

## Life in Wyre task group Minutes

The minutes of the Life in Wyre task group meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Thursday, 5 October 2017 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

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### **Life in Wyre task group members present:**

Councillors Emma Anderton, Marge Anderton, Lady Dulcie M Atkins, Colette Birch, Emma Ellison, Patsy Ormrod, Julie Robinson, Christine Smith, Matthew Vincent, Lynn Walmsley and Val Wilson

### **Officers present:**

Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

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#### **20 Apologies for absence**

None.

#### **21 Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **22 Other resident surveys in Lancashire - comparative information**

Peter Foulsham presented a summary of the review of other resident surveys in Lancashire that he had carried out. The summary included information provided by council officers, Infusion and wider internet research. Information from twelve other councils had been obtained.

Since it had become no longer mandatory for councils to carry out a survey according to prescriptive guidelines it was clear that there was no common approach. Consequently making direct comparisons was very difficult, if not impossible. A variety of different methods was used across the county, including telephone surveys, Citizens Panels, stakeholder surveys, issue-based consultation panels and combinations of all of these.

Some councils had not run a resident survey recently (e.g. Lancaster) while others ran them annually (e.g. Burnley). Several others were more like Wyre in that they carried out a survey every two years (e.g. Chorley, Pendle and Ribble Valley).

The content also varied significantly, although Chorley and South Ribble still used survey documents that contained many questions that were very similar to, or the same as, Wyre's. There were no other examples in which the CCG contributed their own dedicated questions.

The Chairman, Councillor Smith, confirmed that the survey cost Wyre £8250, plus staff time, which was not quantified. The contribution received from the Fylde and Wyre CCG was £1600, amounting to 19.4% of the overall cost.

## **23 Life in Wyre resident survey - a critical review**

Councillor Ellison reported that she had undertaken a line-by-line review of the resident survey, with some assistance from Peter Foulsham. Her main conclusions were that some of the questions were very similar, if not repetitive, and that the survey was relatively lengthy.

Councillor Ellison summarised her findings, and questions arising, as follows:

- i. On the whole, a survey of residents is a useful thing to do for a number of reasons - engaging, listening to residents, prioritising service improvements, for example.
- ii. On the whole, the survey as it stands addresses the most salient issues.
- iii. The survey feels repetitive – can duplication be reduced?
- iv. Is the survey too long? Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is, but there are other councils who also use a similar format of a similar length (e.g Chorley, Burnley).
- v. Should the CCG's continued participation in the survey be supported?
- vi. Does the CCG contribute an appropriate (proportionate) amount to the overall cost?
- vii. Should the whole survey document be reviewed?

The point was made that, referring to the Life in Wyre 2016 report, the satisfaction in 'response from our customer contact centre' had reduced significantly (from 60% to 43%) between 2012 and 2016. It was agreed that it would be appropriate that the point be raised by a councillor at a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who might consider it for further investigation.

A number of other comments and suggestions were made by members of the task group, including the following:

- o Lancashire County Council (LCC) were advised of the results of the Life in Wyre survey, on issues relevant to them. It was unclear whether LCC wanted to continue to receive such information.

- It would be helpful to carry out a full review of the content and structure of the survey.
- It was difficult to assess what impact the results of the survey had on the delivery of services.
- The inclusion of questions from the CCG was appropriate so long as their inclusion benefitted both parties.
- The publication of the survey results did not appear to be coordinated between the council and the CCG

## **24 Emerging conclusions**

Following discussion, and taking into account all the evidence that had been gathered during the course of the review, the task group identified the following conclusions:

1. Different councils take very different approaches to resident surveys, some of them choosing not to do one at all (e.g. Lancaster) and others taking a very detailed approach like Wyre (e.g. Chorley, and to a lesser extent, South Ribble).
2. From our review of other Lancashire councils, we have found no other examples in which the CCG has their own dedicated section of the resident survey.
3. A survey of residents is a useful thing to do for a number of reasons - engaging, listening to residents, prioritising service improvements, for example.
4. The survey as it stands addresses the most salient issues.
5. The survey feels repetitive. Duplication could be reduced.
6. The survey feels long and not always an 'easy read'. The content could be rationalised.
7. The number of questions (currently 41) could be reduced but only at the cost of gathering less information.
8. The CCG's participation in the survey is supported.
9. The health questions could include more emphasis on mental health.
10. When information is collated for the benefit of Lancashire County Council there should be some benefit to Wyre in doing so.
11. There is often a very simple and logical explanation for any recorded decrease in satisfaction scores, which was the original concern of the O&S Committee. Many of these changes are not statistically significant. Satisfaction should be monitored over a longer period, not just from one survey to the next. Levels of satisfaction do not always reflect the reality of a situation (e.g. dog fouling).

12. The work of the Youth Mayor in devising a similar survey for younger people should be recognised and could be picked up by a new task group on Engaging with Children and Young People, the first meeting of which took place on Tuesday 10 October 2017.
13. Raising awareness of online services was a priority for both the council and the CCG.
14. Feeding the results from the survey back to respondents and other residents was very important for both the CCG and the council. It would make more sense to respondents and residents, in the opinion of the task group, if this feedback was given as one report.

**25        Next Steps**

The task group requested that one further meeting be arranged, to which the relevant portfolio holder and the Policy and Engagement Manager be invited, to discuss the task group's draft recommendations to the Cabinet.

**26        Date and time of next meeting**

To be confirmed.