

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

In May 2023, the Council changed its governance arrangements from a 'committee system' (which had been in place since May 2018) to a 'leader and cabinet' system.

In line with this form of Governance, the full council elected a leader who, in turn appointed his cabinet (known as the Executive). An Overview and Scrutiny Committee was also established.

At the start of the year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had seven members. However, only two members attended the meeting scheduled for the 14th September, therefore the meeting was consequently inquorate and could not carry out its business. As a result, Council agreed to increase the membership from seven to nine to reduce the likelihood of the same thing happening again.

In this first year, the Scrutiny Team developed its work programme by focussing on issues already identified as areas of concern or interest to local people.

Below are details of the work carried out by Overview and Scrutiny members in 2023/24.

- **Domestic Insulation in Pendle**

A Task and Finish Group was set up to look at the options open to the Council to improve domestic insulation in Pendle and possible funding opportunities.

The Group received presentations and information from RHEA Projects, the delivery partner for Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL); the Council's Housing Technical Officer; and the Head of Housing and Environmental Health and was fully appraised on all the initiatives and grants in use by the Council.

Members were satisfied that they had gained a clear understanding of the options available to the residents of Pendle to improve domestic insulation and home energy efficiency.

They took confidence in the fact that Pendle had identified all funding streams available at that time to its residents; was actively involved in promoting the uptake of the schemes; was working in successful partnership with Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL); and continued to play an active role in trying to secure as much external funding for the borough as possible.

This outcome was reported to the Council's December meeting and the information was noted.

- **Strategic Leisure Review**

At the request of the Executive, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to consider convening a Task and Finish Group 'to examine how the three leisure facilities in Colne, Nelson and West Craven could be made to be financially viable through retrofitting and renewal; to consider the mix of features taking affordability into account; and to consider operating models for the future taking account of what was needed to ensure delivery of requirements for each leisure facility.'

The Committee noted that there had been three leisure reviews carried out in recent years and that a team of consultants, led by Alliance Leisure, had already been engaged to work on a review. It therefore agreed that the work was already being done and that a Task and Finish Group would not add value.

Members did feel however, that there was value in the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee looking at the results of the review from Alliance Leisure and comparing this with an earlier feasibility study.

This was carried out at the December 2023 meeting. After hearing all the evidence presented, the Committee concluded that it would not be financially viable or sustainable to refurbish the three leisure facilities and therefore recommended to the Executive that further options should be explored. Along with other information presented to it, the Executive noted our recommendations and requested further work on the topic.

- **Crime and Disorder Committee**

The Committee's meeting on 14th March 2024 was dedicated to carrying out its role as the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee.

The Committee started a review on the work being undertaken by the Pendle Community Safety Partnership. Representatives of the Partnership attended the meeting and answered questions from Members.

Members agreed that further information was required before any recommendations could be made, therefore this topic has been carried forward to the 2024/25 work programme.

Councillor Chris Church
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023/2024