

Meeting of the Full Council - Thursday 24 February 2022

Report on the External Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 29 November 2021 and 11 January 2022

Chair: County Councillor Peter Britcliffe

The agenda and minutes of the meeting may be viewed on the county council's web site via the following link:

[External Scrutiny Committee](#)

29 November 2021

Supporting Lancashire Businesses during COVID-19

A presentation was delivered to the committee by Andy Walker, Head of Service Business Growth, Amin Vepari, Senior Project Officer, and Andrew Leeming, Boost Programme Manager from Lancashire County Council. County Councillor Aidy Riggott, Cabinet Member for Economic Development was also in attendance to support the presentation and answer any questions from the committee.

The presentation covered the following topics in relation to the support and funding available to businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- National Business Support Offer
- Local ERDF Grants
- Local Business Support Provision (Boost)
- Financial Support Offer
- Skills and Employment
- Early thoughts on the impact.

Resolved: That the support provided to businesses in Lancashire during the COVID-19 pandemic, be noted.

Lancashire Strategic Assessment 2022-2025

The committee considered a report from Debbie Thompson, Public Health Specialist, Alison Wilkins, Senior Public Health Practitioner, Lee Sculpher, Lancashire Constabulary, and Steffani Hull, Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office. County Councillor Peter Buckley, Cabinet Member for Community and Cultural Services was in attendance in support of the report. The purpose of this Strategic Assessment was to highlight significant crime and anti-social behaviour threats and issues that impacted on community safety.

Resolved: That;

- i. The key themes within the Strategic Assessment, as the main elements that will feature in the Community Safety Agreement, be noted as they would be

the issues that underpin the development of local partnership plans, and the setting of priorities for the next three years.

- ii. The Strategic Assessment and local district profiles will be used as evidence to support commissioning activity and targeting of issues across the county be recognised.
- iii. Support be given for the Strategic Assessment as the evidence base to enable further work on the related issues, for example, domestic abuse, exploitation (criminal/sexual), vulnerability and safeguarding, and cyber-crime.

11 January 2022

Universal Credit in Lancashire - Department for Work and Pensions

The committee received a presentation from the Department for Work and Pensions on following topics:

- Lancashire Youth Hubs
- Plan for Jobs
- The Restart Scheme
- The Kickstart Scheme

Resolved: That the Department for Work and Pensions' representatives be asked to raise the following matters at policy level within the department and feedback to the committee on potential support for:

- i. Help for migrant workers during periods of ill health;
- ii. Improving and reducing the six-week wait for new customers with new claims; and
- iii. Advance payments for prison leavers.

Universal Credit Update

The committee received a presentation from Clare Platt, Head of Service Health, Equity, Welfare and Partnerships, Joanne Barker, Welfare Rights Manager, Debbie Thompson, Public Health Specialist (Stronger and Safer Communities), Adeel Khan, Finance Assessment Performance Manager, and Karen Jones, Care Finance Assessment Manager from Lancashire County Council which provided an update on changes to Universal Credit and outlined the potential impact of the continued migration of people from legacy benefits onto Universal Credit on a range of Lancashire County Council service areas.

Resolved: That Lancashire County Council officers monitor the transition to Universal Credit in Lancashire and accumulate statistics, to be reviewed with the External Scrutiny Committee in three months.

Electricity North West - Storm Arwen

The committee considered a report from Electricity North West who attended the meeting to present on the impact of Storm Arwen across Lancashire and the organisations response.

Resolved: That Electricity North West return to the External Scrutiny Committee after the three reviews have been published to present a summary and answer any resulting questions.