

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman 2023/24, Councillor Peter Cartridge

Welcome to the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24; it provides a reflection of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work and achievements over the past municipal year.

The overview and scrutiny process is an essential part of any council's democratic structure and governance framework. At Wyre Borough Council, theme-based scrutiny is weaved through the committee's 'Programme of work'. Over the past year, this process has played a key role in scrutinising the delivery and performance of council services and holding decision-makers to account through positive pressure and constructive challenge.

Following the 2023 Wyre Borough Elections, a new committee was formed which consisted of a mixture of experienced and new members. Notably, a Climate Change Sub-Committee was also formed to reflect the importance of this defining issue of our time. In February, a new draft programme of work was set based on this year's Council Plan (subject to this Council's approval in April). Accordingly, the committee and I look forward to using this as a framework to fulfil our role as a 'critical friend', ensuring only the best outcomes for Wyre businesses and residents.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor and members who are no longer on the committee for their commitment and contributions - they have left a positive impact on our borough. I would also like to express my continued gratitude for the support of our current members, the dedicated officers that continue to interact with the committee and the expert attendees that provide an insight to the many issues considered.

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 2023/24:

- 12 members of the council
- 7 Conservative councillors, 5 Labour councillors
- On 12 June 2023, Councillor Peter Cartridge was elected as Chair and Councillor Callum Baxter was elected as Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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, with particular responsibility for Treasury Management;
- 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

Overview and Scrutiny Climate Change Sub-Committee

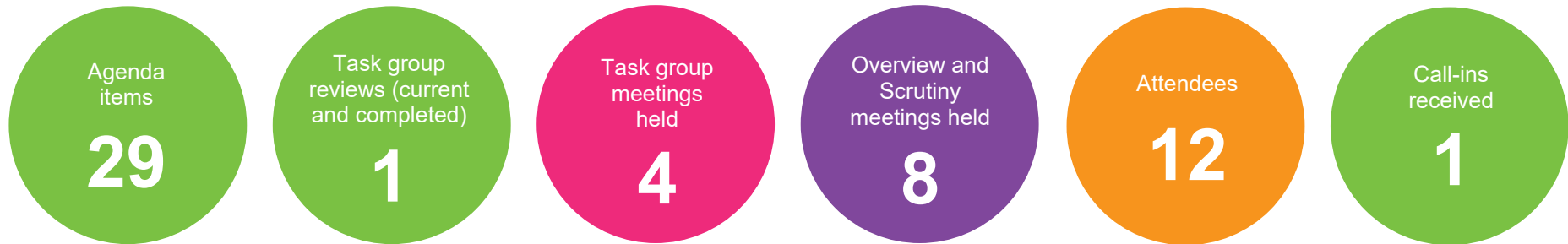
On 12 June 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to discharge its function in scrutinising decisions made in relation to climate change by establishing the Climate Change Sub-Committee and its terms of reference were established on 17 July 2023. The sub-committee have met three times to date, reviewing the council's draft Climate Change Strategy and establishing a task group on Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Wyre. The sub-committee will be presenting a periodic report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide updates on its work during the 2023/24 municipal year.

Member training:

The council experienced its highest number of new members following the elections in May 2023. The committee itself saw a number of new members, and so training took priority for this municipal year. Equally, making use of the external resources available to the council and signposting these to committee members.

Committee members have been invited/booked onto the following sessions in 2023/24:

- The role of Overview and Scrutiny (in-house) x2
- Scoping and managing scrutiny reviews (Centre for Governance and Scrutiny)
- Effective Scrutiny Leadership (Local Government Association)
- Scrutiny task groups (in-house)
- Skills in reviewing and understanding performance information (North West Employers)
- Financial Scrutiny (NWE – including a guest presentation from Wyre's S.151 Officer)
- Strategic Scrutiny Network meetings
- Questioning skills for Scrutiny (Local Government Information Unit)



Committee meetings:

- Meetings of the full committee are open to the public to attend.
- Each meeting typically lasts 1 to 2 hours.
- The committee meets at least eight times a year, usually on Monday evenings.
- Meetings were held either in the Council Chamber or Committee Room 2.

Attendance:

- Councillor Peter Cartridge – 8/8
- Councillor Callum Baxter - 7/8
- Councillor Sir Robert Atkins - 7/8
- Councillor Ian Amos – 8/8
- Councillor Lorraine Beavers - 3/8
- Councillor Maureen Blair – 4/8 (membership began 6 July 2023)
- Councillor Daniel Bolton – 7/8
- Councillor Alice Collinson – 8/8
- Councillor Rob Fail - 8/8
- Councillor David Higgs – 7/8
- Councillor Wayne Martin – 6/8
- Councillor Andrew Walker – 7/8

- Councillor Ashley Sorensen – 1 (membership ceased 6 July 2023 – max 1)

Attendees:

- Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive
- Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities (x2)
- Clare James, Corporate Director Resources
- Mark Broadhurst, Head of Housing and Community Services (x2)
- Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council
- Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder
- Councillor Simon Bridge, Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder
- Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder
- Councillor Julie Robinson, Co-Opted Member, LCC Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Agenda items:

- O&S Work Programme 2023/24 – update and planning x 7
- Election of Chair 2023/24
- Election of Vice-Chair 2023/24
- Business Plan 2022/23, Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 4: January – March)
- Climate Change Sub-Committee report
- Wyre Moving More Strategy
- Terms of reference and membership of Climate Change Sub-Committee
- The Promotion of Self-Care and Social Prescribing in Wyre Task Group – final report
- Review of the implementations of the District Enforcement Pilot Task Group – one year on
- Housing briefing note
- Business Plan 2023/24, Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 1: April – June)
- Business Plan review
- Fees and Charges – draft
- North West Employers Finance Scrutiny Session
- Business Plan 2023/24, Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 2: July – September)
- Annual update regarding the work of the Lancashire County Council Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
- Annual update from the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board

- Wyre Community Safety Partnership – annual scrutiny review
- Review of the Youth Anti-Social behaviour in Wyre Task Group – one year on
- Business Plan 2023/24, Quarterly Performance Statement (Quarter 3: October – December)
- Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group – final report
- Review of written responses submitted by the Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB
- Call in of the decision made by Cabinet, titled “Update on the future operation of the Council’s theatres – Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre”

Task Group reviews current and completed:

- Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group (completed)

The Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group met on four occasions, and agreed four recommendations, which were:

1. That Cabinet renew the agreement between the Council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West for four years.
2. That Cabinet considers increasing the grant contribution payment to Citizens Advice Lancashire West from £30,000 as per previous service agreement renewals.
3. That within an updated service level agreement, the use of the units at Fleetwood Market and the in-kind contribution be added to formalise their use.
4. That the Council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West consider re-starting the trial of the digital kiosks, particularly over Wyre, and for the £8,000 set aside for this in 2021 to be released.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented with the task group’s final report, and recommended this be submitted to Cabinet for their consideration at their meeting on the 17 April 2024.

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

- District Enforcement Pilot Task Group

At the meeting of the committee on the 4 September 2023, members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee invited the Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder, Councillor Simon Bridge, and the Head of Public Realm and Environmental Sustainability, Kathy Winstanley, to provide an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the task group a year on. The Portfolio Holder and officer

updated members on the new enforcement arrangements and informed the committee of the innovative solutions for the new enforcement contract which had been fed into by the recommendations of the task group.

- Youth Anti-Social Behaviour in Wyre Task Group

At the meeting of the committee on the 26 February 2024, members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee invited the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder, Councillor Roger Berry, and the Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety, Neil Greenwood, to provide an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the task group a year on. They updated members on the reported cases of youth ASB, and the success of the Wyre Beat event with local secondary schools.

KEY ACHEVIEMENTS 2023/24

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:

The Promotion of Self-Care and Social Prescribing in Wyre Task Group – Cabinet recommendations

In October 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted the final report of The Promotion of Self-Care and Social Prescribing in Wyre Task Group. The task group recommended:

1. That the council continues to promote its ongoing work with its primary care networks, local GP practices and other link/community organisations; that the council supports these groups by continuing to advertise its services via different methods.
2. That the council should ensure its health and wellbeing services and offers are well promoted on its website and social media. The council's services and offers should also be specifically promoted to local NHS social prescribing teams. If and when an opportunity to refresh a local directory of services presents itself, it is recommended that the council supports this work.
3. That the work of the council in relation to social prescribing be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and be made a strategic priority.

Cabinet agreed to the three recommendations as set out by the task group.

Refresh of the Council Plan

The committee were asked to formally review and feed into the draft version of the new Council Plan, to help establish the areas of commitment and key priorities for the council going forward for 2024-2028. Members reviewed the priorities and commitments to be included in the new plan, and were given an update to how performance measures would be reported to the committee, with performance measures selected to monitor progress against the council's priorities and commitments. This would strengthen this monitoring process and better track the progress towards medium-term and current commitments. The overall process would be more transparent, consistent and detailed.

One of the points raised by the committee was to question the council's longer term goals and commitments and how these would fit into the Council Plan. In response the council plan document was updated to include three longer terms commitments to work with partners to deliver on the return of rail or delivery of light rail to Thornton and Fleetwood; seek public and private investment into the borough to deliver economic development; and to work with partners to ensure Wyre is healthier, safer and more environmentally sustainable.

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY COMMITMENTS

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

The Lancashire County Council Health and Adult Services 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 2023/24 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.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee held their annual work programme workshop on Thursday 22 February 2024. All council members were invited to submit suggestions for review topics, and members were also invited to attend to take part in the workshop discussions for the first time, along with the committee and members of the Corporate Management Team. The discussions centred around key priorities for the council and its residents, and what appropriate or feasible actions the committee could undertake to help address these. The three priorities identified for 2024/25 are:

1. Communications
2. Fly-tipping
3. Economic Development and Visitor Economy strategy

There were also a number of areas identified by members which require updates to be presented to the committee. These included:

- Council tax on mobile homes/holiday vs residential sites and enforcement
- Preparations for updates to waste and recycling measures in 2026/Recycling rates update
- HMO licensing rates
- Updates on empty homes within the borough
- Energy efficiency standards in housing
- Fleetwood Market

The agreed topics and pre-arranged agenda items will be reviewed thematically, with the acknowledgement that the work programme is a flexible, working document.

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.

