

Minutes of	Scrutiny Committee
Meeting date	Tuesday, 12 January 2021
Members present:	Councillors David Howarth (Chair), Michael Green (Vice-Chair), Will Adams, Jacky Alty, Matt Campbell, Colin Coulton, Chris Lomax, Colin Sharples, Stephen Thurlbourn, Matthew Trafford and Karen Walton
Cabinet members:	Councillor Paul Foster (Leader of the Council and Leader of the Labour Group) and Councillor Matthew Tomlinson (Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets))
Officers:	Darren Cranshaw (Shared Services Lead - Democratic, Scrutiny & Electoral Services) and Charlotte Lynch (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
Guests:	Councillor Keith Martin, Jennifer Mullin (Director of Neighbourhoods and Development), Neil Martin (Senior Environmental Health Officer) and Melanie Berry (Environmental Health Officer)

23 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jim Marsh.

24 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

25 Minutes of the Last Scrutiny Committee Meeting

An amendment to minute 19.3 was requested to include the Chamber of Commerce in the list of business organisations to be consulted on the Community Wealth Building Action Plan.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, held on Thursday, 22 October 2020, be approved as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

26 Minutes of the Last Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the previous Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel meeting, held on Monday, 9 November 2020, be noted.

27 Matters Arising from previous Scrutiny Committee Meetings

The Committee received an update on progress made against matters arising from previous meetings.

Members queried why recommendations made in June 2019 had not yet been completed. Although it was acknowledged that many of these projects were ongoing, an update would be provided at the next meeting.

The update was noted and those actions implemented would be removed from the table.

28 Climate Emergency Action Plan Consultation

The Chair of the Climate Emergency Task Group (Councillor Keith Martin) and the Director of Communities (Jennifer Mullin) and the Environmental Health Officer (Neil Martin) gave a presentation on the public consultation on the Climate Change Action Plan and responded to members' comments and queries.

Members were reminded that the Council had declared a climate emergency in May 2019 and that a member task group had been established to identify ways to reduce carbon emissions and the effects of climate change in South Ribble.

As a result of the work of the task group, a Climate Change Action Plan was being developed and a public consultation undertaken to identify priorities for the action plan in addition to measures already being taken up by residents and what climate change initiatives they would like to see the Council implement or promote.

In the interest of contributing to the development of the Climate Change Action Plan, members of the Scrutiny Committee queried the approach taken to the public consultation. In response, it was advised that the task group identified five key themes (transport, energy and the built environment, waste and water, consumption and offsetting) to base the consultation on.

This was also similar to consultations undertaken by other local authorities.

Members had also been encouraged to complete and promote the consultation to residents and the Scrutiny Committee supported this.

Members were pleased to note that there had been approximately 50 responses to the consultation, following an extension to the deadline due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The consultation had been promoted to schools, community groups and the Council's partnership network and had been publicised on the website and social media channels.

It was acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdown had impacted responses to the consultation particularly around engagement with schools, which had been affected due to closures and home learning guidelines.

In response to a question around the evidence sources used to develop the Action Plan, officers advised that information such as the carbon footprint and emissions of the Council and wider borough had been assessed in addition to cost-benefit analysis of suggested measures, published studies and officer and member research.

Members were also interested in how the Action Plan would link with the Council's wider Corporate Strategy and were informed that the Action Plan would contribute to the work of the Green Agenda project. Smaller-scale work such as encouraging tree-planting and banning single-use plastics would also link the Action Plan to the Corporate Strategy projects.

The progress of the project would be reported in the quarterly performance monitoring reports and members expressed their anticipation for the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel to receive these updates.

The influence of the Council on climate change was queried and it was acknowledged that although the Council has a regulatory impact, this is limited and that the educational influence is of greater significance.

However, it was acknowledged that the Council could influence greater climate change action through its own activity such as ensuring estates are carbon-neutral and the vehicle fleet is as environmentally-friendly as possible.

Engagement with partners on climate change work was also discussed and members welcomed the commitment to improve engagement with external organisations.

Members were particularly interested in how the Climate Change Action Plan would inform the Local Plan review, which was ongoing. In response to queries, it was advised that officers had already made representations to the review. It was hoped that the requirements for carbon reduction considerations within the planning process would be strengthened in a new Local Plan, particularly around Supplementary Planning Documents, and members expressed support for this.

The significance of fuel poverty and the challenge this presents to reducing carbon emissions was also discussed.

Work was ongoing to assess energy efficiency levels of properties. Government grants, such as the Green Homes Grant, to install energy efficient improvements would be promoted through the Council's communication channels and an officer would be recruited to enforce energy efficiency improvements to privately-rented properties.

Members were also pleased to note that the Climate Change Action Plan would encourage local procurement by assessing the distance travelled by contractors to provide services, thereby benefitting local businesses.

It was anticipated to be taken to Full Council in June 2021 and a Member Briefing on the Action Plan was requested to be held prior to discussion at Full Council to ensure that all members are fully informed.

Members also asked that the Action Plan be brought back to the committee for further review prior to Full Council.

The committee commended the Action Plan and the wider work of the Climate Emergency Task Group.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee

1. thanks the Chair of the Climate Emergency Task Group and the officers for attending the meeting;
2. encourages Members individually and any of their contacts to respond to the climate emergency action plan consultation;
3. looks forward to the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel receiving quarterly progress updates on the green agenda as part of corporate strategy monitoring;
4. supports the commitment to engage partners further in the climate emergency action plan development and ideas to enthuse and involve our local communities;
5. asks that the South Ribble Local Plan review reflects carbon reduction principles and links with the climate emergency action plan, including the consideration of incentives for new housing being built to higher energy efficiency standards;
6. wishes the Member Task Group well with the action plan; and
7. looks forward to considering the draft climate emergency action plan.

29 Worden Hall Progress Update

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets (Councillor Matthew Tomlinson) and the Assistant Director of Projects and Development (Neil Anderson) presented an update on the progress of the Worden Hall project to the Committee and responded to members' comments and queries.

A slight delay in the progress of works due to the COVID-19 pandemic was acknowledged but the Cabinet Member remained ambitious that the project would be completed for summer 2022.

A Leyland-based project management and Quantity Surveying firm, Gosling Construction Services, had been appointed and on-site works were expected to begin in late March 2021.

Members queried the level of stakeholder engagement and requested further detail on who the stakeholders for the project were. In response, it was advised that communications were in place with occupiers of the craft units and the café at the park, the Scrutiny Committee and the wider public through the Council's media channels.

Assurances were provided in response to a member query that the project would keep to budget.

In response to a query regarding what progress could be expected by the next meeting hopes that planning permission would have been approved were expressed and that the procurement for more detailed work would have advanced.

A written question was received from a member of the public, who queried the estimated value of the contract with Gosling Construction Services and the decision-maker for awarding this contract.

In response, the Cabinet Member explained that the value could not be disclosed as it related to a private business contract. The company had experience in similar projects to the Worden Hall works and had a positive reputation in addition to being a South Ribble-based business.

The Committee thanked the Cabinet Member and the Assistant Director of Projects and Development for their attendance.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee

1. thanks the Cabinet Member for attending and his update on the Worden Hall Project;
2. welcomes the progress being made on the project and ambition to have Worden Hall open for Leyland Festival in summer 2022; and
3. looks forward to progress reports at future meetings.

30 Scrutiny Matters

30a Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee Update

The Chair, Councillor David Howarth, virtually attended two recent meetings of Lancashire County Council's (LCC) Health Scrutiny Committee and provided members with an update.

The first meeting focused on the NHS Test and Trace service and mass testing scheme. Members were informed that LCC would be working with the military to roll out asymptomatic lateral testing to care and education facilities, the faith sector and large employers across the region.

It was reported that local tracing services had proven more effective at reaching residents and that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine had been found to be 95% effective, which was welcomed.

The second meeting was of a task-and-finish group established to review the forthcoming proposals from the Our Health Our Care programme on the future of Chorley and South Ribble A&E. The meeting was for the purpose of scoping the review and Councillor Howarth would provide further updates as the group's work progressed.

30b Meetings and training attended by Scrutiny Committee members

There had been no recent meetings or training attended by members of the Scrutiny Committee.

30c Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

30d Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan

Members reiterated their interest in reviewing housing association provisions in the borough.

It was acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic meant that providers would not be able to attend a meeting during the current restrictions, but this remained a priority for the Scrutiny Committee's work programme going forwards.

Chair

Date