



Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL

Annual Report Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2025/26



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Foreword

“Over the past year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has carried out robust scrutiny of the Council’s priorities, as identified in the Corporate Plan, and monitored the Council’s budget, and scrutinised the 2025/26 budget proposals.

Scrutiny has recommended to Cabinet issues that have been raised from Members. The next step will be engaging more with the wider community to ensure we focus on issues that matter to residents and have a real impact on Council policies and services. This report summarises the main issues which have been reviewed and challenged throughout the year and highlights some of the key achievements.

Some significant achievements for Overview and Scrutiny this year include:

- The task-and-finish report into the issue of cemetery memorials.
- Advanced, comprehensive scrutiny of the 2025/26 budget proposals.
- Continued oversight of Broxtowe’s environmental enforcement contractor through performance data.
- Significant engagement with reviews of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across many council assets, such as parks and the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is cross-party and aims to be non-political, it is a critical friend to provide clarity and influence positive conversations. The Committee aims to amplify the voice of residents and invite witnesses to contribute to the meetings and share both expertise and lived experiences.

I am happy to submit this report to Council.”



Councillor S Dannheimer
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Overview and Scrutiny at Broxtowe

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the local democratic governance arrangements for local authorities in England and Wales. Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. Authorities who welcome challenge and recognise the value scrutiny can bring are more likely to thrive, develop resilience, and deliver better value for their residents.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to be an active and integral part of the Council's governance apparatus. During 2025/26 the Committee Members have acted as a critical friend as they have scrutinised the items selected for their work programme. It provides a vehicle for elected Members to influence the development of Council policies and enhances transparency and accountability to residents. The Committee also suggest service improvements through recommendations.

Scrutiny engagement has included appointing subcommittees, receiving presentations and taking reports followed by question-and-answer sessions, and delivering a complex task-and-finish review. This has enabled scrutiny to take an in-depth look at specific areas within the Council and has provided a variety of opportunities for Members to discuss and add value to key service areas.


During 2025/26, the Committee has received no call-ins. Legislation permits Overview and Scrutiny Committees to investigate, make reports and give recommendations regarding Cabinet decisions that have been agreed, but are pending implementation, subject to 'call-in'. The decision is suspended until it is reviewed - the Committee can ask Cabinet to reconsider its decision based on further evidence gathered.

The Committee has maintained oversight of the Council's budget performance throughout the year, scrutinising key areas of overspend and underspend, as well as emerging financial risks and key performances within business plans at the annual Overview and Scrutiny budget meetings each January. The Constitution requires the Executive to refer its initial budget proposals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration each year.


Councillor S Dannheimer, J Owen and S Webb, as Chair and Vice-Chairs respectively, would like to thank all the Officers and Members who have been involved in supporting and assisting in the Overview and Scrutiny process over the past year.

Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee


Councillor S Dannheimer (Chair)
Councillor S Webb (Vice Chair)
Councillor J M Owen (Vice Chair)
Councillor S J Carr
Councillor H L Crosby
Councillor H J Faccio
Councillor K A Harlow
Councillor H Land
Councillor D L MacRae
Councillor A W G A Stockwell
Councillor C M Tideswell
Councillor E Winfield
Councillor K Woodhead



"Overview and Scrutiny plays an important function in the work of the Council, providing valuable insight, experience and a second look to the work of the Executive."



' Having been a Member of Scrutiny for two years, I appreciate the valuable role that Scrutiny is able to play in enhancing the Council's performance. The adage that Scrutiny should be a critical friend of the Council is only too true.'



"Having site visits to places that Scrutiny is examining provides hands-on evidence to support recommendations to Cabinet."

How does scrutiny make a difference?



The principal power of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to influence the policies and decisions made by the Council and other organisations involved in delivering public services. The Committee gathers evidence on issues affecting local people and makes recommendations based on its findings.

Call-in Information

The Call-in Procedure at the Council provides a way for non-Executive Members of the Council to refer Executive (or 'Cabinet') decisions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before they are implemented. Once a decision has been called in, the matter must be included on the agenda of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting for review. Further information relating to the call-in process can be found within the Council's Constitution. [Constitution on Wednesday, 9 October 2024: Broxtowe Borough Council](#)

2022/23 - No Call-ins were made during 2022/23.

2023/24 - Two Call-ins were made during 2023/24 and were resolved within legislative timescales

2024/25 - No Call-ins.

2025/26 – No Call-ins.

Requests for reports to be added and approved to the Forward Plan

A forward plan regulation 28-day notice refers to a requirement in Local Government regulations that mandates Councils to publish a list of upcoming 'key decisions' they plan to make, providing at least 28 days' notice to the public before the decision is taken, allowing for transparency and public engagement.

Purpose:

To give residents and interested parties enough time to review proposed decisions, give their comments or raise concerns, and potentially influence the Council's final decision.

What is included in a forward plan:

Details about the key decision, such as the subject matter, proposed action, responsible Officer, date of the decision-making meeting, and relevant background information. Any report where the decision will be made in a private session will be listed by its title and the reason that the contents of the report is exempt from the press and public.

Where to access a forward plan:

The Council publish the forward plans on the website, making it accessible to the public. [Browse plans - Cabinet, 2026: Broxtowe Borough Council](#)

Legal basis:

This requirement stems from the [The Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#), which outline procedures for decision-making and public engagement.

If an urgent decision needs to be made before the next Cabinet meeting, the report requires the permission of the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Constitution, with a report on the subject to be included at the next Cabinet meeting. A Statutory Notice must be published stating the reason why the decision must be taken urgently and was not identified in the published Forward Plan giving 28 days' notice of a decision being made.

The Chair of the Committee has approved a total of ten requests for either a Key Decision or an Exempt decision to be made in the period May 2025 to April 2026. The reports were not identified in the published forward plan giving 28 days' notice before a decision had to be made, and the decisions were considered urgent.

<i>Request to add to the Forward Plan</i>	<i>Decision Date Cabinet</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Reason for Urgency</i>	<i>Date approved by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Notice Published</i>
1	4 November 2025	Opportunity to Purchase a Property for Housing Conversion	Commercially sensitive report to be able to proceed with discussions	Tuesday, 28 October 2025
2	27 November 2025	Fire Safety Works	By virtue of paragraphs 1 (Information relating to any individual), 2 (Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual), and 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).	Wednesday, 19 November 2025
3	16 December 2025	Submission of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan for Examination	In order to meet the necessary deadlines and outcomes.	Monday, 8 December 2025

4	16 December 2025	Scrutiny Review of Cemetery Memorials	In order to meet the necessary deadlines and outcomes.	Thursday, 11 December 2025
5	3 February 2026	Scrutiny Review of Cemetery Memorials	In order to meet the necessary deadlines and outcomes.	Tuesday, 27 January 2026
6	3 February 2026	Budget Proposals and Associated Strategies	In order to meet the necessary deadlines and outcomes.	Tuesday, 27 January 2026
7	3 February 2026	Housing Scrutiny Group Report - Voids Process	In order to meet the necessary deadlines and outcomes.	Tuesday, 27 January 2026
8	3 February 2026	Environmental Enforcement Update	In order to meet the necessary deadlines and outcomes.	Tuesday, 27 January 2026
9	10 March 2026	New Replacement Bramcote Leisure Centre	In order to meet the necessary deadlines and outcomes.	Monday, 2 March 2026
10	14 April 2026	Eastwood Health Hub and Town Centre Redevelopment	In order to meet the necessary deadlines and outcomes.	Thursday, 2 April 2026

Special Urgency Notice

There were no Special Urgency Notices in the period May 2025-April 2026.

Member Development

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee built on the suite of external training delivered last year through sustained scrutiny activity, helping to effectively solidify what they had learnt in previous training and help deliver sustained benefits for residents. Select members of the Committee had the opportunity to deepen their scrutiny capabilities through

involvement in the long-running and complex task-and-finish enquiry into cemetery memorials.

Further member training is planned for later in 2026, allowing members to deepen their knowledge of other aspects on which they have not previously received training. The opportunity for members to receive bespoke training from the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) is being explored by the Council's Member Development Group.

Key Achievements in 2025/26

Final report of the Cemetery Memorials Task and Finish Group

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following continued feedback from local residents, constituted a task-and-finish group of six members in September 2025 to investigate and consider the matter of unauthorised memorials in borough cemeteries. This followed the deferral of a decision by Cabinet at its 3 June 2025 meeting, subject to the outcome of this scrutiny exercise.

After agreeing the review's scoping document at its 25 September 2025 meeting, the group worked to scrutinise the issue of cemetery memorials, unauthorised constructions in borough cemeteries, present and previous cemetery management procedures and practices, the approaches of other authorities, and local resident interest in the issue. The group delivered its final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 15 December 2025 before it was referred to the 3 February 2026 meeting of Cabinet alongside a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment following public consultation.

The purpose of the review was to consider present cemetery management practices alongside resident feedback and, in light of national trends, make recommendations to ensure that current practices met the needs and desires of residents. Extensive review of council reports, papers from other authorities, government publications, industry guidance and other documentation was necessary alongside conducting a wide array of interviews and meetings with a range of stakeholders: these included residents who were for and against changes to the present rules, council officers, and members.

The following recommendations were put to Cabinet and approved accordingly:

- 1. To recognise the confusion caused to some local residents and thank them for their contributions, while also commending the work of Council Officers, acknowledging the difficult work they undertake in an often conflicting environment and also thanking them for their contributions to the work of the task and finish group.*
- 2. To allow the construction and maintenance of cemetery memorials and memorial gardens on leased grave plots in Borough cemeteries, **up to a maximum length of one metre** from the headstone plinth and of the equivalent width as the headstone at*

its base. These must be bounded by an kerbset installed by a registered stonemason (or an agreed alternative, if signed off by the Officers deemed appropriate by Cabinet), and subject to agreement on the materials used, the absence of any prohibited items, and an agreed plan of action should any issues arise. The outside of the kerbset should be in alignment with the headstone at its base.

- 3. To therefore permit the installation of kerbsets on grave plots in Borough cemeteries, subject either to official installation by Council staff, or a suitable standard of installation and maintenance that does not unduly interfere in grounds maintenance. It is advisable that any kerbing fitted to a grave should bound the outer limit within which memorial items are permitted, up to a limit of **one metre**, with the width being the same as that of the headstone at its base. Any kerbset that is not officially installed must be signed off by the relevant Council Officers.*
- 4. To instruct Legal Services to review (and draft where required) any revisions to the existing Cemetery Rules and Regulations and internment forms that may be required. This will ensure compliance by the grave owners of the terms and conditions and to ensure the Council complies with their statutory obligations.*
- 5. All new graves (plots leased or dug since new Rules and Regulations take effect) should be permitted to maintain a memorial of up to one metre as stipulated in recommendations above, while older graves will be permitted to maintain memorials of more than one metre and up to a maximum length of the length of the grave plot, where these are already in place. When such older graves are reopened, they must then revert to 'the one metre rule', only maintaining memorials of up to one metre after this reopening. Any such memorials over one metre in length must still be at or below the width of the headstone at its base and bounded by an appropriate and agreed upon kerbset.*
- 6. The owners of any graveside memorials outside of those allowed under these new rules (i.e. where older graves with pre-existing memorials do not revert to 1m in length following a reopening, are too wide, or feature prohibited items, or where new graves have memorials of >1m, etc.) should be offered time and assistance to reorganise their memorials, after which time their memorials should be removed in accordance with the new regulations. Support may include notification of the grave owners that their memorial items may need to be cleared and storage of such items for a specified period of time.*
- 7. The list of items prohibited on graveside memorials is to be reviewed and agreed, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the Friends of Broxtowe Cemeteries and other cemetery users and bereaved families. The list should then be strictly adhered to by all grave owners and clearly enforced by grounds staff to*

safeguard against health and safety concerns. An exception should be made for a small amount of additional decoration on birthdays (for 14 days after the deceased's birth date) and Christmas (until 4 January).

- 8. Planted flowers, trees or shrubs should not be permitted in graveside memorials, due to the unsettling effects that roots can have on headstones and other features. Where planted vegetation is present, grave owners should be contacted and asked to pot them. If this is not done within an agreed timespan, any such planted features should be removed.*
- 9. To consider, in consultation with any Officers, the Friends of Broxtowe Cemeteries, and any other stakeholders as appropriate, new messaging to grave owners and cemetery visitors informing them of the changes to Cemeteries Rules and Regulations and how this may affect them, such as in relation to adjacent burials, among other areas. Consideration should be given to communications stating that the Council wishes to work with visitors to manage any new health and safety and accessibility dynamics that may arise from new regulations and that visitors are duly informed of these by entering any Borough cemetery. Input should be sought from Communications, Bereavement Services and Health and Safety to ensure accuracy and consistency.*
- 10. Grave owners should be given a copy (paper or electronic) of the Council's Cemeteries Rules and Regulations upon signing their interment form, where this is not already the case.*
- 11. To consider making available any additional funding necessary to implement changes to cemetery management and grounds maintenance procedures which are required to work around any memorials that will remain under the new rules, i.e. changes to shift patterns, procurement of different grass-cutting, soil boxes or other equipment, etc. This would need to be subject to specific approval by Cabinet where there would be budget implications. Use of the Council's apprenticeship scheme should be considered if it is deemed necessary to take on additional staff.*
- 12. The feasibility of implementing a 'cooling period' of seven days or more before the signing of the interment form by grave owners should be evaluated. This would be a period in which grave owners are able to contact the Council, enquire about and potentially reconsider whether they would like to sign their interment forms assenting to the Rules and Regulations, allowing them time to properly comprehend all of the conditions while in a state of grief, though this must of course occur before and not delay interment. This may also function as an improved accessibility measure for mourners with dyslexia, ADHD etc., who may struggle to digest the form in full when they are first presented with it.*

13. *Grave owners should be contacted again before they are able to commission an official memorial – such as a headstone – to ensure that they are still cognisant of the Rules and Regulations and appreciate what they may and may not construct. The possibility of having them sign a document again at this stage to reiterate this should also be investigated.*
14. *The Council should investigate alternative possibilities to facilitate residents' mourning at Borough cemeteries, such as the creation of designated memorial gardens where more significant, personalised memorials are permitted, or augmented reality/VR offers, such as has been implemented at the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum, especially where this would be helpful in managing accessibility or health and safety concerns.*
15. *The Council should investigate the possibility of helping to offer or signpost cemetery visitors to bereavement counselling services as part of its communications with residents on this issue.*
16. *To consider requesting that Bereavement Services should work closely with local funeral directors to understand their processes and procedures, if it would not duplicate work and as and when resources allow. The Council's Cemeteries Team should also consider the creation of a working group or bi-monthly catch-up meeting between themselves and local funeral directors to discuss any issues regarding communications with grave owners. This may help improve co-ordination and understanding of the Rules and Regulations and allowable memorial features among grave owners.*
17. *To consider, in consultation with Officers as appropriate, investigating the co-ordination of forms of funding for those that cannot afford funeral costs, such as helping those who cannot afford one to purchase a headstone. Monies from metals extracted during cremation should also be considered for this purpose, in collaboration with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM), as required.*

Cabinet also added the following recommendations:

18. *The formation of a working group, composed of Members, Officers, and any other stakeholders as considered appropriate, that will work to implement all new measures arising from any Cabinet resolutions on these recommendations, in a robust and compliant manner.*

19. *Any reopened graves would not be required to revert to the one metre stipulation.*
20. *To undertake consultation with concerned individuals and groups regarding the number of celebration/memorial days.*
21. *New memorials to comply with the one-metre rule.*

Members of the Committee are receiving and update on the progress made toward implementation of the recommendations at its 18 June 2026 meeting.

The Task and Finish Group was Chaired by Cllr S Dannheimer, with Councillor S Webb the Vice Chair, and Councillors D D Pringle, S Carr, E Winfield and D Watts the remaining members.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Building on the work of the previous year's review of Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at Broxtowe, the Committee continued to scrutinise Council EDI performance in several areas, chiefly by continuing to track performance against previous recommendations and reviewing update reports.

The Committee reviewed update reports on 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Council Parks' and 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace History Museum' at its September 2025 meeting.

The Committee will receive further updates on each of these at its September 2026 meeting as part of its responsibility to keep a watching brief over EDI at the Council.

EDI aspects also evaluated and accounted for in other scrutiny activities, such as the review of cemetery memorials, and will be properly considered through other upcoming planned scrutiny activities.

Budget Scrutiny

Members considered the budget through the standard budget-setting process, scrutinising the proposals before they were decided on by Cabinet. The Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer reported to the Committee on key issues affecting local government finance in the future, such as the requirement to carefully manage resources, uncertainty of the future of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

as relates to large contracts and core infrastructure (among other areas) and the work planned for residents through the capital programme. Members scrutinised the proposals and raised questions on availability of grant funding and the final business case for the replacement Bramcote Leisure Centre before enquiring about the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Housing Modernisation Programme. They also gave attention to the performance of markets and retail events and appeals to Council planning decisions.

In January 2026, there were two budget scrutiny meetings: on 19 and 20 January 2026. Members considered proposals for business plans, detailed revenue budget estimates for 2025/26; capital programme for 2025/26 to 2026/27; and proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 in respect of the Council's priority areas. The Committee recommended to Cabinet to approve the Business Plans, the detailed revenue budget estimates for 2025/26, the Capital programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28 and fees and charges for 2025/26 for all business areas and they noted the Liberty Leisure business plans. Budget scrutiny allows the Committee to ask questions to anticipate potential challenges and build meaningful oversight.

Sub-committees

Missed bins

Following discussion between Members and Officers at the 26 March 2026 meeting, the Committee constituted a Sub-Committee to examine the issue of missed bins and how these are recorded and calculated.

The Sub-Committee will:

- Review and evaluate the causes of Broxtowe's recorded below-average performance on missed bin collections and related calculations, including any specific challenges or differing working practices – what is the definition of a 'missed bin' in Broxtowe as opposed to other areas;
- Assess the effectiveness of any actions being taken to remedy any issues that are identified, understanding whether these will be effective into the future; and,
- Decide whether further change is needed to deliver best value for Broxtowe residents and, if so, recommend accordingly

Press coverage asserting an especially high frequency of missed bins in the borough has led to reviewed working practices; the sub-committee intends to review bin collection data for all bin types, any analyses of the most commonly missed bins/routes, staff testimony and resident survey and complaints data to ascertain the root of any problems and the efficacy of actions already taken in this area, making additional recommendations if deemed necessary.

The Sub-Committee will be chaired by Councillor S Webb, with Councillor H Land as the Vice Chair. Councillor S Dannheimer and H Faccio are also members of the Sub-Committee.

Once its terms of reference are agreed by the wider Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 18 June 2026, the Sub-Committee will gather and assess all of the relevant information and evidence, including internal reports, collection data and direct testimony (gathered from witness sessions with a range of Members and Officers, and potentially residents impacted by the issue) across a number of meetings. This will culminate in the production of a report, detailing the Sub-Committee's conclusions and any recommendations it deems necessary, which will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then Cabinet.

Spotlight Reviews

Lime bikes

No spotlight reviews were carried out in 2025/26 given the much longer and more intensive task-and-finish exercise. Nevertheless, a spotlight review into Lime bikes in the borough was scoped by its members in May 2026, to be agreed by the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its 18 June 2026 meeting.

This review is in response to extensive resident feedback to Members on issues relating to Lime bikes, chiefly poor parking or 'dumping' of bikes outside of allocated parking bays, suspected antisocial behaviour (ASB) involving Lime bikes and reported incidents of vandalism/theft of the bikes.

To reassure residents that the Council is taking the necessary action in this area, the members of the spotlight review will gather and assess the relevant evidence, including policies and the history of their introduction into Broxtowe, any reported ASB data, testimony from relevant Broxtowe officers throughout different teams, usage data from Lime and details of the sanctions that are applied to users for causing disruption to residents.

The review will be aimed at producing the assurance for residents, as well as for Members and Officers, that the right action is being taken regarding any ASB or other inappropriate behaviour that may be taking place involving Lime bikes, and that the operation of a private e-bike hire company in the borough has the right safeguards and oversight to produce the best results for local people.

After reviewing all of the relevant information, the review will produce a report of its conclusions and any recommendations it feels are required, which will then be presented to the wider Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A report on these recommendations will then be notified to Cabinet.

Work Programme

The Scrutiny Committee consider suggestions for scrutiny as part of the Work Programme, which is also submitted to each Cabinet meeting. The criteria to consider new topics by the Committee are listed below:

- Issues identified by Members as a key issue for the public

- Issue has a significant local impact
- Significant public dissatisfaction (e.g. through complaints)
- Issue raised by auditors
- New government guidance/legislation
- New evidence provided by external organisation
- Poor performance (e.g. evidence from performance indicators)
- High level budgetary commitment
- Pattern of budgetary overspending.

The Committee also dedicated its 26 March 2026 public meeting to discussing topics for consideration and deciding the level of scrutiny that they should receive; they decided to form a subcommittee to examine missed bin collections at this meeting, as well as spotlight review on Lime bikes in the borough.

The Work Programme shows the following items for the agendas of its upcoming meetings:

18 June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Scrutiny Review • Missed bin collections and calculations – agree the scope of the subcommittee • Lime bikes – to agree the scope of the Spotlight Review • Cemetery Memorials • Consideration of options for Broadgate Public Toilets
24 September 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion in Council Parks • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion at the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum • Environmental Enforcement • Trade Waste Service
19 November 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling Banks Review

1. Topics agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

	Topic	Topic suggested by	Link to corporate priorities/values
1.	Budget Consultation	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	All Corporate Priorities.
2.	Building Control	Councillor B C Carr agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to put on hold. Awaiting the outcome of a report to Cabinet.	A good quality home for everyone.

2. Update items

	Title	Length	Expected date	Link to corporate priority
1.	Cemetery memorials	<i>Update paper</i>	June 2026	Protect the environment for the future
2.	Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion in Council Parks	<i>Update paper</i>	September 2026	Invest in our towns and our people
3.	Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion at the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Heritage Museum	<i>Update papers</i>	September 2026	Healthy and supported communities; a safe place for everyone

3. Items referred from Cabinet

	Title	Details	Expected date	Link to corporate priority
1.	Renters Rights Act 2025 - Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy	<p>At its 2 June meeting, Cabinet resolved that '<i>The Overview & Scrutiny Committee be requested to conduct regular reviews of the progress and implementation of the Policy.</i>'</p> <p>This is to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 June, and a decision taken on whether it should be scrutinised.</p>	<i>To be determined</i>	Invest in our towns and our people