

REPORT BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITY

Since my last report to Full Council, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met twice. The first meeting of the new year was held on the 16th January 2025, followed by a meeting on the 11th March. In the meantime, the work of task and finish groups has continued. The following progress is reported -

- The Task and Finish Group appointed to carry out a review of the implementation of the **Member Code of Conduct** carried out its work over two meetings.

After considering all the information presented to the Group it was concluded that the Council should adopt the LGA Model Code of Conduct. This was in line with the recommendations of the Council's auditors. The Group also recommended that the Hearings Panel Hearing Procedure be amended.

The findings of the Task and Finish Group were reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January, where the recommendations were agreed for submission to Council.

The report is to be considered elsewhere on tonight's Council agenda (27th March 2025).

- At the same Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, we agreed the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group that had been appointed to carry out a review of the **mechanical street cleansing (compact sweepers) service**.

The Group carried out a thorough review and found that the evidence presented supported the introduction of changes to the service. The recommendations were submitted to the Executive's 30th January meeting for consideration and response, where it was agreed to refer the report to Full Council for consideration.

Unfortunately, Council did not support the scrutiny recommendations.

- We also received the response to our reviews on **bulky household waste collection and replacement waste containers**. As with the review on the compact sweeper service, the Executive referred the recommendations to Full Council for consideration.

We were disappointed to note that, despite the evidence presented, the scrutiny recommendations were not supported by Council.

- We received an update on the work undertaken in reviewing the management of the Council's **leisure facilities**. This included information on the decisions made by the Executive at its December 2023 meeting. We were reminded of the appointment of a new Chief Executive to Pendle Leisure Trust (PLT) and noted that a further meeting between the Executive and the PLT Board has been scheduled for June 2025.
- We continued our review of the **Pendle Community Safety Partnership (CSP)** by receiving a report which provided information on the potential impact of the Council joining the wider Pennine Community Safety Partnership.

The Committee carefully considered the information in the report, along with updates provided at the meeting. It was clear that there were pros and cons to joining the wider Pennine CSP and, as a result, the Committee has not made any recommendation to join.

- In response to a request from the Executive we agreed to comment on the **Land and Property Asset Management Strategy 2025-28**. The matter was discussed at our January 2025 meeting and the Committee's response is being reported to the Executive meeting on the 20th March.
- As Members will be aware, at the Special Budget Council meeting held on 27th February 2025, provision was made for the creation of a new Empty Homes Officer post. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has therefore decided to postpone its review of **empty homes in Pendle** until the new municipal year.
- In considering whether there was a need for a review of **fixed penalty notices for dog fouling and littering**, the Committee had previously asked the Leader to advise, on behalf of the Executive, on any proposals for carrying out proactive enforcement.

In response, at our meeting on the 11th March we received the Operational Services Enforcement Policy, designed to provide an effective enforcement service, which had been agreed by the Executive in October 2024. Although we agreed that this was a worthy policy it was acknowledged that littering and fly-tipping continued to be a problem in the Borough.

At the same time, we also considered a request from Barrowford and Western Parishes Committee to look at the varying types of environmental offences causing concern within the Borough's greenspaces. This request was linked to the food dumping blight in the vicinity of Victoria Park Lake, Barrowford. Here, food waste was being tipped in piles on the path surrounding the lake adjacent to Park Avenue. Peaks in the volume of food dumping directly corresponded to sightings and complaints of rats in the area. It was noted that there had been an improvement since being considered by the area committee, but the problem still remained.

We have agreed to carry out some work on this issue.

- The Committee also considered the request of Council to carry out a review of **homelessness**, including its causes and options for local solutions. We noted that, at its meeting on the 20th March, the Executive is being asked to determine a way forward in relation to the Council's provision of homelessness temporary accommodation and to agree the Pendle Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030.

We therefore agreed to consider the response of the Executive at a future meeting of the Committee before making a decision.

Councillor Chris Church
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
17th March 2025