

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Thursday, 9 July 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors David Howarth (Chair), Michael Green (Vice-Chair), Jacky Alty, Matt Campbell, Colin Coulton, Chris Lomax, Colin Sharples, Matthew Trafford and Karen Walton

CABINET MEMBERS: Councillor William Evans (Cabinet Member (Planning, Regeneration and City Deal)), Councillor Matthew Tomlinson (Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets)) and Councillor Paul Foster (Leader of the Council and Leader of the Labour Group)

OFFICERS: Gary Hall (Interim Chief Executive), Darren Cranshaw (Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services), Charlotte Lynch (Democratic and Member Services Officer), Howard Anthony (South Ribble Partnership Manager) and Jonathan Noad (Director of Planning and Property)

OTHER MEMBERS:

PUBLIC: 0

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Will Adams and Jim Marsh.

2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Michael Green declared a personal interest in item 7 – South Ribble Partnership Update.

3 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 11 February 2020 of Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, held on Tuesday 11 February 2020, be approved as a correct record.

4 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 13 February 2020 of Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, held on Thursday 13 February 2020, be approved as a correct record.

5 Minutes of meeting Monday, 22 June 2020 of Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel, held on Monday 22 June 2020, be noted.

6 Matters Arising from Previous Scrutiny Committee Meetings

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

An update on when the findings from the audit of the borough's leisure centres would be provided. In response, members were informed that this had been reported to the Governance Committee and the information would be shared after the meeting.

Progress on youth engagement work was also queried and it was understood that this would be referenced in a review of the Council's Corporate Plan objectives later this year.

The update was noted.

7 South Ribble Partnership Update

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Paul Foster), the Interim Chief Executive (Gary Hall) and the South Ribble Partnership Manager (Howard Anthony) presented an update on the work of the Partnership to the Committee and responded to members' comments and queries.

Much of the Partnership's recent work had been in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and included supporting the council's community hub, South Ribble Together, by helping those experiencing hardship to access food, medicine and support services.

The Partnership operated with a collaborative approach and members requested further elaboration of this. In response, it was understood that prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, partnerships with other agencies and organisations were still in development and delivery had shortly begun but the common goals of partners had been strengthened by work during the pandemic and greater cooperation was now possible.

A community recovery task group had been established and members queried who was involved in this. It was reported that this was a cross-sector group consisting of Citizen's Advice, Lancashire Adult Learning, Lancashire Constabulary, Department of Work and Pensions, Progress Housing and more.

Members requested an update on progress of implementing the Refernet service and were informed that 30 organisations had signed up to participate to date, including KEY and Preston Community Transport, and that this would help with the 'one front door' approach to accessing support services.

Interest in the link between the Partnership and Chorley Public Service Reform Board was expressed. The Reform Board was a similar model to the Partnership and worked with similar partners in Chorley. Greater work between the two was

being undertaken as many partners, such as the Clinical Commissioning Group, worked within the two boroughs and greater collaboration would ensure minimal duplication.

In response to queries regarding the resources provided by partners, it was emphasised that the Partnership is reliant on collaboration and cross-sector working, as opposed to financial contribution.

The method for measuring success of the Partnership's action plan was also questioned and members were advised that metrics for this were still in development. It was acknowledged that these could change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and further information would be provided.

A further update on the work of the Partnership would be provided to the Scrutiny Committee in January 2021 but it was acknowledged that the Partnership was facing significant challenges as a result of COVID-19. Whilst forecasts in progress were impractical, assurances were provided that community interests would continue to be met.

The committee thanked the Leader of the Council, the Interim Chief Executive and the Partnership Manager for attending.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee

1. commends the work of the Partnership in supporting our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic
2. welcomes greater links being made between the Partnership and Chorley Public Service Reform Board and;
3. looks forward to receiving an update in January 2021.

8 Worden Hall Progress Update

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets (Councillor Matthew Tomlinson) and the Director of Planning and Property (Jonathan Noad) presented a report on the progress of the Worden Hall project to the Committee and responded to members' comments and queries.

The officer working group had met several times but progress had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding for the project was agreed by Full Council in February 2020 and planning consultants, Purcell, had been appointed to help with any technical work in preparation of a planning application for the Hall.

Members queried the budget and forecast expenditure for the employment of Purcell and were assured that these figures could be provided.

Interest in how the project would meet the Council's aim to be carbon neutral by 2030 was expressed. In response, members were informed that this would be

incorporated into the design and works to the Hall and that emphasis would be placed on innovative ideas and minimising the carbon footprint of the Hall. Local procurement was also desired and those appointed to undertake the works would be made aware of the council's environmental aspirations.

In response to queries regarding what progress could be expected by the next meeting, it was suggested that an update on procurement routes could be provided and Purcell may also be able to provide an update on progress.

The Committee thanked the Cabinet Member and Director for their attendance.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That

1. the Scrutiny Committee thanks the Cabinet Member for the offer of regular updates from the Council's consultants
2. the Scrutiny Committee welcomes a further update on procurement process
3. the Scrutiny Committee requests information on the costs involved with the Council's consultants and;
4. the Scrutiny Committee supports the commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of the building.

9 Scrutiny Portfolio Update: Planning, Regeneration and City Deal

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and City Deal (Councillor Bill Evans) and the Director of Planning and Property (Jonathan Noad) presented an update on the work of the portfolio since May 2019 and responded to members' comments and queries.

Key priorities for the portfolio were centred around the Local Plan, which was a significant project for all authorities, Masterplans for Leyland, Penwortham and Bamber Bridge, and meeting deadline targets for determining planning applications.

Looking ahead, priority would still be given to work on the Local Plan but applications for major developments were also anticipated, which would require significant attention.

Members were interested to note that the portfolio had been involved in the relief efforts against COVID-19, with the council's Investment and Skills team providing general support to businesses within South Ribble, including authorising grants. Potential impact on the housing market was also acknowledged and the portfolio may need to emphasise the subject of affordable housing as a result.

COVID-19 had also resulted in changes to planning policy which could impact the work of the portfolio. For example, new proposals on house-building were anticipated and contractors were now permitted to work longer hours which could breach planning conditions.

Additional monitoring would be required to ensure adherence to conditions and there was still a requirement to apply for a variance of conditions.

In response to a request for an update on the Penwortham and Bamber Bridge Masterplans, members were informed that all work was currently focused on the Leyland Masterplan to meet the requirements for Town Deal funding but that work on the Penwortham Masterplan would begin within the current financial year.

Queries were raised regarding the membership of the Town Deal Board and members were advised that this included the Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and City Deal, a representative from the Conservative Group, the Chair of Leyland My Neighbourhood Forum, the Leader of the Council and a member of Farington Parish Council.

In response to a question as to why there was no representative from Lancashire County Council (LCC) on the Board, it was stated that the Council had written to LCC regarding membership and an officer was appointed as representative.

Some concern was expressed that a hot food takeaway had recently been approved by the Planning Committee and that this contradicted advice from the Director of Public Health. It was felt that greater consideration should be given to this advice when determining applications on takeaway premises in South Ribble.

Further information on the Council's homelessness strategy was requested and would be provided to the committee following a meeting on the matter in late July 2020.

Members queried progress in the extra care facility project and were informed that the Cabinet Member had visited a similar facility in Chorley and that two potential sites in South Ribble had been identified for the facility. A report would be provided to Cabinet in September 2020.

The Scrutiny Committee expressed interest in visiting the facility in Chorley and asked if this could be arranged.

An update on progress in unlocking the Pickering's Farm site for development was requested and members were informed, in response, that the masterplan was due to be presented to the Planning Committee and applications would soon be submitted for the cross-borough link road and the development.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Director of Planning and Property for their attendance.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee

1. wishes the Cabinet Member well with his portfolio priorities over the next 12-18 months
2. looks forward to progress being made on the masterplans for Leyland, Penwortham and Bamber Bridge

3. requests consideration be given to a planning policy on hot food takeaways in light of the Director of Public Health's advice
4. requests an update on the homelessness strategy be provided to members and;
5. welcomes the offer of visiting the extra care facility in Chorley.

10 Registered Provider (Housing Associations) Report

Members received a report identifying the registered housing providers in operation across South Ribble.

Members were in agreement that it would be beneficial to invite Progress Housing and Accent Housing to a meeting to gain further insight into their work and stock.

However, it was felt that this meeting should be deferred until such a time where normal meetings can resume following the outbreak of COVID-19. This would enable and encourage greater public participation.

11 Scrutiny Matters

11a Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee Update

The Chair, Councillor David Howarth, virtually attended a recent meeting of Lancashire County Council's (LCC) Health Scrutiny Committee and provided members with an update.

NHS employees were also in attendance at the Health Scrutiny Committee meeting and kept members informed of the current situation in hospitals and care facilities. It was reported that a second spike in COVID-19 infections was anticipated later in year.

The Chair also informed members that work regarding Chorley and South Ribble hospital had been delayed by the outbreak of COVID-19.

12 Meetings and training attended by Scrutiny Committee members

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Council meetings were being held virtually and training was postponed.

12a Scrutiny Review Task Group - Commercialisation and Property Investment Update

The Chair updated members of the committee on the work of the Scrutiny Task Group on Commercialisation and Property Investment.

The Task Group had influenced the scope for the strategic review of assets and met with relevant officers. The Task Group felt that it had completed its work as it did not wish to duplicate and would consider revisiting this topic in the future.

13 Forward Plan

Members discussed the establishment of a new Task Group to investigate health inequalities in South Ribble.

The Task Group would consist of 5 members of the Scrutiny Committee, including the Chair, and nominations were to be submitted in writing to the Assistant Director of Scrutiny and Democratic Services.

Chair

Date