



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 2 September 2024 at the Committee Room 2 - Civic Centre.

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

Councillors Cartridge, Amos, Sir R Atkins, Bolton, Fail and A Walker

### **Absent- apologies received:**

Councillors Baxter, Belshaw, Martin and Robinson

### **Absent- apologies not received**

Councillors Blair

### **Officers present:**

Jack Tickle, Democratic Services Officer

Emma Cross, Assistant Democratic Services Officer

Marianne Unwin, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager (Temporary)

Jane Warne, Communications and Visitor Economy Manager

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

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### **14            Declarations of interest**

None.

### **15            Confirmation of minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 15 July 2024 were **confirmed** as a correct record.

### **16            Communications - Service Monitoring**

Jane Warne, Communications and Visitor Economy Manager, provided members with a verbal update on Communications – Service Monitoring and a summary document for members to read.

She provided members with updates on several communications and visitor economy matters between April 2024 and August 2024, as well as highlighting the important priorities for the remainder of 2024.

It was highlighted that a press release had been created on the potential Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) airborne chemical contamination within the Hillhouse Industrial Estate. Sampling of land in the vicinity of the site was expected to take place in September 2024. Ten email enquiries had been received by the Environmental Health team and regular updates on the website and drop-in sessions were being made available for residents.

Almost 2000 people attended the Wanderland 2024 festival, with the Wanderland 2025 Festival expected to be bigger and better, with less reliance on external companies and providers to reduce outlay.

A brand-new Communications Plan was being worked up, which would enable statistical reporting on the work being undertaken by the Communications Team to be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 14 April 2025.

Members provided several comments and questions, which are summarised below:

- Councillor Atkins queried how Wyre Council was communicating key messages with the public. Common themes were picked up through observing activity on social media and designing campaigns around specific trends. Media releases and narratives were also utilised, one example was regular updates on waste management and collection services.
- On communicating with residents who do not use social media, Jane explained that a diverse range of other communication channels were used to ensure campaigns were inclusive. Examples were the use of branded material on council vehicles, specific teams such as the Climate Change Team attending local events, distributing pulse surveys and publishing articles within school newsletters and local papers.
- A representative from the Communications Team would be able to attend upcoming meetings of the Waste and Recycling Task Group once it was officially approved by members of the Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
- Phase two of the Discover Wyre website would offer new features. Lists of accommodation, hospitality and events packages were planned. Film and TV advertisement recording locations would also feature as a new section.
- Jane responded to a question from Councillor Amos regarding the ongoing dispute between fishermen and Associated British Ports over Jubilee Quay access.
- Ten enquiries had been received on the potential PFOA chemical contamination within the Hillhouse Industrial Estate since September 2023. It is thought that the contamination was airborne and occurred around ten years ago.
- The Environment Agency was testing the land around the site and a press release and drop-in sessions for residents had been arranged.

- Jane Warne explained that she was receiving regular updates on the historic contamination investigation from external stakeholders, such as Lancashire County Council, UKHSA and the Environmental Agency. Updates would be regularly posted on our dedicated webpage, but the process would take some time as analysis of samples was a complex and thorough process.
- Regarding the timing of the start of the investigation into the potential historic contamination, Jane Warne offered to follow up on this upon conclusion of the meeting.

## **17 Electric Vehicle Charging Points Task Group Draft Report**

Marianne Unwin, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager (Temporary), submitted a report on the Electric Vehicle Charging Points Task Group Draft Report.

Councillor Sir Robert Atkins, the Chair of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points Task Group, introduced the report. The report provided members of the committee with a summary of evidence that the task group had gathered in relation to Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging points across the borough of Wyre.

Councillor Atkins thanked Democratic Services for the detailed work that was undertaken to produce the report.

It was recommended by the Chair of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points Task Group that the committee approved the draft report to be sent to Cabinet for review.

Councillor Rob Fail highlighted that anecdotal evidence indicated electric vehicle charging points were being underutilised. It was important to analyse the type of electric vehicle chargers used and ensure they were marketed at the right level of affordability. Councillor Atkins acknowledged the comments and added that the contract with Blink would need to be handled with care when reviewing the electric vehicle charger pricing strategy for Wyre Council car parks.

The Committee agreed that the draft report be sent to Cabinet for review.

## **18 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2024/25 - Update**

Clare James, The Director of Finance and Governance (Section 151 Officer), submitted a report which provided an update on the delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2024/25.

Jack Tickle, Democratic Services Officer, introduced the report and provided members with an update on actions taken from the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny on the 15 July 2024.

He explained that Mark Fenton, the Economic Development Manager, was investigating the rural economy as a 'big issue' and liaising with the National Farmers Union and the Federation of Small Businesses.

Sarah Palmer, the Director of Transformation and Change, would provide an update on the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone at a future meeting once work had begun on the Council Masterplan.

Members had requested that a Fly Tipping draft scoping document was created at the previous meeting of Overview and Scrutiny on the 15 July 2024. The document had been drafted and it was recommended that the committee approved the creation of the Fly Tipping task group.

It was highlighted that additional training had been arranged with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny that would provide councillors with knowledge on the functions of Scrutiny and information that Scrutiny was entitled to access. The date for this training would be circulated with the Committee once confirmed by Democratic Services later in the year.

Members agreed:

- 1) That the Work Programme 2024/25 update report be noted.
- 2) That the Fly Tipping Task Group was officially approved by the Committee.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.40 pm.

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