

Minutes of **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting date **Thursday, 16 March 2023**

Committee Members present: Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Hasina Khan, Kim Snape, Jenny Whiffen, Dedrah Moss, Arjun Singh and Ryan Towers

Committee Members present virtually (non-voting): Councillors Samir Khan and Aidy Riggott

Officers: Chris Moister (Director of Governance/Managing Director of Chorley Leisure), Jennifer Mullin (Director of Communities), Zoe Whiteside (Head of Spatial Planning), Matt Evans (Air Quality and Climate Change Officer), and Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Member Services Officer),

Apologies: Councillors James Nevett, Michelle Le Marinel and Alan Platt

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on [YouTube here](#)

37 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 26 January 2023 of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Roy Lees raised a correction, rather than the community centre extension, he questioned the section 106 for the sports and recreation provision and requested a breakdown of the £189,000.

Resolved: That the minutes be approved with the above correction and approved as a correct record.

38 Minutes of Meeting Thursday, 9 March 2023 of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting Thursday, 9 March 2023 of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel be approved as a correct record.

39 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations.

40 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

41 Executive Cabinet Minutes

Resolved: That the Executive Cabinet minutes of the meeting held 23 February 2023 be noted.

42 Notice of Executive Decisions

Resolved: That the Notice of Executive Decisions be noted.

43 Health Scrutiny

A Health Scrutiny Update to be circulated to members, and any questions in relation to Health Scrutiny can be raised to the Chair, the Democratic and Member Services Officer or Councillor Hilton.

44 Chorley Leisure Company Update

Director of Governance Chris Moister attended and presented the report as Managing Director of Chorley Leisure Company.

Following a procurement exercise in 2019, the preferred bidder withdrew their bid due to the global change caused by Covid. The decision was made for the council to operate the leisure facilities. It was clarified that the council already owned the buildings, but leased the facilities to leisure providers.

The Leisure Company was established April 2021 and commenced operation in August 2021. The entity was considered separate from the council and held its own objectives. The governance structure of the company included the board of directors made up from the Directors of Chorley Council. The position of Managing Director should be the Director of Commercial Services, but due to the vacancy, the Managing Director was currently the Director of Governance. The other involved director is the Director of Finance.

The sole shareholder of the Leisure Company is the council and its functions were fulfilled by the Executive Cabinet.

The Director of Communities fulfilled the client role and supported the Executive Cabinet Member.

To deliver the objectives of the Leisure Company, a single year business plan was adopted that reflected the imminent priorities of the council. They were

- a. Growth of Membership Base
- b. Establishing the Branding and Company Identity
- c. Junior and 60+ and Community Programming
- d. Recruitment and Staff Development

e. Capital Investment

Financially, the Leisure Company was a challenge, the cost of utilities had increased significantly. The cost of staff increased greater than the budgeted 2%, and the cost of living crisis was likely to impact public spending which created a risk of reduced income, especially as the decision was made not to increase costs to ensure accessibility and affordability for the community. Membership had increased 8% year on year, however, was not yet at the point achieved pre Covid.

Following the single year Business Plan, a five-year business development strategy was to be introduced with the objective to become financially self-sustained. Any surplus would be reinvested within the company and facilities, however, there was not expected to be a surplus for the foreseeable future.

It was confirmed that there was no consideration for further investment in other companies by the Leisure Company.

Turnover of staff was high but was not unusual within the leisure industry.

It was discussed where and how the Leisure Company would be subject to scrutiny as there was limited opportunity for Member involvement outside Executive Cabinet. It was concluded that the appropriate time would be under the Communities Directorate Performance Panel.

The renovations for Brinscall Baths, which was allocated £600,000 was not yet underway, however, further surveys were required to assess the issues as required repairs may not be as extensive as first reported. The baths were currently open, but not for public swimming.

All three of the buildings, Brinscall Baths, Clayton Green and All Seasons required investment, and there were plans in place to make them more appealing to the public. It was noted that there had been a shift in the industry from pure leisure to community driven locations.

It was announced that there would be funding from central government to support leisure facilities, but further information was forthcoming.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

45 Cycling Update

Matt Evans, Air Quality and Climate Change Officer presented the Cycling Update ahead of a full report to be given at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July.

The objective behind the work conducted was to understand the views of cycling and to promote more cycling in the borough. This was to be done by

- Engaging with the Community to understand wider needs
- Using social media to promote and raise awareness
- Engage with county to understand their plans for provisions
- Exploring provision for cycle parking and storage across Chorley
- Resident consultation to garner views.

The purpose of the consultation was to manage expectation and to sign post to Lancashire County Council. 180 responses were received, with two from cycling groups. There were no written responses received, however comments on the Facebook and Twitter page were collated and included.

The majority of the comments were constructive, and the vast majority agreed that improved cycling facilities would positively influence their decision to visit Chorley. The most popular improvements suggested were cycleways, pedestrianised areas, and safe and secure storage for cycles. Interest was also raised for

- bike maintenance provisions
- repair days
- basic skills training
- Cycle training for children and adults
- Confidence building leisure activities

The feedback from the consultation would be incorporated into the objectives, and as a result;

- Partners have been identified to provide training, workshops, maintenance
- Exploration was underway how activities could be promoted.
- Chorley Council's climate change website to be refreshed with dedicated pages for active travel and cycling.
- A focus on cycling Infrastructure across Chorley
- Bike storage pods for Chorley to be placed in Portland Street Car Park, due to its proximity to the town centre and the transport links. These would be monitored by town centre ambassadors, with updates provided to the team at the end of Spring.

The team were interested in the cycling habits of staff, the cycle pods at Bengal Street were not used as much as desired. It was believed that this was due to

- Change in working patterns,
- Distance between the pods and the Town Hall
- Potential damage to the new ICT equipment through bad weather or accidents,
- Lack of changing facilities in the Town Hall.

Work was underway with Lancashire County Council to ensure that Chorley was represented within the Lancashire Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Partnership. It was clarified that District Councils were not eligible for active travel funds, network planning was ongoing but was delayed due to Covid.

The County Council expressed their wish to be involved with the planning process and to feed in their views when a site or application was compatible with their active travel plans. Members raised about the secure sheds at Adlington Rail Station that were never installed, and no money was provided. It was confirmed that legal advice would be sought for an answer.

Cycling was a part of the upcoming Local Plan, with an emphasis for walking, wheeling and cycling in new developments

Resolved: That the update be noted.

46 **Quality of Housing Provided by Social Landlords - Final Monitoring Report.**

Jennifer Mullin, Director of Communities presented the report.

Work was underway to ensure that best practice was conducted. Learning Sessions were held and completed by the Select Move Coordinator. The council were engaged with partners to ensure the distribution of disability grants, and work was in progress with housing partners to decrease waiting lists, time frames and to streamline the process.

The White Paper was outstanding, and additional regulations were due by 2024. In the meantime before the enactment of the White Paper, the customer satisfaction and quarterly performance had been conducted and the first results were due imminently. Work was ongoing with the partners within Select Move to ensure that recommendations and the Charter were implemented.

There was an influx of concern with damp and mold for both private and housing association properties due to recent publicity of the risks and dangers associated with damp and mold. A specialist housing officer was appointed to inspect properties owned and rented by Housing Associations.

Members raised if it was procedure for the council to contact landlords when tenants reported environmental health concerns. It was noted that there were cases of vulnerable residents scared about potential retribution or recourse about making a report. It was confirmed that it was best practice, but there was uncertainty if it were a legal requirement but would return with clarification.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

47 **Period Poverty Update**

Jennifer Mullin presented the report.

There was considered to be a good overall provision of products available within the Borough.

Within schools, there was a good supply of products available to students, but there were also additional opportunities for further education. Other considered products to be made available included shampoo, body wash and deodorant.

It was acknowledged that there were gaps in what was provided in council owned buildings for staff and visitors.

Members raised that work was required within some communities to raise awareness, education and provide information. Members would take the matter to the Equalities Panel, and place a focus on cultures where honour and shame were prevalent which could potentially prevent access for some women to healthcare and understanding.

Members raised surprise that the only supermarket that provided free products in the area was Morrisons. It was clarified that provisions were not localised within the town centre, but across the borough, and there were a range of groups that provided support and products including, but not limited to Chorley Together, food groups, and food banks.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

48 Reports from the Task and Finish Groups

Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group for Empty Properties Councillor Sarah Ainsworth provided an update on the progress of the task group. The final report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July.

49 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Resolved: That the Work Programme be noted.

50 Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair

There was no urgent business, but members praised and reflected positively on Councillor John Walker's time as a Chorley Borough Councillor and Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Chair

Date