
SPECIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 16th July, 2025

Present: Councillor Kate Walsh (in the Chair),
Councillors Josh Allen, Heather Anderson, Bernard Dawson, Zak Khan,
Clare McKenna, Clare Yates and Mohammed Younis
Co-optees: Shahed Mahmood

In Attendance: Victoria Tindall (The Business & Marketing Co-ordinator))

Apologies Councillor Mike Booth

97 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mike Booth.

Councillor Bernard Dawson acted as substitute representative for Councillor Mike Booth.

98 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillors Kate Walsh, Josh Allen, Heather Anderson and Bernard Dawson all declared personal interests in respect of item 6 of the agenda – Events Review, as all had involvement with events in their local communities. They all remained in the meeting and participated in discussions.

No dispensations were declared at the meeting.

99 Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 5th February 2025, were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

100 Overview & Scrutiny Work Programmes

The Overview & Scrutiny Officer submitted a report seeking approval of the work programme for the Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee for 2025-26. Members were reminded that items could added to the programme throughout the year should it be considered important and relevant.

Members referred to the importance of projects taking place in Accrington Town Centre and indicated that the work programme should reflect this. It was proposed that additional meetings should be added to ensure sufficient scrutiny.

The Chair explained that the item 'Financial support to the borough's other Town Centres' had been withdrawn from the meeting due to the financial information required not being available geographically. She requested that this item was considered at a future meeting.

Resolved - That the work programme for the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee be approved.

101 Co-optee Nominations

The Overview & Scrutiny Officer submitted a report to inform the Committee that a vacancy had arisen due to Co-optee, Andy Tatchell's resignation. She explained the process for new nominations to the Committee. The Committee thanked Andy Tatchell for his time and service on the Committee.

The Chair informed the Committee to forward any nominations for the vacancy to the Overview & Scrutiny Officer.

Resolved - that the report be noted.

102 Events Review

The Business & Marketing Co-ordinator, Victoria Tindall, presented a report to provide an update on plans for events in Accrington Town Centre for 2025-26 including costs and value of money. She reported that the location criteria for events had grown considerably, extending from the high streets across the borough to include parks and open spaces. She reported that this year's budget of £150,000 allowed for grants to be provided for events and included an additional £11,000 to ensure that organisers were able to align their security measures with incoming requirements for Martins Law. She referred to 3.2 of the report which gave details of the current event programme for 2025-26.

She referred to section 4 of the report detailing that each event had its own objectives and target audiences.

In respect of the success of events, she reported that footfall for four large events had fallen, this year, due to extremely wet weather and explained that events were reported on and assessed, with post event debriefs taking place to measure the reality against their proposed objectives. This information helped the Portfolio Holder to determine whether the event should be repeated.

A list of Advanced Questions was forwarded to the Officer in advance of the meeting and the questions and responses were given to the following issues:

- The accuracy of measuring footfall at events
- The impact of improvement works on events in Accrington Town Centre
- The work the Council was doing to get independent businesses/the high street involved in events
- What the Council was doing to extend provision for other townships to hold events
- Action to ensure that the availability of grants for events was promoted to a wider audience
- Encouraging businesses to apply for grant funding to run events taking pressure off the usual organisers

The Business & Marketing Co-ordinator referred to the success of using the HUQ system in recording footfall at events. She explained the software provided figures on the number of visitors to the whole town centre on that day, not specifically to the event. It was a good indicator of how the numbers compared to those of other comparative days in the

month/year/events. The way the footfall numbers were aggregated made some assumptions and exceptions, some of which were explained. In addition to footfall, the HUQ software was able to provide other figures, such as day part, hot spot and dwell time.

Members considered the benefits of the HUQ system and proposed that meetings were held with Councillors, Co-optees and the business community to share the benefits of the use of the system.

Members also noted that footfall at events in Accrington Town Centre had been down but considered that the disruption caused by the improvement works and the weather could have been contributory factors. They also pointed out that the Town Hall had been closed during some of the main events taking place and suggested that this had been a missed opportunity for the Hyndburn Leisure Trust to increase usage and the income of the Town Hall. They exposed the fact that the cost of using the Town Hall often deterred people from hiring the venue.

The Business & Marketing Co-ordinator reported that she had attended meetings to consider best practice for delivering events and had devised a report to share this information. The Committee requested that reports of this nature should be released and taken into consideration by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder and brought before interested parties. They requested that Cabinet Portfolio holders worked more closely with Officers to ensure information of this nature was considered. The Business & Marketing Co-ordinator indicated that she could issue an interim report to those interested.

- Resolved**
- (1) That the Business & Marketing Co-ordinator organised an event(s) to showcase the benefits of the HUQ system and that Councillors, Co-optees and businesses be invited to attend;**
 - (2) That the Business & Marketing Co-ordinator explores the possibility and viability of extending the number and type of cultural events; and**
 - (3) That the Business & Marketing Co-ordinator raises awareness to business of the opportunity for businesses to apply for grants to host events in their townships.**

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed