

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 10 April 2017 at the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee members present:

Councillor I Amos

Councillor R Amos

Councillor C Birch

Councillor Fail

Councillor Hodgkinson

Councillor Ibison

Councillor Jones

Councillor Ormrod

Councillor Robinson

Councillor Smith

Councillor Matthew Vincent

Councillor Michael Vincent

Officers present:

Marianne Hesketh, Service Director Performance and Innovation

Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

Others present:

Councillor Vivien Taylor, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder

77 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E Anderton.

78 **Declarations of interest**

None.

79 **Confirmation of minutes**

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

80 **Scams and doorstep crime**

Amanda Maxim, Trading Standards Manager, Lancashire County Council, made a presentation to the committee.

Ms Maxim summarised Lancashire County Council Trading Standards' priorities. A very broad service was provided, with any crimes that sought to exploit vulnerable people being prioritised.

Scams were frequently changing. Phishing scams were very common, as were scams on dating sites, which often went unreported. It was estimated that 30% of scams took place on the web or via email.

Phone scams were the second most common type of scam in the UK (approximately 29%) and had included:

- Callers pose as banks & send couriers to pick up your bank card
- Money transfers, inheritance, claim a prize, up-front payments required
- Calls to reduce your council tax
- Energy calls - for a free boiler or loft insulation
- Medical survey calls
- Unsolicited phone call from 'computer firms' to help fix computer problems

Older people were often the targets of medical survey scams.

Mail scams remain common, with people being advised they had won a prize or the lottery, or were due to inherit some money. Clairvoyant scams targeted lonely and vulnerable people.

The average cost to each scam victim was just under £2,000 and the average scam victim's age was 73.5 years. Scams could be reported to Lancashire County Council by email or via their Facebook page.

Doorstep crimes also tended to target older people, often repeatedly, with information being exchanged between rogue traders and professional criminals. Offenders developed the ability to understand the thought processes and behaviour patterns of older people. Prolific offenders committed in the region of 500 crimes on average before detection.

Lancashire County Council has been successful with a number of prosecutions recently, although the age and vulnerability of witnesses sometimes made prosecutions more difficult. Offenders were often given suspended prison sentences in addition to the requirement to carry out unpaid work.

Scams and doorstep crimes had a very negative impact on victims, who were often unable to talk about what had happened. The stress and pain of victimisation often resulted in depression, withdrawal and isolation from family and friends, as well as deterioration in physical and mental health. In some cases victims had considered, attempted or committed suicide.

Ms Maxim suggested that scams and doorstep crimes were not something that could be tackled effectively by any one agency; a joined up approach was required as victims were often already known to care agencies.

Lancashire County Council's doorstep crime strategy included:

- Rapid response (2 officers available for immediate call out)
- Target hardening (working with victims)
- Mediation/disruption
- Banking protocol (banks to identify unusual withdrawals)
- Theatre presentation
- Police and partner training
- Rogue Trader Week
- Roadside checks
- Early warnings
- No Cold Calling zones (16 currently in Wyre)
- Safe Trader Scheme

Ms Maxim explained that Lancashire was working with the National Trading Standards Hub, which aimed to identify scam victims so that they could be visited by Trading Standards officers. There were about three hundred people in Wyre on the list and Ms Maxim and her team aimed to visit each one.

The Chairman, Councillor Michael Vincent, said that the committee's work with the Clinical Commissioning Groups had been very positive and Ms Maxim agreed that it would be helpful for councillors to speak directly to the CCG to ensure that they were involved in helping to identify socially isolated older people.

The Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder, Councillor Vivien Taylor, said that she would promote a local campaign on scams and doorstep crime. Ms Maxim confirmed that it would be possible to identify hotspot areas in Wyre so that any campaign could be properly targeted.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Ms Maxim be thanked for her very relevant and informative presentation,
- (ii) Councillor Julie Robinson be requested to raise the subject of scams and doorstep crime at a forthcoming meeting with the Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group,
- (iii) The Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder be supported in her suggestion to carry out a local campaign on scams and doorstep crime.

81

Review of task group recommendations - building stronger relationships with Town and Parish Councils

Marianne Hesketh presented a note summarising actions taken on the recommendations made, and accepted by the Cabinet, by the Building Stronger Relationships with Town and Parish Councils Task Group. Ms

Hesketh reported that the council now had an improved relationship with the Towns and Parishes and channels of communication had been opened up and shown to be more positive, specifically involving the Policy and Engagement Manager.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

82 Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Julie 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 2016. Councillor Robinson explained that the most significant discussions during the year were about the Accident and Emergency Unit at Chorley Hospital.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

83 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2016-17 - update report

The Chairman, Councillor Michael Vincent, explained the background to the proposed task group on the Life In Wyre Residents' Survey and he introduced the draft scoping document.

RESOLVED that a task group on the Life in Wyre Residents' Survey be commenced in May.

84 Date and time of next meeting

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the committee be held at 6pm on Monday 22 May 2017 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.53 pm.