

Scrutiny Reporting Back

Chorley Council's Annual Report on
Overview and Scrutiny

2023/24



1. Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.....	3-4
2. Introduction by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.....	4
3. Challenging Performance.....	5
Customer and Digital.....	5
Policy and Governance	6
Communities and Leisure.....	7
Planning and Development.....	7
Quarterly Performance Monitoring.....	8-11
4. Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups.....	11-12
5. Budget Scrutiny.....	12-13
6. Topics presented to Committee.....	13-18
7. Monitoring Reports.....	19
8. Conclusion.....	20

1. Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Debra Platt

Current Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2024/25

(previous Chair Councillor Aidy Riggott 2023/24)



Councillor Roy Lees

Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023/24 and 2024/25

Committee Membership 2023/24

Aidy Riggott (in the Chair until May 2024)

Roy Lees (Vice chair)

Sarah Ainsworth

Michelle Brown

Michelle Beach

Christine Heydon

Dedrah Moss

Samantha Martin

Pauline McGovern

Arjun Singh

Kim Snape

Ryan Towers

Joan Williamson

2. Introduction by the Chair and Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had a busy year undertaking a varied and extensive work programme.

There was sad news at the start of the municipal year when Councillor Keith Iddon, who was initially appointed Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, died in June 2023. Councillor Aidy Riggott was subsequently appointed Chair by Council in July 2023.

Councillor Roy Lees was appointed Vice Chair.

There were also several new members welcomed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel, which consisted of six members and met five times monitored the business planning and performance of the council along with a focus on each of the Directorates in turn.

Over the year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee observed the completion of the Recruitment and Staff Retention Overview and Scrutiny Task Group.

Following the approval at Executive Cabinet, the committee continued to receive monitoring reports which included information about implementation and success of previous scrutiny reviews, these were:

- Select Move
- Community Safety Partnership / Crime and Disorder.

3. Challenging Performance

The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel scrutinised the performance of the council with all monitoring information considered. Scrutinising performance is essential to ensure key details are examined, questioned and that consistency prevailed.

The panel for the 2023/24 Panel consisted of:

- Councillor Aidy Riggott (Chair)
- Councillor Roy Lees (Vice Chair)
- Councillor Sarah Ainsworth
- Councillor Michelle Brown
- Councillor Arjun Singh
- Councillor Kim Snape

Customer and Digital

Adrian Lowe, Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment) presented the report with Asim Khan, Director (Customer and Digital) and Chris Walmsley, Head of Streetscene and Waste.

The Performance Panel noted and discussed the following key performance indicators:

-11 of the directorate's performance indicators were on or above target. Of the 39 business plan projects, 25 were rated green or completed, and 14 were rated amber. Both Corporate Strategy Projects were rated green.

-Financially there was an underspend of £35,000.

-Two Corporate Strategy indicators were above target, the 'percentage of household waste sent for refuse, recycling, or composting' was worse than Quarter 3, but within the 5% threshold.

-The figure for 'average days to process a new council tax support and housing benefit claim' was worse than Q4 2021/22 due to the number of complex cases received in the year. There were also delays caused by matters outside the control of the council.

-The figure for 'percentage of ground maintenance service requests completed on time' was incorrect within the report and was actually above target at 87.8%.

-The new Corporate Strategy Project for the year was to deliver improvements to the public transport networks. The council had possession of 83 bus shelters and there is a 5-year improvement plan for them all. The first year will see 19 bus shelters replaced.

-18 vacancies had been filled but there remained outstanding vacancies. There were 4 vacant apprenticeships and 3 other vacant posts.

-In relation to the figure of dissatisfaction, there was not a correlation between the increase in online service and dissatisfaction. The online service was designed for convenience, although it was noted that the service could contribute to the delays some faced.

There were ongoing operational issues with the contractor. Recycling had stagnated which impacted the figure for '% of waste recycled'. For additional increase of this figure, there required behavioural changes from residents and certainty from government. There is a delay from central government to conclude waste and recycling initiatives now expected in 2025, in the meantime, and in the absence of the government position, the council was currently in the process of drafting its own waste and recycling strategy.

Policy and Governance

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform and Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented a report providing a performance update for the Policy and Governance Directorate. This included:

- An overall directorate summary and budget position,
- An overview of performance at quarter two 2023/2024
- An update on the Corporate Strategy projects.

Chris Moister, Director of Governance and Louise Mattinson, Director of Finance were also in attendance.

A number of questions / queries were raised by the Panel, and the responses were as follows:

Overall employment rate – members queried the figure as it differed significantly from the rest of the region average. Councillor Bradley agreed that the figure needed to be investigated further, and if accurate to identify the reasons.

Corporate projects – Improve our Council buildings – Councillor Bradley explained the delays were related to the decarbonisation scheme and the need to meet government criteria which was very strict.

Internal audit reviews – Chris Moister explained that all management actions had been agreed with the service. It may be that work in some areas was complete, however, if they had yet to be ticked off in the system (.i.e at the deadline of end of the month or the quarter), the action would still be shown as outstanding in the report. He stressed that overall, things were moving in the right direction.

Astley Hall Bookings – Councillor Wilson agreed to provide a breakdown of footfall figures split into local residents and visitors.

Digital connectivity in rural areas - Rural England Prosperity Fund grants – Cllr Bradley indicated that the take up had been very good. He would be receiving a full report in due course and an update would subsequently be provided to the Panel.

Council business networking / events – Councillor Bradley indicated we are now taking a different approach – it is working well but there is more we can do.

Response times for complaints to the Chief Executive and MP - identify what is the issue / reason for delay and review the appropriateness of the target if necessary.

Communities and Leisure

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention), presented a report providing members with a performance update for the Communities and Leisure Directorate which included:

An overall directorate summary and budget position at September 2023,
An overview of key performance measures at quarter two 2023/24, and
An update on the Corporate Strategy projects.

The report also indicated that the Leisure Company transferred over to the Communities Directorate in September 2023, therefore, this is the first time that a report on the Company has come to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel. It was clarified that the Board met on a regular basis (formally four times a year) and held informal meetings / briefings inbetween to discuss any issues.

Jennifer Mullin, Director of Communities stressed that demand in the area was being looked at with a view to targeting resources to increase leisure centre membership.

Councillor Murray indicated that Cosy Homes Lancashire Scheme was benefiting local residents.

A question was asked regarding promotion of the Home Energy Support Scheme and availability of information for members. Cllr Murray indicated that the postholder running the scheme had only recently been appointed, however she would circulate information to members.

A question was asked regarding the Anti Social Behaviour action plan. The Director of Communities explained that Chorley INSPIRE were assisting the Council with their outreach work, which would be the subject of a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 January 2024.

Planning and Development

The Executive Member for Planning, Councillor Alistair Morwood, and the Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Sector Reform, Councillor Alistair Bradley, presented a report providing a performance update for the Planning and Property Update which included:

- An overall directorate summary and budget position
- An overview of key performance measures at quarter three 2023/24
- An update on the Corporate Strategy projects.

The Directorate was noted to be unusual due to covering several Executive Portfolios.

Councillor Morwood referred to the Local Plan which had been moved from red to amber status since the Business Plan Update had been considered. Councillor Morwood explained that the Local Plan had previously been in red due to the delays in progress i.e. needing to be considered at the Local Plan Working Group and then Council. Now that the matter is moving forward it has been moved up to amber.

Councillor Bradley addressed the performance indicators in respect of property services. It was noted that there was an 80% overspend. He indicated that the council was still catching up on repairs and maintenance on properties dating back to COVID. He also stressed that some slippage was related to underspend rather than overspend.

Councillor Bradley informed the Committee that he did not expect the significant overspend to be recurrent in future years as it was largely due to factors such as outstanding property repairs and utility costs (which are expected to be lower in subsequent years).

As regards bad debt provision, he explained that some businesses had built up bad debts during COVID and were still trying to get back on track. The Council's approach was to take long term view to encourage businesses to stay in the town centre. The council has a good record of dealing with debt recovery for both residents and businesses.

It was also noted that Levelling Up Funding and projects considered at the Development and Assets Working Group would be subject to scrutiny in future. The Panel resolved that Levelling Up Funding and projects considered at the Development and Assets Working Group to be included in the future Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Quarterly Performance Monitoring

Quarter Four Performance Report

The Panel considered the quarter four performance report from January – March 2023.

Key achievements included Tatton Gardens with the connected GP surgery and café. Following the completion of the scheme, the council continued to commit to the corporate strategy and develop further options for high quality, affordable and green housing.

The amber rated key project was the delivery of the local plan. Reasons explained included vacancies within the team which impacted the capacity to deliver the project. Recruitment was underway and some of the posts had been successfully recruited. It was also noted that the project contained complexity due to working with two other authorities. It was questioned by the Panel if the project should be rated red, however, for a project to be rated red, the project would be stopped, off track with no plan to move forward. Actions were currently in place to bring the project back on track, it was noted that more leeway was provided due to partnership working with two other authorities.

Of the key service measures, four were better than target, one was worse than target but within threshold, 'percentage of business rates (NNDR) collected' and one was worse than target and outside of threshold, 'town centre vacancy rate'. The reason was due to the pandemic. Actions were in place to encourage vibrance in the town centre. The figure for the list of units within the town centre and those earmarked as available would be reported back.

It was agreed that future quarterly performance monitoring reports would be presented by the Executive Member.

Business Plan Update 2023/24

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform and Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented a report providing an update on the delivery of service level projects outlined in the business plans.

Councillor Bradley highlighted that of the total 81 projects:

54 were rated as **Green (67%)**
10 were considered **Completed (12%)**
16 were rated as **Amber (20%)**
1 was rated as **Red (1%)**

Councillor Bradley explained that the project rated red was in relation to the finance system project, which had been delayed for the reasons explained in paragraph 14, i.e. to ensure a stable environment before proceeding with the purchase of a new system.

The Panel members raised queries on the following topics in the report:

2023 Events Programme .
Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy
Finance systems project delay
Long term empty property checks
Special Expenses

UKSPF programme
Exploration of joint district health scrutiny.

Quarter Two Performance Monitoring Report

The Executive Member (Resources), Councillor Peter Wilson, presented a report setting out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the second quarter on 2023/24, covering 1 July 2023 – 30 September 2023.

Councillor Wilson referred to the performance indicator showing a lower than expected rate of employment for Chorley (64%) compared to the regional average. He stressed that the reasons were being investigated although he was not convinced the figure was an accurate given that it did not accord with other indicators (e.g. which showed Chorley had a lower than average unemployment rate). It would next be reported in the Executive Cabinet's quarter 3 monitoring report in March. The

Chair requested that if there was an issue of note or concern, to bring it to the attention of the Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention), who was also in attendance, responded to queries relating to leisure centres following the appointment of the new activities manager in post.

Further to a query regarding the NEET (Not in education, employment or training) figure, the Panel were informed that the data had now been obtained from Lancashire County Council. The figure for Chorley was 1.7% which was within target.

The Chair highlighted the delays in the adoption of the Local Plan and the resulting performance indicator going from amber to red. He suggested that, once the Local Plan had gained traction and was closer to adoption, the Panel may wish to scrutinise the background as to how the Council arrived in this position.

Quarter Three Performance Monitoring Report

The Executive Member for Resources, Councillor Peter Wilson, and Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Sector Reform, presented a report setting out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the third quarter of 2023/24, covering 1 October 2023 – 31 December 2023.

Councillor Wilson indicated that the Council was in a good position and delivering on its Corporate Strategy.

He referred to the need to make leisure centres more sustainable and the lower than national average Employment Rate, which was initially queried on 11 January 2024 (Minute 12). He confirmed that the figure was correct and therefore needs to be addressed.

A query was made about the Household Support Fund. Jennifer Mullin, the Director of Communities and Leisure explained that Central Government were only going to provide funding for a further six months beyond 31 March 2024.

As regards the performance indicator for percentage of 16-17 year old NEETs (Not in education, employment or training), it was highlighted that there were several reasons for this post COVID trend, including increased mental health issues, however steps were being taken to address it via place/space/care partnerships, Chorley and South Ribble Partnership, and early intervention work for 13-14 year olds.

The Chair expressed concern about the Local Plan and timescale slippage but accepted that the position had now changed.

The Committee also discussed economic activity in Chorley, which was linked to NEETs. It was noted that apprenticeships were in decline, however Chorley was offering grants for apprenticeships.

The Panel agreed that the following areas be included in the 2024/25 Overview and Scrutiny work Programme:

- Local Plan
- NEETs and Economic activity – October / November 2024.

4. The Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups

Recruitment and Staff Retention – Chaired by Councillor Michelle Beach

The final report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Recruitment and Staff Retention was presented to the Committee in January 2023.

The aim was to identify any underlying issues relating to recruitment and staff retention, and if so, to address them ensuring the Council has an excellent workforce, providing quality services to residents and a reputation as a good employer.

The Task Group met on several occasions over the course of 4 months from September to December, gathering evidence from a range of witnesses and sources including Hollie Walmsley, Head of Human Resources (the lead officer for the study), UNISON branch secretary Lesley Miller, survey responses from the Council's Senior Management Team and an interview with the Executive Member for Resources.

The recommendations, which were accepted by the Executive Cabinet, were as follows:

1. That the Council's Senior Management Team be requested to investigate the feasibility of the Council working towards the Living Wage Accreditation, and if promising, present their proposals to Executive Cabinet

2. That the Council actively promotes health and wellbeing (including mental health) support available as part of its overall employee benefits package
3. That the Executive Member for Resources monitor recruitment and retention figures over the next 6 – 12 months especially in identified key risk areas
4. That a member learning session be arranged on an annual basis to update on workforce planning
5. To include performance reporting data on recruitment and staff retention on the new members portal from the new recruitment system

The report was presented at Executive Cabinet in March 2024 and the actions are in progress.

Suicide Bereavement and Prevention – Chaired by Councillor Samantha Martin

An informal meeting open to all members was held at the end of March 2024 to discuss ideas and information that might be relevant to the review.

The review topic formally commenced in May 2024 and is in progress. The Task Group have considered information provided at interview from the Council's Social Prescribing Service, LCC Public Health and Lancashire MIND. They are also planning to meet with Bereavement Support Groups and Lancashire Constabulary. The review is due for completion in September 2024.

5. Budget Scrutiny

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources) presented the report on the Draft Budget 2024/25 which had been considered and agreed at Executive Cabinet on 18 January 2024. Louise Mattinson, Director of Finance was also in attendance.

The report set out the draft budget position for the council for 2024/25 and the forecast for 2025/26, reflecting the information contained within the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement announced on 18th December 2023.

Councillor Wilson explained that the budget consultation process, which had now started, included the following proposals:

- A proposed 2.99% increase in council tax in 2024/25 with no proposed cuts to services;
- A forecast balanced budget for 2024/25, based on a 2.99% increase in council tax as noted above and the use of £0.365m of reserves;

A forecast budget shortfall for 2025/26 of £1.575m, to be addressed through the development and delivery of the council's savings programme

Proposals for the labour administration to invest in the priority areas identified in the report.

Councillor Wilson highlighted the investments which generate net income for the Council, such as the Market Walk Shopping Centre, Primrose Gardens, Strawberry Meadows and Tatton Gardens.

It was noted in the report that the figures in the report may be subject to change, pending receipt of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement announcement which is due from Government in early February 2024. The Council has only received a one year settlement. In the absence of any figures or framework from Government, it is almost impossible to prepare a credible financial strategy beyond 31 March 2025 with any degree of confidence in the underlying assumptions. It was therefore difficult to develop the Medium Term Strategy in this context. There were also financial risks and uncertainties which would have an impact on the Council's budget such as staffing costs following an agreed pay award.

Councillor Wilson responded to two issues raised by the Chair, in relation to energy costs and impact on projects for the area. Councillor Wilson indicated that hopefully energy costs would reduce, however they were unlikely to return to rates of 12 months ago. In relation to projects, e.g. arising from the Levelling Up Funding, these are still on track and would not be adversely impacted.

Finally, Councillor Wilson indicated that due to the financial challenges being faced by the Council, the Executive Cabinet would be looking closely at all areas of the Council in the next twelve months and suggested that scrutiny would have a key role in that process.

6. Topics presented to the Committee

Cycling Update

Matt Evans, Air Quality and Climate Change Officer presented the report. The work grew from the Overview and Scrutiny Sustainable Public Transport Task Group. Following the unsuccessful formation of a cycling task group, it was agreed that the work would be picked up and continued by the Climate Change Working Group.

Social media was a key tool in communicating and directing people to information and promoting active travel in the borough.

Consultations took place for internal staff and the general public. The public responded constructively, and reported higher likelihood of visiting the town if there were improved cycling facilities and infrastructure.

Internally, it was resolved to understand the failure to improve cycling uptake following requested facilities and measures. It was indicated that the distance from the facilities at Bengal Street and the Town Hall was too great, and there was concern about damage to new ICT equipment.

The bike pods were to be moved from Bengal Street to Portland Street Car Park. The new location should benefit commuters, workers and visitors to the town centre.

There were aims to repurpose the Town Hall basement and provide separate shower and changing facilities for staff.

The council had continued to work with the County Council to ensure that Chorley was well represented within the Lancashire Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Partnership. The next draft had been delayed but expected to be published in August. A consultation was currently underway.

The process and progress would be reported to the Climate Change Working Group.

Work completed for the new Local Plan aimed to encourage developers to work with the active travel team to promote active travel. Work was to be completed with the Planning department to ensure that an emphasis was placed on walking, wheeling and cycling while considering planning applications.

It was raised by members that on the 'Check Out Chorley' website there was information lacking related to Charnock Richard, Eccleston and Heskin, despite being popular with cyclists. It was confirmed that additional work could be done, and a meeting could be arranged outside of the Committee to seek further details.

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.

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, a couple of issues were highlighted as follows:

Wheelchair accessibility at the front of the town hall

Disability awareness in the plans for Primrose Gardens

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.

Youth Diversionary and Outreach Services

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention) presented a report of the Director of Communities providing an overview of youth diversionary and outreach support services in the borough, including:

Tackling anti social behaviour – engagement of the Public Protection Team
INSPIRE Youth Zone Detached Outreach Programme
Children and Family Wellbeing Detached Service
Lancashire Violence Reduction Network
Preston North End

Councillor Murray responded to questions from the Committee. Arising from the discussions it was agreed that details about the INSPIRE outreach programme (i.e. forthcoming planned activities in which areas) be communicated to members (e.g. via in the Know).

It was also suggested that INSPIRE be invited to jointly participate with the Council in local democracy week to engage with young people outside a school setting.

Town Centre Action Plan Update

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform), presented a report providing an overview of the matters related to anti-social behaviour (ASB) in connection with Chorley Town Centre.

Arising from the discussion it was agreed in principle that a similar framework be applied to other urban hub areas in the borough, as anti social behaviour can be sporadic and move outside Chorley Town Centre. The Chair suggested that if there were patterns of anti social behaviour which related to the approval of planning applications (retail outlets, eating outlets etc) it may be possible to put something in place at the planning stage.

Water Safety – Doing it for Dylan Campaign

Beckie Ramsay from the “Doing it for Dylan” Water Safety Campaign gave a presentation about her campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of swimming in open water which had been inspired by the tragic death of her son, Dylan in 2011 who had decided to go swimming in a local quarry.

The presentation included a short dramatization showing two young characters, one of whom drowns after attempting to swim in open water. Beckie explained that this film was shown at schools at which she had given talks about water safety. It highlighted that anyone, even a strong swimmer, could get into difficulties in open water.

Her campaign had been mentioned at World Drowning Prevention Day in Australia and she has travelled all over the world to promote awareness of water safety including Kenya. She had won awards for her campaigning including from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

Beckie stressed that she was not against swimming in open water – she wanted to tackle lack of awareness of the dangers. Her approach would be “No lifeguard, no swimming”. The presentation demonstrated the importance of wearing protective clothing in open water as worn by rescue services.

Beckie informed the Committee that there had been no national public announcements from the Government on water safety since the 1970s. Open water often contained dangerous chemicals and she gave an example of one water source tested which had a PH of 11.6 (bleach is 12.2).

She indicated that since Dylan’s death thirteen years ago, annual drowning statistics have remained static i.e. 600 deaths a year, of which 400 were accidental. Beckie felt that there was a lot more which could be done to promote public awareness and improve water safety.

Some of Beckie’s proposed recommendations were:

- Improved warning signage at open water sites
- Councils engaging with landowners e.g. on adequate fencing and lighting
- Signage with suicide prevention information and locator apps for people at high risk
- Measures for water safety equipment nearby open water –
e.g. rope– to be a designated bright colour so easily identifiable if stolen (trials in Scotland);and
- to tackle theft and vandalism of equipment e.g. lifebuoys
- Locating high risk sites and raising public awareness
- Promoting awareness of water safety via schools, local media

Encouraging the public to sign up to the “What3Words” locator app
Installing Number Locator Boards every 50 metres along open water to help rescue services (this was trialled in Liverpool and rescue times were reduced from 23 to 9 minutes)
Greater accountability for landowners to ensure water safety measures are in place
To create a Lancashire wide approach so that Lancashire can lead on the issue.

Beckie also spoke about a voluntary organisation called “Beneath the Surface” which carried out private searches for missing persons once police resources had been exhausted. They use a piece of technology called “Aqua Eye” which was an underwater camera making it easier to locate people underwater.

Chief Inspector Chris Abbott, Lancashire Constabulary informed the Committee that he was already part of a water safety advisory board in West Lancs and that he would be willing to be involved in setting up a similar body here in Chorley. He acknowledged that funding in this area was an issue for both Lancashire police and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service however it was important to do as much as possible.

The Committee thanked Beckie for her excellent and informative presentation, particularly as it was a subject which had affected her personally. It was agreed that the Council should do everything it can to assist the campaign and take the proposed actions forward.

Crime and Disorder – Community Safety Partnership

The Director of Communities and Leisure, Jennifer Mullin presented a report providing an overview of the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). Chief Inspector Chris Abbott, Lancashire Constabulary and Laura Jean-Taylor, Head of Public Protection were also in attendance.

The report demonstrated the resilience of the CSP and its capability to provide a dynamic response.

The report included The Strategic Assessment 2022 and then further broken down into Local District Profiles, highlighting the key issues and risks across Lancashire.

Utilising the information contained with the strategic assessment, local knowledge and intelligence and the Lancashire Talking survey the CSP had drawn together a Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership Action Plan. The plan detailed the established key priorities and the commitment of the Responsible Authorities towards each priority. A partnership event was held on 21 July 2023, which was a great success with great attendance and engagement across the partnership and Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations.

The report gave details of a number of police activities. Chief Inspector Chris Abbott indicated that Operation Centurion for example, launched by the Police and Crime Commissioner in July 2023 targeting ASB hot spots areas, had successfully targeted locally based issues and that overall crime figures were lower across the board.

Updates from the Lancashire County Council's Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Over the course of the year, the Committee were periodically provided updates from the Lancashire County Council's Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee that was attended by Councillor Margaret France.

Lancashire and South Cumbria New Hospital Programme - Two new hospitals on two new sites, Royal Preston, and Royal Lancaster Hospital. Unfortunately, the start date had been pushed back to 2030 at the earliest.

Virtual Wards - 393 virtual beds across Lancashire, and were used to manage and monitor patients at home, and allowing additional space at hospitals.

Integrated Neighbourhood Teams - Results and outcomes were better when services were closer to the community, it was the goal for residents to be able to take control of their health and wellbeing. It was believed that there was a push to reduce hospital beds and there were concerns raised that a replication could be observed of the issues that developed with the closure of psychiatric hospitals in favour of care in the community.

It was confirmed that the Integrated Care Board was told by NHS England to reduce their budget by 30%, which was considered to be difficult given the demands on the costs and required building maintenance.

It was clarified that agency costs were significant due to the difficulty in filling the vacant roles. There was a knowledge gap, and more staff were leaving than were being replaced. It was however noted, that the Lancashire Teaching trust had doctors and nurses available on bank to take extra shifts and were prioritised over agency staff.

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.

Councillor France also gave updates on:

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

- NHS Lancashire Place Update and Future Arrangements

NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board – Recovery and Transformation

Concern was expressed by the Committee about NHS dentist provision in Lancashire.

Achievements on the work of the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board's priorities – Healthy Hearts, Happier Minds and Best Start in Life. It was noted that Chorley had a particular issue in terms of suicide risk.

7. Monitoring Reports

Select Move – First Monitoring Report - October 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 agreed that a note be provided to new members on the Select Move system.

Select Move - Second Monitoring Report – March 2024

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

The report also gave details of two Select Move Customer Surveys which were completed between 14th November to 13th December 2023. One survey was sent to applicants where Chorley Council was managing the application, and the second survey was sent to applicants whose applications were managed by any other partner.

Councillor Howarth explained that one of the key recommendations, simplifying the banding, had been addressed in the Select Move Policy Review. The new policy had now been signed off by all three Local Authorities, (Chorley, Preston and South Ribble). The policy implementation has been delayed due to lack of CIVICA (IT software provider) capacity, however CIVICA will now start work developing updates to the housing management system. They have committed to a new “go live” date in September 2024.

Councillor Howarth indicated that he was very pleased with the report and the progress made.

8. Conclusion and the Year Ahead

It had been an interesting year for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, scrutinising, reviewing, and exploring topics that were of interest and concern to Members and to the public.

The Committee is committed to working closely with Members, partners, Officers, and the Executive and will continue to challenge and hold the Executive to account while remaining a critical friend to ensure positive outcomes.

In the forthcoming municipal year, there will be four meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and four meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel.

Following the elections, the Committee's Membership has changed. Councillor Debra Platt is now the Chair and there are newly elected members on the Committee.

In August, the Committee will consider the upcoming work programme.