

Public Document Pack



Wyre Borough Council
Date of Publication: 10 April 2024
Please ask for: Marianne Unwin
Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 01253 887326

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of Wyre Borough Council to be held at the Civic Centre, Breck Road, Poulton-le-Fylde on **Thursday, 18 April 2024** commencing at 7.00 pm.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Huddleston", written over a light grey dotted grid background.

Rebecca Huddleston
Chief Executive

COUNCIL AGENDA

The Mayor will invite the Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend John Squires, to say prayers.

1. Apologies for absence

2. Confirmation of minutes

(Pages 5 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 7 March 2024.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest from any Member on any item on this agenda.

4. Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Mayor, Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, Members of the Cabinet, a Chairman of a Committee or the Chief Executive.

5. Public questions or statements

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public under Procedure Rule 9.1.

6. Questions "On Notice" from councillors

To receive any questions from Members of the Council to the Mayor, a member of the Cabinet or the Chairman of a Committee under Council Procedure Rule 12.1

7. Executive reports

To receive reports from Cabinet Members. (In accordance with Procedure Rule 11.3 Councillors will be able to ask questions or make comments).

- (a) Leader of the Council (Councillor Vincent) (Pages 13 - 16)
- (b) Resources Portfolio Holder (Councillor McKay) (Pages 17 - 20)
- (c) Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder (Councillor Bridge) (Pages 21 - 24)
- (d) Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder (Councillor Le Marinel) (Pages 25 - 28)
- (e) Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder (Councillor Berry) (Pages 29 - 32)
- (f) Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder (Councillor Bowen) (Pages 33 - 36)

8. Calendar of Meetings 2025-2026 (Pages 37 - 46)

Report of Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive.

9. Review of the staff pay line (Pages 47 - 52)

Report of Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive.

10. Appointment of Director of Transformation and Change (Pages 53 - 58)

Report of Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive.

11. **Councillor Development Strategy 2024-2028, Councillor Development Programme 2024/25 and Wyre Councillor Skills Framework** (Pages 59 - 106)
- Report of Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Clare James, Director of Finance and Governance.
12. **Periodic report - Councillor Development Group** (Pages 107 - 110)
- Report of Councillor Colette Birch, Vice-Chair of the Councillor Development Group.
13. **Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Annual Report 2023/24** (Pages 111 - 126)
- Report of Councillor Peter Cartridge, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
14. **Periodic Report - Audit and Standards Committee** (Pages 127 - 132)
- Report of Councillor Ibison, Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee.
15. **Notices of Motion**
- None.

If you have any enquiries on this agenda, please contact Marianne Unwin, tel: 01253 887326, email: Marianne.Unwin@wyre.gov.uk

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Council Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Thursday, 7 March 2024 at the Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Council members present:

Councillors Robinson, Catterall, Amos, Lady D Atkins, Sir R Atkins, Baxter, Beavers, Berry, Belshaw, Birch, Bolton, Bowen, Bridge, Cartridge, Collinson, Duffy, Ellison, Fail, Fielding, Higginson, Ibison, Jackson, Kay, Le Marinel, Livesey, Martin, McKay, Meekins, Minto, Moliner, Nicholls, Preston, Rendell, Rushforth, Smith, Sorensen, Swatton, Swift, Vincent, A Walker, C Walker and Wells

Absent- apologies received:

Councillors Blair, Higgs, Leigh, Raynor, Rimmer, C Stephenson, B Stephenson and Thewlis

Officers present:

Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive
Mark Billington, Corporate Director Environment
Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities
Clare James, Corporate Director Resources and Section 151 Officer
Marianne Unwin, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager (Temporary)
George Ratcliffe, Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Joanne Billington, Head of Governance and Business Support
Mary Grimshaw, Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
Jane Warne, Communications and Visitor Economy Manager
Sandy Lee, Policy, Data Intelligence and Change Manager

2 members of the public or press attended the meeting.

61 Former Councillor and Mayor Ronnie Shewan

A minutes silence was observed in memory of Former Councillor and Mayor Ronnie Shewan.

62 Confirmation of minutes

The Mayor updated members that the draft minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 January 2024 had been amended to correct an error at minute 46.

Councillor Fail raised an amendment to minute 51c. He clarified that although

he referred to the housing type figures shown in the Authority Monitoring report for 2021/22, his question was regarding the housing figures reported for 2022/23.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the minute was not factually incorrect, but acknowledged Councillor Fail's correction and agreed this would be clarified in the minutes of this meeting.

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 January 2024 were **approved**, unanimously, by those who were in attendance.

63 Declarations of Interest

None.

64 Announcements

The Mayor announced that the Mayoral Selection Panel had nominated Councillor Jane Preston as the Mayor Elect for 2024/25 for approval at the Annual Council meeting.

On behalf of the Council, Councillor Vincent said a few words in memory of former Councillor and Mayor Ronnie Shewan.

The Mayor reminded members of her charity race night at Garstang Golf Club on Saturday 6 April 2024 to raise money for her Mayor's charities. She thanked those who had bought a horse; this was £5 per horse. Tickets were £40 per person and were available to book online.

The Mayor added that she was going to host a final fundraising event in April; details regarding this would be shared with members in due course.

65 Public questions or statements

None.

66 Questions "On Notice" from councillors

None.

67 Pay Policy Statement 2024/25

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Vincent, and the Chief Executive, Rebecca Huddleston, submitted a report on the council's Pay Policy Statement 2024/25.

Councillor Vincent introduced his report.

It was proposed by Councillor Vincent, seconded by Councillor Berry that the Pay Policy Statement in respect of 2024/25, which was attached at Appendix A of the report be approved.

It was **agreed**, unanimously, that the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 be approved.

68 Review of the staff pay line

Following a verbal update from Councillor Vincent, the Mayor confirmed that the staff pay line report had been **deferred** to a future meeting of the Council.

69 Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices, Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Capital Strategy 2024/25

The Resources Portfolio Holder, Councillor McKay, and the Corporate Director Resources (and S.151 Officer), Clare James, submitted a report to confirm the Treasury Management Policy and Annual Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement and Capital Strategy 2024/25.

Councillor McKay introduced her report.

It was proposed by Councillor McKay, seconded by Councillor Vincent that the Treasury Management Practices, MRP Policy Statement, Prudential Indicators and Capital Strategy for 2024/25 as considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 14 February 2024.

Councillor McKay and Vincent responded to a question from Councillor A Walker regarding an update on the potential for the council to develop an ethical investment policy.

It was **agreed** (28 votes to 0, with 13 abstentions) that the Treasury Management Practices, MRP Policy Statement, Prudential Indicators and Capital Strategy for 2024/25 be approved.

70 Revenue Budget, Council Tax and Capital Programme

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Vincent, submitted a report on the Revenue Budget, Council Tax, Revised Capital Budget 2023/24, and Capital Programme 2024/25.

The Mayor said that, in accordance with the usual convention, Procedure Rule 16.4 would be suspended so that the Leader when proposing the Budget and the Leader of the Opposition when commenting on or proposing any amendments to it, would not be time limited. However, all other speakers in the debate would, as usual, be limited to a maximum of five minutes each.

The Mayor also proposed that Procedure Rule 16.6(b) be suspended to allow a single debate to be held on any amendments proposed to the budget as a whole. The Council **agreed** unanimously.

Councillor McKay provided members with a verbal correction to the report,

she clarified that the figure at 3.4c ought to read £9,860,830 (£3,000 less than stated in the report published owing to a late change to a Parish Precept). The figure at 3.4d should then read £251.95. She confirmed no other figures were affected.

Councillor Vincent introduced his report, he had unlimited time to do so.

It was proposed by Councillor Vincent, seconded by Councillor Berry that the recommendations as set out in paragraphs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 be approved.

Councillors Fail and Rushforth made comments to the proposed budget, they had unlimited time to do so.

Councillors Belshaw, Sorensen and McKay made additional comments to the proposed budget.

Councillors Berry and Vincent responded to the debate.

In response to comments from Councillor Vincent, Councillor Fail raised a personal explanation to clarify his previous comments regarding the spending of council reserves.

A recorded vote was taken on the Cabinet's recommendations on the budget for 2024/25 as set out in paragraphs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 of the Leader's report.

The following members voted in support of the proposal: Councillors Amos, Lady D Atkins, Sir D Atkins, Baxter, Berry, Birch, Bolton, Bowen, Bridge, Cartridge, Catterall, Collinson, Ellison, Ibison, Jackson, Kay, Le Marinel, Livesey, McKay, Meekins, Minto, Nicholls, Preston, Rendell, Robinson, Rushforth, Swift and Vincent.

The following members voted against the proposal: Councillors Beavers, Belshaw, Duffy, Fail, Fielding, Higginson, Martin, Moliner, Smith, Sorensen, Swatton, A Walker, C Walker and Wells.

The proposal was therefore approved (by 28 to 14) and it was **agreed**:

- 3.1** That the following recommendations of Cabinet on the 14 February 2024 be approved:
 - a.** For the purpose of proposing an indicative Council Tax for 2025/26, 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 taking into account the Medium Term Financial Plan at Appendix 2 which reflects an increase of 2.99% in 2024/25 and ongoing.
 - b.** The Revised Revenue Budget for the year 2023/24 resulting in a draw down from General Balances totalling £5,950 and the Revenue Budget for 2024/25 resulting in a draw down from General Balances totalling £695,000.

- c. Members' continuing commitment to the approach being taken regarding the efficiency savings, detailed within the council's 'Annual Efficiency Statement' at Appendix 1.
- d. The use of all other Reserves and Balances as indicated in Appendices 4 and 5.
- e. In accordance with the requirements of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance, those indicators included at Appendix 7.
- f. The Revised Capital Budget for 2023/24 and the Capital Programme for 2024/25 onwards in Appendix 8.

3.2 That it be noted that, in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, as agreed by Council at their meeting on 24 February 2005:

- a. The amount of 39,138.48 has been calculated as the 2024/25 Council Tax Base for the whole area [(Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act"))]; and
- b. A Council Tax Base, for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates, has been calculated as indicated in Appendix 6.

3.3 That the following be approved:-

The Council Tax requirement for the council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish precepts) is £8,857,429.

3.4 That the following be approved:-

That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:-

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------------|---|
| a. | £88,351,610 | Being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils. |
| b. | £78,490,780 | Being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act. |
| c. | £9,860,830 | Being the amount by which the aggregate at 3.4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3.4(b) above, calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act). |

d. £251.95	Being the amount at 3.4(c) above (Item R) all divided by Item T (3.2(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
e. £1,003,401	Being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act and as detailed in Appendix 6.
f. £226.31	Being the amount at 3.4(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3.4(e) above by Item T (3.2(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

3.5 That it be noted that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not considered excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

71 Council Tax 2024/25

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Vincent, submitted a report on the setting of Council Tax for 2024/23.

Councillor Vincent introduced his report.

It was proposed by Councillor Vincent, seconded by Councillor Berry that recommendations 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 be approved.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendations of the Council Tax 2024/25 report as set out in paragraphs 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.

The following members voted in support of the recommendations: Councillors Amos, Lady D Atkins, Sir D Atkins, Baxter, Berry, Birch, Bolton, Bowen, Bridge, Cartridge, Catterall, Collinson, Ellison, Ibison, Jackson, Kay, Le Marinel, Livesey, McKay, Meekins, Minto, Nicholls, Preston, Rendell, Robinson, Rushforth, Swift and Vincent.

The following member voted against the recommendations: Councillor Sorensen.

The following members abstained from voting: Councillors Beavers, Belshaw, Duffy, Fail, Fielding, Higginson, Martin, Moliner, Smith, Swatton, A Walker, C Walker and Wells.

The proposal was therefore approved (by 28 votes to 1, with 13 absentions) and it was **agreed**:

1. That this Council's Band D equivalent Council Tax for the 2024/25 financial year of £226.31 together with parish precepts, as submitted in the report on the Budget, be approved for each of the valuation bands as set out in table A of the Appendix to these minutes.
2. That it be noted that for the year 2024/25 the major precepting authorities have stated the following amounts in precepts, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings in the Council's area as set out in table B of the Appendix to these minutes.
3. That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.1 and 3.2 above, and in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the following amounts are set as the Council Tax for the year 2024/25 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings as shown in table C of the Appendix to these minutes.

72 Notices of Motion

None.

Appendix to Council Minutes - 7 March 2024

The meeting started at 7.00 pm and finished at 7.56 pm.

Date of Publication: 14 March 2024.

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Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council	Council	18 April 2024

Executive Report: Leader of the Council
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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on a number of issues, as set out below.

2. Lancashire Devolution Deal

- 2.1 In November 2023, the Government announced it would be willing to enter into a devolution deal with Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council.
- 2.2 Following this, an eight-week public consultation was launched in December to gather feedback on the devolution proposal. The results of the consultation have seen the majority of respondents welcome the proposal and where concerns have been raised, they have been reviewed and used to update the proposal document.
- 2.3 During March each of the upper tier authorities discussed the findings of the consultation at meetings of their Full Council and have approved recommendations to proceed with Lancashire's plans for devolution and to submit a joint devolution proposal to Government. Each council supported the view that a Combined County Authority (CCA) should be set up to allow powers and budgets to be devolved from centre government to Lancashire.
- 2.4 The Secretary of State is now expected to lay an order in Parliament to establish the new combined authority before the summer recess, with the new Lancashire CCA being established by the Autumn.

3. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

- 3.1 A meeting of the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board was held on the 14 March where updates were given on the Blackpool Enterprise Zone and the Hillhouse enterprise zone.

- 3.2 The key updates regarding Hillhouse were to note the ongoing ambitions of NPL regarding delivery of hydrogen on site by 2025. This aims to provide hydrogen to existing companies on site, replacing gas, with the remaining hydrogen being used locally or sent to the grid.
- 3.3 There continues to be a good pipeline of enquiries from potential investors in the site, however it should be noted that the nature of many of these large scales enquires means that negotiations and conversion of interest takes some considerable time.
- 3.4 Outline plans to re-open the Fleetwood/Poulton rail line are still awaiting a ministerial decision, with uncertainty around this meaning that finalisation of a delivery plan which will unlock a large area of the Enterprise Zone continues to be on hold.

4. LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

- 4.1 In June we will be having a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC). The last peer challenge took place in 2017 and councils are encouraged to have one at least every five years. You will also remember that this was a piece of work which we committed in our Council Plan, approved by Council last November.
- 4.2 In June, we will be visited by member and officer 'peers' from other councils, together with the LGA and they will spend time reviewing our key strategies and policies and talking to members, staff and partners.
- 4.3 The peer challenges cover a number of areas including local priorities and outcomes, organisational and place leadership, governance and culture, financial planning and management and capacity for improvement.
- 4.4 Following the peer challenge, we will get a report which will set out findings and recommendations. I see this as a great opportunity to share and celebrate examples of the great work we do and to receive recommendations on how we can improve.
- 4.5 Prior to the peer challenge officers will be running briefing sessions for staff and members to explain more about the process and answer any questions that you may have.

5. Theatres update

- 5.1 We are delighted to have awarded the lease of Thornton Little Theatre to local organisation CRE8IV Group Ltd from the end of April 2024. CRE8IV's passion for theatre and professional experience will be the driving force behind ensuring the theatre remains an affordable and accessible resource for local entertainment, cultural and community

groups and those who currently use its facilities. Their commercial expertise will bring a more secure footing to the theatre's future, whilst retaining its ethos as a much-loved vibrant community hub. We wish them all the success for the future.

- 5.2** A theatres consultant has now been appointed to work with the Director of Communities to progress a short-term action plan for improving the way the Marine Hall operates. Alongside this work, GJG consultants have been appointed to commence the tender process. I will keep Members updated of this process.

6. Climate Change Strategy Consultation

- 6.1** During January and February, we ran a consultation exercise to seek residents views on the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy.
- 6.2** The consultation involved an online survey via the council's website for approximately three weeks during January and February. This was promoted via a press release and paid adverts on social media.
- 6.3** In addition, officers held seven in-person public engagement events to give residents the opportunity to discuss the strategy in more detail, learn more about climate change and have their say. These were planned using footfall data to reach residents on the busiest days across a range of locations throughout Wyre, which included:
- Knott End Library (Monday 29 January)
 - Garstang Booths (Thursday 1 February)
 - Teanlowe Centre in Poulton (Saturday 3 February)
 - Fleetwood Library (Wednesday 14 February)
 - The Mount, Fleetwood (Thursday 15 February)
 - Cleveleys Library (Friday 16 February)
 - Teanlowe Centre in Poulton (Saturday 17 February)
- 6.4** A range of key stakeholders were invited to two events held at the Civic Centre on Tuesday 6 and Thursday 8 February. This involved a presentation on the strategy followed by an opportunity to read through the action plans in detail and provide comments.
- 6.5** Local schools were also invited to two events held in the Council Chamber on Wednesday 31 January (primary) and Friday 9 February (secondary). Pupils took part in interactive sessions to learn more about climate change, local impacts and to have their say on priorities and actions within the strategy.
- 6.6** Staff and elected members were encouraged to have their say via a specific link to the survey on the staff and councillor hub.
- 6.7** In total, the online survey had 228 responses. Approximately 85 people were reached during the seven public engagement events. The key

stakeholder events had 25 representatives attending from a range of local and wider organisations, children from five primary and secondary schools attended the school events.

6.8 A full evaluation of the consultation has been undertaken and was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Climate Change sub committee meeting on 21 March.

6.9 The next stage of the process will be to further update the strategy with the key findings from the public consultation, as well as any recommendations from the Sub-Committee, and continue to explore ways to prioritise the action plans. The final strategy is due to be brought to Full Council this summer.

7. Comments and questions

6.1 In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.5.



Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Lesley McKay, Resources Portfolio Holder	Council	18 April 2024

Executive Report: Resources Portfolio Holder

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Resources Portfolio, as set out below.

2. Finance

- 2.1 Members should now have received their council tax bills for the 2024/25 financial year reflecting this Council's decision to increase its element of the bill by just £6.57 (2.99%) on a Band D equivalent property to £226.31 or just 62p per day.
- 2.2 Whilst the total band D council tax (excluding parish precepts) is now £2,227.73, I wish to remind members that the Wyre element is just over 10% of the charge with the costs of Lancashire County Council (74%), the Police and Crime Commissioner (12%) and the Fire Authority (4%) all contributing to the final bill that drops through our residents' letterboxes.
- 2.3 2024/25 sees a one-year settlement deal for the sixth year running and our forecasts contain a high level of uncertainty as a result. Our most recent financial projections in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) indicate a gap between expenditure and income of £4m in 2028/29. Given that a General Election is due before the end of January 2025, it is unlikely that any significant local government finance reforms will take place in advance of this.
- 2.4 As of January 2024, fewer than 10% of audits of local authorities' financial statements had been submitted for the financial year 2022/23 by December, according to the latest figures from Public Sector Audit Appointments. Only 45 out of 467 had been filed. This compares to a pre-pandemic position in 2018 where 87% of audits were completed by the then publishing deadline of 31 July. Wyre's 2020/21 accounts are the last to have been fully audited and expected to be signed off by Deloitte leaving 2021/22 and 2022/23 to be captured under any 'backstop' arrangements imposed.

- 2.5** In order to address the delays, a consultation on proposals to clear the backlog of local government audits closed on 7 March. It focused on a phased approach to restoring confidence in the local audit process.
- 2.6** The main elements are:
- **Phase 1: Reset** involving clearing the backlog of historical audit opinions up to and including financial year 2022/23 by 30 September 2024.
 - **Phase 2: Recovery** from Phase 1 in a way that does not cause a recurrence of the backlog by using backstop dates to allow assurance to be rebuilt over multiple audit cycles.
 - **Phase 3: Reform** involving addressing systemic challenges in the local audit system and embedding timely financial reporting and audit.
- 2.7** The outcome of the consultation and its impact on Wyre is expected to be reported to Audit Committee in June.

3. Revenues and Benefits

- 3.1** £143,286.93 of the balance of the 2023/24 council tax support fund has been allocated to 1,362 Localised Council Tax Support (LCTS) recipients to clear or contribute to their outstanding council tax liability for 2023/24. In accordance with the guidance, a further £4,259.19 has been allocated to economically vulnerable households who are not in receipt of LCTS to help with council tax bills.
- 3.2** The remainder of the fourth round of Household Support Funding has been spent with a £10,000 payment being made to the Fylde Coast Women's Refuge, plus payments of £300 being made to 109 households in receipt of contributions based job seekers allowance or employment support allowance. These households have not received the low income benefits cost of living payments made by the DWP. We have also awarded 10x £200 vouchers to LCTS claimants under 25 who are living alone and 7x £200 vouchers to people with Disabled Band reductions who have become entitled since the last vouchers were issued in November 2023.
- 3.3** In his budget speech on 6 March 2024, the Chancellor confirmed that there would be a further round of Household Support Funding for a six month period in 2024/25. As yet there are no details of the amounts being allocated, or guidance on the qualifying criteria for receiving a payment.
- 3.4** Ongoing issues with the availability of the courts following the closure of the Blackpool Courts are likely to cause problems for the Corporate Debt Recovery Team in trying to collect unpaid council tax and business rate debt. While a reduced number of court dates for 2024/25 have provisionally been agreed, these will take place at Lancaster Magistrates Court and may be restricted to online hearings. We will continue to monitor the impact on collection rates as part of the Council Plan performance measures process.

4. 2024 Pay Claim

- 4.1** The Unions have submitted a pay claim for 2024 which seeks an increase of £3,000 or 10% to pay scales whichever is greater. In addition, they are asking for a review of gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in local government, a two-hour reduction in the working week with no detriment, an additional day of annual leave and a phased approach to reaching a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour by 2026.
- 4.2** Regional Briefings are currently taking place with employers, the feedback from which will be considered by the National Employers before they respond with a Pay Offer. This is expected to be communicated sometime in May, after the elections.

5. Governance and Legal

- 5.1** Preparations for the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner Elections on the 2 May 2024 are well underway. All polling stations and count venues are now booked, and the Elections Team are currently in the process of appointing Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks to each station. The Returning Officer is meeting with the Elections Team on a weekly basis, which will be followed by daily updates when the postal voting opening sessions start on 23 April 2024. Detailed project/action plans are in place and are being monitored and updated regularly. Whilst at the time of publishing this update, a date for the General Election was not yet known, but a snap election will not take place on 2 May.

6. Comments and questions

- 6.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.5.

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Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Simon Bridge, Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder	Council	18 April 2024

Executive Report: Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio as set out below.

2. Parks and Open Spaces

- 2.1 The next phase of the King Georges and Church Road Playing Fields project with Wyre Rivers Trust (WRT) has been completed. A section of boardwalk has been constructed over the newly created wetlands and adjacent to the improved playing field. The work has been undertaken by volunteers working closely with Wyre and WRT staff and a local contractor. The damaged section of the football pitch with minimal grass covering will be reinstated once the ground has dried out sufficiently.
- 2.2 The Cleveleys, Knott End, Rossall and Estuary beach clean events continue to grow in popularity and great work is carried out by volunteers and community groups coordinating beach cleans. Corporate volunteering has been taking place with small groups of United Utilities staff undertaking employee volunteer days at Fleetwood and Rossall Point beaches.
- 2.3 Wyre`s team are working closely with local landowners, Lancashire County Council and Wyre Rivers Trust to undertake emergency tree and river restoration works following flood damage to Brock Picnic Area. The Brock Valley is a special site for wildlife and landscape and the picnic area is a very popular spot for local visitors and tourists. The riverbank had become dangerous and unstable due to undercutting, causing several large trees to fall into the river. Specialists works using sustainable flood management techniques have been undertaken. The next stage will involve work to reinstate the public footpath and picnic area and to fence and protect the embankment to allow it to grow back; the public will be kept informed with notices on natural flood management in rivers.

- 2.4** 5,500 trees have been planted on council land by council staff, partners, volunteers and community groups, members of the public and school groups during the 2023/24 tree planting season as part of our commitment to addressing climate change. This brings the current accumulative total of trees planted to 19,192.
- 2.5** February was a busy month at The Mount, bringing the Heritage Lottery Funding programme of improvements and activities to a close. All 20 of the standard trees purchased through the Forestry Commission Urban Tree Challenge Fund for The Mount were planted. A variety of other trees including Hazel, Rowan, Field Maple, Holly, and Hawthorn whips and, Elm and Pine standards were also planted, bringing the total to 120 planted over the month. Three community gardening events were delivered: school groups were involved in building bird and bat boxes and dead hedges to help boost the biodiversity on site; a flower arranging workshop with a local health and wellbeing group; and a scavenger hunt style event following clues themed on the site's history. The programme culminated in a successful celebration event with diverse activities involving the public, volunteers, and partners during the February half term.
- 2.6** The Memorial Park gardening club continues to meet weekly in preparation for new growing season, while Friends of Memorial Park work closely with Fleetwood Town football club to deliver community event at the park.

3. Waste and Enforcement

- 3.1** Between October 2023 – March 2024, WISE issued 880 Fixed Penalty Notices as part of reactive patrols in response to information relating to known 'hotspots' or community intelligence of litter and dog fouling, and proactive patrolling in areas with PSPO restrictions in place, as follows:

Offence Type	Offence Numbers
Littering	868
PSPO-Dogs Exclusion Zones	1
Dog Fouling*	11
Total:	880

* Jubilee (5), Rossall, Stanah, Tithebarn, Mount, Pharos, and Park

3.2

Area	Patrol Hours (October to March 2024)	Number of FPN's **
Cleveleys (Victoria & Norcross, Jubilee, and Cleveleys Park)	623	307
Fleetwood (Park, Mount, Rossall, Pharos and Warren)	562	443
Thornton (Pheasants Wood, Marsh Mill, Stanah and Bourne)	103	8
Poulton-le-Fylde (Hardhorn with Highcross, Carleton, Breck and Tithebarn)	423	110
Rural East (Brock with Catterall, Garstang, Calder and Wyresdale)	17	9
Rural West (Hambleton & Stalmine, Great Eccleston, Preesall and Pilling)	15	1

** In addition, 2 FPNs were issued in areas where no GPS data was captured and cannot be allocated to specific wards.

3.3 WISE Enforcement Officers has also engaged with 98 dog walkers to determine if they were carrying dog foul bags and observed 300 dog walkers being compliant by removing faeces after the dog had fouled.

3.4 The Wyre inhouse enforcement team issued 6 Fixed Penalty Notices over the same period as follows:

- Litter x 2 (Mount Ward)
- Fly Tipping x 2 (Rossall and Jubilee Wards)
- Dogs PSPO x 1 (Pharos Ward)
- Dog Fouling x 1 (Pharos Ward)

3.5 In February, Wyre hosted a Fylde Coast Dangerous Dogs training event following the Government ban on XL Bullies. The training covered safe handling techniques and warning signals to recognise traits when dangerous/banned dogs may be out of control. Joint procurement of safety equipment to administer sedatives to dangerous dogs is being explored between the three councils (Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre) and kennel provider.

3.6 Lead Enforcement Officers from the three councils will be meeting regularly in a new initiative to share intelligence on the cross-boundary movements of suspected fly tippers and rogue traders to assist with vehicle tracking and identification of suspects; this will also be a forum

to share experience and best practice.

- 3.7** A joint mobile patrol involving Wyre Enforcement Officers and the police was carried out in March to stop and search suspected rogue traders and identify breaches of waste carriers' responsibilities. No illegal operations were identified on this occasion however it was a valuable exercise and plans are in motion to make this a regular occurrence.
- 3.8** The council is supporting a Lancashire County Council campaign to warn of the dangers of incorrect battery disposal and encourage people to recycle them safely. Batteries contain chemicals hazardous to the environment which can cause fires in bins, collection vehicles and at processing facilities. The 16 Wyre refuse collection vehicles have been updated with campaign artwork to highlight the hidden batteries inside vapes, electric equipment and children's toys that cannot be disposed of in domestic bins.

4. Comments and questions

- 4.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with procedure rule 11.5.



Report of:	To:	Date
Cllr Peter Le Marinel, Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder	Council	18 April 2024

Executive Report: Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To inform council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio as set out below.

2. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

2.1 Eighty one percent (equates to 30) of the UKSPF and REPF projects have now progressed, two of which have completed. Councillors were invited to a pre-council presentation on 7 March 2024 to learn about the projects and programme expenditure and were asked to promote the services as appropriate. The Garstang Town Centre Public Realm consultation, and the Mythic Coast survey recently closed, and will inform next steps for projects within the towns. A very successful ‘Meet the Funders’ community networking event was held on 20 March 2024 at the North Euston, Fleetwood. Around 60 representatives attended from community groups and were able to meet The National Lottery, Grantscape (Walney Community Fund) and Lancashire County Council (Crowdfunding) to discuss potential projects and network with other groups. The event is planned to be replicated at a rural location in the new financial year.

2.2 A REPF open call for applications, to deliver rural circular economy project/s, has recently been launched. The closing date is due to be the last week in April.

3. Fleetwood Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

3.1 The HAZ programme was completed in March and an exhibition showcasing the projects led by the council was displayed at Fleetwood Market 14 March – 2 April 2024.

- 3.2** With £1.7m of Government funding and match funding of £2.9m, the project has seen key historic buildings revived and a cultural programme led by Fleetwood Museum that built on the local arts scene that the town enjoys.
- 3.3** An event for stakeholders was held 9 March 2024 and attended by Catherine Dewar, North West Regional Director, Historic England which provided grant recipients the opportunity to see the exhibition and to learn about Historic England's involvement in the refurbishment of Fleetwood Market. If Councillors wish to learn more please use this link https://wyregovuk.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/Councillor-Portal/EZSaU2J6dhdJsQ0AUMrsH84BpTz5_SYrqNJZjvTDdO9PhQ?e=56Jlrw

4. Biodiversity Net Gain Grant Allocation 2024/25

- 4.1** The council has been allocated a grant of £26,807 for 2024/2025 to support the council to implement mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in the planning system, which became mandatory for major planning applications from 12 February and minor planning applications from 2 April 2024.
- 4.2** BNG is a way of creating and improving natural habitats. BNG makes sure, through planning decisions, that development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development.

5. Fleetwood Market Refurbishment Completion

- 5.1** The main contract works to Fleetwood Market are now substantially completed. The snagging list, which had some 130 identified items to remedy, is now largely completed.
- 5.2** I am pleased to report that the heating is now functioning. A replacement (larger) pump has been installed as there were issues with the capacity of the original pump. The new pump and air source heat pumps (ASHP) were commissioned by the Mitsubishi engineer (with the project engineer and installing contractor in attendance) on Friday 15 March. Discussions with several traders on Tuesday 19 indicated they are happy about the temperature inside the market, which on that day ranged between 17 degrees in the Birdcage, and 21 degrees in the Main Hall and Annex. The BMS (Building Management System) will be connected by hard wire into the Wyre network so as to allow the Estates and Market teams to access 'real-time' performance data, and to make adjustments to temperature if required. The system will be monitored and there may be ongoing 'fine tuning' adjustments to the BMS controls unit. Officer training on the BMS will be carried out in due course.
- 5.3** As part of the ongoing review of rental levels for the market and which will subsequently support a revised financial plan, we have asked The National Association of British Markets (NABMA) to visit site and review the current operation and financial charges and to provide their 'health

check' report outlining any advice and recommendations for change. This should be available to us by the end of April.

6. Comments and questions

- 6.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with procedure rule 11.5.

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Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder	Council	18 April 2024

Executive Report: Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To inform council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio as set out below.

2. Community Safety

2.1 During February the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) held an E-Scooter event at Asda Fleetwood. The event was organised in response to the number of complaints and accidents involving E-Scooters and is intended to raise awareness of the legalities of using E-Scooters and the current fire risks around the use and storage of the lithium batteries used to power them. Further events may be arranged later in the year.

2.2 During the course of the year we have worked with Child Safety Media and various partners within the CSP who have all signed up to support the crucial crew initiative this year. This is a project aimed at year 6 children and an event took place between the 19th – 23rd February at the Lofthouse building Fleetwood, where along with partners we delivered key community safety messages via a number of interactive presentations including:

- Anti-Social Behavior
- Road Safety
- Cyber Security Team
- Drugs, Alcohol and Vaping
- Basic First Aid
- Water safety
- Community Railway Safety

2.3 I along with the Chief Executive and other officers had the pleasure of attending the Redeeming our Communities (ROC) launch event at the North Euston Hotel, Fleetwood on February 28. During the event we looked at identifying areas where along with the community we can

make a difference to peoples lives in Fleetwood and where additional help may be required.

3. Housing

- 3.1** The Autumn Statement 2023 announced an additional £120 million to help councils address homelessness pressures and to support Ukrainians into settled accommodation in 2024-2025. We were awarded an extra £102,276 of Homelessness Prevention Grant and will use this funding to support those that are at risk of homelessness and to help fund the provision of temporary accommodation. Our original award for 2024-2025 was £287,741 and so our total allocation of Homelessness Prevention Grant will be £390,017 for the year.
- 3.2** Funding has been awarded to Lancashire County Council from the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID) (for work alongside the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC)) to deliver the Government's aim that by 2024/25 there will be more people recovering from addiction in stable and secure housing as part of a programme of investment in treatment and recovery interventions. Funding has been allocated by the County Council to appoint a Strategic Lead Officer for Lancashire together with additional Housing Options Officers in each of the three Lancashire localities. We are to receive funding for a new Housing Options Officer post to work across Wyre and Fylde to support those with substance misuse issues. The post will be hosted by Fylde Council.
- 3.3** We have been selected to take part in a new Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities Healthy Homes Project to better understand the impact of housing enforcement interventions on health and wider societal outcomes. This is great news and over the next year we will receive up to £130,000 to fund additional housing enforcement officer capacity and other interventions such as communications support to increase the awareness of the health impacts of damp and mould with landlords, additional training and tools to measure damp and mould.

4. Wyre Beach Management Scheme

- 4.1** Phase 2 of the works is ongoing with rock installation will focussing on the northern area between the end of the Rossall scheme and Marine Lakes Fleetwood. A northern satellite compound has been set up and this will be the main focus of activities through the summer period. Rock deliveries have now commenced to this area. Concrete works are focusing on the Cleveleys crossover ramps and will continue until the bathing water season in May.
- 4.2** The Marine Management Organisation undertook a confirmatory visit on 26 February and they requested evidence of compliance documentation which has been provided.

- 4.3** A number of school visits and career days have been supported by the project team so far and continued support to community events will be ongoing during delivery of the scheme.

5. Comments and questions

- 5.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with procedure rule 11.5.

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Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder	Council	18 April 2024

Executive Report: Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio, as set out below.

2. Tourism and Events

- 2.1 During February half-term, we commissioned Gambolling Arena Theatre from Southport to put on five shows of the popular Roald Dahl story ‘The Big Friendly Giant’ at Stalmine and Scorton Village Halls. This is part of our aim to bring the performing arts to rural areas, as well as enabling venues to income generate by offering tuck shop facilities. The shows were loved by audiences, with 140 tickets sold for each performance, and up to 30 people each night on waiting lists. We have a similar theatre performance by ‘Cultrapedia’ arranged for 1 June in Pilling and are hoping to soon announce dates for another show in Preesall, Stalmine or Hambleton.
- 2.2 On 9 March we held a ‘Celebration of Fleetwood Market’ for key stakeholders and the public to learn about the history of the iconic market up to the present day, including the recent £3.94 million refurbishment works to secure the market’s future as one of Wyre’s key attractions. Refreshments were provided in Market House Studios, alongside an exhibition of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone projects and a brief talk from Historic England’s regional director Catherine Dewar. After a guided tour of the market, attendees could watch a short video and visit our ‘Just Reminiscing’ display of curious old artefacts and scrapbooks. The event was well received by both attendees and traders and paves the way for future Heritage-led events.
- 2.3 Tickets are on sale for Garstang Walking Festival, taking place from 4 to 12 May. The packed programme is coordinated by the Friends of Garstang Walking Festival, supported by the Council. This year marks its 20th anniversary and to celebrate there will be over 40 walks for all ages and abilities. Information sessions are being held at Garstang Library. Last

year saw a significant rise in ticket sales and we expect even more visitors to take part this year to explore Wyre's Great Outdoors.

2.4 Local artist Christian Fenn has been commissioned to produce a mural at Cleveleys bus station. Funded by UKSPF, the mural will raise awareness of the existing Mythic Coast sculpture trail, direct visitors to the Star Wars filming location, bridge the gateway between the high street and the coast and offer a unique photo opportunity for visitors, which in turn will generate passive promotion of the area. We are working in close partnership with local community group Care For Cleveleys, whose volunteers prepared the wall ahead of painting.

2.5 Wander your way to WANDERLAND... Wyre's brand-new Family Festival will be held at Cottam Hall playing fields on 27 July. Celebrate Hey Duggee's 10th Birthday, meet Mr Bloom and the veggies - CBeebies favourite gardener, join in with the live karaoke party with Massaoke – as seen at Glastonbury - PLUS lots more family fun for everyone. This will be Wyre's biggest festival yet with three individually themed fun-filled entertainment zones to explore, interactive workshops, a huge main stage with live music and performances from family favourite stars and even more! Explore Wyldwood, the Dreamfield and the Fun field for even more walkabout acts, accessible activities, selfie stations, rides, games, free gifts to create and take home. There are mermaids to meet, giant inflatables to enjoy, a creepy crawlies roadshow, face painting, giant games to play and so much more! There will also be food concessions and a licensed bar. The event expects to draw upwards of 3,500 visitors and we will be working with local businesses to promote their products, services and offers to attendees. We will also provide a limited shuttle bus service and have clear signposting of car parks. We have a robust campaign plan and are working with local residents and ward councillors to ensure residents' concerns are alleviated.

3. Leisure Centres

3.1 We are delighted to have received news from Sport England that we have been successful in our bid to Phase 2 of the Swimming Pool Support Fund. We have been allocated £141,212 for energy efficiency improvements to Fleetwood Leisure Centre. This is great news and will fund photovoltaics to generate carbon free electrical power for the centre. Water saving shower flow restrictors will also be funded. This is the second round of funding we have secured after we secured £142,000 of revenue funding in November 2023 to offset the increase in utility and chemical costs that occurred over the last two years at Fleetwood, Poulton and Garstang pools.

4. Healthy Lifestyles and Communities

4.1 Weight management - We have secured a contract with Lancashire County Councils Public Health Service to support our work to reduce overweight and obesity levels for adults and children in Wyre. We will receive £74,500 per year for the next five years to enable us to provide the popular PASTA programme for families at four schools in Wyre. Following a tender exercise a local Fylde Coast company, Healthy

Heads, has been awarded the contract. We look forward to working with them to enable families to cook, eat and become more active together. We have awarded the adult weight management contract to Slimming World, who we have worked with very successfully over the last three years. They provide 23 Slimming World groups across Wyre each week, enabling people who have a BMI of over 30 to access funded support for 12 weeks. Slimming World provide an excellent, high quality offer to our residents and we are delighted to partner with them once again.

4.2 SEND Provision - We know from our work in running the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme that there is a lack of funding and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Wyre, so for the last twelve months we have funded a SEND club at Fleetwood Leisure Centre, where every other Saturday, up to 12 children and young people have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities including swimming, games and walks on the beach. The club is run by the Play Inclusion Project, a team who provide high quality SEND and break time provision across the Fylde Coast. Feedback from parents and children is really positive and there is a waiting list for every club session. We are hoping that the club will continue long term with support from ourselves and a grant from Sport England. We have also recently started to work with another SEND provider, Sportscool. Sportscool work with us on the HAF programme and we have funded them to start an after school club in targeted primary schools with large numbers of SEND children. The clubs have just started once a week at Chaucer Primary School initially and the first week saw nine children attend. We look forward to supporting and developing this much needed provision in Wyre.

4.3 Arts & Health - Just Reminiscing sessions at Fleetwood Market are back up and running on the first Friday of every month. Sessions at Cleveleys library are also proving popular. Creative Wellbeing sessions started at Over Wyre Medical Centre on 21 March with a Fleetwood-based artist commissioned to lead the group for eight weeks of inspiring and relaxing arts and crafts.

5. Marine Hall

5.1 Marine Hall has hosted some wonderful sold-out shows during February and March including Jive Talkin' Bee Gee's in Concert and A Night of Queen – Killer Rhapsody. In particular, the Heritage Cinema Night was a runaway success with over 500 attendees re-enforcing the borough's appetite for all things Heritage. Working with the council, North West Film Archive proudly presented Wyre on Film showcasing the industries, cultures and traditions of Fleetwood and the surrounding areas of the last 120 years.

5.2 On Saturday 13 April, 'Big Country' bring their 'Return to Steeltown' Tour to Marine Hall as part of their 40th Anniversary Celebrations. The Band last performed in Fleetwood back in 1983 at the height of their fame in the eighties.

6. Countryside

- 6.1** Coast and countryside volunteers have led a variety of popular guided short walks over the past three months while preparing for the Garstang Walking Festival – checking walking routes, reporting any faults on public rights of ways, and undertaking risk assessments. Newly recruited volunteers have received the necessary training to enable them to lead walks, as well as attending First Aid and Dementia Awareness Training delivered by a local care provider offering their time freely.
- 6.2** A joint venture between Wyre, Lancashire, and the Westmorland Hedge Laying Association, with the assistance of Wyre Rivers Trust and a local farmer, delivered a hedge laying workshop. Customers benefited from the training and advice given by the craftsman Hedge Layer to learn this traditional method of boundary management in support of our biodiversity and climate change objectives.
- 6.3** The coast and countryside team have undertaken a variety of flood management, woodland management and access improvements in river catchments areas and sites across the borough. Activities included footpath repairs, tree felling and coppicing, dead hedging, and construction of leaky dams. The material from the felled trees (mostly felled due to Ash dieback), is reused to make dead hedges to protect biodiverse areas within our parks and picnic areas and to construct leaky dams to slow the flow in the small rivers and streams to reduce flooding.

7. Comments and questions

- 7.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.5.



Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive	Council	18 April 2024

Calendar of Meetings 2025/26

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To publish the programme of Wyre Council's meetings for 2025/26.

2. Council priorities

2.1 To provide a framework of meetings that will assist the delivery all of the priorities in the Council Plan, particularly innovative and customer focused which is about being a well run forward thinking council that puts customers first.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That the Calendar of Meetings for 2025/26, attached as Appendix 1, be noted.

4. Background

4.1 Paragraph 2 of Part 4.01 of the Constitution states that:

“Ordinary meetings of the Council will take place in accordance with a programme published by the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Group Leaders.”

4.2 The programme of meetings for 2025/26 follows a broadly similar pattern to the programme for the current year.

5. Key issues and proposals

5.1 The frequency, times and dates of each meeting are listed in Appendix 2. Any adjustments to the previous pattern are referred to in the text.

5.2 The only adjustment of any significance is that the meetings of the Audit and Standards Committee for July and September 2025 have been pushed back by one week, to better meet the timescales of the items to be considered.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

6.1 No alternative options have been considered.

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	The number of meetings in 2025/26 is proposed to be the same as in 2024/25 so there will be no additional financial implications.
Legal	The proposed schedule of meetings meets with the requirements of the law and the Council's constitution.
Climate Change	No direct implications.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Peter Foulsham	01253 887606	peter.foulsham@wyre.gov.uk	13 March 2024

List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None.		

List of appendices

Appendix 1 Calendar of Meetings for 2025/26

Appendix 2 Dates of meetings 2025/26

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CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025/26

APPENDIX 1

	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
MON					1 O&S			1					
TUE			1 CG		2			2					
WED			2 PLA CMT		3 PLA MB CAB	1 PLA MB		3 PLA CMT				1 PLA	
THU	1		3 COU		4	2		4 CCSC	1 BH			2 MB	
FRI	2		4	1	5	3		5	2			3 BH	1
SAT	3		5	2	6	4	1	6	3			4	2
SUN	4	1	6	3	7	5	2	7	4	1	1	5	3
MON	5 BH	2	7 E&A	4	8 LG	6	3	8 CDG	5	2	2 LG	6 BH	4 BH
TUE	6	3	8	5	9 CG	7	4	9	6	3	3 CG	7	5
WED	7 CMT	4 PLA CMT CAB	9 MB CAB	6 PLA MB	10 CMT	8 CMT	5 PLA CMT	10 MB	7 PLA MB	4 PLA MB	4 PLA MB	8 CMT	6 PLA CMT
THU	8	5	10	7	11 COU	9	6	11	8	5	5 COU*	9	7
FRI	9	6	11	8	12	10	7	12	9	6	6	10	8
SAT	10	7	12	9	13	11	8	13	10	7	7	11	9
SUN	11	8	13	10	14	12	9	14	11	8	8	12	10
MON	12	9 O&S	14 O&S	11	15 CDG	13 O&S	10	15	12 O&S	9	9	13 LG	11
TUE	13	10	15 LIC	12	16 LIC	14 LIC	11 A&S	16	13 LIC	10	10	14 CG	12
WED	14 MB	11 MB	16 CMT	13 CMT	17 MB	15 MB CAB	12 MB	17 CMT	14 CMT CAB	11 CMT CAB	11 CMT	15 MB CAB	13 MB
THU	15 COU ANN	12 CCSC	17	14	18 CCSC	16	13	18	15	12	12 CCSC	16 COU	14 COU ANN
FRI	16	13	18	15	19	17	14	19	16	13	13	17	15
SAT	17	14	19	16	20	18	15	20	17	14	14	18	16
SUN	18	15	20	17	21	19	16	21	18	15	15	19	17
MON	19	16 CDG	21	18	22	20 LG	17 O&S	22	19 LG	16 E&A	16 CDG	20 O&S	18
TUE	20	17 A&S	22	19 LIC	23	21 CG	18 LIC	23	20 CG	17 LIC	17 LIC	21 LIC	19
WED	21 CMT	18 CMT	23 MB	20 MB	24 CMT	22 CMT	19 CMT	24 MB	21 MB	18 MB	18 MB CAB	22 CMT	20 CMT
THU	22	19	24	21	25	23 COU	20	25 BH	22 COU	19	19	23	21
FRI	23	20	25	22	26	24	21	26 BH	23	20	20	24	22
SAT	24	21	26	23	27	25	22	27	24	21	21	25	23
SUN	25	22	27	24	28	26	23	28	25	22	22	26	24
MON	26 BH	23	28	25 BH	29	27 E&A	24 LG	29	26	23 O&S	23	27	25 BH
TUE	27 LIC	24 LIC	29 A&S	26	30 A&S	28	25 CG	30	27	24 A&S	24	28	26
WED	28 MB	25 MB	30 CMT	27 CMT		29 MB	26 MB CAB	31 CMT	28 CMT	25 CMT	25 CMT	29 MB	27 MB
THU	29	26	31	28		30	27 COU		29	26	26	30	28
FRI	30	27		29		31	28		30	27	27		29
SAT	31	28		30			29		31	28	28		30
SUN		29		31			30			29	29		31
MON		30 LG									30		
TUE											31		

Key

BH = Bank Holiday
* = Budget Meeting

Internal meetings:

CG = Conservative Group - **
LG = Labour Group - **
CDG = Councillor Development Group – 6pm
MB = Management Board – 5pm
CMT = Corporate Management Team - **

Meetings held in public:

CAB = Cabinet – 6pm
COU = Council – 7pm
COU ANN = Annual Council Meeting – 7pm
A&S = Audit and Standards Committee – 6pm
E&A = Employment & Appeals Committee – 6pm

Meetings held in public (cont.):

CCSC = Overview and Scrutiny Climate Change Sub-Committee – 6pm
O&S = Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 6pm
PLA = Planning Committee – 2pm
LIC = Licensing Committee – 6pm

Please note these dates are correct at the time of publication and may be subject to change. Please refer to the Council's website for the most up to date information.



CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

May 2025 to May 2026

DATES OF MEETINGS 2025/26

COUNCIL

8 meetings. Same number as in 2024/25. Thursdays at 7pm.

15 May 2025 (Annual meeting 2023/24)

3 July 2025

11 September 2025

23 October 2025

27 November 2025

22 January 2026

5 March 2026 (Budget meeting)

16 April 2026

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

5 meetings. Same number and similar pattern as in 2024/25. Not evenly spaced. Scheduled to fit in with the requirements of the Audit Plan and various statutory deadlines.

Tuesdays at 6pm.

Additional meetings will be organised, if necessary, to deal with any particular Code of Conduct issues which may arise.

17 June 2025

29 July 2025

30 September 2025

11 November 2025

24 February 2026

EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

3 meetings. Same number and similar pattern as in 2024/25. Mondays at 6pm.

7 July 2025

27 October 2025

16 February 2026

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 meetings. Same number as in 2024/25.
Mondays at 6pm.

9 June 2025

14 July 2025

1 September 2025

13 October 2025

17 November 2025

12 January 2026

23 February 2026

20 April 2026

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CLIMATE CHANGE SUB-COMMITTEE

4 meetings. Same number as in 2024/25.
Thursdays at 6pm.

12 June 2025

18 September 2025

4 December 2025

12 March 2026

PLANNING COMMITTEE

12 meetings. Same pattern of meetings as in previous years.
First Wednesday of each month, at 2pm.

4 June 2025

2 July 2025

6 August 2025

3 September 2025

1 October 2025

5 November 2025

3 December 2025

7 January 2026

4 February 2026

4 March 2026

1 April 2026

6 May 2026

LICENSING COMMITTEE

11 meetings. Last or penultimate Tuesday of each month, at 6pm. As in previous years, monthly meetings have been scheduled to enable statutory deadlines to be met if applications are received. It is likely that a number of these meetings will not be needed, but it is easier to schedule meetings on a monthly basis and cancel them if necessary, than to have to add extra meetings at short notice.

27 May 2025

24 June 2025

15 July 2025

19 August 2025

16 September 2025

14 October 2025

18 November 2025

13 January 2026

17 February 2026

17 March 2026

21 April 2026

CABINET

9 meetings. Wednesdays at 6pm.

4 June 2025

9 July 2025

3 September 2025

15 October 2025

26 November 2025

14 January 2026

11 February 2026 (Budget meeting)

18 March 2026

15 April 2026

COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT GROUP

4 Meetings. Same pattern as in 2024/25. Mondays at 6pm.

16 June 2025

15 September 2025

8 December 2025

16 March 2026

Conservative Group: Tuesday before each Council Meeting (except Annual Meeting).

Labour Group: Monday before each Council Meeting (except Annual Meeting).

Management Board: Every 2 weeks (alternate weeks from CMT)
Wednesdays at 5pm.

Corporate Management Team: Every 2 weeks (alternate weeks from MB) Wednesdays usually at 9.30am.



Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)	Council	18 April 2024

Review of Pay and Conditions

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To approve changes to the pay, terms and conditions of staff following a review which included legally required negotiations with the union.

2. Corporate priorities

2.1 A well run, forward-thinking council that puts customers first.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The proposal being recommended is to escalate staff on Grades 4 to 13 in the following bands:

- Grades 4 to 6 will receive one additional increment – average 1.84% increase (141 staff, 124.58 FTE)
- Grades 7 to 13 will receive two additional increments – average 5.12% increase (133 staff, 126.58 FTE).

3.2 It is proposed that the annualised flexi allowance be amended from 26 days to 16 days per year (pro-rata to part-time staff) on a phased basis over the next two years as follows:

2024/25 – 20 days
2025/26 – 16 days.

3.3 The above proposals be implemented with effect from 1 April 2024.

4. Background

4.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 29 November 2023, approval was granted to undertake a review of pay and conditions, primarily to support improving the recruitment and retention of technical and professional staff at the

council. Permission was granted to enter into legally required negotiations with the union based upon the proposal detailed in section 5 of that report ([Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 29th November, 2023, 6.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)).

- 4.2** Wyre has a collective bargaining agreement in place with unison and as such are bound to negotiate with them on matters effecting terms and conditions of employment.
- 4.3** Representatives from the Human Resources team met with local and regional representatives from Unison on 21 December 2023. The initial proposals to the union were to increase the pay line as set out in 3.1 above; reduce mileage rates from 52.2p per mile to HMRC rates of 45.5p per mile; and cap the number of days' flexi that can be taken per annum to 16 days (from 26 days).
- 4.4** Unison conducted a five-day ballot ending at noon on 12 January 2024 the result of which was to reject the proposals – 68 voting against and 12 for. Further discussions with the branch members continued through January and February and briefing sessions were held with staff (not restricted to union members) to gauge wider feedback on the proposals.
- 4.5** Feedback from Unison set out that members would not wish to accept the proposals as a package. Whilst staff at Grade 4 and over were keen for an increase in pay, the reductions to mileage rates and annual flexi leave allowance were seen as detrimental and therefore not something that they would want to agree to.
- 4.6** No counter proposals were provided by the Unison branch. However in consideration of the feedback received we amended our proposals to include a phased approach to reducing the flexi allowance and to limit the reduction to 46.9p per mile rather than 45.5p per mile in the initial proposal. The updated mileage proposals together with the offer as set out in sections 3.1 – 3.3 above were communicated to the Unison branch as a final offer.
- 4.7** Unison conducted a further ballot w/c 19 February, this time with 52 rejecting and 30 voting to accept.
- 4.8** Further discussions with the union took place and in recognition of the depth of feeling around mileage and with a view that the proposals should be a very positive message for the majority of staff, an amended proposal was offered to the union taking out any decrease in mileage allowance.
- 4.9** On 27 March we received confirmation from the branch that they have accepted the proposals.
- 4.10** Following agreement on the 2023/24 national pay award and minor changes to the active spinal points, the estimated cost of the additional

increments has been revised upwards from £380,000 to £400,000 in 2024/25.

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1** The proposal being recommended is to escalate staff on Grades 4 to 13 in the following bands:
- Grades 1 to 3 will not change (50 staff, 40.88 FTE)
 - Grades 4 to 6 will receive one additional increment – average 1.84% increase (141 staff, 124.58 FTE)
 - Grades 7 to 13 will receive two additional increments – average 5.12% increase (133 staff, 126.58 FTE)
- 5.2** This increase will cost an estimated £400,000 (including NI and pension) in 2024/25, based on the current establishment list, which is in line with the savings figure identified on pension contributions.
- 5.3** Not changing rates of pay for Grades 1 to 3 reflects the significant weighting at the bottom end of the pay scale from recent pay awards which have had to keep pace with the rises in National Living Wage at the expense of maintaining the differential between these less skilled roles and their supervisors. This approach will help to redress the balance and, in some circumstances, improve the incentive for those in the lower paid roles to seek advancement.
- 5.4** Benchmarking indicates that Wyre is in the minority with the current number of flexi leave days that can be taken over a twelve month period (26). The cap at 16 days brings us in line with other local councils whilst still providing the flexibility for staff to use flexi time accrued throughout the year. The phased approach proposed will assist staff and managers with this transition.
- 5.5** The proposal to reduce mileage allowance was resisted by the union and feedback from staff not in the union was similarly opposed to the change. Whilst the savings that would be realised by the reduction would have gone towards the proposed increases in salary as set out in 5.1, they would have been minimal and the benefit of this was balanced with the importance of staff morale. To ensure the positivity of the proposals was retained, the decision was made to take out the mileage.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 6.1** Numerous scenarios have been profiled and rejected on the grounds of cost and failure to achieve the desired outcomes of maximum benefit to staff at the skilled, technical and professional levels whilst creating headroom between supervisory levels and general staff.
- 6.2** As detailed in the report above, the original mileage rate proposal has been modified following the feedback received from staff and Unison.

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	In 2023/24, a new triennial actuarial review period commenced for our local government pension scheme contributions. The council's future service contribution rate fell from an estimated 18.3% to an estimated 13.5% for the three financial years from 2023/24 to 2025/26. The majority of this saving was retained in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) pending a review of the pay line and will therefore be utilised to cover the cost of the changes at 5.1.
Legal	Negotiations with the union will be subject to approval at Full Council and take place within agreed parameters as per the Cabinet report 29 November 2023. The outcome of these discussions is relayed as part of this report.
Climate Change	The proposals made do not have a direct impact on the council's carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
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Jane Collier	01253 887506	Jane.collier@wyre.gov.uk	27/03/2024
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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

List of appendices

None

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Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)	Council	18 April 2024

Appointment of the Director of Transformation and Change

1. Purpose of report

1.1 Following a selection process including an assessment day and interviews by the Senior Officer Appointments Committee on 25 March 2025, this report recommends to the Full Council the appointment of the new Director of Transformation and Change.

2. Council priorities

2.1 A well run, forward-thinking council that puts customers first.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Council agrees to the appointment of the new Director of Transformation and Change.

4. Background

4.1 The Senior Leadership Team Restructure Report brought to Full Council on 25 January 2024 provided for the creation of a new post – Director of Transformation and Change.

4.2 On approval of this report by Full Council the post was advertised and promoted using an executive recruitment company.

4.3 A number of strong applications were received, and the Senior Officer Appointment Panel agreed a long list of six candidates to undergo long list interviews carried out by the Chief Executive and HR Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer on the 19 and 20 March.

5. Key issues and proposals

5.1 From the long list interviews three candidates were shortlisted for the assessment day and senior appointment panel interview on 25 March.

5.2 The assessment activities held in the morning of 25 March consisted of:

- Stakeholder panel interview
- Interview with the Chief Executive
- Written assessment

Feedback from these sessions was provided to the Senior Appointments Committee on the candidates performance.

5.3 The Senior Officer Appointments Committee interviewed the three candidates in the afternoon of 25 March and taking into consideration the feedback from the assessment activities selected one of the candidates to be appointed as the Director of Transformation and Change subject to Full Council approval.

5.4 The minutes of the meeting of the Senior Officer Appointments Committee held on 25 March 2024, recommending the appointment of the new Director of Transformation and Change are attached in Appendix 1.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

6.1 The option not to appoint was rejected as the Senior Officer Appointments Committee interviewed strong appointable candidates.

6.2 Appointment of one of the other two candidates was rejected as the person appointed was considered the strongest and most appropriate candidate for the position.

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	The financial implications of this appointment were included in the Senior Leadership Team Restructure report approved at Full Council 25 January 2024.
Legal	The proposals made do not have any direct legal implications.
Climate Change	The proposals made do not have a direct impact on the council's carbon emission and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There

are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	X
equality and diversity	X
health and safety	X

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	X
ICT	X
data protection	X

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a ‘privacy impact assessment (PIA)’ is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Rebecca Huddleston	01253 887500	Rebecca.huddleston@wyre.gov.uk	27 March 2024

List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

List of appendices

Appendix 1: Minutes of the Senior Officer Appointments Committee meeting on 25 March 2024.



Senior Officer Appointments Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Senior Officer Appointments Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 25 March 2024 at the Committee Room 2 - Civic Centre.

Senior Officer Appointments Committee members present:

Councillors Vincent, Berry, Bowen and Fail

Officers present:

Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive

Jane Collier, Human Resources Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

1 Election of Chairman

It was **resolved** that Councillor Michael Vicent be elected as the Chairman of the Senior Officer Appointments Committee.

2 Apologies for absence

None.

3 Declarations of interest

None.

4 Exclusion of the public and press

It was **resolved** that the public and press be excluded from the meeting whilst agenda item 5 (interviews for the post of the Director of Transformation and Change) was considered, on the grounds that their presence would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in category 1 (information relating to individuals) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Variation Order 2006 and, that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

5 Interviews for the post of Director of Transformation and Change

The Committee interviewed three applicants for the post of Director of Transformation and Change.

It was **resolved** that, subject to the approval of the Council on 18 April 2024, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authority (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, a Director of Transformation and Change be appointed (post created following approval of the Senior Leadership Team Restructure Report brought to Full Council on 25 January 2024). Commencement date to be agreed.

The interviews started at 12.45 pm and finished at 4.15 pm.

Date of Publication: 10 April 2025

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Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council, and Clare James, Director of Finance and Governance	Council	18 April 2024

Councillor Development Strategy 2024-2028, Councillor Development Programme 2024/25 and Wyre Councillor Skills Framework

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To present the Councillor Development Strategy 2024-2028, the Councillor Development Programme 2024/25, and the Wyre Councillor Skills Framework, to Council for approval.

2. Council priorities

2.1 A well run, forward-thinking council that puts customers first.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the proposed Councillor Development Strategy 2024-2028 be approved and the relevant Director continue to make appropriate arrangements for the provision of development opportunities for all councillors within the agreed budget.

3.2 That the proposed Councillor Development Programme 2024/25 be approved.

3.3 That the proposed Wyre Councillor Skills Framework be noted and endorsed.

3.4 That the Strengths and Development Questionnaire (SDQ) (pages 34-42 of the Strategy) be noted.

3.5 To recommend that we continue to ensure that development opportunities are relevant and available to all councillors. In order to achieve this, the SDQ is recommended to be made mandatory, and responses reviewed annually. Political group leaders are also asked to allocate senior members from their groups to act as mentors to more new councillors to assist in this process.

3.6 That members note the proposed objectives and action plan for member development (as set out in pages 7 - 12 of the Strategy) and work with the Councillor Development Group and relevant officers in achieving these objectives.

4. Background

4.1 In November 2023, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council signed the North-West Charter for Elected Member Development Declaration, recommitting the council to the principles of the Charter in its bid to be awarded the Level 1 Review award for exemplary training.

4.2 One of the assessment criteria for the Level 1 Review award is having an up-to-date councillor development strategy which is refreshed annually.

4.3 In November 2023, the Full Council approved the new Council Plan 2024-2028.

4.4 It was noted that a refreshed Councillor Development Strategy was needed to match the new Council Plan period, strategic objectives as well as making sure that the council meets the assessment criteria for the Level 1 Review award.

4.5 In September 2023, the annual Strengths and Development Questionnaire (SDQ) was circulated to all members of the council, asking them to review their learning and development needs. Of the 50 members of the council, 29 responded to the survey. The top training priorities for 2024/25 were identified and have been used to create a training programme for the next municipal year.

4.6 In 2016, the Local Government Association and the University of Birmingham published the document titled "The 21st Century Councillor", establishing the new expectations placed on councillors and setting out their roles and responsibilities and how officers can support members to meet these challenges.

4.7 The Wyre Councillor Skills Framework has been updated to reflect changing expectations placed upon councillors and, reflected through the Councillor Development Strategy and Programme, how officers can best support members. It is proposed for this to be reviewed annually, along with the other documents, to ensure consistency.

4.8 On 18 March 2024, the Councillor Development Group endorsed the refreshed Councillor Development Strategy 2024-2028, Councillor Development Programme 2024/25, the Wyre Councillor Skills Framework and Strengths and Development Questionnaire.

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1** The Councillor Development Strategy 2024-2028 is the key strategic document which sets out the long-term plan of how the council will provide learning and development opportunities for councillors. It is proposed for this to be reviewed annually and refreshed every four years, to meet the assessment criteria for the North-West Elected Member Charter and to align training priorities with the council's priorities.
- 5.2** The Councillor Development Programme 2024/25 is the learning and development programme for that municipal year, taking into account the needs of members identified through the questionnaires, and other topics of focus discussed with officers. It is a flexible document that is designed to support both members and the wider council in meeting its learning and development objectives as set out in the strategy.
- 5.3** The Wyre Councillor Skills Framework sets out the roles and responsibilities of all members and all potential roles they may undertake within the council. The framework establishes the expectations of councillors at Wyre, and so works in conjunction with the strategy to influence the learning and development programme to identify further areas of support. It is proposed for this to be reviewed annually alongside the other documents to ensure any proposed training programme is relevant to the roles and responsibilities of members.
- 5.4** The Strengths and Development Questionnaire (SDQ) is part of the assessment criteria for the North-West Elected Member Charter; to help the council achieve its Level 1 Review award, there must be a process for members to review their learning and development needs annually, and for the data to then be reviewed by the Councillor Development Group. Given the relatively low rate of submission (58%) and how this might impact the award of the Level 1 Review, it is recommended that this exercise now be made mandatory to meet engagement requirements and to ensure that learning and development opportunities meet the needs of as many councillors as possible.
- 5.5** It is proposed that an updated Councillor Development Strategy, with clear expectations for councillors through the updated Wyre Councillor Skills Framework, and a training programme for 2024/25, will ensure that members are fully supported in their learning and development.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 6.1** It was considered to not update the Councillor Development Strategy from 2023-2027. However, in order to meet the assessment criteria of the North-West Charter for Elected Member Development, it was necessary to incorporate updates.

- Similarly, it was considered not to refresh the Wyre Councillor Skills Framework.
- 6.2** However, it was necessary in order to ensure proper standards of training and to meet the assessment criteria for the North-West Charter for Elected Member Development.

6.3 It was necessary to create a new training programme for 2024/25, using the data from the SDQs; no other options were considered.

6.4 It was considered to continue to recommend that members submit the SDQ and to not make this mandatory. However, as this is a requirement of the North-West Elected Member Charter and owing to fewer than two thirds returning them, it has now been recommended to make this a mandatory requirement to enable officers to act on the needs of councillors as identified through the questionnaires.

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	<p>A councillor development budget of £11,000 has been allocated for 2024/25. This includes an uplift of £1,500 approved as a growth bid during the Revised Estimate budget setting process to the 2023/24 base budget. It also includes £2,500 reallocated from existing budgets to increase the councillor development budget temporarily.</p> <p>Training and development facilitators will be chosen from a variety of sources as appropriate. This will include in-house training and briefing sessions, cost-sharing with neighbouring authorities as well as utilising external providers. It is intended that all costs will be met from the overall training budget and it is not envisaged that costs will exceed the budget provided. Should essential training be required that involves any costs over and above the budget allocated, these will normally be met from savings identified elsewhere.</p> <p>Any such issues will be fed into the process for the formulation of future budgets.</p>
Legal	<p>The provision of effective training will minimise the risk of illegal or ill-considered decision making. In particular, the Code of Conduct training provided to all councillors is mandatory.</p>
Climate Change	<p>There are no implications arising directly from this report. However, one of the objectives of the Councillor Development Strategy 2024–2028 is to encourage climate-friendly initiatives to match council priorities. In encouraging more climate-friendly training events, this may have an impact on the number of members travelling to training events, as well as encouraging members to be more thoughtful of this when taking decisions.</p>

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	✓
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a ‘privacy impact assessment (PIA)’ is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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Daphne Courtenage	01253 887476	Daphne.courtenage@wyr e.gov.uk	19/03/2024

List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None.		

List of appendices

- Appendix 1 – Councillor Development Strategy 2024-2028**
- Appendix 2 – Councillor Development Programme 2024-25**
- Appendix 3 – Wyre Councillor Skills Framework**
- Appendix 4 – Strengths and Development Questionnaire**

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Together
we make a
difference

COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024 - 2028

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The way in which we work has changed profoundly over the last few years and national government has set some challenging targets for local authorities. At the same time, councils have undertaken a digital transformation that includes paperless meetings, hybrid work environments and remote working. Wyre Council has responded and adapted to these constantly changing circumstances and our councillors continue to make hugely important decisions on how to allocate a budget of many millions of pounds.

Anyone who is eligible to stand for election as a councillor may do so and, if they receive sufficient votes, can become an “elected member”. Councillors do not need any formal qualifications whatsoever and yet the decisions they make can have a significant impact on local people and their lives.

It is essential therefore that we provide our elected members with all the resources they need to develop themselves to their full potential. Doing this will help to ensure that they have all the necessary skills to allocate the council’s budget wisely and provide the best possible services for more than 110,000 Wyre residents, the thousands of businesses based in the borough and all the tourists and investment that we want to attract to Wyre.

21st century councillors require an extensive range of skills and knowledge, which they must keep under constant review to enable them to play an effective role in local government.

Wyre’s Councillor Development Strategy is designed to provide the ways and means in which councillors can augment their knowledge and attain all the professional skills and knowledge they need to carry out their role effectively and to make sure that development opportunities are available to all councillors, whatever their political viewpoint or level of prior experience.

Wyre Council has historically been acknowledged for its excellent member learning and development programme, and is proud to be going for reassessment for the North West Charter for Elected Member Development award.

Our ultimate intent is for Wyre to be a place where everyone can prosper. Every councillor who engages and participates fully with the strategy and associated annual programmes by taking advantage of the opportunities they offer, will demonstrate their commitment to make a positive difference to the community they represent.



Councillor Michael Vincent,
Leader of the Council



Rebecca Huddleston,
Chief Executive

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Wyre Council understands that good governance; openness, accountability and transparency, can only be met through the effectiveness of their decision-makers. The 50 councillors that make up the council. Effective governance can only be achieved through well-trained, knowledgeable and confident councillors who adhere to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- 1.2 Wyre Council therefore puts the learning and development of its councillors at the heart of everything it does, and strives to continuously improve its offer, and ensuring that there is equal opportunity for all.
- 1.3 Most importantly, it is vital that councillors are involved from the beginning in their training and development. This was why the Councillor Development Group was commissioned in 2003, to give members the ability to have their say in how they are trained and what they are trained on. As improvements to learning and development opportunities continue, including the opportunity for councillors to attend training sessions virtually, we must ensure that all learning and development opportunities are equal and accessible to all. This was also the impetus behind the Councillor Portal, which was developed and trialled in 2021/2022 and officially launched in May 2023.
- 1.4 It is also important as we continue to work through the challenges faced by Local Government in recent years, that we embrace these challenges and adapt our offer to councillors whilst still ensuring the best quality training opportunities for our decision-makers. This is why the Councillor Development Strategy must be reviewed and refreshed annually, to respond to any challenges or changes to member development and to reflect the opinions of councillors highlighted in the annual Strengths and Development Questionnaires.
- 1.5 The council has undergone a number of changes since the strategy was last approved at Full Council in March 2023. A new Chief Executive has joined the council, we had all-out elections in May 2023 which saw us take in the biggest cohort of new councillors arrive in many years, and a new Council Plan has been developed and published.
- 1.6 The council is also updating its status for the North West Employers Elected Member Charter and an updated strategy will ensure that we set out the steps to achieving our Level 1 Review status and preparing for a further review in 2027.
- 1.7 The Councillor Development Group fully endorsed this refreshed Councillor Development Strategy for 2024-2028 at their meeting on 18 March 2023.

2. AIMS AND PURPOSE

Council Values and Priorities

- 2.1 The Councillor Development Strategy sets out the long-term plan of how the council will provide learning and development opportunities to councillors, as well as establishing goals it wishes to achieve in the four-year period. Refreshing the strategy annually also allows for flexibility to reflect changing priorities.
- 2.2 These changing priorities are reflected in the new Council Plan, refreshed and approved by Full Council in November 2023. To deliver on its objectives for residents, the Council Plan now focuses on four strategic themes:
- People and Communities
 - Growth and Prosperity
 - Place and Climate
 - Innovative and Customer Focused
- 2.3 Wyre is a place where everyone can prosper. We want everyone in Wyre to:
- have access to jobs and share the benefits of economic growth;
 - live in thriving, safe, more environmentally sustainable and welcoming communities; and
 - be healthier and independent for longer.
- 2.4 As the Council Plan is reviewed and monitored, changes may be made to corporate priorities or areas of improvement identified that will have an impact on training priorities for councillors.

North West Elected Member Charter

- 2.5 The strategy also draws from the principles of the North West Charter for Elected Member Development. These principles are:
- having a clear commitment to councillor development;
 - ensuring the effective promotion of learning and development opportunities;
 - having a councillor led approach to developing learning and development;
 - having a strategy that includes impact measures within a continuous improvement framework.

Aims and Purpose

- 2.6 Wyre's 50 councillors, elected in May 2023, are held accountable for the delivery of the Council's objectives. Therefore councillors must have the necessary skills and knowledge to take the crucial decisions that affect the lives and well-being of all those who live and work in the borough.
- 2.7 The purpose of the Councillor Development Strategy is to have an improved learning and development programme, influenced by the Councillor Development Group and the views of all councillors, to ensure the highest possible standards of training.
- 2.8 The aim of the Councillor Development Strategy is to have a knowledgeable and engaged group of councillors, who are continuously involved in their own development. To have consistent engagement of members in training opportunities, and to have an active forum for discussion and improvement through the Councillor Development Group. This is in order to achieve the Level 1 Review status of the North West Employers Elected Member Charter, and to ensure that this standard is achieved and improved on throughout the years.
- 2.9 The overall responsibility of the planning and delivery of member development is therefore a combination of the work of both officers and members.
- 2.10 The Councillor Development Strategy will set out an action plan to achieving the key strategic objectives of the council and a plan for achieving a Level 1 Review status.

3. ACTION PLAN

Objectives

- 3.1 The action plan for the Councillor Development Strategy sets out the four main objectives that the council wishes to achieve or improve on within the four year period. These objectives align with the principles of the North West Elected Member Charter as well as the strategic priorities of the council.

The four objectives are:

1. Increasing member engagement
2. Embedding good governance
3. Encouraging climate-friendly initiatives to match council priorities
4. Achieving Level 1 Review

Action Plan

- 3.2 The action plan for the Councillor Development Strategy contains 11 actions relating to the four objectives as set out above. These actions have been identified through officer discussions, responses from the Strengths and Development Questionnaires and will contribute to the award of the North West Elected Member Charter Level 1 Review status. Each action includes steps to be taken, how it will be measured, current progress and departments involved in the actions.

This plan will be monitored by the Councillor Development Group and updated annually.

Objective	Action	What we will do	How we will measure it	Current progress	Who will action this
1	Review the best method for communicating learning and development opportunities to all members.	Survey members on the best methods for communication.	Using IT systems as well as attendance at events.		Councillor Development Group/Democratic Services
1	Ensure all members know they can feed back to the Councillor Development Group and the best method to do this.	Discussions with Councillor Development Group about best way to engage members.	Addition of item on Councillor Development agendas. Members of CDG to encourage councillors to submit feedback or comments.		Councillor Development Group
1	Have at least three quarters of members attending pre-council briefing slots or this number attending sessions within a six month period.	Use responses from SDQs to tailor sessions to encourage members to attend. To have the CDG act as ambassadors for training events open to all councillors.	Review attendance figures on a monthly basis.		Councillor Development Group/Democratic Services
2	Complete all mandatory training.	Democratic Services to review 2023/24 training programme to ensure all mandatory sessions have been covered. Officers to discuss with Democratic Services	Review previous committee training programmes. Officers to review committee decisions.		Democratic Services/Planning/Licensing/Audit/Legal/HR/Standards

		any missing required training.			
2	Review committee training programmes to ensure members feel knowledgeable in their committees.	Officers of all committees to prepare committee training programmes along with Democratic Services.	Analyse SDQ responses per committee member to address gaps in knowledge. Develop committee surveys with officers to be circulated before end of municipal year.		Democratic Services/Planning/Licensing/Audit/Legal/HR/Standards
2	Review members' understanding of scrutiny and financial governance.	Members to complete Treasury Management training. Continue pre-council briefings and pre-recorded videos on scrutiny and council finances.	Review SDQ responses in 2024/25. Officers to review discussions/decisions in relation to scrutiny and financial governance.		Democratic Services/Finance
2	Ensure all learning and development opportunities provide value for money.	Officers to continue to review available learning and development opportunities. Members to continue to submit member training application forms for costed events.	Officer responsible for member development budget to continue to review this on a monthly basis, in discussion with other officers. The councillor development budget to continue to be presented to the Councillor Development Group for review and comment.		Councillor Development Group/Democratic Services

3	Have all members complete the Carbon Literacy training.	Discuss facilitating the training with the Councillor Development Group, Cabinet and Group Leaders along with the Climate Change team.	Ensure all councillors complete the Carbon Literacy training.		Democratic Services/Climate Change Officer
3	Review all learning and development opportunities to ensure that options for climate friendly sessions are considered.	Promote more carbon-friendly options for training. Consider alternative options for traditional training events.	Monitor levels of in-person versus hybrid/online training sessions run in-house/pre-recorded briefings.		Democratic Services/Climate Change Officer
4	Evaluate and submit evidence to North West Employers for the Level 1 Review.	Democratic Services to continue working on evaluating and submitting evidence. Continued updates to the Councillor Development Group on progress.	Ideally submitting all evidence by summer 2024. Councillor Development Group to monitor officer progress, to make comments on improvements.		Democratic Services
4	Interviews conducted by North West Employers for the award of the Level 1 Review.	Following approval of submitted evidence to NWE, Democratic Services will arrange with relevant officers and councillors to take part in the interview process.	Ensuring submission of evidence and approval of evidence meets expected deadlines. Councillor Development Group to be updated on progress.		Democratic Services

4. DELIVERY

Delivery

- 4.1 The Councillor Development Strategy establishes a clear framework underpinning the values of the organisation and an action plan setting out how it proposes to fulfil this vision. This vision is not just based on organisational needs, but individual needs of each and every elected member.
- 4.2 This is established through representations made to the Councillor Development Group, but also the annual Strengths and Development Questionnaire. This asks all councillors to submit their views on what learning and development areas they would like more support on, how this would be delivered and what best days/times of the week this should be delivered.
- 4.3 It is important to take into account the support needs of each councillor so that they all have the necessary skills at the required level to conduct their roles effectively.

Equality of Opportunity

- 4.4 This means ensuring and promoting equality of opportunity for all. Training opportunities will be organised, ensuring there are no physical, social, religious, cultural or general medical barriers to members taking advantage of these opportunities.
- 4.5 The learning and development programme will also have an emphasis on contributing to the decrease in the council's carbon emissions. This means trying to find opportunities to host sessions virtually, and being as paperless as possible, putting climate change at the forefront of all our development opportunities.

5. MEASURING SUCCESS

Evaluation

- 5.1 Part of the submitted evidence to the North West Elected Member Charter includes the requirement for evidence of a majority of councillors being involved in their personal development plans. An indicator of a successful strategy would be the approval of the submitted evidence and subsequent award of the Level 1 Review status; but also overall increased engagement from members on their personal learning and development.
- 5.2 Members will be encouraged to reflect on their learning and development, both through the Strengths and Development Questionnaires as well as requirements to present feedback on training events to the Democratic Services team within 14 days of the event.
- 5.3 Responses to the Strengths and Development Questionnaires will be evaluated annually when councillors are asked to re-submit responses. This is the starting point for a councillor's personal development plan; all 50 councillors elected/re-elected in May 2023 were asked to submit a questionnaire response, highlighting further areas of support or development. Of these, 29 were completed and returned and the data used to populate
- 5.4 A successful strategy will show an improvement in these responses, with fewer topics being identified for more support and in particular, committee members feeling confident in their knowledge of their committees. Regular surveys of committee members will be encouraged.
- 5.5 On the 19 June 2023, the Councillor Development Group approved their updated terms of reference, to include the provision of an annual period report of the group to Full Council. The periodic report will discuss the group's work for that municipal year, including reporting on progress on each of the actions/objectives.
- 5.6 The Councillor Development Group review the member training budget and ongoing training programme as a standing item at every meeting; along with the responsible officer, they can evaluate all training to ensure it provides value for money and promote the needs of councillors.

Strengths and Development Questionnaires (SDQs)

- 5.7 The SDQs, as mentioned, are an integral part of a councillor's training programme and personal development plan. They are to be circulated annually to all councillors, following consultation with the Councillor Development Group.
- 5.8 The questionnaire is designed to help officers when organising the next year's training programme. The questionnaire will focus on the best circumstances to hold training sessions/events, and asking members to show what areas in particular they would want prioritised as a matter of further support and development.
- 5.9 The Councillor Development Group will have the opportunity to review the format and circulation of the questionnaire annually before it is circulated to all members. They will also have the opportunity to review the anonymised data and in collaboration with the councillor development officer, produce the annual Councillor Development Programme.
- 5.10 All members are recommended to submit a questionnaire response. The Councillor Development Group are expected to promote the questionnaires and encourage councillors to submit a response.

6. RESOURCES

Officer resources

- 6.1 The council recognises that councillor development is vital to the council's success and has appointed an officer from the Democratic Services Team with this specific responsibility to coordinate councillor development.

Financial resources

- 6.2 The council allocated a member training budget of £11,000 for 2024/25 and this is typical of the level requested (£7,000 - £11,000) each year. This budget is to be used solely for all 50 members' learning and development needs, including external speakers, consultations, and online webinars. The councillor development officer is responsible for the member development budget and it is their responsibility to allocate the funds appropriately and to ensure and show value for money for all learning and development opportunities.
- 6.3 In line with the member training and development policy, all members are required to submit a member training and development application form for any and all learning and development opportunities that are paid for through the member development budget. The council reserves the right to recoup any costs if a member fails to attend without giving sufficient notice to Democratic Services in line with the procedure.

Councillor resources

- 6.4 All councillors have access to the Councillor Portal, a councillor-focused intranet hosted via Sharepoint. The portal includes news items, useful tips and tricks, as well as copies of the Constitution, induction materials and recorded training videos.
- 6.5 Councillors also have access to the Local Government Association Councillor Hub, which has additional resources such as briefing notes, short e-learning courses and workbooks on useful topics.
- 6.6 External learning and development opportunities will also be advertised to all councillors or to relevant committees. The council works with trusted organisations and those recommended by the LGA and North West Employers. These might include:
- Local Government Association (LGA)
 - Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)
 - Planning Advisory Service (PAS)

- North West Employers
- Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA),
- Institute of Licensing (IoL)
- Counter Terrorism Policing North West (CTPNW)
- Lancashire County Council (LCC).

Councillor Development Group

6.7

Following the original signing of the North West Charter for Elected Member Development declaration in 2001, the Councillor Development Group was commissioned in 2003. The group is a cross-party, designated group of councillors that is committed to supporting councillor development and ensures a councillor-led approach in decisions related to member training.

The Councillor Development Group are expected to act as ambassadors of the council's training programme; represent the voices of fellow councillors; work closely with officers to ensure that all learning and development opportunities meet the needs and are accessible to all councillors.

The group will be expected to present feedback from their fellow members, to comment and review the training budget and calendar of training sessions and ensure that the learning and development opportunities hosted and advertised by the council provide value for money.

7. COUNCILLOR SKILLS FRAMEWORK

21st Century Councillor

- 7.1 In 2016, the University of Birmingham in collaboration with North West Employers published “The 21st Century Councillor”; a research project which reported on the changing roles of the modern councillor and advice for councils on how best to support councillors as expectations evolved.
- 7.2 The guide sets out the two main skill sets they identified as being important for councillors to have: foundational skills and relational skills. Within these two skill sets were five types of skills: practical; knowledge-based; connective; digital; and reflective.
- 7.3 These two skill sets cover the basics that all councillors should feel confident in, or receive additional support in. These are:
- Understanding how the council works
 - Committee training
 - Being an effective ward councillor
 - Organisational skills
 - Chairing/participating in a meeting
 - Political skills
 - Communication skills
 - Fostering good working relationships
 - Influencing, negotiating and questioning skills
 - Digital and ICT skills
 - Personal safety and resilience as a ward councillor

Wyre Councillor Skills Framework

- 7.4 Taking the identified skill sets from the 21st Century Councillor, as well as those identified by North West Employers/Local Government Association and learning and development surveys, the attached framework has been developed to set out the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all councillors at Wyre. This is then further developed for members of specific committees, Chairs/Vice-Chairs, Lead Members, the Mayor/Deputy Mayor and the Executive.
- 7.5 The framework can then be used by councillors when completing their Strengths and Development Questionnaires and committee surveys to evaluate their role and where they might need further support.



Appendix

Appendix 1 – Wyre Councillor Skills Framework

Appendix 2 – Councillor Development Programme 2024-25

Appendix 3 – Strengths and Development Questionnaire

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Councillor Development Programme 2024/25

Purpose	Event details	Date/time
<p>Committee specific training</p> <p>For all new committee members/returning committee members.</p> <p>To ensure all mandatory training is completed.</p>		<p>Within first two months following Annual Council.</p>
<p>Planning Policy</p> <p>To address the result of the SDQ.</p>	<p>Open to all councillors.</p>	<p>4 July Pre-Council briefing slot (tbc)</p>
<p>Licensing policy</p> <p>To address the result of the SDQ.</p>	<p>Addressed to Licensing Committee members as part of ensuring all mandatory training is completed/refresher on committee terms of reference.</p>	<p>28 May or 25 June 2024, 5-6pm</p> <p>To be repeated as appropriate.</p>
<p>Planning Process</p> <p>To address the result of the SDQ.</p>	<p>Addressed to Planning Committee members as part of ensuring all mandatory training is completed/refresher on committee terms of reference. Also open to all councillors.</p>	<p>4 April, 6pm</p>
<p>Planning Committee</p>	<p>Open to all councillors but pushed for committee members.</p>	<p>Lunchtime sessions prior to the meeting, 12.30pm-1.30pm</p> <p>To be repeated as appropriate.</p>
<p>Code of Conduct – Hoey and Ainscough</p>	<p>External presentation. Open to all councillors.</p>	<p>30 May 2024</p>
<p>Meetings procedures</p> <p>To address the result of the SDQ.</p>	<p>Open to all councillors.</p> <p>Presentation/workshop as a refresher on Council procedure rules, specific committee rules.</p>	<p>Thursday 20 June (tbc)</p>
<p>Cybersecurity training</p>	<p>As part of the Audit & Standards Committee training programme.</p>	<p>Tuesday 23 July, 5-6pm (tbc)</p>

Council Finance To address the result of the SDQ.	In-house presentation given by Finance team on local government finance.	Pre-council briefing, Thursday 24 October 6-7pm (tbc).
Economic development To address the result of the SDQ.	In-house presentation given by Economic Development team.	Pre-council briefing, Thursday 12 September 6-7pm (tbc).
Climate change To address the result of the SDQ.	Carbon literacy training – open to all councillors.	TBC
Overview and Scrutiny – Scrutiny Essentials	External presentation with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.	Winter 2024
Dealing with conflict To address the result of the SDQ.	Open to all councillors.	
Being an effective ward councillor To address the result of the SDQ.	Open to all councillors.	
Dealing with the press and other media To address the result of the SDQ.	Open to all councillors.	
Institute of Licensing – councillor training	External presentation given by IoL. Addressed to Licensing Committee members.	January 2025.
Computer and ICT skills To address the result of the SDQ.	In-house workshop run by the ICT and Democratic Services teams.	Within six months following Annual Council.
Data Protection and GDPR – Tim Turner	Open to all councillors. Presentation given by Tim Turner.	10 April 2025 (tbc).

Wyre Councillor Skills Framework

What does it mean to be a councillor?

As elected representatives, you have a duty to represent all residents within your ward, as well as everyone within the borough. However, the role and responsibilities of a councillor has changed in recent decades. Councillors are now expected to take a leading role in public resources, representing vulnerable residents, educating residents on changes within local government, convening public meetings and navigating a growing digital world.

It is important that councils support councillors as best they can as expectations placed on them grow and change.

This skills framework will help set out the foundational skills that all councillors are expected to have in order to carry out their duties effectively as elected representatives. It also sets out more specific skill sets for individual committees, Chairs and Vice-Chairs, the Mayor/Deputy Mayor and the Executive.

In setting out the foundational and relational skills for councillors, we hope to support councillors adapt to new challenges and fulfil the seven key roles of a 21st Century councillor. These are:

- steward of place (representing and working across their local area)
- advocate (representing interests of residents)
- buffer (trying to mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis on vulnerable residents)
- sensemaker (educating residents on the workings of local government)
- catalyst (enabling and encouraging residents to do things for themselves)
- entrepreneur (working with residents and partners to encourage new ideas for their areas)
- orchestrator (helping to build working relationships)



Birmingham University <http://21stcenturypublicservant.wordpress.com/> Illustrations by Laura Brodrick

Councillors are not employees of the council and they do not receive a salary for the work they carry out for the people of Wyre. However, the council does make payments to

councillors in accordance with the allowance scheme set out in the Constitution.

Councillors are also held to the principles of public life, devised by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and the Nolan Committee. These seven principles are:

- selflessness
- integrity
- objectivity
- accountability
- honesty leadership

Councillors at Wyre are also held to the standards as set out within the Code of Conduct. One of the most important skills for a councillor is to act as a representative of their residents with fairness, openness and transparency; with respect to officers, fellow councillors and the public.

The Code of Conduct has been designed to protect the democratic role of councillors, to encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

This framework has been designed with the principles set out in the 2016 publication "21st Century Councillor" and the LGA Local Leadership Framework for Councillors.

Foundational skills

Knowledge-based

It is important that councillors have some foundational, knowledge-based skills in local government and in how their particular council operates, and how this works within and affects their local areas.

The skills are:

- how the council works
- the role of officers
- the roles and remits of committees/groups
- council finances
- the local government tier system
- your local area

Practical

Practical skills are those that are useful for day-to-day responsibilities of councillors, both as representatives of their residents and local leaders, as well as council responsibilities. Being a councillor with their day-to-day responsibilities does also come with many pressures that could affect someone's wellbeing; it is therefore important for councillors to also think about their workload and safety.

The skills are:

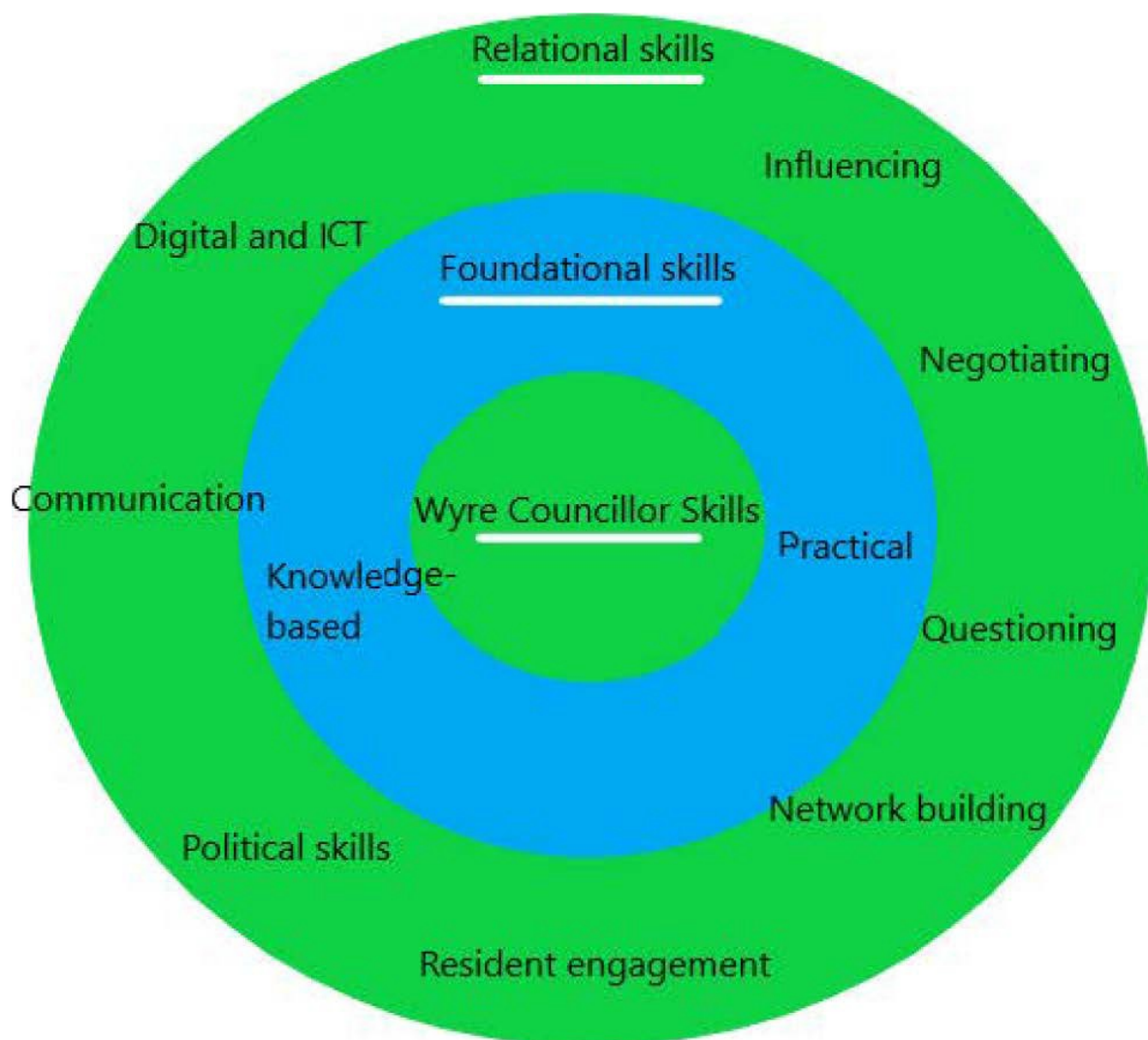
- meeting skills
- communication
- active listening
- organisation and time management
- fostering good working relationships
- personal resilience and safety

Relational skills

Relational skills are those that impact on a councillor's ability to relate and engage with people – particularly their residents. These skills will help foster confidence with councillors on how to bring together resources, engage with their community and developing themselves as local leaders.

These skills are:

- influencing
- negotiating
- questioning
- communication
- resident engagement
- network building
- political skills
- digital and ICT



Roles and responsibilities of all councillors

Overall, councillors are expected to:

- have a good understanding of how the council works, including committees, procedure rules, finance and how Wyre fits into the local government system
- engage with the residents in their local area and ensure their views are represented and represent the borough as a whole
- fostering good working relationships with council officers, local residents, community groups and key stakeholders
- represent the council within the community
- providing community leadership, undertaking casework and managing this to the best of their ability
- communicating with residents, officers and key stakeholders and ensuring you are contactable within a reasonable timeframe
- attending Full Council meetings and committee/group meetings where appropriate and engaging in discussion
- reading agendas and other relevant paperwork to ensure that decisions made are reasonable and well-informed
- acting in accordance with the council's Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles, both in public, in council meetings and elsewhere when acting as a councillor
- understand and promote the council's values as set out in the Council Plan
- scrutinising the performance of council services and other public services to ensure that they are efficient and effective and provide good value for money for residents
- regularly assess your own development as a councillor and take advantage of learning and development opportunities

Committee-specific roles and responsibilities

Each committee and group of the council will have its own terms of reference, which set out its remit and functions. Every councillor on a committee or group should have an understanding of their committee's terms of reference and general functions.

There are some general skills for each committee/group that councillors ought to be able to demonstrate. These are:

- attending meetings (or tendering apologies via the procedure as set out within the Constitution)
- reading that meeting's agenda, and where relevant, asking questions of officers in advance
- adhering to the Code of Conduct in meetings
- an understanding of the Council Procedure Rules where they apply to committee meetings
- participate in debate and ask questions when necessary
- leave politics at the door

However, some committees do have specific procedure rules due to the nature of their content/ functions. These mainly apply to the two regulatory committees - Planning and Licensing - as well as the Audit & Standards Committee, Employment & Appeals Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the O&S Climate Change Sub-Committee and their task groups.

Planning and Licensing Committees

The skills that councillors are expected to have, to fulfill the role and responsibilities of a member of either of these committees are:

- understand your committee's terms of reference and functions
- have an understanding of relevant legislation, policy and procedures
- the roles of officers, members and external parties within meetings
- make informed and balanced decisions, within the terms of reference of the committee, which meet legal, constitutional and policy requirements
- ensure the integrity of decision-making within the committee by attending committee-related training events
- act impartially and representing the committee and the council
- attend required training events

The Chair/Vice-Chair role and responsibilities

The Chair and/or Vice-Chair of the regulatory committees will be expected to:

- provide confident and effective management of meetings to facilitate inclusive and robust participation and clear decision-making
- ensure the transparency as to the decision-making process for both members, officers and the public
- demonstrate integrity and impartiality in decision-making in accordance with legal, constitutional and policy requirements
- have an understanding of their committee's terms of reference, specific procedural rules, the council's code of conduct and relevant legal and policy frameworks
- observe and assess the performance of the committee, identify any training and development needs and arrange for these opportunities to be provided

Audit and Standards Committee

Members of the Audit & Standards Committee will be expected to have an understanding and demonstrate the following skills to fulfill the requirements of the role:

- to review the effectiveness of the council's internal audit procedures
- oversee arrangements for both internal and external audit of the council's accounts and records
- ensure that effective and transparent governance arrangements are in place and that resources are used effectively
- review the council's Risk Management policy and contribute to the committee's role in ensuring that adequate controls are in place to mitigate risks
- approve policies in relation to compliance with the Data Protection Act and Regulations made under the Act
- consider any specific matters which have been the subject of an audit report
- review the council's Financial regulations and Financial Procedure Rules
- monitor the council's Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery, Whistleblowing, Gifts and Hospitality and registering Interests, and Anti-Money Laundering policies
- consider key audit documents and systems
- promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members
- monitor and advise members on the observation of the Members' Code of Conduct and other relevant protocols
- consider reports from the council's Monitoring Officer on allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct
- conduct hearings into complaints against councillors where an initial investigation has found a hearing to be warranted
- demonstrate leadership on governance and ethical standards issues and have exemplary personal behaviour
- an understanding of the terms of reference and functions of the committee
- act objectively on the basis of evidence
- attend required training events

Chair/Vice-Chair role and responsibilities

The Chair and/or Vice-Chair of the Audit & Standards Committee will need to demonstrate:

- confident and effective management of meetings to facilitate inclusive and robust participation and clear decision-making
- an understanding of their committee's terms of reference and functions and ensure transparency for all members, officers and members of the public
- a good working relationship with the Internal Audit team, Corporate Director Resources (S151 Officer), and the Governance and Legal team
- procedures to be followed at a Standards hearing
- to assess the performance of the committee, identify any training and development needs and arrange for these opportunities to be provided
- objectivity and impartiality
- good communication and questioning skills

Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Climate Change Sub-Committee and task groups

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) Committee, its Climate Change Sub-Committee and any subsequent task groups will be expected to demonstrate the following to fulfill the requirements of their role:

- an understanding of the committee's terms of reference, functions and the role of scrutiny
- the O&S procedure rules and concepts of best practice and value for money
- arrangements for call-in and questioning of executive members and guests
- the council's governance and operating arrangements
- ability to interpret information and data from a range of sources, including the council's performance management reporting
- listening, questioning and analytical skills
- an understanding of the Council Plan
- ability to work with all members of the community and council officers and build understanding and ownership of scrutiny
- champion residents' voices and concerns to ensure the council delivers effective services for all residents
- assist in the creation, development, improvement and refinement of council policy
- act objectively and on the basis of evidence
- leave politics at the door
- holding the executive to account by scrutinising decisions taken and proposed by Cabinet, individual Portfolio Holders and officers under delegated powers
- review the Schedule of Executive Decisions on a regular basis
- monitor the performance of internal and external service providers against standards, targets and best value criteria
- investigate and address the causes of poor performances
- build dialogue around priorities, objectives and performance, among the communities and stakeholders
- identify topics for and help deliver the O&S Work Programme

Chair/Vice-Chair role and responsibilities

The Chair and/or Vice-Chair should demonstrate the following skills:

- promote the role of scrutiny both within and outside the council and build good working relationships with members, officers and external partners
- help build and deliver the O&S Work Programme and ensure it takes account of relevant factors such as the council's strategic priorities and risks, and issues of community concern
- evaluate the impact and added value of scrutiny activity and identify areas for improvement
- inspire and enthuse the committee/group and encourage high performance from all members in meetings
- manage the progress of business at meetings, ensuring that meeting objectives are met, and the code of conduct, standing orders, and other constitutional requirements are adhered to
- to maintain a constructive and 'critical friend' relationship with the Executive

Employment and Appeals Committee

Members of the Employment & Appeals Committee will be expected to demonstrate the following to fulfill the requirements of their role:

- an understanding of the committee's terms of reference and functions
- an understanding of corporate policy and any other relevant legal and constitutional requirements
- to act with impartiality and objectivity on the basis of guidance provided by the council's advisors on human resources
- consider and, if necessary, make recommendations to the council on matters that relate to the terms and conditions of employment for council officers, superannuation, pensions and gratuities and retirement pay
- attend training events that will permit members to participate in the consideration of appeals against dismissal, grading and grievances by employees

Appeals panel member, Chair and Vice-Chair

All members of an Appeals panel will need to demonstrate the following, in particular the Chair and Vice-Chair:

- an understanding of the council's Grievances Procedure and appeals panel procedure
- to have attended required training to participate in the consideration of appeals against dismissal, grading and grievances by employees
- analytical and questioning skills
- impartiality and objectivity

Other committees/groups

Members of committees/groups not listed are expected to:

- prepare before meetings by reading the agenda and any other relevant documentation
- have an understanding of their committee/group's terms of reference, functions and remit
- facilitate effective and robust discussion
- good communication skills
- impartiality and objectivity
- adhere to the Code of Conduct and relevant Council Procedure Rules

Chairs/Vice-Chairs of committees/groups not listed are expected to:

- provide confident and effective management of meetings to facilitate inclusive and robust participation and clear decision-making
- promote high standards of good conduct as set out within the council's Code of Conduct
- have an understanding of the meeting's procedure rules

Cabinet/Executive Member/Portfolio Holder

Wyre Council operates under the Executive model of governance; the majority of decisions will be undertaken by Cabinet, either as a whole or as individual members (Portfolio Holders). These members will be expected to:

- be the principal political spokesperson for the council on the activities of the services within the portfolio
- foster good working relationships with council officers, and provide support to these officers in the implementation of programs within the portfolio
- be accountable for decisions taken and performance within the portfolio
- have an overview of the performance management, efficiency and effectiveness on services and activities covered by the portfolio
- work with council officers to formulate and deliver council policy, both strategic and statutory
- carry out consultations with stakeholders as required
- submit a progress report to each ordinary meeting of the Full Council and respond, in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, to questions and comments
- report as appropriate to the Leader, Cabinet, appropriate Overview and Scrutiny committees, regulatory bodies, and the media
- provide information to and attend meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Climate Change Sub-Committee and their task groups, as requested
- to support fellow Cabinet members
- to give leadership to local partners in the pursuit of common aims and priorities
- to represent the council at a local level
- have an understanding of law, national policy framework, and current issues relating to the services included within the portfolio
- understand the council's key strategic documents, policies, priorities, operations and activities
- good communication and inter-personal skills
- analytical and critical thinking skills
- to act as role models for all members of the council, in particular adhering to and promoting the council's Code of Conduct

Lead Members (supporting the Cabinet)

The Leader can appoint Lead Members who have special responsibilities that involve more than one portfolio. These members will be expected to:

- maintain knowledge and awareness of their area of focus and current activities and developments in relation to this focus
- liaise with Cabinet and the responsible officer
- communicate and represent the views of non-Executive councillors to the Executive on all matters relating to their role
- assist Cabinet in promoting the efficient and effective delivery of the relevant services within

the approved budgets

- provide any other assistance, advice and support Cabinet may from time to time require
- respond to and assist relevant scrutiny committees and task groups as required
- submit progress reports to ordinary meetings of the Full Council in rotation with other Lead Members and respond to questions and comments
- if requested, lead for the council politically and publicly on your area of focus in external dealings and relationships, including with the media

Leader of the Council (and Deputy Leader)

The Leader of the Council (and Deputy Leader) will be expected to demonstrate:

- be a political figurehead for the Council and be its principal political spokesperson on a regional, county and local level
- to act as the focus for the strategic leadership of the council and help build a consensus around council policies
- assign Cabinet members to Portfolio roles, designate the Deputy Leader and allocate Lead Member roles
- act as the council's representative with local partnerships, organisations and external bodies
- ensure the effective running of Cabinet
- ensure the work of Cabinet meets national policy objectives
- advise and mentor other Cabinet members in their work
- chair meetings of the Cabinet (and the Deputy Leader in the absence of the Leader) in line with the Constitution
- work closely with other Cabinet members to ensure the development of effective council policies, the budgetary framework for the Council, and the delivery of high quality and value for money services to local people
- accept collective responsibility and support decisions made by the Cabinet once they have been made
- liaise with the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors, and other appropriate officers on a regular basis
- chair meetings of Management Board
- negotiate and broker solutions in cases of differing priorities and disagreement
- an understanding of community strengths, areas of improvement and key issues
- a good strategic awareness of issues facing the council
- good inter-personal, communication and leadership skills
- an understanding of the Council Plan, the Constitution and other relevant policies
- the ability to constructively challenge decisions and suggest alternatives

The Deputy Leader may be required to fulfil the duties of the Leader in their absence, and assist them in specific duties as required.

Mayor (and Deputy Mayor)

The Mayor of the Council is a civic role. Councillors may express an interest to be Mayor, either themselves or on behalf of a fellow councillor, and a panel formed of the Leader, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Executive will review nominations and make a decision. The Mayor nominates the councillor they would like to serve as Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor will be expected to:

- act as the ceremonial head of the council, to be non-political and uphold the democratic values of the council
- represent the council at civic and ceremonial functions
- attend local community events and engagements in response to invitations, at the decision of the Mayor
- represent the authority to a high standard at local, county, regional and national events
- preside over meetings of the council, so that its business can be carried out efficiently, effectively and fairly
- have a good understanding of the Constitution
- ensure the council conducts its meetings in line with the Council Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution
- ensure the Constitution is adhered to, and if necessary, seek the advice of the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officers and/or the Chief Financial Officer and to rule on the interpretation of the Constitution
- good public speaking, communication, chairing and inter-personal skills
- have respect for, and desire to work with, different groups and individuals
- have an understanding of the Members' Code of Conduct and the Member/Officer Protocol
- an understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Mayor

The Mayor also may wish to help organise and attend fundraising events in support of nominated charities or local organisations. The decision to attend events and to fundraise is at the discretion of each individual Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor may be expected to fulfil the duties of the Mayor in their absence, and to assist the Mayor in specific duties as required.



Your Strengths and Development Questionnaire (SDQ)

Instructions

What is the point of the SDQ?

Your SDQ will help you to set out what it is that you would like to achieve over the coming months and years and whether you need any additional skills and knowledge to achieve those objectives. It will help you to plan your personal development in line with your responsibilities as a councillor, identify your existing strengths and may reveal areas that you might like to develop and improve.

Please fill in the SDQ carefully and identify any skills and knowledge that you need or would like to improve or develop further. You can talk to a senior councillor or a member of Democratic Services about it if you wish to.

We will use the information from all the completed questionnaires to establish the priority needs identified by the largest proportion of councillors so that we can provide appropriate development activities.

We will also use your completed SDQ to try to satisfy where possible, any individual development needs that you have identified within the limited budget available.

Only you and the officers responsible for looking after your development needs as a councillor will see your SDQ. If you want your political group leader to have a copy to help them to match skills to roles within the council, you will need to tell Democratic Services in writing.

What is the Wyre Councillor Skills Framework and why is it important?

While the main role of a councillor is to represent your local residents, you also have many other responsibilities and roles to play. The Wyre Councillor Skills Framework sets out the different skills and knowledge you need for each council committee and official role within the council.

If you look at the parts of the framework that apply to your current committee(s) and council roles while you fill in your questionnaires, it will highlight the knowledge and skills you need to fulfil those roles effectively and the areas that you might want to develop.

Reviews and evaluation

You should review your SDQ every 12 months or so to make sure that you are getting the opportunities to develop yourself that you identified when you filled it in. If you belong to a political group, they may instigate your review or Democratic Services may remind you when it is time for you to review your SDQ.

Equality of opportunity

All councillors are encouraged to complete a SDQ as Wyre Council is committed to equality of opportunity and access to training and development for all our councillors.

This means that you will receive equal treatment whatever your age, gender, sexuality, marital status, disability, race, religion, ethnic background or political affiliation, etc.



Strengths and Development Questionnaire

This is an easy questionnaire for the self-assessment of your personal development needs. It will also help us to identify common learning and development needs. Only the council officers responsible for your development will see this.

Name
Ward

How long have you been a Wyre councillor?

less than
a year

1-4 years

more than
4 years

What is your current work time commitment (if any)? You may tick more than one option.

full time

part-time
set hours

part time
variable

self-
employed

retired/
not working

carer/
other

Your personal interests and aspirations

Excluding your role as a councillor, please describe in not more than 12 words your main vocation, activities or interests in life.

What are your personal aspirations for the future as a councillor (e.g. committee chairman, portfolio holder, Leader of the Council, etc.)?

Transferable skills and knowledge

Other than anything provided by or gained within the council, please list and describe below

- any training and development you have had that would be transferable to your councillor role,
- any other experience, achievements and skills that are useful in your role as a councillor, including employment or voluntary experience and skills
- any qualifications you have that are relevant to your councillor role.

Best times to attend courses and events

What time of day is best for you to undertake any learning and development activities (you can tick more than one box)?

between 9-11am	<input type="checkbox"/>	between 5-8pm	<input type="checkbox"/>
between 2-4pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	no preference	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us below, any times when you are **not** usually available because of your work or your other life commitments.

Best day of the week to attend courses and events

What day(s) of the week are best for you to undertake any learning and development activities (you can tick more than one box)?

Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Webinars and remote/e-learning courses

Many courses are available online. If they were available at a convenient time, would you be interested in taking them?

Yes No Possibly

Hybrid/virtual attendance

If you cannot attend an internal training course/event in person, but still wish to attend, would you like the option of attending virtually?

Yes No Possibly

Training videos

We host many recorded videos of training courses/events on the Councillor Portal.

Have you watched any of our previous recorded sessions?

Yes No

If no, why?

Would you like officers to continue to upload recorded training courses/events on the portal where appropriate?

Yes No Possibly

Strengths and development areas

Please tick only those areas where you would like some support or development.

If you have any particular expertise or skills and knowledge that you would be willing and able to share with other councillors, please state that below and if appropriate, we will have a follow up conversation to discuss how it could benefit other councillors.

foundation skills	I would like support or development	If you could contribute to helping other councillors acquire skills and knowledge, please give details here
being an effective ward councillor		
handling casework and helping residents		
time management		
computer and ICT skills		
Council Plan		
understanding how the council works		
overview and scrutiny		
community engagement / knowing your community		
council finance (budget, treasury management, etc.)		
meetings procedures and the Council's Constitution		
code of conduct, standards and ethics		
equality and diversity		
planning process		
climate change		
personal safety		
safeguarding		

policy and local government knowledge	I would like support or development	If you could contribute to helping other councillors acquire skills and knowledge, please give details here
planning policy		
health and well-being		
economic development		
licensing policy		
practical skills		
chairing skills and participating in meetings		
speed reading		
dealing with the press and other media		
public speaking and presentation skills		
connective skills		
social media		
influencing		
negotiating		
coaching and mentoring		
partnership working		
reflective skills		
dealing with conflict		
emotional intelligence		
identifying and managing stress		

Please specify other subjects that would help you in your role as a councillor here:

Any other comments on training and development:

Please return to Democratic Services when complete.

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Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Colette Birch, Vice-Chair of the Councillor Development Group	Council	18 April 2024

Councillor Development Group – Periodic Report 2023/24

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To report on the work of the Councillor Development Group for 2023/24 to the Full Council.

2. Council priorities

2.1 A well run, forward-thinking council that puts customers first.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Council note the report and the work of the Councillor Development Group.

4. Background

4.1 The Councillor Development Group was commissioned in 2003 to act as a cross-party, designated group of councillors focussed on supporting councillor development.

4.2 At the meeting of the Councillor Development Group in June 2023, it was agreed to update the terms of reference to include the provision of a periodic report to Full Council.

5. Key issues and proposals

5.1 The Councillor Development Group have met three times in 2023/24 and will have their final meeting on 18 March 2024.

5.2 The group have reviewed the induction process and overall training programme for the year, including monitoring the member development budget and attendance levels.

- 5.3** The group approved their updated terms of reference and the new member training application forms and policy. To date, 17 forms have been submitted for costed training events.
- 5.4** In June 2023, it was agreed for the council to re-apply for the North-West Elected Members Charter Award, and work has been ongoing with the Democratic Services team to submit evidence for a Level 1 Review.
- 5.5** The North-West Charter for Elected Member Development Declaration has been signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, re-stating our commitment to the principles of the Charter. The Councillor Development Group has also agreed a supporting statement, stating members' desire for a reassessment on our learning and development strategy and programme. The council is hopeful to be approved for the award and receive this at the end of the calendar year.
- 5.6** The annual Strengths and Development Questionnaire (SDQ) was circulated to all members in September 2023. Overall, 29 responses were submitted and the group analysed the data. This was then used to review current training priorities and offers, which have been fed into the Councillor Development Programme 2024/25. The Vice-Chair reiterated the point that where possible, the council ought to make use of its in-house expertise, with greater relevance to members who also find it enjoyable and interesting to work with our in-house teams.
- 5.7** The group has also reviewed and agreed the refreshed Councillor Development Strategy 2024-2028, Councillor Development Programme 2024-2025 and Wyre Councillor Skills Framework. This is now to be formally approved by Full Council.
- 5.8** The below table shows the overall attendance at the three meetings of the Councillor Development Group held at the time of report writing:

Name	Attendance (max 4)
Councillor Amos	3
Councillor Birch (VCh)	4
Councillor Catterall (substitute)	3
Councillor Ellison	3
Councillor Jackson	3
Councillor Kay (Ch)	1
Councillor Moliner	4
Councillor Rimmer (membership agreed 30 November 2023 – max 2)	1
Councillor Sorensen (membership ceased 30 November 2023 – max 2)	1
Councillor C Stephenson	2
Councillor Swatton	2
Councillor Swift	4

Councillor C Walker	4
Councillor le Marinel (appointed Cabinet member)	2

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

6.1 Not applicable for this report.

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	None arising from this report.
Legal	None arising from this report.
Climate Change	None arising from this report.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Daphne Courtenage	01253 887476	Daphne.courtenage@wyr.gov.uk	22/03/2024

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Report of:	Meeting	Date
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Peter Cartridge	Council	18 April 2024

Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Annual Report 2023/24

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To inform Council of the work the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has undertaken since the last annual report was submitted on 20 April 2023.

2. Council priorities

2.1 A well run, forward thinking council that puts customers first.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That the report be noted.

4. Background

4.1 The Annual Report is designed to inform and engage with members and residents on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for that municipal year.

4.2 Since the last annual report, the committee has met on eight occasions.

5. Key issues and proposals

5.1 The report highlights the key projects and activities of the committee. It does not provide exhaustive detail of all the meetings, discussions or recommendations of the committee in this year. Reports, agendas and minutes of each meeting can instead be viewed [here](#).

5.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report is attached at Appendix 1.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

6.1 Not applicable to this report.

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	None arising from this report.
Legal	None arising from this report.
Climate Change	None arising from this report.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Daphne Courtenage	01253 887476	Democratic.services@wyre.gov.uk	22/03/2024

List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None.		

List of appendices

Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report

This document can be made available in other formats. For more information please contact democratic.services@wyre.gov.uk or telephone (01253) 887476.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman 2023/24, Councillor Peter Cartridge

Welcome to the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24; it provides a reflection of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work and achievements over the past municipal year.

The overview and scrutiny process is an essential part of any council's democratic structure and governance framework. At Wyre Borough Council, theme-based scrutiny is weaved through the committee's 'Programme of work'. Over the past year, this process has played a key role in scrutinising the delivery and performance of council services and holding decision-makers to account through positive pressure and constructive challenge.

Following the 2023 Wyre Borough Elections, a new committee was formed which consisted of a mixture of experienced and new members. Notably, a Climate Change Sub-Committee was also formed to reflect the importance of this defining issue of our time. In February, a new draft programme of work was set based on this year's Council Plan (subject to this Council's approval in April). Accordingly, the committee and I look forward to using this as a framework to fulfil our role as a 'critical friend', ensuring only the best outcomes for Wyre businesses and residents.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor and members who are no longer on the committee for their commitment and contributions - they have left a positive impact on our borough. I would also like to express my continued gratitude for the support of our current members, the dedicated officers that continue to interact with the committee and the expert attendees that provide an insight to the many issues considered.

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SCRUTINY AT WYRE

The scrutiny function acts on behalf of the community to improve services and decision-making inside and outside the council. This is achieved through in-depth task group reviews, evidence sessions on a topic or questions to service providers, Cabinet members or partners.

Structure of Scrutiny:



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Committee membership 2023/24:

- 12 members of the council
- 7 Conservative councillors, 5 Labour councillors
- On 12 June 2023, Councillor Peter Cartridge was elected as Chair and Councillor Callum Baxter was elected as Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Functions:

The committee will discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 or Regulations under Section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000.

In addition, the committee will, as per the Constitution:

- assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of its budget and policies, with particular responsibility for Treasury Management;
- challenge the boundaries of existing policies and think creatively about possible new policies or solutions to problems;
- conduct research, community and other consultation and to consider possible options;

- make a positive contribution to the improvement of services;
- liaise with external organisations operating in the area, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;
- review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Cabinet or individual portfolio holders and by Council officers where decisions have been delegated, both in relation to individual decisions and over time;
- review and scrutinise the performance of the Cabinet in relation to the Council's policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or the Council arising from the scrutiny process.
- undertake the Council's statutory requirements to scrutinise the Crime and Disorder partnership.
- consider any Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) submitted to it by the Service Director Performance and Innovation. If appropriate, the Committee will make recommendations to the Cabinet, in accordance with the procedures set out in the Council's CCfA Scheme (Part 5.10).

Overview and Scrutiny Climate Change Sub-Committee

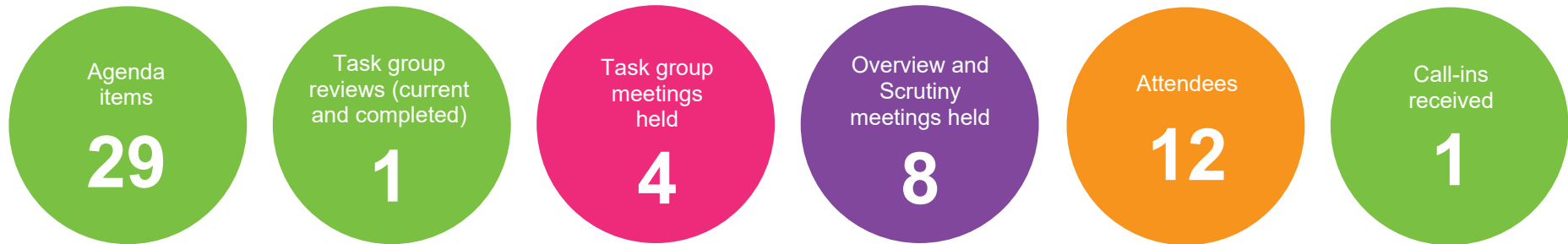
On 12 June 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to discharge its function in scrutinising decisions made in relation to climate change by establishing the Climate Change Sub-Committee and its terms of reference were established on 17 July 2023. The sub-committee have met three times to date, reviewing the council's draft Climate Change Strategy and establishing a task group on Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Wyre. The sub-committee will be presenting a periodic report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide updates on its work during the 2023/24 municipal year.

Member training:

The council experienced its highest number of new members following the elections in May 2023. The committee itself saw a number of new members, and so training took priority for this municipal year. Equally, making use of the external resources available to the council and signposting these to committee members.

Committee members have been invited/booked onto the following sessions in 2023/24:

- The role of Overview and Scrutiny (in-house) x2
- Scoping and managing scrutiny reviews (Centre for Governance and Scrutiny)
- Effective Scrutiny Leadership (Local Government Association)
- Scrutiny task groups (in-house)
- Skills in reviewing and understanding performance information (North West Employers)
- Financial Scrutiny (NWE – including a guest presentation from Wyre's S.151 Officer)
- Strategic Scrutiny Network meetings
- Questioning skills for Scrutiny (Local Government Information Unit)



Committee meetings:

- Meetings of the full committee are open to the public to attend.
- Each meeting typically lasts 1 to 2 hours.
- The committee meets at least eight times a year, usually on Monday evenings.
- Meetings were held either in the Council Chamber or Committee Room 2.

Attendance:

- Councillor Peter Cartridge – 8/8
- Councillor Callum Baxter - 7/8
- Councillor Sir Robert Atkins - 7/8
- Councillor Ian Amos – 8/8
- Councillor Lorraine Beavers - 3/8
- Councillor Maureen Blair – 4/8 (membership began 6 July 2023)
- Councillor Daniel Bolton – 7/8
- Councillor Alice Collinson – 8/8
- Councillor Rob Fail - 8/8
- Councillor David Higgs – 7/8
- Councillor Wayne Martin – 6/8
- Councillor Andrew Walker – 7/8

- Councillor Ashley Sorensen – 1 (membership ceased 6 July 2023 – max 1)

Attendees:

- Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive
- Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities (x2)
- Clare James, Corporate Director Resources
- Mark Broadhurst, Head of Housing and Community Services (x2)
- Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council
- Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder
- Councillor Simon Bridge, Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder
- Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder
- Councillor Julie Robinson, Co-Opted Member, LCC Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Agenda items:

- O&S Work Programme 2023/24 – update and planning x 7
- Election of Chair 2023/24
- Election of Vice-Chair 2023/24
- Business Plan 2022/23, Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 4: January – March)
- Climate Change Sub-Committee report
- Wyre Moving More Strategy
- Terms of reference and membership of Climate Change Sub-Committee
- The Promotion of Self-Care and Social Prescribing in Wyre Task Group – final report
- Review of the implementations of the District Enforcement Pilot Task Group – one year on
- Housing briefing note
- Business Plan 2023/24, Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 1: April – June)
- Business Plan review
- Fees and Charges – draft
- North West Employers Finance Scrutiny Session
- Business Plan 2023/24, Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 2: July – September)
- Annual update regarding the work of the Lancashire County Council Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
- Annual update from the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board

- Wyre Community Safety Partnership – annual scrutiny review
- Review of the Youth Anti-Social behaviour in Wyre Task Group – one year on
- Business Plan 2023/24, Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 3: October – December)
- Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group – final report
- Review of written responses submitted by the Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB
- Call in of the decision made by Cabinet, titled “Update on the future operation of the Council’s theatres – Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre”

Task Group reviews current and completed:

- Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group (completed)

The Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group met on four occasions, and agreed four recommendations, which were:

1. That Cabinet renew the agreement between the Council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West for four years.
2. That Cabinet considers increasing the grant contribution payment to Citizens Advice Lancashire West from £30,000 as per previous service agreement renewals.
3. That within an updated service level agreement, the use of the units at Fleetwood Market and the in-kind contribution be added to formalise their use.
4. That the Council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West consider re-starting the trial of the digital kiosks, particularly over Wyre, and for the £8,000 set aside for this in 2021 to be released.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented with the task group’s final report, and recommended this be submitted to Cabinet for their consideration at their meeting on the 17 April 2024.

The committee reviewed the progress of the implementation of recommendations, which had been accepted by Cabinet, of the following reviews:

- District Enforcement Pilot Task Group

At the meeting of the committee on the 4 September 2023, members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee invited the Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder, Councillor Simon Bridge, and the Head of Public Realm and Environmental Sustainability, Kathy Winstanley, to provide an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the task group a year on. The Portfolio Holder and officer

updated members on the new enforcement arrangements and informed the committee of the innovative solutions for the new enforcement contract which had been fed into by the recommendations of the task group.

- Youth Anti-Social Behaviour in Wyre Task Group

At the meeting of the committee on the 26 February 2024, members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee invited the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder, Councillor Roger Berry, and the Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety, Neil Greenwood, to provide an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the task group a year on. They updated members on the reported cases of youth ASB, and the success of the Wyre Beat event with local secondary schools.

KEY ACHEVIEMENTS 2023/24

The committee's work has focused on the delivery of the annual Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. The committee's Work Programme has remained sufficiently flexible to accommodate other issues as and when they have arisen.

The following include some of scrutiny's key achievements over the last municipal year:

The Promotion of Self-Care and Social Prescribing in Wyre Task Group – Cabinet recommendations

In October 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted the final report of The Promotion of Self-Care and Social Prescribing in Wyre Task Group. The task group recommended:

1. That the council continues to promote its ongoing work with its primary care networks, local GP practices and other link/community organisations; that the council supports these groups by continuing to advertise its services via different methods.
2. That the council should ensure its health and wellbeing services and offers are well promoted on its website and social media. The council's services and offers should also be specifically promoted to local NHS social prescribing teams. If and when an opportunity to refresh a local directory of services presents itself, it is recommended that the council supports this work.
3. That the work of the council in relation to social prescribing be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and be made a strategic priority.

Cabinet agreed to the three recommendations as set out by the task group.

Refresh of the Council Plan

The committee were asked to formally review and feed into the draft version of the new Council Plan, to help establish the areas of commitment and key priorities for the council going forward for 2024-2028. Members reviewed the priorities and commitments to be included in the new plan, and were given an update to how performance measures would be reported to the committee, with performance measures selected to monitor progress against the council's priorities and commitments. This would strengthen this monitoring process and better track the progress towards medium-term and current commitments. The overall process would be more transparent, consistent and detailed.

One of the points raised by the committee was to question the council's longer term goals and commitments and how these would fit into the Council Plan. In response the council plan document was updated to include three longer terms commitments to work with partners to deliver on the return of rail or delivery of light rail to Thornton and Fleetwood; seek public and private investment into the borough to deliver economic development; and to work with partners to ensure Wyre is healthier, safer and more environmentally sustainable.

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY COMMITMENTS

- **Councillor Robinson – Lancashire County Council Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee (Co-opt member)**

The Lancashire County Council Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee scrutinises matters relating to health and adult social care delivered by the authority, the National Health Service and other relevant partners. The Committee shall include twelve non-voting Co-opted district council Members. Councillor Robinson attends an annual meeting of Wyre's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and presents a report about the business undertaken by the committee over the past twelve months.

- **Councillors Berry and Le Marinel – The Police and Crime Panel (PCP)**

The Police and Crime Panel (PCP) have 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.

CURRENT AND FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/24 is reviewed at every meeting of the committee. All members are invited to make suggestions about potential review topics for inclusion in the Programme. Scrutiny is member-led and without suggestions from councillors about task group topics the Programme will not achieve its purpose.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee held their annual work programme workshop on Thursday 22 February 2024. All council members were invited to submit suggestions for review topics, and members were also invited to attend to take part in the workshop discussions for the first time, along with the committee and members of the Corporate Management Team. The discussions centred around key priorities for the council and its residents, and what appropriate or feasible actions the committee could undertake to help address these. The three priorities identified for 2024/25 are:

1. Communications
2. Fly-tipping
3. Economic Development and Visitor Economy strategy

There were also a number of areas identified by members which require updates to be presented to the committee. These included:

- Council tax on mobile homes/holiday vs residential sites and enforcement
- Preparations for updates to waste and recycling measures in 2026/Recycling rates update
- HMO licensing rates
- Updates on empty homes within the borough
- Energy efficiency standards in housing
- Fleetwood Market

The agreed topics and pre-arranged agenda items will be reviewed thematically, with the acknowledgement that the work programme is a flexible, working document.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomes suggestions from councillors and the public regarding issues that could be investigated. The Committee aims to consult with the public, councillors and officers each year and their suggestions are considered for the Annual Work Programme.

There are a number of ways you can get involved in the work of scrutiny at the council:

- Suggesting an issue or topic for scrutiny to look at by writing, emailing or phoning the Democratic Services team.
- Attending a meeting open to the public. Please note that reports may be considered in private if they contain confidential information.
- Consultation and participation – you could be asked for your views on an issue or be invited to provide specialist knowledge you might have by being an expert witness in a scrutiny review.
- Contacting your local councillor on how to get involved.

You can also view Overview and Scrutiny papers on Wyre's public website, which include meeting dates, agendas, minutes, reports and committee membership via <https://wyre.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=143> or contacting Democratic Services on democratic.services@wyre.gov.uk.





Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor John Ibison, Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee	Council	18 April 2024

Audit and Standards Committee: Periodic Report

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To update the Council on the activities being dealt with by the Audit and Standard Committee during the municipal year 2023/24.

2. Council priorities

2.1 A well run, forward-thinking council that puts customers first.

Recommendation

3.

3.1 That Council note the report and the work of the Audit and Standards Committee.

Background

4.

4.1 Annually the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee provides an update report to Council on the work of the Audit and Standards Committee. The update includes attendance statistics and also any training that the committee have attended which contributes to the overall effectiveness of the committee.

4.2 As its meeting on 18 May 2023 the Council approved the recommendation to amalgamate both the Audit and the Standards Committees. Many local authorities merge these two committees in the interests of good governance and by seeking to make better use of council resources, particularly officer and member time. The first Audit and Standards Meeting was held on 20 June 2023.

4.3 2023/24 saw the introduction of a reconfigured committee, with the traditional '14 elected members' configuration replaced with 12 elected members and two seats for co-opted independent members. The first of these co-opted members was filled by Paul Taylor in September 2023 and the second is currently being advertised. More detail can be found in section 8 of this report.

5. Audit Committee Meetings

5.1 Since the last periodic report, which was discussed at the Council meeting on 20 April 2023, the Audit and Standards Committee has met a further five times. A link

to the website for further details on the reports and minutes is included here:

<https://wyre.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeed=149>

5.2 In summary, the following reports have been considered by the committee:

At the 20 June 2023 meeting:

- Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit
- Internal Audit Annual Report 2022-23
- Draft Annual Governance Statement 2022-23
- Statement of Accounts (pre-audit training)
- Audit Progress 2020/21 and 2021/22 (including 2022/23 Audit Plan update)

At the 25 July 2023 meeting:

- Member Training - Data Protection Act / GDPR and the Role of External Audit
- Update on the Council's Risk Management Policy

At the 26 September 2023 meeting:

- Update report on the Statement of Accounts 2020/21 (Post Audit)
- Statement of Accounts 2022/23 (pre-audit)
- Annual Audit Fee Letter
- Periodic private discussion with External Audit

At the 14 November 2023 meeting:

- National Fraud Initiative; Data Matching Exercise 2022/23
- Members' Code of Conduct Complaints – Summary
- Compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Internal Audit and Risk Management – Progress Report
- Annual Review of Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules
- Annual Review of the Council's Counter Fraud Policies
- Annual Review of the Council's Information Governance Policies and Procedures

At the 27 February 2024 meeting:

- Review of Audit Committee Effectiveness
- Annual Review of Audit and Standards Committee's Terms of Reference
- Internal Audit Strategy and Audit Plan Priorities 2024/25
- Annual Review of the Internal Audit Charter
- Unaudited Local Authority Accounts - letter from the Minister for Local Government to the Chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Statement of Accounts update
- Periodic Private Discussion with the Chief Internal Auditor

The next meeting is scheduled for 11 June 2024.

6. Attendance

6.1 The table below shows the overall percentage of attendance at the five Audit and Standard Committee meetings during 2023/24 referred to in paragraph 5.1.

NAME	Total Expected Attendance	Apologies, including absences	Present	%
M Belshaw	5	3	2	40
D Bolton	5	2	3	60
R Duffy	5	1	4	80
D Higgs	5	0	5	100
J Ibison	5	0	5	100
H Jackson	5	0	5	100
A Leigh	5	1	4	80
K Minto	5	2	3	60
R Rendell	5	1	4	80
C Rushforth	1	0	1	100
A Sorensen	4	1	3	75
P Taylor	3	0	3	100
A Walker	5	0	5	100
V Wells	5	1	4	80

7. Training and Development

7.1 The table below shows the training and development undertaken by the Audit and Standards Committee meeting since their appointment to the committee on the 18 May 2023. The committee were also provided with recorded training on the Statement of Accounts prior to the June meeting.

NAME	Introduction to the committee 20 July 2023	Data Protection Act/ GDPR 25 July 2023	Role of the External Auditor 25 July 2023	Budget briefing 27 February 2023	Audit effective leadership (LGA)
M Belshaw				✓	
D Bolton	✓			✓	
R Duffy	✓	✓	✓	✓	
D Higgs	✓	✓	✓		
J Ibison	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
H Jackson	✓	✓	✓		
A Leigh	✓	✓	✓	✓	
K Minto		✓	✓	✓	
R Rendell	✓			✓	
C Rushforth	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	
A Sorensen		✓	✓		
P Taylor	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	
A Walker	✓	✓	✓	✓	
V Wells	✓	✓	✓		

7.2 The slides and an introduction pack were circulated for any non-attendees of the ‘introduction to committee’s’ training session and any committee members appointed since this training session were invited to attend a 1-2-1 session with either the Chief Internal Auditor or the Head of Governance and Business Support.

Co-opted Independent Member

8.

8.1 In accordance with best practice guidance, Audit Committees of local authorities should include co-opted independent members. Whilst at present there is no legislative direction to include co-opted independent members, CIPFA recommends that each authority’s audit committee should include at least two co-opted independent members to provide appropriate technical expertise.

8.2 At its meeting on 18 May 2023, the Council agreed to the appointment of two external independent members onto the Audit and Standards Committee. Following which, on 14 September 2023, the Council agreed to the appointment of its first external co-opted independent member; Mr Paul Taylor. Paul was appointed owing to this extensive local government and senior leadership experience and his previous background in internal audit, particularly in his role as chief internal auditor at Blackpool Council.

8.3 The advertisement to recruit to the second co-opted independent member will remain ‘live’ until both places are filled.

9. Alternative options considered and rejected

9.1 No alternatives considered.

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	No financial implications arising from this report.
Legal	No legal implications arising from this report.
Climate Change	No climate change implications arising from this report.

Other risks / implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
climate change	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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List of background papers:

name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

List of appendices

None

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