

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Thursday, 8 November 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Matthew Tomlinson (Chair), Colin Coulton (Vice-Chair), Carol Chisholm, David Howarth, Sue Jones, Keith Martin, Elizabeth Mawson, John Rainsbury, Michael Titherington, Graham Walton and Linda Woollard

CABINET MEMBERS: Councillors Colin Clark, Margaret Smith, Phil Smith, Karen Walton

OFFICERS: Heather McManus (Chief Executive), Jonathan Noad (Director of Planning and Property), Gary Hall (Section 151 Officer) and Darren Cranshaw (Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services)

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillors Warren Bennett, Caroline Moon and Paul Wharton

PUBLIC: 0

23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Jim Marsh and Mike Nathan.

24 Minutes

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 30 August 2018 and 27 September 2018 be signed as a correct record.

25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of any interests.

26 Matters Arising from previous meetings

The Committee received an update on the progress made against matters arising from previous meetings. A general comment was made around future updates being more specific on the timescales involved in making progress with the recommendations.

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

The update be noted and that further information be provided on minute 5.2 from the meeting on 28 June 2018 concerning statutory and mandatory training for employees.

27 Corporate Performance Report as at the end of Quarter 2 (30 September 2018)

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Margaret Smith) and Chief Executive (Heather McManus) addressed the Committee and responded to its comments and enquiries relating to the corporate performance report at the end of quarter 2.

During the discussion, the Committee's comments/enquiries included the following areas:

- ▶ The rationale for not reporting on the first quarter's performance was discussed and assurances sought that in future years a first quarter's performance report would be provided to Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee.
- ▶ Three projects affecting our employees were off track around the living wage reform, health and safety and sickness absence. It was confirmed that the Council paid the living wage and that the description of this project would be reviewed as part of the actions to bring these projects back on track.
- ▶ The increase in complaints and new feedback policy was explored further and suggestions made of how this information could be used in the future for learning from complaints with an offer to include this in future reports.
- ▶ Concern was expressed at the increase of homelessness recorded and the fact that this has increased due to it being recorded differently.
- ▶ The partnership and influencing role of the Council with regards community safety was explored with regards the increase in violent offences which would be taken forward through the community safety partnership.
- ▶ The rise in the average number of days taken to process new housing benefit claims lead to discussions on how Universal Credit has impacted on the Council. It was reported that the Chancellor's budget would have an impact on this policy. However, the Council was working hard to manage the impact of Universal Credit and improving processing time for new housing benefit claims.
- ▶ Reference was made to some of the narrative in the report stating that the indicator was beyond the Council's control such as empty properties. It was acknowledged that the Council did have a role and this particular indicator would be monitored.
- ▶ The Ribble Crossing project was assessed as off-track, which was a long-term project for the Borough. Further information was provided on the City Deal and the Council's commitment for a new river crossing to drive our growth which was about balancing our ambitions and key influencing role with that of being realistic and delivering outcomes.
- ▶ The update provided on the organisational development programme was explored and whether this conflicted to the information about staff morale provided by employees and union at a recent Full Council meeting. The steps being taken to engage with employees and deal with any concerns were outlined together with information on the number of employees leaving the Council being consistent with previous years. These issues would be

considered further at the next meeting of the Committee which was looking at a variety of reports around employee morale, engagement and support.

- ▶ Based on the number of exceptions within the report assurance was sought that there was sufficient capacity and resource to deliver our corporate plan. Confirmation was provided that there was sufficient capacity, which would be enhanced once the leadership team re-structure was complete.
- ▶ The fault referred to with regards our new performance management system InPhase was being rectified and other than the error noted had not impacted on the data within the remainder of the report.
- ▶ The use of the subjective word of 'slightly' was queried and would be reviewed for future reports.
- ▶ The Masterplans for Leyland and Lostock Hall had been delayed due to not having capacity with steps now being taken to bring them back on track.
- ▶ The non-compliance with licensing requirements was linked with the increase in proactive enforcement by the Council. Further information on this and other outcomes would be included in the licensing annual report to Full Council.
- ▶ Customer service performance in Gateway and delivering our services via the website was raised, which would be picked up by the Digital Strategy currently being developed by the Council.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That:

1. the Committee welcomes the assurance that in future the first quarter's performance and budget report will be presented to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet;
2. the title for the Living Wage Reform Project be reviewed and welcomes the assurance that the project will be brought back on track for 1 April 2019;
3. the Committee thanks the Leader for the offer of future reports providing a flavour of complaints and compliments received and a summary of what has been learned in response;
4. more detailed information on the impact of Universal Credit on performance be provided to the Committee;
5. future reports include a more detailed commentary with the impact and outcomes being more explicit;
6. the Committee requests trend information on the number of employees leaving the Council and the reason given for leaving the Council;
7. the Committee looks forward to exploring staff morale issues at the next Committee meeting; and

8. the draft Digital Strategy be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in order to assess the customer service provided.

28 Budget Monitoring report as at 30 September 2018 (Quarter 2)

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Margaret Smith) and Interim Deputy Chief Executive - Resources and Transformation/Section 151 Officer (Gary Hall) addressed the Committee and responded to its comments and enquiries relating to the budget monitoring report as at 30 September 2018 – Quarter 2. The Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Susan Snape) was unable to attend the meeting due to recovering from an operation.

During the discussion, the Committee's comments/enquiries included the following areas:

- ▶ The staffing savings being higher than originally budgeted was explored and explained that this was down to delays in making appointments to the Council's leadership team, which had now been resolved.
- ▶ Confirmation was provided that should the additional green waste charging income not have been significantly higher than budgeted for the transformational savings would not have been achieved. Further information was provided on the Council's approach to invest to save and taking a strategic approach to our transformational agenda.
- ▶ The transformation of My Neighbourhoods project was queried and the impact this would have on the My Neighbourhood Forum. It was confirmed that Members would see no impact from this particular transformation.
- ▶ The current underspend of the capital programme was raised and whether the programme would be delivered as planned by the end of the financial year. Attention was drawn to two large projects being around the property investment fund, which was awaiting the right opportunity to come along and the site of the leisure hub.
- ▶ The vacant office space within the Civic Centre was mentioned and the time taken to let this space to provide income for the Council. It was reported that positive discussions were taking place but no timetable was in place.
- ▶ The risks included within the report around council tax and business rates retention were raised with the Council putting in place what it could to mitigate this risk through trying to influence and shape the proposed scheme through the pilot, lobbying and working through the figures.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Committee:

1. wishes Councillor Susan Snape a speedy recovery;
2. welcomes the recruitment to the Leadership and a more stable officer team;
3. notes the Leaders commitment to the future of the My Neighbourhood Forums;

4. expresses concern at the proportion of capital spends at the end of the second quarter; and
5. welcomes the assurance of a more robust system for delivering the capital programme in the future.

29 Worden Hall Commercialisation Update

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets (Councillor Colin Clark) and Director of Planning and Property (Jonathan Noad) addressed the Committee and responded to its comments and enquiries relating to the Worden Hall Commercialisation Update.

During the discussion, the Committee's comments/enquiries included the following areas:

- ▶ The delay in producing the options paper on the future use of Worden Hall was explored further, expressing disappointed that the timetable set had not been followed. Commitment was provided to the consultant's report being presented to Cabinet in January 2019.
- ▶ The success of the Worden Autumn Market was discussed and how this might generate income for the Council in the future.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Committee:

1. expresses its disappointment at the consultant's report on future options for Worden Hall being delayed;
2. looks forward to the consultant's report being presented to Cabinet in January 2019 and to Scrutiny in February 2019; and
3. asks that a charging policy for events be developed to expand the commercialisation of Worden Park.

30 Scrutiny Matters

30a Membership of Member Induction/Development Review Task Group

The Scrutiny Chair (Councillor Matthew Tomlinson) reported on the last two meetings of Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee, which he attends on behalf of the Council.

30 Member feedback on meeting(s) attended on behalf of the Committee **b**

There was nothing to report.

30c Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.

30 Membership of Member Induction/Development Review Task Group
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The Committee appointed the following Members to the Scrutiny Review Task Groups for the Member Induction/Development review and the Joint Our Health, Our Care review with Chorley and Preston Councils.

Scrutiny Review of Member Induction/Development

Councillor David Howarth

Councillor Sue Jones

Councillor Keith Martin

Plus two Conservative members of the Committee to be advised outside the meeting

Joint Scrutiny Review of Our Health, Our Care

Councillor Colin Coulton

Councillor Mick Titherington

Councillor Matthew Tomlinson

Councillor Linda Woollard

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the membership of the Scrutiny Review Task Groups be agreed.

Chair

Date