

Report to Council

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16

Report of: Cllr Colin McLaren, Chair of Overview & Scrutiny

Officer Contact: Dami Awobajo, Head of Business Intelligence

Report Author: Lori Hughes, Constitutional Services Officer
Ext. 4716

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Reason for Decision

To provide Council with an overview of the contribution made by Overview and Scrutiny during 2015 / 16 as required in line with the Council's Constitution.

Executive Summary

The report outlines the purpose of overview and scrutiny, the roles and responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Performance and Value for Money Select Committee, a summary of the work undertaken by overview and scrutiny during 2015/16 and an outline of how individuals can get involved in overview and scrutiny in Oldham.

Recommendations

That the report be approved.

1. **What is Overview and Scrutiny?**

- 1.1 All local authorities with an executive model have an Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) function, which was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000.
- 1.2 Overview and Scrutiny bodies are made up of Elected Members (Councillors) who are not members of the Cabinet but who hold those decision makers who are members of the Cabinet to account. The Overview and Scrutiny process is not political – it is driven by the interests of the residents of Oldham.
- 1.3 O&S bodies cannot make decisions, but instead examine policies, decisions, areas of work and make recommendations to the Cabinet. It acts as a “critical friend” to the Council and its partners around the decision-making process and uses informed debate and evidence to make its recommendations.
- 1.4 Scrutiny works to drive forward improvements to the Council’s policies, procedures and delivery.

2 **Policy Development**

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

3 **Roles and Responsibilities**

3.1 **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board**

3.1.2 Membership

- Councillor McLaren (Chair)
- Councillor Ball
- Councillor Dean
- Councillor Garry
- Councillor Judge
- Councillor Klonowski
- Councillor Williams
- Councillor Williamson
- Councillor Cosgrove (substitute)
- Councillor Ames (substitute)

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- Councillor Briggs (substitute)
 - Councillor Salamat (substitute)
 - Councillor Rehman (substitute)
 - Councillor Harkness (substitute)

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

3.1.4 The Board is also responsible for:

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

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

3.1.6 Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee was established to discharge the responsibilities of the Council for health scrutiny functions, receive and respond to referrals from Healthwatch Oldham and also scrutinise the Health and Wellbeing Board and its appropriate policies and strategies to include the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

3.2 **Performance and Value for Money Select Committee**

3.2.1 Membership

- Councillor Wrigglesworth (Chair)
- Councillor Briggs
- Councillor M. Bashforth
- Councillor Malik
- Councillor McCann
- Councillor Murphy
- Councillor Mushtaq
- Councillor Roberts
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Rehman (substitute)
- Councillor Ball (substitute)
- Councillor S. Bashforth (substitute)
- Councillor Ali (substitute)
- Councillor Cosgrove (substitute)
- Councillor Sykes (substitute)
- Councillor Blyth (substitute)

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

3.2.3 One of the most important aspects of the Select Committee's role is to examine the Council's budget proposals each year. This involves considering various stages of both the administration's budget and any alternative budget proposals put forward by the opposition. During 2015/16 this included three tranches of budget proposals.

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

4 Where has O&S contributed in 2015/16?

4.1 O&S Management Board: Key Plans and Strategies

4.1.1 Oldham Education and Skills Commission – the Board were provided with an update on the Commission report and the 19 key recommendations which had emerged from the Commission's research. The partnership with independent partners was explained along with the implementation board which would be led by a practitioner. Targets had been established with education providers. The themes were transforming outcomes, cooperative contribution and alignment of the education system with the economy. Consultation, governance arrangements and the next steps were outlined to the board. The Board commented on the importance of communicating with school governing bodies, the needs and aspirations of young people and questioned funding for those pupils who were less able and those who were not pushed to their full potential. Members also queried the expenditure per pupil at primary and secondary level. The Training of governors was also raised to include questions to ask to challenge headteachers. Members also raised the role of ward councillors which could be developed. Members also raised the need to develop a closer relationship with primary and nursery schools. The Board would continue to review this area in its 2016/17 work programme.

4.1.2 Pupil Place Planning and Education Capital Strategy – The Board were provided information related to the prediction in demand for schools which was critical to the planning of the correct amount of school places in the correct geographic location to satisfy demand. Members were informed of the methodology used and the long term strategy and funding criteria. The Board were informed that this would need further review with regard to the Government's announcement related to Academies. Members expressed concerns related to Free Schools and provision which could not be maintained. Members sought clarification on basic needs allocation, if there was input from Planning on building new homes, provision for pupils with learning needs and the scope for the Council to develop its own academy chain.

4.1.3 Affordable Warmth Strategy – The Board were provided with an update on the scheme which was being delivered by a number of partners who offered help to tackle fuel poverty. The project had been recognised nationally. Funding had been secured for 2016/17 and discussions were ongoing for a delivery model across the sub-region. Members were informed that referrals were encouraged through front line staff. A steering group met quarterly. Members expressed their thanks to the team for the work which had been done.

4.1.4 Homelessness Strategy – The Board were presented with the process of the development of a new five-year Homelessness Strategy. The strategy set out how it would work with partners to address homelessness issues in the Borough. The Board were advised of pressures which included the impact of welfare reform on not only the Council but other housing providers. The Board noted the number of achievements which included letting social-rented homes through a Common Allocations Framework, modernised approach to temporary accommodation; increased access to the private sector; and pre-tenancy

training where there was a high risk of new tenants not maintaining their tenancy. Key challenges outlined included housing supply to meet demand; impact of Welfare Reform; unrealistic expectations; public sector funding cuts; current economic situation and the impact on benefits and barriers to access accommodation. The Board questioned the prevention and early intervention when working with young people and were informed about provision in those situations. Members received clarification on the number of homeless and support available. Clarification was provided on the classification of homelessness. The Board expressed concern around unfit accommodation.

- 4.1.5 Generation Oldham – the Board noted progress on the programme which included a network of community energy collaborators being in place, increased resident awareness of community energy options and opportunities, bespoke package of support and development opportunity and secured external resources which supported schemes and built community capacity. Members were advised of the delivery by a new Community Benefit Society which set up to deliver installation of photovoltaic panels. The Oldham Community Power Limited company was highlighted to the Board. The Board queried the use of biomass and it was explained that this was not in Phase 1. The Board also queried the use of former coal mines and it was explained that the Coal Authority were being consulted and a feasibility study being investigated. Members also questioned the role of the planning process in new build programmes and if the Council had influence in persuading developers to include sustainable energy. Members noted that primary schools had been included and secondary schools had not and were informed that these would be included in Phase 2.
- 4.1.6 Public Services Reform – the Board were presented with an update on the Early Help Offer which had been formally established in April 2015. The model was made up of internal Council services which provided intensive support the infrastructure which supported the delivery, the externally commissioned part of the service provided lower level support and engagement. The Board noted the excellent progress to date and the relatively high number of referrals to Early Help. There were high numbers of people being supported by the engagement casework and positive outcomes for those people supported by the service which included work and skills; crime and anti-social behaviour; school attendance and behaviour; housing; mental well-being; and drugs and alcohol. The Board enquired as to how referrals were made; asked about the work of the GPs and the Clinical commissioning Group (CCG) and financial risks.
- 4.1.7 Highway Asset Management Policy, Framework and Strategy – The Board considered the document which was a requirement of the Department for Transport. The document detailed the strategy for the whole of Highway Infrastructure Assets and the individual processes for the maintenance of all major highway assets. The processes had been developed for best value for money. The Board recommended the information related to the testing of reinstatements completed by utility and other companies and made reference to fines where such was found to be substandard, qualification of operators and reference was made to Highways England. The Board endorsed the report.
- 4.1.8 Two Year Plan for Delivering the Offer to Two Year Olds (Early Years) and Extended Offer to all Three and Four Year Olds – The Board reviewed information related to the entitlement of free early education for disadvantaged two year olds. Success was dependent upon all parties – parents, early education providers, health professionals, children’s centres and the wider council. A challenge had been to secure sufficient places in good quality early education settings and over the course of the project, there had been a 164% growth in the number of places funded across the borough. The Board were informed of the impact of the Child Care Bill (2015) and the extension of the entitlement to three and four year olds but the impact could not yet be assessed.

4.2 **O&S Management Board: internal and external consultations**

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- 4.2.1 Review of Gambling Policy – the Board were presented with the changes to the Gambling Policy which was reviewed every three years. The changes included revision of the Operator’s Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice by the Gambling Commission. The Board commended the report to Full Council.
- 4.2.3 Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – The Board were presented with the framework consultation and call for sites. The Framework identified land needed to meet housing and business needs and the management of future supply of land across Greater Manchester. The key issues for Oldham were housing, employment and transport and the lack of opportunities in north and east Manchester. Members sought clarification on the impact on education and health facilities which the Local Plan would need to address. Transport links had improved and a development corridor created along the tramline with employment opportunities.
- 4.3 **O&S Management Board: Services monitored**
- 4.3.1 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - The Board received information on the work of the agencies in the hub as well as progression in the development in the next phase. The MASH had been designed to streamline the routes for referrals and notifications to the local authority was a safe environment where safeguarding partners shared information in a dynamic way which identified and assessed risks. The Board requested that a presentation be made to each District Executive on the role of the MASH unit and the link to District Teams. Members of the Board were also invited to a tour of the MASH unit.
- 4.3.2 Get Oldham Working – The Board were provided with an update and in-depth case study for the Programme. Members received clarification on support to residents, the work programme, employer engagement and experiences by a participant on the programme and their experience with other agencies. Provision focused on those of working age, but there were increased pressures on funding. Greater Manchester Combined Authority would be commissioning the European Social Fund and seek to co-commission the next Work Programme. There would be an opportunity for Get Oldham Working to become part of the Welfare to Work Framework.
- 4.3.3 Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Business Plan 2014/15 and 2015/18 – The Board received the Business Plan which enabled board members to gain an understanding of the issues that the LSCB would be working towards related to safeguarding children in 2015-16. The Board were informed of the three strategic aims and priorities had been identified through consultation. The Overview and Scrutiny Board members raised issues related to serious case reviews and asked that outcomes and implications be reviewed by the Board and shared in training. They also requested that training be expanded into a stepped approach. Members raised the issue of support to young people.
- 4.3.4 Safeguarding Adults Improvement Plan – A review of adult safeguarding had been developed to ensure that the Council continued to meet the framework as set out in the Care Act 2014 and a person centred approach for keeping people safe as part of the making safeguarding personal initiative had also been developed. Making Safeguarding Personal had been launched in August 2015. There was a focus on quality assurance and roles for safeguarding and the Mental Capacity Act. Quality monitoring capacity was being enhanced which supported a more pro-active and robust scrutiny of provision of care in care homes, domiciliary care and supported living. The Board were informed of changes to the Framework operating system. Investment in skills and competencies required for the development of the service had been made. The Board raised concerns on reporting problems and it was clarified that the care homes were legally bound under
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the Act to report any issues. Members also sought and received clarification on the role of community groups and volunteers as well as financial implications.

4.3.5 Investment in Clean Streets – the Board were provided with an update on the enforcement programme which support the Changing Behaviours Programme, Landlord Licensing Scheme and service redesign. The zero tolerance approach to flytipping and targeted households was outlined as well as changes in environmental legislation. The service redesign with additional street cleaners was explained as well as the modern technology being put in place which enabled a quicker response as well as improvements being delivered in the context of efficiencies. Staff were building relationships with the communities they service and taking on a wider role which included public health training to offer a supportive role and information to residents.

4.4 **Motions Referred to Overview and Scrutiny**

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

- Community Shop – this item was referred to Board related to a social enterprise which has a network of social supermarkets which provided a means for reatilers, brand and manufacturers to redistribute their surplus stock. The Overview and Scrutiny Board initial considered the report on 14th July and recommended a workshop for all elected members and a visit to another community shop. The further report was considered by the Board on 13th September 2015 which recommended that risk assessment and cost benefit analysis be carried out on combined model for Community Shop and Fare Share models. Work is still ongoing.
- Community Bank – investigations were made in the concept of a Community Bank for Oldham. The purpose of which would be to offer a competitive community-based bank alternative to the traditional high street offer. The Board were informed of the capital funding requirement and asked of any authorities were exploring the issue. The Board were informed that a community bank which had been established by another authority had failed after one year with capital implications for that authority. It was agreed that a community bank offer would not be explored further.
- Support for Jobseekers and Employees with Dyslexia – a motion had been referred to the Board regarding support to residents with dyslexia. The motion had been positively received. The Board were provided with review of progress and work undertaken which include meeting with the Dyslexia Foundation, the review of the online application process and recruitment training of staff, meetings with Job Centre Staff and funding made available for a pilot programme to be supported.
- Loyalty Card Scheme – a motion was referred to Board for the examination of the practicalities of the introduction of a shop local loyalty scheme in Oldham and its district centres. The Board were informed about the “Oldham Offers” scheme which had been introduced which enabled the promotion of offers/discounts offered by businesses in Oldham. Phase Two of the schemes was being considered which included the development of an app and push notification whereby shoppers were notified of current offers/discounts in real time. The Board agreed that the Oldham Offer schemed be delivered.
- Mosquito Device – this was a Youth Council motion referred to the Board by Council related to the installation of mosquito devices and their impact on young

people. Representatives of the Board met with representatives from the Youth Council, District representatives and Community Safety officers as part of a working group. It was agreed that the Council Policy would need to be reviewed and Community Safety representatives would meet with the Youth Council. A report is due back in 2016/17.

- Irresponsible Dog Ownership – a motion was referred to the Board to ensure that the Council was following best practice, taking account of recent research, current practice and the powers granted in recent legislation. The Board has been receiving regular updates including the examination of new powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which consolidated dog control orders and given the Council flexibility to tackle local issues in public spaces. The Board were apprised of the complaints regarding dog fouling, DNA sequencing and signage. The detailed consultation required for the consolidation of the previous four orders in to a Public Spaces Protection Order would commence in May 2016. A further update would be report to a future Board meeting.
- Street Charter – a motion was referred to the Board related to the “Who Put That There” campaign of the Royal National Institute for the Blind which endorsed that local authorities engage with blind and partially sighted people to develop a Street Charter for the removal of obstacles and hazards from the public realm. Work was ongoing with several agencies and representative groups for the development of a Charter.

4.5 PVFM Select Committee: Finance Scrutiny

- 4.5.1 Scrutiny of Budget Proposals – The Council’s overall budget proposals were considered by the Committee at various stages during the 2015/16 Municipal Year. Initial outline proposals were presented to the Committee during September 2015 and they continued to be considered at various intervals up until approval at full Council in February 2016.
- 4.5.2 Community Care Budget – The Committee were provided with an updated on mainstream funding and the complexity of demand for adult social services which had increased. Integrated ways of working with organisation such as Royal Oldham Hospital and Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group were pivotal in addressing residents social care needs.

4.6 PVFM Select Committee: Performance Scrutiny

- 4.6.1 Quarterly Council Performance Report and Challenge – Reports were presented to the Committee in terms of how the Council was performing against its key local and statutory priorities. The Committee undertook more detailed scrutiny of a number of topics through examining the performance report. These included 16 – 18 year olds who were not in education, training or employment (NEET) to be included alongside the work placement, Social Trading Arm, Council Sickness Absence and changes in School OFSTED Outcomes.
- 4.6.2 Unity Partnership – The Committee examined the performance of the Unity Partnership against the contract and its key performance indicators and had an overview of the changes in the Strategic Services Partnership Agreement, revised Key Performance Indicators and the savings target for 2015/16.
- 4.6.3 First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO) – FCHO provided an update on services and performance. Following the Stock Transfer agreement, the Offer Document had been completed 12 months earlier than assured. Members received clarification on

adaptations, allocation policy, criteria used to identify and support housing needs, tenancy eligibility and members inquiries.

4.6.4 Greater Manchester Police – GMP provided an update on their budget for 2016/17. The relationship between GMP and the Council was praised for the outstanding work on domestic violence and mental health. Members were informed Greater Manchester had been identified as the most challenging area in England and Wales for policing. A new operating model had been designed which enabled GMP to be equipped and trained to manage the challenge faced by communities. There would be investment in technology to facilitate mobile working and investment in body-worn video technology.

4.6.5 Oldham Community Leisure (OCL) – the summary quarterly report was presented on key performance indicators. Year one of the contract had now been completed. The overall performance had been good and the relationship with the client remained very good, in particular, the joint effort on the new Leisure builds which had been positive and productive.

4.7 **Health Scrutiny Sub Committee**

4.7.1 The Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee has met six times since April 2014. The Committee has received a number of reports from across the Health and Care Sector in Oldham, but has shown a particular interest in the work being conducted by the Integrated Commissioning Partnership, particularly the re-shaping of carer services, how the hospital discharge process is being improved and how the development of the two new leisure centres in Oldham and Royton will improve the health and wellbeing of Oldham's residents.

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

5 **Ways to get involved with O&S?**

5.1 Overview and Scrutiny has a rolling work programme. The current version, for 2016/7, can be found on the Council's website at:

5.2 If you are interested in attending a meeting of either the Board or Select Committee, meeting dates can be found on the website at:

<http://decisionrecording.oldham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=-13236&bcr=1>

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

5.4 You can contact Lori Hughes on 0161 770 4716 to ask Overview and Scrutiny to consider an issue which has an impact on Oldham and local people. This could be a problem, Council service or an issue which you think the Council should take in lead in improving.

6 **Legal Services Comments**

6.1 n/a

7. **Co-operative Agenda**

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- 7.1 The Annual report contains examples of work aligned to the Council’s co-operative approach in relation to issues that have an impact of local communities.
- 8 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**
- 8.1 None
- 9 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**
- 9.1 None
- 10 **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**
- 10.1 No
- 11 **Key Decision**
- 11.1 No
- 12 **Key Decision Reference**
- 12.1 N/A
- 13 **Background Papers**
- 13.1 None
- 14 **Appendices**
- 14.1 None