

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT

2019/20

**FOREWORD FROM THE 2019/20 CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY,
COUNCILLOR JANICE JOHNSON**



This Report highlights the activity and work of the Overview and Scrutiny committee and the Task and Finish Groups during 2019/20.

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. I am particularly proud of our work to implement the Holiday Hunger pilot scheme and our work on suicide prevention. I would like to thank all members, officers and external partners for their work on this.

I am 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.

**MESSAGE FROM COUNCILLOR SEAN SERRIDGE – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR
CORPORATE SERVICES 2019/20**



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'.

The Committee continues to work hard on Task and Finish Groups and has tackled some difficult subjects, including holiday hunger and suicide.

Both councillors and officers continue to work together 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 Cabinet members.
- 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. The Corporate Management Team lead on O&S is currently the HR Manager.
- 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 the 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.
- 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.
- 1.10 In May 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government released 'Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities'. The Council continues to work in line with statutory guidance and the Constitution, and the Chair, Vice-Chair and Officers attend Scrutiny Networks where possible.

2. Internal Scrutiny

2.1 Quarterly Performance Reports

The committee continues to receive the quarterly performance reports. If the committee feels a service area's performance requires further investigation, then the relevant senior officer can be called to committee. If members feel it necessary once the officer has attended committee, then the Performance Management Task and Finish Group may be reinstated to scrutinise matters further. During 2019/20 the Operations Manager was called to the committee to provide clarification on recycling targets. Following on from this, the Operations Team provided a live demonstration of the new in-cab technology in refuse vehicles and provided an update on implementation at the March 2020 meeting.

2.2 Pre-Decision Scrutiny

The committee received a variety of reports during 2019 with some of them being part of the annual work programme and some being brought to O&S for a specific reason and discussion, including:-

- As part of the Council's formal budget-setting process, the committee examined the 2020/2021 budget proposals.
- Alongside the 2020/2021 budget proposals, pre-decision Scrutiny was undertaken on:-
 - Debt Management Policy
 - Revised Common Allocations Policy
- Annual Equality Report.
- Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter and Council Feedback (Complaints) Update.
- RIPA update – O&S committee is required to have a quarterly update on the use of RIPA. This was done verbally in the Chair's update and is timed in with the quarterly performance reports. It should be noted that the Chair is not able to give specific details if RIPA has been used and all enquiries should be directed to the Monitoring Officer.
- The Council did not receive a Service Assurance Team/Capita update in 2019, as officers realised all relevant information was now contained in the quarterly performance reports. A separate report would only duplicate virtually identical information. An officer attended the November 2019 meeting to answer any queries about SAT/Capita performance and targets.

3. External Scrutiny

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

'To act as the Council's Crime & Disorder Committee'

3.2 As set out in the O&S Terms of Reference, the committee 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 2020.

3.3 Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT) and CLAW Update

Rossendale Leisure Trust presented their annual update in January 2020 via a YouTube video, accompanied by a short summary document. The video was very well received and informed members of the Trust's key achievements during the year. This year's update incorporated CLAW's performance.

3.4 Rossendale Together Barnfield (RTB)

After a suggestion from an elected member during the work programme consultation, RTB attended the October 2019 committee and updated members on work carried out and future plans. Going forward, RTB will be invited on an annual basis.

3.5 Transdev

Transdev agreed to attend the March 2020 committee and provided an update on services. A frank and constructive Q&A session took place and members were provided with a contact email for reporting service issues. It should be noted that Transdev are under no obligation to attend the O&S Committee.

3.6 Updates were also received from grant recipients, who are required to update the O&S Committee on an annual basis:-

- Bacup Credit Union
- First Choice Credit Union
- Citizens Advice

4. **Task and Finish Group work in 2019/20**

4.1 Task and Finish Groups are established by the O&S Committee to conduct an in-depth review of any service, policy or issue 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. Due to resources, only two groups are able to operate at the same time.

4.2 Holiday Hunger

This group was established following a notice of motion to Full Council which highlighted the issues faced by children in receipt of free school meals in the school holidays. The group recommended the establishment of a pilot scheme over the 2019 summer holidays. The Communities Team brought together the community networks and groups and worked with the schools. A report was taken to the October 2019 committee which outlined how the pilot scheme had worked.

4.3 Suicide Rates

This group was set up to examine suicide rates in Rossendale. Work took place between October 2019 and January 2020 and the group's recommendations were endorsed by Corporate Management Team and accepted in full by the Cabinet. The final report went to the January 2020 O&S Committee. Officers are continuing to implement the recommendations and report back to a future meeting (provisionally June 2020).

4.4 Copies of task and finish group reports are available on the council's website via the link below:-

https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/download/10718/task_and_finish_group_reports

5. **How has Scrutiny made a difference?**

5.1 O&S continues to perform the important function of holding the executive (the Cabinet) to account, carrying out task and finish work and reviewing policies and strategies before implementation. The following is worth reiterating and noting:-

- Establishment of a Holiday Hunger pilot scheme during the 2019 summer holidays.
- The Task and Finish Group regarding suicide in Rossendale made 12 recommendations and these are being implemented by officers. To date almost all members of staff and elected members have completed some form of suicide awareness training.
- Policy development – the committee was consulted on and provided feedback on several policies before they were approved by Full Council or Cabinet and this included the annual budget reports.

5.2 A document which sets out the status and progress of O&S Task and Finish Group recommendations is attached at Appendix 1.

6. **2020/21 Meetings and Work Programme**

6.1 The O&S Committee meetings for 2020/21 are confirmed and listed in the Committee Schedule. The O&S Committees take place at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber. Please note there are two O&S meetings in November 2020, and the latter will be treated as the December meeting.

6.2 The Work Programme is a separate document and sets out the basic work to be carried out by O&S Committee during 2020/21.

RAG Status

Incomplete
Ongoing
Complete
Unknown

Task and Finish Group	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/Team	Update	RAG Rating	Notes
Holiday Hunger	Rec 1: That a pilot scheme is established within schools and the community network to look at constant source of fresh food available to those who require it.	Communities	Pilot scheme took place during the 2019 summer holidays.	Completed	Although complete from a T&F point of view, further officer work will be required to ensure future schemes can run successfully.
Holiday Hunger	Rec 2: This scheme will address the immediate issue of hunger, and once established, address hunger during the longer six-week holidays.	Communities	Pilot scheme took place during the 2019 summer holidays.	Completed	Although complete from a T&F point of view, further officer work will be required to ensure future schemes can run successfully.
Holiday Hunger	Rec 3: That although the council is not responsible for this service, it is agreed that officers are able to provide co-ordinating assistance to enable the schools and the networks to work together.	Communities	Pilot scheme took place during the 2019 summer holidays.	Completed	Although complete from a T&F point of view, further officer work will be required to ensure future schemes can run successfully.

Rossendale

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Task and Finish Group	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/Team	Update	RAG Rating	Notes
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 1: The council signs up to a 'Time to Change' and promotes the '6507' project.	Clare Law/HR		Completed	
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 2: Offer and encourage the appropriate training through Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria (HLSC) and LCC and other suitable providers to all staff and partners in line with the developing training matrix.	Clare Law/HR	This is ongoing and is being rolled out across staff and members in a variety of formats – online and training sessions.	Completed	Member training session held 11/02/20. Officer training completed online.
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 3: That the PPU unit adds suicide awareness training to its training for taxi drivers and how this can be promoted in licensed premises and work with landlords.	Phil Morton/ PPU		Ongoing	External training provider can add this to the training, however this has been delayed by the CV-19 pandemic.
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 4: That the Council's Health Champion liaises with the Samaritans.	Councillor Brennan		Ongoing	Continues to liaise.
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 5: The council's facilities are made available to partners and organisations to host training and awareness	HR	Dates the chamber is free January to March have been given to the trainer.	Ongoing	Sessions postponed due to CV-19 pandemic.

Rossendale

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Task and Finish Group	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/Team	Update	RAG Rating	Notes
	events.				
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 6: The Zero Suicide Alliance training will be raised with business leaders.	Cath Burns	Done	Completed	
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 7: The Samaritans' 116 123 number will be promoted	HR & Communications Team	Number printed on 'emergency cards'.	Completed	
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 8: The appropriate use of language around suicide will be promoted.	HR & Communications Team	Officers will continue to use the correct language.	Completed	Completed but to be adhered to going forward.
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 9: The issue will be raised on agendas at Community partnership meetings.	Communities Team	Officers will raise issues on agendas where appropriate.	Completed	Meetings have be postponed due to CV-19 pandemic.
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 10: That a member of council staff continues to attend the Suicide Prevention and Self Harm Reduction Strategy Group.	Communities Team	Officer has made contact and will attend meetings.	Completed	
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 11: That awareness raising through digital means and social media is undertaken.	HR & Communications Team	Use of social media to raise awareness has taken place.	Completed	Completed but the council will engage with official campaigns going forward.
Suicide in Rossendale	Rec 12: That the council feeds back actions taken	Communities Team	Officer to liaise with LCC Public Health going	Completed	Ongoing feedback and liaison.

Rossendale

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Task and Finish Group	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/Team	Update	RAG Rating	Notes
	to the LCC Public Health so that these actions may be measured.		forward.		