
COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 8th October, 2024

Present: Councillor Jodi Clements (in the Chair),
Councillors Clare McKenna, Ethan Rawcliffe, Tina Walker, Clare Yates
and Heather Anderson (Vice Chair)
Co-optees: Jackie Rawstron and Jean Battle

Apologies: Councillor Loraine Cox

77 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Loraine Cox. There were no substitutions at the meeting.

78 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Jean Battle, Co-optee, declared personal interests in two items on the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee as follows:

Item 8 - Aawaz – due to her being a Patron of the organisation.

Item 9 - Hyndburn Over 50's Forum – due to her being a Member of the Forum.

Councillor Heather Anderson declared a personal interest in item 9 - relating to Hyndburn Over 50's Forum in respect of her being the Council representative to the organisation.

Councillor Clare McKenna declared personal interests in item 6 – Social Housing Update and item 7 – 1st Call, due to her employment by Onward Homes.

No dispensations were declared at the meeting.

79 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 15th July 2024 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

80 Chairs Update

The Chair, Councillor Jodi Clements, updated the Committee on the following items:

- The Committee was informed that Council had approved the appointment of the two new Co-optees, Jean Battle and Jackie Rawstron, at the meeting held on 26th September 2024, to cover two Municipal Years 2024-25 & 2025-26. Both new Co-

optees of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee were welcomed to the meeting.

- Changes to Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting dates.
- Changes to the Work Programme. Items added to the Work Programme included invitations to a number of community and voluntary organisations to speak about the work of their organisations and their impact on the community.

81 Citizens Advice

The Chair of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomed CA Lancashire to the meeting.

Julia Hannaford and Nick Pilling of CA Lancashire gave a presentation to the Committee as follows:

Overview:

- the service was available for everyone.
- 280 Citizen Advice Charities and 1600 locations across England and Wales.
- Each Citizens Advice is responsible for sourcing its own funding.
- Available face to face, by phone, email and webchat plus national online advice pages.

East Lancashire:

- In July 2023 Citizen's Advice Rossendale, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley merged with Burnley and Pendle Citizen's Advice to create Citizen's Advice East Lancashire.
- Deliver services from various locations across East Lancashire.
- Launched a digital WhatsApp Service in November 2023.
- 41 paid members of staff and 40 volunteers.

Hyndburn:

- Website access
- Service in Hyndburn is located at the New Era Centre and via Adviceline
- Participation in community events
- Service covers: Energy Redress, MacMillan Advice Service, Homeless Prevention Service, specialist debt advice and HMRC service support.
- Partnership work with Hyndburn Leisure to deliver Household Support Fund.
- Referrals
- Signposting
- For every £1 Hyndburn Council has spent on the service, Hyndburn residents benefit by £25.

Future: a continued service, plans for accessing rural communities and using secured premises as a Training Hub.

Members asked questions and made comments on the following issues:

- A request for advice on the Homeless Prevention Service.
- Request for clarity on the merger of Citizens Advice branches.
- If demand exceeded resources?
- Would CA Lancashire receive a quicker response if a Councillor put a referral in?

Responses to the Member questions and comments are summarised as follow:

- A person presenting as homeless would be supported in considering their financial circumstances and on the legalities of their paperwork. The aim was to keep people in private rented accommodation, where possible.
- Clarification was provided on how and why Citizen Advice branches merged. The Committee was informed that larger organisations were more successful in bidding for funds.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted; and
(2) That the Committee request that Officers give consideration to Hyndburn Council sharing data with Citizens Advice Lancashire.**

82 Social Housing Update

Rachel Richardson, Neighbourhood Delivery Manager, Onward Homes, gave a presentation on social housing in Hyndburn. She reported that Onward Homes was the largest social landlord in the borough and had:

- 3247 properties
- 2097 general lets
- 1125 sheltered properties
- 25 supported properties

She reported that B-with-Us was the choice based lettings system used by Onward and all other registered providers in Hyndburn. Applications for housing were assessed and prioritised and placed in one of five bands with Band 1 being the highest priority for rehoming. Band 1 would deal with those who were statutorily homeless, had high medical needs and were care leavers. The average waiting time for properties was 51 weeks.

In addition, Home + helped the most financially vulnerable new customers by providing a package of essentials.

New build properties had been delivered for 2023 and 2024 and properties were being provided for 2025.

Onwards Homes worked with Hyndburn Council with homelessness including the provision of two properties to be used as temporary homeless accommodation.

Members commented on the following issues:

- Can Councillors report issues on behalf of the residents in their wards?
- A young person 17 years old in poor accommodation and pregnant – what priority would they receive?
- The location of new builds in Clayton is problematic due to traffic congestion. This location is not ideal for elderly people.
- Is Onward Homes responsible for the new builds?
- Does Onward Homes work with Hyndburn Council in respect of children's parks and play areas.

Responses to the issues raised above were:

- Councillors can assist residents with submitting complaints to Onward Homes if required.
- A person under the age of 18 would be allocated Band 1 or 2 once they had given birth if the accommodation they were living in was in poor condition.

- Rachel Richardson agreed to pass on the opinions of Members who considered that the new buildings in Clayton had been located in the wrong place for elderly people due to traffic congestion and there being limited facilities in the area. She indicated that she would ask if anything could be added to the infrastructure that would assist the elderly.
- Hyndburn Borough Council is responsible for the new builds.
- Onward Homes would work with Hyndburn Council if parks were under their ownership.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

83 1st Call

Jill Stazicker, 1st Call Team Leader, reported that she worked for Onward Homes on the Social Investment Team and explained that the organisation had previously been located in the Arndale Centre in Accrington but that they had to move out due to health and safety issues. She reported that they now worked two days in the Town Hall and two days in the Onward Accrington Office as well as providing telephone support on Fridays.

The Committee were informed of the range of services provided by 1st Call but she also pointed out that they did not deal with debt problems or applications. People with these type of issues were diverted to other services. She informed the Committee that their services included health and wellbeing initiatives and gave examples of the projects they were working on. Details of the number and type of calls they had received throughout the year were provided. She indicated that in the future their aim was to continue to provide support and also find a suitable venue in the community. She also wanted to secure funding for employment services in Hyndburn, extend health and wellbeing and to acquire funding from Hyndburn Council to support asylum seekers.

Councillor Yates referred to the problem of digital poverty being a barrier for people accessing services, including health care. Jill Stazicker reported on a scheme to reuse donated electronic devices.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

84 Aawaz

Zulekha Dala, Chief Officer of Aawaz, referred to the vision of the organisation and how they aimed to help women in various ways. She reported that the organisation was holistic, multilingual, was grassroots, person centred and practical. She reported that there were weekly sessions on a Wednesday in the Library.

She explained that funding for the service was acquired through bids, was usually short termed and limited and raised through funding and donations.

The organisation was focussed on women's needs to:

- Learn English and be a responsible British citizen
- Play an active role in society
- Look after their health and wellbeing
- Move forward with their personal development, lifelong learning, volunteering and employment.

She gave details of what Aawaz offered, who could access the services, what services they offered and how they supported women and families.

Comments and responses were provided on the following issues:

- Domestic violence
- Translation services
- Funding Requirements
- Employment courses

Resolved - That the report be noted.

85 Over 50's Forum

Resolved - That the item be deferred to a future meeting.

86 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved - That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972, the public were excluded from the meeting during the following item, when, in view of the nature of the proceedings there was disclosure of exempt information within the Paragraph Schedule 12A of the Act specified at the item.

87 Appointment of Co-optees

Exempt Information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, Paragraph 1 – Information relating to any individual.

The Scrutiny and Policy Officer submitted a report to inform Members of the two Co-optee appointments formally made by Council to the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 26th September 2024. The Co-optees appointed were Jean Battle and Jackie Rawstron.

The report also requested that Committee gave consideration to the nominations, as set out in the report, for the two remaining vacant Co-optee positions. The two nominations were received from Councillor Zak Khan. One further nomination was received, from Councillor Yates, at the meeting.

The Committee recommended that one of the two vacant Co-optee posts was reserved for a young person (aged 18 – 25 years) and that the other Co-optee post was filled by one of the three nominees outlined at the meeting. The Committee determined that Council should make the appointment to the final Co-optee post.

Resolved - That, the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommend to Full Council:

- a) To approve the reservation of one of the vacant co-optee positions on the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee for a young person (between the age of 18-25 years);
- b) To determine the final vacant co-optee position on the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. There are currently three nominations; and

c) To approve the above co-optee appointments to cover a period of 2 municipal years until the end of the 2025/26.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed