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Chief Executive  
52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
West Lancashire  
L39 2DF

17 January 2025

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEMBERS UPDATE**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024/2025**

**JANUARY 2025 - ISSUE NUMBER 4**

The content of this **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEMBERS UPDATE** covers all the services.

If a Member wishes to receive further information on anything in the Update, please contact the officer named at the beginning of the article.

**Articles:**

If a Member wants to place an item on the Committee agenda in connection with any article in the Update, please provide it to [member.services@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:member.services@westlancs.gov.uk) or telephone 01695 585017 by **12 NOON FRIDAY, 24 JANUARY 2025**.

**Members Item/Councillor Call for Action:**

If a Member wants to place an item on the Policy & Resources Committee Agenda, please complete the attached Member Item/Councillor Call for Action Proforma (Appendix B) and return it to [member.services@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:member.services@westlancs.gov.uk) by **12 NOON FRIDAY, 24 JANUARY 2025**.

The Press are asked to contact the Digital Communications Manager for further information on this Update.



**MEMBER UPDATE REQUEST**  
**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING: 4 FEBRUARY 2025**

This form must be received by Member Services, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk before 12 noon on Friday 24 January 2025.

Member Update Issue: [Number]

Councillor:	
Article No:	
Subject:	

If more information is required in relation to this item, please contact the officer indicated on the first page of the related report.

Please advise Member Services on 01695 585017 if at any time you wish to withdraw this item following receipt of further information or e-mail [member-services@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:member-services@westlancs.gov.uk)

1. What are your reasons for requesting the item?
2. What outcome would you wish to see following discussion of the item?

**FOR MEMBER SERVICES USE ONLY**

Received by:	Date of Committee:
Date:	Chief Officer informed:
Time:	Chairperson informed:
Contact Officer informed:	Lead Member informed:



## MEMBER ITEM / COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MEETING: Tuesday 4 February 2025

This form must be received by Member Services, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk before 12 noon on Friday 24 January 2025.

If more information is required in relation to this item, please contact the officer indicated on the first page of the related report.

Please advise Member Services on 01695 585017 if at any time you wish to withdraw this item following receipt of further information or e-mail [member-services@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:member-services@westlancs.gov.uk)

Member Update Issue: 4

<b>Councillor:</b> (Name of Member requesting the item)	
<b>Subject:</b>	
1. What are your reasons for requesting the item:	
2. What outcome would you wish to see following discussion of the item?	

3. What have you already done to resolve this issue?

**Potential means of pursuing an issue before resorting to a Member Item/CCfA:**

- Raise Ward Issue as a ‘Patch Problem’
- Discuss issue with an appropriate officer from the Council Service or Agency
- Discuss issue with an appropriate lead member
- Raise the issue with partner agency, eg. Police, PCT, etc.
- Write formal letters on behalf of constituents
- Use official complaints procedure or other official route

**The following are potential reasons why your Member Item/CCfA may not be considered further:**

- The issue is an individual case
- You have not explored the issue fully and exhausted all avenues above
- A petition is being submitted to the Council
- A complaint is being or has been submitted and the outcome is awaited
- A FOI request is being or has been made and the outcome is awaited
- Scrutiny of the issue is unlikely to result in improvements for local people
- The issue has been the subject of a Council Motion / Question
- The issue is urgent and could be more speedily resolved by other means
- The issue is an ‘excluded matter’ (Constitution 18.3)

**FOR MEMBER SERVICES USE ONLY**

Received by:	Date of Committee:
Date:	Chief Officer informed <input type="checkbox"/>
Time: <input type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson informed <input type="checkbox"/>
Contact Officer informed <input type="checkbox"/>	Lead Member informed <input type="checkbox"/>

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**We can provide this document, upon request, on audiotape, in large print, in Braille and in other languages.**

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:-  
JILL RYAN ON 01695 585017  
OR EMAIL [JILL.RYAN@WESTLANCS.GOV.UK](mailto:JILL.RYAN@WESTLANCS.GOV.UK)





## POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MEMBERS UPDATE 2023/24  
ISSUE NO: 4

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**Article of: Deputy Chief Executive**

**Contact for further information: Mrs Jill Ryan (Extn. 5017)**  
(E-mail: [Jill.Ryan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:Jill.Ryan@westlancs.gov.uk))

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**SUBJECT: MINUTES OF LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S HEALTH AND  
ADULT SERVICES SRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE**

1.1 To keep Members apprised of developments in relation to Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee in Lancashire.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION**

2.1 The Health and Social Care Act (2001), subsequently superseded by the National Health Service Act 2006 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012, extended the powers of Overview and Scrutiny Committees of local authorities responsible for social services functions to include the power to review and scrutinise matters relating to the health service in their areas.

2.2 The Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee at Lancashire County Council exercises the statutory functions of a health overview and scrutiny committee. The Membership of the Committee includes twelve non-voting Co-opted District Council Members.

2.3 To ensure that Members receive regular updates on the work being undertaken by the Service and to provide an opportunity to feed back any comments via the Council's representative, a copy of the County Council's Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee minutes are attached.

### **3.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this Article and in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications associated with this item, except the Officer time in compiling this Article.

#### **5.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

5.1 This Article is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to the risk registers as a result of this article.

#### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this report.

#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The article does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

#### **Appendices**

Minutes of the Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee can be accessed via the link below:-

[Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee \(lancashire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/scrutiny/minutes/health-and-adult-services-scrutiny-committee)

30 October 2024

13 December 2024





## POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MEMBERS UPDATE 2023/24  
ISSUE: 4

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**Article of: Deputy Chief Executive**

**Contact for further information: Mrs Jill Ryan (Extn. 5017)**  
(E-mail: [Jill.Ryan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:Jill.Ryan@westlancs.gov.uk))

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**SUBJECT: MINUTES OF THE LANCASHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE**

1.1 To keep Members apprised of developments in relation to the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION**

2.1 The Police and Crime Panel (PCP) can exercise specific powers under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, and all other enabling powers, discharging its functions in accordance with the Policing Order 2011. The Panel has the power to scrutinise Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) activities, including the ability to review the Police and Crime Plan and annual report, request PCC papers and call PCCs and Chief Constable to public hearings. The PCP can also veto decisions on the local precept and the appointment of a new Chief Constable.

2.2 The panel is a Joint Committee made up of representatives from the 15 local authorities in the Lancashire Police Force area, together with two independent co-opted members.

2.3 To ensure that Members receive regular updates on the work being undertaken by the Panel and to provide an opportunity to feed back any comments via the Council's representative, a copy of the PCP's minutes are attached.

### **3.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this Article and in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications associated with this item, except the Officer time in compiling this Article.

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#### **Background Documents**

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#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The article does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

#### **Appendices**

Minutes of the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel can be accessed via the link below:

[Police & Crime Panel for Lancashire | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council](#)

23 July 2024

1 October 2024

## ARTICLE NO:

**MEMBERS UPDATE - 2024/25  
ISSUE:**



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**Article of: Chief Legal & Democratic Services Officer**

**Contact for further information: Mr Tom Lynan – Electoral Services Manager  
(E-mail: [tom.lynan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:tom.lynan@westlancs.gov.uk))**

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**SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMEN – STATISTICS 2023/24**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE**

1.1 To inform Members of the Council's performance in respect of the Local Government Ombudsmen statistics 2023/24.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Council is overseen by two ombudsmen following changes brought about by the Localism Act 2011.

2.2 The Housing Ombudsman (HO) deals with complaints by Council housing tenants about matters such as estate management, repairs to Council house properties, rent and service charges, possession proceedings and mutual exchanges.

2.3 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) deals with all other complaints against the Council across all the services it provides, including complaints by Council housing tenants about matters such as housing improvement grants, homelessness and statutory noise nuisance. The Council's response to enquiries and complaints received from the LGSCO are co-ordinated by the Chief Legal & Democratic Services Officer, and the Electoral Services Manager.

2.4 In July 2024 the LGSCO published its annual review letter which provides a summary of statistics on enquiries and complaints made in respect of the Council for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The annual review letter can be found at Appendix 1.

2.5 There were no complaints investigated by the Housing Ombudsman in 23/24.

2.6 Complaints to the Ombudsman should not always be seen as a negative. Complaints provide a valuable learning and transformation opportunity to improve service delivery.

### **3.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN PERFORMANCE-2022/23**

- 3.1 During 2023/24 the LGSCO made decisions on 16 enquiries and complaints about the Council. This is 2 fewer than the previous year.
- 3.2 Of those 16 matters, 6 were referred to the Council for local resolution (because the Council had not had an opportunity to properly consider the enquiry or complaint). 8 were closed after initial enquires without investigation. 2 formal investigations were completed during this period, 1 of which was upheld, the other dismissed.

Service Area	Number Referred	Investigated	Upheld	Not Investigated	Premature Complaint
Planning & Regulatory	8	2	1	4	2
Environmental Services	1	0	0	0	1
Housing Services	4	0	0	3	1
Revenues & Benefits	3	0	0	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>

- 3.3 The upheld case related to a licensing and environmental health issue. The Council were asked to apologise and pay £200 to the complainant, update them on enforcement in the area, and improve officer training. Please contact the Electoral Services Manager for further information on this or any Ombudsman case.
- 3.4 Using information available from the LGSCO website, the table below allows a comparison of the Council's performance with the 11 other non-unitary district councils within Lancashire. Across Lancashire there were 19 detailed investigations (average 1.6 per authority) of which 6 (average 0.5 per authority) were upheld, a reduction of 12 and 13 respectively from 22/23.

Council	Investigations	Complaints Upheld
Burnley	1	0
Chorley	0	0
Flyde	0	0
Hyndburn	1	1
Lancaster	1	1
Pendle	0	0
Preston	2	1
Ribble Valley	0	0
Rossendale	2	2
South Ribble	9	0
<b>West Lancashire</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Wyre	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Lancashire Average</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>

3.5 Compared to the other similar authorities nationally, West Lancashire had a lower number of investigations and upheld complaints than the average.

#### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this article and no significant impact on crime and disorder.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Investigating and co-ordinating responses to enquiries and complaints made to the Ombudsmen takes officer time for the Electoral Services Manager and for the service area or multiple areas to which the complaint or enquiry is directed. Given the importance to the Council in satisfactorily resolving enquiries and complaints made by service users this work stream will continue to receive a high priority.

#### **6.1 RISK ASSESSMENT**

6.1 This article is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this article.

#### **7.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

#### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

This article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Annual Review Letter – West Lancashire Borough Council – 2023/24



17 July 2024

*By email*

Ms Sinnott-Lacey  
Chief Operating Officer  
West Lancashire Borough Council

Dear Ms Sinnott-Lacey

### **Annual Review letter 2023-24**

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2024. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints, and I know you will consider it as part of your corporate governance processes. As such, I have sought to share this letter with the Leader of your Council and Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, to ensure effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes, which offer valuable opportunities to learn and improve. In addition, this year, we have encouraged Monitoring Officers to register to receive the letter directly, supporting their role to report the decisions we uphold to their council.

For most of the reporting year, Paul Najsarek steered the organisation during his tenure as interim Ombudsman, and I was delighted to take up the role of Ombudsman in February 2024. I look forward to working with you and colleagues across the local government sector to ensure we continue to harness the value of individual complaints and drive and promote systemic change and improvement across the local government landscape.

While I know this ambition will align with your own, I am aware of the difficult financial circumstances and service demands that make continuous improvement a challenging focus for the sector. However, we will continue to hold organisations to account through our investigations and recommend proportionate actions to remedy injustice. Despite the challenges, I have great confidence that you recognise the valuable contribution and insight complaints, and their swift resolution, offer to improve services for the public.

### **Complaint statistics**

Our statistics focus on three key areas that help to assess your organisation's commitment to putting things right when they go wrong:

**Complaints upheld** - We uphold complaints when we find fault in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before we investigated. We include the total number of investigations completed to provide important context for the statistic. This year, we also provide the number of upheld complaints per 100,000 population.

**Compliance with recommendations** - We recommend ways for organisations to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

**Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority** - In these cases, the organisation upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right. We encourage the early resolution of complaints and give credit to organisations that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your organisation with similar authorities to provide an average marker of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

Your annual data, and a copy of this letter, will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), on 24 July 2024. This useful tool places all our data and information about councils in one place. You can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

### **Supporting complaint and service improvement**

In February, following a period of consultation, we launched the [Complaint Handling Code](#) for councils, setting out a clear process for responding to complaints effectively and fairly. It is aligned with the Code issued to housing authorities and landlords by the Housing Ombudsman Service and we encourage you to adopt the Code without undue delay. Twenty councils have volunteered to take part in an implementation pilot over the next two years that will develop further guidance and best practice.

The Code is issued to councils under our powers to provide guidance about good administrative practice. We expect councils to carefully consider the Code when developing policies and procedures and will begin considering it as part of our processes from April 2026 at the earliest.

The Code is considered good practice for all organisations we investigate (except where there are statutory complaint handling processes in place), and we may decide to issue it as guidance to other organisations in future.

Our successful complaint handling training programme continues to develop with new modules in Adult Social Care and Children's Services complaint handling available soon. All our courses include practical interactive workshops that help participants develop their complaint handling skills. We delivered 126 online workshops during the year, reaching more than 1,700 people. To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training) or get in touch at [training@lgo.org.uk](mailto:training@lgo.org.uk).

Returning to the theme of continuous improvement, we recognise the importance of reflecting on our own performance. With that in mind I encourage you to share your view of our organisation via this survey: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ombudsman/>. Your responses will help us to assess our impact and improve our offer to you. We want to gather a range of views and welcome multiple responses from organisations, so please do share the link with relevant colleagues.

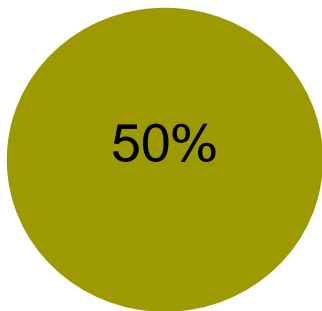
Yours sincerely,



Amerdeep Somal  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England



### Complaints upheld



**50%** of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of **63%** in similar organisations.

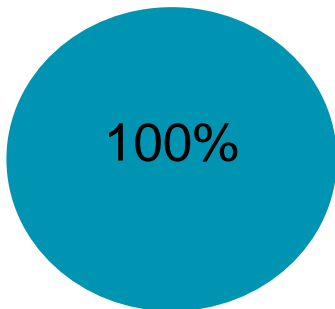
**1**  
upheld decision

This is 0.8 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

The average for authorities of this type is 1.2 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

Statistics are based on a total of **2** investigations for the period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

### Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations



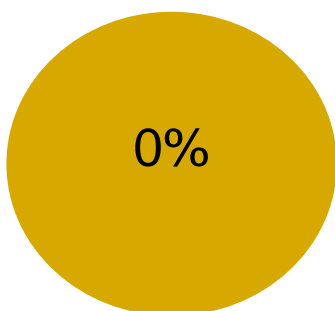
In **100%** of cases we were satisfied the organisation had successfully implemented our recommendations.

This compares to an average of **99%** in similar organisations.

Statistics are based on a total of **1** compliance outcome for the period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

- Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An organisation with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

### Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation



In **0%** of upheld cases we found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

This compares to an average of **21%** in similar organisations.

**0**  
satisfactory remedy decisions

Statistics are based on a total of **1** upheld decision for the period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

