

## Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel

Thursday, 10th March 2022, 6.30 pm  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, and YouTube

### Agenda

#### Apologies

- |   |  |                |
|---|--|----------------|
| 1 | <b>Minutes of meeting Thursday, 13 January 2022 of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel</b>   | (Pages 3 - 6)  |
| 2 | <b>Declarations of Any Interests</b><br><br>Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda.<br><br>If you have a pecuniary interest you must withdraw from the meeting. Normally you should leave the room before the business starts to be discussed. You do, however, have the same right to speak as a member of the public and may remain in the room to enable you to exercise that right and then leave immediately. In either case you must not seek to improperly influence a decision on the matter. |                |
| 3 | <b>Performance Focus - Commercial and Property</b><br><br>To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Chief Executive.  | (Pages 7 - 16) |
| 4 | <b>Business Plans Progress Update 2021/22</b><br><br>To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Chief Executive.   | (To Follow)    |
| 5 | <b>Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair</b>  |                |

Gary Hall  
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Julia Berry, James Nevett and Aidy Riggott.

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**Minutes of** **Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel**

**Meeting date** **Thursday, 13 January 2022**

**Members present:** Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Julia Berry, James Nevett and Aidy Riggott

**Officers:** Jennifer Mullin (Director of Communities), Victoria Willett (Service Lead - Transformation and Partnerships) Jon-James Martin (Performance and Transformation Officer) Adele Hayes (Service Lead – Planning) and Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**21.OSP.17 Minutes of Meeting Thursday, 16 December 2021 of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel**

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

**21.OSP.18 Declarations of Any Interests**

No declarations were made.

**21.OSP.19 Performance Focus - Communities**

Councillor Beverley Murray, Executive Member - Early Intervention, and Jennifer Mullin, Director of Communities attended virtually to present the report.

There was an underspend for the quarter, primarily due to the vacancies within the Directorate which included; Housing Solutions Team, Communities Service, and Environmental Health.

The leisure centre performed well, with an increased visitor number from the last quarter. As with other areas within the Council, there had been issues with recruitment. Focus had been placed on providing good customer service and it was believed that there was a positive atmosphere and culture for both employees and customers.

The leisure centre had its own budget as it was a separate company. Matters that related to finance had improved, but Covid-19 had an impact. It was expected that by the end of March 2022, without any additional or continuation of restrictions, opening times would be as they were before the Covid-19 pandemic.

There was no inclination to sell the leisure centre, but the option would not be ruled out. Investment had been made to upgrade and modernise facilities. It was

recommended that a Member Learning Session was held for Members towards the end of March 2022.

It was confirmed following a question from Members that the leisure centre still allowed staff to use time credits in exchange for gym and swim sessions.

Disabled Facilities Grants completion was worse than the previous quarter. At present, delivery was under the base line of 10 weeks at 6.8 weeks.

In reference to the 262 people waiting for an assessment by the Occupational Therapist, the Council considered employing its own to decrease waiting times. The timeframe required to complete the 262 Assessments was uncertain due to the variety of potential needs. Those that required minor adjustments such as handrails, or stairlifts took less time than substantial requirements such as building extensions, wet rooms, or door adjustments.

New and existing community groups continued to be supported. There was uncertainty as to when community support activity would return to pre pandemic levels, it was noted that the number of residents that benefitted from opportunities created by the Communities Team was better than expected, but was far below target.

There had been a decline in the performance indicators for Housing Solutions. The new Housing Manager was currently reviewing processes and procedures, work that had been delivered and what was in progress. It was expected that following the review, there would be a change in what was monitored.

Performance Indicators from the Public Protections Team showed that the number of food establishments inspected had increased from the previous quarter, although due to Covid-19, staff had been involved in other work. The current inspection programme was expected to finish in March 2022 and was currently on target.

Performance Indicators for Corporate Projects were all green and on track, but a significant amount of work was to be completed by the end of March. This included the homeless and rough sleeping plan.

Neighbourhood Area Meetings resumed, with varied levels of success. Some believed that there had been too little time to fully consider potential projects. The next round of meetings to start in January 2022.

The new Animal Welfare Officer was in post and worked closely with South Ribble's equivalent to learn the role and undertake inspections of boarding and breeding centres.

There was a current vacancy in the Environmental Health Team, and following work related to Covid-19, a return to normality was underway with ongoing inspections of food, housing, and health and safety.

Jennifer Mullin highlighted that during her first year in the role across Shared Services, she had identified and utilised expertise at both authorities to the benefit of both Chorley and South Ribble.

**21.OSP.20 Business Plans**

The item was withdrawn from the agenda.

**21.OSP.21 Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair**

Members were provided information requested at previous Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panels. Outstanding requests included ICT data and tree planting by ward.

Adele Hayes, Service Lead – Planning, attended the Performance Panel to provide clarity to the planning system and how performance was recorded.

She highlighted that the Government set the target to determine planning applications which were either 8 weeks or 13 weeks.

Within the Planning Department at Chorley Council, a culture of good performance had been cultivated. There was good communication with applicants and agents. The process of Planning and Development was predicated on the presumption of sustainable development and the starting point was approval. Frequently extra time was needed to secure added value, this could include alterations to the designs or waiting for the response of technical consultants.

Reasons varied as to why some applications took longer, time extensions allowed positive and proactive decisions to take place. Time extensions were never used to prolong the process.

Response times from external consultants varied, there was a good working relationship with the County Council. The Council had seen the volume of applications increase substantially over the previous 18 months.

Non-determined items were not counted in the figures of determined applications. Over the 18 months of the pandemic, three appeals were made against non-determination. Two of which were in safeguarded sites with applicants not agreeing to an extension of time. The third appeal was against non-determination of a certificate of lawfulness.

There were two parallel systems that provided figures, Performance Management and Outside the Scope.

Applications were categorised as either minor or major. Major applications were not always controversial, the erection of a garden shed would be considered a major application.

Extensions were provided for a variety of reasons included, but not limited to the application going to Committee, the application awaited technical responses, the application required amendments, or if the applicant wished to change part of the application.

The time limit does not start until the application had been submitted and accepted. It was not uncommon for miscommunication between agent and applicant to occur regarding the time the application was submitted. Inadequate or poor applications

would need to be resubmitted, this could take a significant amount of time, the clock would not start until the application was accepted.

If there were any concerns about the impact of any application, progress of application, or other queries about an application, it was recommended that the Case Officer be contacted. Any delay in communication between Councillors and Planning Staff should be highlighted to Adele.

Members raised questions about the progress and outcome to the sites in Coppull, Adele stated that she was happy to meet with residents and talk about any sites that they held concerns with. It was understood that the process was long, stressful and anxiety inducing but due process was required, but there was no update to provide. The proposals were part of the five-year housing supply that needed to be resolved, if no decisions were made, there were risks of appeals against non-determination.

The Planning department had no significant issues with sickness over the previous 18 months, but there was a high caseload compared to other authorities. There was a vacancy in the department, and there had been difficulties with recruitment due to competition from the private sector.

Members noted the update and thanked Adele for attending.

Chair

Date

Report of	Meeting	Date
Deputy Chief Executive (Introduced by the Executive Member for Resources )	Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel	Thursday, 10 March 2022

Is this report confidential?	No
Is this decision key?	No

## Performance Focus - Commercial and Property

### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel with a performance update for the Commercial and Property directorate. This includes:
  - a) An overall directorate summary and budget position,
  - b) An overview of key performance measures over 2021/22,
  - c) An update on the Corporate Strategy projects.

### Recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel

2. That the information contained within this report is discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel to understand and monitor performance within the Commercial and Property directorate.

### Reasons for recommendations

3. To ensure the effective monitoring of performance with the Commercial and Property directorate and subsequent delivery of the Corporate Strategy and its strategic objectives.

### Other options considered and rejected

4. No other options have been considered or rejected. This is because the report does not present any key items for decision.

### Corporate priorities

5. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	X	A strong local economy	X
Clean, safe and healthy communities	X	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	X

### Background to the report

6. Each quarter a directorate level performance update is presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel for review. For quarter three, an update for Commercial and Property has been prepared. This directorate was last reviewed in March 2020. The directorate includes the following services:

- Development
- Property
- Markets and Town Centre
- Accommodation

7. This report presents an overview of the directorate's performance over 2021/22 as well as a breakdown of the financial position, service level indicator performance, and the progress of the Corporate Strategy projects as of quarter three 2021/22.

### Directorate overview

8. The directorate has been performing well over 2021/22, with over half (57%) of the Commercial and Property performance indicators performing on or above target for quarter three 2021/22. There are 45 business plan projects under the Commercial and Property directorate, of these projects 39 (81%) are rated green or completed, four (8%) have been put on hold and five (10%) are rated amber. Further details on the business plan progress can be found in the 'Business Plan Progress Update 2021/22' report to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel.

### Financial position 2021/22

9. The below table outlines the General Fund Revenue Budget monitoring provisional outturn 2021/22 for the Commercial and Property directorate:

<b>Provisional Outturn 2021/22 – Commercial and Property</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Original Cash Budget</b>	1,011,130
<b>Agreed changes</b>	-23,010
<b>Current cash budget</b>	988,120
<b>Provisional outturn</b>	1,152,481
<b>Variance</b>	<b>164,361</b>




<b>Variance</b>	16.6%
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- 10. The biggest spend in this directorate is on staffing and premises which is partly supported by income generation in this directorate.
- 11. The original budget has reduced by £23k as at 31st December 2021 due to transfer of staffing budgets from Primrose Gardens Retirement Living to Housing Services and recharges to South Ribble Borough Council.
- 12. The outturn for Commercial and Property shows an overspend of £164k as at 31st December 2021 giving a 16.6% variance against the current budget. The overspend has been generated mainly due to reduction in car park income and reduced income from market rents due to Covid-19 restrictions during lockdown.

**Performance indicators**

- 13. A three colour symbol rating system is used for performance indicators to indicate status as shown in the table below:

	Performance is better than target		Worse than target but within threshold (5%)		Worse than target, outside threshold (5%)
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- 14. A summary of key performance information for each service within the Commercial and Property directorate over the year of 2021/22 is provided below:

**Corporate Strategy indicators**

- 15. There are no corporate strategy indicators allocated within this directorate.


**Local indicators: Commercial and Property**

- 16. The tables below outline the indicators performance for the Commercial and Asset directorate split between each service.

**Development**

- 17. There are no local performance indicators allocated within this service.

**Property**

Indicator	Polarity	Target	Performance (Q3 2021/22)	Symbol	Trend
% reactive repair orders logged and issued on time within the Tech Forge system within Priority ratings (emergency/urgent/routine)	Bigger is better	90%	95%		Better than Q3:2020/21 (92%)

Indicator	Polarity	Target	Performance (Q3 2021/22)	Symbol	Trend
% reactive repair jobs inspected post work completion	Bigger is better	30%	55%	★	Worse than Q3:2020/21 (60%)
% land ownership enquiries replied to within 3 working days	Bigger is better	99%	100%	★	Same as Q3:2020/21 (100%)
Average time to issue valuation letter to resident following request for low cost housing valuation	Smaller is better	15 Days	14.5 Days	★	Worse than Q3:2020/21 (0 Days)
Average time to issue offer letter to resident following request to purchase freehold reversion	Smaller is better	10 Days	22.6 Days	▲	Worse than Q3:2020/21 (1 Days)
% occupancy of fixed office voids in the Digital Office Park	Bigger is better	7.5%	97%	★	Better than Q3:2020/21 (40%)
% rent collected at the Digital Office Park from fixed offices	Bigger is better	97.5%	78%	▲	Better than Q3:2020/21 (72.53%)
% of voids on the Commercial Sites (excludes Market Walk, Market & DOP)	Smaller is better	7.5%	14.7%	▲	Worse than Q3:2020/21 (5.55%)
% of daily site inspections for new developments	Bigger is better	60%	69%	★	Data unavailable Q3:2020/21
% of PPM activities completed	Bigger is better	90%	88%	●	Data unavailable Q3:2020/21

18. The average time to issue offer letters to residents following request to purchase freehold reversion has increased when compared to the same time last year and is above the target of 10. This increase can be attributed to the impact on Covid-19 restrictions, and every effort is being made to conduct more site visits in a safe manner.
19. The percentage of rent collected at the Digital Office Park from fixed offices is below target in quarter three, however the trend has improved when compared to the previous quarter (60.31%). There are plans in place to contact tenants regarding rental arrears, as rents are still in arrears due to Covid restrictions and the non-collection of rent during this period.
20. The percentage of voids on the commercial sites is below target in quarter three, however the trend has shown improvement from the previous quarter (6.25%). These properties are being advertised and any leads of interest are being pursued. However, uptake has been slow due to the Christmas period and the impact of the Covid -19 pandemic.

Indicator	Polarity	Target	Performance (Q3 2021/22)	Symbol	Trend
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Market Walk Footfall	Bigger is better	2,695,058	<b>1,169,625</b>	▲	Better than Q3:2020/21 (453,320)
Town Centre Vacancy Rate	Smaller is better	8%	<b>11.2%</b>	▲	Worse than Q3:2020/21 (9.7%)
Community centres - percentage of occupancy	Bigger is better	51%	<b>54.18%</b>	★	Worse than Q3:2020/21 (60.12%)
% of voids on the Covered Market	Smaller is better	7.5%	<b>9.8%</b>	▲	Better than Q3:2020/21 (14.3%)
% of rent collected at the Covered Market	Bigger is better	97.5%	<b>85.83%</b>	▲	Worse than Q3:2020/21 (91%)
% voids on Market Walk	Smaller is better	7.5%	<b>4.76%</b>	★	Better than Q3:2020/21 (12.2%)
% rent collected at Market Walk	Bigger is better	97.5%	<b>84%</b>	▲	Better than Q3:2020/21 (63.6%)
Number of coach visits	Bigger is better	117	<b>15</b>	▲	Better than Q3:2020/21 (0)
Response rate for CCTV requests within average of 5 days	Smaller is better	5	<b>2.76</b>	★	Worse than Q3:2020/21 (1.64)
Combined car park ticket sales (including FOC)	Bigger is better	240,000	<b>245,071</b>	★	Better than Q3:2020/21 (215,751)

**Markets and Town Centre:**

21. The amount of people registered as footfall for Market Walk has been reported as under target in quarter three. These targets were established before the Covid-19 pandemic; therefore, it is expected that whilst we are not fully recovered from the pandemic these figures will remain below target, however they are steadily increasing. Government guidelines are being followed to ensure the town centre is safe and that customers feel safe to visit. There is also a marketing plan to promote the town centre, which aims to increase the amount of footfall.

22. The Town Centre vacancy rate has increased in quarter three and is performing below the target. To address the drop in performance, the Council will continue to promote Chorley as a good place to do business and continue investing in the Market/Market Walk. A review exercise has commenced to survey vacant units to determine ownership and length of vacancy. This will be completed in quarter four and will inform targeted measures to tackle vacancies going forward, with long term voids being targeted for acquisition.

23. The percentage of voids on the Covered Market is performing below target in quarter three, however performance has improved when compared to the same time last year. There is currently work being undertaken to create food and beverage seating areas where there were previously stalls. There are now an additional 2 vacant cabins meaning

a total of 5 vacant overall, this is due to 1 trader retiring and 1 trader ceasing trade. The deadline for more applications is the end of January and temporary lets on the voids will be considered whilst the recruitment process is ongoing.

24. The figures for the percentage of rent collected at the Covered Market is below target in quarter three. The moratorium on eviction action for the non-payment of rent, which resulted in some tenants electing not to pay rent will come to an end in March 2022. In addition to this, trade has been slow to recover, and shoppers' habits are changing as a result of the pandemic. The Council will follow arrears process as set out in the market regulations and will also offer opportunities for advice, guidance and financial support. As government advice changes, any new measures recommended to keep staff, traders and shoppers safe will be introduced.
25. The percentage of rent collected at Market Walk is performing below target, however trend has improved significantly when compared to the same time last year. As previously mentioned, the Council will follow arrears and debt collection processes, once government advise on the moratorium on eviction action for the non-payment of rent comes to an end in March 2022.
26. The number of coach visits are below target in quarter three. This is thought to be because of Covid and the changing restrictions making it difficult for companies to operate as they did before the pandemic. Coaches are slowly coming back as restrictions are gradually coming to an end. The Council will be reaching out to coach companies to promote and raise awareness of services such as meet and greets, free parking and food vouchers for coach drivers to encourage them back to Chorley.

**Accommodation:**

Indicator	Polarity	Target	Performance (Q3 2021/22)	Symbol	Trend
% rent collected at Cotswold Supported Housing	Bigger is better	98.52%	<b>77.85%</b>	▲	Worse than Q3:2020/21 (100%)
% voids Cotswold House	Smaller is better	20%	<b>1.46%</b>	★	Better than Q3:2020/21 (22.45%)
% rent collected at Primrose Gardens	Bigger is better	98%	<b>100%</b>	★	Better than Q3:2020/21 (95.29%)
% voids at Primrose Gardens	Smaller is better	20%	<b>0.18%</b>	★	Worse than Q3:2020/21 (9.51%)
Cotswold conference facilities - percentage of bookings	Bigger is better	50%	<b>0%</b>	▲	Same as Q3:2020/21 (0%)
Primrose conference facilities - percentage of bookings	Bigger is better	50%	<b>5.53%</b>	▲	Better than Q3:2020/21 (0%)
Percentage of voids at Primrose turned around within 14 days	Bigger is better	95%	<b>100%</b>	★	Better than Q3:2020/21 (75%)
% rent collected in rented Housing	Bigger is better	98%	<b>99.18%</b>	★	Data unavailable Q3:2020/21
% voids in rented housing	Smaller is better	20%	<b>0.14%</b>	★	Data unavailable Q3:2020/21
Percentage of voids in rented Housing turned around within 14 days	Bigger is better	90%	<b>100%</b>	★	Data unavailable Q3:2020/21

27. The percentage of rent collected at Cotswold Supported Housing is performing below target in quarter three. The reduction in rent collected can be attributed to delays in receiving payments from Housing Benefit. Support is being offered to tenants to complete the necessary applications to the Housing Benefit service, once processed these payments should be backdated.

28. The percentage of bookings for the Cotswold Conference facilities remains at 0%. The facilities have not been in use in quarter three; as the pandemic restrictions begin to be fully lifted it is expected that there will be an increase in booking uptake. Plans will be put in place in quarter four to contact the groups that have previously used the facilities to encourage more bookings.

29. The percentage of bookings at the Primrose conference facilities has risen from the same time last year, however is performing below target in quarter three. The conference facilities had extended periods of closure due to the pandemic restrictions and since being reopened the groups that used the facilities have slowly returned. As the restriction continue to be lifted and public confidence returns it is expected that there will be an increase in the number of booking received.

**Projects**

30. Under the Commercial and Property directorate there are a total of four Corporate Strategy projects, with three rated as green for quarter three 2021/22. These include:

- Deliver the employment land at Alker Lane
- Deliver improvements to the Town Centre
- Bring forward site at Bengal Street

31. There is one project is rated amber for quarter three 2021/22 as below:

- Deliver the extra care scheme and community facilities at Tatton

Corporate Strategy projects

32. In the table below, an update on the current Corporate Strategy project position for each corporate project under Commercial and Property can be found below:

Project	Rating (Q3 2022/23)	Update (Q3 2022/23)
Deliver the employment land at Alker Lane	<b>Green</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site at Alker Lane and its development will continue as part of the Corporate Strategy for 2022/23.</li> <li>• The project has focused predominately on the early preparatory and initial construction works over 2021/22, which will be key in the progress of the development going forward.</li> </ul>
Deliver improvements to the town centre	<b>Green</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This project will continue into 2022/23 as part of the projects under the new Corporate Strategy, with focus on supporting independent traders and promoting more visitors and customers to the town centre.</li> <li>• Over 2021/22, this project has delivered a number of improvements works. This includes the renovation of the covered market, which now features new toilets, signage, and exterior canopy's and paintwork, as well as the demolition of the former bingo hall in preparation of the site's future development.</li> </ul>
Bring forward site at Bengal Street	<b>Green</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project to bring forward the site at Bengal Street will be completed in quarter four.</li> <li>• This project has produced options and costings for the potential future development of the site off Bengal Street, which currently hosts the Streetscene Depot.</li> </ul>
Deliver the extra care scheme and community facilities at Tatton	<b>Amber</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery of Tatton Gardens will continue as part of the Corporate Strategy projects for 2022/23.</li> <li>• Over 2021/22, key structural works have been undertaken that will be critical in progressing the project going into the next corporate year. This includes the clearing of the former bus depot site on Eaves Lane as well as building works such as the preparation of foundations, erection of steelwork, and instillation of the brickwork, roofing, and cladding.</li> </ul>

33. As part of the Corporate Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24, the following projects have been proposed for future delivery. These projects will fall under the Commercial and Property directorate and were presented to Council in November 2021:

Project	Proposed Scope (2022/23)
Complete the town centre projects including market renovations	Review the 2020 town centre survey and develop a list of properties for targeting landlord improvements to provide an attractive and vibrant town centre delivered through improvement works.
Deliver Strawberry Meadows employment site	Completion of the Strawberry Meadows development and market the units on site.
Open the Tatton Gardens Extra Care development and community facilities	<p>This 2022/23 project will deliver the completion and opening of the Tatton Gardens development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To complete the development of a new GP surgery, retail unit, 62 assisted living apartments, community café, community facilities and a nursery</li> <li>• To upgrade the recreation ground</li> <li>• Report on the social value opportunities delivered as part of the development phase</li> <li>• Report on the installation of renewable technologies</li> <li>• To market the development.</li> </ul>

**Climate change and air quality**

34. The work noted in this report impacts the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations and measures are applied to development projects.

**Equality and diversity**

35. The material presented and discussed in this report has no direct implications on equality or diversity.

**Risk**

36. There are service level risk registers contained with the GRACE risk management system recording risk for the directorate. These are regularly monitored through Directorate Management Team, where risks are discussed, reviewed, and updated according to service needs and the current risk context.

**Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

37. Any financial implications from performance in 2021/22 has been captured in the budget monitoring process. The 2022/23 budget will include the necessary resources to deliver the proposed projects as outlined in the report.

#### **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

38. This is a comprehensive report that covers the work of the Commercial and Property Directorate. The report is for noting and discussion. There are no legal implications for this report.

#### **Background documents**

39. The following documents are key background items for this report:

- Business Plan Progress Update 2021/22
- Quarter Three Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22
- Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring

#### **Appendices**

40. There are no appendices that accompany this report.

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
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