

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORE SERVICES

**TITLE: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (OSC)
ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24**

REPORT TO:	Full Council
Date of Meeting	25 July 2024
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Not Applicable
Key Decision	No
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of report

The purpose of the attached Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Annual Report is to inform Full Council of the work undertaken by committee members during 2023-24 and to publish the report for the public as evidence of local authority as well as partner agency decision makers being held to account.

Council Plan Priority

- Healthy Barnsley
- Growing Barnsley
- Sustainable Barnsley
- Learning Barnsley
- Enabling Barnsley

Recommendations

That Full Council:-

1. Receive the OSC's Annual Report and note the contribution of the work undertaken during 2023-24 in further improving services across the borough.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Scrutiny was introduced in the Local Government Act 2000 as a means to hold Council Cabinets to account for their decisions. Since then, subsequent acts of parliament have bolstered Scrutiny by extending its remit beyond the council to the work of partner organisations as well. Much of this legislation was

consolidated in the Localism Act 2011. This includes Overview and Scrutiny having a specific role in exercising the Authority's powers in relation to the scrutiny of health services and the crime and disorder partnership in the borough.

1.2 Overview and scrutiny is carried out by non-Cabinet Members and is there to act as the 'check and balance' to decisions made by both the Council and its partners. The key principles of Overview and Scrutiny are to:

- Provide 'critical friend' challenge
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public
- Drive improvement in public services

1.3 In March 2019, the findings of the Corporate Peer Challenge of Barnsley Council, undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA), were presented in a feedback report. As part of this it was acknowledged that 'The council's scrutiny function appears to work well. Members are knowledgeable about the areas they scrutinise, and they are appropriately inquisitive about the subject matter, with good working relationships with officers'.

1.4 Within the LGA report it was recommended that 'the work and impact of scrutiny could be further enhanced if members' activities and achievements in shaping and improving policy through overview and scrutiny were pulled together in an annual report, which is then reported to Full Council on an annual basis'.

1.5 At the end of the 2018/2019 municipal year, the OSC annual report was introduced in response to this recommendation and serves to provide evidence of the work of committee members in the ongoing improvement of services delivered by the Council and those of its partners.

2. PROPOSAL

2.1 The attached Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2023-24 outlines the work of the committee, both in Barnsley and in partnership with neighbouring Councils, and its three task and finish groups, and demonstrates how this work contributes to the priorities of the council, thereby improving outcomes for the residents of Barnsley.

2.2 The report also highlights the findings from surveys completed by committee members and expert witnesses and this feedback will be used to drive improvements within the overview and scrutiny function.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Risk

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. It is noted however that the work of the committee helps to ensure the delivery of value for money services across the borough.

Scrutiny of service performance, both Council and its partners, contributes towards the effective control and mitigation of risks relating to the delivery of services including the protection of vulnerable adults and young people in the borough.

3.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

3.3 Equality

Ensuring the wellbeing and safeguarding of our vulnerable adults and children continues to be a priority for the Council and its partners. The work of Scrutiny contributes to this work in highlighting issues and ensuring appropriate plans are in place to address them.

The work of Scrutiny promotes equality and diversity and social inclusion throughout all its work in considering the performance and improvement of services. The Committee will continue to consider the impact of service provision on all Barnsley communities including vulnerable groups. The option to involve co-optees and technical advisors on the OSC and its TFGs will also enable the committee to further involve the voice of those from our diverse communities; thereby promoting social inclusion.

3.4 Sustainability

There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

3.5 Employee

There are no direct employee implications arising from this report.

3.6 Communications

It is noted that the work of Scrutiny keeps under review the performance of the Council and other relevant organisations in providing safeguarding and other services to Barnsley communities. Proactive communication about these services and activities takes place on a regular, planned basis as part of the communication strategy for each directorate.

In addition to ongoing communications, publication of an OSC Annual Report provides opportunity to document the Committee's activities and highlight its contribution to service improvement.

4. CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place with members of the committee and the Council's Senior Management Team.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 No alternative options have been considered.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 By producing an annual report, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee demonstrates the role it has to play in the Council's commitment to sound, effective decision making, which is critical to ensure it meets the needs of the residents of Barnsley; providing 'critical friend' challenge; amplifying the voice of communities; and driving service improvements. It also demonstrates how the Committee contributes to the priorities of the Council as it works towards Barnsley 2030.

7. GLOSSARY

LGA Local Government Association
OSC Overview & Scrutiny Committee
TFG Task & Finish Group

8. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2023-24

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Local Government Act 2000:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/part/1A/chapter/2/crossheading/overview-and-scrutiny-committees>
- Localism Act 2011:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf

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