



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

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## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman 2021/22: Councillor John Ibison**

“Wyre’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee had many successes this municipal year; however, the impact of the pandemic was still very apparent. Members and officers have worked extremely hard to return to in-person meetings and ensure they are safe and Covid-19 secure.

The year 2021 saw the completion of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny’s (CfGS) review of Wyre’s scrutiny function; subsequently, the committee completed work to address some of their recommendations such as an Action Plan, a Work Programme Prioritisation Guide and a Work Programme Workshop. Member development is very important to the committee; therefore, the committee and the Chairman have been on a substantial amount of training throughout the year, as touched on in this report.

In conclusion, Wyre’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to add value and do its part to ensure the best for the borough’s residents.

Many thanks,

Cllr Ibison (Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee).”

## SCRUTINY AT WYRE

The scrutiny function acts on behalf of the community to improve services and decision-making inside and outside the council. This is achieved through in-depth task group reviews, evidence sessions on a topic or questions to service providers, Cabinet members or partners.

### Structure of Scrutiny:



### Committee membership 2021/22:

- 14 members of the council
- 11 Conservative councillors, 2 Labour councillors, and 1 Wyre Alliance councillor
- On 7 June 2021, Councillor Ibison was re-elected as the Chairman of the committee and Councillor Matthew Vincent was re-elected as Vice Chairman

### Functions:

The committee will discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 or Regulations under Section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000.

In addition, the committee will, as per the Constitution:

- assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of its budget and policies;
- challenge the boundaries of existing policies and think creatively about possible new policies or solutions to problems;
- conduct research, community and other consultation and to consider possible options;

- make a positive contribution to the improvement of services;
- liaise with external organisations operating in the area, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;
- review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Cabinet or individual portfolio holders and by Council officers where decisions have been delegated, both in relation to individual decisions and over time;
- review and scrutinise the performance of the Cabinet in relation to the Council's policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or the Council arising from the scrutiny process.
- undertake the Council's statutory requirements to scrutinise the Crime and Disorder partnership.
- consider any Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) submitted to it by the Service Director Performance and Innovation. If appropriate, the Committee will make recommendations to the Cabinet, in accordance with the procedures set out in the Council's CCfA Scheme (Part 5.10).

## SCRUTINY'S DEVELOPMENT

### **Centre for Governance and Scrutiny review – completed:**

At the beginning of 2021, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) carried out an evaluation of Wyre Council's scrutiny function.

The purpose of the review was to give the council an external perspective on how well the current model of scrutiny is functioning, and fulfilling its essential role of policy shaping, holding the Cabinet to account and reviewing issues of importance to local communities. CfGS undertook a review of the current scrutiny arrangements, involving two days of evidence gathering through conversations with members and officers on 25 and 26 January 2021. In addition, they observed an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, reviewed key documents, and created and analysed a member survey.

CfGS staff who conducted the review:

- Ian Parry – Head of Consultancy
- Kate Grigg – Senior Research Officer

They met with 13 Members and eight Officers, including the Council Leader, Deputy Leader, members of Cabinet, Group Leaders, Scrutiny Chair, Members of the Scrutiny Committee, the Council's Chief Executive, Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team as well as Governance and Democratic Services Officers.

Since its completion, the committee have reflected on this review and implemented options for improvement. An action plan was created detailing some improvement action points. A Workshop Programme Prioritisation guide was created in order to assist members with deciding items for review. Members have also attended internal and external training sessions and webinars to guide them with this development. This will be explained in more detail below.

As recommended in the CfGS report, members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Management Team attended a Work Programme Workshop hosted by Democratic Services. This workshop involved a shortlist of priority topics for the next 12 months according to an agreed selection criteria and rationale. Those topics were then filtered through an agreed scoring system to provide a final shortlist for consideration in the work programme.

### **Work Programme prioritisation:**

An effective scrutiny work programme should focus on strategic corporate objectives and on making a difference for the residents of Wyre. Prioritisation is essential, and scrutiny benefits from an agreed methodology to filter and select topics for the work programme.

A criteria was created for councillors when thinking about what is appropriate to put in the O&S Work Programme and this will now be used going forward. This also highlighted that a topic should not be considered for review if it has been reviewed during the current four-year political cycle.

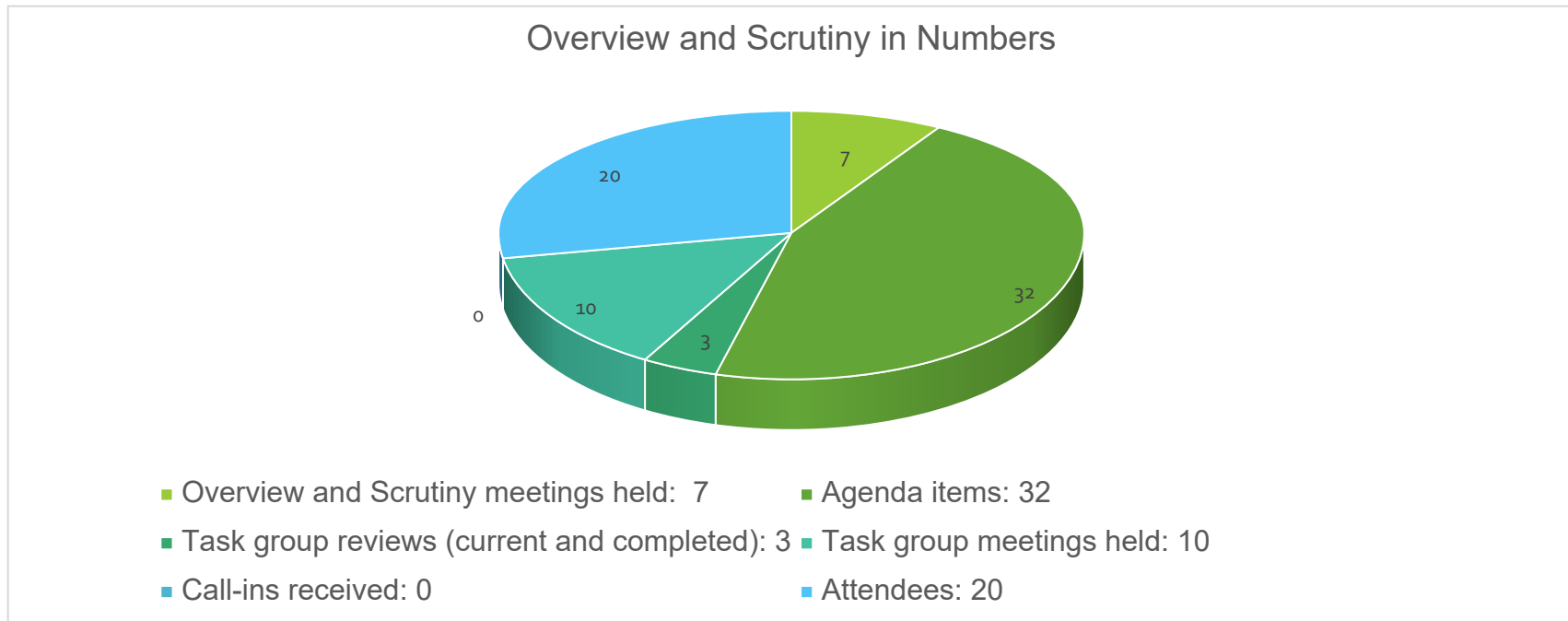
This criteria is attached at Appendix A.

### **Member training:**

Owing to the results of the councillors survey (January 2021), Wyre Councillors Action Plan (March 2021) and the CfGS review, as mentioned above, member development has been one of the most important areas for the committee this year. They have immersed themselves in multiple sessions both internal and external.

The members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been invited/booked to the following sessions in 2021/22:

- LGiU Introduction to Scrutiny (15/06/2021)
- LGiU Questioning Skills (17/06/2021)
- CfGS Scrutiny Review Presentation (17/06/2021)
- An Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny at Wyre for new members – in house (30/06/2021)
- CfGS Work Programming making scrutiny more effective (19/07/2021)
- LGA Leadership Academy Programme (18/09,7/11/2021)
- LGA Effective Scrutiny (21-22/09/2021)
- Updated Overview and Scrutiny training – in house (14/10/2021)
- Wiz Training Dealing with Conflict, Challenging People and Situations (21/10/2021)
- LGA Scrutiny Essentials Webinar (22/11/2021)
- CfGS Scrutiny Round table (10-14/01/2022)
- CfGS Information Access and Evidence-based Scrutiny (12/01/2022)
- NW Employers Strategic Scrutiny Network (03/02/2022)
- CfGS Executive Working and Delivering Effective Recommendations (08/02/2022)
- Budget Briefing (09/02/2022)
- Effective Questioning Skills for Scrutiny in house (10/02/2022)
- O&S Work Programme Workshop (24/02/2022)
- Treasury Management Briefing (24/02/2022)



**Committee meetings:**

- Meetings of the full committee meetings are open to the public to attend.
- Each meeting typically lasts 1 – 2 hours.
- The committee meets at least eight times a year, usually on Monday evenings.
- Owing to Covid-19 and social distancing, all meetings took place in the Council Chamber.

**Attendance:**

- Councillor John Ibison – 6/7
- Councillor Matthew Vincent - 5/7
- Councillor Sir Robert Atkins - 6/7
- Councillor Peter Le Marinel - 7/7
- Councillor Ian Amos - 4/7



- Councillor Rita Amos - (dispensation in terms of attendance at meetings was granted at Full Council on 2 December 2021. Sadly, Councillor Rita Amos passed away on 3 March 2022)
- Councillor Howard Ballard - 5/7
- Councillor Emma Ellison - 1/7
- Councillor Rob Fail - 7/7
- Councillor Jonny Leech – 2/6 (membership ceased on 27 January 2022)
- Councillor Paul Longton - 6/7
- Councillor Kenneth Minto - 5/7
- Councillor David O’Neill - 5/7
- Councillor Elizabeth Webster – 4/7
- Councillor Peter Cartridge – 1/1 (new member since 27 January 2022)

**Attendees:**

- Ruth Hunter (Head of Public Realm and Environmental Sustainability)
- Councillor Bridge (Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder)
- Councillor Berry (Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder) x 2
- Neil Greenwood (Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety) x 2
- David Thow (Head of Planning Services)
- Councillor Alice Collinson (Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder)
- Councillor Julie Robinson (Co-opt member of the Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee)
- Beth Goodman (Deputy Director of Commissioning)
- Dr Hartley-Smith (Clinical Director)
- Councillor David Henderson (Leader of the Council) x 2
- Garry Payne (Chief Executive) x 2
- Councillor Michael Vincent (Resources Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader)
- Clare James (Corporate Director Resources and Section 151 Officer)
- Marianne Hesketh (Corporate Director Communities)
- Andrew Snowden (Police and Crime Commissioner)
- Cara Leadbetter (Chief Inspector)

## Agenda items:

- O&S Work Programme 2020/21 – update
- O&S Work Programme 2021/22 – update and planning x 7
- Citizens Advice Bureau Review Task Group report – draft
- Update of the District Enforcement service over the past year – 2020/21
- Planned Maintenance and Investment Projects Statement – 2021/22
- Business Plan 2020/21, Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 4: January – March)
- O&S Work Programme 2021/22 – update and planning (standing item)
- Review of the implementations of the recommendations of Public Conveniences Task Group report
- An update on waste and recycling management
- Discussion about Overview and Scrutiny Committee pre meetings
- Review of the implementations of the recommendations of the Domestic Abuse Task Group: 5 years on
- Planning Enforcement - update
- Business Plan 2021/22 – Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 1: April – June)
- Annual update regarding the work of Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee
- Annual update from the Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group
- An update on Wyre's Covid-19 response
- Fees and Charges - draft
- Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 2: July – September)
- Tourism Recovery in Wyre Task Group – draft report
- Business Plan 2022/23
- Planned Maintenance and Investment Projects Schedule for 2022/23 – draft
- District Enforcement Pilot Task Group – draft report
- PCC Police and Crime Plan – update from the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Wyre Community Safety Partnership – annual scrutiny review
- Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 3: October – December)
- O&S Work Programme 2022/23 – planning

**Task Group reviews current and completed:**

- Tourism Recovery in Wyre Task Group (completed)
- District Enforcement Pilot Task Group (completed)
- Tackling Youth Anti-social Behaviour in Wyre Task Group (current)

**The committee reviewed the progress of the implementation of recommendations, which had been accepted by Cabinet, of the following reviews:**

- Public Conveniences Task Group
- Domestic Abuse Task Group (five years on)

## KEY ACHEVIEMENTS 2021/22

The committee's work has focused on the delivery of the annual Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. The committee's Work Programme has remained sufficiently flexible to accommodate other issues as and when they have arisen.

The following include some of scrutiny's key achievements over the last municipal year:

### **Updated scoping document template**

The scoping document template has been updated to reflect the outcomes and recommendations from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny review concluded in mid-2021. Members recognised the need to update this document and agreed to the updated version.

### **Tourism Recovery in Wyre**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to commission a task group on tourism recovery group in the light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The review was carried out over five meetings held on 28 June, 20 July, 11 August, 15 September and 4 October 2021.

The aims for the review were as follows (as per the Scoping Document):

1. To assess how the Covid-19 pandemic may have affected the tourism offer in Wyre
2. To explore the ReDiscover Wyre Campaign
3. To capitalise on 'staycations'
4. To understand Wyre's USP The Great Outdoors and identify enhancements
5. To explore both the rural and coastal offerings including the impact of recent filming in the area
6. To understand Wyre's support for local businesses and identify opportunities
7. To identify areas of improvement particularly with a focus on the Welcome Back Fund
8. To make succinct recommendations to Cabinet on how we can support tourism recovery in Wyre
9. To make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on specific and focused related topics that might be considered for further scrutiny review

After substantial research and hearing evidence from multiple expert witnesses, the group agreed 13 recommendations that went to Cabinet for review on Wednesday 12 January 2021. The following recommendations (numbered as per the report) were accepted:

*3.1 That the council concentrates on the promotion of Wyre as a tourist destination.*

*3.2 That the Discover Wyre website be brought in-house.*

*3.3 That improvements be made to the Discover Wyre website and for it to concentrate on promoting the individual towns within the borough, ensuring all areas are covered equally.*

*3.5 That a digital marketing strategy for the council's various digital platforms be created, in order to benefit the wider tourism strategy. In addition, report the defined objectives of this strategy back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S).*

*3.6 That there is a continued collaborative working relationship between the Tourism, Events and Communication teams.*

*3.7 That coach industries and businesses be invited back to Wyre to see what coach offer/packages Wyre can offer.*

*3.10 To explore options that will enhance the Civic Centre, including the Members Lounge, to make it a more attractive venue for weddings and other events.*

*3.12 That the implementation of the recommendations agreed by Cabinet be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after 12 months.*

The final report of this task group and the full minutes for the Cabinet meeting can be found on the Wyre Council website here:

<https://wyre.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MIId=1390&x=1>.

### **District Enforcement pilot**

Wyre Council first introduced the pilot scheme with District Enforcement on 5 September 2018, it was agreed that the council would enter a 12-month environmental enforcement trial with District Enforcement. The agreement was then extended the on 12 March 2021 for another year (until March 2022).

A task group to review the pilot scheme was originally commissioned at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Monday 22 July 2019.

Owing to the unforeseen circumstances, created by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, the work of this review was halted since early March 2020. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their 19 July 2021 meeting decided to recommission the District Enforcement Pilot Task Group. The first meeting back was held on 25 August 2021.

The review was carried out over seven meetings held on 14 October 2019, 4 November 2019, 25 November 2019, 19 February 2020, 25 August 2021, 9 November 2021 and 6 December 2021. Here, expert witnesses as suggested in the scoping document submitted evidence to them.

The aims for the review were as follows (as per the Scoping Document):

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the environmental enforcement pilot
2. Make recommendations regarding future service provision
3. Consider opportunities to expand on the offences covered by the pilot within any future services
4. Review the Council's approach for under 18's
5. (Currently the Council policy is not to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to under 18 year olds; the task group could look at the issues related to reducing the age limit or consider other means of addressing littering / environmental offences by minors)

The task group submitted its report and recommendations to the Cabinet in March 2022.

The final report of this task group and the full minutes for the Cabinet meeting can be found on the Wyre Council website here:

<https://wyre.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=1392&Ver=4>

### **Tackling Youth Anti-social Behaviour in Wyre**

At the November 2021 Overview and Scrutiny meeting, it was proposed that a scoping document be created for a review of anti-social behaviour (ASB). It was identified in the early stages that this review should focus on youth ASB across the borough. The task group was commissioned at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Monday 28 February 2022.

This review is currently on going and once the group have concluded, their recommendations will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for endorsement and the Cabinet for review.

## WYRE COUNCIL COUNCILLORS AND THEIR EXTERNAL SCRUTINY COMMITMENTS (OUTSIDE BODIES)

- **Councillors Emma Ellison and Ballard - Chair and Vice Chair of the North West Strategic Scrutiny Network.**

The Strategic Scrutiny Network is part of North West Employers core membership offer and is designed to support councillors in the development of their scrutiny function and role, share good practice and highlight local and national drivers.

- **Councillor Matthew Vincent – Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Scrutiny Committee**

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a strategic collaboration between business, universities and local councils, which directs economic growth and drives job creation.

- **Councillor Robinson – Lancashire County Council Health and Scrutiny Committee (Co-opt member)**

The Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee scrutinises matters relating to health and adult social care delivered by the authority, the National Health Service and other relevant partners. The Committee shall include twelve non-voting Co-opted district council Members. Councillor Robinson attends an annual meeting of Wyre's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and presents a report about the business undertaken by the committee over the past twelve months.

- **Councillors Berry and Le Marinel – The Police and Crime Panel (PCP)**

The Police and Crime Panel (PCP) have the power to scrutinise Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) activities, including the ability to review the Police and Crime Plan and annual report, request PCC papers and call PCCs and Chief Constable to public hearings. The PCP can also veto decisions on the local precept and the appointment of a new Chief Constable.

## CURRENT AND FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2021/22 is reviewed at every meeting of the committee. All members are invited to make suggestions about potential review topics for inclusion in the Programme. Scrutiny is member-led and without suggestions from councillors about task group topics the Programme will not achieve its purpose.

On the 24 February, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the members of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) attended a Work Programme Workshop to assist the committee with the creation of their Work Programme for 2022/23.

The members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee came to a consensus on the following review topics:

- Youth Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) (as previously agreed) – approx. start date March 2022
- Tourism Corporate Strategy – approx. start date June 2022
- YMCA Contract/Agreement – approx. start date September (dependent on conclusion of the Leisure Provision review)
- Business Plan (extra Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting with a single item agenda) – possible date 5 December 2022
- Climate Change Progress – approx. start date January/February 2023

Looking further ahead:

- Business Model of Wyre's Theatres – approx. start late 2023 (post 2023 elections)
- Commercialisation – approx. start late 2023 (post 2023 elections)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will agree the Work Programme for 2022/23 early in the new Municipal Year although it will continue to have the flexibility to react to issues as they arise. It should be recognised that the current pressures placed upon the council's staff because of the on-going pressures of Covid-19 and different ways of working may continue for some time.



## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomes suggestions from councillors and the public regarding issues that could be investigated. The Committee aims to consult with the public, councillors and officers each year and their suggestions are considered for the Annual Work Programme.

There are a number of ways you can get involved in the work of scrutiny at the council:

- Suggesting an issue or topic for scrutiny to look at by writing, emailing or phoning the Democratic Services team
- Attending a meeting open to the public. Please note that reports may be considered in private if they contain confidential information.
- Consultation and participation – you could be asked for your views on an issue or be invited to provide specialist knowledge you might have by being an expert witness in a scrutiny review
- Contacting your local councillor on how to get involved

You can also view Overview and Scrutiny papers on Wyre's public website, which include meeting dates, agendas, minutes, reports and committee membership via <https://wyre.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=143> or contacting Democratic Services on [democratic.services@wyre.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@wyre.gov.uk).



Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme Prioritisation Guide.