

Report of Scrutiny Committee

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meetings of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel on 11 November 2019 and the Scrutiny Committee held on 14 November 2019

SCRUTINY BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE PANEL – 11 NOVEMBER

Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring Report

2. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster, and the Interim Chief Executive, Gary Hall, presented a report on the performance of the Corporate Plan at the end of Quarter 2.
3. 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 future quarterly reports will be based upon the new Corporate Plan, as approved in September 2019.
4. We were pleased that the current timescales of 31 out of 32 projects have been met or are within the agreed targets and that Key Performance Indicators of the Corporate Plan are also performing well, with 10 succeeding and 30 marked as on-track.
5. We queried the percentage of calls to the Council's Gateway service that are abandoned before being answered. Although performance in this area was succeeding its target there is a lengthy pre-recorded message that residents must listen to when they call the council, which can cause frustration. We have asked for further information on the average length of call waiting times and a review of the pre-recorded message.
6. We were pleased that InPhase, the Council's performance monitoring system, is being implemented and that the relevant officers are receiving training on the system. It is anticipated that the system will be in use for reporting on Quarter 3 performance.
7. The report highlighted that average number of days between a Disabled Facilities Grant referral from Lancashire County Council to application is off-track. Although this was largely as a result of customers failing to provide the necessary paperwork and a lack of resources in the referrals team at Lancashire County Council, we have asked for a review of the application process to be carried out with the intention of streamlining the process where possible.
8. We also received further information on homelessness in South Ribble, as requested at the previous meeting. We were pleased to note the work undertaken by the Council's Housing Officers to prevent residents becoming homeless and commend the officers for providing support to vulnerable households.
9. We requested that the average length of stay in temporary accommodation be provided to Panel members and that an annual update on homelessness figures in South Ribble be presented to the Panel.
10. We noted the report and I thanked the Leader and Gary Hall for their attendance.

Budget Monitoring 2019/20 – Month 6 (September)

11. The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets, Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, and the Interim Section 151 Officer, Jane Blundell, presented a report on the Council's overall financial position at the end of September 2019.
12. We were informed that an underspend of £515,000 was forecasted for the end of the financial year but new budgets have been approved for a music festival in Leyland and for consultancy fees on the borough's leisure facilities. A large proportion of this underspend has come from staffing shortages. The report provided a list of vacant posts and we requested that information on length of time that these posts have been vacant be included in future budget monitoring reports.
13. We requested that a progress column be added to the Capital Programme 2019-20 Monitoring document to demonstrate the progress of these projects against their allocated budgets and spend forecasts.
14. Budgets for each My Neighbourhood Forum would be allocated in early 2020 and we welcomed the alignment of the Forum budgets with the Council's formal budget process.
15. 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 had been confirmed.
16. We noted the report and I thanked Councillor Tomlinson and Jane Blundell for their attendance.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14 NOVEMBER

Leisure Partnership

17. The Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Leisure, Councillor Mick Titherington, and the Assistant Director of Projects and Development, Neil Anderson, presented a report that provided an update on the performance of the South Ribble Leisure Partnership. The Contracts Manager for South Ribble Community Leisure, Mark Snaylam, and the Chairman of the South Ribble Leisure Trust, Peter Dodd, also attended the meeting.
18. The Council has a close working relationship with the Trust and we work together on projects such as the development of the Leisure Strategy. We would, however, like to see the development of a Leisure and Public Health Strategy, which would take a more holistic, strategic and integrated approach with our partners and may include topics such as mental health, prevention and youth engagement.
19. We were pleased with the performance and achievements of the Leisure Partnership. In terms of challenges to the Partnership, the leisure industry is a competitive market and this had initially contributed to a decline in membership. We were pleased that, following significant investment in Leyland Leisure Centre and the Tennis Centre in

2017 and a review of membership rates, there had been a steady increase in customers.

20. The decentralisation of the GP referral scheme from Lancashire County Council to ABL Health had also posed a challenge to the Trust. The Partnership is considering working with the council on the scheme to provide residents with a locally-focussed approach to referrals and leisure, as ABL Health's contract is due to expire soon.
21. SERCO's contract to manage the leisure centres will expire in 2021 and the Partnership will work with the council to find the most efficient way to deliver leisure provisions to the community. We would ask that the council considers how best to work with the leisure trust on the campus project in the future.
22. A report on the findings of the consultancy firm employed to identify options for the future management of leisure centre would be presented to Cabinet in 2021 and the Scrutiny Committee would also like to be involved in the consideration of future options for the management of the leisure facilities.
23. Discussion focused on the following areas and we asked for further information to be reported back on certain topics:
 - We were pleased to hear that the leisure centres use LED lighting and movement sensors, have been awarded the Green Tick Award and have a boiler efficiency of 92% which helps to reduce their carbon footprint.
 - We asked for further information on the results of a customer satisfaction survey which was undertaken in April 2018.
 - As the expenditure has increased significantly at Leyland Leisure Centre over the last 4 years, we have asked for clarification on these increased costs.
 - We would encourage My Neighbourhood Forums to help with the Partnership's agenda by advertising events to residents and organising leisure or sports events in their respective areas, in conjunction with the council's Sports Development team.
 - The leisure centre is a big employer in South Ribble and we requested further information as to whether employees are paid a foundation living wage.
24. We noted the report and I thanked Councillor Titherington, Neil, Mark and Peter for their attendance.

Worden Hall Update

25. The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets, Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, and the Assistant Director of Property and Housing, Peter McHugh, presented a report which provided an update on the progress of the Worden Hall project.
26. A review is underway for an enhanced option 1 following public consultation, which would comprise of community use and a small wedding and events venue. Officers would meet with the consultants for the project in November and December to

establish an approach, implementation plan and costings for the project and a report on this would be provided to Cabinet in January 2020.

27. Discussion focused on the following areas and we asked for further information to be reported back on certain topics:

- Events and opportunities for the Hall and the park to work together on events were acknowledged. Clear responsibilities and permissions would be established for those working in both the Hall and the park to mitigate any potential conflict.
- We were pleased to hear that the Hall could be used by a wide variety of people for a range of events such as birthday parties or community events and, whilst there is potential for the project to make a profit in its first year, members and officers involved on the project would be content to breakeven in the first year.
- The continuation of public consultation was queried. There is no requirement to undertake further formal consultation and progress would be shared through the council's communications channels to inform residents of the developments in the project.
- We were pleased to hear that My Neighbourhood Forum members can help to influence and shape the project once the approach is agreed and thanked Councillor Tomlinson for his offer to work with the members of the Leyland Neighbourhood Forum.

28. We noted the consultation process which has been undertaken, the feedback from Cabinet and the next steps in bringing Worden Hall back into use and I thanked Councillor Tomlinson and Peter for their attendance.

Recommendations

That Council note the report.

COUNCILLOR DAVID HOWARTH
CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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