

**MINUTES OF SCRUTINY BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**MEETING DATE** Monday, 22 June 2020

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors David Howarth (Chair), Will Adams, Colin Coulton, Colin Sharples and Karen Walton

**CABINET MEMBERS:** Councillor Paul Foster (Leader of the Council and Leader of the Labour Group)

**OFFICERS:** Gary Hall (Interim Chief Executive), James Thomson (Deputy Director of Finance), Victoria Willet (Service Lead - Transformation and Partnerships), Howard Anthony (South Ribble Partnership Manager), Darren Cranshaw (Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services) and Charlotte Lynch (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**1 Apologies for Absence**

None.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The Chair thanked Councillor Colin Coulton for chairing the last meeting of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel in his absence.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the meeting, held on Monday, 10 February 2020, be signed as a correct record by the Chair.

**4 Matters Arising from Previous Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel Meetings**

Members received a report which provided an update on matters arising from previous meetings of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel.

It was acknowledged that the revenue budget summary had been shared with Panel members, as requested, but that the report had not been updated to reflect this.

The report was noted.

## 5 Year End and Quarter 4 (Jan - Mar 2020) Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20

The Panel considered a report of the Interim Chief Executive which outlined the Council's performance against the delivery of the Corporate Plan projects and objectives during Quarter 4 (Jan-March 2020).

Overall, performance of the projects was good, with 4 of 43 succeeding and 32 on-track.

Given recent issues surrounding the council's Annual Governance Statement, members of the Panel welcomed assurances by the Shared Services Lead for Partnerships and Transformation that the data provided in the performance monitoring report was robust.

Discussion largely focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Council's performance and members were advised that, although a significant financial impact was anticipated in the next year, the pandemic had a minimal impact on performance in Quarter 4. This was largely because the virus had not peaked during the quarter.

Members noted that a member working group on business recovery post-COVID-19 had been established to look at how the Council could provide local businesses with support and access to funding. Members were also informed that the Council was still in the 'containment' phase and that emphasis was on maintaining service delivery whilst adhering to new health and safety measures as advised by government.

It was acknowledged that some of the targets within the Corporate Plan would be reviewed as a result of COVID-19 and as part of a refresh of the Corporate Plan in September 2020, including resource allocation. Further information on this would be provided to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel.

In response to queries around the financial impact on COVID-19 on performance, members were informed that there had been some savings as a result of services being online-only and that the council had received £1 million in central government grants to manage the crisis.

Members noted that the surplus site review was off-track and enquired as to whether this was due to issues with capacity. Whilst it was acknowledged that the team was not fully staffed, an additional staff member had commenced work on the project. The task was identified as a priority by the Leader of the Council and the Interim Chief Executive.

A key line of enquiry focused on the holiday hunger scheme and its 14.7% redemption rate. In response, numerous challenges were acknowledged with regards to the scheme including accessibility, as many families did not shop where the vouchers were redeemable, and demographic diversity across the borough. Members were assured that the council had supplemented the scheme with additional food packages where needed.

In response to queries regarding the MH2K project, which was listed as being off-track, it was recognised that COVID-19 had impacted recruitment to the Youth

Engagement Officer post but that this would begin again soon. The project was ongoing and further detail would be provided when appropriate.

The Panel also requested further information on the cost breakdown for the implementation of Tempo time credits.

Further to discussion, members sought assurances that the appropriate resources were in place to deliver the council's Corporate Plan. In response, the Panel was informed that structures and resourcing had been examined and that more capacity and resilience was anticipated with the development of shared services with Chorley Council.

A residents' survey had recently been undertaken and, in response to member queries on how the findings would be used to improve services, it was explained that the findings would be assessed robustly against baselines which had been devised through comparisons with similar local authorities.

The Panel commended the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery plans for the future and thanked the Leader and Interim Chief Executive for their attendance.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

1. the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel looks forward to receiving a copy of the ICT Benefit Realisation Plan once finalised
2. the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel acknowledges that some of the targets within the Corporate Plan will need to be reviewed in light of COVID-19 and as part of a refresh of the Corporate Plan in September 2020, including resource allocation
3. further information on the costs of the Tempo time credits project be provided to the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel

Chair

Date