

Minutes of Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date Thursday, 24 November 2022

Members present: Councillors Angela Turner (Chair), Michael Green (Vice-Chair), Matt Campbell, Colin Coulton, Lou Jackson, Colin Sharples, Kath Unsworth, Karen Walton and Chris Lomax

Officers: Darren Cranshaw (Head of Democratic Services) and Ben Storey (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

Other members: Councillor Michael Titherington and attended virtually, Councillors Harry Hancock and Mary Green

Guests: Chris Moister (Director of Governance) and Victoria Willett (Director of Change and Delivery)

Public: 0

74 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Trafford – substituted by Councillor Chris Lomax. Apologies for absence were also received for Councillors Julie Buttery, Will Adams and Mal Donoghue.

75 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

76 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 11 October 2022 of Scrutiny Committee

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, held on Tuesday, 11 October 2022, be approved as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

77 Minutes of meeting Monday, 14 November 2022 of Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel, held on Monday, 14 November 2022, were noted.

78 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.

79 Staff Satisfaction Survey 2021

The Chair welcomed Vicky Willett, Director of Change and Delivery to present the report and answer any questions.

When asked about the definition of 'good' in relation to staff satisfaction, Members were advised that whilst 75% of comments being positive could be deemed good – there was more work to do in promoting and supporting a positive culture in the organisation and managing significant changes more effectively.

On the difference in results between South Ribble staff and staff employed in shared services, engagement with staff through focus group and other methods had been undertaken to understand concerns. There was a perceived lack of trust and uncertainty about shared services but after teams had transitioned there was greater reassurance in their roles. Other work around supporting the building of relationships and teams would continue through the recently launched People Strategy.

A question was asked over the response rates and engagement could be improved. In undertaking the survey, efforts had been made to reach all areas and services of the Council but acknowledged the use of incentives could be utilised in future. Following on, queries were raised on the response rate of the subsequent pulse survey that was undertaken. Members were advised that this survey was not promoted as extensively as the full survey. The pulse survey formed part of a wider process of engaging with staff such as focus group and 1-2-1s.

In response to queries on any trend information when the 2021 results were compared with earlier staff satisfaction, Members were told that the last survey was in 2017 and the survey was very different so it was difficult to make meaningful comparisons. Moving forward the 2021 survey would be used as a baseline against future monitoring of staff satisfaction.

Referring to negative comments, with particular reference around the senior leadership team, the Committee heard that being newly shared and in the midst of the pandemic and an increase in home-working, building relationships with new colleagues had been challenging. The team were aware of this and actions had been put in place with senior officers attending staff listening days and actively being more visible around the offices.

Picking up on comments in the report around the leadership team, the Committee asked whether improvements had been made and if more questions should be included on future surveys. In response, it was noted that embedding a culture of trust and building relationships was a long-term project, but improvements were reflected in more recent engagement.

Members requested more details on the outcomes of the completed actions – in summarising Members heard that the implementation of the Workplace Strategy, the passport to people managers training scheme, a refreshed performance review system along with improvements to internal communications were now established.

Members heard that the full staff satisfaction would be undertaken every two years with the next once scheduled for November 2023. Members were reassured that monitoring and engagement was a continuous process in various ways. Members

also asked whether exit interviews were undertaken and formed part of this – in response, Members heard that this was the case and there was a wide range of reasons given in feedback.

It was subsequently

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

that the Committee;

1. Thanks the Director for attending and answering questions.
2. Asks that future pulse surveys include a wider range of questions to gauge the view of employees.
3. Looks forward to the setting of officer targets and measures of employee satisfaction to help ensure progress is made.
4. Requests that regular updates on the People Strategy progress report be presented to Scrutiny.
5. Looks forward to receiving the results of the next survey in a timely manner.

80 South Ribble Leisure Company

The Chair welcomed Chris Moister, Director of Governance and also Acting Managing Director of the South Ribble Leisure Company to present an update and answer questions from Committee members.

The Director provided a summary of the company's current position, the governance and management arrangements and the business plan that had been requested by the Scrutiny Committee. It was acknowledged that the business plan included in the agenda required improvement and in future would be refined and align more closely with the Corporate Strategy.

Current objectives and challenges the company was facing centred around refurbishment and decarbonisation works, a staffing restructure and meeting the financial challenges with recent pay awards and increasing costs.

Members were reminded of the reasoning and benefits of establishing the leisure company, namely some tax advantages with the company being set up as a charitable, non-profit entity and the access to grant funding this provides.

Members questioned how, given the company directors were also directors of the Council, any conflicts of interests were managed with these dual roles and whether Directors had sufficient capacity to manage both.

Whilst there was a potential risk of a conflict of interest, it was noted that as the company's business was discharged at the direction of the Council the objectives of

the company mirror that of the Council. It was most likely, Members were told, that a conflict could arise for the Director of Finance in narrow circumstances where there are funding requests to the Council.

With regards to Director's capacity, Members were informed that capacity had been built into the Director of Commercial Services role to accommodate additional duties as Managing Director of the Leisure Company - the other Directors weren't involved operationally and were only required to attend board meetings. It was acknowledged that currently, given the vacant Director of Commercial Services post and taking on the Managing Director role on an interim basis it had been challenging but once this post had been filled there would be a reallocation of work.

A question was asked on what contingencies were in place when the planned refurbishment and decarbonisation work would take place. In response – the aim was to protect service provision by utilising the different leisure centres to accommodate maintenance and improvement work. For example, offering the use of facilities at Leyland when works took place at Bamber Bridge. Whilst there would be some disruption and potential costs it was hoped that this would retain their use and good will through the process.

Members heard that once works had been completed there would be a drive to increase membership, utilise the centres to support Council schemes and initiatives like social prescribing work and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) program with the aim of achieving better health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Committee sought reassurance on the role of Members in the company and whether the AGM would be open to all Members and the wider public. In response, as the Council was the shareholder any reports would come to Cabinet and Full Council meetings. With regards to the AGM, whether the public could attend would be a matter for Members to decide, the budgetary matters would be included in the statement of accounts which would be publicly available in any case.

In relation to the company's key performance indicators – these were set out in the contract with the Council and reported against. More detailed indicators were being development as part of the business planning process. As previously mentioned, it was accepted that the business plan need reviewing and improving and work was progressing with the Council's performance teams to facilitate this.

In response to a query whether the company's key performance indicators would be included in the quarterly performance reports considered by the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel and Cabinet, the Committee heard that the reporting on the performance indicators is done through the client meetings with the Director of Communities and shared with the Executive Member. The contents of quarterly performance reports would be for the Council to decide. It was suggested that performance of the company could be indirectly monitored through the Corporate Priority outcomes that are measured in the area of health and wellbeing.

On issues reported with the WIFI at Leyland Leisure Centre recently, Members were reassured that the ICT team had been working hard to resolve the matter and an update would be circulated after the meeting.

The Committee welcomed the commitment from the company to attend future Scrutiny Committee meetings to provide updates and answer questions as requested.

The Chair thanked the Director of Governance and Acting Managing Director of the Leisure Company for their attendance and answering all of the Committee's questions.

It was subsequently

Resolved: (Unanimously)

that the Scrutiny Committee:

1. Thanks the Director for attending and answering questions.
2. Welcomes the offer to the Committee receiving the next leisure company business plan.
3. Asks that consideration be given to the Council's quarterly performance report including key leisure company indicators.
4. The Leisure Company be invited to attend the Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

81 Scrutiny Matters

81a Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee Update

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

There had been several meeting over the last few months with a number of presentations delivered around the visions of the County Council, the Wellbeing 2030 project, the Health Care Act 2022 and updates from the Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

An update on the New Hospitals Programme was also provided with work progressing to evaluate the shortlisted options, assess viability of potential sites and engage with residents and key stakeholders as plans progress.

82 Meetings and training attended by Scrutiny Committee members

The Scrutiny Committee noted the questioning skills training session delivered by John Lamb and arranged through North West Employers last month.

Committee members who attended found the session interesting and useful in supporting their scrutiny role.

83 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

84 Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan

Members requested that consideration be given to the refugee resettlement update in March 2023 being incorporated within a wider update on the Communities, Social Justice and Wealth Building portfolio area.

In addition it was suggested that the Community Hub review be brought to a meeting in this municipal year, if possible.

Councillor Michael Green provided an update on scrutiny task group reviewing the impact of housing development in the borough. The Task Group had been established with meetings scheduled over the coming weeks to interview witnesses; a questionnaire had also been produced and circulated for wider views.

Chair

Date