



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Notes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 18 April 2016 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Committee members present:

Councillor R Amos	Councillor Reeves
Councillor Fail	Councillor Robinson
Councillor Hodgkinson	Councillor Smith
Councillor Ibison	Councillor Matthew Vincent
Councillor Jones	Councillor Michael Vincent (Chairman)
Councillor Ormrod	

Other councillors present:

Councillor I Amos.

Officers present:

Neil Greenwood, Head of Environmental Health and Community Safety
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

OS.94 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Anderton and C Birch.

OS.95 Declarations of interest

None.

OS.96 Minutes of meeting held on 7 March 2016

In the resolution of minute OS.92 the word "Council" should be replaced by the word "Cabinet".

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 7 March 2016 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to this one amendment.

OS.97 Domestic violence

Debbie Thompson, one of Lancashire County Council's Health Equity, Welfare and Partnerships Managers presented a report about domestic abuse services across Lancashire's twelve districts. The written report summarised the current services that were in place as well as describing the commissioning arrangements and statistics for Wyre in 2015/16. It also outlined the need for partners to work together to review the current service provision and to consider how support may be developed post March 2017. This would need to be in the context of the resource challenges faced by all partners

Ms Thompson explained that her role was within public health and there was a recognition that domestic abuse was a complex issue that affected the life chances of victims, families and children. It required sensitive handling by a range of partners, including police, health, social care, criminal justice and voluntary sector professionals.

A joint commissioning arrangement had been in place for three years until 31 March 2016, including financial contributions from Lancashire County Council, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and district councils. This arrangement had been extended for a further year. It was recognised that all parties faced unprecedented change so it was important to look at how things could be done differently. For example, there was increased focus on preventative work and considering where support could be mainstreamed by partner organisations.

The medium and high risk domestic abuse victim's support service was provided by Letgo in the Fylde area. Between April and December 2015 Letgo received a total of 387 new referrals, which was thought to be a conservative figure in the light of the number of incidents that remained unreported. Councillor Reeves commented that, from her experience, Letgo was not as widely known as it might be, many relevant professionals not having heard of it at all. It was a concern because it appeared that a service was being commissioned about which people knew little. Ms Thompson agreed to investigate this concern further so that Letgo was more widely publicised.

Another concern was that there had been no referrals from Wyre so far for the Lancashire Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme, the reasons for which were unclear. Ms Thompson agreed to look into this and inform the committee of her findings.

In response to a question Ms Thompson confirmed that there was one refuge in Wyre, and a total of nine across the county. There was a risk that some might be closed following the proposal to withdraw funding. Ms Thompson agreed to provide the committee with figures that would give an indication of the occupancy rate of Wyre's refuge.

The Pan Lancashire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board was chaired by DSI Sue Clarke from Lancashire Constabulary; this included membership from the two unitary authorities. There was also a Joint Commissioning Reference Group that covered the joint commission of the twelve Lancashire districts, which met quarterly. It was likely that the governance structure for Domestic Abuse work across Lancashire would be reviewed during 2016/17. Ultimately the responsibility for domestic abuse services across the twelve Lancashire districts lay with the Public Sector Chief Executive's Board.

When answering further questions from the committee Ms Thompson agreed to provide additional information about:

- Clare's law (regarding disclosure)
- The reasons for people choosing not to engage with the Early Support Service for Children and Young People
- Whether there is any subsequent follow up to referrals

Neil Greenwood had received a submission from Fylde Coast Women's Aid in response to the proposed removal of Supporting People funding by Lancashire County Council. He agreed to arrange for copies to be sent to committee members.

Following further discussion the committee agreed that a task group on some specific aspects of the issues presented by Debbie Thompson should be set up. Peter Foulsham suggested that he met with Neil Greenwood and Councillor Reeves to identify the issues that might be covered by a task group, with specific focus on the impact on the residents of Wyre, after which a scoping document would be prepared and an initial meeting arranged.

RESOLVED

- (i) That a task group on domestic violence be set up, and
- (ii) That Debbie Thompson be thanked for her report and her attendance at the meeting

OS.98 Lancashire County Council – health scrutiny

Councillor 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 2015.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

OS.99 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2015-16

The Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report updating the committee about the delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Several proposals for topics to be considered for inclusion in the O&S Work Programme 2016/17 were discussed.

Alderman Brooks had emailed the Chairman to suggest that, in light of the threat to libraries and museums across the county and in the context of the Culture White Paper published in March 2016, the committee might consider it timely to review what residents expected of council run services and how they could be enhanced and made more accessible, a theme that runs through the White Paper. The committee considered this to be a good idea but felt that it would be preferable to wait until the current uncertainty over the closures had reduced.

Councillor Fail suggested that a task group might be convened to review Council Tax Discounts, as he was aware of two residents who were subject to, in his opinion, a lack of fairness. The committee requested that a report be submitted to the meeting to be held in July, so that councillors could consider the proposal in more detail.

Councillor Jones advised the committee that the current food hygiene ratings for Wyre included six premises that had zero stars and thirty-six that achieved one star (maximum five stars). Although it was acknowledged that officers did an excellent job, it appeared that more might be done to facilitate some businesses to take greater responsibility for improving their own ratings. Councillors agreed that this topic was appropriate for a task group review and requested that a report be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the committee in June.

RESOLVED that

- (i) A report on food hygiene ratings be requested for the meeting to be held on 6 June 2016, and
- (ii) A report on Council Tax Discounts be requested for the meeting to be held on 4 July 2016.

OS.100 Date and time of next meeting

RESOLVED that the next meetings of the committee be held as follows:

- (i) Wednesday 27 April 2016 at 6pm at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde, to consider a call in, and
- (ii) Monday 6 June 2016 at 6pm at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

The meeting started at 6pm and finished at 7.14pm.