

Minutes of	Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel
Meeting date	Monday, 21 March 2022
Committee members present:	Councillors David Howarth (Chair), Colin Sharples and Karen Walton
Committee members attended virtually (non-voting):	None
Officers present:	Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Louise Mattinson (Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer), Victoria Willett (Service Lead - Transformation and Partnerships), Howard Anthony (Performance & Partnerships Team Leader), Darren Cranshaw (Shared Services Lead - Democratic, Scrutiny & Electoral Services) and Charlotte Lynch (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
Other attendees:	Councillors Paul Foster, Jon Hesketh (attended virtually), Keith Martin (attended virtually), Mick Titherington (attended virtually), Matthew Tomlinson, Angela Turner (attended virtually) and Carol Wooldridge (attended virtually)
Public:	1

54 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Will Adams and Colin Coulton.

55 Declarations of interest

None.

56 Minutes of the 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, held on Monday, 15 November 2021, be approved as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

57 Matters Arising from previous Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel Meetings

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That

1. the Matters Arising from previous meetings of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel be noted and
2. any completed actions be removed from the report.

58 Corporate Strategy Quarterly Monitoring Report - Quarter 3 2021/22

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Paul Foster) and the Chief Executive presented a report which outlined the Council's performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy projects and objectives during Quarter 3 (October-December 2021).

Overall, performance of the projects was good with 11 of 14 being on-track, 2 complete and 1 forecasted as delayed. Of 8 key performance indicators (KPI's) reported, 3 were above target; 1 performing worse but within the 5% threshold; and 2 were outside of the threshold.

The report referred to a digitisation review within the Planning department and members queried whether this had already been done with the Planning Portal system. It was clarified, in response, that the digitisation review would incorporate a different software to the Planning Portal to enable tracking and management of applications.

Members also raised issues around being unable to access the Planning Portal to view and make representations on planning applications and asked that an update be provided on the technical issues outside of the meeting.

The delivery of the joint digital strategy was identified as amber/delayed in the report and the panel queried if this should be marked instead as red or off-track.

In response, it was explained that the rating of project performance is the judgement of officers and that fundamental changes in resourcing and progress would be reported in the next quarter.

The panel also requested that further ICT training be made available to Members, following some technical issues experienced by individuals.

Clarification was sought as to the impact of self-service channels on the number of telephone calls and in-person visits to Gateway.

It was acknowledged that the current software used was not fit-for-purpose although the call abandonment rate had recently improved to 4%. More detailed customer service performance data would be included in the next quarterly report which members welcomed.

The panel noted that many of the projects within the 'Thriving Communities' corporate priority related to young people and queried what support and programmes were available for the wider population.

Members were assured in response that the My Neighbourhood Community Hubs provide a range of support to their wider communities and that this would be identified in a Cabinet update report on the Hubs.

The panel also expressed a desire for future quarterly performance reports to provide examples of successes from across the Borough.

Assurances were also provided that the mental health support programme could be extended if there was sufficient need.

Some of the discussion focused around the Community Wealth Building programme, which had made good progress in the quarter.

Members queried the tangible benefits of the programme and were advised that a social value portal for procurement had been established, training delivered to officers and suppliers and that a credit union had opened in Leyland.

Members felt that clarification was needed that the Council had established a credit union branch in Leyland and asked that the report be updated to reflect this.

A request was also made that further consideration be given to communicating the roles of the county council and district council and the service they provide to ensure clarity amongst residents.

The panel also commended the Council's efforts in bringing the management of leisure centres in-house and in forming the leisure company.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel:

1. thanks the Leader and Chief Executive for attending, their detailed report and answering questions;
2. asks that an update be provided on the technical issues affecting the Planning Portal;
3. looks forward to an update on the Digital Strategy performance;
4. requests that further ICT training be made available to Members;
5. is grateful for the offer to provide more detailed customer service performance data in the next quarterly report;
6. would like to see future reports provide examples of successes from across the Borough and celebrate the work of all the Community Hubs;
7. asks that further consideration be given to communicating the roles of the county council and district council and the service they provide.

59 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Quarter 3

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets (Councillor Matthew Tomlinson) and the Chief Executive presented a report of the Section 151 Officer which provided an update on the Council's revenues and reserves forecast as at 31 January 2022.

Members noted the update and queried if the Council had the capacity and resources to deliver the activities allocated for in the reserve accounts. In response, some issues with capacity were acknowledged but the Corporate Strategy was felt to be realistic.

Assurances were provided that recruiting agency staff and redeployment of employees were underway to minimise impact on services where there were significant underspends, such as IT, Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits and Neighbourhoods, which members welcomed.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel:

1. thanks the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets and the Chief Executive for attending, their report and answering questions and
2. welcomes the update on the additional resources being invested to deliver corporate projects.

60 Capital Budget Monitoring Report Quarter 3

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets (Councillor Matthew Tomlinson) and the Chief Executive presented a report of the Section 151 Officer which outlined the overall financial position of the Council in respect of the capital programme as at 31 January 2022.

Members noted the ongoing high-value spend for various projects and queried the Cabinet Member's confidence in the delivery of the capital programme.

In response, the Cabinet Member advised that they remained very confident in the council's current ability to deliver projects.

A query was also raised as to why the parks and playgrounds budget had been reprofiled and the delivery delayed to next year. It was explained that this was due to a variety of reasons, including consultation feedback.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel:

1. thanks the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets and the Chief Executive for attending, their report and answering questions and

2. acknowledges the significant spend on Worden Hall, the McKenzie Arms Site and other projects that will be reflected in the fourth quarter's report.

Chair

Date