
COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 13th October, 2025

Present:	Councillor Stephen Button (in the Chair), Councillors Clare Yates, Clare McKenna, David Heap, Loraine Cox and Tina Walker and Bernard Dawson Co-optees Jackie Rawstron and Jean Battle
In Attendance:	Councillors Melissa Fisher accompanied by the Environmental Health Manager – Environmental Protection Councillor Stewart Eaves accompanied by the Head of Environmental Services Councillor Clare Pritchard accompanies by the Community Safety Manager
Apologies:	Councillors Jodi Clements, Mike Booth and Sandie Dent

168 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Booth, Clements and Sandie Dent.

Councillor Dawson acted as substitute representative for Councillor Booth.

169 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no interests or dispensations declared at the meeting.

170 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 14th July 2025 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Councillor Yates pointed out that Councillor Brereton had been in attendance at the previous meeting but omitted from the minutes.

Resolved **- That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record, subject to the amendment, as set out in the minutes, above.**

171 Chair's Update

The Chair updated the Committee on the recommendations made at the last meeting, as follows:

a) The Draft Climate Strategy & Action Plan

Three recommendations were made on the Draft Climate Strategy & Action Plan.

The first recommendation was to request that Cabinet gave consideration to extending the Council's climate fund, to facilitate the Council's ability to achieve its net zero targets. This recommendation had been submitted to the Cabinet held on 10th September and agreed.

Updates were also provided on two further recommendations made under this item.

The first referred to concern about the increasing number of empty commercial properties in Accrington Town Centre and the impact of these on the Council's ability to achieve its net zero target. The Committee was informed of how the Council dealt with empty properties and the challenges of managing them, as well as what action the Council had taken to provide businesses with opportunities to become more energy efficient.

Secondly, there had been a further recommendation to request consideration for carrying out a stock condition survey of property in the borough. This was to provide the Council with detailed knowledge of the work required on properties to help it to reach its net zero target. The Head of Regeneration and Housing had advised that the cost and resources to do this work would be extensive and consequently, there were currently no plans to undertake this work.

b) Allotments Update

The Committee was provided with an update on the recommendations relating to the Allotments Review. A recommendation referred to the budget and time constraints of the Regeneration Project Manager in managing the allotment sites. The Committee was informed of the budget allocated to the position and how the role of the Manager was split between managing the allotments and ecology work. They were informed that consideration would be given to how the allotment service could be best supported, taking budget constraints into account.

c) Co-optee Vacancy

The Chair reported that the Overview & Scrutiny Officer had contacted Six Form Colleges in the borough and Accrington & Rossendale College to request that they advertised the vacant Co-optee position for a young person. There had been no applications received via this advertisement, however, one application for the post had been received and would be considered later in the meeting.

172 Fly Tipping & Enforcement

Two reports were submitted to the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to fly tipping, waste accumulation and enforcement. One report was submitted by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health, Councillor Melissa Fisher, supported by the Environmental Health Manager – Environmental Protection and dealt with fly tipping and the accumulation of waste on private land and the second report was submitted by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Waste Services, Councillor Steward Eaves, who was supported by the Head of Environmental Services and dealt with fly tipping and the dumping of waste on public land.

The Committee was provided with statistical information from both departments and details on the enforcement policies used to remove fly tipped and accumulated waste, issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) and prosecutions.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health, Councillor Fisher, referred Members to the report and responded to the questions submitted in advance by the Committee in respect of fly tipping, waste accumulation and enforcement on private land:

1. Is the Fixed Penalty Notice amount fixed by statute or is there flexibility to vary this?
The limits for UK environmental crime fixed penalty notice (FPN) payments are set by a combination of national legislation and local authorities. Legislation provides the framework by setting the maximum and minimum amounts that can be charged for specific offences, while local authorities choose to set their own penalty amounts within the legislative limits.
2. What happens if a fine is not paid or the resident cannot afford to pay the fine?
Environmental Protection hasn't issued any FPNs this year however, the legal process would need to be followed for non-payment.
3. Does the amount of fly tipping correlate with the location of HMOs or has there been an increase in fly tipping around HMOs?
Some research had been done as evidence for Article 4, however, whilst officers could see if addresses were HMOs, they did not routinely overlay the information with Dirty Back Yards (DBY)/fly tipping locations. There had been no correlation between fly tipping and HMOs identified.
4. How quickly is the Council able to remove waste which is considered a risk to public health such as asbestos?
Environmental Protection investigate waste fly tipped on private land or waste within dirty back yards (DBY). They visit to assess the waste, establish owner/occupier details, serve Notices on owners to remove waste (within a time limit of least 7 days), visit to check if the waste has been removed and arrange for its removal if not. This could be a further 7-10 days and the cost would need to be recouped from the owner/occupier.
5. Is there enough staff to support the need for enforcement action?
Yes

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Waste Services, Councillor Stewart Eaves, referred Members to the report and responded to the questions submitted in advance by the Committee in respect of fly tipping, waste accumulation and enforcement on private land:

1. Is the Fixed Penalty Notice amount fixed by statute or is there flexibility to vary this?
In the legislation there is a range set for fines for fly tipping which is between £400 and £1000. Historically the Council has used the lower end of this range, however, Cabinet is exploring increasing the fine for fly tipping to nearer the top of the range as more of a deterrent.
2. What happens if a fine is not paid or the resident cannot afford to pay the fine?
If the Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid then this outstanding debt to the Council goes to the Council's Debt Recovery Team. They contact the person who has been fined to agree payment. This can be a one-off payment or via instalments. Should the person not co-operate with the debt recovery team then usually the debt goes to County Court judgement.
3. Does the amount of fly tipping correlate with the location of HMOs or has there been an increase in fly tipping around HMOs?
There is no evidence to collaborate this statement.
4. How quickly is the Council able to remove waste which is considered a risk to public health such as asbestos?
The Council would usually remove waste which may be a risk to public health quite quickly within a day or two. For general fly tipping this is usually done over the next 5 to 10 days when the refuse crews are in the area.
5. Is there enough staff to support the need for enforcement action?
There are currently two staff within Waste Services undertaking enforcement work on public land relating to side waste, fly tipping, commercial waste, abandoned

vehicles, littering and graffiti. If there were more enforcement staff they would undertake a greater volume of work.

The Chair provided Members of the Committee with an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments as follows:

- Were there enough enforcement staff to manage cases of fly tipping?
- In relation to fly tipping on private land, why was there a case still outstanding after a year?
- Skip Days – what type of items could be disposed of in the skips?
- How is the success of Skip Days measured?
- Could information on HMOs be shared between both Departments?
- Why had there been little enforcement action taken place by Environmental Protection during the last two years.
- What costs could be attached to property owners if they continued to do nothing about removing waste?
- What success has Environmental Protection had in recouping money after removing specialist waste, such as asbestos?
- Is fly tipping usually carried out by the same people?
- Are there any plans in place to hire more enforcement staff to increase service productivity?
- Are there any plans to erect CCTV in the Belthorn area as a preventative measure to reduce the amount of fly tipping taking place there?
- A request to provide financial data (the total amount of fines, the total amount of income and the total amount outstanding).

Responses to the above were given as:

- Both Departments reported that although they considered the number of enforcement staff was adequate, additional personnel would increase the effectiveness of the services.
- The Committee was informed that the unresolved fly tipping case was a complex one and challenging. One of the reasons that it had not been resolved promptly, was because of the difficulties and the time consuming nature of trying to locate the owners of the property. Councillor Fisher reported that a full response to this question would be circulated to Members after the meeting.
- Skip Days had been successful but they did not take bulky items or recyclable waste. A request for evidence of its success would be emailed to Councillors, after the meeting.
- Information on HMOs was shared between Departments and had been for the provision of the Article 4 Direction.
- Members were informed of the difficulties of identifying those responsible for fly tipping including hazardous waste, and as such it was a challenge on the Council's resources and, particularly time-consuming, in preparing cases for prosecution. However, the Council would often be successful in recouping costs if they were required to remove waste.
- Enforcement processes included serving a range of Notices, although the Council would try to speak and work with the public before taking any action.
- Both Departments provided an outline of their enforcement processes.
- The Committee was informed that the financial data requested in respect of the number of fines issued, those paid and those still outstanding would be circulated to the Committee, after the meeting.
- CCTV had already been considered for use to deter fly tipping in places such as Belthorn but the Committee was advised that its implementation would take time.

Members of the Committee referred to the challenges of finding evidence to prosecute for fly tipping and was advised that other enforcement agencies, such as the Police, regularly sought permission from residents to use their domestic doorbell cameras as evidence. The Committee suggested that this was something that the Council could also consider. Councillor Fisher pointed out that people were not always co-operative but acknowledged the proposal.

The Chair permitted Councillor Shabir Fazal, a non-Member of the Committee, to speak at the meeting. Councillor Fazal expressed concern at the amount of fly tipping in the borough and encouraged the Council to ensure robust measures were in place to deter people from doing it.

Councillor Loraine Cox requested that thanks be given to the Environmental Protection and Waste Services Teams for their hard work in tackling the challenges of fly tipping.

Resolved

- (1) **That the Environmental Health Manager – Environmental Protection, circulates a full explanation of the reason why an unresolved fly tipping case was still outstanding;**
- (2) **That the Waste Services Manager provides the Committee with information about the success of recent Skip Days; and,**
- (3) **That the Environmental Health Manager – Environmental Protection and the Waste Services Manager provides the Committee with financial data to show the amount of fines issued, the amount paid and the amount outstanding in the last 12 months; and**
- (4) **That Council Officers working in the Environmental Protection and Waste Services Departments be thanked for their hard work and efforts to ensure that the borough is kept clean of fly tipping and waste.**

173 Crime & Disorder and the Community Safety Partnership

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Councillor Clare Pritchard, submitted a report to update the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the Community Safety Partnership. Councillor Pritchard was accompanied by the Community Safety Manager who supported her in the presentation to Committee.

Councillor Pritchard referred Members to the report and the three attached appendices, as below:

Appendix 1 – Hyndburn & Pennine CSP Structures 2024-25

Appendix 2 – Hyndburn District Profile 2025

Appendix 3 – Lancashire Strategic Assessment 2025-28

Members had submitted several questions, in advance of the meeting, to the Officer and Cabinet Portfolio Holder and responses were provided as below:

Why are the Ribble Valley and Pendle Borough Council's not represented on the Community Safety Partnership?

Pendle are an unofficial partner and do attend the Pennine partnership meetings. Ribble Valley are not part of the partnering due to resource.

Statistics show that women are at their most vulnerable to abuse when pregnant. The Hospital Emergency Department has a process of dealing with maternity cases of concern so that issues of violence, domestic abuse, domestic homicide etc. are picked up and dealt with through a multiagency approach. How do maternity vulnerabilities fit into the CSP priorities?

This is a public health priority as stats are rising. HARV are an integral part of the CSP and work closely with our Public Health Colleagues and Victim Support in devising vulnerability markers to prevent this abuse and provide wraparound support throughout the entire pregnancy. Hyndburn CSP attend the Lancs-wide DA forum where this rising issue is tabled for action and hold a local DA multi-agency partnership to expedite actions from the forum.

A Public Spaces Protection Order has been proposed for Accrington town centre, could you detail what the PSPO will cover and the consequences if it is breached. Do they have enough Police resources to deal with the outcomes?

PSPOs can be used to restrict a broad range of activities. Under Section 59 of the 2014 Act, local authorities must be satisfied on reasonable grounds, as listed in the Act.

The public determine this activity based upon survey results.

Breach of a PSPO is a criminal offence. The penalty for breach of a PSPO can be a fixed penalty notice of £100. A person committing an offence will have 14 days to pay the penalty. However, if someone persistently breaches an order they could receive more formal action such as a Community Protection Warning/Notice or a Respect Order (nee ASBO). Failure to comply with the order if prosecuted is an offence carrying a maximum fine of £1000.

There will be no reliance on the Police to determine a breach. The Council and the entire CSP partnership can report breaches including members of the public and businesses via the radio network we have amongst retailers within the town centre of Accrington.

Could there be an extension of the PSPO to other town centres?

Yes

The Neighbourhood Boards are considering community safety in the town centre and, with funding allocated through the Levelling Up fund for this, could you suggest ways in which funding could be used and which services would need to feed into this?

To have a dedicated team addressing anti-social behaviour within the town centre and for additional services for youths and family event spaces.

Councillor Pritchard added that there had been concern about the prolific shoplifting taking place in the town centre but that action was being taken to address this.

The Chair referred to the radio network project and asked how long the scheme had been working and if it had been a success.

Councillor Pritchard reported that the scheme had been operating for many years and informed the meeting that larger businesses often used the scheme more than smaller businesses but agreed that there could be greater promotion of the project to increase use of the scheme.

Members of the Committee expressed concern about the levels of anti-social behaviour in Accrington Town Centre.

Councillor Pritchard pointed out that the Police Inspector for Accrington had recognized the problem of anti-social behaviour in Accrington Town Centre and intended to focus on this issue.

Members referred to the local multi-agency operations, Op Centurion and the Bin the Banger project. They acknowledged the additional £2m secured by OPCC to enable Hyndburn to benefit from additional foot patrols to target ASB in key areas and asked about the effectiveness of these operations. The Committee was informed that anti-social behaviour in the town centre had been recognized as an issue and that extra funding would be advantageous in addressing this. They were also provided with information on how abandoned vehicles were dealt with.

Councillor McKenna reported on the issues of anti-social behaviour and drug dealing happening in her ward, Barnfield, and informed the meeting how she had built up a good working relationship with the neighbourhood PCSOs in addressing these issues.

Councillor Pritchard informed the Committee of the projects in place to deal with anti-social behaviour around the borough and agreed that the PCSOs did do a good job. She also explained how Youth Services contributed to this. The Community Safety Manager outlined the effectiveness of the Youth Panel and gave details of how it worked.

Councillor Fazal asked if anything was being done about issues of hate crime in the town centre. He also referred to the importance of sporting events and activities for young people in the prevention of anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Pritchard responded that there had been conversations with the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner to discuss how to deal with rising tensions. She reported that the intention was to deal with issues immediately, sending out a message of this behaviour not being acceptable.

Resolved - **That the Community Safety Manager be thanked for the work she has done and for the report to be noted.**

174 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved - **That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item, when it was likely, in view of the nature of the proceedings that there would otherwise be disclosure of exempt information within the Paragraph at Schedule 12A of the Act specified at the following item.**

175 Co-optee Nomination

Exempt Information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Paragraph 1 – Information relating to an individual

The Committee was requested to consider and make a recommendation to Full Council on the application submitted for the vacant co-optee position on the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved - **That the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommend that Full Council approve the application for the vacant co-optee position.**

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed