

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

Scrutiny Management Team

Since writing my report for the last Council meeting, the Scrutiny Management Team has met twice. The first meeting was held on 18th July where –

- We appointed Councillor Wayne Blackburn as Vice-Chairman.
- We received our six monthly update on the work of the **Community Safety Partnership**. The Partnership continues to be extremely busy with work on issues such as anti-social behaviour (ASB) - community protection and victim support; organised crime groups; road safety; scam awareness; and community cohesion.

We also received information on the Lancashire Victim Service which provides services for victims of hate crime, young victims, sexual abuse and domestic abuse as well as victims of more general crime types and of repeat ASB. Further information on this can be found at item 5 of the following link -

http://www.pendle.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2373/scrutiny_management_team

In a previous report I told you of a new CCTV monitoring hub based in Blackburn. I am pleased to report that the hub is now managing and monitoring cameras 24/7 in Nelson, Brierfield, Barnoldswick and Earby.

Sadly, an overview of crime and disorder has shown a continued rise in all types of crime within the Borough, which reflects increases across Lancashire. Due to our concerns we agreed to discuss this further at our September meeting.

- We began a review on **Council Tax Enforcement Agent fees and charges**. The topic had been chosen following a suggestion from a local resident. As you may know, if enforcement action is taken with regard to council tax debt, fees to enforcement agents increase the cost further. We were asked to investigate whether Attachment of Earnings (AOE) or Attachment of Benefits (AOB) could be implemented to avoid escalating the issue for vulnerable people.

After hearing from the Revenues Manager we are satisfied that AOE's or AOB's are applied where possible. However, there is a limit to how much can be deducted by AOE or AOB, therefore it is not always a practical way of collecting debt, particularly when the charge payer's weekly liability exceeds this amount.

In Pendle, approximately 4% of cases have been referred to Enforcement Agents. Their fees are set nationally in legislation so cannot be changed by a decision of this Council.

We appreciate that a more personal approach would be of benefit to many people, but accept that there are no additional resources available to facilitate this. However, leaflets promoting Council Tax support and signposting customers to various advice agencies are sent out with reminders and summonses.

This documentation is currently being reviewed, with the input of scrutiny. We are to consider the final version at our November meeting, prior to final publication.

- Councillor David Whipp provided us with an update on the work of the **Lancashire Police and Crime Panel**. One of the main discussion points had been the cost of officers being deployed to deal with fracking demonstrations in the Fylde which has been a significant drain on resources.

An application for Special Grant funding has been made to the Home Office. A decision is awaited.

- We now have seven members on our **youth engagement working group** and are hoping to meet next month to consider the practicalities of forming a Pendle Borough Council Youth Council.

Our second meeting was held on 19th September.

- At this meeting we continued our discussions on recent increases in crime and disorder within the borough. We were pleased to welcome the Council's Lead for Community Safety and Inspector Andy Winter, who were able to provide some perspective on the figures provided. It was explained that there has been a change in how crimes are reported and that, when considering the figures, many factors have to be taken into account.

As we all know, there has been significant budget cuts to public services and this has resulted in a reduction in police officers. This has led to a change to the policing model and has left certain areas of policing unsustainable. We learnt that there has also been a change to the demand on the services, with extra resources needed for things such as mental health, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and modern slavery/human trafficking.

The hard work and commitment from the officers in our local team is clear and the discussion has helped us understand the reasons behind the increase in crime statistics. Unfortunately, it has done little to alleviate our concerns.

- It is 6 months or more since we completed our reviews on mental health care and drug and alcohol rehabilitation provision. It was therefore time to check on progress with the recommended actions.
 - * In respect of the review on **mental health care** one significant action is to ensure that the Council continues to be actively involved in the Local Authorities Mental Health Challenge and makes links with other Champions. Our Disability and Mental Health Champion Councillor Wayne Blackburn is working hard to make sure this is the case. In doing so we are happy to report that it has been agreed in principle to host the Annual General Meeting in Pendle, possibly in March 2018. This will bring together Mental Health Champions from across the country and will include key speakers on mental health.
 - * We are keen to make sure that the Council's contact centre staff and other relevant staff continue to assist in signposting the options available to those who require **drug and alcohol** treatment. We noted that Lancashire Wellbeing is the main partner used by Liberata's Customer Services staff in helping vulnerable customers. We are therefore going to invite a representative of the service to a future meeting of our Health and Social Care Panel to learn more about the services it delivers.

- We received the annual update on the **Local Strategic Partnership's Thematic Groups**. This included updates on the main theme groups of health and wellbeing; children and young people; economic development; and community safety.
- We also considered the Council's **annual emissions report**. We noted that both gas and electricity consumption has increased, despite a rationalisation of building stock over the reporting period and a reduction in staffing levels. We have therefore asked for further information to explain the reasons for the increases.

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel has also met twice, on 22nd August and 17th October. An update on our work is as follows -

- We continued our review on **highlighting the symptoms of sepsis**, by welcoming Paul Dean and Heather Coleman of East Lancashire Hospitals Trust (ELHT). They gave a presentation on the dangers of sepsis and the signs to look out for.

It was shocking to hear of cases of multiple organ failure and death as a result of this serious complication of an infection and the fact that anyone can develop sepsis after an injury or minor infection.

Quick treatment is vital, but worryingly, the symptoms are not clear cut and can be masked by medication, particularly in the elderly.

As a Panel we are keen to assist with increasing awareness, but this needs to be in a controlled manner, using standardised language and terminology. We are therefore doing this in consultation with ELHT.

Our first piece of work was to promote World Sepsis Day 2017 which took place on 13th September.

- We continue to receive regular updates on the work of the **East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)**. Dr Asif Garda of the East Lancashire Medical Service (ELMS) Pendle Valley Practice introduced himself as the new CCG Lead for Pendle, a position that had previously been held by Dr Stuart Berry. The role provides a GP link between communities and the Executive Board/Governing Body of the CCG.

He provided the Panel with information on work being carried out to remodel existing services. This is necessary due to increased demand and fewer resources. The use of online services to order repeat prescriptions and book appointments is being promoted and it is hoped that there will be an increased uptake for this service.

- We received the minutes of the inaugural meeting of the **Pendle Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board** meeting held on 22nd June, 2017. The Partnership has been formed jointly by East Lancashire CCG and Pendle Council to drive local public sector reform and health improvements in Pendle. Emerging Pendle priorities from the inaugural meeting include –

- * Building Community Resilience
- * Engaging with young people on key health issues

- * Mental health, particularly ESA claimants with mental health issues
- We continue to receive brief updates on the **Together a Healthier Future** programme resulting from the Lancashire and South Cumbria Sustainability and Transformation Plan. Our latest update included the key findings from a Pendle engagement event that had been held at Walshaw House, Nelson on 12th July. We were told that a business case was being developed and that formal engagement and consultation would take place from October/November this year. As yet, we have not heard anything further and are growing increasingly frustrated at the apparent lack of district council involvement.

We are therefore seeking further information from our representatives on the Pennine Lancashire System Leaders' Forum on local delivery plans.

- We received an annual update on **Integrated Care** provided by ELHT. This included a detailed update provided by Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) Clinical Co-ordinators Kim Atkinson and Catherine Ashworth, on the INT service.
- Following on from our scrutiny review of **mental health care** in the community, care homes and mental health wards we received an update on action taken with regard to three care homes that had been rated as 'Requires Improvement' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). These were –
 - * Calder View, Keighley Road, Colne
 - * Nelson Manor Care Home, Barkerhouse Road, Nelson
 - * Carr Hall Care Home, Carr Hall Road, Barrowford

The information is limited due to the nature of the work carried out by the CQC. However, the most recent inspection reports can be accessed via the following link -

http://www.pendle.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2407/health_and_social_care_scrutiny_panel

- We received a further update on progress with the **recommissioning of homecare services** being carried out by Lancashire County Council (LCC). The report provided a list of providers that LCC intend to award contracts to in Pendle. There will be nine providers for older people/people with a physical disability; five providers for people with learning disabilities; and five providers for people with mental health needs.

We have been assured by the CQC that their role will not change following the award of new contracts and all services will be inspected in the same way, regardless of whether they have an LCC contract or not.

Councillor Ken Turner,
Chairman, Scrutiny Management Team
18th October, 2017