

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL
ON 16TH JANUARY 2025**

PRESENT –

Councillor C. Church (Chair)

Councillors

*R. Anwar
D. Cockburn-Price
D. Gallear
M. Stone
M. Strickland
Y. Tennant*

Officers in attendance

<i>Phillip Spurr</i>	<i>Director of Place</i>
<i>Karen Spencer</i>	<i>Director of Resources</i>
<i>Peter Gregory</i>	<i>Interim Property Officer</i>
<i>Tim Horsley</i>	<i>Community Safety Officer</i>
<i>Lynne Rowland</i>	<i>Committee Administrator</i>

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Land.)

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13. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded of the requirements of the Member Code of Conduct concerning the declaration of interests and that whipping declarations were also required.

14. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

15. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16. STRATEGIC LEISURE REVIEW

The Director of Place submitted a report which provided an update on the work undertaken in reviewing the management of the Council's leisure facilities following the Committee's consideration of the issue in late 2023.

Members were reminded of the work carried out to date. This included a number of reviews which had sought to find a sustainable way forward for the provision of leisure facilities in the borough; a

comprehensive exercise investigating possible funding sources; an engagement exercise with facility users and residents; and an options appraisal.

The Director of Place highlighted two recommendations of the Executive, agreed in September 2024, should the Council decide not to change its current operational delivery model. In response to the recommendations, a meeting had been held with Executive members and the Pendle Leisure Trust (PLT) Board to consider the way forward.

A number of issues had been discussed during the meeting, the key being a mechanism to reduce the total level of support paid to the Trust. In 2024/25 this was around £2m and, based on an assumed figure of the same £2m, the Leisure Trust had agreed to a £200k per annum reduction in support for each of the next two financial years, 2025/26 and 2026/27. Since the production of the committee report it had been clarified that, of the £2m support in 2024/25, only £1.65m was the management fee, with the remaining £350k being from the Swimming Pool Support Fund. As a result, while PLT were proposing a £200k reduction per annum in the overall level of support received for each of the next two financial years, for financial year 2025/26 this would actually entail an increase in the management fee from £1.65m to c.£1.8m.

There was a shared commitment to keep the management fee under review on an ongoing basis.

The Committee considered the information presented in the report and asked questions of the Director of Place. Reference was made to the recent appointment of the new Chief Executive of the Trust and their active involvement in the process since taking on the role. Work to identify a sustainable way forward for specific facilities would be actively progressed over the next few months, with the immediate priority being identified as Marsden Park Golf Course.

A further meeting between the Executive and the Board had been scheduled for June 2025 at which progress would be reviewed.

The Committee welcomed the update and noted the contents.

17. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Further to the request at the last meeting, the Head of Policy and Commissioning submitted a report which provided further information on the potential impact of the Council joining the Pennine Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The report was an updated version of a report considered by Council at its meeting on 29th September 2022 and was presented to the meeting by the Community Safety Officer.

It had previously been explained that, should the Council join the Pennine CSP, local focus could continue, but the statutory functions would move to the Pennine CSP. Resources across the patch could be shared and it would allow access to funding opportunities, along with knowledge and expertise.

The report demonstrated ways in which time demands and resources could be eased at a local level by joining the Pennine CSP and provided details of funding that had been sourced by the Pennine CSP in 2024, along with information on future potential funding opportunities.

The report also clarified the legal duties and provided assurance that, should the Council join the Pennine CSP it would, like all other local authority partners, be a 'specified' partner. It would retain

the lead role in localised responses to crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), but be able to call on the support of the full Pennine Partnership for key issues and challenges.

In a verbal update, the Community Safety Officer advised that support for the facilitation of the Domestic Homicide Review had gone back to base districts, therefore there wouldn't be a benefit in that respect. He also advised that the collective approach to funding had gradually declined since the original report in 2022. However, it was acknowledged that bidding opportunities were enhanced when undertaken collaboratively, an example of which was provided in the report.

It was explained that the way in which the Pennine CSP was coordinated had changed over the past 12 months and its structure and action plans were being reviewed.

The report provided information on the next steps should the Council wish to join the Pennine CSP and confirmed that the arrangement could be annulled via the same process at any time.

The Committee discussed the contents of the report and the information provided by the Community Safety Officer. In answer to questions it was explained that there were two ways of joining the Partnership. One would be as a cooperating body where a fee would be paid. The second would be to remove the statutory element from Pendle to the Pennine group.

The discussion revealed a difference of opinion amongst Members and a vote on a motion to join the Pennine CSP was lost. No further action was proposed and the update was noted.

18. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

(a) Implementation of the Member Code of Conduct

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report on the work of the Task and Finish Group appointed to carry out a review of the implementation of the Member Code of Conduct. Notes of the Task and Finish Group meetings held on 27th November and 12th December 2024 were included as appendices to the report along with the revised Standards Hearing Procedure and the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group were included for consideration.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be agreed and Council be recommended to approve the following -

- (1) That Council notes the proposed changes to the Hearings Panel Hearing Procedure and approves the revised procedure as set out as an appendix to the report.
- (2) That Council adopt the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct in full, without amendment.

(b) Mechanical Street Cleansing (Compact Sweepers)

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report on the work of the Task and Finish Group appointed to carry out a review of the implementation of the Mechanical Street Cleansing (Compact Sweepers) service. The notes of the Task and Finish Group meeting held on 10th

December 2024 were attached as an appendix to the report.

The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group were included for consideration.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be agreed and the Executive be recommended to approve the following -

- (1) That the proposal to reduce the mechanical street cleansing resource by two vehicles and redeploy the drivers of those vehicles to litter pick the areas of need be agreed.
- (2) That the proposed programme following the Council's collection zone arrangements be accepted as detailed in the report.

19. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

Bulky Household Waste Collection and Replacement Waste Containers

Following the conclusion of the scrutiny review of bulky household waste collection and replacement waste containers, the recommendations of this Committee were submitted to the Executive for consideration and response. The matter was discussed at the Executive's 28th November 2024 meeting where it was agreed to refer the report to Full Council for consideration.

It was reported that Council considered the recommendations at its meeting on 19th December 2024. The recommendations included the introduction of a stepped charging mechanism for bulky household waste collections and the introduction of charges for replacement wheeled bins, details of which were provided in a report to the meeting.

The recommendations were noted by Council, but the recommendations for introducing charges as set out in the report were not accepted. The Council did however resolve to approve a cap on free replacement wheeled bins of no more than one a year and free bulky waste collections of no more than eight items a year.

20. LAND AND PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025-2028

It was reported that, at its meeting on 31st October 2024 the Executive had been asked to approve the Council's Land and Property Asset Management Strategy 2025-2028. The Executive was interested in the views of this Committee and therefore deferred any decision until its January 2025 meeting to allow this Committee to comment on the Strategy.

The report considered by the Executive was submitted for information and was presented by the Council's Director of Resources.

It was explained that the current Strategy had been approved in May 2018 and was designed to cover the three-year period to 31st March 2022. The draft Strategy was intended to be an updated successor to that document.

The production of a Land and Property Asset Management Strategy was recognised as good practice in the proper management of the Council's property assets. The draft Strategy set out four principles and four outcomes expected from the management of the Council's land and

property assets.

The Committee discussed various elements of the Strategy and, in answer to questions, received further information from the Director of Resources and Interim Property Officer.

It was noted that the Strategy included a list of assets and was felt that some living case studies would be helpful, demonstrating how an individual asset had been evaluated.

Specific reference was made to the sections on maintenance costs and partnership working. Members commented that some parish and town councils had made requests to take on some of the Council's assets, such as garage sites, and that agreement to this would reduce maintenance costs to the Council. The option for parish and town councils to increase their precept without restriction would help in them funding such things. Although it was acknowledged that maintenance costs could be reduced by the sale of assets, it was made clear by officers that any capital receipt generated by the Council could not be spent on revenue and that, in some cases, it was better to rent out an asset.

It was felt that prioritisation was key and, whilst referring to the ongoing transfer of some allotments in Colne as an example, it was felt that the transfer of assets could be carried out faster than at present. With Colne being given as a further example, comments were also made on car parks, which were running at a cost, and a view that the number of car parks could be reduced.

In addressing the housing targets, continued partnership with the Council's joint ventures was encouraged.

Overall, Members supported the document, believing it to be an excellent resource for getting information out.

RESOLVED

That the Committee's comments on the Land and Property Asset Management Strategy 2025-2028, detailed above, be reported to the Executive for consideration.

21. EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME/FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Work Programme and Forward Plan for the four-month period commencing 1st February 2025 was submitted for consideration.

22. WORK PROGRAMME 2024/2025

The Committee's updated work programme was submitted for information.

RESOLVED

That the review of empty homes in Pendle be commenced, to be carried out by a Task and Finish Group of all members of the Committee and led by Councillor R. Anwar.

CHAIR _____