

# Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 8th November, 2023, 6.00 pm

Shield Room, Civic Centre, West Paddock, Leyland PR25 1DH and [Youtube](#)

## Agenda

### 1 Apologies for Absence

### 2 Declarations of Interest

Members are requested to indicate at this stage in the proceedings any items on the agenda in which they intend to declare an interest. Members are reminded that if the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (as defined in the Members' Code of Conduct) they must leave the room for the whole of that item. If the interest is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, but is such that a member of the public could reasonably regard it as being so significant that it is likely that it would prejudice their judgment of the public interest (as explained in the Code of Conduct) then they may make representations, but then must leave the meeting for the remainder of the item.

### 3 Minutes of meeting Monday, 11 September 2023 of Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee

(Pages 3 - 10)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting, held on Monday 11 September 2023, as an accurate record for signing by the Chair.

### 4 Scrutiny Recommendations Update

(Pages 11 - 18)

To consider and note updates on recommendations made at previous meetings.

### 5 Assets and Asset Management

(Pages 19 - 26)

Report of the Interim Deputy Chief Executive attached.

### 6 Quarter Two Performance Monitoring Report 2023-24

(To Follow)

Report of the Chief Executive to follow.

<p><b>7 Capital and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report - Quarter 2 2023/24</b></p> <p>Report of the Director of Finance to follow.</p>	(To Follow)
<p><b>8 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - Quarter 2 2023/24</b></p> <p>Report of the Director of Finance to follow.</p>	(To Follow)
<p><b>9 Scrutiny Matters</b></p>	
<p><b>9a Meetings and training attended by Scrutiny Committee members</b></p>	(Verbal Report)
<p><b>9b Cultural Strategy Task Group</b></p>	
<p><b>9c Cabinet Forward Plan</b></p>	
<p><a href="#">The latest version of the Forward Plan can be found on the Council's website by clicking here.</a></p>	
<p><b>9d Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan</b></p> <p>Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan attached.</p>	(Pages 27 - 28)

Chris Sinnott  
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee Councillors Will Adams (Chair), Michael Green (Vice-Chair), David Howarth, Will King, Nicky Peet, Pete Pillinger and Haydn Williams

The minutes of this meeting will be available on the internet at [www.southribble.gov.uk](http://www.southribble.gov.uk)

Forthcoming Meetings

6.00 pm Monday, 19 February 2024 - Shield Room, Civic Centre, West Paddock, Leyland PR25 1DH

<b>Minutes of</b>	<b>Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Monday, 11 September 2023</b>
<b>Committee members present:</b>	Councillors Will Adams (Chair), Michael Green (Vice-Chair), David Howarth, Will King, Nicky Peet, Pete Pillinger and Haydn Williams
<b>Officers present:</b>	Darren Cranshaw (Head of Democratic Services), Michael Johnson (Senior Policy Officer (Engagement)), Polly Patel (Performance and Partnerships Manager) and Clare Gornall (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
<b>Guests:</b>	Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Property, Assets, Commercial Services & Major Developments); Councillor Matthew Tomlinson – Cabinet Member (Finance and Public Protection); Chris Sinnott (Chief Executive); and Jean Waddington (Principal Financial Accountant),
<b>Other members:</b>	Councillors Mary Green and Keith Martin (attending in person) and  Councillors Lou Jackson, Phil Smith, Ian Watkinson and Karen Walton (attending virtually)
<b>Public:</b>	0

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on [YouTube here](#)

## 10 Apologies for Absence

There were none.

## 11 Minutes of meeting, Monday 12 June 2023, of Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee

### Resolved (unanimously):

That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 12 June 2023 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

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## 12 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

## 13 Scrutiny Recommendations Update

Darren Cranshaw, Head of Democratic Services presented the Committee's Recommendations Tracker updated as of 31 August 2023.

### Resolved (unanimously):

- i) That the Scrutiny Recommendations Update be noted; and
- ii) That the Recommendations marked "complete" be removed from the Tracker list.

## 14 South Ribble Quarter One Performance Monitoring Report 2023-24

The Committee noted the apologies of the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member (Strategy and Reform), Councillor Paul Foster, who was unable to attend the meeting.

The Chair welcomed the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member (Property, Assets, Commercial Services & Major Developments), Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder, and the Chief Executive, Chris Sinnott to the meeting to present the Quarter One Performance Monitoring Report 2023-24.

Councillor Bylinski Gelder highlighted that 75% of the performance indicators were either on or above target. With regard to Music in the Park, held on 28 May 2023, 2,300 people attended and furthermore, using an event calculation tool, the event contributed an estimated £196,200 boost to the economy. She also referred to the Cost of Living Action Plan, South Ribble Credit Union, and Play Areas Refurbishment. She highlighted performance indicators which were currently on amber, notably the Leyland Town Deal project, which she stressed was related to the inherent risk in finalising elements in the design stage (RIBA stage 3). This would be resolved once the stage was complete.

The Committee asked a number of detailed and probing questions in relation to the report. The key issues and responses were as follows:

- There was a dispute about the figure of 75% performance indicators being on or above target quoted by Councillor Bylinski Gelder. This was due to the 5% "tolerance" of certain performance indicators not meeting target. It was explained that the tolerance was applied in order to allow focussed attention on the highest priorities. The Committee were concerned that this was not sufficiently clear within the report and that more clarity was needed.
- The estimated figure of £196,200 boost to the economy by the Music in the Park event was generated by a government-backed calculator which measured the impact on the local economy. Councillor Bylinski Gelder acknowledged that it was therefore possible the event was not in profit. She stressed that the event was viewed as an investment for the first few years, as time was needed to build up a strong reputation and brand. It was

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confirmed that detailed figures were to be reported to full Council including the gross spend. A budget for further events would need to be approved by Council. The Committee requested further information on the income and expenditure from the event.

- The Committee were informed that the Social Prescribing service arose from the Chorley and South Ribble Partnership which identified that the Chorley service had been shown to have a positive impact e.g. reduction in feelings of loneliness. Access was via several channels e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureau, Council's homelessness service.  
The Committee referred to the lack of provision identified by Community Hubs in some areas e.g. Farington, Lostock Hall. It was suggested that the service be linked with Community Hubs.
- With regard to customer services, the Committee stressed the importance of retaining face to face contact for those who prefer to do so or who are unable to contact the Council online. Councillor Bylinski Gelder strongly agreed and expressed a commitment to this.
- With regard to the Civic Centre workspace, Chris Sinnott, Chief Executive gave number of reasons for the delay, including the implementation of the shared services programme, establishing the use of office space following the pandemic, and the rolling out of new ICT equipment to staff.
- Chris Sinnott addressed a question regarding data and intelligence sharing arising from the Chorley and South Ribble Partnership. He indicated that the pandemic led to a lifting of data protection restrictions, which had helped better target residents in need. The initiative seeks to ensure that the public sector is using information in the best way to benefit residents.
- A query was made regarding the planned Leyland Town Deal engagement event in August 2023. An update would be provided to the Committee.
- As regards the Economy Strategy, which was only launched 3-4 months ago, an update would be provided by Councillor Flannery to the Cabinet in a few months.
- As regards Wellbeing Sessions and team capacity, Chris Sinnott informed the Committee that there had been short term vacancies at a crucial time which caused the target to be missed. However, there was now added capacity and the intention is to hold an additional session in the week.
- As regards the number of households in temporary accommodation, Chris Sinnott informed the Committee that the Council works closely with partners e.g. Registered Social Landlords and Lancashire County Council. However, there has been an overall increase in the number of people presenting as homeless.
- Chris Sinnott informed the Committee that recruitment of planning officers was a national problem and the LGA had now launched a graduate scheme to address this. This Council has recently appointed to the Planning Team and that the recruitment process for the Director of Planning and Development post was currently underway.

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- As regards the risk of non-determination of planning applications, improvements are expected in terms of determining applications more rapidly, which should be reflected in Quarter 2.

## **Resolved (unanimously):**

The Committee:

1. thanks the Deputy Leader and Chief Executive for attending and answering questions,
2. asks that future performance reports provide greater clarity in the way tolerance information is presented;
3. welcomes the assurance that the evaluation of Music in the Park is being presented to Full Council and requests further information on the income and expenditure from this year's event be provided to committee members;
4. suggests that the social prescribing service links in with the Council's Community Hubs;
5. wishes the social prescribing service well and looks forward to regular updates;
6. is grateful for the confirmation that we will continue to offer face to face customer service in addition to channel shifting to online;
7. asks that the quarter 2 performance report provide further information on customer contact performance data;
8. welcomes the offer of more information being provided on the Business Energy Efficiency Scheme and the Leyland Town Deal engagement event; and
9. understands the staffing shortage and national situation facing planning and welcomes the re-assurance will improve in future quarters.

## **15 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Q1**

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member (Finance and Public Protection), Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, and the Principal Financial Accountant, Jean Waddington, to the meeting to present the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – Quarter 1.

Councillor Tomlinson gave an overview of the report, highlighting key factors impacting on the budget such as the expected £200k overspend on staffing costs.

The Committee asked a number of questions and the key issues / responses are summarised below:

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- The Council is in a good financial position with a reserve of £4.2m. It is a relatively large reserve compared to other local authorities.
- A review of the Council's waste services is to be carried out including the spend on agency staff. Factors outside of the Council's control, such as additional bank holidays, and staff holidays, impact on the budget. It is hoped that a result of bringing the service in house the costs will be seen to be reducing.
- The Committee were keen that the Council maximises its advertising of South Ribble Council jobs across social media platforms.
- The Committee requested an update on the 6 month review of car parking changes.
- The Committee raised the issue of delays concerning Worden Hall. It was acknowledged that there were unforeseen issues such as the drainage collapse which needed to be addressed.
- The Committee raised the issue of vacant posts in the Customer and Digital Directorate. Chris Sinnott indicated that an Executive Member Decision should now have been taken with regard to IT staffing. An update would be provided to the Committee.

## **Resolved (unanimously):**

The Committee:

1. thanks the Cabinet, Chief Executive and Principal Financial Accountant for attending and answering questions;
2. asks that job vacancies be advertised more effectively via social media and sites such as LinkedIn in the future;
3. welcomes the re-assurance that the overspends in the waste service are being closely monitored and reviewed;
4. requests an update on the six-month evaluation of the car parking changes;
5. welcomes the progress made in making Worden Hall operational; and
6. Asks for an update on the recruiting to vacant posts in the Customer and Digital Directorate.

## **16 Capital and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report Q1**

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member (Finance and Public Protection), Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, and the Principal Financial Accountant, Jean Waddington, to the meeting to present the Capital and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report – Quarter 1.

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The Committee asked a number of questions and the key issues / responses are summarised below:

- The Committee enquired as to the capacity to deliver on major projects. Councillor Tomlinson indicated that he was very confident in the Council's ability to deliver on major projects such as the Leyland Town Deal.
- As regards pursuing debtors, Councillor Tomlinson stated that the authority actively seeks payment of council tax and business rates as it is a statutory obligation for these to be paid. This Council has a good track record both of debt recovery and of supporting people struggling with debt.
- Queries relating to Leisure Local were made by the Committee. It was noted that further information could be provided by the Cabinet Member (Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing).

## **Resolved (unanimously):**

The Committee:

1. thanks the Cabinet Member, Chief Executive and Principal Financial Accountant for attending and answering questions; and
2. asks that further information on the return on investment on Leisure Local be provided to the Committee.

## **Scrutiny Matters**

### **17 Establishment of Task Group**

Darren Cranshaw, Head of Democratic Services informed the Committee of a proposal to establish a Scrutiny Task Group to consider the creation of a Cultural Strategy for South Ribble.

#### **Resolved (unanimously):**

That expressions of interest for membership of the Task Group be submitted to the Chair or Head of Democratic Services.

### **18 Meetings and training attended by committee members**

The Chair referred to the recent training with Dr Steph Snape.

Feedback from the Committee was very positive.

#### **Resolved (Unanimously):**

That the positive feedback and thanks of the Committee be passed on to Dr Snape.



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## 19 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Forward Plan was noted.

## 20 Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan

Members considered the Committee's Forward Plan for the 2023-24 municipal year, which outlined topics and areas due to be scrutinised.

### **Resolved (unanimously):**

That the Committee's Forward Plan be noted.

Chair

Date

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Recommendations Tracker – 31 October 2023

Date	Agenda Item	The Corporate, Performance & Budget Scrutiny Committee;	Lead Member	Lead Officer	Accepted Yes/No	Progress/Comments	Complete Yes/No
12.6.23	Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2022-2023	3.2.welcomes the success of Music in the Park and looks forward to an evaluation of return on investment and future plans being made available.	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member (Strategy and Reform)	Chief Executive	Yes	A report that set out a review of the 2023 event was presented to the September Council meeting	Yes
12.6.23	Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2022-2023	3.3. is grateful for the offer of further information and statistics with regards to the uptake of the cost of living support;	Cabinet Member (Wealth Building, Social Justice, Equality and Diversity)	Director (Communities)	Yes	This will be considered further by the Community and External Scrutiny Committee as part of its work programme.	No
12.6.23	Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2022-2023	3.4. asks that the council work with the credit union to increase the opening hours of their office and to provide outreach to other parts of the borough;	Cabinet Member (Wealth Building, Social Justice, Equality and Diversity)	Director (Communities)	Yes	Current opening hours are in line with other branches, however as part of the work with the Hubs, local collection points will be considered to provide access to the credit union facilities in other areas of the borough.  The Chief Executive of Unify attended the Chairs and Vice Chairs hub meeting on 5 <sup>th</sup> September and briefed members around the role of the credit union and extended offers to attend future hub meetings. They have already attended Leyland, Bamber Bridge and	Yes

Date	Agenda Item	The Corporate, Performance & Budget Scrutiny Committee;	Lead Member	Lead Officer	Accepted Yes/No	Progress/Comments	Complete Yes/No
						<p>Eastern and arrangements are in place to attend Central Villages and Penwortham.</p> <p>The Credit Union has also since the last update attended and supported the Uniform Pop up shop and Farington Fun Day.</p>	
12.6.23	Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2022-2023	<b>3.5.</b> asks for further information on the councils contribution to the credit union and how the council ensures value for money;	Cabinet Member (Wealth Building, Social Justice, Equality and Diversity)	Director (Communities)	Yes	An update on the success of the Credit Union, including value for money was presented to Cabinet on 13 September 2023 which set out the progress made with the Credit Union and value for money.	Yes
12.6.23	Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2022-2023	<b>3.7.</b> invites the new cabinet member for Customer and Digital to the next meeting to discuss customer services indicators, including the abandoned call rates	Chair of the Corporate, Performance & Budget Scrutiny Committee	Head of Democratic Services	Yes	The Cabinet Member will be invited to present a Portfolio Update at the March 2024 meeting, which will include customer service targets and performance indicators	Yes
11.9.23	Quarter One Performance Monitoring Report 2023-2024	<b>5.2</b> asks that future performance reports provide greater clarity in the way tolerance information is presented	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member (Strategy and Reform)	Chief Executive	Yes	The quarter two performance report includes a short explanation around the 5% tolerance used for reporting the performance indicators	Yes

Date	Agenda Item	The Corporate, Performance & Budget Scrutiny Committee;	Lead Member	Lead Officer	Accepted Yes/No	Progress/Comments	Complete Yes/No
11.9.23	Quarter One Performance Monitoring Report 2023-2024	<b>5.3</b> welcomes the assurance that the evaluation of Music in the Park is being presented to Full Council and requests further information on the income and expenditure from this year's event be provided to committee members;	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member (Strategy and Reform)	Chief Executive	Yes	A report that set out a review of the 2023 event was presented to the September Council meeting. The Director of Finance has also provided additional information to Members about the financing of the event	Yes
11.9.23	Quarter One Performance Monitoring Report 2023-2024	<b>5.4</b> suggests that the social prescribing service links in with the Council's Community Hubs;	Cabinet Member (Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing)	Director (Communities)	Yes	The social prescribing service will work closely with the Community Development Officers and Hubs. The Senior Officer has already attended hub planning meetings for Penwortham, Leyland and Central Villages, and will be seeking to attend the remaining hubs over the coming weeks.	Yes
11.9.23	Quarter One Performance Monitoring Report 2023-2024	<b>5.7</b> asks that the quarter 2 performance report provide further information on customer contact performance data	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member (Strategy and Reform)	Chief Executive	Yes	Supplementary information will be provided to the committee prior to the November meeting	No
11.9.23	Quarter One Performance Monitoring Report 2023-2024	<b>5.8</b> welcomes the offer of more information being provided on the Business Energy Efficiency Scheme and the Leyland Town Deal engagement event	Cabinet Member (Planning, Business Support and Economic Development)	Interim Deputy Chief Executive	Yes	At 18/09/2023 there were 88 active applications for the BEE Scheme. Of those, 26 are due to complete the energy audit application process, 11 are awaiting the energy audit, 51 businesses have had an energy audit completed, of which, 20	Yes

Date	Agenda Item	The Corporate, Performance & Budget Scrutiny Committee;	Lead Member	Lead Officer	Accepted Yes/No	Progress/Comments	Complete Yes/No
						<p>are able (when they wish) to apply for the grant to install equipment, 17 grant applications are being assessed, 11 businesses have offer letters and are sourcing equipment and 3 grants have been paid for completed work.</p> <p>A robust process, agreed with the Audit Team, is in place to process and assess grant applications. Applicants initially apply for a fully funded energy audit, the audit is carried out through the Chamber Low Carbon programme, a grant application can then be submitted by the business to implement energy reduction measures identified by the audit. The grant application is assessed against eligibility criteria, an approval is issued for eligible applications, the business must then arrange for the work to be completed and they can then supply receipts and claim the grant payment.</p> <p>It may take some time for businesses to progress through the stages of having an energy audit carried out through the</p>	

Date	Agenda Item	The Corporate, Performance & Budget Scrutiny Committee;	Lead Member	Lead Officer	Accepted Yes/No	Progress/Comments	Complete Yes/No
						<p>Chamber Low Carbon programme. This is largely due to the need for businesses to collate the required energy use information and the processes required to comply with European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) rules under which the Chamber Low Carbon programme has been funded. Additional engagement and follow-up is being carried out by the Investment &amp; Skills Team to facilitate the process.</p> <p>The businesses, which have had the energy audit completed and are able to apply for the grant, have all been informed that they can submit their application. The Investment &amp; Skills Team is working with the current business applicants to collect the necessary information. The approved businesses are sourcing equipment and arranging for work to be carried out. Demand for contractors has been high since the pandemic so there can be a delay until agreed work is undertaken.</p> <p>The Chamber Low Carbon programme will be funded in</p>	

Date	Agenda Item	The Corporate, Performance & Budget Scrutiny Committee;	Lead Member	Lead Officer	Accepted Yes/No	Progress/Comments	Complete Yes/No
						<p>South Ribble by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) from autumn 2023. The arrangements for UKSPF are more flexible and a new streamlined process is being developed with the Chamber. The UKSPF funded Low Carbon programme delivery was launched on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at the Greening Homes and Businesses Event.</p>	
11.9.23	Quarter One Revenue Budget Monitoring Report	<b>6.2</b> asks that job vacancies be advertised more effectively via social media and sites such as LinkedIn in the future	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member (Strategy and Reform)	Head of HR	Yes	<p>LinkedIn is used by the council for posting job vacancies. This is done on a case by case basis, with relevant managers often sharing posts with their networks. Advertising all roles as paid for adverts on LinkedIn is likely to be a very expensive route – as the cost is £5 per job per day. The council’s approach to recruitment will continue to develop, with a new website and recruitment system in the latter stages of development.</p>	Yes
11.9.23	Quarter One Revenue Budget Monitoring Report	<b>6.4</b> requests an update on the six-month evaluation of the car parking changes	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Property, Assets, Commercial	Director (Customer and Digital)	Yes	<p>This will be done after the six-month period.</p>	No



Date	Agenda Item	The Corporate, Performance & Budget Scrutiny Committee;	Lead Member	Lead Officer	Accepted Yes/No	Progress/Comments	Complete Yes/No
			Services and Major Developments)				
11.9.23	Quarter One Revenue Budget Monitoring Report	<b>6.6</b> asks for an update on the recruiting to vacant posts in the Customer and Digital Directorate	Cabinet Member (Customer Services and Digital)	Director (Customer and Digital)	Yes	<p>Recruitment in Customer Services is almost complete with 2.5 vacancies in the service. No issues recruiting.</p> <p>In ICT, a total of 11 vacancies remain. Recruitment to posts continue. Further applicants shortlisted following the third round or recruitment. Alternatives will be considered for remaining posts, including career/ development grades, for example graduates, should vacancies remain.</p>	Yes
11.9.23	Quarter One Capital and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report	<b>7.2.</b> asks that further information on the return on investment on Leisure Local be provided to the Committee	Cabinet Member (Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing)	Director (Communities)	Yes	The monitoring of the Leisure Local Grants is currently being undertaken and an update will be available following the assessment of progress against the funded projects objectives	No

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# Agenda Item 5



Report of	Meeting	Date
Deputy Chief Executive	Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee	Wednesday, 8 November 2023

## Assets and Asset Management

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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### Purpose of the Report

1. To present an update on the arrangements for Asset Management, including performance and risk.

### Recommendations

2. That Members consider and comment on the contents of the report.

### Reasons for recommendations

3. Members have previously requested an update on this area of work.

### Other options considered and rejected

4. Not applicable.

### Corporate priorities

5. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

<b>An exemplary council</b>	Thriving communities
<b>A fair local economy that works for everyone</b>	<b>Good homes, green spaces, healthy places</b>

### Background to the report

6. The commercial services function of the Council was reorganised in early 2023 and the functions associated with assets and asset management now sit under the Property and Planning department, with Heads of Service for Property and Assets and Operational Assets leading the functions within their areas of responsibility. In summary:

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## **Property and Assets encompasses:**

7. Managing and maintaining the Council's property and land assets. This includes property management, agreeing new leases, managing current leases and tenancies, asset valuations, property maintenance, statutory compliance, and land use planning. The service aims to optimise property usage, generate revenue, and contribute to the overall well-being of the community by responsibly managing public properties and land.

## **Operational Assets encompasses:**

8. Managing the Operational aspects of the Councils assets. This includes soft FM, contractor liaison, market tenancies, general repairs, cleaning, conference, and meeting room setup, booking and revenue management of in-house amenities and car parks. It is anticipated that Operational Assets will manage Jubilee Gardens once completed. This service aims to continuously improve the experience of its stakeholders by providing quality services whilst concurrently maximising its utility.

## **Vision for the service**

9. The Property and Assets and Operational Assets teams' vision is to provide outstanding support to the Council in its objective of being an exemplary Council that delivers high performing services and value for money. The services contribute to two further Council priorities: a fair local economy that works for everyone, and delivering good homes, green spaces and healthy places. A number of key projects are being delivered by the services this year, including in relation to developing the town centres in Leyland and Penwortham, and asset management and the procurement and management of utilities. Other key projects include works in relation to South Ribbles' Leisure facilities, the Jubilee Gardens Extra Care Facility and the Civic Centre.
10. In 2022 the services were the subject of an internal audit report which highlighted a number of areas for improvement spanning the management and monitoring of leases and licences, the management of utilities, the management of the asset register and utilities records, in particular.
11. Since this time considerable progress has been made on the actions identified, and this is summarised in the report that follows.

## **Comprehensive list of property and land**

12. The Property and Assets team have prepared a comprehensive list of the Council's property and land assets within a spreadsheet format. The current system allows the service to be delivered however it has limitations due to functionality, data integrity, reporting functions, compliance, and collaboration.
13. The Council has recently procured Civica Property Management (CPM) a Property and Assets Management system which will be used to form the foundations for an overall improved and more efficient property and assets management process for allowing for efficiencies to be made through workflows, automation, and process optimisation.

## **Conditions, repair and maintenance**

14. In late 2021 condition surveys were undertaken across the Council's estate summarising the physical condition of each building, evaluating various aspect of the structure, systems, and components to determine their current state. The surveys provided a

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programme of works and cost estimates associated with necessary repairs, renovations and maintenance over a 30-year period.

15. The shared service property function has now been fully resourced and will be utilising the condition surveys undertaken to prepare a 5-year planned maintenance programme. This will allow for the accurate allocation of financial resources for each year of the programme to cover repair, replacement, and preventative maintenance costs. The programme will help ensure the efficient and cost-effective upkeep of assets, prolonging their useful life, enhancing safety, and maintaining the property value.
16. Following the implementation of CPM, the software will be utilised to deliver a technology driven approach to condition surveys and maintenance planning. The system will enable the analysis of historical data to predict maintenance needs, enhancing data quality, efficiency and decision making, leading to more effective and cost-efficient asset management.
17. The property service provides ongoing reactive maintenance across the Council's estate. They address issues as they occur, rather than following a pre-planned schedule. The service is deployed to fix unexpected problems, ensuring safety and functionality of assets.

## **Health and Safety and Statutory Compliance**

18. The shared service property function provides health and safety and statutory compliance work across the Council's estate ensuring that a property or facility adheres to legal regulations and safety standards. This activity involves regular inspections, assessments, and maintenance to identify and address potential hazards, as well as compliance with building codes and government regulations. The primary goal is to maintain a safe and legally compliant environment for occupants and visitors, reducing risks and liabilities across the estate. In addition to this, the Facilities team undertake monthly spot checks across the Council's operational assets to ensure that all soft FM is being carried out. This soft FM includes legionella, fire alarm, emergency light and panic alarm testing. During these monthly visits the Facilities team also undertake visual checks such as fire doors, fire extinguishers and general potential hazards to help minimise risk.
19. The current process for managing statutory compliance across the Council's estate entails that each year the required surveys and works are identified, commissioned and tracked through a central spreadsheet database ensuring surveys are undertaken in the required timescales and any compliance works identified are rectified on site as soon as practicable. The current system allows the service to be delivered however, it has limitations due to functionality, data integrity, reporting functions, compliance, and collaboration.
20. Following the implementation of CPM, the software will provide enhanced oversight, cost savings, and reduced risk across the estate. This system will help manage, efficiently track and maintain assets, ensuring they meet legal requirements and safety standards, ultimately resulting in a safer and more compliant estate.

## **Management of the Investment Property Portfolio**

21. The current occupancy rate across the Council's Investment Property Portfolio sits at 93.33%. The estates team proactively markets any vacant property to ensure the swift occupation of units to safeguard income.

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22. The shared service estates team has now been fully resourced with temporary resource also being utilised. The team are focusing on reducing the backlog on lease renewals, rent reviews, reducing rent arrears, and increasing revenue for the Council.
23. In August 2023 there was a total of 109 outstanding rent reviews and lease renewals across the South Ribble estate. Notice has now been served on 75% where a rent review is due and a further 7% awaiting trigger dates between now and the end of 2023. Negotiations are now live on 10% of the properties, with most of the remainder of negotiations due to begin between November 2023 and February 2024 (as per the lease agreements). Once complete, there is likely to be a significant uplift in revenue for the Council.
24. The estates team aim to provide effective tenant communication, prompt issue resolution and a tenant centred approach. They look to foster positive relationships, address tenant concerns, ensure tenant satisfaction, whilst contributing to a well-managed estate.

## **Management of utilities**

25. Following the implementation of shared service in early 2023 the management of utilities is solely undertaken by the property and estates support team who have limited experience in utility management. There are currently over 100 individual supplies managed by the team. Workload to maintain day-to-day utility management is extremely labour intensive and dealing with separate billing systems and payment processes for each site has led to inefficiencies and errors in managing utility costs.
26. Currently this data is being managed within an excel spreadsheet, with no ability to provide the Council or its members with any quantifiable data as to energy usage over specific sites or time periods, energy savings due to efficiencies and new environmental infrastructure, or inaccuracies surrounding billing.
27. Due to the ongoing challenges with utility management, in October 2023 Cabinet approved the procurement of a managed utility supply contract. The utility management company has bespoke cloud-based software to help large organisations manage complex utility requirements, of which the Council qualifies with over 100 core supplies, plus an additional average of over 30 sites annually due to change of tenancies of investment properties.
28. For the Council to continue satisfying the requirements placed when receiving Government Grants for Green Projects, the Council must look to an effective system to track and record the necessary data for reporting purposes and tracking effectiveness of the projects over a long period of time.
29. Inspired Energy Plc has been procured via a PCR compliant framework and will provide a much-needed service to the Council in terms of bill validation, utility company liaison, and the tracking data available to the Council to better understand the energy being used across assets.
30. An ongoing contract with a Utility Specialist will allow the Council to enter flexible procurement of commodities. This will enable the Council to buy commodities during periods of market lows and utilise energy specialist knowledge to better manage the risks and ensure the Council is not hit during market highs as has been the case over the last several years. Previous procurement on fixed basis during market highs has seen the Council tied into 12-month contracts at high prices. The long-term goal of utilising energy market specialists will be to enter a PPA (Power Purchasing Agreement).

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This will see the Council procure green energy direct from energy generators such as wind & solar farms.

## Implementation of Civica Property Management

31. Civica Property Management (CPM) (formerly known as Tech Forge) has now been procured and temporary positions have been created and recruited to in order to aid the embedding process. CPM is currently being implemented and provides structured data entry, reducing errors and ensuring accurate records of land and property assets. CPM offers a centralised solution that is accessible on any internet enabled device and will allow for data capture, visibility and management of data related to all Council property and assets – enabling better management of assets. The current assets and documents need allocating a unique property reference number (UPRN) to enable a digital upload, this process has already started. GIS mapping software will be linked with this process to tie assets to locations.

South Ribble will prioritise module implementation in order to demonstrate action against audit actions and mitigate future risks. Property services and Operational assets will review current records, undertaking a validation exercise (confirming what has already been scanned is actually on the server and readable) before then moving on to paper files not yet scanned.

32. The implementation process is anticipated to take around 18 months.

## Performance indicators

33. Performance is currently tracked and reported across a range of indicators, as referenced elsewhere in this report:

South Ribble				
SR EST01	Percentage of occupancy rates of all commercial investment property	Bigger is Better	90%	Quarterly
SR EST02	Estates – Percentage of incoming enquires responded to within 10 working days	Bigger is Better	85%	Quarterly
SR FAC01	% reactive repair jobs inspected post work completion	Bigger is Better	30%	Monthly
SR FAC06	% of daily site inspections for new developments	Bigger is Better	60%	Monthly
SR FAC07	% of PPM activities completed	Bigger is Better	90%	Monthly
SR FAC08	The Civic income generated based on previous year's figures	Bigger is Better	£3,402.58	Quarterly

## Future plans and strategies

### Short-Medium Term

34. In the short-medium term the priority is the effective implementation of CPM by utilising the system to its fullest extent, making the most out of the technologies workflows, automation, process optimisation and integration with other Council systems such as

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the Civica finance system and LLPG/GIS systems to create efficiencies across the service. Our aim is to ensure we can better manage property data, maintenance, legislative and compliance responsibilities for Council assets.

35. We are also prioritising the preparation and implementation of a 5-year Planned Preventative Maintenance programme through the interrogation of the 2021 condition surveys, effective utilisation of CPM, prioritisation through legislative and statutory requirements and opportunities for further revenue.
36. The effective Implementation of a Utility Management contract will provide a fully managed service which includes:
  - procurement of energy & water supply at advantageous rates on behalf of the Council,
  - meeting the Council green agenda requirements,
  - providing monitoring and usage reports to the Council on monthly basis.
  - communication with utility providers on behalf of the Council,
  - reconciliation of all bills and invoices, including rate charge analysis and meter read data, ensuring the billing figures are accurate and liaising when necessary to correct any errors.
  - paying one central supplier per month for the full utility provision across all sites, with a report provided of the site breakdowns to support the spend.
  - bringing in additional properties within the contract as and when they return to council responsibility (when a tenant vacates)
  - supply to be transferred to tenant responsibility once the site is leased or licenced for use under their own commercial contract without impact on the council's overall service.

## Long Term

37. In the longer term our aim is to prepare a Strategic Asset Management Plan to set out the Council's intentions to ensure property assets support corporate priorities, increasing the Council's financial resources, and delivering value for money. Effective asset management is essential to meeting the Council's priorities and improvement aims. Strategic use of land and property assets is a prerequisite for the achievement of corporate priorities in relation to a growing Borough, supporting communities and promoting inward investment and job creation.

## **Climate change and air quality**

39. The work noted in this report impacts on the following areas of climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda.:
  - a. **net carbon zero by 2030,**
  - b. **reducing waste production**
  - c. **limiting non sustainable forms of transport,**
  - d. **working with sustainable and green accredited companies,**
  - e. limiting or improving air quality,
  - f. limiting water waste and flooding risks,
  - g. **improving green areas and biodiversity.**
40. The report is to note however the work of the services impacts directly on the above targets.

## **Equality and diversity**



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- 41. There are no direct equality implications or considerations because the report is for noting.
- 42. Has an Impact Assessment been completed? Not applicable.

## Risk

- 43. The report addresses the progress made in addressing the risks which are included in the Council's corporate risk register.

## Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

- 44. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report as it is for noting. Commentary on the revenue and capital position of the services and wider Council are included within quarterly corporate revenue and capital reports presented to Cabinet. It is hoped that the work described above on Civica Property Management, utilities management and on the repairs and maintenance programme will assist in future budget setting and monitoring.

## Comments of the Monitoring Officer

- 45. The purpose of this report is for information and noting – as such there are no direct legal implications arising.

## Background documents

Not applicable.

## Appendices

Not applicable.

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## Corporate, Performance & Budget Scrutiny Committee

### Forward Plan 2023-24

Date	Topic	Lead Member	Lead Officer
19 February 2024	Quarter Three Capital and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report	Councillor Matthew Tomlinson	Director (Finance)
	Quarter Three Revenue Budget Monitoring Report	Councillor Matthew Tomlinson	Director (Finance)
	Portfolio Update: Finance and Public Protection	Councillor Matthew Tomlinson	Director (Finance)
	2024-25 Budget	Councillor Matthew Tomlinson	Director (Finance)
11 March 2024	Quarter Three Performance Monitoring Report 2023-24	Councillor Paul Foster	Director (Change & Delivery)
	Portfolio Update: Customer Services and Digital	Councillor Ian Watkinson	Director (Customer & Digital)
	Waste Service Insourcing Update	Councillor Deborah Ashton	Director (Customer & Digital)
	Building Better Homes Task Group Monitoring Report	Councillor James Flannery	Director (Planning and Commercial)

Remaining Cabinet Portfolios will be scheduled into the 2024/25 Forward Plan of the Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee.

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