# **Report of Scrutiny Committee**

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meetings of the Scrutiny Committee held on 18 March 2021 and the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel held on 22 March 2021.

## **Scrutiny Committee – 18 March 2021**

## **Cabinet** **Member Update: Health and Wellbeing**

1. The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing (Councillor Mick Titherington) and the Director of Communities and Assistant Director of Projects (Neil Anderson) presented an update on the work of the portfolio since May 2019.
2. Key priorities for the portfolio included improving employment and economy levels in the borough; increasing activity levels amongst residents; improving air quality; preventing and dealing with homelessness; and improving community safety and resilience.
3. We queried how success is measured within the portfolio and were advised, in response, that many projects can be measured through the level of engagement with residents and statistical data.
4. Business plans were currently being developed and would highlight performance indicators, which would be reported to the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel on a quarterly basis from the beginning of the next financial year and we asked that future portfolio reports include more details on how success and performance is measured.
5. Our discussions focused on the beginning of the council’s in-house management of leisure centres in the borough and we welcomed the Cabinet Member’s assurances that preparations for the transfer were on-track.
6. We queried what differences residents would see as a result of council-managed leisure centres and were told that there would be an increase in facilities, appropriate membership fees and investment into leisure centres that matches private-sector facilities.
7. Assurances that leisure centre staff would be paid the living wage, in line with the council’s terms and conditions of employment, were welcomed.
8. We were pleased to receive a commitment to reporting leisure performance and provide regular updates to Scrutiny in the future.
9. In response to our queries, it was confirmed that food hygiene visits were still underway to high-risk premises during the pandemic.
10. We expressed concerns regarding the number of road traffic collisions in South Ribble and we were advised of various schemes and projects in place which help to improve road safety and awareness. We also welcomed confirmation that Speed Indicator Devices (SPIDs) would be rolled out in hotspots in the borough.
11. It was also requested that the council lobbies the Community Safety Partnership and Lancashire County Council to improve street lighting and to end the practice of dimming lights.
12. We commended the Cabinet Member and wider council on the roll-out of the Holiday Hunger Scheme to all schools in the borough.
13. We requested that the Cabinet Member write to the Secretary of State to ask that virtual council meetings be allowed to continue after May 2021, particularly given the improvements this would provide to air quality.

1. We queried how obesity was tackled by the portfolio, particularly amongst children. In response, it was stated that there are specific projects aimed at improving health such as the Active Schools work, community programs and weight management. We suggested that the Community Hubs consider childhood obesity in their areas.
2. The need to review planning policy with regards to the proximity of hot food takeaway restaurants to schools was also raised and we requested a review of planning policy regarding the proximity of hot food takeaways to schools.
3. We thanked the Cabinet Member and the Director of Communities and Assistant Director of Projects for their attendance.

## **Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel – 22 March 2021**

## **Quarter 3 (October-December 2020) Performance Monitoring Report 2020-21**

1. The Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Shared Services Lead for Transformation presented a report on the Council’s performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy projects and objectives during Quarter 3 (October-December 2020).
2. Overall, performance of the projects was good and we commended the council’s performance at the end of quarter 3.
3. We queried why delivery of the joint Digital Strategy had not yet commenced and were informed, in response, that resources for the roll-out were still awaited but that IT development remained ongoing in the interim.
4. We sought clarification on the difference between the South Ribble Together Community Hub and My Neighbourhood Community Hubs. It was explained that these are the same and we requested consistency in the use of names and descriptions of the Hubs going forwards.
5. We also queried how the performance of My Neighbourhood Community Hubs would be monitored and it was advised that 7 key indicators had been devised for the Cabinet to monitor. A report would be considered by Cabinet on this in June 2021.
6. We requested further information on the definitions and ways of measuring the number of residents benefitting from opportunities created by the Communities team.
7. We welcomed confirmation that the Community Wealth Building Action Plan would be presented to Full Council in summer 2021.
8. We also requested information on the costs for refurbishing Penwortham Leisure Centre.
9. We expressed slight concern that both of the delayed projects related to the council’s green agenda. However, we were assured that a range of activities to promote a green agenda, such as the roll-out of electric vehicle charging points and tree-planting remained underway.
10. We also welcomed the Chief Executive’s confidence regarding deliverability of health and safety within the Civic Centre and explanation that there had been fewer near-miss incidents reported due to homeworking practices.

## **Budget Monitoring 2020-21 Quarter 3**

1. The Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets) and the Deputy Director of Finance presented an update on the Council’s overall financial position at the end of Quarter 3 of the 2020-21 financial year.
2. We were informed that reasonable progress had been made against several projects and that a net deficit of £9000 was now forecasted for the 2020/21 financial year.
3. We queried the kind of borrowing the council undertakes and were provided with assurances that this did not result in cash debt. Borrowing is only undertaken internally.
4. We welcomed the addition of staff vacancy information within the report and had several queries on the impact of current vacancies in the Planning, Licensing and IT departments.
5. We were also informed that the council’s reserves would be reviewed on a quarterly basis going forwards, which was welcomed.
6. Following a query from a member not on the Panel, we requested further information on all Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments made to parish councils within the last seven years.
7. Although we were disappointed that the Capital Programme would not be delivered in 2020/21 based on the total spends, we welcomed the Cabinet Member’s confidence that sufficient capacity and resources were now in place for future delivery.
8. We thanked the Cabinet Member and Deputy Director of Finance for their attendance.

## **Recommendation(s)**

1. That Council note the report.

Councillor David Howarth

Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

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