



MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL

MEETING DATE Wednesday, 10 July 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors June Molyneaux, Gillian Sharples, Marion Lowe and Alex Hilton

OFFICERS: Asim Khan (Director (Customer and Digital)), Victoria Willett (Performance and Partnerships Manager), Rebecca Aziz-Brook (Transformation Programme Coordinator) and Nina Neisser (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Adrian Lowe and Alistair Morwood

17.OSP.17 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 21 March 2019 of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel

Decision – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 21 March 2019 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

17.OSP.18 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interest received.

17.OSP.19 Performance Focus - Customer and Digital Context

The Chair, Councillor John Walker, welcomed Asim Khan, Director (Customer and Digital) and Adrian Lowe, Executive Member (Customer, Advice and Streetscene Services) and Alistair Morwood, Executive Member (Public Protection) to the meeting.

The Performance Panel received a report from Asim Khan, Director (Customer and Digital), which outlined performance at quarter four 2018/19. Rebecca Aziz-Brook, Transformation Programme Co-Ordinator, presented the report.

The services within the directorate are;

- Planning
- Customer services
- Streetscene
- ICT
- Enforcement

Asim Khan welcomed Cllr Alistair Morwood as the new Executive Member for Public Protection which included the responsibility for the regulatory services. Customer and

Digital is a diverse directorate which consisted of the majority of front-line services. Performance had been successful, and the directorate continued to meet aspirations. With regards to the financial position, the budget for the Directorate underspent by £60,000 which had created a 0.9% variance against the original cash budget.

Enforcement

Asim Khan advised that over the last year the new Enforcement Team had been established and the enforcement services were consolidated to deliver services in an effective way. Additional powers such as Section 215 notices have been exercised, and a continued focus and response to community concerns to address fly tipping and dog fouling is being made.

ICT

Work to support the delivery of the council's ICT and Digital strategies had continued, including the roll out of worksmart principles to many teams in the council and the delivery of Office 365. In order to support this work, additional ICT staffing had been appointed to, to ensure that the team could support this work effectively. A notable successful project has been the introduction of public town centre Wi-Fi which was completed on time.

Council Tax

At 98.14%, the percentage of council tax collected was slightly behind target at quarter four in comparison to 2017/18, although this was in line with the trend across other Lancashire authorities. Following queries, Asim Khan ensured Members that any arrears were tracked and advised on the recovery cycle with regards to Council Tax and the debt policy in place for circumstances where payment couldn't be made.

Streetscene and Waste

With regards to Streetscene and waste, a new waste procurement exercise had been concluded with a focus during the fourth quarter to mobilise the contract in April 2019. New refuse collection vehicles had been ordered and supported with technology realising significant savings for the council.

Following Member queries, Asim Khan advised that the annual target for garden waste subscriptions was circa £710,000. There had been 22,370 subscriptions last year which indicated a shortfall against projected figures.

Promotion had taken place but further marketing had been scheduled later on in the year as greater focus had been made on the mobilisation of the new waste contract to mitigate the impact of this. However, in the fourth quarter a paper-based direct debit campaign had taken place to provide support to senior citizens unable to pay by card but could do so through the bank. This exercise had proved successful and was commended by Members who agreed that this be undertaken again next year.

There had been a one-month grace renewal period for garden waste bin collections to facilitate late subscriptions. There had also been a number of cases where residents had subscribed and received the new label but had not placed this on their bin. Under the new waste contract, the team will have devices which enabled them to identify whether a property had subscribed.

Cllr Gillian Sharples left the meeting at 7pm.

Following queries, Members were advised that the current software system 'My Work' would be replaced by new software, Alloy by Yotta, which would offer additional functionality and flexibility and improve productivity within the service. The first phase, which was expected to be completed by the end of September, would focus on litter bin emptying and street sweeping. The first year of this software deployment would provide baseline data for the future.

Councillor Adrian Lowe advised that the council had procured new street cleansing vehicles which would soon be operational. The service and maintenance of the vehicles was built into the new contract to improve breakdown performance.

Following discussion, Members agreed that there had been a drastic improvement with regards to grass cutting with 94% resident satisfaction.

Planning

Asim Khan advised that the Planning team had performed extremely well over the last year. There had been changes to staff with a new member of staff due to start soon. Councillor Alistair Morwood reiterated the planning team's efficient progress and advised that there had been a decrease in the number of major planning applications the council was receiving.

Customer Services

Members recognised that there had been an improvement with customer service call times. Cllr Adrian Lowe advised that the council would be changing phone suppliers which meant that the out of hours numbers would be unavailable overnight on Tuesday 16 July 2019, however there was an emergency contact number in place and information would be sent out about this. This work would provide the wider transformation of front-line services by supporting staff to have more phone functionality.

The Chair thanked Asim Khan and Councillors Adrian Lowe and Alistair Morwood for the attendance.

Decision – That the report be noted.

Asim Khan and Cllr Alistair Morwood left the meeting at 7.15pm

17.OSP.20 Chorley Council Performance Monitoring – Fourth Quarter 2018/19

The Performance Panel considered a monitoring report from the Director (Policy and Governance) which was represented at the Executive Cabinet on 14 June 2019.

Vicky Willett, Performance and Partnerships Manager advised that the report set out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the fourth quarter of 2018/19, 1 January to 31 March 2019.

Overall, performance of key projects was very good, with nine (75%) of the projects rated as green or scheduled to start in quarter one 2019/20. Three (25%) projects

were rated amber and the action plans for each of these were contained within the report.

Performance of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures were also very good with 75% of Corporate Strategy measures and 89% of key service delivery measures performing on or above target within the 5% threshold. Those indicators performing below target have action plans outlined with measures to improve performance.

On the priority of 'Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all' the three projects were rated as green, meaning they were progressing according to timescale and plan. The projects included; development of Astley Hall and Park as a visitor destination, supporting people from across the borough to be digitally included, and to develop a framework for building community resilience and delivery of identified projects.

The 'Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities' priority consisted of two projects rated as green and progressing according to plan. These were the development of a wholly owned company (formerly delivering the Housing Company) and to deliver improvements to the playing pitches in the borough. One project, the delivery of the Primrose Gardens retirement village was rated amber due to operational elements of the development being slightly behind schedule. Following queries, Members were advised that take up at Primrose Gardens was currently around 70%.

The 'Strong Local Economy' priority had two projects rated as green and one, delivery of the Market Walk extension was rated as amber. Two indicators were performing above target and four were performing below target and outside the 5% threshold. Following queries, Members were advised that although the percentage increase in visitor numbers was below target, 2018/19 had still seen an improvement on last year's performance. It was advised that the approach to tourism would be reviewed.

The priority for 'an ambitious Council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area' had one project rated as green, one as amber, and one not yet started. Both indicators were performing better than target. With regards to the performance of key service delivery measures, one indicator, the average working days per employee (FTE) per year lost through sickness absence, was performing below target.

Members held concerns regarding the levels of staff sickness absence, in particular with 611.08 days being lost to mental health and 45% leaving the organisation following a period of long-term sickness due to mental health. Members also recognised the pressure this put on existing staff and the potential for losing work.

Members were reassured that a comprehensive piece of work had been undertaken to support existing staff and there was a shared point of access for teams work to reduce risk of work being lost. Proactive steps had been taken to address mental health issues and mental health first aiders would be established. Members welcomed this work and suggested that this be looked into again and be discussed at the upcoming Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

Decision – That the report be noted.

Chair

Date