

Overview & Scrutiny Committee



ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



Chair's Foreword



I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function for 2021/22. This report provides an overview of the work undertaken by our committee members during the course of the year. This includes work undertaken as part of our committee meetings as well as our task and finish groups in considering services vital to the residents of Barnsley.

Overview and Scrutiny plays an important role in holding the local authority as well as partner agency decision makers to account. It helps to provide 'critical friend' challenge to ensure the effective delivery of public services and drive improvement. Although the committee is not a decision-making body, it is where parties come together to represent the voice of our diverse communities by influencing services and making recommendations.

During the last 12 months committee members have undertaken 38 meetings (committee meetings and task and finish group meetings), made 77 recommendations and considered 22 different topics covering the work of both the Council and its partners. Each of these contributed to the Council's priorities for 2021/22 :

Barnsley - the place of possibilities

Healthy Barnsley	Learning Barnsley	Growing Barnsley	Sustainable Barnsley
People are safe and feel safe.	People have the opportunities for lifelong learning and developing new skills including access to apprenticeships.	Business start ups and existing local businesses are supported to grow and attract new investment, providing opportunities for all.	People live in great places, are recycling more and wasting less, feel connected and valued in their community.
People live independently with good physical and mental health for as long as possible.	Children and young people achieve the best outcomes through improved educational achievement and attainment.	People have a welcoming, safe and enjoyable town centre and principal towns as destinations for work, shopping, leisure and culture.	Our heritage and green spaces are promoted for all people to enjoy.
We have reduced inequalities in health and income across the borough.	People have access to early help and support.	People are supported to have safe, warm, sustainable homes.	Fossil fuels are being replaced by affordable and sustainable energy and people are able to enjoy more cycling and walking.

Enabling Barnsley

We are a modern, inclusive, efficient, productive and high-performing council

We continue to undertake business by upholding the Council's values of being **Proud, Honest, Excellent** and **Working as a Team** and will continue this into our work during 2022/23.



Due to the global Coronavirus pandemic, the last year has brought new challenges to operating our Overview and Scrutiny function. In June we returned to 'in-person' meetings, and these were held at the Civic with Covid restrictions in place. However, it wasn't until October that we saw the committee return to the Council Chamber with the introduction of the hybrid working model allowing for the virtual attendance of Elected Members and witnesses. Despite the turbulence, I am proud to report that throughout the last 12 months we have continued to provide successful critical-friend challenge to a variety of issues and have made a number of recommendations in support of further improvements to services for the benefit of constituents. Our Task and Finish Groups were able to meet in person this year and they met with a variety of representatives including officers delivering services as well as service-users and young people. Hybrid working has presented new opportunities to meet with stakeholders we might previously have struggled to engage with, such as national agencies, and we hope to continue with this good practice over the coming years.

I would like to thank committee members as well as all those who provided information, attended meetings, and assisted with the Overview and Scrutiny function's work during the last 12 months, it is much appreciated. I look forward to the next 12 months and contributing positively to both the Council and our partners' work.



Councillor Jeff Ennis OBE

Introduction

What is Overview & Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny is the process of achieving open and democratic accountability of the provision of public services to ensure they meet the needs of local residents.

Like many other local authorities, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) operates the Cabinet system of governance for decision making, which is made up of the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and eight other Elected Members.

Overview and Scrutiny is carried out by non-Cabinet Members and is there to act as the check and balance to the decisions being 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; and
- Drive improvement in public services

Although Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the political process, it is not party political. Elected Members involved in the process are from across all political groups and are there to work together to look objectively at borough-wide issues. It is not a mechanism for individual complaints from the public or Elected Members - the Council has separate procedures for these - nor can Overview and Scrutiny look at individual planning or licensing decisions.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Structure in Barnsley

There are 12 Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings per year. The full committee of 34 Elected Members plus our Parent Governor Co-optee meet in plenary mode three times a year to look at safeguarding topics, including a private briefing on Children's Social Care performance, and to consider other significant issues, such as substantial NHS changes.

For the remaining nine meetings, committee members allocate time to three workstreams (Healthy Barnsley, Growing Barnsley & Sustainable Barnsley) which each meet three times per year. Workstreams consist of 12 Elected Members plus our Parent Governor Co-optee; however, all Committee Members usually have an open invitation to attend all workstreams if they so wish. These workstreams were introduced in 2020/21 and are now well embedded, enabling the committee to continue to align to the priorities of the Council as it works towards 2030.

The OSC also carries out its work programme through three Task and Finish Groups (TFGs), each made up of around eight committee members. Each of the groups examine a topic in detail and then report their findings to Cabinet.

Work Carried Out in 2021/22

Healthy Barnsley Workstream

Improving Cancer Early Diagnosis & Current Cancer Restoration

Position: In July 2021, this workstream considered the impact of Covid on the ambitions set by the government in the NHS Long Term Plan to have 75% of cancer patients diagnosed at Stage 1 or 2 by 2028. After expressing concerns, members were reassured that GPs had worked harder than usual under very challenging circumstances and had received specialist 'see the signs' training which aims to speed up cancer referrals.

Members provided additional challenge around appointment non-attendance and work done to understand the reasons; support for those with a learning disability who may be experiencing increasing anxieties due to Covid; the recruitment & retention of staff; and screening for prostate cancer.



Dentistry in Barnsley:

At the next meeting of this workstream, in November 2021, members heard about the challenges associated with dentistry in Barnsley and how Covid had impacted upon services. Information was provided by NHS England/Improvement and Healthwatch Barnsley. Members were extremely concerned to hear that contracting arrangements, introduced by the government in 2006, are no longer fit for purpose and do not account for population growth. They were also concerned to hear that over 70% of recent calls received by Healthwatch were in respect of patients being unable to access routine dental appointments. Members heard that Dentists were operating based on instructions from the Chief Dental Officer, with a 65% activity target, and faced tremendous difficulties including the increased need for PPE, the impact of social distancing requirements and stringent infection control measures. Members suggested that there is a need for a stand-alone urgent dental care centre in Barnsley; and challenged the lack of available data relating to demand across the borough; support for people in care homes; and the difference in appointment availability in the public vs private sector, which leads to a widening of health inequalities.



Barnsley Urgent & Emergency Care Delivery Board Strategic Winter Plan 2021/22: At the same meeting members heard about the plans to sustain health and social care services through the additional direct and indirect winter pressures associated with Covid. Members were keen for residents to be discouraged from using Accident & Emergency when it is not necessary and heard that although there are strong navigation and clear communications messages in place, many residents were attending as a last resort because they could not access GP services. Members sought reassurance that work is underway to try and address issues associated with accessing GP services; that the hospital had strong discharge processes; that elective care beds are protected throughout the winter to help with sustained recovery; the challenges associated with recruitment, particularly in the social care market; governance arrangements; and challenged the response times for Yorkshire Ambulance Services.

Children & Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS): In March 2022, the committee scrutinised the work of the CYPMHS, including CAMHS, Chilypep, and the Schools' Mental Health Team. Members heard about the key activities, plans and challenges facing Mental Health Service provision in Barnsley. Particular reference was made to the significant growth in demand for service provision. Members raised questions on addressing both the physical and mental health needs of those with eating disorders; the consistency of support in schools; the provision of a new Single Point of Contact for referrals; lessons learned as a result of the pandemic; transition arrangements to adult services; the benefits of 1-2-1 therapy compared to group work; and the mechanisms in place for reviewing the effectiveness of services. Members expressed serious concerns about the increasing number of young people presenting with eating disorders and were somewhat reassured to hear that work was being done with young people and families to effectively address the

increased demand. Members also heard that the bereavement service, which was described as 'overwhelmed', would soon be boosted by two additional posts and a review would then be undertaken to determine future arrangements going forward. Due to the increasing demand for mental health services and the impact on CAMHS wait times, the committee will scrutinise this topic again in the new municipal year.

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Provision in Barnsley:

At the same meeting, members heard that the recent inspection of the SEND System resulted in officers providing Ofsted with a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to outline the arrangements for making improvements to the system



in Barnsley. Members sought clarity on the number of pupils registered with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP); the proportion of EHCPs in schools; and the gender breakdown of those with an EHCP. Members provided challenge on raising awareness of the 'Local Offer' with families; the annual review of EHCPs; the action being taken to reduce the number of SEND exclusions; and the importance of inclusive provision in schools, including enrichment activities. Following member challenge, it was explained that more proactive work needs to be done to recognise where support is not working in school, and interventions can then be put in place to avoid exclusions. To support a reduction in exclusions, schools need to ensure that they have inclusive behaviour policies that do not discriminate against pupils with additional needs. Also, that schools would be encouraged to share good practice, whilst poor practice would be identified and addressed. Members were reassured to hear that there was currently no backlog in the EHCP Annual Review Programme, mainly due to Council investment into the EHCP Team and better day-to-day management of processes. As there are further improvements to be made across the SEND system, the committee will scrutinise this topic again in the new municipal year.

Overview & Scrutiny Healthy Barnsley Workstream Added Value

Following the Cancer Diagnosis session, members now have the confidence to encourage and support constituents to go for cancer screening and appointments. Thought will also be given to the role of Area Councils and Ward Alliances in raising awareness of cancer symptoms and the various screening programmes.

As a result of the session on Dentistry the Committee outlined their concerns in a letter to Barnsley MPs requesting that they submit a Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ) to the Secretary of State. Three of the MPs responded, and the concerns were to be presented in the form of a WPQ at their earliest convenience.

Although members were reasonably reassured to hear that work is being done to address the issues currently faced by the CYPMHS and the local SEND system, there is still much to be done and they would like to continue to scrutinise these topics to ensure improved outcomes for children and young people in Barnsley.

By scrutinising these topics, the committee has contributed to the following outcomes:-

- People are safe and feel safe
- People live independently with good physical and mental health for as long as possible
- Reduced inequalities in health and income across the borough
- Children and young people achieve the best outcomes through improved educational achievement and attainment
- People have access to early help and support
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Growing Barnsley Workstream

Economic Renewal Action Plan: In June 2021, members were invited to consider a report on the Economic Renewal Action Plan as part of the borough's economic recovery from Covid. Members heard about the funding opportunities available and the challenges faced around the distribution of grants for businesses. Members questioned what was being done to promote Barnsley as a place to invest; how principal towns as well as the town centre are being supported; sought clarity on the complexities of applying for grants and how that is communicated to businesses; and sought assurance that enough was being done to get young people work ready. Members were pleased to see that the whole Council and wider partners have worked collectively to provide a co-ordinated response to the pandemic, helping to provide resilience within the local economy. Several recommendations were made as a result of this session.



Berneslai Homes Annual Performance Review: As with previous years, at the beginning of November the Committee received a report regarding the annual performance of Berneslai Homes, together with the Annual Tenants Report which provided a more detailed reflection of the achievements and challenges faced during the year. Several members expressed serious concerns around anti-social behaviour and were pleased to hear that this has been identified as an area for improvement through partnership working. Members queried whether tenants were made aware of their rights and responsibilities under the tenancy agreement; sought reassurance that work would be done to improve satisfaction levels for grounds maintenance; and challenged the support provided for those experiencing rent arrears. As with previous years, members once again raised concerns that residents are, on occasion, moving into properties of a very poor standard and heard that although Barnsley spends less on void properties than neighbouring authorities, all properties let should be up to the minimum standard. However, delays may be experienced if an area is subject to an upcoming programme, such as kitchen installations, if the tenant moves in before the programme has begun.



A Sustainable Workplace & Healthy Workforce: In March 2022, members were informed of the initiatives developed to support the emotional and physical wellbeing of BMBC employees, particularly during the pandemic. Members challenged the work being done to reduce the gender pay gap and were pleased to hear that positive progress has been made. They found out that opportunities had arisen from the pandemic and different ways of working would help to sustain the organisation and drive it towards 2030; that BMBC aims to be an employer of choice by offering flexibility, apprenticeships and coaching opportunities; the return to office working will be closely monitored to ensure employee wellbeing and productivity and will be evaluated after six months; and that take up of the employee assistance programme has been slow. Members were reassured to hear that partnership working with the healthcare sector is more effective since the pandemic and that awareness of, and support for, employee mental health has improved. They were also pleased to hear that work is being done to ensure that female employees are not disadvantaged and are safe.



Overview & Scrutiny Growing Barnsley Workstream Added Value:

By offering challenge and debate, engaging with officers, and making recommendations members are now better equipped to understand and support the economic recovery in Barnsley and will be able to offer effective signposting to support local businesses and help them flourish.

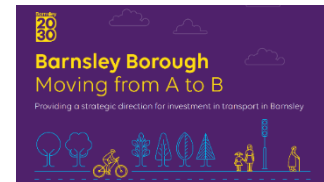
Members have also contributed to ensuring that Berneslai Homes continues to improve the standard of work and the condition of void properties, and effectively manages situations relating to anti-social behaviour.

As a result of recommendations made at the session in March, committee members have contributed to ensuring that employees are well supported, particularly those who suffer from poor mental health, and reducing inequalities within the workforce. The committee has also contributed to the following outcomes:-

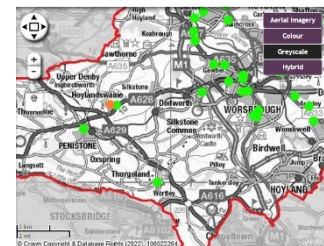
- People are safe and feel safe
- Reduced inequalities in health and income across the borough
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Sustainable Workstream

Barnsley Transport Strategy – At the meeting in June 21, members met to discuss the revised Transport Strategy. Officers outlined the key drivers; the barriers encountered with existing transport provision; and the ambitions for bus, rail, the road network and sustainable travel. Members suggested that the decline in bus patronage was a long-standing issue and was exacerbated by an inadequate service in many parts of the borough. They heard that there is a need for significant investment to ensure that bus services are frequent, affordable and comfortable, and a whole range of schemes and priorities were being examined in order to progress this. Members expressed their opinions on what a quality bus service would look like for all residents and were pleased to hear that any concerns in their area should be shared with the Cabinet Spokesperson so that they could be fed into wider debate. They questioned what funding avenues had been explored to support infrastructure improvements, specifically for cyclists; the possibility of a park and ride scheme; how members of the public had been engaged in developing the strategy and wider work; the use of section 106 monies to fund sustainable travel; and raised concerns relating to the challenges faced with the existing ‘hub and spoke’ model, which offers limited connectivity between villages.



Flooding Response: In October 2021, the committee were presented with a report outlining the work done to prevent flooding in key areas across the borough. After questioning, members were satisfied that current monitoring levels are satisfactory, and work is being done to determine future risk areas to prioritise investment. They expressed concern that the benefits of the Principal Towns Project would be negated if specific areas were subject to widespread flooding and were reassured to hear that a scheme was being formulated to manage culverts in problem areas. Concerns were raised about the need to have sufficient resources and a maintenance programme to carry out prevention work and Members conveyed that residents are concerned and anxious, and were unhappy with some elements of the response during the events in 2019. Members were reassured to hear that a key element of the work is ongoing resident engagement, with officers actively listening to residents and involving them fully. In addition, a Berneslai Homes led task and finish group had been established to determine long-term options for residents of Lang Avenue. Members were also pleased to hear that after the 2019 floods, all affected properties were visited and properties in Wombwell have been provided with front and rear guards and waste pipe blocks. For winter 2021/22 all properties have flood defences and residents know how to use them. Thanks were given to the volunteers who provided valuable support and filled sandbags in Lundwood which helped to narrowly avoid a flooding event in January 2020.



Violent Crime in Barnsley: At the final meeting of the workstream, members were provided with an update on the work of the Community Safety Partnership and South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit in Barnsley towards tackling violent crime and its impact on the communities in Barnsley. Members heard about the work done to disrupt activity, to educate and stop knife crime. Trends and patterns are monitored closely and although knife crime is on the rise in South Yorkshire, this is not being experienced in Barnsley. Members raised concerns about serious anti-social behaviour incidents in their wards which seemingly have not been responded to, leading to frustration and lack of public confidence in the reporting system which needs to improve. They heard that improvements are in hand, but they take time to bear fruit. Members were pleased to hear that operations are not just confined to the town centre and heard of the initiatives introduced, supported by grant funding, to look at combatting



violence against women and girls. Further detailed questioning took place around drug production, increased drug use and drug related violence; positive disruption of organised crime groups; partnership working between Berneslai Homes and the Police; and the work being done to support the night-time economy as it recovers from the Covid pandemic.

Overview & Scrutiny Sustainable Barnsley Workstream Added Value:

Members were able to challenge, debate and make suggestions regarding different solutions to keeping people safe, protecting the environment and ensuring that transport is effective in supporting the needs of the borough.

As a result of scrutiny by the committee, young people are to be consulted on their needs for public transport; partnerships arrangements will be strengthened to ensure a comprehensive and effective multi-agency response to flooding; the maintenance programme for gully cleaning will be interrogated to ensure that it is effective; local intelligence provided by members will feed into the flood response programme, including investigation work; and officers will ensure that the online flood reporting system will always be available and in working order.

Members will encourage residents to be vigilant and report suspicions to the police to help combat crime across the borough, helping to make residents feel safe.

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- Fossil fuels are being replaced by affordable and sustainable energy and people are able to enjoy more cycling and walking
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Full Committee

Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) Annual Report 2020/21: In September 2021 the BSAB Chair alongside representatives from local partnership agencies met with the committee and answered questions regarding work undertaken to safeguard adults across the borough. This included Members challenging the panel on issues such as self-neglect; hoarding; the quality of care in care homes; learning from reviews; and how they engage with individuals that refuse support. Members discovered that communication is one of the biggest challenges facing the BSAB and that a new Communication Plan will help the wider population understand what safeguarding is about. The Board told the committee that work was being done as a result of the sad deaths of four young homeless individuals and this will be followed up by the Committee in the next municipal year. Members were keen to support the agencies in the ongoing need to raise the profile of unseen abuse and encouraging residents to report issues and were reassured by the strong commitment to safeguarding from all the agencies present. To support this, the Board were to share contact details for the safeguarding referrals 'front door' where concerns are triaged and the most appropriate response given, and members will scrutinise the work of the Board again in the next municipal year.



Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) Annual Report 2020/21:

Following consideration of the work to safeguard adults, the committee were joined by additional representatives specifically involved in the safeguarding of children. Members expressed concerns about bullying and heard that it is a constant theme within safeguarding, has far reaching impacts on children, and needs to be tackled using a multi-agency approach. They challenged the Partnership on topics including sexting; neglect; the availability of mental health services; sexual abuse and harassment amongst children and young people; and expressed serious concerns about the rise of Elective Home Education. They were pleased to hear that links with the Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Service (BSARCS) had been strengthened, to ensure that it was being used to its full potential to provide the most appropriate support for children needing wraparound care. Despite challenges faced during the pandemic, members were satisfied that the Early Help Service was deemed to be stable, and they were also reassured to hear that learning had been taken from the investigations into deaths that had occurred over the last 5 years. Members will scrutinise the impact of this work in the next municipal year.



Provisional Education Outcomes across the Borough 2021 including Vulnerable Groups: At the meeting in January 2022, the committee considered provisional education outcomes for 2021, with the knowledge that due to the impact of Covid, all GCSE and A level examinations were cancelled and outcomes for all students nationally were based on teacher assessed grades, taking into consideration a range of evidence including practice exams and coursework. Members heard that Barnsley was taking part in a pilot scheme to offer 'T levels' as an alternative to A levels, and although challenging, this can be overcome by working creatively and collaboratively with partners. Members were reassured to hear that the percentage of young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) compares favourably to regional figures; that targeted interventions are provided for those who are NEET; and a Post 16 Education Advocate works closely with the Targeted Intervention & Guidance (TIAG) Team to ensure that looked after children are supported, giving them a broader focus than just education. Further challenge was given relating to the support provided for those educated at home; how disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils were tracked and supported during the lockdowns; provision to support mental health and wellbeing of both pupils and staff; provision to close attainment gaps; and the quality of remote learning provision during the pandemic. Members were keen for schools to promote the Pupil Premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils so that they are able to access free school lunches and other benefits of the funding.

One Adoption South Yorkshire (OASY): In April 2022 the Committee were presented with a report on the recently formed regional adoption agency One Adoption South Yorkshire (OASY). Members asked specific questions about the work being done to attract a diverse range of adopters; the benefits of Special Guardianship Orders; support offered to adopters; the policy on adopting siblings; placement disruptions; and fostering services. They were pleased to hear that the number of disruptions is very small across the footprint of the agency and there haven't been any since the agency's 'go-live' date (January 2021). In response to questioning by members, it was acknowledged by officers that whilst the agency is performing well, it is still in its infancy and more needs to be done to bring together the four areas across South Yorkshire and that processes need to be standardised across the footprint of the agency to deliver the most effective service to adopters and adoptees across South Yorkshire.



Progress on the Development of Integrated Care in Barnsley: At the same meeting, members were invited to consider a report of the Executive Director Core Services and the Integrated Care Partnership in respect of the development of Integrated Care in Barnsley. The report provided an overview and update in relation to the development of Integrated Care in Barnsley and included the impact of Covid on partnership arrangements, and the response to the introduction of recent Government White Papers and the Health & Care Bill which was in the final stages of its journey through Parliament.



Members offered strong challenge around access to GP appointments and were told that an increasing demand, a falling number of GPs and stringent infection control measures have all impacted upon access to

GPs, however, changes to infection control should now allow for more face-to-face appointments going forward. Specific questions were also raised in relation to the possibility of 24-hour appointments; the benefits of social prescribing; and attracting employees to the care market. Following questioning, it was acknowledged that there needs to be a clear distinction between conditions that would be classed as requiring urgent care and those that are more routine in nature and therefore do not require 24/7 access. Members were pleased to hear that the breast screening service was nearly back on track, particularly given that the committee had previously looked at Improving Early Cancer Diagnosis, and were reassured that there would be bigger changes in the coming year in the development of the shared care record, with an effective system in place by April 2023.

Children's Social Care Performance Private Member Briefings: Throughout the Municipal Year, private member briefings are held for committee members to provide overview and scrutiny of performance in relation to children's social care services. The reports include a summary section with an overview of performance, using RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings and a direction of travel for most indicators. Areas of performance considered good and areas where improvement is required are highlighted.

Throughout the year, it has been noted that good performance has been maintained in the majority of areas throughout the report due to the support available for social workers, the operating environment, and the culture of the organisation. Members considered trends evident in the data presented and provided specific challenge on the number of caseloads assigned to each social worker. They heard that work has been done to improve the situation, including recruiting additional social workers; managing demand; supporting partner agencies; and a tighter application of thresholds; which is now resulting in positive outcomes. They were also reassured that a large number of caseloads does not necessarily mean a high workload as this depends upon the complexities of each case. Specific questions were posed relating to support for newly qualified social workers; plans to increase the percentage of completed Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires to understand the challenges faced by children and young people; employee wellbeing; support for care leavers in unsuitable accommodation; school attendance (including persistent absence and exclusions); and sector led improvement. After an in-depth discussion about the recent 'inadequate' judgement of a Council run children's home, Members were keen for officers to ensure that the issues identified were not also being experienced in any of the other Care Homes within their portfolio.

The committee also considered the letter from Ofsted in response to an annual meeting and the self-evaluation. The Executive Director of Children's Services outlined the content of the letter from Ofsted including strengths and areas for development as identified by the service, and what the next round of inspection activity may look like.

Overview & Scrutiny Full Committee Added Value:

As a result of the topics considered, Members have had opportunity to meet with, question, and challenge a variety of senior leaders from both the Council and partner agencies, which provides evidence and assurance of agencies working together locally to demonstrate that safeguarding is everybody's business.

Members will be scrutinising safeguarding topics again in the new municipal year and will be able to use these sessions to ensure that learning has been put into practice from audits and reviews from previous years. In addition, members are now more aware of how to report safeguarding concerns ensuring that the most vulnerable in their communities are protected and supported.

By scrutinising these topics, the committee has contributed to the following outcomes:-

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- People have access to early support

- People have the opportunities for lifelong learning and developing new skills including access to apprenticeships
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Task & Finish Groups (TFGs)

In addition to meetings undertaken throughout the year, Committee Members can opt to participate in TFGs which undertake detailed investigations into particular topics. These provide Members with opportunities to work in small groups and visit services both within and outside the borough to learn from good practice, meet with a variety of service-users and officers as well as gain a better understanding of the complexities involved in the issues concerned.

At the conclusion of each investigation a report is compiled and presented to the Council’s Cabinet with a number of recommendations, to which a formal response is provided from relevant services outlining whether they accept the recommendation and if so, how they propose to implement it. During 2021/22, committee members undertook the following detailed TFG investigations:

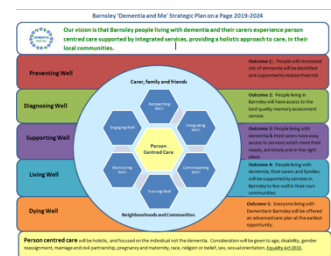
Gambling & Gambling Related Harm: Following on from the previous year’s Child Poverty Task & Finish Group, this year a group of Elected Members met to look at the impact of gambling, particularly given the pandemic, the impact it has on young people, and what support services are available in the borough and beyond. Members of the group met with a number of representatives from BMBC’s Public Health and Licencing teams; the NHS Northern Gambling Service; YGAM & Gamcare charities; officers from Leeds City Council; and the Managing Director of Krysallis, a local counselling service commissioned by GamCare to provide treatment services and support for people in Barnsley.



The TFG highlighted a number of recommendations in support of raising awareness, reducing the harms caused by gambling, and developing a better understanding of the local landscape. This includes working with wider partners to create resources and training on gambling related harm and young people; evaluating how the council can better capture local data on gambling in Barnsley; and reviewing the Statement of Gambling Policy so that Public Health is consulted when new gambling premises submit licencing applications. The TFG also welcomed the offer from Public Health to deliver an All-Member Information Briefing on Gambling and Gambling Related Harms to raise awareness across all Elected Members so that they can effectively support their communities who may be experiencing gambling related issues. The TFG’s full report is available on the following link (Cab 6.4.22/6):

<https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s94549/Report.pdf>

Dementia: The work of this TFG looked at the journey taken by someone living with dementia, including early identification, diagnosis, and the support available to live well. They also wanted to understand whether Dementia is preventable and what could be done to reduce the risk. Specific sessions were held with representatives from BMBC’s Public Health and Adults & Communities Directorates; Barnsley Dementia Alliance (Age UK Barnsley; Alzheimer’s Society Barnsley; BIADS; Butterflies; Crossroads; Making Space), and nurses from South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust’s (SWYPFT) Memory Assessment & Support Service. Members also had the privilege of attending a drop-in session at BIADS to talk to carers and those living with dementia about their experiences and what improvements they think could be made.



As a result of the TFG’s investigation the group highlighted a number of recommendations in support of further improvement to service delivery. These included developing a plan to raise awareness through different groups to help support people who may be living alone with dementia; revisiting criteria for assessing carers of people living with dementia to ensure that those who require support receive it; consider

developing a rapid response team for those who are experiencing a crisis; and ensuring that all individuals using the Memory Assessment Team have access to a named nurse to ensure continuity of care and reduce anxiety. The TFG's full report is available on the following link (Cab.6.4.22/7):

<https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s94550/Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committee%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20-%20Report%20on%20Dementia.pdf>

Air Quality & Carbon Reduction: This TFG maintained a focus on providing overview and scrutiny of the work done to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality across the borough. Specific sessions were held with officers from BMBC's Regulatory Services; Planning, Policy & Control; Strategic Housing, Sustainability and Climate Change; and Transport. The group also met with a Sustainability Project Officer from Sheffield University to hear about the research carried out to identify and support opportunities for carbon reduction across the region and with representatives from Barnsley Youth Council to ask them what they think the council should do to tackle carbon reduction and air quality.



Having concluded their investigations, members of the group made a substantial number of recommendations including promoting more schemes to reduce air pollution around schools and facilities frequented by children and young people; adopting the electrification of fleets for vehicles within the organisation's control and work towards providing on-street electric vehicle charging points for those without private driveways; increasing the scrutiny and monitoring of sustainable travel plans and consider introducing penalties for non-compliance; introduce a higher carbon reduction requirement in all new properties before the Future Homes Standard is introduced; and provide segregated litter bins to allow the recycling of litter in the town centre and surrounding areas. The TFG's full report is available on the following link (Cab.18.3.2020/8): <https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s94551/Report.pdf>

By scrutinising these topics, and taking subsequent action, the committee has contributed to the following outcomes:-

- People are safe and feel safe
- People live independently with good physical and mental health for as long as possible
- Reduced inequalities in health and income across the borough
- People have access to early help and support
- People are supported to have safe, warm, sustainable homes
- People live in great places, are recycling more and wasting less, feel connected and valued in their community
- Fossil fuels are being replaced by affordable and sustainable energy and people are able to enjoy more cycling and walking
- We are a modern, inclusive, efficient, productive and high-performing council

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (JHOSCs)

Within legislation, there is provision for Local Authorities to form Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees with other councils to respond to substantial reconfiguration proposals covering more than one council area. These can be convened over varying geographical areas as well as over varying timescales as is deemed appropriate for the matters being considered. During 2020-21, the Chair of Barnsley's Overview and Scrutiny Committee has contributed positively in the region through our joint arrangements with the South Yorkshire, Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This committee considers NHS services over the stated geographical footprint and although there have been no official meetings during 2021-22, the group has remained in contact to consider any developments of the South Yorkshire Integrated Care System (ICS) and in particular the impact that recruitment issues have had on some oncology services at Barnsley Hospital.

Partnership Working

In addition to the formal meetings undertaken by committee members, work is undertaken to ensure constant liaison with partner agencies to share learning and good practice as well as avoid duplication. Regular contact is maintained with those involved with the Council's governance arrangements including Area Council Chairs, the Audit Committee, partnership boards including BSAB, BSCP, and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The committee also maintains links with other scrutiny committees in the region, including the Sheffield City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SCROSC). Liaison is undertaken with NHS colleagues at Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (BHNFT), and South-West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SWYPFT) and the committee works closely with Healthwatch Barnsley on matters of mutual concern.

At the end of each financial year, the committee also provides a comprehensive written response to be incorporated into the Quality Accounts for South-West Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust (SWYPFT); Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (BHNFT); and Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS).

During the last year, committee members have also engaged with local young people on the Barnsley Youth Council, Care4Us Council and Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Forum. This has included seeking their feedback on the committee's work programme for the year as well as getting their input on the topics being considered by the Task and Finish Groups. The Elected Members were really impressed by all the young people taking part and plan to engage with them again during the coming municipal year.

Referrals Received

Adult Mental Health Crisis Care

Following on from the Adult Mental Health Task & Finish Group in 2019, the Committee received a referral from Healthwatch Barnsley in June 2021 expressing their concerns relating to adult mental health crisis care. They were particularly concerned that recommendations raised within the TFG report had still not been addressed, relating to conveyancing; access to 24/7 crisis care; and governance and accountability. Following investigations into the concerns raised, a series of recommendations were made including adopting alternative ways of transporting individuals experiencing a mental health crisis; rigorous promotion of the new telephone number for crisis care; increasing take-up of the newly introduced app to clearly identify staff on duty regardless of the time of day; better data sharing to allow robust and timely decisions to be made relating to conveyancing, delays for assessments and other appropriate information; and to commit to fully engaging in a system-wide approach, including participation on boards. A response was received from the Mental Health Partnership outlining the progress made against each of the recommendations and the All-Age Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be added to the work programme for 2022-23 to allow for further scrutiny.

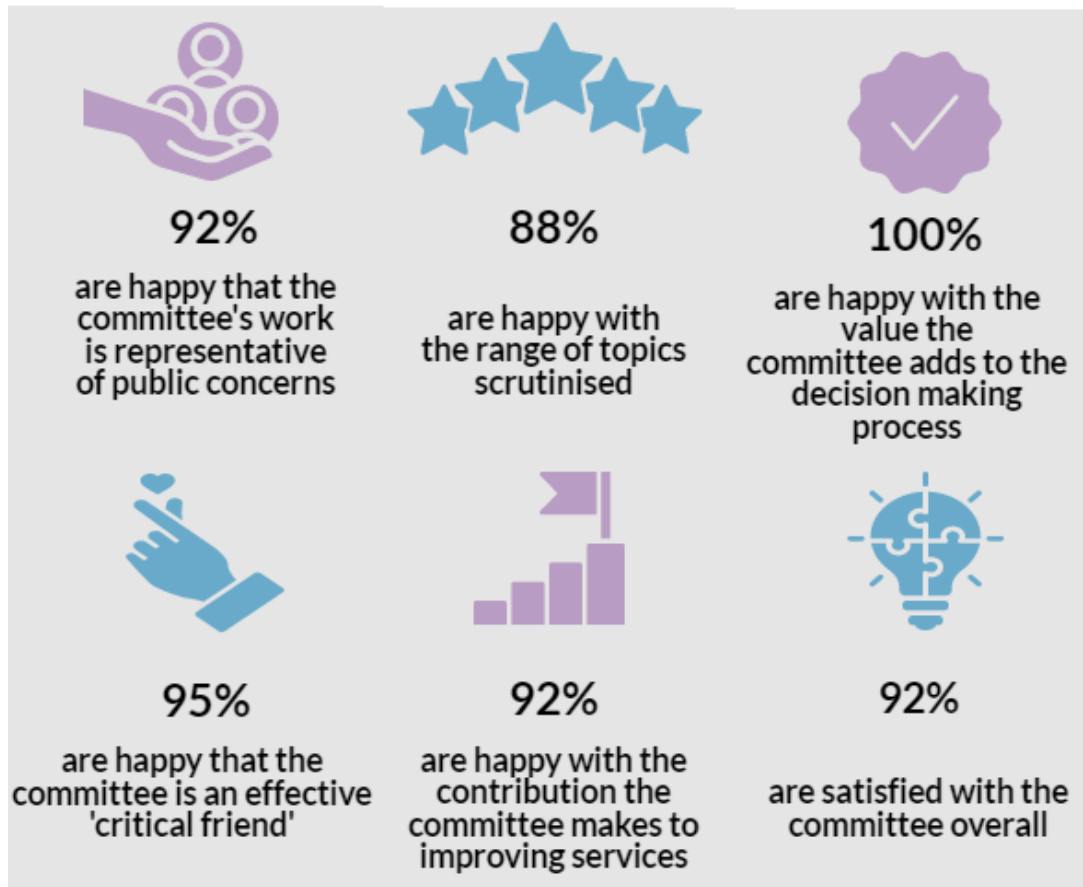
Long-Acting Reversible Contraception

In April 2022, the committee received a referral from Barnsley Local Medical Committee (BLMC) expressing concerns about contraceptive services for women, in particular the Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) offer across the borough. Following investigations into the concerns raised, the Committee responded to BLMC, and plans are in place for LARC to form part of the work of a task and finish group in 2022-23 looking at the wider issues of contraception and teenage conception rates.

Feedback

At the end of the municipal year, committee members are surveyed regarding their satisfaction with the operation of the Overview and Scrutiny function. The questionnaire provides opportunity for committee members to comment on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the arrangements and make suggestions about improvements. Highlights of the Committee Member Survey 2021-22 are shown below:

What's Working Well



Information based on a total of 13 respondents out of a possible total of 34

Areas for Improvement

- member commitment and engagement - attendance at pre-meetings and TFGs could be better
- better preparation by senior officers and less reluctance to share information because the meeting is held in public
- less focus on the vision with a need for a stronger focus on how it impacts on residents
- to involve the public more

Throughout the year, surveys are also undertaken of expert witnesses who attend the meetings to answer questions from committee members. This enables us to ensure attendees feel appropriately prepared for meetings and so that we can respond to any recommendations for improvement they may make. Highlights from the Expert Witness Surveys 2021-22 are:

Overview & Scrutiny Expert Participants' Survey Results 2021-22			
92%	92%	96%	88%
Communication and information received prior to the committee was timely and helpful	Felt welcome at the committee meeting	Understand the scrutiny process and the role of committee members	The committee were effective in acting as a critical friend and providing appropriate challenge
92%	29%	88%	71%
Able to be honest with the responses given	Had to be cautious with the responses given	Were treated with respect and allowed time to represent their service/organisation to the best of their ability	The committee were effective in holding decision makers to account
67%	67%	88%	25%
The committee helps to build relationships amongst partners and stakeholders	Attending the committee helped them to think differently and consider different approaches to areas of work	Attending the committee was a positive experience	Changes have been made to service delivery as a direct result of attending the committee meeting

Information based on a total of 24 respondents (1 respondent equating to 4.17%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing to questions asked

Comments from Expert Witnesses 2021-22 include:

As witnesses, we were made welcome, were able to have good debate, check and challenge and collectively came away with some positive actions which will hopefully improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

Limited discussion on the "so what" and its impact. Would have been helpful to include this rather than repeat information in the report.

Whilst we have not been able to make changes yet, we are pursuing options, something which was not considered prior to feedback from members.

Always great to have the opportunity to explore service issues and gain insights from scrutiny to improve things.

I felt the questioning was appropriate and it was clear that members were well prepared for the meeting and had an understanding of service delivery that equipped them with further questioning on responses.

From my experience some of the committee questions were not relevant to the agenda. I felt we ended up speaking about other issues and lost some of the focus of the meeting.

I think the challenge and lines of questioning were healthy and fair. It didn't feel as scripted as previous sessions I have attended, and the committee were passionate about the subject which is great to see.

The OSC process in Barnsley is, by far, the best experience in relation to similar processes in other LAs. The information before, during and after is efficient and helpful.

The Year Ahead

As we enter the 2022-23 municipal year, the world continues to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic which has placed increased demands and pressures on services. This is likely to continue for several years, and the full extent of the increased demands is still not yet known, such as the need for mental health support services for both children and adults. The committee is also mindful of the impact the cost of living crisis will have on Barnsley communities and will consider its work programme accordingly.

As the last 12 months have shown, Barnsley's Overview and Scrutiny Committee has adapted to the new ways of working by undertaking virtual meetings and hopes to continue to utilise such technologies in the years ahead. Despite restrictions in terms of being able to visit services, new technologies have enabled Elected Members to engage with a broader range of stakeholders and enabled efficiencies in terms of virtual meetings avoiding unnecessary travel for participants.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair, alongside other Members continued to be involved in the local Outbreak Control Advisory Group. This group worked to advise the local Outbreak Control Board who were responsible for overseeing the prevention of Coronavirus transmission within the borough and ensuring that outbreaks were managed effectively if and when they occurred. The Board undertook the following, with the support of the Advisory Group:

- Provided oversight, assurance and scrutiny of plans to prevent and manage outbreaks of Covid in Barnsley and actions taken to prevent and manage outbreaks and their outcomes
- Lead communication with residents, businesses and stakeholders in the borough generally in relation to outbreak prevention and management
- Engaged with communities and groups where outbreaks may be more likely or where they have occurred
- Ensured implementation of the Barnsley Outbreak Control Plan

The Chair will continue to be involved in this type of work should the need arise.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue to work together to provide critical friend challenge to all services, including those of partners. This includes making a positive contribution to plans for the future, ensuring the voice of the public is heard. Work will also be undertaken to utilise the feedback from our recent surveys regarding the ongoing improvement of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

How to find out more

Agendas, reports and minutes for all of our Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings are available here: <https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteId=224>

Alternatively, you can contact us at: Scrutiny@barnsley.gov.uk