



Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25

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Foreword of the Scrutiny Chairs

Throughout 2024/25, our Scrutiny Committees have continued to carry out their functions in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

This year, Members have focused their review work on issues of real importance to our communities. A joint review examined the security arrangements at The Arc, responding to concerns about anti-social behaviour and ensuring that robust policies and protocols are in place to protect both staff and the public. In addition, Scrutiny has carried out an in-depth review of the Council's approach to environmental despoilment, looking at how education and enforcement can be strengthened to reduce fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling, and to improve the appearance and safety of our shared public spaces.

These reviews have directly supported the Council's corporate ambitions: improving customer satisfaction with our services, ensuring our communities feel safe, and protecting the local environment so that the District is a place where people are proud to live, work and visit.

Alongside this, Committees have continued to monitor progress on past recommendations, to challenge performance where necessary, and to work constructively with officers, the Executive and partners in order to influence service improvements.

We would like to thank all Members, officers and partners for their contributions throughout the year. Their input has enabled Scrutiny to examine complex issues in detail and ensure that decision-making remains transparent, accountable and focused on delivering positive outcomes for the people of Bolsover District.

Councillor David Bennett

Chair of the Finance & Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee (2024/25)

Councillor Vicky Waplington

Chair of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee (2024/25)

Councillor Ashley Taylor

Chair of the Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee (2024/25)

Councillor Sally Renshaw

Chair of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee (2024/25)

Summary of 2024/25

Constitution Updates

During 2024/25, Scrutiny made an update to the constitution to strengthen the role of Members in the general awareness and understanding of financial and performance oversight.

Previously, all Scrutiny Members were invited to attend the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee only once a year for consideration of the annual budget proposals. This provision has now been broadened so that all Members serving on the thematic Scrutiny Committees are invited to attend all meetings of the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee in the capacity of invited Members (without voting rights).

The change ensures that Scrutiny Members can observe and engage with the Committee's work throughout the year, particularly in relation to quarterly performance monitoring and the examination of budget proposals. This update enhances transparency, promotes a stronger understanding of the link between financial resources, service delivery and corporate priorities, and supports more effective and joined-up scrutiny across the Council.

Member Training

Members received some training that related to the Scrutiny review on Security Policies, Protocols and Procedures from Derbyshire Constabulary:

- Security Briefing for Members from Tara Addison, Force Elected Official Advisor (Derbyshire Constabulary)

Customer Services Scrutiny Committee

During 2024/25, Members received a range of reports to Committee. Some were routine update reports and others were linked to service transformation and development of new policies:

Policy/Strategy/Programme Monitoring Reports:

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027: Monitoring Update

Policy Development:

- Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group - Review of The Voids Process
- Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Consultation Draft
- Housing Strategy 2024-2029: Final Draft
- Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
- The Electrical Safety Policy
- The Gas and Heating Compliance Policy
- Housing Domestic Abuse Policy 2025-2028

Performance Review Reports:

- Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints 2022/23 – 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2024 and Annual Summary
- Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment Report - Verbal Update
- LG&SCO and Housing Ombudsman Annual Report 2023/24
- Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints 2023/24 – 1st April 2024 to 30th June 2024
- Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints 2024/25 – 1st July 2024 to 30th September 2024
- Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints Report 2023/24 – 1st October 2024 to 31st December 2024

Review Work

- Review of Members ICT & Support and ICT Service Delivery: Post Scrutiny Monitoring
- Review of Effectiveness of Council's Waste Collection and Disposal Education: Post Scrutiny Monitoring
- Joint Review of Security Arrangements at The Arc: Policies, Protocols and Procedures (in collaboration with the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee)

Local Growth Scrutiny Committee

During 2024/25, Members received a range of reports to Committee, some allowing us to monitor delivery of core projects and others to develop new policies for the Authority.

Policy/Strategy/Programme Monitoring Reports:

- Bolsover District Regeneration Fund Update
- Dragonfly Development Limited (DDL) Delivery Updates
- Dragonfly Development Limited (DDL) Shareholder Board Updates
- Pleasley Vale Regeneration Programme – Progress Updates
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Monitoring Updates
- Home England: Compliance Audit Report – 2024/25

Policy Development:

- Disposal and Acquisition Policy
- Social Value Policy Review

Performance Review Report:

- None for 2024/25

Review Work

- Review of Dragonfly Development Limited (DDL) Service Level Agreements
- Joint Review of Security Arrangements at The Arc: Policies, Protocols and Procedures (in collaboration with the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee)

Joint Scrutiny Committee: Customer Services and Local Growth

Joint Review of Security Arrangements at The Arc: Policies, Protocols and Procedures

The Customer Services Scrutiny Committee and Local Growth Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a joint review of security arrangements at The Arc, focussing on policies, protocols and procedures, as part of their 2024-25 Work Programme.

This review related directly to the remit of the Customer Services Committee:

- Emergency Planning
- Managing Complaints
- Customer Services
- Legal Requirements

As well as the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee:

- Facilities Management
- Legal Requirements

By working together, the Committees were able to bring a broader range of ideas and perspectives to the review, ensuring a more thorough and informed approach. This collaborative effort allowed for a more efficient use of resources and promoted a cohesive and integrated scrutiny process, which was particularly beneficial for such a large-scale and complex piece of work.

This review was initiated in response to growing concerns about the security of The Arc, its vulnerability to incidents of anti-social behaviour and potential critical risks that could threaten the safety of staff, Elected Members and the public.

The aim of the review was:

- To ensure that the Council has a clear approach towards security protocols and procedures in at The Arc.

The objectives agreed were:

1. Assess the Council's current security policies and procedures at The Arc in relation to incidents of ASB and situations of critical danger for staff, Elected Members and customers.
2. To examine incidents and data of previous occurrences of ASB and security issues from recent years at The Arc and identify areas for improvement.
3. To examine the Council's current approach to staff training for security procedures and public education on protocols in dangerous security situations.

The key issues identified for investigation included:

- Ensuring the safety of staff and customers at Council facilities

- Exploring the potential for implementing a security guard team
- Reviewing current security protocols
- Evaluating staff training for handling critical situations
- Assessing areas where the Council is performing well and areas that need improvement

The key findings arising from the review included:

- **Clear accountability:** There was no specific officer or Cabinet Member responsible for overseeing security responsibilities and inter-departmental coordination at The Arc.
- **Lack of a comprehensive security policy:** Existing procedures were fragmented; a unified policy would consolidate security arrangements and improve overall effectiveness.
- **Unclear incident response roles:** Procedures would benefit from defined responsibilities and clear escalation pathways during emergencies to ensure swift and coordinated action.
- **Need for regular review/testing of procedures:** Security protocols should be regularly reviewed and tested to ensure they remain effective and up to date.
- **Training gaps for staff:** Frontline and operational staff need consistent, ongoing training in conflict management and emergency response to enhance preparedness.
- **CCTV and perimeter security:** Consideration should be given to upgrading CCTV systems and perimeter security to improve monitoring and protection.
- **Security considerations for committee meetings:** Additional safeguards, such as barriers, codes of conduct and camera monitoring, are needed to ensure safe and orderly proceedings.
- **CTSA security audit:** A Counter Terrorism Security Advisor (CTSA) provided valuable feedback and Members have received a security briefing to enhance awareness and preparedness.
- **Emergency procedures under development:** Invacuation, evacuation and lockdown plans are being drafted but are not yet fully implemented; an accommodation review of the building is under development.
- **Proactive ongoing improvement:** Security measures should be continuously updated to address emerging threats and ensure the ongoing safety of staff, Elected Members and the public.

The Joint Committee put together 11 recommendations to assist the Council in improving security and safety arrangements at The Arc. The recommendations made during this review are detailed below.

1. That the Council introduce a clear security responsibility framework: appoint a senior officer responsible for security at The Arc, tasked with overseeing the development, implementation and regular updates of security policies; assign a portfolio holder from the Cabinet to be responsible for security, as part of their remit.
2. That the Council develops a comprehensive security policy for The Arc that addresses ASB, emergency situations and the safety of staff, Elected Members and customers.
3. That the Council ensures there are clear roles and responsibilities for security procedures and incident response at The Arc.

4. That the Council ensure security procedures are regularly reviewed, updated and tested.
5. That the Council explores options available to develop improved CCTV and monitoring systems at The Arc.
6. That the Council consider strengthening perimeter security for external physical threats such as vehicle mitigation.
7. That the Council addresses security arrangements for committee meetings held at The Arc.
8. That the Council conduct a security audit with a Counter Terrorism Security Advisor.
9. That the Council ensure staff and Elected Members are familiar with emergency, evacuation and invacuation procedures and reporting processes.
10. That the Council provide staff training for conflict management and emergency situations (particularly operational staff and front-of-house staff) and continue to regularly provide training on security related issues to staff and Elected Members.
11. That the Council review and update Panic Button procedures and provide SIA training for appropriate members of staff (such as the Leisure Duty Managers and the Enforcement Officers).

The timescales of Joint Review of Security Arrangements at The Arc: Policies, Protocols and Procedures:

- July 2024 – May 2025
- Agreed by Scrutiny: July 2025
- Date agreed by Executive: July 2025
- Post-Monitoring Period: 18 months commencing July 2025.

This review is now within its monitoring phase with interim reports expected in December 2025, June 2026 and December 2026.

Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee

During 2024/25, Members received a wide range of reports to Committee:

Policy/Strategy/Programme Monitoring Reports:

- Health and Wellbeing Strategy – Monitoring Update
- Annual Review of Community Safety Partnership
- Community Outreach Programme – Member Update

Policy Development:

- None for 2024/25

Performance Review Reports:

- None for 2024/25

Review Work

- Presentation of Council Governance Arrangements in Relation to Dragonfly (Verbal)
- Presentation of Council's approach to Carbon Reduction (Verbal Presentation)
- Review of Council's Approach to Carbon Reduction – Post-Scrutiny Monitoring Interim Report
- Preparation for Annual Review of the Community Safety Partnership
- Review of the Council's Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005
- Review of the Council's Energy Policy for Local Housing – Post Scrutiny Monitoring Report (Interim Report)
- Review of the Council's Approach to Environmental Despoilment Education and Enforcement

Annual Review of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 requires every Local Authority to have a specified Committee (the "Crime and Disorder Committee") with the power to:

- Review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.
- Make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions.

(Responsible authorities are effectively the statutory partners within a community safety partnership, including the Police, Local Authorities (County and District), Fire and Rescue Authority, Probation Trusts, and Clinical Commissioning Groups, as determined by section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (c. 37)).

Following on from last year's review, Members wished to focus on current delivery of the Bolsover CSP, progress against the CSP Plan, and recent achievements in crime prevention and community safety initiatives.

Key issues presented and areas of questioning included:

- An update on Bolsover CSP and current delivery.
- The Bolsover CSP Plan and its implementation.

- A report from Derbyshire Constabulary.
- A summary of achievements during 2024/25, including diversionary activities and crime prevention initiatives.
- Updates on Community Enforcement Rangers, the ASB Team, and a detailed ASB case study.

Officers invited to attend included representatives from Bolsover District Council's Community Safety and Enforcement Team and Derbyshire Constabulary. Members engaged with officers to scrutinise service delivery, explore the effectiveness of partnership working, and consider areas for future improvement. The review provided Members with assurance on the progress made in addressing crime and anti-social behaviour across the District and informed any recommendations for further development of the CSP.

Review of the Council's Approach to Environmental Despoilment Education and Enforcement

The Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of the Council's approach to environmental despoilment education and enforcement, as part of the 2024-25 Work Programme.

The issue was initially raised due to concerns about environmental despoilment in Bolsover District, including fly-tipping, littering, and dog fouling. These issues not only pose risks to public health and the environment but also undermine the District's aesthetics and the Council's corporate goals for a cleaner, safer community. The review sought to assess the effectiveness of current enforcement and education strategies, with the aim of improving the District's cleanliness and public perception.

The aims of the review were:

- That the Council reduces fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling to improve the aesthetical value of Bolsover District, to protect local wildlife and to reduce the cost of dealing with the unauthorised illegal depositing of waste by assessing the service's effectiveness in tackling environmental despoilment.
- That the Council becomes an excellent authority at 'keeping the District clean' rather than 'cleaning the District'.

The objectives agreed were:

1. Understand what Environmental Despoilment involves (fly tipping, littering and dog fouling), the Council's statutory duty and enforcement powers, and policies available to the Council.
2. Analyse the current data of incidents of environmental despoilment across the District.
3. Review the current arrangements undertaken by the Enforcement Team, Streetscene Services and Environmental Health to reduce or prevent Environmental Despoilment.
4. Improve public information/education on environmental despoilment.

5. Identify benchmarking opportunities and areas for improvement; ensure there is a clear strategy of enforcement action to improve the quality of the environment across the District.

The key findings arising from the review are:

- Environmental despoilment, particularly fly-tipping, remains a significant and persistent issue across the District, impacting both the quality of the environment and residents' sense of place.
- Current enforcement outcomes are limited, with performance data showing a low percentage of reports leading to fixed penalty notices or prosecutions, particularly for fly-tipping, dog fouling and littering.
- The joint Environmental Health service with North East Derbyshire District Council offers a useful foundation, but there is a clear need to explore alternative models or tools that could enhance enforcement capability and effectiveness.
- Hotspot locations for fly-tipping require targeted action, including surveillance, signage, and operational task groups to focus efforts and improve accountability across departments.
- The coordination between departments—Streetscene, Community Safety and Environmental Health—must be strengthened through revived Corporate Enforcement Group meetings, structured evidence processes, and shared training opportunities.
- Public engagement and education are essential components of any long-term solution, with the Council needing to amplify its communications, provide clear guidance on waste disposal, and increase the visibility of enforcement actions to deter offending.
- Improved transparency and performance benchmarking through accessible, meaningful data and public updates will help build community trust and demonstrate the Council's commitment to tackling environmental offences.

The Committee put together 11 recommendations to assist the Council in improving the effectiveness of its response to environmental despoilment across Bolsover District. The recommendations made during this review are detailed below.

1. That the Council undertakes a piece of work, led by the Assistant Director of Streetscene, Community Safety and Enforcement, to explore alternative ways of working to improve the level and effectiveness of environmental enforcement activity across Bolsover District
2. That the Council targets fly-tipping hotspots (such as top 5 most frequently visited from 2023/24 including Outgang Lane in Pleasley, Wood Lane in Shirebrook, and Talbot Street in Pinxton), through targeted patrols and installation of surveillance cameras where appropriate.
3. That the Council prioritise completing the installation of the 15 metal signs and place additional signage in high-risk areas (such Outgang Lane in Pleasley, Wood Lane in Shirebrook, and Talbot Street in Pinxton) in lay-bys and secluded spots.
4. That the Council explores options for CCTV surveillance in fly-tipping hotspots.

5. That the Council reintroduces regular quarterly meetings of the Corporate Enforcement Group (Streetscene, the Enforcement Team and Environmental Health).
6. That the Council develops a clear process for evidence collection for fly-tipping sites that ensures evidence is properly managed.
7. That the Council organises joint training sessions for the Enforcement team, Streetscene workers and Environmental Health that focuses on improving understanding of each team's roles; as well as bi-annual training for evidence collection, ensuring there is a specific process for collecting physical evidence.
8. That the Council delivers public awareness campaigns to educate residents about the risks of hiring unlicensed waste collectors and provides clear, accessible guidance on how to verify waste carrier licences.
9. That the Council enhance public information on fly-tipping and littering by regularly featuring updates on enforcement actions and responsible bulky waste removal options through existing communication channels and the newly established social media platforms, including the Bolsover District Council Facebook page.
10. That the Council enhance transparency by publishing meaningful data and information on fly-tipping activities on the website and through social media, that demonstrate what the Council is doing to tackle environmental despoilment.
11. That the Council provide advice on how to handle hazardous items such as needles and syringes, ensuring residents are informed on the safe disposal of such materials and the risks associated with handling them improperly.

This review is now within its monitoring phase with a first interim progress report expected in Spring 2026.

Finance & Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee

The Finance and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee has provided oversight of a range of core governance and accountability arrangements, responses to the recommendations of assurance providers and helping to ensure robust arrangements were maintained. This Committee has provided a forum for Scrutiny Members to review and scrutinise the Council's financial position.

The Scrutiny element of the Committee has been responsible for receiving and scrutinising the Council's Treasury Management Strategies and associated policies, reviewing budget proposals in line with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution, and reviewing performance against the Council's Corporate Ambitions and associated performance indicators.

During 2024/25, Members received a range of reports to Committee.

Treasury Strategy Reports 2025/26 – 2028/29 Including:

- Treasury Management Strategy
- Capital Strategy (Capital)
- Corporate Investment Strategy (Borrowing & Investment)

Budget Monitoring:

- Annual Corporate Debt Monitoring Performance Report 2023/24
- Budget Monitoring Report – Financial Outturn 2023/24
- Budget Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 – April to June 2024/25
- Budget Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 – July to September 2024/25
- Revised Budgets 2024/25
- Setting of Council Tax 2025/26
- Proposed Budget – Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29

Performance Review Reports:

- Corporate Ambitions Performance Update – April to June 2024 (Q1 – 2024/25)
- Corporate Ambitions Performance Update – July to September 2024 (Q2 – 2024/25)
- Corporate Ambitions Performance Update – October to December 2024 (Q3 – 2024/25)
- Corporate Ambitions Performance Update – January to March 2025 (Q4 – 2024/25)

The Committee's Main Achievements/Outcomes

The Committee plays a crucial role in adding value to the organisation through its scrutiny and oversight activities. Over the course of the year, it has monitored non-financial performance against the Council's Ambition targets on a quarterly basis, inviting officers to meetings to provide context and explain areas where performance did not meet expectations.

The Committee has also scrutinised the Medium-Term Financial Plan prior to making recommendations to the Executive on budget proposals, in accordance with the Budget

and Policy Framework Procedure Rules. Alongside this, the Committee has reviewed quarterly budget monitoring reports to ensure that financial performance is closely examined and understood.

The Committee has further scrutinised the setting of Council Tax rates and examined the statement of accounts before approval, ensuring that the Council's finances are presented accurately and transparently.

Through these activities, the Committee has made a substantial and positive contribution to the Council's overall governance, financial control, and risk management arrangements, strengthening confidence in the organisation's decision-making and accountability.

Scrutiny Impact

During 2023/24, the three themed committees monitored implementation of review recommendations. Progress across the year was as follows:

Review	Recommendations						Status
	Achieved	Achieved (Behind target)	On track	Overdue	Extended	Alert	
Council's Approach to Carbon Reduction	5	1	2	0	1	0	The Climate Change Officer started at the Council in July 2024. Progress is being made and the recommendations will be completed during 2025. The new Performance team, which has recently taken over responsibility for corporate Performance reporting, will be reviewing the format and delivery of these reports during summer 2025. As part of this review, the team aims to incorporate carbon reduction data, as outlined in recommendation 2.3, into the quarterly Performance updates. Following the major changes and updates to the Council website during Spring 2025, progress has been delayed for recommendations 2.5 and 2.8.
Review of Members ICT & Support and ICT Service Delivery	7	5	0	0	1	0	New AV equipment has been procured for the Council Chamber however this has not included power supplies. This will potentially be looked at in the future. Recommendations almost complete and signed off pending agreement of Chief Exec and Director of ICT.
Review of Effectiveness of Council's Waste Collection and Disposal Education: Post Scrutiny Monitoring	9	0	0	0	1	1	Bi-weekly e-newsletter, online recycling guides, and regular InTouch features promote waste education. School outreach continues but with low uptake. Recycling messages run on Council digital screens, with a new Comms campaign and 2026 bin calendar planned. Streetscene has strengthened practices ahead of an updated waste policy (Oct 2025). Redesign of the calendar and education materials is delayed pending further review and consultation. One recommendation is marked Alert as it is not able to be completed due to LGR implications.
Review of the Council's Energy	2	1	0	0	2	0	Savills completed the Stock Conditions Survey with 92.7% access. Bolsover District Council secured 40% of Warm Home Social Fund funding to raise EPCs to level C,

Policy for Local Housing							supporting efficiency upgrades at 100 homes over three years, with further projects planned. Energy grant information and educational articles are now online, supported by a planned Climate Plan communications strategy. Additional funding will also deliver housing improvements through DDL and Bassetlaw on both Council and private properties.
Review of the Council's Approach to Environmental Despoilment Education and Enforcement	0	0	11	0	0	0	This review was only complete during June of this year – an interim monitoring report is expected in Spring 2026.
Joint Review of Security Arrangements at The Arc: Policies, Protocols and Procedures	1	0	10	0	0	0	This review was only complete during June of this year – an interim monitoring report is expected in December 2025.
Total No. of Recommendations Monitored	24	7	23	0	3	1	This year, a total of 58 recommendations were monitored. Of these, 24 have been fully achieved, with a further 7 achieved but behind the original target. 23 recommendations are currently on track, three have required extensions, and one is in the alert (cancelled) category. There are no overdue recommendations. Overall, Scrutiny Post Monitoring demonstrates steady progress, with most recommendations either completed or progressing as planned, while a small number require additional focus.

The year ahead

Setting the Committee Work Programmes

In spring 2025, all Members were invited to suggest topics for scrutiny. The three thematic committees considered the proposals and agreed the areas they will investigate during the 2025/26 municipal year, setting out their draft work programmes.

The Local Growth Scrutiny Committee will review opportunities for skills and employment among young people across the District, assessing how the Council can support skills development and access to work in response to local economic changes.

The Customer Services Scrutiny Committee will review Grounds Maintenance and Green Space Standards, examining how the Council prioritises and delivers grounds maintenance across the District. This will include partnership working, resource allocation, public engagement, and levels of satisfaction with green space initiatives, hedgerows, and other natural features.

The Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee will review Community Health and Wellbeing Support for Isolated and At-Risk Residents, evaluating the accessibility, reach, and impact of wellbeing services and initiatives, particularly in rural, isolated, and disadvantaged communities.

Progress on these thematic reviews will be temporarily paused while the Council recruits a new Scrutiny Officer. The Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee will continue to scrutinise the Council's financial position through its ongoing examination of the Budget and Policy Framework.