

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 26 November 2018 in committee room 2 Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee members present:

Councillors Ibison, Jones, Ballard, Ellison, Fail, Hodgkinson, Ormrod, Robinson, E Stephenson and Matthew Vincent

Apologies for absence:

Councillors I Amos, R Amos and C Birch

Other councillors present:

Councillor B Stephenson

Officers present:

Clare James, Head of Finance
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

33 Declarations of interest

None.

34 Confirmation of minutes

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 22 October 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

35 Review of fees and charges 2019/20

The Head of Finance, Clare James, presented a report, which detailed the proposed fees and charges for 2019/20.

There were four areas the report about which the committee had particular comments, which would be reported back to the Management Board:

Theatres

Members discussed the proposed £50 increase for non-commercial hirers in the evening and increased funeral reception charge of £50. It was agreed that

the proposed charges be supported, pending the outcome of the theatre performance review. The need for a further review had been agreed at the meeting of the O&S committee on 22 October 2018, and was scheduled to take place at the June committee meeting at which a scrutiny review would be scoped. The task group would be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019/20.

Car parking

Concern was expressed that the proposed £2 overnight charge could encourage more cars to park on the street.

The committee agreed to monitor the impact of the changes for at least six months, after which a scrutiny review of car parking would commence, to include consideration of fees and charges. The committee continued to express their concern that the Resident Parking Scheme was very costly to the council, and welcomed the fact that a report on the Scheme would be forthcoming in the New Year.

The committee would welcome comments about the possible focus of the Scoping Document to be prepared for the scrutiny review of parking (to start in September/October 2019), no later than June 2019. The review would be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019/20.

Replacement containers

The proposed increase of a standard suits of bins from £56 to £66 was supported, but the point was made that a further increase in charges would be necessary when the green boxes were eventually replaced with bins.

Funfairs and circuses

The committee discussed the fees at some length, but agreed to support the proposals.

The Chairman thanked Clare James for presenting her report and for the information provided to the committee.

It was agreed

- (i) That the comments from the committee be fed back to the Management Board when discussing the proposed fees and charges,
- (ii) That a scrutiny task group on Wyre's theatres be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20,
- (iii) That a scrutiny task group on car parking be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20
- (iv) That the report be noted.

The Head of Finance, Clare James, presented a report. She explained that the cost profiles help to show value for money by making direct comparisons with other similar local authorities. The report would be useful in assisting the committee to identify topics that might be considered for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Overall expenditure had increased by 8% to £120.40 per head of population, partly because of the loss of the council's waste cost-sharing agreement with Lancashire County Council although this was slightly offset by an increase in the borough's population.

Councillors made a number of comments, mostly related to the summary which identified four areas as potentially underperforming in relation to our Nearest Neighbour Group of local authorities:

- Parking services
- Highways maintenance
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Public transport

The point was made that the council needs to better understand how much is being spent on unadopted assets. There remained some uncertainty about the ownership of some pieces of land, which made understanding how much it costs to look after more difficult to assess. Clare James said that it was only worthwhile trying to clarify the ownership of significantly large pieces of land in terms of identifying material savings or efficiencies.

There were ongoing issues with vandalism to bus shelters, which was proving to be very costly. Alternatives were being considered to reduce the maintenance costs.

Concern was expressed about the previously reported reduction in the use of Cleveleys bus station, although usage was now increasing again. There was a need to look at options with other partners, to increase income. This could, for example, include the opening of a kiosk on the site.

The Chairman thanked Ms James for her report and helpful comments.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

37 Treasury management strategy and policies - questions and answers

The Head of Finance, Clare James, delivered a short training session on treasury management for the committee, as required by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice.

38 Business Plan 2018/19 - quarterly performance statement

The Service Director Performance and Innovation, Marianne Hesketh, submitted a report.

The committee expressed concern about the number of affordable dwellings for which planning permission had been granted, which was comparatively lower than last year. The committee wondered how the council's policy on affordable housing might be strengthened in some way, to ensure that every effort was made to deliver the number of affordable homes required. The committee requested additional information about the council's strategy to put this right and asked whether our figures were comparable with other authorities. The committee asked in what percentage of cases does the required 30% of affordable housing get delivered.

Reference was made to the recent scrutiny review of MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast letting scheme, and it was confirmed that a review of the implementation of the scheme would be considered by the committee in September 2019, twelve months after the report had been considered by the Cabinet.

A general comment was made about the way in which performance was reported, members wishing the 'Comments and Issues' section of the report to include more about the strategies being put in place to address the issues of concern.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

39 Overview and scrutiny work programme 2018/19

The Service Director Performance and Innovation, Marianne Hesketh, submitted a report.

The Scrutiny Officer, Peter Foulsham, confirmed that the Public Conveniences Task Group had held two meetings to date, with a third to be scheduled shortly.

Councillor Robinson reported on her regular six-monthly meeting with Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group's Head of Communications, Engagement and Development, Kate Hurry. Following the retirement of Dr Tony Naughton from the role, Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group's Chief Clinical Officer, Dr Amanda Doyle, had been appointed to the same role in the Fylde and Wyre CCG. The two CCGs would continue to operate as separate legal entities, although some of the management responsibilities would be shared.

Four members of the committee had been involved in a trial of the Modern.gov committee management system using portable devices.

The point was made that the impact of the introduction of mobile devices on members' IT allowances had not been fully considered, and it was not appropriate for the Independent Remuneration Panel to come to a view about it without the full evidence. Some printing would still be necessary and there would be costs involved in charging devices before use.

A full report on the trial and other issues related to the full implementation of

paperless meetings had been requested by the committee for their meeting on 7 January 2019.

It was agreed

- (i) That Dr Amanda Doyle be invited to a meeting of the committee early in the 2019/20 municipal year.
- (ii) That the report be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 8.04 pm.

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