutiny Board upheld the Cabinet's original decision.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming

- 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules requires each of the Overview and Scrutiny Boards to prepare and maintain a Work Programme. These Work Programmes are maintained by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, in conjunction with Constitutional Services and are co-ordinated in consultation with the Scrutiny Board Chairs. This approach allows for an efficient use of resources and avoids duplication, allowing for flexibility to accommodate any urgent and/or short-term issues that may arise.
- 7.2 Updated Scrutiny Work Programmes for each Board 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.
- 7.3 2023/24 saw the implementation of the new overview and scrutiny structure, with the introduction of the four Scrutiny Boards. 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 carried over as the new arrangements took shape.

8. Overview and Scrutiny and Procedural Arrangements

- 8.1 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Boards hold 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 2024/25 there were eight instances of General Exception, five 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.

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 2024/25:
- Statutory Scrutiny Officer – the Council is required by the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) to designate a statutory Scrutiny Officer with the functions of: (a) promoting the role of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees,
 - (b) providing support to the Council's overview and scrutiny committees and the members of those committees,
 - (c) providing support and guidance to all Members and Officers of the Council in relation to the functions of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees.

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- The Constitutional Services team undertake lead roles in respect of the four Scrutiny Boards, maintaining Work Programmes, following up on 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 Boards were convened and held in accordance with relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 9.3 The scrutiny function also benefitted from the active support given by the Council's partners across public and voluntary sectors who prepared reports for consideration and attended Board meetings to assist Committee members in their scrutiny considerations.

10. A New Structure for Overview and Scrutiny

- 10.1 From 2024/25 the Council has been operating a further Scrutiny Body – the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) for the Northern Care Alliance.
- 10.2 The purpose of a JHOSC is to scrutinise services provided by the Northern Care Alliance relating to the health of the population in Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Salford and contribute to the development of policy to improve health and reduce health inequalities in respect of services provided by the hospitals.
- 10.3 The Committee comprises member representatives from Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Salford Councils (three from each authority). The JHOSC has delegated powers, on behalf of the four local authorities, to undertake all the necessary functions of health scrutiny in accordance with part 4, Health Scrutiny by Local Authorities, of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, relating to reviewing and scrutinising health service matters provided by Northern Care Alliance. A similar arrangement was previously in place in respect of the NHS Pennine Acute Hospitals Trust. This was subsequently amended following the decision of Salford City Council to withdraw their involvement in the Committee.
- 10.4 The Joint Scrutiny Committee met on several occasions during 2024/25 and Councillor McLaren was appointed Chair.

11. Ways to get involved with Overview and Scrutiny

- 11.1 All the Overview and Scrutiny Boards have rolling work programmes which are updated and can be found as part of the agenda for each Board meeting.
- 11.2 Meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Boards are open for the public to attend, except when a meeting considers confidential or exempt information and the Board resolves to exclude the public. Agendas are published to Council's website and, along with the dates for future meetings, can be found here [Browse Committee Meetings, 2024/25 \(oldham.gov.uk\)](http://Browse Committee Meetings, 2024/25 (oldham.gov.uk))

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- 11.3 Overview and Scrutiny Boards provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions, providing the issue is relevant to the Board'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 Boards.

12 Financial Implications

- 12.1 Not applicable.

13 Legal Implications

- 13.1 Not applicable.

14 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

- 14.1 Not applicable.

15 Key Decision

- 15.1 No.

16 Key Decision Reference

- 16.1 Not applicable.

17. Background Papers

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

18. Appendices

- 18.1 None.