



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 1 March 2021 via WebEx. Members of the public were able to view the meeting via Wyre Council's YouTube page.

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### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee members present:**

Councillors R Amos, Ballard, Collinson, Cropper (left during item 4), E Ellison, Fail, Leech, Longton, Minto and O'Neill

### **Apologies for absence:**

Councillor C Birch

### **Other councillors present:**

Councillor Berry

### **Officers present:**

Emma Keany, Democratic Services Officer

Marianne Unwin, Assistant Democratic Services Officer

Neil Greenwood, Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety

Inspector Kevin Lister, Wyre Neighbourhood Inspector

Police Constable Paul Parkes, Counter Terrorism Policing North West- Cumbria & Lancashire

Peter Foulsham, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager (left after item 3)

Liesl Hadgraft, Head of Business Support and Monitoring Officer (left after item 3)

Barry Parsonage, Independent Person (left after item 3)

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Prior to the formal proceedings, the Chairman Councillor Ibison made a statement, at the request of the Monitoring Officer and the Independent Person, regarding a councillor complaint about the approval of the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 18 January 2021.

The statement was as follows:

*"I have been asked, as Chairman of this Committee, and my fellow Cllrs to make a statement.*

*I wish to advise the Committee that at no time have we intended to act in a way which would misrepresent another Councillor, or breach this Council's Code of Conduct in*

*relation to the minutes of the meeting held on 15th December 2020 which were approved at the meeting on 18th January.*

*At the meeting concerns around the accuracy of the draft minutes were raised, however, at the 18th January meeting we councillors, following discussion and due consideration, felt the draft minutes reasonably summarised and represented the December meeting. However, on 28th January, after discussions with Officers and further consideration, I agreed to make a factual amendment to the minutes, and trust that the matter is now concluded.*

*I have passed a copy of this note to the Officer for full verbatim inclusion in the minutes of this meeting.*

*Thank you.”*

**32            Declarations of interest**

None.

**33            Confirmation of minutes**

During the discussion regarding the draft minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2021, a factual amendment was proposed by Councillor Fail, seconded by Councillor O’Neil and it was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2021 be approved with the inclusion of the following sentence to the original amendment (minute number 26):

*“Note - this was disallowed by the Chair prior to the start of the meeting.”*

**34            Wyre Community Safety Partnership – annual scrutiny review**

The Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety, Neil Greenwood, submitted a report regarding the Wyre Community Safety Partnership.

Mr Greenwood, Councillor Roger Berry and Inspector Kevin Lister addressed the Committee and introduced the report.

Mr Greenwood pointed out that over the last 12 months there had been a reduction in all crime across the Borough and, in particular, a seven per cent decrease in serious violence against the person. He alluded that this was as a direct result of the loss of nightlife due to the pandemic.

He went on to explain that unfortunately, there had been an increase in domestic violence, which had thought to be caused by the recent and on-going COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent lockdowns as more people were staying at home. In addition, he explained there had also been an increase in anti-social behaviour reported.

Several questions were posed by members surrounding the following topics:

- Crime figures and statistics
- Reporting of crimes
- Burglaries in Wyre
- Crime hotspot areas
- Drug offences
- Domestic violence increases due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Anti-social behaviour around the river in Garstang

The Chairman proposed that the Committee would look at reviewing the recommendations and the subsequent actions of the Domestic Abuse Task Group, that concluded its' work in March 2017, in the near future.

The Chairman give his thanks to Inspector Lister, the Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety, and the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder for their participation.

### **35 PREVENT- LGA guidance**

The Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety, Neil Greenwood and Police Constable Paul Parkes, Counter Terrorism Policing North West-Cumbria and Lancashire were invited to the meeting to introduce this item.

Neil Greenwood highlighted the key aspects of the Prevent organisation in Lancashire and Wyre Council's role.

Police Constable Paul Parkes, also addressed members and explained the cases that Prevent were currently dealing with across Lancashire.

During the discussions of this item, members asked the following questions:

- Is there a particular age profile that is more susceptible to being indoctrinated by extremist activity?
- Has the COVID-19 lockdowns created a rise in cases?

The Chairman again thanked the Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety and Police Constable Paul Parkes for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

### **36 Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statement**

The Corporate Director Communities submitted a report on the third Quarter Performance Statement 2020/21 (October-December 2020).

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee queried the following topics:

- Vacancy rates in Wyre's local high streets
- The extrapolation of the Digital Wyre Strategy
- Out of work benefit claimant count
- Levels of tree planting

The questions posed by members would be sent to the relevant officers for their consideration and would be distributed to members after the meeting.

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### **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21 – update report**

The Corporate Director Resources, Clare James, submitted a report updating the committee on the delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21. The Democratic Services Officer, Emma Keany, provided a verbal update to the committee.

Members expressed their interest in reconvening the District Enforcement Task Group as soon as possible. The Chairman echoed this request and expressed that at the next Overview and Scrutiny meeting the task group be recommissioned.

He also asked officers to look into the possibility of the task group receiving a written statement from District Enforcement on the topic of dog fouling around the borough.

In addition, members reiterated their interest in setting up a future task group to review the YMCA contract. It was expressed by the Chairman and subsequently agreed that this would be postponed and revisited once the consultant's report has been completed.

Councillor Ballard, the Chairman of the Citizens Advice Service Task Group, provided the Committee with a verbal update of the task group's current position. He explained that there had been three recommendations put forward to the relevant Portfolio Holder and that they had formally been invited to the final task group meeting on 22 March 2021.

After being temporarily paused, members agreed that the Call-in Procedures Task Group be recommissioned.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 7.51 pm.

**Date of Publication:** 10 March 2021.