

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT

2017/18

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY, COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LYTHGOE



This Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18 highlights the activity and work of the committee and the Task and Finish Groups. It is important for scrutiny members to be involved in decisions at an early stage to ensure they influence the decision-making process and play an important role of 'critical friend'.

I am particularly pleased this year by the work done and progress made on performance management. I appreciate and value the hard work and thinking done on this by the senior management team members involved along with members of the task and finish group.

It is a pleasure to work with the task and finish groups as there is such good cooperation and positive input from all members regardless of political persuasion. The Committee and Member Services Officer has introduced the concept of 'scrutiny in a day' and this proved a very successful way of investigating the possible increase in excess winter deaths in Rossendale and has great potential for efficiently dealing with certain issues in the future.

We are grateful for those external to the Council who gave up their time to attend meetings and who have contributed to the work of both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Task and Finish Groups.

As always, I would like to thank all members and officers.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE LAMB – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR REGULATORY SERVICES



Overview and Scrutiny is a crucial process that ensures we are delivering both Council services and those services of its partners in an appropriate way.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to support and at the same time, challenge the Cabinet in providing assurance in respect of policy development and review across the Council and its partners, acting as a 'critical friend'.

Both councillors and officers continue to work together in these difficult and challenging times ahead to ensure the best provision of services for the people of Rossendale and I have confidence that the scrutiny process will make sure we do this.

1. Overview and Scrutiny – The Basics

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny process is a way of achieving open and democratic accountability for the provision of public services.
- 1.2 All local authorities operating a Cabinet and Scrutiny model have a Cabinet made up of the Leader of the Council and, in Rossendale, there are five other members who make up the Cabinet.
- 1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) role is carried out by non-Cabinet members. In Rossendale we have one politically balanced committee made up of 10 members and one co-opted member.
- 1.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is supported by one officer who works 30 hours per week in Committee and Member Services.
- 1.5 Overview and Scrutiny is not a decision making body, but is a body which monitors and influences those that are, i.e. the Cabinet. Overview and Scrutiny report their work back to Cabinet who then decide whether recommendations will be accepted, and if not, why not.
- 1.6 In Rossendale the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a role in performance monitoring which enables members to scrutinise detailed performance reports on a quarterly basis.
- 1.7 Scrutiny members/non-Cabinet members undertake reviews which are called Task and Finish Groups (T&F). These are usually made up of 5 members who are asked to look in-depth at particular issues and make recommendations which may suggest a change in policy or service provision. The report would then be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to Cabinet¹.
- 1.8 Overview and Scrutiny is not a mechanism for the investigation or settling of individual complaints from the public or members. The Council has a separate complaints process and a member enquiry service. Nor can Overview and Scrutiny look at individual planning or licensing decisions.
- 1.9 Overview and Scrutiny welcomes suggestions from councillors and the general public regarding issues that could be investigated. Committee and Member Services consult with the public, councillors and managers each year and their suggestions are considered for the Annual Work Programme.

¹ The T&F reporting process is currently under review.

2. Work carried out in 2017/18

2.1 Quarterly Performance Reports

2017 saw the introduction of a new performance management process and the Performance Management Task and Finish Group have been involved in the process from the beginning. The reports were brought before the December 2017 and March 2018 meetings.

2.2 The reporting process is new and is evolving. O&S committee will continue to be at the forefront of performance management.

2.3 Other Reports

The committee received a variety of reports during 2017/18 with some of them being part of the annual work programme and some being brought to O&S for a specific reason and discussion:-

- Annual Equality Report
- Empty Homes Update (Calico)
- Capita Performance Update
- Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter and Council Feedback (Complaints) Update.
- Environmental Health and Housing Policies
- Equalities Strategy

3. External Scrutiny

3.1 The committee received a number of presentations from external organisations as follows, which are summarised below.

Lancashire Constabulary – Crime Figures

3.2 O&S monitors crime and disorder issues and under the Police and Justice Act and related statutory guidance from the Home Office on the scrutiny of crime and disorder, Lancashire Police are invited to the committee each year to give a presentation on performance and progress against crime indicators. Inspector Clarke attended in January 2018 and presented an analysis of the crime figures. The update was discussed by members and suggestions were made for items to be included in future reports.

Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT) Update

Rossendale Leisure Trust presented their annual update in January 2018 via a YouTube video which was accompanied by a short summary document. The video was very well received and informed members of the Trust's key achievements during the year.

Community Leisure Association Whitworth (CLAW)

CLAW provided the committee with an update in January 2018 and the report highlighted their key achievements in 2017/18. The financial report was circulated to O&S members following the meeting.

3.5 Members noted that it was very important that the Council continued to support leisure in the community.

3.6 Rossendale Transport (ROSSO)

The Managing Director of ROSSO provided the committee with an update at the March 2018 meeting on the achievements of the company over the past year. This was the final update following the sale to Transdev.

3.7 Updates were also received from:-

- Community Specialist Paramedic
- 101 Service
- Calico
- The Whitaker
- Rossendale Ski Slope
- Young Addaction
- Citizens Advice
- Credit Union

4. Task and Finish Group work in 2017/18

4.1 Task and Finish Groups are established by the O&S Committee to conduct an in-depth review of any service, policy or issues that affects the Borough. Usually there are five politically balanced members (non-Cabinet Members) and at the first meeting a Chair and Terms of Reference are agreed. Only two groups are able to be open at the same time, therefore, 2017/18's work concentrated on completing and closing down existing Task and Finish Groups.

4.2 The work of these Task and Finish Groups is summarised below:-

4.3 Performance Management

The Performance Management Task and Finish Group was established to look at the performance management process within the council. This tied in with the new Corporate Plan and revision of the reporting process. The Group input into this new process and were consulted on the new Corporate Plan. The Chair also met with the Head of HR regularly to discuss progress and format of the quarterly reports. If service areas were failing to meet their targets then the Performance Management Task and Finish Group will reconvene to investigate this.

4.4 Communications

This long-running Group was established to look at communications within the Council. The Group had a wide remit to begin with and a list of actions which members felt would improve matters was sent to Management Team for consideration. This group is now complete following the launch of the new website.

4.5 Equalities

This was a small group which arose out of a meeting to discuss equalities with the co-opted member. It was agreed that the Council should refresh its Equalities Strategy, which was presented to O&S Committee in March 2018. The revised Equalities Strategy is scheduled for Cabinet in July 2018.

4.6 Excess Winter Deaths

This Group was established following publication of the 2015/16 winter death figures. The Group took a new approach to investigation and tried a 'Scrutiny in a Day' approach. Following the Scrutiny Day, the report was circulated to the T&F Group members, Management Team and will be put before O&S Committee in June 2018.

5. Issues for 2018/19

5.1 Members should consider topics for Task and Finish Groups and also the format of the groups. The 'Scrutiny in a Day' approach was successful for the Excess Winter Deaths Task and Finish Group and the approach should be considered for other investigations. It should be noted that 'Scrutiny in a Day' may not be

5.2 Work is underway to streamline the Task and Finish Group process to prevent delays between the report being produced and the response being provided. This will be updated on during 2018/19.

6. 2018/19 Meetings and Work Programme

6.1 The O&S Committee meetings for 2018/19 are confirmed and listed in the Committee Schedule and take place at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber.

6.2 At the suggestion of the Committee and Member Services Officer, the September meeting has been moved to mid-month to allow additional report preparation time following the summer period.

6.3 The Work Programme is a separate document and sets out the basic work to be carried out by O&S Committee during 2018/19. This will include the usual updates from partners, quarterly performance reports, task and finish items and any other policies or items as they arise. This will be taken to Full Council, along with this report in July 2018.