

Report of the Executive Director Core Services and the Task & Finish Group Leads to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 29 April 2025

Report of the Task and Finish Groups for the 2024-25 Municipal Year

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report, and subsequent attached reports, is to inform the Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the work of the three task and finish groups (TFGs) for the 2024/25 municipal year.

2.0 Background

2.1 As part of their work programme, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee conduct three separate task and finish groups during the autumn/winter to allow for a more-in depth investigation into topics that have been identified by elected members as facing particular challenges or warranting more robust scrutiny.

2.2 For 2024/25 the three TFGs established by the committee were:-

- Autism (All Age) – Lead Member Cllr Will Fielding
- Barnsley Carers (All Age) - Lead Member Cllr Robert Barnard
- Barnsley Council's Great Childhoods Ambition – Cllr Paul Murray

2.3 Over the course of the investigations, the groups met with key officers (witnesses), went on site visits, and engaged with stakeholders, including service users.

2.4 It is worth acknowledging that there is significant correlation between the three task and finish groups this year, as effective pathways and support for those with Autism and for Young Carers enable those cohorts of children and young people to thrive.

3.0 Current Position

3.1 The attached reports (Items 6b – 6d) outline a summary of the findings and conclusions from the investigations and resulting recommendations, which can be found in section 5 of the reports.

3.2 The reports are being presented to the Committee for discussion, before being shared with the service for a response to the recommendations.

4.0 Future Plans & Challenges

4.1 The reports are scheduled to be presented (for information only) by the Chair of the Committee and the TFG Leads, to Cabinet on 14 May 2025.

4.2 Executive Directors, Cabinet Members, and key officers will be invited to attend the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 15 July 2025 to present their response to the recommendations, in line with the terms of reference for the committee.

4.3 As part of the ongoing process of continuous improvement, officers had already identified that there is a need to increase pre-decision scrutiny. This was further validated by the findings of the recent LGA Peer Review report. Therefore, steps will be taken to investigate the possibility of incorporating pre-decision scrutiny into the work of the task and finish groups for the 2025/26 municipal year. This will potentially have an impact on how the task and finish groups work in the future, meaning that they will be more flexible in their approach so that they can respond in a timely and effective way to issues that have been identified.

5.0 Invited Witnesses

5.1 The three Task and Finish Group Leads will be present at the meeting to represent the work of the groups.

6.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

6.1 For comment / discussion only.

7.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

- Item 6b (attached) - Report of the Autism Task and Finish Group
- Item 6c (attached) - Report of the Carers Task and Finish Group
- Item 6c (attached) - Report of the Great Childhoods Ambition Task and Finish Group
- Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Report:-
<https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s123365/Barnsley%20MBC%20CPC%202024%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf>

8.0 Glossary

OSC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
LGA	Local Government Association (LGA)
TFG(s)	Task and Finish Group(s)

9.0 Officer Contact

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16 April 2025