

Minutes of	Scrutiny Committee
Meeting date	Tuesday, 11 January 2022
Committee members present:	Councillors David Howarth (Chair), Will Adams, Jacky Alty, Colin Sharples, Matthew Trafford and Karen Walton
Committee members attended virtually (non-voting):	Councillors Julie Buttery, Matt Campbell, Colin Coulton and Kath Unsworth
Officers present:	Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Chris Sinnott (Deputy Chief Executive), Asim Khan (Director of Customer and Digital), Howard Anthony (South Ribble Partnership Manager), Darren Cranshaw (Shared Services Lead - Democratic, Scrutiny & Electoral Services) and Charlotte Lynch (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
Other attendees:	Councillors Damian Bretherton (attended virtually), Anielia Bylinski Gelder, Paul Foster, Margaret Smith (attended virtually), Phil Smith, Angela Turner (attended virtually), Paul Wharton-Hardman and Carol Wooldridge (attended virtually)
Public:	0

23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mal Donoghue, Michael Green and Stephen Thurlbourn.

24 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Matthew Trafford declared a non-prejudicial interest as the Lead Member for Mental Health, which was focused on in many of the items included on the agenda.

25 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 12 October 2021 of Scrutiny Committee

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Committee be approved as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

26 Minutes of meeting Monday, 15 November 2021 of Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel be noted.

27 Matters Arising from previous Scrutiny Committee meetings

Members received an update on the recommendations made at previous meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.

Members welcomed the COVID Recovery Plan which was provided alongside the update and queried the possibility of this being a standalone item for the committee to scrutinise. It was confirmed that the Recovery Plan would be considered by the Cabinet.

A query was also raised with regards to a 131% increase in complaints relating to waste and refuse and further information on the original figures were requested.

A further update on the resourcing of masterplans was also requested and it was explained that work on approving and costing the masterplans would take place prior to identifying funding streams.

It was noted that a recommendation relating to sharing examples of best practice adopted across Chorley and South Ribble Councils as a result of shared services had not been completed due to the postponement of the previous meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee. This would be completed at the next meeting in February 2022.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That

1. the update be noted and
2. those completed actions be removed from the Matters Arising sheet.

28 Scrutiny Portfolio Update: Strategy and Reform

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Paul Foster) and the Deputy Chief Executive (Chris Sinnott) presented an update on the work of the Strategy and Reform portfolio since May 2019 and responded to members' comments and queries.

Highlights of what had gone well for the portfolio included the response to the COVID pandemic; the development of shared services with Chorley Council; the resilience of officers throughout the pandemic; and bringing the leisure centre services under the Council's management.

Challenges facing the portfolio were identified as the COVID recovery efforts; the funding gap affecting local government; ensuring the stability of the council's governance; the impact of the pandemic and significant change on staff; the retention on staff as a result of these challenges; preparing for and delivering the 2023 local elections; and ensuring the internal communications are effective.

In response to a query regarding how internal communications can be made more effective, it was explained that new tools had been introduced such as bi-monthly

Employee Voice meetings, a monthly Team Brief newsletter, and a development programme to promote the role of managers in supporting staff.

Progress on public service reform and the County Deal was also queried and members were advised that a report would shortly be considered by Full Council on joint working in Lancashire, which sought agreement to move forward with the County Deal.

However, desire to maintain a two-tier structure of local government was expressed by the Leader of the Council.

Members queried how the council could continue to strengthen its governance and the advantages of the Scrutiny and Governance Committees in challenging the work of the council and administration were emphasised.

Clarity was also sought as to the meaning of the Corporate Strategy project to “transform the way the council operates”. It was explained, in response, that this referred to fundamental changes to the way the council operates and delivers services.

The committee was keen to note how the Peer Challenge Action Plan would be monitored and it was explained that this would be done by the Cabinet within quarterly performance monitoring reports which are also considered by the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel.

A revisit from the peers involved in the review was anticipated to take place in spring 2022 and would hopefully be a face-to-face meeting.

Members noted the delivery of the 2021 events programme and requested further information on events which took place outside of Leyland.

It was acknowledged that the key performance indicators for communications were limited and not outcome-based and the Leader confirmed that this would be reviewed.

Assurances were also provided that there were no issues in recruiting to the vacant Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods post.

Members requested that the results of the Residents’ Survey and Employee Survey be considered by the Scrutiny Committee.

In response to a query regarding how the Scrutiny Committee could continue to support the work of the portfolio, it was requested that the committee continue to challenge the Cabinet.

Questions were also raised by a member not on the committee regarding the development of an app for residents to access council services and any sponsorship or advertising opportunities. Although it was acknowledged that neither of these areas were a top priority for the council, they could be looked into as and when opportunities arise.

The committee thanked the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executive for their attendance and report.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee

1. welcomes the progress made on the portfolio over the last year;
2. is grateful for the reassurance that governance remains a focus and priority for the Council and ensuring that it is embedded into the work of the Council;
3. looks forward to progress reports on the implementation of the peer challenge being presented to Scrutiny;
4. asks that that future reports includes examples of events and activities around the Borough;
5. suggests that communications key indicators be developed further for future years and be more outcome focussed;
6. requests that consideration be given to the Council's online customer service system allowing third parties to be able to report and make service requests.

29 Partnership Working 2021

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Paul Foster) and the Deputy Chief Executive (Chris Sinnott) presented an update on the Chorley and South Ribble Partnership, which was established in July 2021, including key development and achievements for 2021.

Given the shared nature of the new Partnership, members queried how a focus on South Ribble's needs and issues would be maintained. It was explained that the new Partnership would be of benefit for South Ribble as more senior partners, such as the NHS, were engaged.

Member engagement in the Partnership was also queried and it was advised that the Leader of the Council attends meetings and reports back to the council. Data from each My Neighbourhood Community Hub, which all members are involved in, also feeds into the Partnership and it is subject to scrutiny by the local authority.

Members acknowledged the role of the Scrutiny Committee in the work of the Partnership and welcomed the possibility of undertaking joint scrutiny with Chorley Council.

In response to a query regarding how the Chorley and South Ribble Partnership Strategy 2021-2024 was developed and agreed, members were advised that it was created by officers and has been agreed by the Partnership. It was acknowledged, however, that the document was constantly evolving.

The wide range of partners involved was welcomed by the committee and it was queried whether there were any gaps.

It was explained that the partners were representative of the areas of priority for the Partnership and were key players in the delivery of these priorities. The committee

suggested that parish and town council representatives could be involved in the work of the partnership.

In response to a question regarding what progress could be expected by the next update, it was stated that work on healthcare would have progressed, although this was subject to the engagement of the relevant partners, and that there would be clear plans and priorities for economic growth and skills and training.

The committee thanked the Leader of the Council and Deputy Chief Executive for their report and attendance.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee

1. welcomes the commitment to allow scrutiny of the new partnership and consideration be given to joint scrutiny with Chorley's committee;
2. asks that consideration be given to involving parish and town council representatives in the work of the partnership; and
3. wishes the partnership well in delivering its strategy and looks forward to receiving future monitoring reports.

30 Final Recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Task Group on Health Inequalities

The committee received the draft final report and recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Task Group into Health Inequalities, which sought approval to be presented to Full Council.

The report highlighted the rationale, objectives, methodology and findings of the review in addition to final recommendations.

Clarification was sought on a statistics relating to life expectancy between wards and between men and women. In response, it was advised that one statistic was based on an average figure whilst the other was based on true data. This would be clarified for the final report.

Members expressed concern that the social prescribing model which the review recommended emulating was not sustainable and was overly target-driven.

This was acknowledged and it was suggested that the development of a social prescribing system in South Ribble could be modeled to take these views and best practice into account should the recommendation be accepted.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee endorse the report of the Scrutiny Review Task Group for presentation to Full Council.

31 Urgent Decisions

The committee received a report of the Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer which outlined a number of urgent decisions taken since 29 October 2021 in accordance with urgency procedures outlined in the Council's Constitution.

The report highlighted that 4 urgent decisions had been submitted during this period, which required agreement from either the Mayor or the Chair of Scrutiny Committee to be taken using urgency procedures.

Members reiterated concerns made previously over the number of urgent decisions taken, given that these were not subject to call-in and therefore ineligible to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee.

The report was noted.

32 Scrutiny Matters

32a Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee Update

The Council's representative on Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee, Councillor David Howarth, provided an update on the work of the committee and discussions from recent meetings.

A recent meeting had focused on the take-up of COVID vaccines across Lancashire, with a focus on hard-to-reach areas.

It was noted that the minutes of the meeting were available on the County Council's website.

32 Meetings and training attended by Scrutiny Committee members

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Some members of the Scrutiny Committee had recently visited the Extra Care Facility, Primrose Gardens, in Chorley which they found productive and informative.

32c Forward Plan

The Forward Plan was noted.

32 Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan

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Members considered the Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan for the 2021/22 municipal year, which outlined topics and areas due to be scrutinised.

Members reiterated their wish for the Police and Crime Commissioner to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee and also requested items on the COVID Recovery Plan and City Deal.

The Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan was noted.

33 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act.

34 Partnership Update on Waste Service

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Social Justice and Wealth Building (Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder) and the Director of Customer and Digital (Asim Khan) presented a confidential report which provided an update on the waste and recycling collection contract with FCC Environment.

Discussion focused on a number of areas and topics including:

- Upcoming waste contract extension negotiations
- Increased cost pressures
- The potential for future sharing with Chorley Council
- Recycling rates
- Recycling and waste provisions for community groups
- Use of electric bin lorries
- Achieving the targets set out in the national Waste and Resources Strategy

The committee thanked the Cabinet Member and Director for their attendance and report.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee

1. welcomes the reassurance that the Council has the necessary resources and expertise to deliver the timeline for the waste contract extension negotiations;
2. asks that contact be made with West Lancashire Borough Council to see if anything might be learned on their approach to increasing recycling rates; and
3. requests that the possibility of the recycling service being extended to community groups and voluntary organisations be explored further.

Chair

Date