

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Thursday, 10 October 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors David Howarth (Chair), Michael Green (Vice-Chair), Will Adams, Jacky Alty, Matt Campbell, Colin Coulton, Chris Lomax, Jim Marsh, Stephen Thurlbourn, Matthew Trafford and Karen Walton

CABINET MEMBERS: Councillor Paul Foster (Leader of the Council and Leader of the Labour Group), Councillor Michael Titherington (Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member (Health, Wellbeing and Leisure) and Deputy Leader of the Labour Group), Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder (Cabinet Member (Community Engagement, Social Justice and Wealth Building)), Councillor Susan Jones JP (Cabinet Member (Environment)) and Councillor Matthew Tomlinson (Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets))

OFFICERS: Jennifer Mullin (Director of Neighbourhoods and Development), Peter McHugh (Assistant Director of Property and Housing), Darren Cranshaw (Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services) and Charlotte Lynch (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Phil Smith and Councillor Mary Green

PUBLIC: 0

11 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mal Donoghue and Colin Sharples.

12 Minutes of the Last Scrutiny Committee Meeting

A query was made about minute number 10 which stated that "*Emphasis was placed on the importance of apprenticeships for school leavers in low-income areas*". Members were informed that the reasoning for this was to target resources in the most appropriate areas with the highest need.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Monday, 2 September be signed as a correct record by the Chair.

13 Minutes of the Last Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel

An enquiry was made regarding the actions being taken to increase the performance of off-track projects, as referenced under minute number 3. Information on this would be provided to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel and all members were invited to attend.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel meeting held on Monday, 9 September 2019 be noted.

14 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

15 Matters Arising from Previous Scrutiny Committee Meetings

The Committee received an update on progress made against matters arising from previous meetings.

An update on town centre masterplans was requested. Members were informed that the masterplans were not ready but that an update would be provided within the days following the meeting which would provide the reason for the delay.

An update was also requested on the cross-borough link road, which would be provided to members outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the update be noted.

16 Community Safety Partnership

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Paul Foster), the Director of Neighbourhoods and Development (Jennifer Mullin) and the Chief Inspector of Lancashire Police (Gary Crowe) presented a report on the Community Safety Partnership to the Committee and responded to members' comments and queries.

The Community Safety Partnership is a statutory body made up of representatives from local authorities, the police, fire and rescue authorities and health and probation services. Members were informed that South Ribble Borough Council works collaboratively with Chorley Council within the Community Safety Partnership but that this is not a formal arrangement.

In response to queries around the statistics on violence against a person offences and the delay in this information being available, members were informed that this was largely due to technical issues. The data would be available in the week following the meeting and would be shared with members.

Although it was highlighted that South Ribble is a safe area in comparison to others across the county, members were informed that the key priorities of the Partnership

included anti-social behaviour, serious and organised crime, and vulnerabilities including domestic violence, hate crime and substance abuse.

These priorities are listed within the Community Safety Partnership Plan which is created using statistics from the police survey and from responses relating to fear and opinions of crime in the 'Living in Lancashire' survey. Consultation on this had also been undertaken through a Strategic Assessment which provides specialised data on long-term issues and threats. Members queried this and asked that more detailed information on the data be shared with them. The Community Safety Plan was also requested.

Surveys form part of the consultation on community safety. Lancashire County Council consults with their partner agencies and the police before surveys are distributed. Crimes are then ranked based on data and a crime severity score in order to identify priority areas.

The use and effectiveness of CCTV in preventing and detecting crime was queried. CCTV was acknowledged as being invaluable as a deterrent to casual criminals and anti-social behaviour. There is also an evidential value of CCTV in that it can link suspects to crimes based on their location and thereby reduces deniability.

Members queried the new neighbourhood policing model which had come into effect in March 2019. Under this, South Ribble had gained four new task force constables and an emergency response team were now based in the borough. Members compared South Ribble, which shares a Chief Inspector with Chorley, with West Lancashire which is similar in density to South Ribble but has their own Chief Inspector. Assurances were provided that the allocation of Chief Inspectors is based on need and not geographic size.

In response to discussion on community engagement and crime, examples such as the 'Coffee with a Cop' scheme which is held in McDonalds in Leyland were provided to demonstrate the methods used to engage with residents. Emphasis was placed on preventing crime by young people, which is often tackled through diversionary tactics as utilised in the Kingsfold area of Penwortham over the summer which was acknowledged as a success.

A key line of enquiry focussed on the prevention of domestic violence. The council provides an annual financial contribution of £7000 to the independent domestic violence advocates service and members were pleased that this contribution would continue in future years.

Members were informed that an increase in statistics on domestic violence offences meant that more victims felt confident enough to report the crime. It was acknowledged that there is an educational element to reducing domestic violence and that this can be achieved through publicising the convictions of perpetrators.

The report highlighted a number of groups which support the reduction of crime, including Operation Genga, the South Ribble Integrated Team and the Anti-Social Behaviour County Group. These groups are made up of a great amount of officers and resources and are subject to a success criteria.

Brief discussion was given to the relationship between My Neighbourhood Forums and the Community Safety Partnership. A good relationship was acknowledged

between the two and the Forums can work collaboratively with the Partnership by reporting any issues they may have in their area. Neighbourhood Policing Teams regularly work with parish councils in their area and keep them informed of any issues and progress made.

Members requested further information on crime hotspots within the borough.

A report would be provided to the Cabinet in November which would outline proposals for diversionary activities in an effort to prevent people, particularly youth, turning to crime.

It was acknowledged that the Scrutiny Committee can help the Community Safety Partnership by giving suggestions for focus areas and key issues and by reporting any concerns they may have in their areas.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That

1. the Committee looks forward to receiving further information on 'violence against person' offences.
2. the Committee welcomes the offer of being provided with a copy of the Community Safety Partnership Plan and requests that future reports include progress on the Plan.
3. the Committee thanks the Chief Inspector for the offer to outline the police's approach to targeting and problem-solving to members of the Council.
4. the Partnership looks at how more preventative measures can be put in place with partners.
5. the Committee welcomes the Leader's reassurance that the Council would continue to contribute to the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates Service.
6. the Partnership considers raising awareness of community safety issues with parents as well as young people.
7. the Committee requests more detailed information on the data used for the strategic assessment.
8. further information on crime hotspots within the borough be circulated to committee members.

17 Worden Hall Progress Update

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets (Councillor Matthew Tomlinson) and the Assistant Director of Property and Housing (Peter McHugh) provided a verbal update on Worden Hall to the Committee and responded to members' comments and queries.

A public consultation on the future use of Worden Hall had recently finished and members were informed that over 500 responses had been received. The consultation provided three options for the future use of the Hall, including for community use, as an exclusive wedding venue, or as a mix of community use and a small wedding venue.

There had been a positive response from the public regarding the consultation and the actions being taken to increase the use of Worden Hall. Many respondents were in favour of the Hall as a venue for community use. Other respondents wanted the council to maintain control of the Hall and for the venue to be financially self-sufficient.

In response to queries regarding a proposal made to the previous administration by the Freemasons, members were informed that the options provided in the consultation were recommended based on the findings of consultants. It was acknowledged that a small number of responses were opposed to the idea of the Freemasons purchasing the Hall and that a significant number of responses requested that the Hall be maintained by the Council.

The financial implications of investing in the Hall were queried and members were assured that capital investment had been allocated for the project due to commitments already made by the Council.

It was likely that work would commence in summer 2020 with an estimated timescale of two years for completion. This would be guided by a specialist team with reasonable milestones, which was felt to be realistic.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That

1. the Committee welcomes the progress made on the development of Worden Hall and;
2. the Committee looks forward to a written report on the progress of the Worden Hall project at the next meeting

18 Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/2020

The committee received a report on the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2019/2020 which aimed to help the committee achieve its purpose of improving the quality of life of local people and is based on the key issues affecting the Borough using the criteria within the South Ribble Scrutiny Guide.

Members of the committee had met at an informal workshop in August 2019 to discuss the key items of interest that they would like to consider within the committee and any issues which they felt could benefit from a task group review.

Members felt it would be useful to establish and take part in two task groups. The first would focus on the Council's approach to commercialisation and property investment. A second group would be formed with Chorley Council on the 'Our Health, Our Care' programme, to look at the provisions and performance of

Lancashire's health and social care system. This review may also be extended to include Preston City Council.

Nominations were put forward for the membership of these tasks groups.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That

1. Councillors David Howarth, Jacky Alty, Michael Green, Chris Lomax and Stephen Thurlbourn be appointed to the task group on commercialisation and property investment.
2. Councillors David Howarth, Will Adams and Karen Walton be appointed to the joint task group with Chorley Council on 'Our Health, Our Care'.

19 Scrutiny Matters

19a Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee Update

The Chair, Councillor David Howarth, provided the Committee with an update from the last meeting of Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee.

Members were informed that the Health Scrutiny Committee had queried three options for future health and care provisions across Lancashire. These included a 'do nothing' approach that would leave services as they were now; a second option to leave services as they were but to transform acute services to increase efficiencies; and a final option to increase provisions of the accident and emergency department at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital to the requirements of a type 1 facility.

In response to a question regarding what a type 1 facility is, members of the Scrutiny Committee were informed that this is a fully-functioning accident and emergency department.

Many members were enthusiastic about the third option to increase the accident and emergency facilities at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital and hoped that this could be reiterated to the Health Scrutiny Committee.

The matter would be considered further by the joint 'Our Health, Our Care' task group with Chorley Council.

19 Meetings and training attended by Scrutiny Committee members

b

Councillor Stephen Thurlbourn informed members of the committee that he would be attending the Local Government Association's Scrutiny training in 2020.

19c Cabinet Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

19 Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan

d

Members received the Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan which detailed the reports due for consideration over the next municipal year.

Councillor Matthew Trafford requested that a report be brought to the committee on the housing associations that work with the council, with a focus on the quality of the housing that they offer.

Councillor Stephen Thurlbourn queried whether a member of the Climate Emergency Task Group could meet with the Committee to provide updates and any necessary training. The Climate Emergency Task Group had not yet met but Councillor Thurlbourn would provide regular updates on the progress of the group to the Scrutiny Committee as a member of both bodies.

Training on effectively scrutinising environmental issues would be arranged for committee members.

The Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan was noted.

Chair

Date