

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Thursday, 1 October 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Peter Gabbott, Yvonne Hargreaves, Alex Hilton, Marion Lowe, Matthew Lynch, June Molyneaux, Debra Platt, Paul Sloan and Kim Snape

OFFICERS: Zoe Whiteside (Service Lead - Spatial Planning), Carolyn Williams (Local Plan Coordinator), Angela Barrago (Service Lead - Communities), Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Member Services Officer) and Nina Neisser (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Margaret France

20.OS.88 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 2 July 2020 of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Decision: That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2 July be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

20.OS.89 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interest received.

20.OS.90 Public Questions

There were no public questions for consideration.

20.OS.91 Executive Cabinet Minutes

Decision - That the minutes of the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 30 July be noted.

20.OS.92 Notice of Executive Decisions

Members of the Committee considered the Notice of Executive Decisions for September 2020 which gave notice of key and other major decisions Executive Members are expected to make. The Notice is review on a regular basis to ensure that it is up to date and fit for purpose.

The Chair believed that it was positive to see so many decisions made during such a difficult time which reflected the efficiency of the Council.

Members queried the acquisition of the old Alker Lane Bridge over the railway and questioned if it was owned by the council. It was agreed that officers would look into this.

Decision- That the Notice of Executive Decisions be noted.

20.OS.93 Health Scrutiny

Councillor Margaret France, as Chorley Council's representative for Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny updated Members on the recent LCC Health Scrutiny Steering Group meeting.

At the meeting on 15 September, the main focus was on the current situation regarding the re-opening of Chorley's Emergency Department, the 111 first system, adult social care and winter preparations, test and trace, and the flu vaccine programme.

A decision was made on 21 September to not reopen Chorley's Emergency Department due to difficulties in recruiting staff. One consultant had been appointed so far and seven of the ten required middle grades had also been appointed. It was understood that a review would take place in December with a view to reopen in the New Year.

Discussions were held with regards to the 111 first system which would ensure emergency calls were assessed over the phone or internet triage in the first instance. It was hoped that this service would allow emergency departments to run smoother, reduce waiting time in A&E Departments, and prevent the further spread of Covid-19. Plans were in place for this to be rolled out in the North West at the end of November. Call-takers would receive mandatory six-week training, followed by supervision from clinical staff at the base in Bolton.

With regards to adult social care and winter preparations Members discussions had been held about preventing the spread of infection within care homes and it was proposed that staff would be tested weekly and residents monthly. Test and Trace was also the subject of a long discussion, particularly around the lack of available testing the region. Finally, with regards to the flu vaccination programme for 2021, it was intended to extend the vaccine to also include all adults aged 50-64 however this was highly dependent on supply.

Following queries, it was clarified that most people who were infected with Covid-19 would be managed at home, and the ones that required respiratory care would go to Preston Hospital. In relation to notifying a patient if their appointment was to be delayed, it was not known if there were any systems in place for this but it was likely that there would be occasions of waiting if there were high prioritised patients.

Members condemned the concept of booking an appointment for A and E and recognised that 111 were call handlers not trained in patient care and were without any knowledge of the patient and their background.

Decision – that the update be noted.

20.OS.94 Air Quality Update

Zoe Whiteside, Service Lead for Spatial Planning presented a verbal update on air quality. Members were informed that work was underway for a draft Air Quality Strategy and acknowledged that there had been delays due to Covid-19, and staffing. Within the draft Air Quality Strategy, there were links to climate change, measurements for air quality and plans to coordinate across Lancashire to measure and set a baseline for targets.

After the Council declared a Climate Emergency in November 2019, work was designed to include a tree planting scheme, address local spaces, and the recruitment of Climate Change Coordinator to implement the strategy and action plan. Members were advised that the Draft would be taken to CLT in November before going out for consultation in the New Year.

Carolyn Williams, Central Lancashire Local Plan Co-ordinator, added that the delay of the Environment Bill in the House of Commons also attributed to the delay, but they intended to move forward with more specific targets for particulate matter 2.5. Central Government were exploring targets but were not ready to commit to the 10mg target but have existing targets in place for 2022 to be delivered by 2032.

PM 2.5 was 20.2% of emissions related to road transport. At present, Chorley does not have any obligation to create and meet air quality targets but the Council was voluntarily demonstrating its commitment to the Air Quality Strategy and Climate Change Emergency.

More information about Chorley specifically was available on Lancashire County Council's website and it was agreed that this would be shared with Members. The biggest issue facing Chorley was nitrous oxide due to the close proximity of the motorways. In 2018, the motorways contributed to 60-70 tons of nitrous oxide.

Members queried the locations of the monitoring areas in the borough. It was understood that Chorley had six monitoring stations, the exact locations of these would be provided to Members after the meeting. Three of the stations showed levels slightly above what was desired, but below the levels required for Air Quality Management Areas, and in 2020 the three have shown a decrease. The data would be used to help policy, and to be part of future planning applications.

Members were curious as to whether there would be an impact on outside dining areas close to roads, in particular the A6 bypass in the Town Centre. It was clarified that the distance from the road where it was likely to have outside dining would result in low levels, and there were also landscaping buffers put in place to create separation.

In response to a query from the Chair regarding the role of local schools and the Air Quality Strategy, Members were advised that schools would be reflected in the Air Quality Strategy Plan. It was recognised that a number of authorities had projects in place to encourage more active measures to prevent drop off and pick up air pollution, including no car zones and park and walk, although these had not been popular. It was agreed that community engagement and engagement with schools was required to raise awareness of air quality issues and promote the Air Quality Strategy.

Decision – That the update be noted.

20.OS.95 Leisure Contract

Angela Barrago, Service Lead for Communities provided Members with a verbal update on the Leisure Contract. Members were reminded of the work that had been undertaken on the Leisure Centre Contract since 2017. The procurement process and award of contract had been delayed due to Covid-19 which resulted in the preferred bidder, Life Leisure reluctantly withdrawing their bid in September.

As a result, at the General Purposes Committee on 16 September, Members took the decision to bring the service in house for the short term and prepare for the longer term. Due to the transfer of operator, there needed to be a closure period at the leisure centres from the 30 September to 12 October. This would allow the opportunity to clean up the sites, replace lost equipment and bring in new equipment. A TUPE process had been undertaken as current staff would be employed by the Council going forward. The phone lines were to be reopened, with new software to be developed and commissioned to update the booking system. Letters had been sent to all members to keep them up to date and information issued via social media channels.

Members were advised that consideration was given to approach the second and third placed bidders, but the conditions of the procurement were now different, and the process would need to be restarted.

Cllr June Molyneaux left the meeting at 19:25pm.

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member for Early Intervention expressed her disappointment at the situation but commended Life Leisure for being open and honest about being unable to take on the contract, and had provided advice to help get the leisure centres back up and running smoothly.

Members queried the plans going forward, if there was the possibility that the leisure centres would remain in-house if successful and if consideration had been given about expanding in-house operations to other management contracts such as Duxbury Golf Club. Officers advised that a minimum period of six months was required to examine the market and seek professional advice to understand the position the industry was in. Members were advised that the contract with Glendale at Duxbury Golf Club was slightly different.

Following concerns with the timescales and the situation exposing the council to risk with other contractors in the future, Members were advised that Life Leisure had not signed the contract at the time they withdrew. The procurement process was on schedule until the impact of Covid caused delays which resulted in postponing the award of contract to June. However, Members were reassured that this was the most sensible course of action.

The Chair thanked Angela Barrago for attending and gave his thanks to the council and all officers involved for their work on this.

Decision - That the update be noted.

20.OS.96 Reports from the Task and Finish Groups

Councillor Kim Snape, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group on Sustainable Public Transport, provided Members with a verbal update.

At the first meeting, James Hoskinson (Planning Assistant) delivered a presentation in relation to the Sustainable September Campaign completed by the council last year. This explored the findings of how staff travelled to work and gathered views and opinions about transportation to work. This campaign would be undertaken again to explore the changes in 12 months and how the commute had been impacted with Covid-19. It was expected that the increase in home working would be a significant factor.

A Scoping Document would be created to include the task group to focus within the wide-ranging topic to produce realistic aims. There were suggestions about rail provision, bus services, community transport options such as dial-a-ride, as well as recognising the difficulties the council has in enforcing issues around public transport, the cost implications with public transport and what sustainable funding for buses is available. Work also proposed to tackle social isolation across the borough and environmental concerns such as air quality. The scoping document would also include the potential stakeholders for the review and how they would be consulted.

Some members attended a Local Government Association webinar on the decarbonisation of transport, and the role of public transport. An update on this would be provided at the next session.

Decision – That the update be noted.

20.OS.97 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Committee considered the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Performance Panel, and task group topic areas for 2020/21.

Members discussed the work programme and queried why the Adoption of Estates had not been included on the agenda as indicated on the plan. The Chair confirmed that it was due to be on the agenda but the relevant LCC Officer was unable to attend, therefore it would be taken to the next meeting in January 2021. Any information provided before that date would be distributed to the Members.

Decision – That the work programme be noted.

20.OS.98 Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair

There was no urgent business.

Chair

Date