

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 2 September 2019 and the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel on 9 September 2019.

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2 SEPTEMBER

### Draft Refreshed Council Corporate Plan 2019-23

2. We welcomed the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster, and the Interim Chief Executive, Gary Hall, who presented the report on the revised Corporate Plan for 2019-23.
3. The report provided a summary of the Corporate Plan for 2019-23 with a number of projects emphasised, including improving the environment; increasing community engagement; and tackling health inequalities. The report also highlighted the change to the Council's corporate vision.
4. We discussed a number of topics around the report and noted that community engagement and public participation will be encouraged through various schemes including a cross-party working group on community involvement, a Youth Council, and a review of My Neighbourhood Forums.
5. The South Ribble Partnership will be relaunched in October 2019 and there is a commitment from the Partnership to provide a trial period of time credits as incentive for voluntary work in the borough.
6. Work in developing the Apprentice Factory was ongoing to encourage more businesses to be involved and for more apprenticeships to be available to school leavers in low-income areas.
7. There is a continued commitment toward staff and their development and staff surveys would soon be arranged.
8. A Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel has been set up and held its first meeting earlier this month. This means that the full Scrutiny Committee will no longer receive budget and performance monitoring reports but will remain informed of the discussions surrounding these reports as the minutes of all Panel meetings will be reported to the full Committee.
9. We queried the Community Bank scheme and its potential risk. This is still being considered and no commitment has been made but it would be a joint arrangement between five local authorities in the North West and would provide small-scale loans to the local community.
10. We noted the report and I thanked the Leader, the Cabinet and Gary Hall for their attendance.

## **SCRUTINY BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE PANEL – 9 SEPTEMBER**

### **Corporate Plan Performance Report: Quarter 1**

11. We welcomed the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster, and the Interim Chief Executive, Gary Hall, who presented the report on the performance of the Corporate Plan at the end of Quarter 1.
12. The report set out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Plan projects and objectives that was approved in February 2019. We noted that existing performance measures are currently being reviewed in conjunction with the review of the Corporate Plan and that future quarterly reports will be based upon the new administration's identified outcomes and priorities.
13. We were pleased that the current timescales of 28 out of 34 projects have been met or are within the agreed targets and that Key Performance Indicators and measures of the Corporate Plan were also performing well, with 14 succeeding and 22 marked as being on-track.
14. The Council's performance data is monitored through a reporting system called 'InPhase', which enables the scoping, delivery and evaluation of performance and has a functionality to produce a dashboard for reporting to the public. We agreed that a site visit to Fylde Council, who are currently using this function, would be beneficial for members of the Panel.
15. We queried the percentage of calls to the Council being abandoned before being answered, particularly as there had been an increase from the previous quarter. As of July 2019, this figure had decreased to 9% of calls and we were assured that extra resources are being provided to the service area to alleviate these issues.
16. Discussions around the number of complaints made to the Council focussed around the garden waste subscription scheme. Work was being undertaken to reduce financial burden on residents and the bin collection policy would be looked at as part of this.
17. We acknowledged the difficulty in measuring progress in some areas, particularly homelessness. 65 out of 83 households were prevented from becoming homeless in Quarter 1 with this figure lower than the previous quarter. More in-depth information on homelessness prevention is needed as it involves the authority's most vulnerable residents.
18. We noted the performance summary of quarter 1 and I thanked the Leader and Gary Hall for their attendance.

## **Budget Monitoring Report – Quarter 1**

19. We welcomed the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets, Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, and the Interim Chief Executive, Gary Hall, who presented the report on the Council's overall financial position at the end of July 2019.
20. We were informed that an underspend of £681,000 was forecasted for the end of the financial year and that the majority of this underspend had been caused by low expenditure on staffing. Difficulties in recruiting were acknowledged due to uncompetitive salaries. A review into staff resources was underway and steps are being taken to fill vacancies. We welcomed this work and requested that progress be reported to the next meeting of the Panel.
21. We queried pooling arrangements for business rates and were informed that the current temporary arrangement of pooling 75% of business rate income would end and that a return to the previous arrangement was anticipated but not confirmed.
22. We agreed that Cabinet should approve a virement of the £150,000 turnover savings target budget to reflect staffing savings achieved in the first period up to the end of July.
23. I thanked Councillor Tomlinson and Gary Hall for their attendance.

### **Recommendations**

That Council note the report.

COUNCILLOR DAVID HOWARTH  
CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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