

Minutes of	Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel
Meeting date	Monday, 20 June 2022
Committee members present:	Councillors Angela Turner (Chair), Will Adams, Colin Coulton, Colin Sharples and Karen Walton
Committee members attended virtually (non-voting):	Councillors
Officers present:	Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Louise Mattinson (Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer), Victoria Willett (Director of Change and Delivery), Asim Khan (Director of Customer and Digital), Darren Cranshaw (Shared Services Lead - Democratic, Scrutiny & Electoral Services), Coral Astbury (Democratic and Member Services Officer), Howard Anthony (Interim Shared Services Lead - Transformation and Partnerships) and Michael Johnson (Policy Officer (Engagement))
Other attendees:	Councillors Aniela Bylinski Gelder, James Flannery, Mary Green, Michael Green, Margaret Smith and Mick Titherington and Harry Hancock, David Shaw, Phil Smith and Carol Wooldridge (attended virtually)
Public:	0
1 Apologies for absence	No apologies were received.
2 Declarations of interest	None.
3 Minutes of the meeting Monday, 21 March 2022 of Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel	Resolved: (Unanimously) That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel, held on Monday, 21 March 2022, be approved as a correct record for signing by the Chair.
4 Matters Arising from previous Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel meetings	Resolved: (Unanimously)

That

1. The Matters Arising from previous minutes of the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel be noted and
2. Any completed actions be removed from the report.

5 Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2021-2022

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Foster) and the Director of Change and Delivery presented a report which outlined the Council's performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy projects and objectives during Quarter 4 (January – March 2022).

Overall, the majority of projects within the corporate plan were on-track, with one project (Worden Hall) forecast as having delays. The Leader of the Council advised the Worden Hall project would be complete within the next three to four weeks and invited the Committee for a site visit when completed.

The report referred to the Peer Review re-visit and members asked when feedback would be made available. The Leader of the Council explained that a report would be provided to full Council in July giving members a detailed update.

Members asked how the Chorley and South Ribble Partnership evaluated its effectiveness to ensure it was value for money. It was clarified, in response, the partnership had met three times and had agreed a strategy which covered three corporate priorities. The partnership were looking at economy and how they could work together post COVID to improve economic outcomes. A lot of work had been undertaken outside of the meeting, and work was underway to review the strategy ready to refresh in September. An update would be brought back to Scrutiny Committee.

In response to a question, the Leader of the Council confirmed that all community hubs should have confirmed their terms of reference and he would ask the Cabinet Member (Communities, Social Justice and Wealth Building) to meet with Councillors Turner and Adams to discuss Penwortham Community Hub.

Referring to the proposed Tourism Strategy, members queried the approach taken by the Council working with consultants before establishing a working group. The Leader of the Council explained that the tourism strategy was an important piece of work, the strategy would focus on the primary visitor attractions in Leyland such as Worden Hall and Hurst Grange and would look to advertise them. The strategy would be designed in conjunction with Chorley Borough Council so the authorities would not be competing with each other.

Members sought clarification on the number of new savers with Unify Credit Union and asked if there would be any outreach activity planned for the union. The Leader of the Council explained the report gave figures as at March, however he would write to members of the committee providing the most up to date figures.

The Chief Executive explained that the credit union operate a spoke model, with Leyland hosting the hub and the union working within local communities. The work

within communities is primarily done by volunteers and there could be potential for the community hubs to assist with this.

Members suggested the credit union could utilise a mobile van which could move easily from one area within the borough to another. The Leader of the Council stated he would look further into this.

In response to a member query, the Director of Change and Delivery explained that community co-operatives bring communities together to deliver services that may be needed. It is a local model of working together collectively. Members asked that a register be kept of all community co-operatives as they appear. The Director of Change and Delivery agreed a register would be kept, but explained that it would take some time to establish community co-operatives.

Members requested an update on the progress of Worden Hall. The Leader of the Council explained that there had been delays due to difficulties sourcing materials, as Worden is a listed building only certain materials could be used. Lessons had been learnt for future projects such as the extra care facility, and individuals would be more diligent and responsive to challenges faced, materials would also be pre-ordered.

Members asked what was being done to improve the average call wait time, the Leader of the Council explained that positions were currently being recruited with a number of posts already filled. Additional IT hardware had been acquired and he was confident through summer the call wait times would reduce to a more acceptable time.

Members noted the issues faced with the customer service review implementation and delay in recruitment.

The Leader of the Council assured members that automation would be for those who wanted to use it, there would always be a gateway facility, telephone system and face to face options for those who require it.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel:

1. Thanks the Leader and Director for their detailed report and answering questions.
2. Looks forward to the Chorley and South Ribble Partnership presenting its draft action plan to the Scrutiny Committee later in the year.
3. Asks for more information on the number of credit union members and amount saved and loaned.
4. Welcomes the commitment to take the credit union out to local communities across the Borough linked to community hubs.

5. Expresses concern at the customer service wait times and acknowledges the steps being taken to improve the situation and learn for the future.

6 Revenue Budget Outturn 2021/22

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Foster) and the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented a report which set out the revenue and reserves provisional outturn for the Council as at 31 March 2022.

The Leader of the Council submitted apologies on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets. Members noted that there was an underspend against the budget for 2021/22. Following the allocation to reserves and the agreed movement of £0.392m at quarter three to the Covid Recovery Reserve, there is no change to the general fund reserve.

Members sought clarification on the impact of rising fuel and inflation costs on the Council's budget and were advised that additional costs would be factored into the budget. The Leader of the Council explained that areas of significant cost could arise particularly in the leisure service.

Members asked for more information on the longest term deal the Council were contracted into for utilities. The Director of Finance agreed to provide this information outside of the meeting.

Members referred to the overspend of £47k due to agency and asked how reliant the authority is on agency staff and what had been done to reduce the premium paid. In response, the Leader of the Council explained that a number of vacancies had been open within the council and there was times where posts would need to be filled even on a temporary basis. The Chief Executive advised that within the labour market, individuals have determined that rates secured through agency work were higher than what local authorities could pay and it was difficult to compete.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel:

1. Thanks the Leader and Director for presenting the detailed report and answering questions.
2. Looks forward to the quarter 1 performance report updating on the impact of increased costs and cost of living crisis is having on our residents.

3. Asks that the level reserves for planning appeals and inquiries be reviewed in the future.

7 Capital and Balance Sheet Outturn 2021/22

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Foster) and the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented a report which outlined the outturn financial position of the Council in respect of the capital programme as at 31 March 2022, highlighting key issues and explaining key variances, and providing an overview of various elements of the Council's balance sheet as at 31 March 2022.

Members asked what the impact of recent increases in interest rates would have on the assumptions and budget position. The Leader of the Council explained that they would be reviewed, before an investment is made a bespoke business case has to be approved. Investments would need to be made soon as the continuing rise in business rates may make investments less affordable to the community.

In response to a member enquiry, the Leader of the Council explained the next 12 months would be significant for the Council in terms of project delivery.

In response to a member not on the Panel, the Chief Executive advised that the challenges faced with the delivery of disabled facility grants were due to delays in obtaining the occupational health assessment.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

The Panel:

1. Thanks the Leader and Director for presenting the detailed report and answering questions.
2. Asks that the capital programme be carefully monitored to ensure delivery of the planned schemes.

Chair

Date