

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 6 March 2017 at the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

---

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee members present:

Councillor I Amos  
Councillor R Amos  
Councillor E Anderton  
Councillor C Birch  
Councillor Fail  
Councillor Hodgkinson

Councillor Ibison  
Councillor Ormrod  
Councillor Robinson  
Councillor Matthew Vincent  
Councillor Michael Vincent

### Officers present:

Jane Murray, Community Safety Officer (for Agenda Item 4)  
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

### Others present:

Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder (for Agenda Item 4)  
Councillor Lady Atkins  
Councillor B Birch

---

### 68 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jones, Reeves and Smith.

### 69 Declarations of interest

None.

### 70 Confirmation of minutes

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 6 February 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

## **Performance - The Council's Business Plan 2016-17**

The Service Director Performance and Innovation, Marianne Hesketh, submitted a report, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Performance Statement 2016/17, October – December 2016.

The committee expressed concern about the increase in the number of out of work benefit claimants, which they accepted was a measure that was largely beyond the council's control. They also expressed disappointment about the reduction in satisfaction with the borough's sport and leisure facilities and parks and open spaces when compared with the Life in Wyre results from 2014.

Councillors wished to understand the reasons for these changes and wondered what actions might be taken by the council to reverse the trends. A suggestion was also made that an additional performance measure might be included in order to monitor whether and how the council was meeting its open space requirements.

The Chairman expressed concern that the town centre vacancy rate continued at 7.78% and requested that the committee be advised about how the figure was calculated and what the relevant definitions were (e.g. extent of 'town centre', definition of 'a vacancy'). The committee noted that the proposed changes to Business Rates were likely to have an impact on vacancy rates.

### **RESOLVED** that

- (i) the committee takes action to better understand the Life in Wyre survey, with particular reference to changes in satisfaction levels for (a) parks and open spaces and (b) sport and leisure facilities, and
- (ii) the report be noted.

## **Annual Community Safety Report**

Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder, introduced the report. He reminded the committee that there was a minimum requirement that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) be scrutinised annually.

Councillor Berry drew members' attention to the CSP's priorities for 2016/17 and said that the summary of criminal activity recorded in Wyre was no different from other parts of the county in terms of trends.

Members of the committee asked a number of questions about test purchasing and concluded that the system appeared to be working well.

Councillor Berry clarified a point about Dementia Buddies that had been included in the report submitted by the Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety.

The Dementia Buddy which was being purchased for Wyre was a Guardian Angel Device that helped people with dementia to remain independent, but safe within the community by providing them with near-field communication (NFC) enabled wristbands, badges or hang tags. The devices were encoded with the individual's first name and an emergency contact number, which could be clicked and called when scanned with a mobile phone if they became lost or disorientated.

Councillor Berry agreed, at the request of Councillor Ibison, to suggest that community safely events held by the neighbourhood policing teams took place in the east of the borough as well as in other areas.

Councillor Berry concluded by saying that Wyre was doing a lot of effective work with partners to help deliver the priorities identified by the Police and Crime Commissioner, with a particular focus on early intervention and dealing with people with complex needs.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **73 Report of the Domestic Abuse Task Group**

The task group Chairman, Councillor Natalie Reeves, submitted a report which was introduced by Councillor B Birch in the absence of Councillor Reeves. Councillor Birch said that this had been a very detailed and thorough review but urged his colleagues to accept that the council's commitment to dealing with and preventing domestic abuse needed to continue despite the review having been completed.

Councillor Birch emphasized that all elected members should ensure that they familiarize themselves with and become more aware of the issues surrounding domestic abuse and highlighted the task group's recommendation that all councillors be offered and encouraged to take part in domestic abuse training by the end of March 2018. Councillor Birch said that, in his opinion, it had been disappointing that only one male councillor took part in the scrutiny review – it had been something of a missed opportunity.

Councillor Michael Vincent, referring to the fact that Councillor Reeves had indicated that she had chosen to resign as a councillor through ill-health, said that Councillor Reeves had been a valued member of the committee who had made a very positive contribution to its work. She would be missed, he said, a sentiment echoed by all councillors present.

**RESOLVED** that the task group's report be endorsed and sent to the Cabinet for their consideration.

### **74 Report of the Food Hygiene Task Group**

The task group Chairman, Councillor Kerry Jones, submitted a report which was introduced by Councillor Julie Robinson in the absence of Councillor Jones.

Councillor Robinson explained that the section on premises risk rating trends (page 11) needed to be amended in the light of information that had only recently come to the attention of the task group. The committee agreed that a short explanatory caveat be included in the report at that point.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the section of the draft report on premises risk rating trends (page 11) be amended by the inclusion of an explanatory caveat, and
- (ii) the task group's report be endorsed and sent to the Cabinet for their consideration.

## **75 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2016-17 - update report**

The Chairman, Councillor Michael Vincent, introduced the report that had been submitted by Marianne Hesketh, Service Director Performance and Innovation.

A new parking strategy was being prepared by officers. The Chairman reported that he had had discussions with the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder and had been assured that the draft strategy would be forthcoming for consideration by the committee by 31 May 2017.

The Chairman confirmed that a response to the Parliamentary Select Committee inquiry into overview and scrutiny in local government had been prepared by a Working Group of the committee comprising seven members. The response would be submitted before the deadline, which was Friday 10 March 2017.

Councillor Fail, who was not a member of the Working Group, said that he did not agree with two statements made in the response. The Chairman invited the committee to vote on the Working Group's response, all those present voting in support of it except Councillors E Anderton and Fail who voted against. It was confirmed that when the response was submitted it would clearly state that it was the response of a Working Group of the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman advised the committee that the Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had asked whether a mechanism could be set up by which the CCG could keep the committee better informed about important developments. It was agreed that Councillor Julie Robinson and the Scrutiny Officer would meet periodically with the CCG's Head of Communications, Engagement and Development and feed any relevant information back to the committee.

The Chairman proposed that the committee consider setting up a task group on the Life in Wyre survey in order to give members the opportunity to consider the implications of and possible explanation for the reported reduced

satisfaction in (a) parks and open spaces and (b) sport and leisure facilities.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the response from the committee's Working Group to the Parliamentary Select Committee inquiry into overview and scrutiny in local government be endorsed and submitted by the deadline date, Friday 10 March
- (ii) Councillor Robinson and the Scrutiny Officer arrange to meet with the CCG's Head of Communications, Engagement and Development twice a year and report and significant issues to the committee
- (iii) A task group on the Life in Wyre survey be set up, the draft scoping document to be submitted for the committee's consideration on Monday 10 April 2017.

**76      Date and time of next meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the next meeting of the committee be held at 6pm on Monday 10 April 2017 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 7.01 pm.