



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda

Wyre Borough Council
Date of Publication: 12 October 2018
Please ask for : Peter Foulsham
Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 01253 887606

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Monday, 22 October 2018
at 6.00 pm in committee room 2**

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of interest from any councillor or officer on any item on this agenda.

3. Confirmation of minutes

(Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 10 September 2018.

4. Wyre's entertainment venues

(Pages 5 - 10)

The Service Director Performance and Innovation, Marianne Hesketh, has submitted a report and will attend the meeting with the Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder, Councillor Lynne Bowen, to present the report and respond to comments and questions from members.

5. Flooding task group - draft report

(Pages 11 - 34)

The Chairman of the Flooding Task Group, Councillor Phil Orme, will present the group's draft report and recommendations. Members of the committee will have an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

6. Overview and scrutiny work programme 2018/19

(Pages 35 - 36)

The Scrutiny Officer, Peter Foulsham, will provide a verbal update on the delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 10 September 2018 in committee room 2, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee members present:

Councillors John Ibison, Ian Amos, Rita Amos, Howard Ballard, Emma Ellison, Rob Fail, John Hodgkinson, Patsy Ormrod and Matthew Vincent

Apologies for absence:

Councillors Kerry Jones, Colette Birch, Julie Robinson, Ron Shewan and Evelyn Stephenson

Officers present:

Mark Broadhurst, Service Director Health and Wellbeing
Marianne Hesketh, Service Director Performance and Innovation
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

21 Declarations of interest

None.

22 Confirmation of minutes

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 30 July 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

23 Digital transformation - update on paperless meetings

The Service Director Performance and Innovation, Marianne Hesketh, provided a verbal update about the progress of the implementation of paperless meetings and advised members about the next steps to be taken. She indicated that progress had been slower than intended due to a number of issues, including staffing vacancies in the ICT Department.

Three different devices had been obtained, free of charge from a provider, for trial use by members for eight weeks. They would be ready for use by the end of September. At the end of the eight-week trial period, an assessment of

each device would be carried out, with comments to be received from councillors, Democratic Services Officers and the ICT team. A decision would then be made about which device was the best for the task at the best price. Whichever device was selected would be rolled out to all councillors and relevant officers; only one type of device would be used. It was intended that the device would also enable access to emails and calendars so that all essential elements were available in one place.

The Independent Remuneration Panel would be asked to make recommendations to Full Council about any impact the purchase of new devices might have on members' IT allowances.

It was agreed that

- (i) Councillors Ibison, Jones and Fail trial the devices for the committee, and
- (ii) The outcome from the trial be presented to a future meeting of the committee.

24 Business Plan 2018/19 - quarterly performance report

The Service Director Performance and Innovation, Marianne Hesketh, presented a report, the 1st Quarter Performance Statement 2018/19, April – June 2018.

Ms Hesketh commented that overall the projects were on target, although it was noted that this was a first quarter report. Several measures, including some newly included, were not yet on target so would need to be monitored over the coming quarters.

In answer to a question, the Service Director Health and Wellbeing (Mark Broadhurst) confirmed that members of a House of Lords Select Committee had recently visited Fleetwood to look at the fish processing industry and an update on progress in relation to sustainability would be available towards the end of the 2018/19 year.

Councillors noted that one of the new measures was about the number of dwellings for which planning permission was granted, which reflected something over which the council had a greater degree of control and influence. The previous measure about 'houses built' was beyond the direct control of the council, although it was agreed that the number and proportion of houses built that were 'affordable' remained something which the committee should continue to monitor closely.

Ms Hesketh invited councillors to suggest any other measures about planning that they would find helpful to be included as part of the quarterly performance report.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to monitor numbers and trends in commuting as the percentage of people working outside the borough was increasing. This had implications for pollution and the quality of life of

residents. Ms Hesketh confirmed that the Economic Development team were already engaged in work in this area.

It was agreed that the Service Director Performance and Innovation be thanked for her report and her contribution to the meeting.

25 LGA Peer Review - actions taken

The Service Director Health and Wellbeing, Mark Broadhurst, presented a report on the progress of actions taken on the recommendations of Wyre's Corporate Peer Challenge Review which was undertaken in March 2017.

Mr Broadhurst referred in particular to the Review's four key recommendations regarding:

- The development of the Wyre Economic Development Strategy
- Clarifying the focus and priorities to deliver 'Healthier Wyre'
- Strengthening the coordination of activity and partnership activities in Fleetwood
- Exploring opportunities for business creation and expansion

It was encouraging that the wider determinants of health were being prioritised, as they were likely to have a long-term impact.

In response to a question Mr Broadhurst informed the committee that a holistic, multi-agency approach was being taken to issues such as mental health and substance abuse, with excellent additional work being carried out with more vulnerable people in supported housing schemes. A number of preventative measures were also in place.

Mr Broadhurst was asked whether the committee could usefully undertake some work to add value to that already being undertaken in the borough. He said that the current restructuring in health would take some time to settle. New Neighbourhoods were being set up, and he suggested that the Lead Officers from each would be useful people for the committee to hear from in due course. Their plans, and the implementation of them, would be a constructive focus for discussion and scrutiny.

It was agreed that Mr Broadhurst be thanked for his report and for his informative contribution to the meeting.

26 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19- update report

The Scrutiny Officer, Peter Foulsham, introduced the draft scoping document for a proposed task group review on the borough's public conveniences. The committee agreed to commission a task group on this topic, the group to review and update the draft scoping document at their first meeting, if necessary.

The draft report of the Flooding Task Group would be submitted to the next meeting of the committee, following a final meeting of the group on 24

September 2018.

There remained s capacity for at least one more task group review during the current municipal year, to be completed prior to the elections in May 2019, subject to members' suggestions about topics.

It was agreed that all non-Executive councillors be invited to express interest in joining a task group on public conveniences, which would commence in October.

27 Statement of Accounts

The committee considered a report that had been submitted by the Head of Finance Clare James, which included relevant extracts from a report tabled at the meeting of the Audi Committee on 24 July 2018.

Members agreed that it would be helpful to know more detail about the current subsidy position at the Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre and what improvements have been delivered during the last eighteen month in particular. They asked that a report be submitted to the next meeting on 22 October 2018.

Comment was made that some community groups continue to find the charges prohibitively expensive and they requested that this be commented upon to in any future report. The committee also requested that potential income-raising activities be referred to, including the café, the Wyre Lounge and the use of the Mount as a wedding venue.

It was agreed that the Service Director Performance and Innovation be asked to submit a report about the council's entertainment venues to the next meeting.

The meeting started at 6.02 pm and finished at 7.34 pm.

Date of Publication: 13 September 2018



Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item no.
Marianne Hesketh, Service Director Performance and Innovation	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	22 October 2018	4

Performance of Wyre's Theatres – Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide an update around the operational performance of the council's entertainment venues – Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre, focussing on the improvements and changes that have taken place over the last year.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Marine Hall is located on the seafront at Fleetwood next to Marine Gardens. It was built in the 1930's as a seaside theatre entertainment complex. The Marine Hall complex comprises of a theatre and dance hall with adjoining café and bars, entrance foyer and associated offices. The main theatre seats 600. The annual entertainment programme provides a diverse range of shows and events, with top international performers and independent local groups and dance schools using the facilities. The venue is also available for weddings and conferences.
- 2.2 Thornton Little Theatre (TLT) was originally built circa 1930's. It was built as an assembly hall possibly for lectures in conjunction with the adjoining library. TLT seats 200 people. Thornton Little Theatre is a great little venue at the heart of the local community. It hosts all types of events from touring theatre performances to plays by local amateur dramatic companies, live acoustic gigs and family friendly shows.
- 2.3 Following the sudden death of the Head of Leisure, Culture and Tourism back in January 2017, the responsibility for the operation of the theatres was formally transferred to the Commercial Manager, Julia Robinson, following her appointment in August 2017. Overall strategic responsibility sits under the Service Director Performance and Innovation, Marianne Hesketh.

3. Key improvements / changes over the last year

3.1 Income generation and increased levels of business

A detailed analysis of financial performance at the end of September 2018 compared to performance at the same time last year shows that there has been a better control of expenditure as well as a significant increase in the income generated. Current projections indicate that we are on target to achieve the subsidy level for Marine Hall of £251,000 and £118,000 for TLT. Detailed financial information is available at section 4.

The improvement in income generated has been through general lettings as well as an increase in the number of weddings and other social events such as dinners. There has also been an associated increase in the amount of secondary spend through bars and refreshment services as well as commission from catering and ticket sales.

The programme at both theatres has been restructured, with a reduced number of direct engagements of artistes and an increase in the number of promoters hiring the venues or agreeing to split the box office takings with us instead of a guaranteed fee. This reduces the risk to the council and ensures that the independent promoters have an incentive to ensure a good audience. In addition to this, we now sell marketing packages to the hirers, which has brought in additional income.

The Mount Pavilion in Fleetwood was licensed for wedding ceremonies at the beginning of this year and so far there have been two celebrations held there. Several more are booked in over the next year. Thousands of people have viewed the photographs online and there has been tremendous community support for using the Pavilion for this purpose.

Marine Hall will host a Wedding Open Day in February 2019 to attract more wedding business to Wyre. This will not only showcase the offer at Marine Hall but also the wedding and family celebration offer at Thornton Little Theatre, the Pavilion and also the Civic Centre in Poulton.

Our online engagement through social media has more than doubled in the last year and customer satisfaction has increased with fewer complaints and much more positive feedback.

3.2 Increased focus on Health and Wellbeing activities

With assistance from Health funding and working in partnership with Healthier Fleetwood as well as other local community groups from across the area, there has been an increased focus on Health and Wellbeing activities at our theatres.

The first Health and Harmony singing group was held at Marine Hall in September 2017 and has just celebrated its one year anniversary. Attendances have regularly reached 80 to 100 people every Tuesday

afternoon in the Waterfront Café Bar. A second group was launched at Thornton Little Theatre in April of this year and numbers are now reaching 40-50 people each Tuesday morning. A third group was set up in Hambleton just a few months ago.

The health funding has covered the cost of hiring the Theatres and the cost of singing 'leaders' to work with the groups as well as a small contribution towards refreshments. The BBC are following the progress of this project as part of their coverage of Healthier Fleetwood.

Healthier Fleetwood has also hired Marine Hall for a number of events such as 'Fleetwood Loves Dancing' (a free event which showcased all the different types of dance that people can participate in) and the 'Tea and Talk' afternoon - as part of World Mental Health Day. They have also hired Marine Hall for the Healthier Fleetwood Annual Christmas Party, which brings together all the different Healthier Fleetwood projects.

Last year, Marine Hall held its first 'One You' event - a Sunday afternoon get together /showcase for all Health and Wellbeing organisations across the area, including not just voluntary and community organisations but also local businesses. The first event attracted over 500 people. We are planning another 'One You' event to build on its success.

The numbers of regular attendees at weekly tea dances at Marine Hall have also increased significantly over the last year.

3.3 Staffing

There is the potential to grow the income further at both theatres but this is limited based on the current staffing capacity. There are currently two posts vacant. One is in the process of being recruited to. The other is being considered in the context of a restructure which should equip the team to deal with an increased level of business in a more efficient and effective way. It is hoped that the restructure will be in place by the end of November 2018.

3.4 Policies and Procedures

The Commercial Manager has worked closely alongside the Theatres team for the last year, reviewing processes and procedures and highlighting areas for improvement. There are clearly challenges around capacity to deliver a growing service. A number of training and development needs have been identified across the team and are being progressed.

An Audit and Risk Management review was completed in May 2018 which also highlighted a number of areas for improvements around the controls in place at Marine Hall. Since the audit, the theatres team has worked closely with the Senior Auditor to ensure the right controls are being implemented.

The following progress has been made:

- Health and Safety team training day
- Personal License Training
- Food Hygiene Training
- Asbestos Awareness Training
- Water Quality /Legionella Training
- Finance meetings to discuss and agree procedures with Audit
- More regular stock takes
- Updates to documents and procedures
- More structured training and induction
- Financial event sheets for each booking showing income and expenditure.

4. Financial Information

4.1 Marine Hall – Operating Income and Expenditure

Operating income and expenditure	2018/19 Budget £	2018/19 Forecast £	2017/18 Actual £
Admissions	(35,000)	(35,000)	(32,966)
Kiosk/Café/Bar/Catering	(90,500)	(93,250)	(86,750)
Lettings	(70,000)	(70,000)	(65,871)
Other income	(3,980)	(23,980)	(5,196)
Pantomimes	(7,000)	(7,000)	(8,402)
Weddings	(10,000)	(10,000)	(5,249)
Total income	(216,480)	(239,230)	(204,434)
Staffing	228,530	203,780	218,182
Premises	86,120	90,183	118,943
Vehicle	980	980	1,363
Supplies and Services	84,310	99,839	91,752
Third Party	2,000	2,000	1,732
Recharges	102,420	93,460	95,981
Total expenditure	504,360	490,242	527,953
Operating Deficit	287,880	251,012	323,519
Non-operating costs			
Capital charges	181,110	181,110	174,760
Ticket sales for externals	0	0	0
Total cost centre	468,990	432,122	498,279

4.2 Thornton Little Theatre – Operating Income and Expenditure

	2018/19 Budget £	2018/19 Forecast £	2017/18 Actual £
Operating income and expenditure			
Admissions	(5,000)	(5,000)	(1,345)
Kiosk/Café/Bar/Catering	(2,200)	(2,200)	(4,282)
Lettings	(40,000)	(40,000)	(35,727)
Other income	(540)	(540)	(3,307)
Pantomimes	0	0	0
Weddings	0	0	0
Total income	(47,740)	(47,740)	(44,661)
Staffing	117,070	117,070	116,913
Premises	21,570	21,570	19,859
Vehicle	0	0	0
Supplies and Services	9,550	9,550	5,920
Third Party	200	200	1,330
Recharges	17,690	17,690	17,162
Total expenditure	166,080	166,080	161,183
Operating Deficit	118,340	118,340	116,522
Non-operating costs			
Capital charges	37,410	37,410	37,407
Ticket sales for externals	0	0	0
Total cost centre	155,750	155,750	153,929

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**Flooding
Task Group**

Draft Report

Chairman:

Councillor Phil Orme

Task Group Members:

Councillor Lady Dulcie Atkins
Councillor Howard Ballard
Councillor Peter Cartridge
Councillor Sue Catterall
Councillor Emma Ellison
Councillor Terry Lees
Councillor Julie Robinson
Councillor Lynn Walmsley

**Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Chairman: Councillor John Ibison**

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Introduction

A number of significant flooding events have occurred in Wyre over recent years and all the indications are that such events will become more frequent and more serious in years to come.

Elected members have been involved in all recent flooding events to a greater or lesser extent. One theme that has been consistent has been that the roles and responsibilities of councillors are not clear and not always fully understood, either by councillors themselves or by members of the public.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a task group to review the ways in which councillors have been involved in recent flooding events and to make recommendations about how their roles and responsibilities could be more clearly defined.

Aims of review

The aims of the review, as specified in the scoping document (see Appendix 1), were as follows:

- To clarify the role of ward councillors before, during and after flooding events
- To understand the respective roles of the organisations and individuals involved in planning for, dealing with and the recovery after flooding events in the borough
- To understand the range of issues and challenges faced by residents during and after a flooding event
- To review ward councillors' experiences in terms of the questions asked and demands placed on them in relation to flooding events

The review process

The task group held its first meeting with the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder and the Head of Engineering Services. The group subsequently interviewed the Emergency Planning Officer and the Housing Options Team Leader.

The ten Flood Action Groups (FLAGs) were invited to submit comments and observations about the way in which councillors have been involved with flooding events.

All councillors were invited to complete a questionnaire about their understanding of the roles and responsibilities of elected members in flooding.

Task group members were made aware of a scrutiny review report (dated January 2018) carried out by Knowsley Council which covered many similar issues.

Summary of evidence provided by Councillor Roger Berry (Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder) and Carl Green (Head of Engineering Services)

Cllr Berry addressed the roles and responsibilities of councillors under three headings:

- (i) Day-to-day, on-going work
- (ii) During a flooding event
- (iii) Recovery stage

Much of the day-to-day work is coordinated through the Wyre Flood Forum, which provides for direct engagement between residents, councillors and a range of other agencies and organisations. Actions are agreed and followed up at subsequent meetings.

A number of Flood Action Groups (FLAGs) have been set up, or are in the process of being set up. These are made up of residents who are taking on a localised role of liaison and coordination. They are also responsible for encouraging people to take appropriate resilience action for their own properties. Councillors play a key part in motivating residents to set up and run FLAGs, which is consistent with their role as community leaders.

During an event weather reports and flood warnings are very important, but not infallible. It is very difficult to predict the precise location where flooding might occur as a result of rainfall; predicting flooding from rivers is easier, by comparison. There is a limit to the number of sand bags that the council can provide, despite residents' expectations, which is consistent with the similar approach being promoted by the FLAGs.

There is a limit to what should be expected of councillors during a flooding event, as the key responsible agencies (police, fire and rescue, Environment Agency, LCC) all have clearly defined and understood roles. It is important that councillors act as a hub for local communication and as a support to residents. The comment was made that local ward councillors should carry out an audit of their own wards in order to know where the older and more infirm residents lived and those with mobility difficulties.

It is the recovery phase where councillors can be of most help. They can offer assistance, support and leadership, clearly communicating the needs of residents. Councillors should be available and visible and act as a source of information, advice and reassurance. They should also offer basic advice to encourage residents to make insurance claims, where appropriate.

The Head of Engineering Services, Carl Green, made a presentation, focusing on the roles of key partner organisations during a flooding event. He reaffirmed the point that councillors should leave things to the key services during a flooding event - but they do have a key role afterwards.

The Civic Contingencies Act 2004 sets out a single framework for civil protection in the UK. It creates two categories of responders and sets out clear expectations and

responsibilities for frontline responders during an emergency. Category Two responders include utility companies, transport companies and other organisations such as the Health and Safety Executive and Clinical Commissioning Groups, who have a duty to cooperate and to share relevant information with Category One responders.

A series of multi-agency emergency plans and information are in place, including:

- Generic Emergency Response Plan;
- Multi Agency Flood Plan Part 1;
- Wyre Flood Plan Part 2;
- Rest Centre Plan;
- A number of others (e.g. Merlin, COMAH, CAMI, MACPOL)
- Up to date contacts.

Even with detailed plans in place the most important element remains effective communication at all levels, and this is something in which councillors should be centrally involved as far as links with residents are concerned.

Mr Green emphasized the following points:

- Phone operators have scripts for use during flooding events
- Chairs of FLAGs have scripts
- Flooding events happen most years (2013 was an exception)
- There are likely to be more flooding events, with more and heavier rain
- Each FLAG should have its own local community plan
- Councillors do not need a list of all the relevant service phone numbers – there are already a number of plans and procedures in place. Excessive calls to those phone numbers would be detrimental and block the system
- A number of effective emergency plans, at various levels, are in place for which all the contact details are kept up to date
- The council's website provides information in great practical detail (preparation, FLAGs, rest centres, etc.) and should be the main point of reference
- Individuals have great responsibility for themselves (resilience) and for knowing who their vulnerable neighbours are
- Communication is the key role for councillors

Summary of evidence provided by John Blundell, Emergency Planning Officer

One of the biggest challenges is dealing with the expectations of local communities as the council simply does not have the resources to deal with everything in the way that they would like. The provision of sandbags is a good example, the council only providing them, at present, to vulnerable people and only then, as and when they are available. The council's limited resources should be allocated very carefully in times of crisis. As far as the Emergency Planning Officer is aware, Wyre Council is the only District Council in Lancashire that still provides any sandbags to its residents. Communities and individuals are increasingly encouraged to become more resilient by making their own provision, the Churchtown Flood Action Group being an excellent example of how that can be done.

After every major flooding incident a de-briefing session is held, which leads to action plans being agreed for future improvements. Mr Blundell indicated that he would like to see councillors involved in the de-briefing process, which they are not at present.

Mr Blundell referred to the role of councillors before, during and after flooding events.

1 Before a flooding event

Elected members are the public face of the council and as such have a role to play in both ensuring community resilience is in place for responding to and recovering from emergencies. Resilience can be summarised in this way:

- Supporting your local community
- Taking the opportunity to make the best use of local resources and knowledge
- Encouraging residents to help themselves during an emergency in a way that complements the local response
- Helping to protect and support those who are unable to do that for themselves

Mr Blundell identified the following questions as examples of the sort that might be asked of residents to promote resilience and to assess how prepared the community is:

- I. Are you aware of the risks you and your community might face?
- II. How can you help yourself and those around you prior to, during, and after an emergency?
- III. What can you do to get involved in your community?
- IV. Do you know where to get the information you may need?

It is also important to promote resilience in planning and preparation:

- Promote and encourage the preparation of community emergency plans, not just for flooding

- Ensure the community is aware of partners' websites, Environment Agency, Met Office, etc.
- Use local knowledge to identify local groups/partners who could play a role in preparedness, response, and recovery
- Self-resilience within the community and managing residents' expectations
- Actively support communities involved in community resilience work

Political leadership is important and includes:

- I. Representation to central Government for additional resources or financial assistance
- II. Promoting joint working with Community Groups, Parish, Town, District, Upper Tier, and Unitary Authorities
- III. Liaising with other elected representatives (MPs, MEPs, etc.)
- IV. Representing your communities on the Recovery Group
- V. Minimising reputational risk to the authority and defending decisions
- VI. Being aware of the decisions made by the Strategic Coordinating Group and the implications for your communities
- VII. Ensuring identified lessons are addressed and plans improved

2 During a flooding event

During a flooding event councillors whose wards have been impacted by the emergency have a key role to play in:

- a) Providing community leadership in their own wards
- b) Identifying the needs of individuals and the wider community and feeding them into the appropriate part of the response plan
- c) Signposting members of the public towards the right agency to get the support they need
- d) Communicating consistent information to the community
- e) Supporting and assisting those affected in how they engage with the media

3 After a flooding event

As community representatives and figureheads in the local community, councillors have an important role to play in the recovery phase, once the incident has passed and emergency services have left the scene. The councillors' role during the recovery phase is vital in rebuilding, restoring, rehabilitating and reassuring the communities affected, and making representations on their behalf. Councillors can assist by using local knowledge, listening to the community and providing support. Local community groups can be an important source of help and specialist advice.

Listening to the community entails:

- I. Being the eyes and ears 'on the ground' by providing a focus for and listening to community concerns

- II. Gathering the views and concerns of the community and feed them into the recovery process through the Recovery Coordinating Group
- III. Providing support and reassurance to the local community, by listening or visiting those affected and acting as a community champion and supporter

Providing support in the recovery phase entails:

- ✓ Providing encouragement and support to recovery teams working within the community.
- ✓ Disseminating key messages, advice and information to the community, ensuring there is a consistent message.
- ✓ Potentially assisting debrief sessions with the community.
- ✓ Managing community expectations.
- ✓ Actively engaging with community members involved in recovery efforts.
- ✓ Collating joint recommendations from Town, Parish, District, Local Councillors, as well as Village Halls etc.
- ✓ Supporting community, volunteers and vulnerable people.
- ✓ Supporting the community with technical expertise.
- ✓ Supporting the community with documentation, the management of donations, grant applications, insurance claims, financial matters etc.
- ✓ Supporting the community with loss of life, anniversaries of events etc.

Summary of evidence provided by Pamela Holroyd, Housing Options Team Leader

The Housing Options Team has been involved in assisting with several flooding incidents. Ms Holroyd used these as practical examples to describe the team's work.

The most recent incident was in November 2017 when the team received a phone call from the Duty Officer informing them of flooding. The Thornton YMCA was opened as a rest centre in case it was needed, in line with the Wyre Multi-Agency Flood Plan (updated on 18 May 2018). There was only one family, comprising three adults and two large dogs that needed to be accommodated. It was the council's duty to find accommodation, which was eventually secured in Blackpool, there having been some difficulty in finding accommodation that would accept dogs. In this case the family was only accommodated for one night as water levels reduced and they could return home.

The flooding in Garstang, Bilsborrow and St Michaels in December 2015 was potentially a huge task. The YMCA at Garstang was opened as a rest centre (in accordance with the Flood Plan) and although there were a number of people and dogs that were affected they were all able to be accommodated by family and friends.

In response to questions and comments from task group members, Ms Holroyd made the following additional points:

- Councillors play a valuable role in supporting and reassuring residents during flooding events.
- It is important that councillors are clear about the limits of their role and responsibility in order to enable others to carry out theirs effectively.
- There have been occasions when recognised rest centres have not been used for various reasons. For example, the Crofters Hotel was used on one occasion.
- The council's responsibility continues for as long as it is required to in order to discharge its responsibilities under the Homelessness Act 2002.
- As soon as someone confirms that they are covered by insurance the duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 is relinquished.
- Consideration is always given to looking after the public purse.

Ms Holroyd concurred with task group members on the following points:

- Councillors should have a good knowledge of local resources to refer residents appropriately.
- There should be consistency across the borough, particularly when identifying potentially vulnerable individuals.
- There is the potential for some smaller, more local facilities (churches or village halls, for example) to be considered as potential emergency rest centres, which could reduce the number of people who have to travel away from their own locality.
- There needs to be a mechanism by which councillors are reliably informed about imminent flooding events, perhaps via text message.

Written evidence submitted by local Flood Action Groups

There are Flood Action Groups (FLAGS) in the following areas of the borough:

Churchtown
Cleveleys
Garstang
Great Eccleston
Hambleton
Preesall
St Michael's
Stalmine
Thornton

The following four questions were emailed to each of the FLAGS asking for their opinions and experience of the involvement of Wyre councillors before, during and after flooding events, and the responses received made the following points:.

- 1 Generally speaking, what has been your experience of the way in which Wyre councillors have assisted residents before, during and after flooding events?**
 - (i) Using local knowledge
 - (ii) Councillors' involvement is more of a reaction than a solution
 - (iii) They are not very good at publicising or explaining to voters what they are doing to help
 - (iv) I have not been aware of Wyre councillors playing a major role in helping us with flooding issues
 - (v) As far as we can see they haven't! They come to the meetings we have attended but I'm not sure what they do.
 - (vi) Some are very actively involved and provide a link between the residents and the council; others are not
 - (vii) The local councillors have not been very visible at these times.

- 2 What valuable contribution have Wyre councillors made before, during and after flooding events?**
 - (i) Councillors suggest that that it is solely in the hands of the residents to protect their properties
 - (ii) Councillors should be knocking on doors during and for the weeks following a flood, but it is usually the emergency services who actually do this
 - (iii) Remaining in touch with affected residents for longer than just the short-term
 - (iv) Some individual councillors have been very supportive, including writing about flood issues in local publications

- 3 What could Wyre councillors do better to support residents and local communities, in relation to flooding events?**

- (i) Some contact at the time of flooding would be beneficial in giving moral support, even if the councillors did not physically help
- (ii) Help provide sand bags
- (iii) Knowing where vulnerable residents live
- (iv) Attend FLAG meetings
- (v) They should provide support and advice when needed, helping to 'open doors' with other agencies and organisations
- (vi) Councillors should not just appear at the time of events but follow through with the residents over the following months/years to ensure that protection is improved
- (vii) Help residents not to feel abandoned
- (viii) Councillors should be visiting properties which suffered flooding lending support and giving out any relevant information
- (ix) Show more interest

4 Do you have any additional comments about the role of Wyre councillors in flooding events, which has not already been covered?

- (i) Councillors should attend Flood Forum meetings
- (ii) Councillors should communicate better with local communities
- (iii) Residents do not feel supported or respected
- (iv) They need to demonstrate that they are working to provide funding to create the best defences possible for us all
- (v) Let people know that they are aware that we have a real problem and that tackling it is a priority, not just something they respond to only when a disaster occurs
- (vi) There is no defined role which councillors have to adhere to in situations such as flooding

Councillors' questionnaire responses

A questionnaire was sent to all councillors to try to assess their understanding of their role and responsibilities before, during and after flooding events. Thirty questionnaires (60%) were returned. A summary of the responses to the specific questions posed is attached at Appendix 2.

The responses show that in relation to some aspects of flooding councillors have differing views about what they should and should not be doing and for what they are and are not responsible.

A number of key points were made by members of the task group, in the light of the questionnaire responses received.

These points included:

- All councillors should be notified about an imminent flooding event in their ward by text message, or an alternative method.
- There are mixed views about whether the provision of sandbags should remain the council's responsibility, and if so, what the role of the councillor is in relation to their distribution.
- Residents, as well as councillors, need clarity about what the role of councillors is and is not; a major public information campaign should be considered.
- Residents should be encouraged to take resilience measures whenever possible, although it should be remembered that some people simply cannot afford to do so.
- Despite having the best intentions, councillors should never put themselves in danger and should constantly be assessing risk.

Conclusions and recommendations

It is the task group's view that more should be done to clarify and define the roles and responsibilities of councillors before, during and after flooding events. There is evidence of significant misunderstanding by councillors and local communities about roles and responsibilities, as well as often unrealistic expectations on the part of residents, often fuelled by the general lack of clarity.

1 Before a flooding event

It is important that residents increasingly take on responsibility for aspects of their own safety and flood protection. Ward councillors can and should continue to play a role in this by helping to keep residents informed and encouraging them to become more active in this respect.

The task group is very impressed with the work that has already been done by Flood Action Groups (FLAGs) across the borough, and would like to see them set up more widely still. The role that FLAGs play in engaging the public, involving them in decisions and taking personal responsibility cannot be replicated as effectively by the council.

There was evidence throughout the inquiry that the role of councillors is unclear – indeed, this is what precipitated the review in the first place. Local communities in particular need to understand what the role of a ward councillor is, and they have mixed messages which often fuel unrealistic expectations.

RECOMMENDATION ONE

That ward councillors actively support the excellent work already being undertaken by FLAGs and provide a lead in exploring options with local residents for setting up FLAGs in other parts of Wyre.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

That ward councillors advise, support and encourage residents to take whatever actions are necessary to make their own properties more resilient against the threat of flooding, perhaps to include the installation of flood gates/doors or the development of a Household Emergency Plan, for example. Actions should also include taking steps to improve resilience when household improvements are being made, such as new kitchens avoiding the use of chipboard or the installation of a flood-resistant front door.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

That a campaign is undertaken by the Communications Team to ensure that the community is fully informed about the role of councillors before during and after flooding events. This should include clarity about what is included and what is not included within elected members' roles and responsibilities in relation to flooding.

2 During a flooding event

There are clear expectations and responsibilities for frontline responders during an emergency, and also a series of detailed emergency plans which provide the blueprint for dealing with a flooding event. Councillors should be aware of those but should not get involved in their implementation, leaving it to those agencies responsible. Ward councillors play a valuable role as a hub of information but such a role depends on them being kept informed or having access to the most up to date information. The review exposed some gaps in the provision of information to councillors, which must be resolved if they are to carry out their role to its full potential.

Evidence shows that the public's perceived reliance upon and expectations of the availability of sandbags during a flood are high and unrealistic. Sandbags are only ever in short supply, they are difficult to move, labour-intensive to fill and transport, they are rarely available in the right place and even when used only provide short term respite from serious flooding. It was noted that the majority of other councils in Lancashire do not use sandbags at all; they represent a distraction to residents as well as discouraging residents, to some extent, from taking their own resilience measures.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

That a system be put in place to ensure that ward councillors are provided with all essential information about flooding events, in a timely fashion, including the decisions made by the Strategic Coordinating Group and the implications for local communities.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

That the role of the ward councillors as an 'information hub' for residents be reinforced at every opportunity, so that it is fully understood by councillors and members of the public.

RECOMMENDATION SIX

That the council stops routinely providing sandbags with immediate effect, in recognition of the facts that their effectiveness is limited, they are labour-intensive to fill and distribute and that members of the public should be increasingly encouraged to take responsibility for making their own properties safe from floods.

Consideration should be given to continuing to provide a limited number of sandbags to protect critical assets and to support FLAGS for distribution to their vulnerable residents, whom they had previously identified.

3 After a flooding event

The long-term impact of flooding is well-recognised, residents often being unable to return to their flooded homes for many months. After such a traumatic event many residents require on-going support and advice (e.g. in relation to how to make an insurance claim) and ward councillors can play a very significant role in this regard.

There is a wealth of information that councillors will have gleaned from a variety of sources at all stages of a flooding event. In their role as 'information hub' it is important that there is a clearly understood path by which the information they have gathered can be fed back to other relevant individuals and organisations as part of the multi-agency emergency plans.

Councillors need to be kept fully up to date about flooding issues and to have the opportunity to clarify aspects of their role, in the light of recent developments, on a regular basis. Work on flood prevention is always changing and any alterations to policy and practice need to be fully understood by councillors so that they can support communities in line with the other recommendations in this report, specifically their role as an 'information hub'.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

That ward councillors be facilitated to contribute to the de-briefing session following a flooding event.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT

That the importance of ward councillors being involved in the medium- and long-term support of people whose properties have been flooded be encouraged by

- (i) Advising residents that this is part of the agreed role of a ward councillor, and**
- (ii) Ensuring that ward councillors have the requisite skills and knowledge to carry out such a role effectively**

RECOMMENDATION NINE

That flooding event training be made available to councillors at least annually, perhaps by way of presentation at a pre-Council briefing or by other agreed methods.

RECOMMENDATION TEN

That a list of Dos and Don'ts for councillors be adopted and distributed to all members, in line with the training to be provided under recommendation nine (see Appendix 3).

Councillors' attendances

There were five meetings of the task group.

Name	Meetings attended (maximum 5)*
Councillor Lady Atkins	2
Councillor Ballard	4
Councillor Cartridge	3
Councillor Catterall	4
Councillor Ellison	4
Councillor Lees	3
Councillor Orme	4
Councillor Robinson	3
Councillor Walmsley	4

List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Flooding Task Group – Scoping Document – FINAL
Appendix 2	Councillors' questionnaire
Appendix 3	Flooding events - Dos and Don'ts for ward councillors

DRAFT

4 October 2018

Flooding Task Group – Scoping Document - FINAL

Review Topic	Flooding – the role of councillors	
Chair	Councillor Phil Orme	
Group Membership	Councillors Emma Anderton, Lady Dulcie Atkins, Howard Ballard, Peter Cartridge, Emma Ellison, Terry Lees (Vice Chair), Paul Moon, Julie Robinson and Lynn Walmsley	
Officer Support	Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer	
Purpose of the Review	To clarify the role of councillors in planning for, reacting to and dealing with flooding events.	
Role of Overview and Scrutiny in this Review (mark all that apply)	Holding Executive to account – decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Existing budget and policy framework	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Contribution to policy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Holding Executive to account – performance	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Community champion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Statutory duties / compliance with codes of practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Aims of Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To clarify the role of ward councillors before, during and after flooding events ○ To understand the respective roles of the organisations and individuals involved in planning for, dealing with and the recovery after flooding events in the borough ○ To understand the range of issues and challenges faced by residents during and after a flooding event ○ To review ward councillors' experiences in terms of the questions asked and demands placed on them in relation to flooding events 	
Methodology	Reviewing relevant reports and guidelines Interviewing witnesses Site visits	
Scope of Review	The review is limited to the role of elected members in flooding management and recovery.	

Potential Witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio holder ○ Head of Engineering Services ○ Emergency Planning Officer (Depot Manager) ○ Housing Options Team Leader ○ Paul Bond, Environment Agency ○ Representative from Lancashire Constabulary ○ Representatives of Flood Action Groups, with the specific inclusion of people directly affected by previous flooding events
Documents to be considered	A councillor's guide to civil emergencies, LGA publication, May 2016
Risks	
Level of Publicity	Moderate
Indicators of a Successful Review	Councillors better informed to provide advice to residents before, during and after flooding events.
Intended Outcomes	Residents clear about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the respective roles of the organisations involved in and responsible for dealing with flooding events, and (ii) how and where to access assistance and advice before, during and after a flooding event
Approximate Timeframe	3 months
Projected Start Date	25 April 2018

The role and responsibility of councillors in flooding events –

a short questionnaire

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED

1 Are you clear about what your role as a councillor would be if there was a flooding event in your ward?

YES	8
NO	11
NO RESPONSE	11

2 Which of the following would you see as your role or responsibility before, during and after a flooding event in your ward?

Indicate **YES** or **NO** to the following:

Note: Things are often much more complicated than that, but a simple **YES/NO** indication is all that is required here, please. You have the option to make additional brief comments in the free text box below, if you wish.

Councillor's role or responsibility	YES	NO	NOT SURE
(a) To knock on residents' doors to alert them to the danger	18 (60%)	12 (40%)	
(b) To ring up the council to make sure that you know what is going on, so that you can advise residents accordingly	28 (93%)	2 (7%)	
(c) To advise residents to take their own flood prevention actions well in advance of any flooding event (e.g. get their own sandbags)	24 (80%)	4 (13%)	
(d) To help organise the distribution of sandbags to residents who need them	14 (47%)	16 (53%)	
(e) To advise the Environment Agency about the locality	20 (67%)	10 (33%)	
(f) To support residents who are immediately affected by the flood	25 (83%)	0	

(g) To do an audit of residents so that those who are less mobile or vulnerable are identified	17 (57%)	11 (37%)	2 (6%)
(h)			
(i) To fill sand bags whenever you get the chance	9 (30%)	20 (67%)	1 (3%)
(j) To act as a hub of information for the community	29 (97%)	1 (3%)	
(k) To help direct traffic	4 (13%)	25 (83%)	1 (3%)
(l) To visit affected residents and offer support for many weeks or months after a flooding event	27 (90%)	2 (6%)	
(m) To help set up and support Flood Action Groups	26 (87%)	4 (13%)	
(n) To act as a source of information, advice and reassurance to residents, including offering advice about making insurance claims.	15 (50%)	12 (44%)	2 (6%)
(o) To help staff the emergency phone lines to offer advice	9 (30%)	20 (67%)	1 (3%)
(p) To maintain an up to date list of phone numbers for all the relevant organisations	20 (67%)	9 (30%)	1 (3%)
(q) To respond to enquiries from the press	10 (33%)	18 (60%)	2 (6%)

NB All percentages refer to a percentage of the total responses (30)

FLOODING EVENTS –

DOS AND DON'TS FOR WARD COUNCILLORS

As a ward councillor, in relation to flooding or the risk of flooding in your ward:

DO

- 1) Promote and support Flood Action Groups
- 2) Work with FLAGs to carry out an audit of your area so that those residents who are less mobile or vulnerable are identified.
- 3) Advise residents to take their own flood prevention actions well in advance of and flooding event.
- 4) Advise residents to obtain their own sandbags.
- 5) Leave the identified front line responders to get on with their jobs.
- 6) Monitor and keep up to date with emails from the council's communications team.
- 7) Assume the role of 'information hub'.
- 8) Offer support, reassurance and advice to residents.
- 9) Take a proactive support role at rest centres, once they have been established, and with the information bus and staff.
- 10) Visit affected residents and offer support and advice for as long as it takes, following a flooding event.
- 11) Gather feedback and comments from residents, to be contributed to a subsequent debriefing session.

DO NOT

- 1) Ring up the council to find out what is going on during a flooding event, as the phone lines will already be under pressure and this will make things worse. .
- 2) Undertake any role of a front line responder that is already covered by the plethora of emergency plans in place.
- 3) Get in the way.
- 4) Respond to enquiries from the press.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

Committee Meetings

(All meetings are held on Mondays starting at 6pm)

Date	Planned Committee agenda items
2018	
21 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Election of Chairman ii. Election of Vice Chairman iii. Draft report of the Engaging with Children and Young People task group iv. Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statement v. Environmental crime vi. Car parking consultation report vii. O&S Work Programme 2018/19 - update
25 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review of task group recommendations – Food hygiene ii. Review of task group recommendations – Domestic abuse iii. O&S Work Programme 2018/19 – update (including mention of Modern.gov implementation, Phase 2)
30 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group – update report ii. Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee iii. O&S Work Programme 2018/19 - update
10 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statement ii. Outcomes from LGA Peer Review – review of actions taken iii. Digital transformation – update on paperless meetings iv. Statement of accounts v. O&S Work Programme 2018/19 - update
22 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Flooding task group – draft report ii. Entertainment venues iii. O&S Work Programme 2018/19 - update
26 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statement v. O&S Work Programme 2018/19 – update vi. Fees and charges vii. Cost profiles – benchmarking results viii. Treasury management

Date	Planned Committee agenda items
2019	
7 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Business Plan 2019/20 – Leader and Chief Executive to attend ii. Annual Schedule of planned investment in assets iii. O&S Work Programme 2018/19 - update
11 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statement ii. O&S Work Programme 2018/19 - update
18 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Wyre Community Safety Partnership – annual scrutiny review ii. O&S Work Programme 2018/19 - update
29 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. O&S Work Programme 2018/19 - update

Scrutiny task group reviews

Date	Format	Topic
October 2017 to May 2018	Task group - completed	Engaging with children and young people
Started 25 April 2018. Report to Cabinet on 28 November 2018.	Task group - completed	Flooding – the role of councillors.
Started 25 July 2018	Task group - completed	'MyHomeChoice' consultation
To start 30 October 2018	Task group	Public conveniences
	Possible task group	Environmental crime – enforcement and members' role
	Possible task group	Car parking consultation
	Possible task group	Support a sustainable future for the fish processing industry
	Possible task group	Entertainment venues

Updated 11 October 2018