



Life in Wyre task group Minutes

The minutes of the Life in Wyre task group meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Thursday, 13 July 2017 at the Committee Room 2, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Life in Wyre task group members present:

Councillors Marge Anderton, Lady Dulcie M Atkins, Colette Birch, Patsy Ormrod, Christine Smith, Lynn Walmsley and Val Wilson

Apologies for absence:

Councillor(s) Emma Anderton, Emma Ellison and Matthew Vincent

Others present:

Adam Pearson, Infusion Manager
Sara Ordonez, Policy and Performance Officer
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

10 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Anderton, Ellison and Matthew Vincent.

11 Declarations of interest

None.

12 Life in Wyre Residents Survey - Infusion

Adam Pearson (Infusion Manager) and Sara Ordonez (Policy and Performance Officer) attended the meeting to inform the task group about the way that the Life in Wyre Resident Survey was administered, analysed and interpreted, and to answer questions from councillors.

Sara Ordonez confirmed that the survey had been in place for many years, and was carried out biennially. The number of residents involved in the survey and the organisation administering the survey had changed over the years. The current provider, Infusion, was a service provided by Blackpool Council, which operated on a cost recovery basis. 3,500 residents were randomly selected and sent a hard copy of the survey to fill in on the last occasion in 2016, and 324 responses were received on line via the council's

website.

It used to be mandatory for all councils to carry out a resident survey but since that requirement had been relaxed some local authorities had chosen not to do so. Councils also decided on their own content and format which made it very difficult to make direct comparisons. Wyre, for example, had recently amended its questions on communications, engagement and relationships with Town and Parish Councils.

Mr Pearson confirmed that it was generally an older age bracket that submitted responses to the survey, but the analysis was weighted in order to make it representative. This was a trend that was not unique to Wyre and was related particularly to the postal methodology. The current Youth Mayor was working with Sara Ordonez through the summer to develop a survey similar to 'Life in Wyre' for younger people in order to make sure that their views were gathered as well.

Mr Pearson was asked whether there was any evidence that, because on-line responses were completely voluntary, those responding had some sort of issue with the council, which they wanted to highlight. He responded by saying that there was a greater chance of bias being introduced when respondents self-selected rather than being in a controlled sample, but there was nothing that was statistically significant in this case. Analysis showed that similar concerns were received via the postal survey; the two were not dissimilar.

The Chairman asked whether an easy-read version of the survey was available. She was advised that there was not, but respondents were invited to request assistance to fill in the form if required; officers would be happy to go through the form line by line on the telephone, for example, if that was necessary in particular instances. Sara Ordonez added that provision would be made in response to a specific request (e.g. for translation).

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had previously expressed some concern about reported decreases in satisfaction levels for (i) sport and leisure services and (ii) parks and open spaces. Adam Pearson observed that the reduction from 66% to 63% in satisfaction regarding sport and leisure services was relatively small and statistically insignificant, when considering the margin of error. He added that for parks and open spaces the satisfaction figure was one of the highest. It was also relevant that over time targets moved and expectations were increased which made high satisfaction levels more difficult to achieve. Sara Ordonez suggested that it was important to consider trends over a number of years rather than simply comparing two consecutive results. He added that on some issues it was more challenging to change perceptions, levels of satisfaction not always reflecting the reality of the situation (e.g. dog fouling).

Mr Pearson confirmed, in response to a question from a task group member, that most councils had questionnaires that were eight pages in length. A wide range of services needed to be covered by such a survey. The number of questions (currently 41) could be reduced but only at the cost of gathering

less information. The CCG had recently added their own section, for which they made a financial contribution, and this directly impacted upon the space available for the council's questions. There was no optimum number of questions; it depended completely on what the council wanted to find out. Sara Ordonez added that the questionnaire was made as short as possible for the information sought. Research showed that the length of a survey had a direct impact on the response rate, so a balance was needed.

Councillors asked to see an analysis of the responses broken down by area. This could be accessed on the council's website at

http://www.wyre.gov.uk/downloads/download/829/life_in_wyre_survey_results

The Chairman thanked Adam Pearson and Sara Ordonez for their very helpful and informative contributions to the scrutiny review.

13 Next steps

The task group agreed that they would like to speak to a representative from the Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group at the next meeting, in order to better understand the value of the section of the resident survey dedicated specifically to the CCG. It was noted that the Fylde and Wyre CCG did not cover the whole of the Wyre geographical area, although there were plans to include the rural areas of Garstang and Great Eccleston in the near future. Part of Cleveleys would remain within the Blackpool CCG area, however.

14 Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 1 August at 6pm in CR2.