

Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item No.
Corporate Director of Resources	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 February 2016	6

<b>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2015/16 – update report</b>
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## 1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the committee considers options for a task group on domestic violence.
- 1.2 That the committee considers options for a task group on Local Council Tax Support.
- 1.3 That the committee agrees a plan for the preparation of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17.

## 2. Current and completed work

### 2.1 Clinical Commissioning Groups task group

The task group reported to Cabinet on 20 January 2016.

The Cabinet agreed that

- the council's engagement team would explore ways in which better communication with the other three CCGs could be developed, using the work done with Fylde and Wyre CCG as an example of good practice.
- the Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder would take the lead role in enhancing working relationships with the four CCGs and would provide updates on any actions that had been taken in her Executive reports to Council.
- the Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder would be the nominated contact point for the four CCGs, rather than identifying separate elected members for each CCG as suggested in the recommendations of the task group, and a mechanism would

be set up to ensure that pertinent information was shared to the relevant councillors. The issue of cascading information to councillors whose wards did not fall within Wyre and Fylde CCG would also be addressed.

Subsequently, a meeting has been arranged between the Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder and the Fylde and Wyre CCG's Interim Head of Communications.

## **2.2 Town and Parish Councils task group**

This task group's draft report was considered at a meeting on 26 January 2016, which was also attended by the Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder.

Following discussions it was agreed to amend some aspects of the task group's recommendations. Once those amendments have been made and agreed by the task group the report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 March 2016 and then to the Cabinet on 23 March 2016.

## **2.3 Lancashire County Council – budget proposals**

Following the committee meeting on 7 January 2016 a response was sent to Lancashire County Council as part of their consultation on the impact of the budget proposals. Wyre's response was ratified by the Cabinet on 20 January 2016.

A more detailed response relating to the proposed withdrawal of bus subsidies was prepared and submitted to Lancashire County Council following work by a small task group chaired by Cllr John Ibison (attached at Appendix 2)

## **3. Future task group work**

### **3.1 Domestic Violence**

The committee previously requested that a draft scoping document be prepared for a review on domestic violence.

Following discussions with the Corporate Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of People and Places, which is usual practice, it is suggested that the committee takes steps to understand more about how the domestic violence service is commissioned (by Lancashire County Council) and how it is delivered by the main provider (Fylde Coast Women's Aid). By doing so, it would provide the committee with a better understanding of some of the issues, assist them in deciding whether to carry out a review and what the focus might be. One option would be that the task group look at the measurement and possible improvement of the domestic violence service.

In order to progress this proposal the committee might consider inviting someone from the commissioning service to attend an O&S Committee meeting (ideally on 7 March 2016) and to use their evidence and expertise to assist councillors in defining a review that would add value to what is already being done in Wyre.

### **3.2 Local Council Tax Support**

Local Council Tax Support was a topic for review identified at a previous meeting of the committee. A draft scoping document will be tabled at the meeting after which the review will be ready to start, subject to the committee's agreement.

### **3.3 Work Programme 2016/17**

Members are invited to begin to consider how the O&S Work Programme for 2016/17 might be complied.

Report Author	Telephone No.	Email	Date
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer	01253 887606	<a href="mailto:peter.foulsham@wyre.gov.uk">peter.foulsham@wyre.gov.uk</a>	28 January 2016

<b>List of Background Papers:</b>		
Name of Document	Date	Where available for inspection
Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules	May 2011	Council's website

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1            Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme May 2015 – April 2016
- Appendix 2            Submission made to Lancashire County Council by the Transport task group

<b>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme May 2015 – April 2016</b>										<b>Updated 28 January 2016</b>			
	01-Jun	29-Jun	21-Jul	03-Aug	14-Sep	12-Oct	09-Nov	07-Dec	07-Jan	11-Jan	08-Feb	07-Mar	18-Apr
Work Programme update report													
Community Safety Partnership (to include PCC)													
Performance review (quarterly)													
Local Plan progress report													
LCC Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee													
Call in													
<b>Holding the Exec to account for forthcoming decisions</b>													
Leader (Business Plan)													
Planning and Economic Development portfolio holder													
<b>Task Groups Reporting to Committee</b>													
Engaging with Communities													
A New Strategy for Sport – consultation response													
Working with four Clinical Commissioning Groups													
Effective engagement with Town and Parish Councils													
Discharge of vulnerable pateints - joint review													
<b>Other work and reports to committee</b>													
Solar panels													
North West Ambulance Service Quality Account													
Review Fleetwood Market TG recommendations													
Review Employment TG recommendations													
Fleetwood ferry update													
Review Volunteering TG recommendations													
Waste contract annual performance plan													
Review of executive and exempt reports													
Capital programme and proposed fees and charges													
Review Welfare Reform TG recommendations													
LCC budget proposals													



**Lancashire County Council – Budget Proposals 2016**

**Public Transport in Wyre**

Councillors note that the County Council has made proposals for the withdrawal of all subsidies for bus services, it has formally advised the bus operators of this decision and that the bus service subsidies will cease on 2 April 2016. Councillors also understand that it will be for the operator to either deregister the services with the Traffic Commissioner after 2 April 2016 or determine whether they could continue to provide some service in the area, without any level of subsidy from Lancashire County Council. Operators have been asked to confirm their intentions as soon as possible.

Wyre Council submitted an initial response to Lancashire County Council's budget proposals before the deadline of 18 January 2016.

On 11 January 2016 Wyre's Overview and Scrutiny Committee expressed their concern at the proposals in relation to public transport in Wyre and the likely impact of the County Council's proposals on Wyre's residents.

A task and finish group was convened specifically to provide the County Council with more information about the impact of the proposals to remove all subsidies on bus routes in the borough.

The task and finish group wishes to make the following observations about the County Council's proposals:

- 1 Councillors are alarmed at the haste with which the current proposals appear to be being made. There has been a very short period within which any consultation has been able to take place which is regrettable when one considers the importance of the pending decisions on the residents of Wyre.
- 2 If all bus service subsidies are removed as proposed it will have a devastating effect upon public transport provision in Wyre and in some of the rural areas in particular.
- 3 The withdrawal of the 2C, 86 and 89/89H bus services will mean that there are no services at all to Preesall and Knott End, an area that has a very high proportion of residents who are over 65 years of age.

4 The 2C connects Knott End and many of the rural communities Over Wyre with Poulton-le-Fylde and Blackpool, including the Victoria Hospital, and it is a vital link for those communities.

5 The loss of other bus services (the 84A and 87 services, for example) will make it impossible to get easily from place to place in some of the more urban areas in Wyre without going into Blackpool first and taking at least two buses. An example would be a simple short (two miles) journey from Thornton to Poulton-le-Fylde which will no longer have any direct bus links.

6 The negative effect of social isolation, particularly on an ageing population, is well documented. Councillors are concerned that the withdrawal of public transport services will increase social isolation, with its associated impact on mental health and general health and well-being.

7 The removal of all public transport provision from rural areas (the Fleetwood to Knott End Ferry as well as buses) will create hardship for many different groups – not only older people, but also anyone going to Blackpool Victoria Hospital, young people without their own transport and people going to work or to higher education.

8 Councillors are strongly of the opinion that the way in which concessionary travel is delivered should be reviewed. They would like to know whether the County Council has considered alternative charging mechanisms. Most people, they believe, would be more than happy to make a small contribution to a fare and it is likely that by so doing the subsidies on bus services can be reduced. While the financial pressure on local authorities is not questioned, it is important that every step is taken to ensure that some sort of service is maintained even if the number of services and/or the frequency of the service is reduced.

9 The task and finish group would like to be assured that the County Council has done all that it possibly can to ensure that customers are fully aware of the impact of the budget proposals. Furthermore, it would like to be assured that full consultation with the public has taken place, including asking the question, 'Would you be prepared to pay a contribution towards the cost of the currently subsidised bus routes?'

10 Whilst we are aware that there has been some previous consultation with parishes concerning the options for establishing parish-based public transport schemes, councillors are concerned about their viability. In our opinion they would be unlikely to be successful, a view that is consistent with comments received directly from parish councils.

Task and finish group membership:

Councillors Ibison (Chairman), Fail, Orme, Ormrod, S Turner, Walmsley and Wilson.

26 January 2016