

Minutes of	Scrutiny Committee
Meeting date	Tuesday, 12 July 2022
Members present:	Councillors Angela Turner (Chair), Michael Green (Vice-Chair), Will Adams, Julie Buttery, Matt Campbell, Colin Coulton, Mal Donoghue, Lou Jackson, Stephen Thurlbourn, Matthew Trafford, Kath Unsworth and Karen Walton
Cabinet members:	Councillor Paul Foster (Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member (Strategy and Reform) and Leader of the Labour Group)
Officers:	Jennifer Mullin (Director of Communities), Victoria Willett (Director of Change and Delivery), Darren Cranshaw (Shared Services Lead - Democratic, Scrutiny & Electoral Services), David Brunskill (Graduate Management Trainee) and Ben Storey (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
Other members:	Councillors Keith Martin, Matthew Tomlinson and Mary Green. Councillors Harry Hancock, Caleb Tomlinson, Jacqui Mort, Jane Bell and Jacky Alty attended virtually
Public:	0

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on YouTube here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5BTA89XZBI>

50 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Ange Turner welcomed the Committee to her first meeting as Chair. Councillor Lou Jackson was also welcomed to her first meeting as a member of the Committee.

The Chair also thanked Charlotte Lynch, Democratic and Member Services Officer, for her help and support of the Committee as she departs for a new role.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Colin Sharples.

Councillor Chris Lomax attended as a substitute.

51 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Michael Green declared a personal interest in item 8- Holiday Activities and Food Programme Update as a County Council Cabinet Member.

Councillor Kath Unsworth also declared a personal interest in item 8- Holiday Activities and Food Programme Update as a volunteer with some of the projects included in the update.

52 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 17 March 2022 of Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Michael Green wished to place on record his thanks for Councillor David Howarth's hard work as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee for the past year and also to formally welcome Councillor Ange Turner as Chair.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, held on Thursday, 17 March 2022, be approved as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

53 Minutes of meeting Monday, 21 March 2022 of Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel

The minutes of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel held on Monday, 21 March 2022 were noted.

54 Minutes of meeting Monday, 20 June 2022 of Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel

The minutes of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel held on Monday, 20 June 2022 were noted.

55 Matters Arising from previous Scrutiny Committee meetings

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

Members noted progress on previous recommendations and unanimously resolved to remove any completed actions from the Matters Arising Sheet.

The Committee requested a detailed update on a long-standing issue around Masterplans be brought to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in October.

Members also sought further information after considering the employee survey results and requested that a report be produced exploring this at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in October.

Members raised several long-standing items and requested an update on the following:

- Minute 4.3- clarification on when the report would be provided to Scrutiny Committee.
- Minute 36.2- an update on Member involvement in developing the transformation strategy.
- Minute 46.5- whether the Committee is minded to pursue joint Scrutiny of Shared Services with Chorley Council.
- Minute 48.2- when will the Committee receive information on the use of urgent decisions at comparative local authorities.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Paul Foster) and the Director of Change and Delivery (Vicky Willett) responded to these points.

The commercialisation of the Civic Centre was paused during the pandemic. A detailed review is currently underway with a report scheduled for an upcoming Cabinet meeting. The Assets and Facilities Teams transition into Shared Services will also form part of this review.

Work on the Transformation Strategy is ongoing with a Member Briefing to be scheduled later in the year to allow Members to provide any input.

It was agreed that all outstanding items on the Matters Arising sheet be reviewed and updated for the next meeting.

56 Community Wealth Building

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Paul Foster) and the Director of Change and Delivery (Vicky Willett) presented an update on the Community Wealth Building project highlighting the key aims, progress and successes achieved so far.

Unfortunately the Cabinet Member for Communities, Social Justice and Wealth Building (Councillor Aniela Bylinksi Gelder) was unable to attend the meeting with the Leader of the Council substituting. The Leader read out a pre-prepared statement on behalf of Councillor Bylinksi Gelder to provide wider context.

It was noted that Community Wealth Building formed a key part of the Council's Corporate Strategy in achieving a fair economy that works for all and was a shift in model that better supports the local economy and placed a greater focus on social value.

It was acknowledged that Community Wealth Building was a complex concept that needed to embed but the dashboards included in the report highlighted the benefits to communities throughout the procurement process.

In response to a query about staff in the waste services team following the waste contract being insourced it was confirmed that 44 staff had transferred to the Council with a small number choosing to remain as agency employees. Further information about pension contributions would be provided after the meeting. Having control over the supply chain also ensured greater support for local businesses as well as improved terms and conditions for staff providing benefits to social value.

Queries were raised by the committee about how the Community Wealth Building model would operate in such uncertain times and how adaptable it could be. In response, Members were reassured that impact assessments were undertaken with any significant procurement but the Council's approach was to be as flexible as possible to meet any challenges it faces.

The committee was updated on the transition of insourcing the waste contract and welcomed news that there had not been any negative impact on performance indicators.

Members looked forward to receiving further information on where staff lived that would demonstrate the positive impact of insourcing the waste contract on social value within the local community.

Members noted that there were potential opportunities for the Council to expand the waste service to consider increased commercial collections.

It was queried as to what leverage the Council had in getting key stakeholders and partners, particularly in the private sector, to buy in to the Community Wealth Building model. The Leader confirmed that changes to procurement policies supported this in addition to national and local frameworks which are having a greater focus on this model.

The committee asked how businesses were being engaged in this model and if they were buying in to the concept. The committee heard that co-operation with business has been positive and has built upon relationships between the Council and local business that were strengthened throughout the pandemic with ongoing dialogue between Cabinet Members, Officers and businesses through extensive networks and partnerships such as the South Ribble and Chorley Partnership.

Members noted the approach taken by Preston City Council but were assured that South Ribble Borough Council had also made a significant contribution in the sharing of best practice amongst key stakeholders.

The committee suggested producing a register of local co-operative groups emerging with support from the Council.

On protecting land in the borough, it was acknowledged that the two-tier system with Lancashire County Council was at times challenging aligning with their vision for how land is used. Strengthening the council's planning policies was seen as vital in supporting this area of Community Wealth Building.

In response to a query, the Leader of the Council agreed to provide an update on how the £150,000 set aside as a reserve would be allocated and spent.

The Leader of the Council reaffirmed the commitment to pursuing the Community Wealth Building model but would remain flexible and open to other methods in the interim period.

Implications of the model for the pension fund were raised. As responsibility for this lay with Lancashire County Council, the committee saw South Ribble and the other district authorities role in influencing the approach taken by the County's Pension Board and welcomed them being encouraged to consider adopting Community Wealth Building principles.

Queries were raised over the falling numbers of new savers at the Credit Union. In response it was noted that there had been a leak at the Credit Union recently which had impacted on them operating fully. The Leader of the Council was optimistic that numbers would improve in the next Corporate Performance report.

The committee thanked the Leader of the Council and Director of Change and Delivery for their report and attendance.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee

1. Thanks the Leader and Director for attending and answering questions;
2. Welcomes the plans to promote the community wealth building concept with partners, businesses and residents;
3. Asks that the community wealth building model be reviewed in light of the changing and increasing challenges affecting the Borough and ensure it remains adaptable and best practice;
4. Looks forward to a list of co-operatives in South Ribble being provided;
5. Is grateful for the offer of further information on the £150k reserve for community wealth building; and
6. Asks that the Council encourages the Lancashire County Council pension fund committee to consider adopting community wealth building principles.

57 Holiday Activities and Food Programme Update

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Paul Foster) and the Director of Communities (Jennifer Mullin) presented an update on the Holiday Activities and Food Programme highlighting the benefits and overall success of the scheme.

Unfortunately the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing (Councillor Mick Titherington) was unable to attend the meeting with the Leader of the Council substituting.

The committee were pleased with the scheme and feedback included in the report. Learning points centred around the demand and managing the Council's ambition to not turn any child away. Lessons were also learnt in the way the schemes were communicated to avoid any confusion and also with the implementation of a more suitable booking system.

Responding to queries about continued funding for the programme, Members were assured that funding was in place for the next three years. In addition, there was a commitment to finding any required funding, similiarly to the Holiday Hunger scheme, to meet any future needs.

The committee requested that further information around the impact of the programme on anti-social behaviour and community safety be provided, though Members were reassured that there had been no negative feedback from last year's programme.

In looking ahead to how improvements could be made to the programme the possibility of expanding the scheme to cover additional school holidays and half terms was raised as an option to explore further. The Leader of the Council elaborated on this point explaining that work done as part of the Leisure Local

projects had provided availability of sites, staff and expertise that would be able to facilitate an expanded offer throughout the school year.

The committee were pleased to hear that all children, including those being home-schooled, were welcome to attend any and all of the sessions. Members were also mindful of looking at ways to maximise the number of home-schooled children engaging with the programme.

The committee thanked the Leader of the Council and Director of Communities for their report and attendance.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee

1. Thanks the Leader and Director for attending and answering questions;
2. Commends the programme and positive impact it has had on our young people and communities;
3. Asks that further information be provided on any benefits and positive impacts the programme has had on anti-social behaviour and community safety;
4. Welcomes the reassurance that consideration is being given to extending the programme to other school holiday periods; and
5. That consideration be given to those who are involved in home schooling could be engaged in the programme.

58 Urgent Decisions

The committee received a report from the Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer which outlined a number of urgent decisions taken since 20 April in accordance with the urgency procedures outlined within the Council's Constitution.

The report highlighted that 8 urgent decisions had been submitted during this period, which required agreement from wither the Mayor or the Chair of Scrutiny Committee to be taken using urgency procedures.

A query was raised over several decisions taken due to funding timescales or the end of contracts when these dates would have been known in advance - Members questioned whether this was due to any capacity issues or demands on officers.

In response, the Shared Service Lead - Democratic, Scrutiny and Electoral Services assured the committee that the number of urgent decisions had dramatically fallen making reference to just two occasions where call-in had been waived. These two were linked to tight deadlines imposed by government on the spending of allocated grant funding.

Members reiterated their request for information on the number of urgent decisions taken by comparable local authorities.

59 Scrutiny Matters

59a Lancashire County Council Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee Update

The Chair referred to Councillor Lou Jackson being appointed the Council's new representative on Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that there had been changes in the structure of the Committee with her first meeting being held the following day. Councillor Jackson looked forward to providing an update at the next meeting.

60 Meetings and training attended by Scrutiny Committee members

Members of the Scrutiny Committee had attended a training session with Dr Steph Snape last month with a follow up session delivered by the Shared Service Lead - Democratic, Scrutiny & Electoral Services for those Members unable to attend the first session.

Members praised and provided positive feedback on the two sessions and looked forward to future training later in the year.

61 Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

62 Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan

Following informal discussion at the Scrutiny Committee workshop a few weeks ago the Forward Plan has been populated to reflect areas the committee wishes to explore further.

In addition, feedback was sought from the committee on which two areas they would like to consider the focus of a Task Group and for volunteers. It is proposed that a Task Group be formed to consider:

1. Housing Developers and their efforts to tackle climate change linking into wider planning policies. The following Members volunteered: Councillors Michael Green, Karen Walton, Stephen Thurlbourn, Kath Unsworth and Lou Jackson.
2. Housing Associations. The following Members volunteered: Councillors Matthew Trafford and Will Adams. Further volunteers from the Committee would be sought outside the meeting.

A request was made to consider looking at transport in general around the borough as part of the Forward Plan.

Chair

Date