

**Barnet Council**

**Overview and  
Scrutiny  
Annual Report**

**2013/14**

## Background

Overview & Scrutiny was introduced in local government through the implementation of the Local Government Act 2000. The role of Overview & Scrutiny has been strengthened over time through the introduction of the following legislation: Health & Social Care Act 2001; Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007; Crime and Disorder Act 2006, Localism Act 2011; and Health and Social Care Act 2012.

The Localism Act 2011 contained a provision that local authorities could choose to adopt a “committee system” form of governance. In January 2014, full Council resolved that Barnet would adopt a committee system effective from Annual Council 2014. This is the final Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report which will detail work completed during 2013/14 and outline legacy arrangements.

## Structure

During 2013/14, Overview & Scrutiny in Barnet has been delivered through a committee structure and through time-limited working groups. Councillors who are not part of the Executive (or Cabinet) sit on these Committees. Overview & Scrutiny Committees hold the Council’s Cabinet to account by examining various functions of the Council, asking questions about how decisions have been made and considering whether service improvements are needed. Overview & Scrutiny also raises issues that are important to local people and scrutinises the performance of the Council and partner organisations. It is a key mechanism for driving forward service improvement.

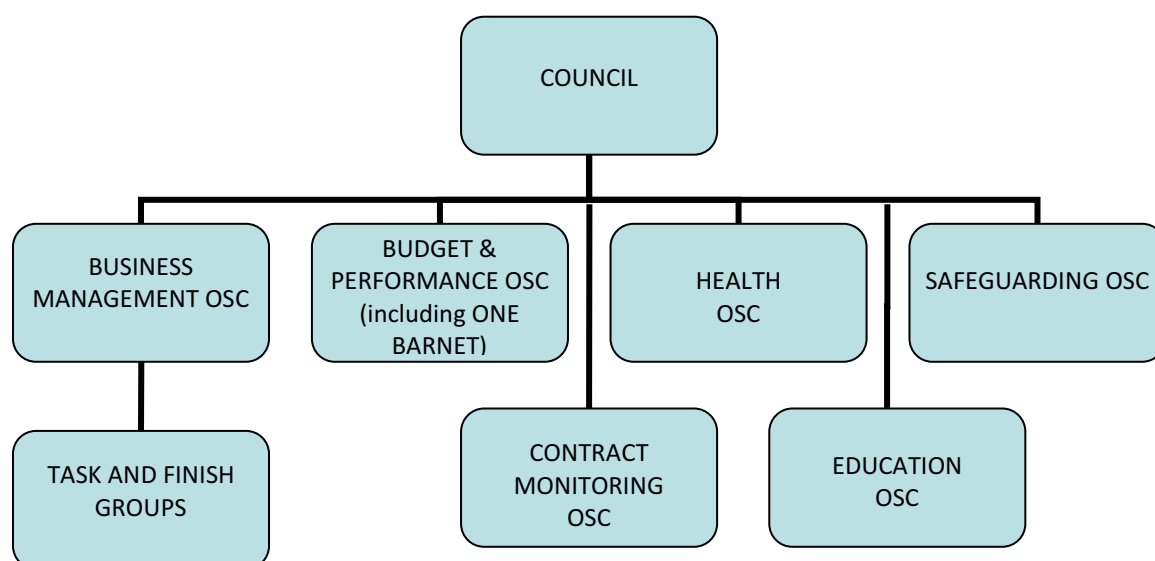
The Centre for Public Scrutiny *Good Scrutiny Guide* defines four principles of effective public scrutiny as:

1. Constructive critical friend challenge
2. Amplifies the voices and concerns of the public
3. Led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
4. Drives improvement in public services

## Overview and Scrutiny in Barnet

Barnet has 63 Councillors. The Cabinet is made up of the Leader of the Council and nine other Councillors. The other remaining (non-executive) Councillors are appointed to sit on Overview and Scrutiny Committees or other committees (e.g. planning, licensing, forums, area committees, partnership boards etc.) which are responsible for carrying out a range of governance or quasi-judicial functions for the Council.

In 2013/14 Overview & Scrutiny was delivered under the following structure:



Under this structure there are two committees which deal with statutory matters (Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee) and four other committees (Budget & Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Contract Monitoring Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee). This structure has been in place since May 2013.

# Overview and Scrutiny Committees

## Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee has a wide ranging remit and its terms of reference include many of the statutory powers conferred upon overview and scrutiny committees including: call-ins; councillor calls for action; and crime & disorder scrutiny. The Committee also consider policy and strategy not in the remit of other committees. During 2013/14 the Committee continued its management of the call-in process and, in addition, appointed Task & Finish Groups. It also considered reports on:

- Members' Item – Your Choice Barnet (July 2013)
- Amendments to the Housing Allocations Scheme and Introduction of a Placements Policy (September 2013)
- Saracens Event Day CPZ Review (October 2013)
- Members' Item – Parking Policy (October 2013)
- Draft Equalities Policy and Communities Together Action Plan (November 2013)
- Interim Update Report on Growth and Regeneration Programme (January 2014)
- Housing Strategy (January 2014)
- Parking Policy Task and Finish Group – Update (January 2014)
- Local Authority New-Build Programme (March 2014)
- North London Waste Authority (March 2014)
- Crime and Disorder Scrutiny (March 2014)
- 20 MPH Zones Task and Finish Group – Final Report (March 2014)
- Parking Policy Task and Finish Group – Final Report (March 2014)
- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report (April 2014)
- Task and Finish Groups / Scrutiny Panels – Committee System Legacy (April 2014)

## Petitions

Following legislative changes arising from the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Committee took on additional responsibility for considering petitions which had received between 2,000 and 7,000 signatures, triggering a provision to 'call an officer to account'. In October 2013, a petition in relation to road safety (Walksafe N14 Petition) was considered by the Committee. The Committee received representations from the Walksafe N14 lead petitioner, the Cabinet Member for Environment and relevant officers. Following the debate on this issue, the Cabinet Member for Environment undertook to commission a site investigation to develop a detailed safety scheme for the area.

## Call-in

The Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee had the (statutory) power to 'call-in' a decision before it was implemented. Calling-in a decision allows Overview and Scrutiny Members to review and challenge decisions after they have been taken, but before implementation. Cabinet Members and Officers regularly attend the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee to answer questions and provide information to the Committee Members. Call-in powers relate to Executive (or Cabinet) functions/decisions. Any decision made by the Cabinet, an individual Cabinet Member or a key decision taken by an officer using delegated powers may be called-in. However, there are various exceptions that may be applied.

In 2013/14, the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered 6 call-in requests (compared to 9 call-ins during 2012/13). Full details of the items called in during 2013/14 are shown in **Appendix 1**.

## Budget and Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee

In 2013/14 the Budget and Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee continued its regular scrutiny of the Council's corporate performance information, improvement initiatives and financial performance data. The Committee also continued its scrutiny of the Strategic Outline Cases, Business Cases and Closures Reports for the projects within the One Barnet Programme.

During the year, the Budget and Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered reports on:

- Quarter Four and Year End 2012/13 Financial and Corporate Performance (June 2013)

- One Barnet Programme (June, September, December 2013)
- Quarter One Finance and Corporate Performance (September 2013)
- Parking Pilot Schemes (September 2013)
- Review of Capital Programme (September 2013)
- Medium Term Financial Strategy proposals for the period 2014/15 – 2016/17 (November 2013)
- Quarter Two Finance and Corporate Performance (December 2013)
- One Barnet – Waste and Street Scene (December 2013)
- One Barnet – Sport and Physical Activity Review (December 2013)
- Quarter Three Finance and Corporate Performance (March 2014)
- One Barnet Programme Final Report (March 2014)
- Empty Properties Task and Finish Group Report – Final Report (March 2014)

In relation to scrutiny of the council's performance against Corporate Plan performance targets, the Committee made a number of recommendations to Cabinet Members and officers on areas of underperformance and associated service improvement initiatives. In addition, the Committee also had oversight of the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy and made a number of recommendations in this regard.

In addition to the budget and performance scrutiny activity outlined above, the Committee scrutinised a number of project updates, output specifications, business cases and closure reports in relation to the One Barnet programme. Following consideration of these items, a number of recommendations were made to the Cabinet Resources Committee and officers.

Scrutiny of the Council's budget remained the key focus of the Committee. The November 2013 meeting was dedicated to scrutinising performance against the financial savings set out in the Council's Business Planning 2013/14 to 2015/16 proposals.

## **Contract Monitoring Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

The Contract Monitoring Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established at the start of the 2013/14 municipal year with the purpose of scrutinising performance against targets that are included within the Corporate Plan and otherwise relating to the services provided by the Customer & Support Group, Development & Regulatory Services, The Barnet Group Ltd, HB Public Law, NSL and other major contracts to enable challenge of external service providers.

During the year, the Committee received reports on:

- Contract Monitoring – Organisational Arrangements (June 2013)
- The Barnet Group Ltd End of Year Performance Report 2012/13 (June 2013)
- Parking Services Performance (June 2013)
- Quarter 1 External Contracts Performance (October 2013)
- CSG and R<sub>e</sub> Ltd. Contract Objectives (October 2013)
- Quarter 2 External Contracts Performance (January 2014)
- Shared Legal Services Update (January 2014)
- External Contracts – Management Resources (January 2014)
- Quarter 3 External Contracts Performance (March 2014)
- CSG and R<sub>e</sub> Ltd. Closedown Reports (March 2014)
- Street Lighting PFI Contract Performance (March 2014)

## **Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

The Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee was established at the start of the 2013/14 municipal year. Its purpose was to scrutinise the Council and its partners in the discharge of statutory duties in relation to the provision of school places and education within the Borough and to monitor the implementation of the Education Strategy for Barnet.

During the year, the Committee received reports on:

- School Place Planning (July 2013)
- Barnet Education Strategy (July 2013)
- Emerging Findings of the Early Years Review (October 2013)
- Proposals for Post-16 Alternative Education Provision (October 2013)
- Education Update Report – Key Stage 2 Results (October 2013)
- School Priority Areas (October 2013)
- Children and Families Bill 2013 (January 2014)
- Key Stage 4 Results (January 2014)
- Early Years Review Task and Finish Group (January 2014)
- Education Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Update (January 2014)
- How Scrutiny Can Influence and Improving Local Education Results (January 2014)

- Alternative Provision in Barnet (March 2014)
- Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (March 2014)
- Implementation of the Education Strategy (March 2014)
- Provision of Secondary School Places and Vocational Opportunities (March 2014)
- Educational Provision in Barnet – Annual Report (March 2014)

## **Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

During 2013/14 the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee continued its scrutiny of the work of the Independent Safeguarding Children’s Board and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Board. The Committee’s work programme reflected the work taking place to drive improvements in the provision of education and social care for children and young people and adults in need of social care support.

During the year, the Committee considered reports on:

- Telecare Update (June 2013)
- Local Account of Adult Care Services (June 2013)
- Safeguarding Adults Peer Review (June 2013)
- Barnet Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2012/13 and Safeguarding Strategy 2013-15 (September 2013)
- Tackling Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Grooming (September 2013)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (September 2013)
- Adults and Communities Delivery Unit Annual Complaints Report 2012/13 (October 2013)
- Safeguarding Children’s Board Annual Report 2012/13 (October 2013)
- Safeguarding in Barnet (October 2014)
- Children Subject to Child Protection Plan 2012/13 (November 2013)
- New OFSTED Inspection Frameworks for Child Protection and Looked After Children (November 2013)
- Your Choice Barnet Task and Finish Group – Final Report (November 2013)
- National Winterbourne View Programme – Barnet’s Response and Compliance Report (November 2013)
- OFSTED Inspection Frameworks (November 2013)
- Analysis of Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan (November 2013)
- Community Advice Contract (January 2014)



- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Update Report (January 2014)
- Local Account of Adult Care Services (April 2014)
- Care Bill Update Report (April 2014)
- Application of The Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (April 2014)
- Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel Annual Report 2012/13 (April 2014)
- Adoption Service Annual Report (April 2014)
- Fostering Service Annual Report (April 2014)
- Children and Families Act (April 2014)

Additionally, the Committee have received a number of “Enter and View” reports from Barnet Healthwatch. Committee Members have also completed a programme of announced and unannounced visits to young people’s hostels.

## **Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee continued its work scrutinising the NHS during a time of considerable transformation including the enactment of new organisational structures arising from the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the implementation of the Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Clinical Strategy and the transfer of public health services to local authority control.

During the year, the Committee received reports on:

- Members’ Item – Diabetes Screening (July 2013)
- Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Clinical Strategy (July 2013)
- GP Services – Brunswick Park Medical Centre and Finchley Memorial Hospital (July 2013)
- Transport Services – Finchley Memorial Hospital (July 2013)
- Update on NHS Transition (July 2013)
- Maternity Services (Caesarean Births) (July 2013)
- Barnet Healthwatch (July 2013)
- Francis Report – Implications for the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (July 2013)
- Transport Services – Finchley Memorial Hospital (October 2013)
- Members’ Item – Breast Screening Services at Finchley Memorial Hospital (October 2013)
- Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Clinical Strategy Update (October 2013)

- Barnet Healthwatch Enter and View Report – Thames Ward (October 2013)
- Health and Social Care Integration (October 2013)
- Dolphin Ward Update (October 2013)
- Maternity Services (Caesarean Births) (October 2013)
- NHS Health Checks Task and Finish Group – Update (October 2013)
- Members’ Item – Sexually Transmitted Diseases (October 2013)
- Members’ Item – GP Services in Barnet (October 2013)
- Members’ Item – GP Services at Finchley Memorial Hospital (December 2013)
- Members’ Item – Site Issues at Finchley Memorial Hospital (December 2013)
- Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Clinical Strategy (December 2013)
- NHS Quality Accounts – Mid Year Update (December 2013)
- Maternity Services (Caesarean Births) (December 2013)
- GP Services in Barnet (December 2013)
- Barnet Healthwatch Enter and View Reports – Ken Porter Ward and Thames Ward (December 2013)
- Breast Screening Services at Finchley Memorial Hospital (December 2013)
- NHS Health Checks Scrutiny Review (December 2013)
- GP Services at Finchley Memorial Hospital (March 2014)
- Site Issues at Finchley Memorial Hospital (March 2014)
- Barnet Healthwatch Enter and View Report – Woodfield House (March 2014)
- Annual Report of the Director for Public Health (March 2014)
- Public Health Commissioning Intentions (March 2014)
- NHS Health Checks Scrutiny Review (March 2014)
- Quality Accounts – Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust; Royal Free Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; Community London Health NHS Trust; Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health Trust; and North London Hospice (May 2014)

In scrutinising the items above, the Committee made a number of recommendations to health partners on their plans / strategies and ongoing delivery of health services within the borough. In addition, Committee Members raised a number of service related issues through Members Items and sought information from health partners on these. The Committee also considered the Quality Accounts of health partners operating within Barnet and made formal comments for inclusion in the Accounts.

The Committee’s Chairman and other Committee Members continued to represent Barnet at meetings of the North Central London Sector Joint Health Overview and

Scrutiny Committee, alongside neighbouring Councils, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington. These meetings were attended by senior staff of NHS services across the North Central London sector where trends, pressures and priorities were regularly discussed. Minutes of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee are included in agenda for the Barnet Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure that Barnet Members have an effective oversight of the work of the joint committee.

## **Task and Finish Groups**

Task and Finish Groups comprise five elected councillors who work together to undertake in-depth reviews of a service, policy or issue of concern to local people. Task and Finish Groups are time limited and normally complete their review within three months of being established, although this timescale is flexible and dependent on the topic under review.

The Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the work of Task and Finish Group. The Committee consider topics suggested by non-Executive Members and determine which will progress to review. Once a review has been convened, political groups nominate councillors to serve on each Task and Finish Group. Task and Finish Groups are empowered to determine their own terms of reference and what evidence they wish to receive. At the conclusion of a review, the Task and Finish Group will make evidence based recommendations to the Cabinet or relevant partner organisation.

During 2013/14, six Task and Finish Groups were established, each of which completed reviews:

- Your Choice Barnet
- Early Years Review
- 20 MPH Zones
- Empty Properties
- NHS Health Checks
- Parking Policy (Cash Meters)

Findings and recommendations from these reviews were reported to Cabinet on 25 February and 2 April 2014.

During 2011/12, the Scrutiny Office introduced a mechanism to track the progress made by the council (or public sector partners) in implementing recommendations made by Task and Finish Groups which had been accepted by the relevant decision making body. Updates were reported at six, 12 and 18 month intervals to the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This mechanism enabled Scrutiny Members to monitor

the outcomes of their work and challenge areas where they feel inadequate progress had been made. After 18 months, monitoring ceases and the reviews are closed. Though the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be dissolved when the new committee system of governance comes in to being from June 2014, updates will continue to be reported in to the relevant successor committees.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Panels**

Scrutiny Panels operate in a similar way to Task and Finish Groups but comprise seven members (with substitutes) and some of their meetings are held in public. Scrutiny Panels also review services, policies or issues of concern to local people. A Scrutiny Panel set up to consider the Education Strategy for Barnet reported a number of recommendations to the Cabinet at the 24 June 2013 meeting. Monitoring the implementation of the recommendations made by the Panel has been undertaken by the Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Legacy**

In the development of the new committee system form of governance, officers from the Governance Service have reviewed the work programmes of all six overview and scrutiny committees and have incorporated, where appropriate, items of business from overview and scrutiny committees.

In relation to the recommendations made by Task & Finish Groups and Overview & Scrutiny Panels, arrangements have been put in place to enable the new theme committees to monitor the implementation of recommendations made by these groups to ensure that positive outcomes are achieved.

As there remains a statutory requirement to retain health scrutiny in a committee system form of governance, the work of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee will continue under the current arrangements.

### Total Number of Call-ins by Year:

Year	Number
2006-07	53
2007-08	45
2008-09	40
2009-10	11
2010-11	24
2011-12	17
2012-13	9
<b>2013-14</b>	<b>6</b>

### Detail of Call-ins:

Date	Item called in
3 July 2013	The Sale of the Council's Freehold interest in the former Hendon Football Club Ground and adjoining land at Claremont Road, Hendon NW2 1AE
3 July 2013	Amendments to Housing Allocations Scheme and the Introduction of a Placements Policy
3 July 2013	Development and Regulatory Services (DRS): Selection of the Preferred and Reserved Bidder as the council's Strategic Partner to form a Joint Venture to deliver the DRS Services
18 November 2013	Pavilion Way HA8
18 November 2013	Sport and Physical Activity
6 January 2014	Future CCTV Service