



**MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**MEETING DATE** Thursday, 21 March 2019

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Alistair Morwood (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Matthew Lynch, June Molyneaux and Kim Snape

**OFFICERS:** Mark Lester (Director (Business, Development and Growth)), Victoria Willett (Performance and Partnerships Manager), Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Team Leader) and Nina Neisser (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Greg Morgan

**OTHER MEMBERS:** Councillor Alistair Bradley

**17.OSP.13 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 29 November 2018 of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel**

**Decision:** That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 29 November 2018 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

**17.OSP.14 Declarations of Any Interests**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**17.OSP.15 Performance context paper - Business, Growth and Development**

The Chair, Councillor John Walker, welcomed Mark Lester, Director (Business, Development and Growth) and Alistair Bradley, Executive Leader and Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform) to the meeting.

The Performance Panel received a report from Mark Lester, Director (Business, Development and Growth), which outlined performance at quarter three 2018/19. Vicky Willett, Performance and Partnerships Manager, presented the report.

The services within the Directorate are;

- Land and Property Services
- Development and Regeneration
- Market Walk, Markets and Town Centre
- Employment, Skills and Business Support

The Panel noted some of the corporate projects being delivered by the Directorate which included bringing forward key sites for development, the delivery of Primrose Gardens, the Market Walk extension and the Digital Office Park, amongst other projects.

Performance against two of the corporate strategy indicators was good, with the overall employment rate for Chorley continuing to increase, and the percentage of 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training continuing to decrease, meaning overall there are more people in employment across the Borough. Unemployment was at 2.8% in Chorley, the second lowest rate across Lancashire.

Performance was lower than anticipated for the number of projected jobs created through the council's support schemes (job grants, investments and direct business support) this quarter with 64 jobs created against a target of 90. This was due to the current offer for businesses (Choose Chorley grant and the BIG grant) having restrictive criteria. As a result, the criteria for grants would be reviewed. Following vacancies during quarter three, changes within the team meant that officers were able to proactively develop relationships with local businesses and deliver business events.

There were four new measures for Property Services. Performance against three of the local indicators was good, with all three performing above target. The percentage of land ownership replied to within 3 working days was off target due to one enquiry exceeding the deadline.

### **Market Walk Extension**

Mark Lester advised that every unit had received interest or an offer. Members were reassured that these things take time as there were lots of different negotiations and conditions to consider and officers wanted to ensure the best deal for Chorley. Logistically, it was unlikely that all units would be signed up by the time the building work was complete, but assurances were given that M&S and REEL Cinema would be in the units for Christmas.

At present, construction progress was ahead of schedule. It was hoped that REEL would have access in June, followed by M&S in August. M&S had been on site this week and provided positive feedback, they were happy with current progress and able begin planning detailed designs.

### **Primrose Gardens**

Mark Lester advised Members that Chorley Council Building Control had issued a practical completion certificate in time for the required Homes England, deadline. Following this, officers would be submitting a final grant claims to LCC and Homes England.

Subsequent to the handover there would be two weeks of snagging with increased resources to complete this in time. There were also a number of potential cost items still to be added at the site, such as additional mobility scooter charging points and additional signage. At this stage all commissioned works are within budget.

The development had received a lot of interest and it was anticipated that the first tenants would be moved in by the end of summer. Cllr Bradley advised that the first 40 offer letters had been sent out to potential occupiers.

## **Strawberry Fields Digital Office Hub**

Mark Lester advised that construction was ahead of schedule and the majority of the building work was complete. There had been potential difficulties outside of the council's control, such as the delivery of the spine road and services to the site, however these had not significantly delayed progress of the development.

The S278 works and the development of the junction to access the site had been a long process as a result of technical issues regarding ownership, however it was understood that these were close to being resolved. It was hoped that the junction would be completed in time for the site opening however, temporary access options have also been explored as a backstop.

Positive levels of interest had been received from businesses and the c.30% of the building is under offer or negotiation with a lot of interest in the remaining units. Phil Owen, Senior Business Engagement Officer, would be providing monthly updates on occupancies to ensure that movement remained.

Members queried the green performance rating at Cowling Farm and whether the project should have been further ahead at this stage. Members were reassured that the masterplan criteria had been adhered to for quarter 3 and the main milestone for quarter 4 was the submission of a planning application. Officers advised that Homes England were reviewing their strategy on the submission of an application, however a joint application was of preference to the Council.

With regards to a Housing Company update, detailed analysis was taking place and a paper outlining the potential structures and a business case would be produced. It was suggested upskilling Councillors knowledge base regarding the Housing Company.

The Chair thanked Mark Lester and Councillor Bradley for their attendance.

**Decision – That the report be noted.**

## **17.OSP.16 Business planning update**

Vicky Willett, Performance and Partnerships Manager, presented an update report on the progress of delivery for the service level projects outlined in the service business plans.

A review of 16 business plans produced last year had been completed. The plan identified an overall total of 133 projects and of those, 105 were ongoing (79%), 21 were complete (16%), 4 were closed (3%) and 3 had not started (2%).

It was anticipated that many of the ongoing projects would run over one year and therefore were not of major concern. Members were reassured that officers undertook regular quality assurance checks and were confident that most, if not all teams' projects would be completed.

It was proposed that the approach for 19/20 would follow a similar format to previous years. All services had received a briefing from their Directors and teams would subsequently be identifying the key activities that they would deliver over the next 12

months. This year's process would provide a greater focus on developing staff and team engagement, and skills analysis.

Members requested that going forward, the projects be broken down into directorates and a portfolio be brought to each relevant performance panel meeting. The Chair thanked officers for their work and Members for their attendance at the Performance Panel meetings throughout the year.

**Decision – Members noted the report.**

Chair

Date