

## **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 July 2021, and the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 24 June 2021

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1 July 2021**

#### **Health Scrutiny**

2. We welcomed Councillor Alex Hilton via Microsoft Teams who introduced himself to the new members of the Committee, explained his background in the NHS and summarised the content of the Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny.
3. There are significant changes occurring in the NHS, the Our Health, Our Care has been discontinued in favour of Integrated Care Systems.
4. After a presentation from Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria Partnership the process starts in October and will finish in April 2022. Chorley is part of the Central Lancashire sub region.
5. The desire is to slow and reverse the competitive nature between NHS Foundation Trusts and the private sector and to encourage collaboration. The third sector, voluntary and community groups will play a partner role.
6. The Health Scrutiny Committee will use National NHS waiting list figures as part of the programme to measure improvements.
7. The Director of Adult Services at Lancashire County Council gave a presentation exploring collaboration with neighboring hospitals to form alliances, similar to Manchester.
8. The full extent of Covid-19 on social care is still unknown. Work is outlined to focus on inequalities for those with learning difficulties. There is the concern that the needs of high intensity users are not being met.
9. We asked if the move to Integrated Care Systems will lead to regionalisation of services at the expense of accountability. Councillor Hilton is uncertain but would ensure that the views of Chorley are well represented.
10. Councillor Hilton added that Covid-19 is a predominant feature of the health landscape, the aim is to get as many vaccinated as possible, but there is concerns about the backlog of routine care as a result of the focus on Covid-19.
11. We noted the update.

#### **Chorley Council's Response to Covid-19**

12. We welcomed Chris Sinnott, Deputy Chief Executive to give a presentation highlighting the efforts of the Council during the Covid-19 Pandemic.
13. Programmes were developed and rolled out to ensure those shielding was given the support needed. Chorley Council Staff accepted additional responsibilities to support residents.
14. A significant amount of planning, effort and focused work went to the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF), a partnership made up of organisations that work together to prepare and respond to emergencies in Lancashire. The LRF involves the emergency services; local authorities; health agencies; Environment Agency; Voluntary groups; transport providers; utility providers and local businesses.
15. The initial response was focused on keeping staff safe and services running effectively. Council buildings are Covid-19 secure and staff given the confidence and equipment to work from home.
16. Democratic Services ensured that Members were kept up to date so the work of the Council could continue safely.

17. Over 3000 households were supported by council volunteers and members of the community. 4700 calls were made to those on the shielding list, and 1100 food parcels were delivered to the community. Many residents reported a positive change in how they view the council.
18. Business in the Borough have been significantly impacted. Over £40m has been processed in grants. 4000 businesses have been supported directly, 70 businesses attended webinars and 40 booked appointments with advisors to receive help and support.
19. A new team established has been one of the first to take on the Zero Covid-19 Programme. The team took over the role of Track and Trace with a success rate of 95% placing them greater than the national average. The team assisted the local primary care network with the roll out of the lateral flow testing and is now working with the vaccination bus.
20. The Council face challenges with the fourth quarter performance off track. There is an increase of 16-17-year old's not in employment, education, or training (NEET). Work is required to support the recovery of the local economy and there is a rise in the reports of young people suffering with their mental health.
21. From 19 July, Council staff will begin a phased return to work. A workplace strategy explores staff adapting to post Covid-19 work patterns in a shared service dynamic. An emphasis is placed on ensuring that staff receive the right amount of support, while maintaining flexibility and balance within the organisation.
22. We asked about any conflict between keeping staff safe and ensuring that residents have issues within their homes resolved. Significant effort made to adapt work, but if there are any issues to be attended it can be raised with relevant directors.
23. Members with knowledge and experience of the LRF praised the positives for Lancashire and we are optimistic that there would be further cooperation between organisations. Chris Sinnott added that at the executive level of the Council, there is desire for further cooperation.
24. We acknowledged and praised that members of all backgrounds in Chorley came together to help each other throughout the pandemic.
25. Chorley is doing well for figures of vaccination in comparison to the rest of Lancashire, but the more deprived areas of the Borough are falling behind. Work is ongoing with the NHS to encourage vaccination uptake.
26. The Council wants to maximise the amount of money provided to local businesses and the local economy, but each grant is restricted to strict criteria that needs to be reported back to central government and undertake post grant assurance to ensure that the correct grants were processed to the right recipient.
27. We noted the report.

### **Scrutiny Reporting Back: Chorley Council's Annual Report on Overview and Scrutiny in 2020/21**

28. We acknowledged the work of the previous year, thanked Officers for their assistance and we noted the report.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme**

29. We discussed and noted the Work Programme.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel – 24 June 2021.**

### **Performance Focus – Customer and Digital**

30. We welcomed Asim Khan, Director (Customer and Digital) Shared Services and Councillor Adrian Lowe, Executive Member (Customer and Streetscene Services).

31. The Customer and Digital Directorate includes Customer Services, Neighborhoods, Streetscene, and ICT.
32. The budget for the Directorate is £6,051,880 with a variance of 4.7% equaling £285,703. The biggest attribute to this is vacant posts.
33. The Council rates performance with a green star to indicate that 'performance is better than target', a blue circle is 'worse than target by within threshold (5%)', and a red triangle is 'worse than target, outside threshold (5%)'.
34. Online requests the Council received increased significantly with fewer dissatisfied users compared to Quarter 4, 2019/20.
35. In the last 12 months, the Council suspended recovery action for Council Tax, instead opting to send reminder notices. Collection of Council tax is down 0.9% (£639,999). This figure showed underperformance compared to Quarter 4 2019/20. Recovery of non-payment to recommence at the start of July 2021.
36. The time to process housing benefits and change of circumstance has reduced.
37. There is a significant increase in missed residential waste and recycling collections, the Council recorded 43 missed collections per 100,000.
38. We understood that due to lockdown, cardboard waste is higher, and we asked if collections would increase. The collections are to remain monthly, but the size of the receptacle increased to 240L. Residents can request an additional bin if required or leave cardboard next to the bin.
39. The Council outperformed targets for collection of public litter bins, high street cleaning routes completed, and ground maintenance service requests completed on time. Ad hoc services failed to outperform the previous year, but the result is greatly above the target of 80%.
40. All ICT strategy projects are green.
41. In relation to 2020/21 corporate projects, the website was delivered but the development and rollout was affected by Covid-19.
42. We asked if the Council wanted the primary point of contact to be the website and if there is an expected target for face to face interaction. Asim Khan believes that the demand for online services will continue to grow due to ease of use and convenience.
43. We believe that the target of 80% for Streetscene is too low and suggest it be raised to 90%. This suggestion is acknowledged but it is said that the weather can affect the work of Streetscene.
44. Asim explained the situation around a potential data breach that occurred and the actions taken by the Council of which the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) ruled that there was no breach as sensitive information could not be accessed through manipulation.
45. Councillor Lowe is open to suggestions for other parks in the Borough to be considered for Green Flag status.
46. The mini meadow and wildlife policy are agreed to be contentious, but the project is successful in delivering a variance in bloom and contributing to the green agenda.
47. We noted the report.

#### **Quarter Four Performance Report 2020/21**

48. We welcomed Howard Anthony, Performance and Partnership Team Leader. The Quarter Four report covered January to March 2021.
49. Considering the challenging circumstance, performance is very good. 84% of projects are on target and rated green. 8% have not started and 8% are amber. 50% of indicators are on track or above target. 50% of the corporate strategy measures are on target.
50. The renovations of Astley Hall are currently amber due to issues found during renovations but when resolved the project will be back on track, and work will be completed before the G7 Speakers arrive, and there is no indication that the project is at risk of going over budget.

51. The percentage of the population with an NVQ level 3 or higher exceeds the target.
52. Progress is being made with the Westway Sports Campus' installation of grass and artificial pitches. Work on King George V's playing field commenced with improvements including a changing facility, kiosk space and a foyer.
53. Other projects include the extra care scheme and community facilities at Tatton Gardens. Progress is good and ahead of schedule and will provide high quality, affordable and suitable housing, a GP surgery, pharmacy, café and community centre.
54. The number of empty properties increased and the number of affordable homes in the borough underperformed.
55. We raised that only 47 affordable homes were delivered and noted that Tatton Gardens would not make up the number and enquired what is being done to increase the number of affordable homes. The reason for the number is due to the market, the slowdown of house building and supply constraints. The Local Plan is being developed and will highlight land supply and explore long term sites to be put forward for development.
56. Good progress is being made with Alker Lane, the town centre market, and Bengal Street with all three projects reported Green. It is too early to fully understand how the future of working dynamics will impact the need for business premises.
57. The Council will monitor the level of 16-17-year old's not in education, employment or training and assess if further action is needed. Employment rate is below target and is decreasing in line with the average. Work is underway with the Quick Start Scheme and the Business Engagement Team assisting with government grants.
58. To fill the local skill gaps in the region, education establishments are working with the Local Enterprise Partnership across Chorley and South Ribble to provide future employees with the skills needed.
59. Median workplace earnings are below the average for the region. Efforts to improve growth in the local economy include Alker Lane and Strawberry Fields.
60. We are concerned that Chorley is on the wrong side of the average rate and suggest it could be an area to be scrutinised.
61. The Council progressed with the green agenda and appointed a Climate Change Co-Ordinator with the capacity to deliver and enact the programme.
62. Performance of Key Service Delivery Measures has two below target, one below but within threshold, and five performed greater than target. The number of businesses closed due to the pandemic increased the Town Centre vacancy rate. The Council failed its target of household waste collection.
63. We noted the report.

### **Recommendation**

64. To note the report.

Councillor John Walker

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

MP