



## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

To - Scrutiny Management Team

Date of meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2016

Notes of - Committee Administrator

### **BRIEFING NOTES – ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS**

#### **Background**

1. At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Management Team it was agreed that a further invitation for suggestions for topics for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme be made via the press and social media.
2. Below are details of the suggestions received for potential additional scrutiny topics for inclusion in the current year's programme.

Suggested by	Topic (to be clearly defined)	Comments
Earby resident	<b>Flooding in the A56 in the Foulridge area – Road flooding and you doing NOTHING what so ever about it.</b>	This matter has been referred to Lancashire County Council Highways Department.
Nelson resident	<b>Sale of Council Assets –</b> Unhappy at how the disposal of land at Branch Street, Nelson, and the related planning application was dealt with. Believes it should be against the law for public assets to be sold without public consultation and there should be laws to prevent councillors making decisions on sale of land to relatives and friends. Made unsubstantiated claims of corruption.	The disposal of land was dealt with by the Executive and in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The planning application was determined by Nelson Committee. All Councillors are required to abide by the Member Code of

		Conduct and declare any interests as applicable.
Councillor R. Allen	<p><b>Behaviour of Enforcement Officers (formerly known as Bailiffs)</b> – Issues raised by clients of the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). There have been complaints about bad language, intimidation and aggressive behaviour. Request a review regarding the collection of Council Tax and any issues, complaints received etc.</p> <p>Burnley Council picking up the same issue from CAB has carried out a similar review.</p> <p>Some key questions as follows:</p> <p>I understand the council uses Bailiffs to collect on council tax arrears. In how many cases has the council used Bailiffs?</p> <p>How many problems and complaints have been found regarding these cases?</p> <p>Do the complaints and problems relate disproportionately to any specific company? If so which one?</p> <p>Given the increasing financial difficulties that local people in Pendle may face it should be incumbent on councillors to pick up on these issues and assess if action is needed.</p>	A question was put to the Leader at the meeting of the Council in July, 2015. It was explained that cases would only be referred to the Enforcement Agents (EAs) where there was no alternative remedy and the debtor had failed to enter into a mutually acceptable arrangement. The Leader explained the various time scales involved. The Council had agreed a 30 day compliance stage with its EAs. During this period the EAs would send out up to 3 letters in an attempt to engage the debtor. It was reported that there was a tendering process to engage EAs and that there was a code of practice which they were required to comply with.
Earby resident	<p><b>Recycling and refuse collection</b> - We have to take our bins nearly half a mile for collection and they are often missed! Our cardboard is often left. We try to be as green as possible but the recycling and bin collection system for us is really difficult.</p> <p>REASONS: Compared to other councils, Pendle seems many years behind. And it's really difficult for us to have our recycling and cardboard and refuse collected where we are. Our neighbours too.</p>	Pendle Council collect the waste from this particular property on behalf of Craven District Council, who in return collect from a Pendle property that they pass on route. This particular problem has arisen due to the introduction of a revised collection method for cardboard and paper and reducing the number of

		teams employed. The team now covering the area didn't realise they had to go as far up the lane as they should be. They are now aware and the supervising officer has contacted the resident and apologised for the missed collections.
<b>Barrowford Resident</b>	<b>Liberata</b> – Friends of Barrowford Memorial Park has had indirect contact with Liberata earlier this year as the Friends wanted to reopen a toilet for public use. We were given a price and on this basis an application was made to the area committee for funding. The bid for funding was successful but then there was a considerable delay before the work was carried out by Liberata. My main concern is that the price increased so I wonder if the residents of Pendle are getting value for money from Liberata.	In this particular case, the original estimate was based on the cost of similar works for a toilet in Earby. The final price for the actual works for the toilet in Barrowford Memorial Park was approximately £500 greater than the estimate. This was met from the department revenue budget.
<b>Relative of elderly Nelson resident</b>	<b>Littering in Nelson Town Centre</b> - I am writing to say that there is a great problem with littering around the streets of Nelson town centre. Albert street in particular has a great problem with littering as it is used by visitors to Nelson as free parking and free disposing of their takeaway leftovers.  The street has recently been modernised by the council under the regeneration scheme. Only half the houses are inhabited on the street as the remainder are vacant and up for sale. You would think that with such a huge investment and the need for new property buyers, that the council would take pride in caring for the area . Unfortunately the street is deteriorating faster than it took to modernise it. Residents have come to the point of not bothering to pick up after messy visitors or phoning up the council to clean up and leaving things as they are.  Visiting cars are parked up on the pavements making it hard work for pram and wheelchair users to access the pavements. Road sweepers are also unable to access the pavements yet mobile	This is a problem relating to a specific area of the Borough. The issues have been raised with the appropriate departments. The following update is provided on some of the issues -  At present Albert Street is visited twice weekly by the handsweeper, once by the mechanical sweeper and both are supported by the neighbourhood pride operative who visits at least once each week to remove larger items. In addition, officers patrol the area as a

	<p>sweepers could be put in place to help with this growing problem.</p> <p>The back streets are being used as dumping grounds because most of the houses are vacant. Other antisocial behaviour is also occurring. On many occasions the police has been informed and the councils antisocial behaviour team been contacted, yet this problem is still occurring.</p> <p>Elderly residents don't feel safe at night.</p> <p>A request to put alley gates in place has been refused which was the initial plan by the council themselves.</p> <p>A request to put signs up to stop littering has been refused as there are signs on litter bins! I don't think the person who is going to throw a takeaway bag out his car window is going to see the sign on a bin ! People are very good at noticing residential parking signs so why can't a sign like that be put in place saying there will be a fine if you drop litter? More bins need to be made available around the area as there is now a school at the other end of the street.</p>	<p>part of their duties and respond to customer requests as received.</p> <p>We will look further into the need for further litter bins.</p>
<b>Trawden Resident</b>	1. Bus shelter opposite Trawden Arms has lost its roof.	Now repaired.
	2. Bus shelter at Monmouth Street needs either yellow lines on road or bus stop marked on road as cars park in front of it making it difficult for bus to stop to pick up passengers waiting. This is at the top of Trawden, heifer lane	Referred to Lancashire County Council Highways Department.
	3. Road sweeper seems to nearly always miss sweeping along road from church in Trawden downwards to Trawden Arms. I realise cars park here at times but sweeper can very often get in between. They just zoom down the middle of the road and therefore do not clear drains .... I do the one near us!	Referred to Environmental Services.
	4. We have a questionnaire to fill in re buses in the area. We need public transport as some of us do not have a car and so this is essential. People ought to be encouraged not to use their cars .... there are too many on the roads now ... one car and one person in it!	Comments sent to Lancashire County Council.

	<p>5. Parklands. I am an advocate of such areas but is it really necessary to cut grass etc so often. Why not have more wild areas for flora and fauna? Similarly, flowers are all very pretty at sides of roads, at bus stations etc but there are too many planted. Cut backs could be made here.</p>	We are continually reviewing our grounds maintenance and have put in some wild areas e.g. Alkincoats Park.
	<p>6. We have seen in recent years many public toilet closures, particularly in towns. I understand there are nominated cafes for public use. Can you therefore make these places known.</p>	There is currently a directory of public toilets and baby changing facilities on the Council's website. However, it is difficult to access and requires updating.

3. In determining items for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme the following criteria should be borne in mind –

- ◆ Issue is related to the Council's priorities
- ◆ Issue is matter of concern to Members/the public
- ◆ Issue is not currently under review by another body or has been recently reviewed
- ◆ Issue is one where something can be done and a scrutiny review could make a difference
- ◆ The timing is right

4. The Scrutiny Team's priorities should also have a bearing –

- To drive improvements in public services which affect people in Pendle
- To ensure that Pendle people's views and concerns are heard and are able to influence change
- To be a critical friend in challenging the Council's Executive and its partners
- To lead and own the scrutiny role in Pendle independently and impartially in the public interest

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