

MINUTES OF: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 8th September 2025

Present: Councillor Ashworth (Vice Chair), Driver, Harrison, Payne (sub), S Smith and Co-opted member J Heaton

In attendance: David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development
Clare Law, Head of People and Policy
Natalie Atkinson, Programme Manager – Sport and Physical Activity
Anne Storah, Principal Planner – Forward Planning
Hannah Callan, Executive and Democratic Services Officer

Also present: 1 press

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received by Councillor S Barnes, Bauld and McMahon.

2. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting on 16th June 2025 be approved as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

5. Question Time

There were no public questions.

6. Chair's Update

- 6.1 At the previous meeting members were asked to note and consider the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and Work Programme. This report was approved by Council on the 16th July 2025.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

7. Rossendale Playing Pitch Strategy – Stage E Update

- 7.1 The committee is asked to note and consider the Stage E Update of the Rossendale Playing Pitch Strategy and recommend that Council approve the Stage E Update.

- 7.2 In response to members' questions the following clarification was given:

- It was confirmed that it was decided to conduct the Stage E refresh instead of a commissioning a full new Playing Pitch Strategy due to costs and Sport England only required a Stage E refresh at this time because of the timescales for the submission of the Football Foundation bid for the Adrenaline 3G pitch.
- It was clarified that between 2020-23 the number of football teams increased by 46%, which included, male, female and disabled teams. Haslingden women and girls football club is one of the largest in Lancashire. The consultation with Lancashire FA

throughout this process is that more FA programmes need to be implemented which will increase participation in Rossendale.

- It was also confirmed that more clubs need to be accredited to two stars, which offers women and girls, men and boys and disability teams, and you have to have a certain number in each category.
- It was outlined that in some areas of the country the boys under 11 teams have plateaued, however, this is not the case for Rossendale as there has been growth within this category.
- One of the junior football clubs will grow to 52 teams within the next 5 years.
- It was confirmed that the sports that are not included within this Stage E Update such as tennis, bowls and running will be included within the next strategy update. Work is ongoing internally with regards to bowls and also the users of the running track. In terms of tennis, participation programmes have been implemented to encourage the community to use the courts. The hire charges have also been changed after listening to feedback from the community.
- In relation to cricket for women and girls, Rawtenstall and Haslingden Cricket Clubs have recently been supported with funding to develop women and girls' cricket.

Resolved:

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended Council to approve the Rossendale Playing Pitch Strategy - Stage E Update.

8. Consultation on proposed Waterfoot Conservation Area

8.1 The committee is asked to consider and approve the draft Waterfoot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for formal consultation, to be undertaken for 4 weeks, prior to designation of Waterfoot becoming a Conservation Area.

8.2 In response to members' questions the following clarification was given:

- It was clarified that the new designation of the Conservation area would ensure that new development preserves or enhances the character of the appearance of the Conservation area. The Appraisal will become the basis of planning decisions and would allow the Council to undertake further planning policies, for example, a shop front signage design guidance or specific guidelines for Trickett's Arcade. It would also help control demolition and some minor developments. It is also possible that an Article 4 direction could be implemented to limit permitted developments rights, but given that Waterfoot has a lot of commercial properties that do not have permitted development rights there is not strong evidence for this but it is something that we can consider. It would also help the enforcement team tackle and authorise developments, for example, in relation to roller shutters. It was also confirmed that it would create funding opportunities and ensure that repairs are undertaken and are consistent.
- Work is ongoing with the owners and agents of Trickett's Arcade in relation to legals and long-term investment.
- The designation of the Conservation area would also provide an opportunity to approach Historic England for support, of who only fund properties that sit within a Conservation area.
- The designation of the Conservation area and having the Appraisal would provide support and guidance to developers in terms of what will be expected to be seen in Waterfoot and would provide them with more opportunities for funding.

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended Council to approve the draft Waterfoot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for formal consultation, to

be undertaken for 4 weeks, prior to designation of Waterfoot becoming a Conservation Area.

9. Quarter 1 Performance Management Report

9.1 The committee considered the Quarter 1 performance report.

9.2 In response to members' questions the following clarification was given:

- It was clarified that work is ongoing to recruit to the vacant Environmental Health Officer role within the current structure. Recruitment and retention of Environmental Health Officers is challenging both nationally and locally. We are exploring the options to either buy in service or shared working with other local authorities. In the interim the Council will continue to use a consultant for the work.
- It was confirmed that work is ongoing with officers to respond to Freedom of Information requests and enquires within the agreed timelines. Training has been completed by new officers and reminders have been issued to staff to outline the importance of timely responses despite busy workloads. It is proposed that training videos and templates will be shared on the Intranet for officers to review when responding to requests. Reminders are also sent every Friday to responsible officers and advice is provided by legal if guidance is needed. A detailed quarterly report is provided to CMT for information and escalation of outstanding requests.

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the Council's performance during Quarter 1 2024-25.

10. Forward Plan

10.1 Members were updated on the Forward Plan and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. Members were encouraged to submit their questions in advance in relation to items on the next agenda and suggest services to attend future meetings in relation to the performance report which would be distributed when it had been published for Cabinet.

Resolved:

The Forward Plan and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme items were noted.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 7:16pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date