



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda

Wyre Borough Council
Date of Publication: 27 May 2016
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Scrutiny Officer
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Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Monday, 6 June 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde

1. **Election of Chairman**
2. **Election of Vice Chairman**
3. **Apologies for absence**
4. **Confirmation of minutes** (Pages 1 - 8)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 April and 27 April 2016.
5. **Local Plan** (Pages 9 - 12)

Rea Psillidou (Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager) has submitted a report updating the committee on the progress of the Local Plan.

Ms Psillidou will attend the meeting with Councillor Pete Murphy (Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder) to present the report.
6. **Localised Council Tax Support (LCTS) - Task Group Report** (Pages 13 - 20)

Councillor Howard Ballard, Chairman of the LCTS task group, will present a report on the task group's work.
7. **Food Hygiene** (Pages 21 - 22)

The Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety, Neil Greenwood, will present a report to the committee.

8. Performance - The Council's Business Plan 2014/15 (Pages 23 - 24)

The Head of Transformation, Marianne Hesketh, has submitted a report, the 4th Quarter Performance Statement 2015/16, January – March 2016.

9. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2016-17 (Pages 25 - 42)

Philippa Davies, Corporate Director of Resources, has submitted a report updating the committee about the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17.

Councillor Michael Vincent will also refer to the council's response to the consultation on Lancashire County Council's budget proposals which was reported to the Cabinet on 20 January 2016.

10. Date and time of next meeting

Monday 4 July 2015 at 6pm.



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Notes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 27 April 2016 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Committee members present:

Councillor R Amos

Councillor C Birch

Councillor Fail

Councillor Hodgkinson

Councillor Ibison

Councillor Ormrod

Councillor Reeves

Councillor Robinson

Councillor Smith

Councillor Matthew Vincent

Councillor Michael Vincent (Chairman)

Other councillors present

Councillor I Amos

Councillor Barrowclough

Councillor Beavers

Councillor I Duffy

Councillor R Duffy

Councillor Bowen, Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder

Councillor B Stephenson

Councillor E Stephenson

Officers present:

Philippa Davies, Corporate Director of Resources

Mark Broadhurst, Service Director, Health and Wellbeing

Ian Munro, Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism

Clare James, Financial Services Manager

Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

Three members of the public also attended the meeting.

OS.101 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Anderton and Jones.

OS.102 Declarations of interest

None.

OS.103 Review of splash pad fees and charges 2016/17 – call in

Councillor Ruth Duffy referred to the call-in request that had been submitted, which detailed the reasons for calling in the portfolio holder's decision to introduce a £2 charge for use of the splash pad facility in Fleetwood.

Councillor Duffy referred to a report prepared by Councillor Vivien Taylor in her role as Street Scene Portfolio Holder, which was considered by the Cabinet on 30 July 2014, which indicated that ongoing revenue costs regarding the facility were expected to be contained within existing budgets. She added that the new facility was described as being a modern alternative to the paddling pool; there was an assumption that an "alternative" to a free facility would also be free to use.

Councillor Duffy reminded members that the contract with the YMCA stated that operational costs and management fees for the forthcoming year would be agreed in November, and she asked Councillor Bowen to explain whether such agreement had taken place, and if not why not. Councillor Duffy asked why it had been left so late before proposing the charges for 2016/17.

Referring to paragraph 5.5 of Councillor Bowen's report, Councillor Duffy challenged the assertion that the initial capital cost of introducing a system to recycle water was considered prohibitive even when, according to Councillor Duffy, there was still £150,000 of Coastal Communities Fund monies available. She went on to say that stated the requirement in paragraph 5.4 of the Portfolio Holder's report, that there be three lifeguards present because of the inclusion of standing water was also inaccurate; the YMCA came under the Royal Life Saving Society's guidance and procedures which said that the number of lifeguards required was solely based on the number of people in the facility.

Councillor Duffy concluded by asking the committee to request that, in the light of the evidence presented, the portfolio holder be asked to reconsider her decision to charge for the splash pad facility.

Councillor Bowen responded by saying that there had never been any guarantee that there would be no fee for the splash pad or, indeed, any other council leisure facility. She also confirmed that the council had consulted with the Fylde Coast YMCA who had been supportive of charging, having favoured a fee of £2 per person and £1 for YMCA members. She added that people expect high quality schemes, which are good value to the council tax payer. The council would continue to subsidise the cost of the facility, and the small charge, as proposed, would help make the scheme more sustainable. It was important to try to

recover at least some of the cost; full cost recovery had not been applied.

In response to questions from members of the committee Councillor Bowen reiterated that it had never been said that a charge would not be made. She also confirmed that consultation had taken place with the YMCA, although not directly with the residents of Fleetwood. The suggestion was made that more detailed information about the consultation process and responses to it could usefully have been included in the portfolio holder's report dated 11 April 2016.

Councillor Bowen went on to explain, again in response to questions, that if the decision was made to not charge for the splash pad there would be an additional revenue cost of £28,000 in 2016/17 a situation that would get worse year on year, which was unsustainable.

Members of the committee voted on the proposal to support the call- in, which was defeated by 8 votes to 3.

RESOLVED that the call-in be not supported.

OS.104 Date and time of next meeting

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the committee be held on Monday 6 June 2016 at 6pm at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

The meeting started at 6pm and finished at 6.54pm.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Notes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 18 April 2016 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Committee members present:

Councillor R Amos	Councillor Reeves
Councillor Fail	Councillor Robinson
Councillor Hodgkinson	Councillor Smith
Councillor Ibison	Councillor Matthew Vincent
Councillor Jones	Councillor Michael Vincent (Chairman)
Councillor Ormrod	

Other councillors present:

Councillor I Amos.

Officers present:

Neil Greenwood, Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

OS.94 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Anderton and C Birch.

OS.95 Declarations of interest

None.

OS.96 Minutes of meeting held on 7 March 2016

In the resolution of minute OS.92 the word "Council" should be replaced by the word "Cabinet".

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 7 March 2016 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to this one amendment.

OS.97 Domestic violence

Debbie Thompson, one of Lancashire County Council's Health Equity, Welfare and Partnerships Managers presented a report about domestic abuse services across Lancashire's twelve districts. The written report summarised the current services that were in place as well as describing the commissioning arrangements and statistics for Wyre in 2015/16. It also outlined the need for partners to work together to review the current service provision and to consider how support may be developed post March 2017. This would need to be in the context of the resource challenges faced by all partners

Ms Thompson explained that her role was within public health and there was a recognition that domestic abuse was a complex issue that affected the life chances of victims, families and children. It required sensitive handling by a range of partners, including police, health, social care, criminal justice and voluntary sector professionals.

A joint commissioning arrangement had been in place for three years until 31 March 2016, including financial contributions from Lancashire County Council, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and district councils. This arrangement had been extended for a further year. It was recognised that all parties faced unprecedented change so it was important to look at how things could be done differently. For example, there was increased focus on preventative work and considering where support could be mainstreamed by partner organisations.

The medium and high risk domestic abuse victim's support service was provided by Letgo in the Fylde area. Between April and December 2015 Letgo received a total of 387 new referrals, which was thought to be a conservative figure in the light of the number of incidents that remained unreported. Councillor Reeves commented that, from her experience, Letgo was not as widely known as it might be, many relevant professionals not having heard of it at all. It was a concern because it appeared that a service was being commissioned about which people knew little. Ms Thompson agreed to investigate this concern further so that Letgo was more widely publicised.

Another concern was that there had been no referrals from Wyre so far for the Lancashire Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme, the reasons for which were unclear. Ms Thompson agreed to look into this and inform the committee of her findings.

In response to a question Ms Thompson confirmed that there was one refuge in Wyre, and a total of nine across the county. There was a risk that some might be closed following the proposal to withdraw funding. Ms Thompson agreed to provide the committee with figures that would give an indication of the occupancy rate of Wyre's refuge.

The Pan Lancashire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board was chaired by DSI Sue Clarke from Lancashire Constabulary; this included membership from the two unitary authorities. There was also a Joint Commissioning Reference Group that covered the joint commission of the twelve Lancashire districts, which met quarterly. It was likely that the governance structure for Domestic Abuse work across Lancashire would be reviewed during 2016/17. Ultimately the responsibility for domestic abuse services across the twelve Lancashire districts lay with the Public Sector Chief Executive's Board.

When answering further questions from the committee Ms Thompson agreed to provide additional information about:

- Clare's law (regarding disclosure)
- The reasons for people choosing not to engage with the Early Support Service for Children and Young People
- Whether there is any subsequent follow up to referrals

Neil Greenwood had received a submission from Fylde Coast Women's Aid in response to the proposed removal of Supporting People funding by Lancashire County Council. He agreed to arrange for copies to be sent to committee members.

Following further discussion the committee agreed that a task group on some specific aspects of the issues presented by Debbie Thompson should be set up. Peter Foulsham suggested that he met with Neil Greenwood and Councillor Reeves to identify the issues that might be covered by a task group, with specific focus on the impact on the residents of Wyre, after which a scoping document would be prepared and an initial meeting arranged.

RESOLVED

- (i) That a task group on domestic violence be set up, and
- (ii) That Debbie Thompson be thanked for her report and her attendance at the meeting

OS.98 Lancashire County Council – health scrutiny

Councillor Robinson, the council's representative on Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee, presented a report about the main topics discussed by the committee in 2015.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

OS.99 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2015-16

The Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report updating the committee about the delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Several proposals for topics to be considered for inclusion in the O&S Work Programme 2016/17 were discussed.

Alderman Brooks had emailed the Chairman to suggest that, in light of the threat to libraries and museums across the county and in the context of the Culture White Paper published in March 2016, the committee might consider it timely to review what residents expected of council run services and how they could be enhanced and made more accessible, a theme that runs through the White Paper. The committee considered this to be a good idea but felt that it would be preferable to wait until the current uncertainty over the closures had reduced.

Councillor Fail suggested that a task group might be convened to review Council Tax Discounts, as he was aware of two residents who were subject to, in his opinion, a lack of fairness. The committee requested that a report be submitted to the meeting to be held in July, so that councillors could consider the proposal in more detail.

Councillor Jones advised the committee that the current food hygiene ratings for Wyre included six premises that had zero stars and thirty-six that achieved one star (maximum five stars). Although it was acknowledged that officers did an excellent job, it appeared that more might be done to facilitate some businesses to take greater responsibility for improving their own ratings. Councillors agreed that this topic was appropriate for a task group review and requested that a report be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the committee in June.

RESOLVED that

- (i) A report on food hygiene ratings be requested for the meeting to be held on 6 June 2016, and
- (ii) A report on Council Tax Discounts be requested for the meeting to be held on 4 July 2016.

OS.100 Date and time of next meeting

RESOLVED that the next meetings of the committee be held as follows:

- (i) Wednesday 27 April 2016 at 6pm at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde, to consider a call in, and
- (ii) Monday 6 June 2016 at 6pm at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

The meeting started at 6pm and finished at 7.14pm.

Wyre Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6th June 2016

Wyre Local Plan Preparation Update

1. Update on current Progress on the Local Plan

i. Housing requirement and distribution.

It was reported in February that the sensitivity testing of the Employment Land Study (ELS) Update was complete and has shown that the Experian forecasts used in The ELS Update are appropriate.

The results of the sensitivity testing for the ELS Update has fed into the update of Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This work is now complete and the unconstrained housing Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) figure of 479 dwellings per annum was reported to full Council in April through the Portfolio Holder's Executive Update.

It was reported previously that in establishing a housing requirement figure for the Local Plan, evidence relating to flood risk & highways will be taken into account. It was also reported that both these pieces of critical evidence have been delayed and they are due to be completed in May. See below under 'Evidence base'.

ii. Infrastructure planning and viability work

There have now been meetings with all infrastructure providers who have been made aware of potential growth in the Borough. Meetings are on-going with Lancashire County Highways, Highways England and Network Rail with regards to highways and transport evidence for the Local Plan, (see Evidence Base below).

As previously reported further meetings with all infrastructure providers will be necessary once the scale and distribution of development has been determined. It is evident from the initial meetings that it may not be necessary to meet with all Infrastructure Providers unless there are issues arising from the level of growth in a particular area. It is expected that meetings will be required with LCC Education Authority and the CCGs.

Work is progressing on updating the viability evidence. This will feed into the Local Plan Viability Assessment.

iii. Evidence base

- The Employment Land Review (ELR) update and sensitivity testing are now complete.

- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Addendums I and II are complete.
- As previously reported, consultants were appointed in February to complete the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level II. An initial table indicating flood risk on the various sites has been produced and the results are feeding into the LP process. The SFRA is due to be completed early June. The Environment Agency, LCC and United Utilities will need to comment/endorse the findings before it can be finalised.
- Progress is being made in relation to highways evidence. In March it was agreed that further modelling work was necessary to assess the cumulative implications on Junction 3 on the M55 from growth in Wyre and Fylde. A meeting took place on 19 May when both LCC and Highways England reported the final findings. This provides more certainty on the final position with regards to highway constraints on growth and subject to identifying specific improvements required to the highway network and their deliverability, enables us to determine the scale and distribution of development.
- It was reported in February that the Green Belt Review was complete. This was an error. The Study was completed and published on the Council's website in May.
- The Rural Affordable Housing Needs Study is now complete.
- It was reported in February that consultants have been commissioned jointly with Blackpool and Fylde Council to update the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in light of new Government Policy and in particular the new definitions of a 'Gypsy' and 'Traveling Showperson' published in 2015. There have been delays due to difficulties in contacting travellers at the site at Hardhorn. The study has been completed and we are currently reviewing the draft report.
- Following the Ministerial Statement published in June 2015 we are now required to identify areas suitable for wind energy developments in the Local Plan. In February it was reported that we are reviewing existing evidence to establish what if anything further is needed. It was concluded that no further evidence is required in order to comply with the requirements of the ministerial statement.
- Work has progressed on the Local Centre Study update. The boundaries of all town, district and local centres have been reviewed.
- Following a meeting with Heritage England, we are now advised that we will have to carry out heritage assessments for allocations in the Local Plan. This is an additional task not previously programmed. It will need to be undertaken once allocations have been identified. Ecological and landscape assessments will also be necessary in relation to specific allocations.

iv. Development Management policies.

Work is progressing in drafting the Development Management Policies. Draft policies were circulated internally at the end of February for comment. Currently meetings are being held with Development Management and the Head of Planning Services to finalise the wording.

v. Duty to Co-operate meetings

As previously reported, meetings have now been held with all adjoining local authorities to establish strategic cross boundary issues. The possibility of Wyre not being able to meet in full its Objectively Assessed Needs for housing because of constraints has been raised with all adjoining authorities. A formal

letter has been sent to the Chief Executives of Fylde and Blackpool Councils regarding the housing situation and reminding them that all three authorities have a collective responsibility with regards to the OAN needs on the Fylde Coast.

A letter has also been sent to the Chief Executives of Preston and Lancaster City Councils.

vi. Sustainability Appraisal

The next stage in the process would be to assess various housing scenarios as well as the draft policies and proposals in the draft Local Plan.

2. Issues affecting progress

- As previously reported establishing the Local Plan housing requirement has been affected by delays in progressing the highways and flood-risk evidence.

Completing the highways evidence is critical. Any further delay would be a concern and it would be difficult to ensure submission before the 31 March 2017. Once the highways constraints are known draft allocations can be determined. The intention is to have a draft plan ready by early June so that various assessments can be carried out including the Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment. These can take six to eight weeks.

- Attempts to meet with Natural England for over a year have not been successful. A meeting did, however, take place on 18 May. NE's requirements in relation to Pink Footed Geese are a concern and could delay the process. At present we only have third hand information from colleagues in other LAs as to what NE's requirements are.
- As previously reported the Housing and Planning Bill is going through parliament and will introduce further planning reforms. These might have direct implications for the local plan and/or divert resources. Two main matters that will require consideration are 'Self Build' and 'Brownfield land registers'. In addition, there might be further work required to establish the general need for 'caravans and park homes' and also 'starter homes' as part of the affordable housing requirement.
- As previously reported progressing the Local Plan requires engagement with various organisations including the County Council, adjoining local authorities and many infrastructure providers. These are time consuming tasks and we depend on a timely response from the various organisations. For example, to prepare the Infrastructure Plan we will require input from all the infrastructure providers. Work with infrastructure providers can not progress to conclusion until we have established the scale and distribution of development across the Borough.
- There have been two enquiries regarding the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan at Barton and Dolphinholme. Both of these settlements extend across the borough boundary and both have been instigated by the parishes in Preston and Lancaster respectively. Neither has progressed to actual submission yet, however once there is a submission to the Council to designate a Neighbourhood Plan area, the Council will have to comply with regulations and this will divert resources away from the Local Plan.

3. Critical work in the next three months

- Completing the highway evidence work and determining the Local Plan housing requirement and the distribution of housing.
- Completing work in relation to the Development Management Policies and Settlement boundaries.
- Prepare a draft Local Plan and begin the Sustainability Assessment incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment, (SA/SEA); Habitat Regulations Assessment, (HRA); Viability Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, (HIA) and Equality Impact Assessment, (EIA).
- Commence work to finalise the Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Progress compliance with the duty to co-operate with regarding to OAN requirement in Wyre.
- Progress other Evidence work including background papers

4. Overall Programme

The Government has indicated its intention to intervene in LAs who have not progressed their Local Plan to a certain stage by the 31 March 2017. Following a meeting with DCLG it is clear that we need to expedite the preparation of the Local Plan. A report will be taken to Full Council in July to amend the Local Development Scheme (i.e. Local Plan project plan). The timetable will be considered by Full Council in July.

Réa Psillidou
Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager

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Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item no.
Councillor Howard Ballard, Chairman of the Localised Council Tax Support task group	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	6 June 2016	6

Localised Council Tax Support task group

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To report the findings of the Localised Council Tax Support (LCTS) task group to the committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the task group's work and report be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1 An update of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 8 February 2016 referred to Localised Council Tax Support as a potential topic for review.
- 3.2 An independent review, chaired by Eric Ollerenshaw had been commissioned by the Government. Despite the deadline for Mr Ollerenshaw's consultation being 12 January 2016, it was agreed that it would still be valuable for the committee to undertake a scrutiny review which would contribute to developing the council's policy on the subject prior to the scheme for 2017/18 being agreed in October 2016.
- 3.3 The scope of the review was agreed, and the scoping document is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The task group, comprising six councillors, met on two occasions with Philippa Davies and Pete Mason (Head of Contact Centre) advising the group on both occasions.

4. Key issues and proposals

- 4.1** As part of the 2012 Welfare Reform Act the national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme was abolished and in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 2012 local authorities were required to introduce Localised Council Tax Support (LCTS) schemes from April 2013.
- 4.2** Support for Council Tax is now offered as reductions within the Council Tax system with claimants of state pension credit age receiving a discount equal to that which they were previously entitled to under the former council tax benefit scheme thereby ensuring that they experience no reduction in support as a direct result of the reform.
- 4.3** Localisation provided local authorities the flexibility to design Council Tax Support schemes for working age claimants taking into account the needs of vulnerable groups and the importance of supporting work incentives. Following a consultation exercise, the Council agreed at their meeting of 29 November 2012 to adopt a scheme which qualified for transitional grant for one year ensuring that:
- Those working age claimants who would be entitled to 100% support under current Council Tax benefit arrangements pay between zero and no more than 8.5% of their net Council Tax liability;
 - The taper does not increase above 25%;
 - There is no sharp reduction in support for those entering work – for claimants currently entitled to less than 100% support, the taper will be applied
- 4.4** At the meeting of the Full Council on 22 October 2015 the Resources Portfolio Holder (Councillor Alan Vincent) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report on proposals for the continuation of the current localised council tax support scheme originally implemented on 1 April 2013 for the 2016/17 financial year. It was resolved:
- i. That the current localised council tax support scheme be continued into 2016/17 financial year with the additional maximum percentage contribution from working age claimants being more than 8.5%, and
 - ii. That the original policy be confirmed recognising that it included a number of specified amounts used to calculate entitlement which might change in line with up ratings published by the Department of Work and Pensions, that there might also be minor adjustments to the scheme should further guidance be received from the Department of Communities and Local Government and that the roll out of Universal Credit would ultimately replace existing benefits.

- 4.5** The task group considered the value of the council tax debt payable by LCTS claimants and the debt recovery process, which often involves obtaining a Liability Order at a cost of £75 and subsequent attachments to earnings. There were a number of cases that were impossible to collect and the methods for collection were, in reality, very limited.
- 4.6** Former Member of Parliament for Lancaster and Fleetwood, Eric Ollerenshaw, undertook a review, at the request of the Government, into how local Council Tax support schemes were working across the country and how LCTS might be incorporated within Universal Credit. The review team published its report in March 2016, and councillors considered the report and its recommendations.
- 4.7** The report recommended:
- “I conclude that LCTS should not be moved into Universal Credit at this time. No-one has prepared for such a move, which would be complex and disruptive to both central and local government at this critical phase in the Universal Credit timetable. I also believe it would cause unnecessary financial risk to councils and bring confusion and disruption to LCTS recipients”.
- 4.8** Members noted that the report made it clear that councils had implemented the government’s localisation of council tax support effectively and professionally. All councils had schemes in place and running by April 2013 despite initial tight deadlines and the ongoing problem of late announcements from government.
- 4.9** The report made three recommendations to councils:
1. Where possible, councils should work in partnership in designing future schemes. Councils should consider options around joint procurement of software providers, and joint schemes with neighbouring councils, where appropriate.
 2. Councils should ensure their debt collection practices remain in line with latest Government guidance, and that their processes are proportionate to the debt involved. Councils should consider signing up to the Citizens Advice “Council Tax Arrears: Good Practice Protocol”, developed in partnership with the Local Government Association.
 3. Departments and teams within councils should work closely with each other and with partner organisations to develop a holistic approach to LCTS council tax collection, identifying and supporting people who are struggling to pay.

4.10 Members considered the following options for modifying the council's scheme:

1 Introduce a band cap.

By capping at, for example, Band F, only 9 claimants currently living in Band G properties would no longer be eligible for LCTS, saving £1,787 for Wyre Council. Having viewed the snapshot of data at 18 April 2016, most claimants (82%) are in Bands A and B.

2 Increase the minimum payment to a level comparable with other Lancashire authorities.

Working age Wyre residents currently pay a minimum 8.5%. If that was increased in line with Fylde's rate of 22.7%, for example, there would be the potential to collect an additional £602,000, £69,000 of which would be Wyre's share. However, it was noted that there are already difficulties in collecting the current 8.5%.

3 Implement a minimum or maximum award

There are currently 72 claimants who receive less than £100 and the introduction of a minimum award of £100 would save the council £488. If a maximum award of, say £2,000 was introduced this would only affect 7 claimants and save a total of £252 for Wyre.

4 Implement a reduced savings value (currently £16,000)

There are 7 claimants with capital in excess of £15,000 so capping eligibility to those with below £15,000 in savings would save Wyre £637.

5 Removal of the Second Adult Rebate

There are currently 75 claimants who receive a total of £21,830.13 council tax support. Of these, 38 are of pensionable age receiving a total £11,605.96 council tax support. Therefore, it is estimated that the removal of the Second Adult Rebate for working age claimants would save £10,224.17 with the Wyre element at 11.6% being £1,186.

It was noted that some other modifications would not be able to be modelled without the purchase of additional software. The task group took the view that the council's scheme is as good as it can be at the current time. There is a danger of reducing eligibility for LCTS which then increases the council tax payable and ultimately results in increased write offs meaning the council is no better off.

4.11 Members were concerned about residents who already have difficulty in paying and they did not want to recommend changes that might unreasonably exacerbate that situation. The council operates a hardship scheme, employs two debt advisors and offers Discretionary Housing Payments.

4.12 There have been many changes to the regulations for Housing Benefit in the past year. There are benefits in amending the council tax support scheme to mirror the Housing Benefit changes, essentially bringing the two schemes more closely together again and ensuring that the council administers one scheme using the existing software. In order to make those changes there will need to be a consultation process commencing in June/July, providing consultees with a number of alternatives.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Peter Foulsham	01253 887606	peter.foulsham@wyre.gov.uk	19 May 2016

List of appendices

Appendix 1 Localised Council Tax Support task group scoping document

arm/o&s/cr/15/0606pf1

Task Group - Scoping Document

Localised Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS)

Review Topic	Localised Council Tax Support												
Chairman	Councillor Howard Ballard												
Group Membership	Councillors Ian Amos, Rita Amos, John Hodgkinson, Ann Turner and Shaun Turner												
Officer Support	Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer												
Purpose of the Review	To consider Wyre's localised council tax support (LCTS) scheme and in particular the minimum level of contribution, with a view to identifying potential options for change.												
Role of Overview and Scrutiny in this Review (mark all that apply)	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Holding Executive to account – decisions</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Existing budget and policy framework</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contribution to policy development</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Holding Executive to account – performance</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community champion</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Statutory duties / compliance with codes of practice</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	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 type="checkbox"/>	Statutory duties / compliance with codes of practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 type="checkbox"/>												
Statutory duties / compliance with codes of practice	<input type="checkbox"/>												
Aims of Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To understand the current scheme ○ To review the key differences between Wyre's scheme and the other Lancashire authorities ○ To consider the impact of the scheme on individuals in Wyre ○ To consider future options and their implications 												
Methodology	<p>Interview witnesses</p> <p>Website research</p>												

Scope of Review	Any benchmarking undertaken should be with Lancashire authorities only.
Potential Witnesses	Corporate Director of Resources Head of Contact Centre
Documents to be considered	LCTS scheme Website information LCTS case law
Risks	
Level of Publicity	Low
Indicators of a Successful Review	Councillor 'ownership' of the scheme.
Intended Outcomes	Scheme reviewed – first implemented 2013/14.
Approximate Timeframe	2 months
Projected Start Date	February 2016

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 6 June 2016 – Briefing Paper

Food Safety Report

Wyre has 1149 food businesses of which 89% are broadly compliant (ie rated 3,4 or 5)

The food hygiene rating scheme extends only to establishments supplying food direct to consumers. This includes restaurants, cafes, takeaways, sandwich shops and other places where people eat food prepared outside of the home, as well as food retailers. The aim of the scheme is to provide information on hygiene standards to consumers in circumstances where they are making a choice about eating or purchasing food.

The data on Food Standards Agency's website is uploaded from Wyre's database every 2 weeks so data is continually changing as officers carry out inspections, for example we now only have 3 zero rated premises.

When an officer carries out an inspection and identifies a business with a 0, 1 or 2 rating, correspondence ie a report of visit is left on site for priority work and then a letter or notices are sent with a revisit date and/or other enforcement action is taken at that time. An officer will ensure that the premises are broadly compliant (ie satisfactory) before it is left until the next programmed inspection or complaint. 0,1,2 businesses are more closely monitored as these businesses are inspected more frequently. The FSA require councils to tackle their broadly non-compliant premises through a range of enforcement strategies in addition to letter writing such as hygiene improvement notices, simple cautions, prohibition notices and prosecution. Businesses that don't comply are targeted with increased enforcement although we are encouraged by the Food standards agency to have a graduated approach to enforcement.

However the rating continues to be that given at the time of the initial inspection because those are the rules of the scheme as detailed in the Food Hygiene Rating Brand Standard, issued by the Food Standards Agency and agreed by the Council when we signed up to the scheme.

Food business operators have a right to request a re-visit for the purposes of re-rating if they have taken action to rectify the non-compliances identified at the time of inspection. This request for a revisit has to be made by the business and details about how to do this are sent out with every food hygiene letter. If a request for a revisit is received and businesses have provided sufficient evidence that the required improvements have been made, an unannounced inspection will occur between 3-6 months of the request and a new food hygiene rating will be given. It is the policy at Wyre that for all businesses that request a re-rating a new inspection is carried out. Ratings at this inspection however can go up or down. Businesses are only allowed one request for a re-rating visit per inspection period

The food hygiene rating scheme is only part of the inspection process. Food businesses once inspected are scored by officers using a scoring mechanism set out by the Food Standards Agency. The first part of the score is determined by the risk of a premises ie will be higher for businesses such as those cooking and preparing food and a lot lower for those selling prepacked food. The second part of the score ie hygiene, structure and cleanliness and management systems determines what food hygiene rating is given. The total score determines how often we carry out a programmed visit. Programmed visits can occur every 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, 24 months, or 36 months as determined by risk and compliance of the business.

If businesses choose not to request a revisit they will be inspected at their next programmed visit.

Since 2009 we have run two projects with poorly performing businesses with resources funded by the Food Standards Agency. The FSA provided coaching available for safer food better business pack training we invited 92 businesses to take part. 62 took part. In 2014 again with FSA funding coaching sessions of 2.5 hours were provided for 9 poorly performing takeaway businesses.

Some ideas as to how we can help poorly performing premises-

We are currently working with the website designer at Wyre to make our web page more easily accessible for food businesses to apply on line for a rerating inspection as currently the correct forms are not easy to find, download or complete on line. We also feel it would be beneficial to have a web page as to 'how businesses can improve their rating'

The food team have recently had training in 'active communication' and it is our intention to change our written communication to food businesses to help promote improvements, once time and resources allow.

arm/o&s/cr/16/0606 item 7

Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item No.
Marianne Hesketh, Service Director, Performance and Innovation	Overview & Scrutiny	6 June 2015	8

<p>Council Business Plan – 4th Quarter Performance Statement 2015/16</p> <p>January – March 2016</p>

Summary

The dashboard style report (attached) gives a quick reference to quarterly progress against the council’s business plan projects and measures, along with commentary where issues have been identified.

During the period from January – March 2016 (quarter 4), good progress has been made, with 10 of the 14 Business Plan projects advancing as planned. Four of the projects are experiencing delays according to their intended timescales i.e. the Local Plan; the redevelopment of the sites of Poulton Youth and Community Centre and Garstang Business Centre; Garstang Leisure Centre improvements and the Engagement Campaign. Further information on these are summarised in the ‘Comments and Issues’ section of the attached report.

Of the measures that have comparable data eight are showing an improvement when compared with the previous year. There are no measures in decline and the remaining measures are either not significantly different to the previous year’s performance, or they are not directly comparable to data held. Data was unavailable for two of the measures. Further details on these are referred to under the ‘Comments and Issues’ section.

Full progress information on the business plan projects and measures can be accessed online, via the hyperlinks embedded within the report, by clicking on the relevant project or measure title. *(Please note these links do not work for the general public, however information will be made available on request)*

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Key:
G = On schedule/target;
A = Minor issues;
R = Major issues
B = Complete/Ended

i = no target set
O = No Information
X = Not Started

Direction is based on previous year performance

▲ Increasing (green = improvement, red = worsening)
 ◀▶ No significant change or comparable data unavailable
 ▼ Decreasing (green = improvement, red = worsening)

Projects	
We will improve economic growth, housing and employment through delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new Local Plan A new Local Growth Plan 	A G
We will deliver the 'Five For Fleetwood' Project – Euston Park, Skate Park, Splash Pad, Marine Lake and Ecology zone	G
We will restore the Mount and its Gardens in Fleetwood	G
We will facilitate redevelopment of the sites of Poulton Youth and Community Centre and Garstang Business Centre	A
We will construct the Rossall Sea Defence Scheme	G
We will work with partners to reduce obesity levels and encourage increased physical activity	G
We will deliver improvements to Garstang Leisure Centre	A
We will support vulnerable families	G
We will enhance the home improvement service to help people to maintain independence	G
We will develop a programme of work to reduce social isolation focusing particularly in the rural areas of Garstang, Cabus and Preesall	G
Engagement Campaign/Shaping Your Neighbourhood - working with Elected Members, Parish and Town Councils and our communities	A
We will work with Regenda to improve the West View Estate in Fleetwood as part of the 'Love West View' project	G
We will work with DWP and our communities to fulfil our role as a delivery partner for Universal Credit (UC)	G

Comments and Issues - Projects

Local Plan – The analysis and summarising of 753 representations from the Issues and Options Document public consultation is now complete. The additional sensitivity testing required for the Employment Land Study (ELS) and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has delayed establishing the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing. The Highways Authority and Highways England are carrying out various modelling work to ascertain the capacity of the strategic and local highway network, and further work has been necessary in relation to Junction 3 on the M55 taking into account proposals in the Fylde Local Plan. A draft report of the highway evidence is expected end of April. Consultants have been commissioned to analyse and complete the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Consultants have also been commissioned jointly with Blackpool and Fylde Council to update the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show people Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), following the new definition of terms. The work is taking longer than anticipated because of difficulties in contacting the travellers at Hardhorn. A report is now expected in April.

We will facilitate redevelopment of the sites of Poulton Youth and Community Centre and Garstang Business Centre – the Clinical Commissioning Group are no longer interested in Poulton Youth and Community Centre and so new options for letting the property are being pursued. Garstang Business Centre and High Street Car Park are listed as assets of community value. The moratorium period on both is due to expire on 6 July 2016.

We will deliver improvements to Garstang Leisure Centre - The plan for the leisure centre was delayed but has now been agreed. A short consultation is due to commence in May at both the leisure centre and the swimming pool with work planned to commence at the end of July.

Engagement Campaign – The community projects funded through Shaping Your Neighbourhood (SYN) continue to progress well. The engagement campaign will be considered alongside the review of Shaping Your Neighbourhood which is due to be conducted by the new Policy and Engagement Manager. The Overview and Scrutiny task group's report on building stronger relationships with Town and Parish Councils was reported to [Cabinet](#) on 23 March 2016 and work is being progressed to make the council's website more user friendly.

Measures	Actual	Direction
Number of additional houses built (net cumulative)	306	▲
Number of businesses registered with Wyred Up (cumulative)	4,682	▲
Number of jobs, placements and training opportunities created (Wyre Council involvement) cumulative	160	▲
Number of affordable dwellings built	37	◀▶
Number of visitors (annual)	4.6 million	▲
Excess weight in adult (obesity & overweight measure)	65.2% (12/14)	◀▶
Excess weight –child 10-11 years(obesity & overweight measure) ANNUAL	34.6% (14/15)	◀▶
Number of families assisted	O	-
Number of referrals and assessments dealt with by Care & Repair (cumulative)	4,155	◀▶
Households assisted via affordable warmth projects (cumulative)	382	◀▶
Social isolation numbers referred and assisted	X	-
Percentage of neighbourhood led projects successfully delivered	63%	▲
Number of people assisted with claiming Universal Credit (UC)	0	◀▶
Number of volunteer hours offered	7,354	▲
Annual Efficiency Savings Delivered	£353,322	▲
% Capital Spend funded by external funding	91%	▲

Comments and Issues – Indicators

Number of families assisted - Lancashire County Council have reported that over the 5 years of Troubled Families to 31 March 2016 there have been 8670 families worked with. The district figures are not available to date.

Social Isolation numbers referred/assisted – New strategic work is underway with North Lancashire CCG, Fylde and Wyre CCG and Lancashire County Council. This includes: pulling a Community Directory together with Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre CVS (funded by Fylde and Wyre CCG) that will be used to refer patients/clients to appropriate groups / activities: work with North Lancashire CCG on a new neighbourhood based model of working for Garstang and proposed new work streams of activity to be supported by Lancashire County Council. It is too early yet to be able to capture the number of clients referred and assisted.

Number of people assisted with claiming UC – As in the previous quarter, UC claimants have not presented themselves to the council for assistance. However the council has provided support to the Universal Credit Service Centre on 124 cases this quarter.

* Subject to external grant funding

PLEASE NOTE: The [hyperlinks](#) give further information on each of the projects and measures (this is available with council intranet access only). Further Information on the projects and measures is available for members of the public by request via mailroom@wyre.gov.uk or the Engagement Team: 01253 891000



Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item No.
Corporate Director of Resources	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	6 June 2016	9

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17 – update report

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the draft scoping document for the libraries task group be approved.
- 1.2 That the draft scoping document for the domestic violence task group be agreed.
- 1.3 That the committee consider setting up a task group on food hygiene ratings, to commence in June 2016.

2. Current work

2.1 Libraries task group

On 18 May 2016 Lancashire County Council commenced a twelve-week consultation on their Property Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in November 2015. The consultation relates to premises that are proposed as being no longer required to deliver the county council’s future pattern of service delivery, which includes the following:

- Cleveleys Library and Children's Centre
- Northfleet Library
- Thornton Library

The Chairman has suggested that a scrutiny consultation group be convened as a matter of some urgency to investigate the likely impact of the proposed library closures and to contribute to Lancashire County Council’s consultation. A revised draft scoping document is attached at Appendix 1.

Fifteen councillors attended the group’s first meeting on Wednesday 25 May 2016, which Lancashire County Council’s Head of Asset Management also attended.

2.2 Domestic violence task group

The committee agreed on 18 April 2016 to set up a task group on domestic violence. Further discussions have taken place involving Neil Greenwood, Wyre's responsible officer, and Councillor Natalie Reeves as an interested representative of the committee and a revised draft scoping document has been prepared (see Appendix 2). It is intended that the task group will commence in the first half of June, councillors reviewing and amending the draft scoping document at their first meeting, if necessary.

3. Future task group work

3.1 Work Programme 2016/17

A number of topics for inclusion in the O&S Work Programme 2016/17 have been suggested by members of the committee and others in recent months. Those topics are included in a draft document that details possible task groups and reports to committee for the committee's consideration (see Appendix 3).

A proposal was made at the same meeting for a task group to be convened, in the light of recently published data which highlighted low food hygiene ratings for a significant number of establishments in the borough. Recent press reports both locally and nationally have also reflected the level of public concern. A report was requested by the committee, prior to a task group being established. The committee will have considered that report under a previous item on the agenda, but agreement about commissioning a task group on this subject will be required.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer	01253 887606	peter.foulsham@wyre.gov.uk	26 May 2016

List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules	May 2011	Council's website

Appendices

Appendix 1	Libraries task group – Scoping Document – Draft
Appendix 2	Domestic Violence Task Group - Scoping Document - Draft
Appendix 3	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Topics 2016/17
Appendix 4	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme May 2016 – April 2017 – Summary

arm/o&s/cr/16/0606pf1

Libraries Consultation Group – Draft Scoping Document

Review Topic	Library closures – consultation response
Chairman	Councillor Matthew Vincent
Group Membership	Councillors E Anderton, Lady Atkins, Ballard, C Birch, R Duffy, Fail, Hodgkinson, Ingham, Jones (Vice Chairman), Kay, Ormrod, B Stephenson, A Turner, S Turner and Walmsley (total 16)
Officer Support	Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer
Purpose of the Review	To prepare a response on behalf of Wyre Council to the consultation on Lancashire County Council's Property Strategy, with particular reference to the proposed closures of the Thornton, Cleveleys and Northfleet (Flakefleet Primary School) libraries.
Role of Overview and Scrutiny in this Review (mark all that apply)	<p>Holding Executive to account – decisions <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Existing budget and policy framework <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Contribution to policy development <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Holding Executive to account – performance <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community champion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Statutory duties / compliance with codes of practice <input type="checkbox"/></p>
Aims of Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address the three questions posed by LCC's consultation • To understand who uses library services • To consider the wider social benefits of libraries • To consider how the closures of libraries will affect the residents of Wyre • To consider alternative ways of maintaining a service
Methodology	Evidence from witnesses Reports and other documentation Consultation with users of the service
Scope of Review	The review will be limited to responding to LCC's consultation about the proposed closures of the Thornton, Cleveleys and Northfleet (Flakefleet Primary School) libraries.
Potential Witnesses	Lancashire County Council Head of Asset Management Residents and residents' groups Other interested individuals

Documents to be considered	Lancashire County Council Cabinet reports, 4 February 2016 and 12 May 2016 Lancashire County Council Property Strategy – Cabinet, November 2015
Risks	Unrealistic level of public expectation. Duplication with other initiatives.
Level of Publicity	Potential to be high
Indicators of a Successful Review	Wyre's response to LCC's consultation drafted and submitted.
Intended Outcomes	Lancashire County Council to take into account Wyre's representations before coming to a conclusion about the implementation of their Property Strategy.
Approximate Timeframe	4 - 6 weeks. Consultation closes Sunday 14 August 2016.
Projected Start Date	25 May 2016

arm/o&s/cr/16/0606pf1 App1

Domestic Violence Task Group - Scoping Document - Draft

Review Topic	Domestic violence
Chairman	To be agreed
Group Membership	To be confirmed
Officer Support	Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer
Purpose of the Review	To review the current provision for domestic violence services in Wyre and to make recommendations for improvements that could affect Wyre residents.
Role of Overview and Scrutiny in this Review (mark all that apply)	<p>Holding Executive to account – decisions <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Existing budget and policy framework <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Contribution to policy development (See 'Scope of Review', below) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Holding Executive to account – performance <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community champion <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Statutory duties / compliance with codes of practice <input type="checkbox"/></p>
Aims of Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To understand the funding arrangements for domestic violence in Lancashire and Wyre ○ To understand the use of domestic violence services in Wyre ○ To identify gaps in services ○ To consider the impact of potential closures of services, including refuges on the residents of Wyre ○ To review the effectiveness of communication between partner agencies and to make recommendations
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consideration of documents, reports and performance statistics ○ Interviewing witnesses at meetings ○ Considering anonymised case examples
Scope of Review	<p>Noting that services for domestic violence are primarily the responsibility of Lancashire County Council and not Wyre Council, the review will not focus on other closely related services, including mental health, children's services or education, for example.</p> <p>The focus will be solely on the delivery of the primary domestic violence service in Lancashire</p>

Potential Witnesses	Wyre Council officers Resources Portfolio Holder Lancashire County Council officers Fylde Women's Aid Letgo Lancashire Constabulary Regenda Citizens Advice Bureau
Documents to be considered	
Risks	
Level of Publicity	Low
Indicators of a Successful Review	
Intended Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement to services • More efficient use of domestic violence funding • Wyre councillors having better understanding of domestic violence arrangements in Lancashire • Improved communication between partners • Identification of alternative solutions within the context of the current funding cuts
Approximate Timeframe	3 months
Projected Start Date	June 2016

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DRAFT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME TOPICS 2016-17

TO BE INCLUDED AS TASK GROUPS	
Domestic violence	O&S Committee on 18 April 2016 agreed to set up task group. To commence in May/June 2016. Focus on a couple of very specific issues that relate to services in Wyre.
Food hygiene	Proposed by Cllr Jones. Supported by O&S Committee on 18 April 2016. Concern about 36 establishments in Wyre having 0-1 star. Food establishments need to be helped to improve their standards. Report to committee in June 2016. To commence in June/July 2016.
Citizens Advice Bureau	Review of current provision needs to be carried out in Oct/Nov for recommendation about further funding with effect from May 2017 (see scrutiny review report to Cabinet 21 January 2015).
Left Coast	Review the three years of the three-year agreement What were the objectives? What were the intended outcomes? Have these been achieved? What have we committed to by agreeing to continue to fund? What do we expect to get out of it? Start by requesting report to committee (July 2016?), and follow up with scrutiny review.
Review of resident parking permit scheme	Needs to be done as soon as there is sufficient data from new car parking machines and fobs. Plan to commence review six months after implementation of new machines.
Review of customer complaints process	See report to Cabinet, 15 June 2016

TO BE INCLUDED AS REPORTS TO COMMITTEE	
Review of council tax discounts and exemptions	Cllr Fail's proposal. Report to committee July 2016.
Audit report - safeguarding	Report awaited from Phil Threlfall. PF to check current progress and status with HR before requesting report to committee.
Review of council's treasury management arrangements	Statutory requirement. November/December 2016.
Budget scrutiny - fees and charges, capital growth bids	Annual consideration – likely to be considered by reports to committee in October/November 2016
Value for money profiles	Review of the comparative profiles previously produced by the Audit Commission. October/November 2016.

Revised 25 May 2016

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme May 2016 – April 2017 - Summary										Updated 26 May 2016			
	06-Jun	04-Jul	01-Aug	12-Sep	10-Oct	07-Nov	05-Dec	09-Jan	06-Feb	06-Mar	10-Apr		
Work Programme update report													
Community Safety Partnership (to include PCC)													
Performance review (quarterly)													
Local Plan progress report													
LCC Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee													
Holding the Exec to account for forthcoming decisions													
Leader (Business Plan)													
Planning and Economic Development PH													
Task Groups Reporting to Committee													
Localised council tax support													
Libraries (consultation)													
Domestic violence													
Food hygiene ratings													
Other work and reports to committee													
Food hygiene ratings													
Waste contract annual performance plan													
Council tax discounts													
Left Coast													
Fees & charges, capital bids													
VFM profiles													
Treasury management													
Review Engaging with Communities TG recs													
Review CCGs TG recs													
Review Town and Parish Councils TG recs													



Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item no.
Cllr Michael Vincent, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Philippa Davies, Corporate Director of Resources	Cabinet	20 January 2016	8

Lancashire County Council budget proposals – response to consultation

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To report the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding Lancashire County Councils proposals to Cabinet.

2. Outcomes

- 2.1 Feedback provided to Lancashire County Council indicating Wyre's comments on their budget proposals.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as detailed in this report, be submitted to Lancashire County Council as Wyre Council's contribution to stage one of the budget proposals consultation.

4. Background

- 4.1 The council received a letter from County Councillor Jennifer Mein, Leader of Lancashire County Council, dated 10 December 2015, inviting partners to comment on Lancashire County Council's budget proposals. The information in paragraphs 4.2 – 4.4 of this report refer directly to information contained in that letter.
- 4.2 The letter explained that the County Council continues to face an unprecedented financial challenge. An analysis recently conducted based on current spending and forecast demand for services, showed that the County Council would not have sufficient financial resources to meet its statutory obligations by April 2018, even if it no longer continued to deliver any of its non-statutory services. The review also showed that the County Council will need to rely heavily on its reserves in order to set

a balanced budget for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

- 4.3** Over the next five years to 2020/21 Lancashire County Council needs to make savings of £262m on top of those agreed within previous budget processes.
- 4.4** The County Council's Cabinet considered its initial budget proposals for 2016/17 to 2020/21 on 26 November 2015. Organisations and the general public have now been invited to comment on these proposals by 18 January 2016, prior to the meeting of Full Council on 11 February 2016 when the budget is set.
- 4.5** The council understands that there will be a second stage of consultations beginning later in January when the County Council will be consulting in more detail on specific proposals, to which Wyre Council intends to contribute. The consultation process and deadlines afford partners very little opportunity to engage in any positive dialogue or to make fully considered and evidenced responses, which will limit the value of the consultation.
- 4.6** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee convened a special meeting on 7 January 2016 to consider the likely implications of the County Council's budget proposals on the residents of Wyre and to formulate a draft consultation response.
- 4.7** Whilst accepting the fact that local authorities are having to deal with significant financial challenges, which will inevitably result in some cuts, Wyre Council would hope that the number of compulsory redundancies be kept to a minimum and that the impact on any residents of the borough be mitigated. It further hopes that the protection of the public will be maintained at an appropriate level (regarding trading standards and youth offending, for example). These over-arching comments apply to all the County Council's proposals under all the service headings, even where specific reference is not made to a particular service in this response from Wyre.
- 4.8** Numerous references are made in the Lancashire County Council documentation to the use of reserves. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was very disappointed that there was no indication of the extent of the County Council's reserves or the earmarked use of those reserves to meet future redundancy costs. Such information would have assisted the committee with their deliberations.
- 4.9** Councillors also commented on the lack of information and detail in some of the options presented by the County Council, and the consequent difficulty in being able to make meaningful comments on some of the proposals. It would have been helpful to have explanations about the thinking behind some of the proposals, with information about deadlines for their implementation, which would have made it easier to offer helpful suggestions.

4.10 Wyre Council is seriously concerned that the cumulative effect of the proposed cuts could be devastating to many of Wyre's residents, particularly older residents without good support networks of friends and family and those who are socially isolated or at risk of being so. Whatever can be done to delay the implementation of any of these proposals would be welcomed by the council.

5. Responses to budget proposals

5.1 Flood risk

Members were concerned about any reduction in this area especially in the light of the recent flooding incidents. There should be no cuts at all under this heading until there is a clear indication from the Government about how it intends to address this issue in the medium- and long-term.

5.2 Highway management

There is concern that a reduction in investment in our highways now will result in greater costs in the future. Further cuts will only exacerbate an already unsatisfactory situation.

Many councillors currently receive complaints about the poor state of roads and pavements. A reduction in investment will result in an increase in insurance claims and result in a longer-term increase in overall cost.

The council would like further clarification about what is meant by reducing the frequency of some services "on a needs only basis" and how priorities will change.

5.3 School transport

The council believes that there should be free bus travel to faith schools.

5.4 Public health general

Wyre Council opposes the termination of any of these services. It is hoped that alternative ways of designing and providing these services will be agreed, possibly with the support of the third sector. The loss of any of these services will have an impact on Wyre residents, particularly those who are less well off. Wyre's emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles would also be undermined, with likely longer-term consequences and costs. Early intervention and prevention is key to reducing costs in the long term.

Councillors were also concerned about cost shunting impacting on other public sector organisations in respect of a number of the County Council's proposals, and for public health and the Youth Offending Team in particular.

5.5 Youth Offending Team

The council is concerned that the service provided by the Youth Offending Team will be reduced, with significant impact upon individuals, Wyre residents and local communities. Options for the pooling of resources should be explored.

5.6 Public Transport

The council strongly opposes the planned cessation of all subsidies for bus services, particularly if this means that the services will no longer run.

All buses to Knott End are subsidised and if they cease there is a very significant risk of many Wyre residents becoming socially isolated. The 2C service, for example, is a particularly crucial link for Knott End residents to get to Blackpool Victoria Hospital, via Poulton-le-Fylde.

The inter-relationship of proposed cuts, including not only the ending of subsidies for bus services but also transport to day centres and the withdrawal of funding for the Knott End Ferry has the potential to be devastating for many people who, particularly in the rural areas, will feel completely abandoned.

Wyre intends to carry out some more detailed analysis of the impact of these budget proposals in time for the second stage of consultation by reviewing information identifying the transport network and the number of passengers travelling.

5.7 Libraries service

The council takes the view that there are a number of different options that should be explored to protect the provision of libraries.

Whilst recognising that 74 libraries is a high number the value of libraries to local communities must not be underestimated. They are much more than simply a source for borrowed books; they provide IT facilities, which are required by some DWP applicants, for example, and they fulfil a valued role in reducing social isolation.

Consideration should be given to hosting libraries in shared buildings in order to maintain the service and reduce costs.

In some parts of the country libraries are run by volunteers and this model should also be considered for Lancashire.

As another example, York's libraries are now run by a new social enterprise to give staff greater scope to work with the local community and more say in how services are delivered.

Whatever the final decision of the County Council, there should be a period during which any community group could have the chance to put a plan together to save a library.

5.8 Cultural services – Lancashire museums

Fleetwood Museum has been a volunteer-led facility for the past ten years. It has worked well and is a model that could be replicated elsewhere.

Closure of the museum would result in a loss of

- (a) part of the cultural identity of Fleetwood
- (b) a valued educational resource, and
- (c) a tourist attraction

The council takes the view that the closure of the Fleetwood Museum would result in a relatively small saving at a significant cost to Fleetwood and the local community.

5.9 Waste recycling and cost sharing

The council is concerned that the impact of the withdrawal of cost sharing for waste services will be passed on to its residents via new charges e.g. for the collection of green waste.

5.10 Prevention and early help fund

Prevention and early intervention should be a fundamental building block for the County Council's strategy; by intervening early savings will be made in the longer term, particularly when one considers that those who become the focus of early intervention are likely to become those who are the heaviest users of publicly funded services.

The council is concerned that vulnerable people will be at risk of being unable to access services that they require.

5.11 Knott End Ferry

Wyre council notes that the current contract for the Fleetwood to Knott End Ferry runs until March 2017.

The council would strongly oppose the closure of the Fleetwood to Knott End Ferry. The inter-relationship of proposed cuts, including the ending of subsidies for bus services and the cuts to transport to Day Centres, has the potential to be devastating for many people who, particularly in the rural areas, will become isolated.

5.12 Transport to Day Centres

The council is very concerned about the impact that these proposals will have on social isolation. The council opposes these cuts to services, the effect of which will be exacerbated by the additional proposals to withdraw subsidies to bus routes and close the Fleetwood to Knott End ferry. The council believes that people who are the most vulnerable will be those who will be affected the most. The impact of these proposals will be dramatic for both service users and carers alike.

5.13 Countryside Services

The council appreciates the need for Lancashire County Council to make cuts but hopes that it will maintain a role in encouraging and coordinating community groups and volunteers to look after as many of the recreation and forestry sites as possible. The council would like to see an organised programme to assist volunteers to take on this role.

Wyre council also expresses concern at the likely impact that the cessation of this service will have upon the health and well-being of the borough's residents.

5.14 Blackpool Tramway

The council notes that the likely impact of the proposal to cease financial support for Blackpool Tramway maintenance is that it will have a detrimental effect upon the financial viability of the Blackpool tram service. The Blackpool Tramway provides a vital link along the Fylde coast, which is an essential service for local residents, particularly those in Fleetwood, as well as being a valued tourist facility. This proposal should be reconsidered in the light of the wider proposed decimation of transport services already addressed in this report (subsidised bus services, Fleetwood to Knott End Ferry and transport to Day Centres).

5.15 Bus stations

Councillors were concerned that there was a risk that, with the proposed increase in departure fees, the use of bus stations by bus operators would decrease or cease altogether.

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	There are no financial implications linked to this report.
Legal	There are no legal implications linked to this report.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	✓
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	✓
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
climate change	x
data protection	x

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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
Lancashire County Council Budget Proposals: Consultation	Thursday 7 January 2016	http://www.wyre.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/505/overview and scrutiny committee

arm/o&s/cr/16/0606pf1 (cabinet report)

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