

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT TEAM ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITY

Scrutiny Management Team

Since my report to the last Council meeting the Scrutiny Management Team has met once, on 15th November, when we discussed the following -

- We carried out a light touch review of the **impact of upper tier authorities on planning matters**. We agreed to carry out this piece of work following concerns regarding the scope, content and timeliness of Lancashire County Council's (LCC's) consultation responses with regard to planning applications.

A similar review had recently been carried out by LCC's scrutiny team and we therefore looked at this as part of our research. Their recommendations seek changes to county council and district council practices and are generally acceptable. However we are aware that the lack of LCC resources to address specific questions does cause delays in nearly every application we consult them on and that this is having an impact on delivering development.

The lack of local knowledge and expertise is also an issue. We have therefore written to LCC to let them know of our concerns.

- A further light touch review was carried out, this time on the topic of **littering**. Taking into account extensive work on two past reviews of litter and dog fouling, we agreed to concentrate this piece of work on the enforcement of littering offences.

We learnt that during the last financial year, the number of Council Environmental Crime Officers (ECOs) had doubled, from two to four. They are responsible for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to individuals dropping or throwing an item of rubbish. Last year a total of 133 notices were issued. So far this year there has been 91.

Businesses that allow its customers or others to leave litter in or around the curtilage of the business premises are liable to enforcement action using Community Protection Notices (CPNs). To date, an initial warning letter has not been warranted for any one particular business.

We acknowledge that volunteers play a large part in helping keep the streets tidy and so we feel that this should be recognised. We understand that some town and parish councils have an annual volunteer award scheme and are therefore finding out more information on this.

In view of the additional posts created and the significant number of FPNs issues, we are satisfied with the work of the Environmental Crime Team.

- In my last report I told you of the Team's review on the impact of **disability budget cuts** on the people of Pendle. After hearing that the application form for Discretionary Housing Payments was viewed as too long and over facing for applicants, we looked at it to see if any changes could be made. We did think that some of the questions were unnecessary and/or over facing, but acknowledged that the Contact Centre staff were fully trained to offer help and support

where needed. Since our meeting, a member of the Team has met with the Financial Services Manager and the Revenues and Benefits Manager to discuss our concerns further.

We also expressed concern at future plans to introduce an online claim system, in line with Council proposals to become digital by default. This is something that we will all be discussing further this evening as a separate item on tonight's agenda.

- We received our six monthly update on the work of the Corporate Equalities Steering Group towards meeting our **Equality Objectives**.

We heard that a review of translation provision has been carried out and procedures on how to deal with requests have been included in a new 'Communicating With All Our Customers' leaflet. The leaflet is a short document which contains guidance on communications and replaces the 'Communication With All Our Customers' manual.

- My last report told you of our agreement to carry out an annual review of the **Promoting Pendle** Action Plan. However, when we re-considered our work plan, we felt that the review would be best carried out at the same time as our review of the Council's Cycling Strategy, which is to be considered at our March 2017 meeting. We would welcome the input from our Executive Member for Tourism and our Cycling Member Champion and hope to see them both at our March meeting.

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel has met once, on 18th October, 2016. An update on our work is as follows -

- Following the full Team's approval of **Pendle's Dementia Action Alliance Action Plan** in March of this year, we welcomed the Chairman of the Alliance and the Council's Principal Policy Officer to our meeting. They gave us an update on progress with the Action Plan and reported on two successful information events that had been held in the borough. One had been held in Nelson and had approximately 80 people in attendance. The second took place in Colne with around 100 people there. Arrangements are being made for a third session to be held in Barnoldswick in February, 2017.

A directory of services has also been produced and distributed widely.

We recognise that there is still work to be done, but are satisfied at the level of activity currently taking place in raising awareness of dementia.

We also heard of a dementia support group that had recently been established at Christ Church, Nelson. The group supports people with all forms of dementia, especially under 65s, and their carers. You may remember receiving the details via email soon after our meeting.

- We continued our review of **drug and alcohol rehabilitation provision in East Lancashire** by considering a report from LCC's Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco Public Health Specialist.

He provided us with information on the contract awarded for both adult and young people's treatment services as of 1st April, 2016. In East Lancashire, the adult treatment service is provided by Change Grow Live and is delivered under the 'Inspire' brand, an integrated

substance misuse service. Young people's treatment services are provided by Young Addaction. As mentioned in a previous report, we have met with representatives of both these organisation during the course of our review.

We have now concluded our research on this topic and will soon report on our final recommendations.

- We have also finished gathering information on our review of **mental health in the community, care homes and mental health wards**. At our most recent meeting we considered information on mental health care provision in care homes and mental health wards. We have now reached the stage where we are drawing conclusions and will soon publish our final report.
- We have referred two topics to **LCC's Health Scrutiny Committee** for consideration. The first is to ask them to consider carrying out inspections of care homes and nursing homes in Pendle. This is following my recent visit to a local care home, which gave me cause for concern.

We have also asked them to consider taking action over concerns raised with us around end of life nursing care provision. As the responsibility for adult social care lies with LCC and/or the NHS, we felt that it was more appropriate for those bodies with a more direct role to carry out a review.

In following this up I attended a meeting with the Chairman of LCC's Health Scrutiny Committee where we discussed issues concerning residential homes and provisions supplied. Whilst the committee was unable to join in any inspections they registered their support and acknowledged the possible need to refer identified concerns to the Care Quality Commission.

- You are probably aware of the **public health profiles** that have recently been published by Public Health England. These were considered by the Panel, alongside a regional comparison report prepared by the Panel Leader, Councillor Ken Hartley. We noted that Pendle does not compare well to some of its neighbours in a number of categories. In many categories, Pendle is significantly worse than the England average, which includes higher than average infant mortality and lower life expectancy for adults in some areas.
- We learnt more about the **Lancashire and South Cumbria Change Programme** which I first reported on in my report to the July Council meeting. We are told that the resource gap in Pennine Lancashire for health and social care will grow to approximately £238m over five years. To help the NHS and other health and social care organisations we are seeking new ways of delivering our core public health services. To help respond to this challenge, a Local Delivery Plan has been developed for Pennine Lancashire. Pennine Lancashire is supported by a System Leaders' Forum and includes our Strategic Director and Council Leader as members.
- We also received a brief update from Dr Stuart Berry of East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group on the public response to the recent consultation with regard to the development of **primary care access**. The three-month patient consultation demonstrated that 3 in 4 residents agreed with the proposed new model.
- Finally, Councillor Ken Hartley reported on his attendance at a meeting with the Interim Director of Operations and Sector Manager of the **North West Ambulance Service (NWAS)** where a

discussion had been held regarding the latest ambulance response times; the loss of the Community Paramedic based in Barnoldswick; and the protocol between the NWAS road ambulance and the air ambulance. With regard to the latter, we learnt that Members were keen to establish protocols clearly defining landing/transfer sites.

Youth Engagement

The Youth Engagement Scrutiny Panel has been working hard, gathering the views of young people, to try and find out what we can do to encourage them to become more involved with council decision making.

We held a successful first meeting at Nelson and Colne College where we talked to students about where we are going wrong and what we can do to improve. Poor attendance at a second, highly publicised meeting held at Nelson Town Hall gave us a clear indication that we need to do more to connect with young people. Even so, the meeting was very worthwhile, as the young lady that did attend was not afraid to speak her mind and provided the Panel with some good ideas to work with.

Our third meeting was more popular, attended by approximately 19 young people and four youth workers, who actively contributed to discussions and put forward ideas. We have also had an excellent response to our youth engagement survey, with around 700 completed forms returned. These will obviously take some time to look through and will play an important part in our final recommendations, which will be agreed upon in the New Year.

Councillor Ken Turner,
Chairman, Scrutiny Management Team
December, 2016