



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 27 January 2020 in committee room 2 Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

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### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee members present:**

Councillors Ibison, Matthew Vincent, I Amos, R Amos, Ballard, Collinson, Cropper, E Ellison, Fail, Leech, Longton, Minto and O'Neill

### **Apologies for absence:**

None received.

### **Other councillors present:**

Councillor David Henderson, Leader of the Council (for item 4)

Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder (for item 6)

### **Officers present:**

Garry Payne, Chief Executive (for item 4)

Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities (for items 4 and 5)

Carl Green, Head of Engineering Services (for item 6)

Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

Emma Keany, Governance Trainee

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

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### **1           Declarations of interest**

None.

### **2           Confirmation of minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 2 December 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **3           Business Plan 2020-21**

The Leader of the Council (Councillor David Henderson), the Chief Executive (Garry Payne) and the Corporate Director Communities (Marianne Hesketh) attended for this item. Marianne Hesketh submitted a report.

The Strategic Narrative, agreed at Full Council on 1 December 2016, had been refreshed, primarily to reflect the council's climate change responsibility. The principle of "working green" was to be incorporated in everything that the council did. However, Marianne Hesketh explained that there had been no fundamental changes.

The Business Plan had a slight change of focus under each of its three headings. The 'People' theme was more focused on empowering communities and not just health and wellbeing, the 'Economy' theme was more focused on town centres and 'Place' on climate change. Garry Payne added that the refreshed Plan was more strategic than had previously been the case; a number of the previous projects were now more appropriately included in Service Plans.

Councillor David Henderson made the point that within Lancashire, Wyre was leading on climate change, compared with other councils and that Wyre was encouraging other local authorities to respond to the climate emergency. Efforts were continuing, through the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone, to get more jobs in Wyre for local residents, to help reduce Wyre's carbon footprint.

A number of points were raised by members of the committee and questions asked. With responses, these included:

1 In terms of measures, it would be helpful to include the number of residents employed in Wyre and the length of the daily commute.

Response – travel to work patterns were measured every ten years within the national Census.

2 The Plan stated that one of the measures of progress would be "reduction in council carbon emissions" – should this measure not be about reducing carbon emissions in Wyre as a whole?

Response – only matters over which the Council had direct control should be included (childhood obesity, for example, had been removed as a measure for this reason).

3 Current baselines were needed for, for example, the number of trees planted, so that progress could be planned and measured.

Response – noted.

4 Concern was expressed about the loss of open space within the borough, and that this should be protected in the future.

Response – the up to date Local Plan would address this issue in the future. However, the Council was not in a position to rectify historical developments, although Wyre was one of the few councils in Lancashire to be actively investing in its open spaces.

5 Anti-social behaviour was a significant issue which might be helpfully

scrutinised by a task group.

Response – this was a valid point, but was a matter to be considered under the agenda item about the O&S Work Programme.

6 The revised Strategic Narrative referred to ensuring that the council's activities were net-zero carbon by 2050. This should actually be done as soon as possible and 2050 should only be viewed as an end date.

Response – noted.

The Chairman thanked Councillor David Henderson, Garry Payne and Marianne Hesketh for presenting the revised Business Plan and for the way in which they responded to the points raised.

#### **4 Scrutiny of performance**

Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities, responded to comments and questions about the role of the committee in scrutinising the Business Plan's Quarterly Performance reports. The committee made the following remarks:

- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) should be measured in terms of the number of cases successfully dealt with.
- ASB was such a significant issue that the committee might consider commissioning a task group on it during 2020/21.
- The progress of projects, as reported, was not always closely mirrored by the progress of the measures supporting the project.
- The measures that were reported sometimes changed from one quarter to the next, making a like-for-like comparison very difficult.

Marianne Hesketh made the following comments:

- Not all measures were measured quarterly, so not all were reported on in every report to the committee.
- A spreadsheet detailing the reporting frequency and showing past performance would be made available to members.
- Sometimes it was very difficult to identify things to measure. Some of the projects did not have measures.
- There was little in the Business Plan to make it clear which projects were designed to address the issue of ASB, apart from, "*Work with partners to improve the aspirations and resilience of our young people through programmes such as Positive Footprints*".

The Chairman thanked Marianne Hesketh for her comments, which had helped the committee's understanding of how it might scrutinise the performance and delivery of the Business Plan.

#### **5 Flooding Task Group - review of implementation of recommendations**

The Head of Engineering Services, Carl Green, submitted a report and, with

the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder Councillor Roger Berry, presented it to the committee.

The point was made that some councillors had not been contacted regarding an on-going flooding event on 29 September 2019, although it had been agreed by the Cabinet on 28 November 2018 that a recommendation be approved for a system to be put in place to ensure that ward councillors were provided with all the relevant information about flooding events, in a timely fashion. Carl Green responded by saying that there was a lot of highways flooding that occurred at the same time; arrangements were in place to inform ward councillors once the plan was triggered, but on occasions there was a delay in triggering the plan. Members made the point that it was vital that they were kept informed with up to date information in such circumstances, in order to be able to respond helpfully to residents.

It was further noted that the current status of flooding was not always made available on the council's website, and this needed to happen reliably.

Councillor Roger Berry confirmed that flood alerts were not always received regarding roads and Wyre was reliant on others providing that information.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Berry and Carl Green for their report and for attending the meeting.

## **6 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20 - update report**

The Corporate Director Resources (Clare James) submitted a report updating the committee about the delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20. The Scrutiny Officer (Peter Foulsham) provided a verbal update to the committee.

The three current task groups were progressing well and were likely to complete their reviews by the end of April.

The Management Board had recently had further discussions about the possibility of setting up two Sub-Committees of the O&S Committee. They had taken the view that matters relating to health and wellbeing were already adequately dealt with, within the Work Programme. They suggested that consideration might be given to dedicating one O&S Committee meeting each year specifically for matters relating to the police, crime and community safety. The committee agreed with this suggestion and that the March meeting, which had annually reviewed the Wyre Community Safety Partnership, would be dedicated for this purpose, with effect from 2020/21.

Members of the committee were invited to give some consideration to the possible contents of the O&S Work Programme 2020/21. There had already been several suggestions about possible topics (including town centres, the CAB and anti-social behaviour) but more detailed discussion would be required between now and the Committee meeting scheduled for 27 April 2020. The Corporate Management Team had been invited to comment and all councillors would also be consulted.

Councillors Emma Ellison and Howard Ballard had recently attended a two-day course entitled '*Leadership Essentials: Effective Scrutiny*', and they were asked to provide feedback to the Committee at the March meeting.

The Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, Roy Saunders, was due to retire at the beginning of April. Peter Foulsham had been appointed to the post with effect from 6 April 2020. Arrangements would be made about officer support to the Committee in due course. In the interim, Emma Keany would cover the next two meetings, on 16 March and 27 April 2020 respectively.

The Chairman thanked Clare James and Peter Foulsham for the report, and confirmed that O&S Committee meetings held in March each year would focus exclusively on the Community Safety Partnership and wider police, crime and community safety matters, commencing in the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 7.23 pm.

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