

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 21 November 2022 at the Committee Room 2 - Civic Centre.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee members present:

Councillors Sir R Atkins, Ballard, Cartridge, Fail, Ibison, Le Marinel, Longton, O'Neill, Matthew Vincent and Webster

Apologies for absence:

Councillors Kay and Minto

Other councillors present:

Councillor Lady D Atkins

Officers present:

Clare James, Corporate Director Resources and Section 151 Officer
Marianne Unwin, Democratic Services Officer

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

26 Declarations of interest

None.

27 Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 17 October were confirmed as a correct record.

28 Fees and Charges - draft

The Corporate Director Resources (Section 151 Officer), Clare James, submitted a report, that detailed the proposed fees and charges for the municipal year 2023/24.

Before Clare James introduced the report, Councillor Sir Robert Atkins asked for clarification regarding when the decision to approve fees and charges can be made. Clare James explained that the approval of fees and charges was in the form of a Portfolio Holder report. She confirmed that the proposed fees and charges set for a municipal year could be amended at any point if a

Portfolio Holder report was presented to the relevant Portfolio Holder. She added that the purpose of an annual decision on proposed fees and charges was to assist with the budget setting.

Clare James introduced the report and explained the key changes proposed. She highlighted to members that owing to the current high levels of inflation, the council was experiencing increased contractual and service costs. Therefore, some of the fees and charges were set on a cost recovery basis. She added that where fees were due to be uplifted by inflation, consumer price inflation (CPI) was used; in September 2022 this was 10.1 per cent. In addition, due to the unprecedented levels of inflation, some amendments to the 2022/23 fees and charges would take effect from 1 January 2023.

Clare James received and answered questions posed by members.

There were six areas that the committee had particular comments, which would be reported back to the Management Board:

Health and Wellbeing Classes

Members raised several concerns regarding the proposed charge of £2 per session to attend a community exercise class. They acknowledged a corporate priority of the council was to improve health and wellbeing across Wyre's communities and feared that an introduction of a charge to the exercise classes may result in more members of the public being discouraged to attend. The Chairman suggested that hardship arrangements be explored for those residents who may not be able to afford the £2 fee. A member also raised a question regarding the locations of the community classes.

Clare James agreed to feedback these comments to the relevant officers.

Development Control

Concerns were raised regarding the capacity of the council to carry out pre-application discussions. The committee agreed that it would be useful for them to review a side-by-side comparison of 22/23 to 23/24 fees.

Clare James agreed to feedback these comments to the relevant officers.

Public Conveniences

Some members expressed their reservations about the proposed increased fees for using public conveniences by 10p (from 30p to 40p). Clare James highlighted that this proposal was in line with neighbouring authorities.

Members also raised questions regarding the previous increase of fees, contactless and cash options for the public conveniences in Wyre and income generated by the fees.

The Chairman suggested consideration be given to monitoring the increase in fees to keep the impact under review.

Clare James agreed to feedback these comments to the relevant officers.

Markets

Concerns were expressed regarding the timescales of when traders at the markets would be made aware of the increase in the administration charge and whether this may result in a loss of current and future traders.

Clare James reassured members that Wyre's markets had high occupancy levels and they did not currently struggle to attract traders.

Concerns were also raised around potential disruption caused by the improvement works to Fleetwood Market that was scheduled to begin in December 2022. Some members also discussed occupancy rates and the timing of the works as a suggestion to minimise disruption.

Clare James agreed to feedback these comments to the relevant officers.

Room Hire (Civic Centre)

A question was raised regarding the redecoration of rooms for hire in the Civic Centre, specifically the Members' Lounge. It was suggested that improvements would attract more customers to book these rooms.

Clare James explained that such works had been delayed due to major works to the external elevation of the Civic Centre and capacity issues in the Property Maintenance Team.

The committee requested a timescale for the redecoration to be carried out and when completed, for the Communications Team to improve the marketing of the rooms.

Clare James agreed to feedback these comments to the relevant officers.

Leisure Development – Playing Fields

Some members raised concerns that the report suggested that the increase in fees for the use of the playing fields was to be in line with CPI. Clare James clarified that this was incorrect and clarification had been sought with the Head of Service and the YMCA was still determining the fees for next year.

Following comments raised by a member regarding the maintenance of the playing fields, the committee suggested that any increase, if contractually possible, should be linked to pitch maintenance support.

Clare James agreed to feedback these comments to the relevant officers.

Members were also briefed and raised questions regarding Thornton Little Theatre, Marine Hall, Cemeteries, Marsh Mill, Communications and Visitor Economy, Car Parking, Building Control and Marsh Mill. No alternative fees were proposed as a result of these discussions.

Following discussions, the committee **agreed** to support the proposals.

The Chairman thanked Clare James for her attendance and contributions.

It was **agreed**:

- i. That the comments from the committee be fed back to the Management Board when discussing the proposed fees and charges,
- ii. That the report be noted.

29 Business Plan 2022/23, Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 2: July - September)

The Corporate Director Communities submitted a report on the Second Quarter Performance Statement 2022/23 (July – September 2022).

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee expressed concern over the following topics:

- The number of memberships at Wyre’s leisure centres
- The number of jobs created within the Enterprise Zone

The questions posed by members were sent to the relevant officers for their consideration and the committee agreed for the responses to be circulated to them before the next meeting.

The report was noted.

30 Tackling Youth Anti-Social Behaviour in Wyre Task Group - draft report

On behalf of the Chair of the Tackling Youth Anti-Social Behaviour in Wyre Task Group, Councillor Kay, the Vice Chairman, Councillor Le Marinel, introduced the report and explained that he was happy to answer any questions from members.

There were discussions regarding the link between youth anti-social behaviour and deprivation.

Councillor Le Marinel thanked all the members of the task group for their hard work. He also thanked Marianne Unwin, Democratic Services Officer, and Daphne Courtenage, Assistant Democratic Services Officer, for their support.

31 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23 – update report

The Corporate Director Resources, Clare James, submitted a report to update the committee about the delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022/23.

The Democratic Services Officer, Marianne Unwin, introduced the report.

The Chairman suggested an amendment to the Aims of Review section in The Promotion of Self-Care and Social Prescribing in Wyre Scoping Document to include the following sentence, “to strengthen links as a District Council with the new Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care

Partnerships”, which the committee **agreed**.

Following further discussions, it was **agreed**:

- i. That the committee endorsed the draft report of the Tackling Youth Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group and that the final report be submitted to Cabinet for their 11 January 2023 meeting for consideration.
- ii. That the committee commissioned a task group reviewing the promotion of self-care and social prescribing in Wyre.
- iii. That the report be noted.

The meeting started at 6.01 pm and finished at 7.22 pm.

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