

# Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/2022

Blackpool Council



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## Introduction

At the start of the Municipal Year, as the country gradually removed pandemic restrictions, the legislation to allow Council meetings to take place virtually was removed and we therefore started the new year holding meetings informally and virtually before moving back to formal in person Committee meetings in September 2021. Despite the impact of the pandemic, the scrutiny committees have carried out more work than ever over the last year and have embraced and effectively utilised informal, virtual working in order to consider key issues and identify improvements.

## Scrutiny Leadership Board

The Scrutiny Leadership Board has continued to develop its leadership role across the Council and in doing so has kept a watching brief over the work of all the scrutiny committees through receiving regular updates from each Chair about the work of their Committee as well as receiving regular input from the Chair of the Audit Committee. Regular informal meetings between Committee Chairs and Cabinet Members have continued and the relationship between the Executive and Scrutiny has been strengthened with the Leader of the Council regularly attending Leadership Board meetings.

### Key pieces of work:

- During the 2021/2022 Municipal Year, the Scrutiny Leadership Board established a new **financial performance reporting** timetable with full monitoring information considered twice per year, with additional informal meetings held to consider the development of the Council's budget for the following year, the findings of which were reported to the Executive for consideration during the budget setting process.
- Following the Scrutiny Leadership Board's input into the development of the Council's Key Performance Indicators in 2020/2021, the Board has taken a leading role in **monitoring performance** against this new set of indicators and is using the information gathered to inform the workplans of the scrutiny committees whilst

continually seeking to improve the information the Council gathers as part of its performance monitoring. An example of this is the recent comments made around the data collected on town centre satisfaction amongst residents, where officers have been requested to review how the data is collected in order to ensure it is truly reflective of the views of residents.

- The SLB has continued to focus on the implementation of the **Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy** and has been robustly examining the progress made. Key areas discussed include the park ranger programme, allotments, volunteering and the potential for a Parks Foundation.

### FOCUS POINT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Council has been working for a number of years on the development of the Community Engagement Strategy with the Scrutiny Leadership Board receiving regular updates and opportunities to contribute to its development. The Place Based Partnership is also working on a Community Engagement Strategy and both organisations are working together in order to ensure a common language is utilised across the Fylde Coast. The Leadership Board has also been receiving regular updates from representatives of the Place Based Partnership on the work they are carrying out and how the NHS and Council are working in partnership on this matter. The Leadership Board will be receiving a timeline for the final development stages of the Strategy in order to ensure it is completed in a timely fashion.

### Ongoing work:

- The work on the **Channel Shift Scrutiny Review** has resumed and nearly concluded with a range of potential recommendations identified for consideration by the Executive. The review was very wide ranging and received input from the NHS and some of the Council's wholly owned companies. The final report and recommendations will be submitted to the Executive once approved by the Scrutiny Leadership Board.

## Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee

The Committee has continued to work hard to build relationships with the Integrated Care System representatives, from the Clinical Commissioning Group which is still working on a temporary basis to the main providers of health services in the town including Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust. It has continued to receive regular reporting from the CCG on performance against national targets in addition to progress reports against CQC inspections from both Trusts alongside a wide range of specific reporting topics.

Other areas of the Committee's focus include Adult Social Care with regular reporting received on a wide range of issues from continued ongoing response to the pandemic to addressing reasons for delays to discharges. A number of key services provided by Public Health have also been identified for review with an in depth look at sexual health services carried out and reports into smoking cessation and alcohol harm reduction identified for future meetings.

### **MAKING A CONTRIBUTION AND CHANGING FOR THE BETTER: DRUG RELATED DEATHS SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Committee has completed the **Drug Related Deaths Scrutiny Review** with the final recommendations wide ranging and including ensuring safe long term and short term prescribing; to work on a comparative costing of Heroin Assisted Treatment and Overdose Prevention Centres to share with all partners and identify what aspects could be legally introduced into services already being provided in order to make an immediate impact; and to continue the outreach homeless provision continue post pandemic.

The Committee is continuing to monitor the progress made against these recommendations and will be holding a special meeting in May 2022 at which the progress will be considered in more detail along with input from the Lived Experience Team.

### Key pieces of work:

- **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:** The Committee remains committed to the scrutiny of mental health services provision and considers it of even more importance due to the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of residents. A special meeting was held in October 2021 to consider the issue in depth with ongoing reporting continuing after this date.
- The **Meals on Wheels** Scrutiny Review concluded with a recommendation to create a leaflet to advise residents of the provision available in the town. The leaflet is currently in development and it is hoped will be available for circulation by Winter this year.
- Members also carried out and concluded a review into **Supported Housing** and as a result a draft set of standards for supported housing in Blackpool have been developed alongside a set of other documents and protocols with a view to improving the quality of supported housing in the town. This issue has also been raised and highlighted nationally and following the conclusion of a recent pilot scheme in which Blackpool participated there have been changes made by the Government to both regulation and funding of supported housing, which can be considered a great success for the Council.
- The Committee has most recently established a review of **Dentistry and Oral Health** in Blackpool. The review has been scoped and held its first meeting and will conclude in the new Municipal Year. The review will look at access to dentists, public health oral health strategy and the preventative measures in place and will consider input from both NHS England and Healthwatch Blackpool.

### Future focus:

The Committee considers that it still has a role in reviewing recovery of services post pandemic, and identifying improvements that can be made for residents and patients. Upcoming items identified in the workplan include delayed discharges, performance of North West Ambulance Service, population health management and dementia with training to be provided on the health structure in Blackpool by the Place Based Partnership.

## Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee

As in the previous Municipal Year, the focus of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee remains on Children's Social Care improvement, Youth Justice and special educational needs and disability provision. The Committee has kept a watching brief on the progress made by Children's Social Care and has been pleased to note the improvements achieved to date.

The Committee has also received in depth reports on a number of specific items during 2021/2022 including Young Adder, pupil literacy and reading performance data and educational diversity.

### Key pieces of work:

- A review panel was established and completed on the Schools Response to the Pandemic and will be followed up with a review looking at how schools have spent the additional 'catch up' funding.
- The Committee carried out a review of **BetterStart** looking at the value for money being provided. A number of recommendations were made by the Panel, all of which were approved by the Executive including that BetterStart should refocus on the original wards that it had been awarded the funding for, that a Communications Strategy should be developed to address how communications would be improved with the faith, voluntary and community sectors and that future interventions should be targeted where appropriate more specifically to those parents identified as being at risk of having their children taken into care.
- Reporting from the **Youth Justice Team** informed the Committee that the service had most recently been re-inspected during May and June 2021 which had acknowledged improvements and the service had been rated as 'Good' and in three aspects 'Outstanding'. The Committee will continue to receive progress updates on the six areas identified for further improvement by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Probation (HMIP).
- Recommendation monitoring will continue following the work undertaken as part of the **Inclusion in Education Scrutiny Review**.

### FOCUS POINT: ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Last year a future focus for the Committee was identified as improving engagement with young people. The Committee has taken some excellent steps in addressing this during the last twelve months through involving representatives in review work such as the BetterStart Review. It also held a special meeting on 12 January 2022 to which a number of young representatives from JustUz attended and presented. The special meeting considered the Corporate Parent Panel Annual Report and a special presentation on Blackpool Families Rock.

The Committee met with some of the Council's Young Inspectors in June 2021 and they have been invited back to give an update on their work at the Committee meeting in June 2022.

In addition, a young representative from Young Adder attended the Committee at its meeting in March 2022 in order to provide a first hand account of the service. This increased engagement has ensured that the Committee is hearing from young people on the topics that matter most to them.

### During the 2021/2022 Municipal Year the Committee has also contributed to and reviewed progress on:

- The **Literacy Strategy** – this Strategy was launched in September 2021 and regular reporting has been received by the Committee on the progress made in implementing the Strategy. The Committee has also made links to the Library Service and will be receiving additional information at a future meeting.
- **SEND Vision and Strategy** – regular reporting has been received on the development of this Strategy and the Committee has been heavily involved. A final version of the Strategy was due to be considered by the Committee no later than June 2022.
- **Domestic Abuse Strategy** – the Committee jointly reviewed the Council's draft Domestic Abuse Strategy along with the Adult Social Care and Health Committee in December 2021, with Members' input being incorporated into the final version.
- The Committee received preliminary information about a large scale **review of youth provision** across the town, the findings of which will be presented at an informal meeting of the Committee to be arranged before the end of the Municipal Year.

## Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee

The Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee has had multiple areas of focus over the previous 12 months including tourism performance town centre regeneration, leisure services performance and has received annual reports relating to parks and green spaces and waste and street cleansing.

### SOMETHING DIFFERENT: ARTS AND CULTURE TOUR

At Blackpool, we are always looks for different ways to carry out scrutiny, new ways to gather information and the opportunity to interact with people in different ways. As part of the Arts and Culture Scrutiny Review, we were able to organise a tour of the key culture venues in Blackpool for Members of the review panel. Feedback from the event was very positive, with one Member reporting that the “tour has certainly given me a better understanding of what the town has to offer and the importance art can play in improving people's lives (on both a social and economic level)”.

The next steps of the review will be to receive a report on the planned consultation and timescales to develop a Cultural Plan for Blackpool. This will be followed by consideration of the draft Plan to allow the Committee to feed into its development.

### Key pieces of work:

- A key priority of the Committee has been to keep continued oversight of the Council’s response to the **Climate Emergency Declaration** it made in 2021. To date the Committee has received regular updates on the work to achieve net-zero by 2030 and the progress made against the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- In response to concerns regarding **Public Rights Of Way** raised by a public speaker at a meeting in 2021, the Committee held a review panel meeting to discuss the planned work on public rights of way in Blackpool. At the Panel meeting it was agreed to include ongoing monitoring of the progress of the proposed work with reports to future Committee meetings.
- The Committee carried out its annual review of the **Community Safety Partnership**. As part of the review it agreed to consider if there were any

areas of community safety work that could be where a deep dive review could be undertaken.

- The implementation of the recommendations made by the **Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review** have been regularly reviewed by the Committee and it is satisfied that sufficient progress has been made to date.
- **CCTV in the Central Area** of Blackpool was considered at a review panel meeting in September 2021. Members were informed of the plans to improve the CCTV infrastructure in the central areas of Blackpool. This included the demonstration of new technology and discussions on how new CCTV equipment would be used. The review panel noted the work being undertaken and agreed to undertake further review work in 2022/2023 to scrutinise the development of CCTV across the rest of Blackpool.
- **Town Deal** – In September 2021 the committee received a briefing on the Council’s submission for Town Deal funding. At the meeting officers outlined the projects that had been identified as part of the submission and discussed how they would impact residents and visitors.
- The Committee also received regular updates on:
  - **Car Parking** - Details of the operation, usage and income from Council owned car parks.
  - **Flood Risk Management** – An annual report on the Council’s performance against its statutory duties.
  - **Bathing Water Quality** - An annual report the quality of Blackpool’s bathing waters and work to maintain them.

### Future Focus:

The Committee will continue to undertake its monitoring of key issues affecting Blackpool, such as the redevelopment of the town centre, the Climate Emergency and public rights of way.

Scrutiny of the development of a **Cultural Plan for Blackpool** will be ongoing in 2022/2023, with the Committee working with officers in preparing the consultation with key stakeholders and reviewing the draft plan when available.

The Committee has also agreed to review **Temporary Hotel Accommodation** in Blackpool during 2022/2023. Considering their impact on residents and the tourism economy. A scope for the review has been agreed and it will commence in the new Municipal Year.

## Document Control

Document owner:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Document number:	1
Document category:	Annual Report
Document location:	
Issued by:	
Last edited:	1 April 2022

### Record of Amendments:

Date	Version	Amended by	Description of changes

### Approved By:

Name	Title	Signature	Date