

Overview and Scrutiny – Report to Council

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 24 October 2024 and 5 December 2024 (16 January 2025 to follow); and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 October 2024. It also includes an update on Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups.
2. Please note that the report may not reflect the wording used in the minutes, as they have yet to be formally agreed. The You Tube stream and documents relating to the meeting can be found here: [Chorley Council - YouTube](#)

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel – 24 October 2024

Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring Report 2024-25

3. Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented a monitoring report setting out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy during the first quarter of 2024/25, covering 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024. The Executive Member for Planning and Development and the Executive Member for Homes and Housing were also in attendance.
4. The following areas were highlighted in the Panel's discussions and the actions agreed:

-Household Waste Recycling rates - to investigate and feedback on the reasons / factors behind under performing household waste figures;

-% customers dissatisfied with the service they received from the Council
- This led to a discussion on data presented in reports more generally. It was requested that future reports include comparative figures for the previous 5 years which may reveal an overall trend; and to include metrics / standard of measurement within the appendix to the report where possible, such as for amber/red performance indicators.

It was also agreed that links to the Local Authority Data Explorer website and the LG Inform website be circulated to members.

Improving housing standards across the borough – The Executive Member for Homes and Housing, Councillor Terry Howarth, informed the Panel that funding had been provided to create a database of all registered private landlords to facilitate this project.

- **% 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs)** – it was requested that a “mapping exercise” be carried out to identify “hotspots” within the borough, to assess if this revealed any common pattern based on demographics.

Business Plan Update 2024/25

5. The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report providing an update on the delivery of service level projects outlined in the Business Plans.

The report indicated that a review of 18 service business plans produced last year had been completed based on the information provided. The plans contain a total of 82 projects and of those:

- 61 are rated as **Green (74.4%)**
 - 5 are considered **Completed (6.1%)**
 - 9 are rated as **Amber (11%)**
 - 1 is rated as **Red (1.2%)**
 - 2 are **On Hold (2.4%)**
 - 4 have **Not Started (4.9%)**
6. There was one project rated as red (off target), the Automated Bookings System for Operational Assets. This project had been rated red due to time delays. It was part of a larger piece of work not limited to those sites considered to be an “operational asset” (e.g. Strawberry Fields and Community Centres) and included Civic buildings and Leisure sites. The report explained that expansion of this project, to include multiple sites, will provide economies of scale but this approach will require further decisions to be made. Once a decision has been agreed as to which solution to move forward with, the project will be back on delivery.

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel - 5 December 2024

Performance Focus: Policy and Governance and Quarter Two

7. The Executive Member for Resources presented a report updating members on performance in corporate services. This included the Directorates Change and Delivery, Finance and Governance.

The performance focus included:

- a. An overall summary and budget position of the services,
 - b. An overview of performance to quarter two 2024/25,
 - c. An update on the Corporate Strategy project delivery for these directorates.
8. A query was raised about the inherent risk associated with new financial system. Reference was made to paragraph 29 c – “already £48k overspend following

finalisation of 2022/23 external audit fees over and above the scale fee charge of £42k” and the following information was requested:

- the cost of additional testing on the new financial system;
 - If the external audit fees were likely to be the same level again or a one off;
 - Is the new financial system used by other councils? Has it been recommended?
9. With regard to the internal audit actions (only 60% completed, target 90%), Panel requested clarification as to whether any of the ones not completed were high risk, and details of the categorisation of risk.
10. The Panel also referred to the PAYE settlement agreement paid to HMRC (paragraph 27 d), requesting information as to the reasons.
11. The Panel highlighted marketing and events at Astley Hall. Information was requested on visitor figures, pricing structure of annual membership fees, and an update in due course of the overall strategy and management plan to ensure Astley Hall is used to its potential to generate revenue.

Quarter Two Performance Monitoring Report 2024/2

12. The Executive Member for Resources presented a report setting out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy during the second quarter of 2024/25, covering 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024.
13. The Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform and The Executive Member for Homes and Housing were also in attendance to assist the Panel.
14. The Panel raised the following points and Executive Members responded as follows:

% customers dissatisfied with the Council – do we attempt to go back to the respondents and get more details if possible. The Executive Member for Resources stressed that in future the Council will be reviewing questions and asking for additional details at the first point of contact.

Energy Support Scheme funded by UKSPF – The Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform indicated that details of a recent presentation by the Home Improvement Team would be circulated to members.

Improving housing standards – The Executive Member for Homes and Housing explained that the initial phase to assess properties in the private rented sector with an energy rating of E or below would be finalised at the end of quarter 3. Once properties were inspected, it was the responsibility of the

landlord to ensure their property was an acceptable standard. If necessary, an enforcement notice could be issued so the property cannot re-let until that time, however the council cannot force landlords to bring empty properties back into use.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 3 October 2024

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2024/25

15. Members considered the draft overview and scrutiny work programme for 2024/2025.

16. Councillors put themselves forward for the Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Groups:

- Community Cohesion and Support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (including associated housing issues); and
- Review of how overview and scrutiny operates.

17. The Committee approved the overview and scrutiny work programme, subject to the following amendments:

1. That the proposed spotlight report on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Update be deferred to the new municipal year;
2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider a spotlight report on the Civica Buildings and Asset Management System at its meeting on 30 January 2025;
3. That the Task and Finish Monitoring Reports be specifically mapped and itemised in the work programme to keep track of timelines for updates.

Corporate Strategy Refresh 2024-25

18. Caroline Wolfenden, Director of Change and Delivery, presented a report updating the Committee on the refresh of the Corporate Strategy 2024/2025.

19. She indicated that there would be a report submitted to Executive Cabinet to approve the Corporate Strategy 2024/25, which would then go out to consultation with residents as part of the Draft Budget consultation.

20. Members discussed the report in detail, giving rise to a number of queries, responses and actions as follows:

- **Residents Survey** – concern regarding figures showing no. residents not satisfied with areas such as “value for money” and “how the council runs things”
 - Caroline explained that officers have drawn up actions to take forward based on the survey responses; however to give some context, resident satisfaction was down nationally and comparatively Chorley’s performance was above other councils in the LGA polling results.
- Page 75 – Chorley specific figures – what is the source of these statistics? Caroline explained that some of them relate to projected figures used to calculate trends. She agreed to provide members with comparative data on previous projections.

Health Scrutiny Update

21. Councillor Margaret France, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships gave an update on the Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee held on 18 September 2024 which included a summary of discussions on the following topics:

- NHS Shaping Care Together Update;
- Speech and Language Assessment in Early Years Settings.

Reports from Task and Finish Groups

22. The Suicide Bereavement and Prevention Task Group held its last meeting on 30 October 2024, at which the draft final report and recommendations were agreed. This report is now due to be considered at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 January 2025 followed by Executive Cabinet.

23. The Review of how Overview and Scrutiny Operates Task Group held its first meeting on 11 December 2024 to agree the scope for this review. It will next meet to carry out interviews with relevant external partners such as the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

Councillor Debra Platt

Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel

January 2025