



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 4 July 2016 at the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee members present:

Councillor I Amos
Councillor R Amos
Councillor Fail
Councillor Hodgkinson

Councillor Ibison
Councillor Ormrod
Councillor Reeves
Councillor Michael Vincent (Chairman)

Officers present:

Mark Broadhurst, Service Director Health and Wellbeing (for agenda item 5 only)
Pete Mason, Head of Contact Centre (for agenda item 4 only)
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

12 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Anderton, Jones, Robinson, Smith and Matthew Vincent.

13 Declarations of interest

None.

14 Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 6 June 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

15 Council Tax Discount

The Head of Contact Centre, Pete Mason, responded to some questions that had been raised previously by Councillor Fail. Councillor Fail quoted two examples which, he suggested, demonstrated unfairness with the current council tax discount scheme. The Chairman reminded the committee that they had been provided with copies of four reports on council tax discount and exemptions that had been considered by the Full Council since November

2012.

In response to a question from Councillor Reeves, Mr Mason confirmed that house owners in such circumstances as had been described by Councillor Fail, would be entitled to apply for an Exceptional Hardship Payment.

Councillor Fail proposed that further consideration might be given by the committee to what is fair and what is not fair, and he said that he would be interested to know how many other examples, such as those that he had described, were known to other councillors. Mr Mason offered to provide Councillor Fail with information about different models and scenarios. Cllr Fail asked specifically for details of a scenario where a 25% empty discount rate was available.

Mr Mason confirmed that any council tax discount or exemption would only be withdrawn six months after probate had been granted, provided that the property remained unoccupied and substantially unfurnished.

RESOLVED that Mr Mason be thanked for attending the meeting and for his contribution to it.

16 Lancashire County Council - Supporting People Consultations

There were five open consultations regarding Lancashire County Council's withdrawal of Supporting People funding and Mark Broadhurst, Service Director Health and Wellbeing, summarised each in terms of the likely implications for service users, the council and the wider community.

It was clear, Mr Broadhurst asserted, that people with a broad spectrum of vulnerabilities could potentially be affected. The County Council were proposing to cut all non-statutory spending. There would be some funding set aside as a Prevention and Early Help Fund but the criteria for eligibility were yet to be determined although it was clear that it was intended that it was likely to be for one-off support rather than for the longer-term.

Mr Broadhurst explained that he was involved in a number of discussions locally with other stakeholders including providers, health, social care and other District Council colleagues. Service providers were considering how costs could be minimised, if alternative sources of funding could be found or if there was the potential for services to be shared across the locality. If the cuts went ahead at the scale proposed then there would be additional cost implications for organisations such as health, police, District Councils and Lancashire County Council services such as Adult and Children's Social Care, although the scale of the additional cost burden was very difficult to predict at this stage.

The committee took the view that the council's responses to the five outstanding consultations would be made very effectively by Mr Broadhurst and his colleagues and councillors would make no separate submission.

RESOLVED that Mr Broadhurst be thanked for attending the meeting and for his contribution to it.

17 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2016-17

Councillors were updated about the progress of the Libraries consultation group, which had two further meetings arranged. At the first one, on Monday 11 July, members would be informed about the way in which York City Council was now delivering a library service, which was based on a Community Interest Company model. A final meeting would take place on Wednesday 20 July to discuss the group's conclusions.

The committee was also reminded that a task group on domestic violence had been established, the first meeting to take place on Tuesday 19 July at 6pm.

A draft scoping document for a task group on food hygiene would be considered by the committee on 1 August, the task group likely to commence in September.

The Chairman reminded members that suggestions for topics for future scrutiny review would be welcomed.

18 Date and time of next meeting

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the committee be held at 6pm on Monday 1 August 2016 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.54 pm.