

Minutes of **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting date **Thursday, 5 October 2023**

Committee Members present: Councillor Aidy Riggott (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Kim Snape, Dedrah Moss, Arjun Singh, Ryan Towers, Christine Heydon, Samantha Martin, Joan Williamson and Debra Platt

Committee Members present virtually (non-voting): Councillors Michelle Le Marinel and Pauline McGovern

Guests present: Councillors Terry Howarth, Executive Member (Homes and Housing) and Beverley Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention)

Officers: Jennifer Mullin (Director of Communities and Leisure), Adam Nickson (Head of Property and Development Projects) and Clare Gornall (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillor Michelle Brown

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

10 **Declarations of Any Interests**

No interests were declared.

11 **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 1 August 2023 of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Arising from Minute 9, Councillor Sarah Ainsworth provided an update on the Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Empty Properties:

Following the helpful discussion and feedback at the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the review of Empty Properties, the Task Group met again last Thursday. The Task Group carefully considered the feedback and decided to remove the table on page 9 of the report breaking the number of empty properties down by parish. It was felt that the table did not add anything additional to the report and that more detailed information broken down by ward would be provided as part of

implementing recommendation 5 in the report (information to be provided to Neighbourhood Area Meetings).

The report will now be considered at Executive Cabinet in the usual way.

Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 August 2023 be approved as a correct record.
2. That the update on the on the Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Empty Properties be noted.

12 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

13 Executive Cabinet Minutes

Resolved:

That the Executive Cabinet minutes be noted.

14 Notice of Executive Decisions

Resolved:

That the Notice of Executive Decisions be noted.

15 Health Scrutiny Update

Councillor Margaret France submitted her apologies as she was unable to attend the meeting. She provided a written update to the Committee as follows:

Report of LCC Health Scrutiny Meeting of Wednesday, 13th September

This meeting was largely taken up with Mental Health issues.

Firstly - an update on the NHS Community Mental Health Transformation Programme.

- 4 Community Mental Health Teams or hubs mirroring the 'Place' model in preparation for a go live date of 16/10/23
- Introducing Mental Health Practitioners into Primary Care
- Lancashire MIND working with VCFS agencies to map out provision of services
- Easy access to specialist mental health services - no 'wrong door' approach
- Multidisciplinary assessments - the right help at the right time

Secondly - Happier Minds Update, the work of LCC Public Health team around alcohol, drugs, self-harm and suicide across Lancashire.

- 5 key strands of work are
Emotional Health and Well-being

Loneliness and Social Isolation
Dementia
Alcohol and Drug use
Self-harm and suicide

There is work taking place to provide materials for schools to support the PHSE curriculum, and collaborative working towards prevention of harm.

Central Lancashire is piloting a drug-related death panel (has the highest rate in Lancashire) with the first meeting to take place in September.

Happier Minds programme performance review

The aims are to reduce self-harm, reduce the number of suicides, increase numbers into treatment for substance misuse, and reduce drug related deaths.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

16 Cost of Living Action Plan - Update

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention) presented a report of the Director of Communities updating members on the Cost of Living Action Plan. Councillor Murray conveyed her thanks to the Communities team and the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector network.

There were still some gaps, however. She highlighted page 45 of the report, which outlined a proposal to address furniture poverty by creating a new and recycled white goods and furniture scheme.

The Director of Communities, Jennifer Mullin, indicated that people could access information about support available such as food clubs via the Council website / social media, via telephone, leaflets, partner/ voluntary organisations, and postcards delivered to households. She agreed to provide members with data about recipients of the Household Support Fund.

One member highlighted the difficulty of getting support to groups such as pensioners, some of whom just miss qualifying for pension credit but were still on very modest incomes. Councillor Murray agreed vulnerable pensioners were one of the hard to reach groups; in such cases the Council works with partner organisations to identify people who use food banks and will hopefully reach people not accessing information digitally by distributing postcards. It was suggested that these postcards be distributed in community venues such as GP surgeries and libraries. It was also suggested that as winter approaches information about the location of warm hubs be included.

The Chair thanked Councillor Murray for her attendance.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted;

2. That the Director of Communities provide members with data about recipients of the Household Support Fund.
3. That the Director of Communities pursue the distribution of postcards to community venues such as GP surgeries and libraries and arrange the inclusion of information about the location of warm hubs.

17 First Monitoring Report - Select Move Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Oct 2023

Councillor Terry Howarth, Executive Member (Homes and Housing) presented a report of the Director of Communities providing the first update of the work undertaken to deliver the 18 recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group for Select Move.

One member referred to page 62, recommendation 15 of the report regarding the demographics of people moving into the area through the 25% allowance not through Select Move and asked if the information had been requested from the Housing Associations again. The Director of Communities confirmed that the information had been requested again quite recently and that officers would continue to chase this up.

One member informed the Committee that they had met with the housing team last week and found it useful to have information about the properties available to bid on such as the waiting times. The Director Communities indicated that this was available via the Select Move system. It was suggested that a note be provided to new members on the Select Move system.

The Chair thanked Councillor Howarth for his attendance.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the Director of Communities provide a note to new members on the Select Move system.

18 Wheelchair Accessibility

Adam Nickson, Head of Property and Development presented a report of the Deputy Chief Executive updating members regarding wheelchair accessibility across Council buildings and externally in Chorley.

The work which had recently been carried out at the back of the town hall to provide access to meetings for wheelchair users was commended.

However, one member highlighted a couple of issues as regards wheelchair accessibility at the front of the town hall as follows:

- The time delay is not sufficient and the door is too heavy to pull open

- The main door and the disabled door to the toilets are both too heavy making it difficult to use.

Adam Nickson said that would follow this up and feedback to members.

One member raised the issue of cars parking in disabled spaces and on the pavement. Adam Nickson indicated there was ongoing dialogue with Lancashire County Council about the matter and to let him know of any specific issues. The Chair stressed that parking on the pavement was a police matter and should be reported to them.

One member raised issues regarding disability awareness in the plans for Primrose Gardens. Adam Nickson said that he was happy to discuss this further.

One member raised the issues regarding lack of disabled access at restaurants in Chorley, i.e. who had benefited from Council grants. Adam Nickson indicated that he would feedback to relevant colleagues in the Council.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That Adam Nickson, Head of Property and Development would follow up the issues raised above.

19 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24 was presented for information.

The Chair gave updates to the Committee as follows:

As regards the Water Safety training session requested by members, the organiser Beckie Ramsay has been contacted, and she will be available to come to the Committee on 14 March next year.

As regards the Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Support Task Group, there is a course being run by Lancashire Mind in October/November, which members may wish to attend as a foundation prior to the Task Group next year. Officers will be able to make contact with representatives from Lancashire Mind with a view to inviting them to the Task Group.

One member informed the Committee that the dates in November were now fully booked and there were only a few places available on 25 October.

The Chair suggested that it may be possible to arrange extra dates if there was additional demand for places.

Resolved:

- 1 That the report be noted;

2. That officers investigate if Lancashire Mind can offer additional dates / places for members who would like to attend the course.

20 Reports from the Task and Finish Groups

Councillor Ryan Towers gave an update to the Committee regarding the Recruitment and Staff Retention Task Group.

He informed members that the Task Group had considered a range of policies and detailed information in areas such as apprenticeships, staff surveys and exit interviews. He highlighted that the Task Group had requested further investigation into the Council obtaining the Living Wage Accreditation. He explained that at present although the Council paid the Living Wage to all its directly employed staff, its sub-contractors were not all meeting that criteria. The Task Group had requested that options be explored to address this e.g. via the procurement route.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

21 Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair

There was no urgent business.

Chair

Date