

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL

MEETING DATE Thursday, 22 September 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Matthew Lynch, June Molyneaux, Alistair Morwood and Mark Perks

OFFICERS: Asim Khan (Director (Customer and Digital)), Victoria Willett (Performance and Partnerships Manager), Kate Cronin (Policy Officer) and Cathryn Filbin (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Charlie Bromilow

16.OSP.21 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 16 June 2016 of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel

AGREED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel meeting held on 16 June 2016 be confirmed as a correct record subject to an addition to minute 16.OSP.19 Performance Focus: Community Development Working in Schools that paragraph has been amended as follows –

Working in Schools; and how the Council engaged with them. The Panel was informed that the Council worked closely with some schools, but not others. Schools were not required to buy in services from Chorley Council; they can choose which service provider they wanted to work with, even if that was a neighbouring authority. However, when it came to borough wide activities such as the Chorley Grand Prix, all schools within the borough were invited to take part.

Councillor Perks asked a number of questions relating to early intervention prevention, particularly those schools the council had little contact with.

16.OSP.22 Declarations of Any Interests

Councillor Matthew Lynch declared an interest during discussions relating to item 16.OSP.24 – Community Action Plans in his role as Chair of the Clayton Brook Action Plan.

16.OSP.23 Performance Focus - Customer and Digital Context

Members of the Panel received a report which provided contextual information in respect of the Customer and Digital directorate performance.

The Chair welcomed Asim Khan, Director of Customer and Digital to the meeting, who attended to answer questions in relation to the Customer and Digital directorate.

Following the organisational restructure in May 2016, the Customer and Digital Directorate encompassed the following services –

- Customer and Transactional Services
- Revenues and Benefits
- Planning and Development Control
- Waste and Streetscene
- ICT

The primary focus of the Directorate was on providing end to end customer services, dealt with at the first point of contact wherever possible and promoting the use of digital channels as a straightforward and efficient way of managing services.

As the contact centre was undergoing a period of change, the panel focused their performance questions towards council tax and benefits processing, planning, streetscene and waste services.

Council Tax and Benefits

The Panel noted that the performance indicator for Council Tax collected at the end of quarter two, was down by 0.05% on the previous year's figures which equated to less than £10,000 of the Chorley precept. However, it was expected at the end of quarter four the figures would be comparable with those for the same period in 2015/16.

In response to queries about conflicting information in regards to the performance figure for 'Average time taken to process new claims and change events' the Director of Customer and Digital explained that the performance target in 2015/16 was 10 days. However, for 2016/17 that performance target had been reduced to 6 days. The results therefore showed that although performance had improved when comparing the figures for the same period the previous year, the figure was still over the 6 day performance target. The Director of Customer and Digital explained that there was mitigating factors behind the delay, and the target was expected to be reached by the end of the quarter 4. It was acknowledged that the set target was challenging, but achievable.

In response to questions about the collection of council tax arrears the Director of Customer and Digital explained the statutory process for the collection of arrears and the court arrangements. The timescale between first bill and court appearance was between six to eight weeks. Payment arrangements could be set up during this time with each case being considered on its own merits. It was inevitable that some debt would not be recoverable for various reasons (insolvency and death etc). On these occasions the provision for writing off bad debt was reported as part of the Council's financial statement.

Streetscene

It was explained that the way performance figures were monitored in the past were not accurate, and that a different way of monitoring the performance indicator should be introduced.

The changes would include the introduction of new technology and a change in service culture. It was therefore expected that the new working arrangements would take between 12 to 18 months for accurate data to be recorded and further 12 months before monitoring performance could take place.

Other challenges for the services included –

- Fundamental review in terms of assets/depot
- Procurement review
- Succession planning
- Opportunity to improve health and safety

A report detailing the future and challenges that the service will face, including recommendation would be presented to members for consideration in the near future.

Waste

The indicator 'number of missed collections per 100,000 collections of household waste' had performed better than target at the end of quarter one and was on target as of August 2016.

Through debate, a number of issues were considered –

- missed bin collection
- bins not being returned
- assisted collections being missed
- bins not being collected from the back of houses
- waste being spilt on to the ground and left by the operatives

There was a general consensus that the quality of service was dependant on a number of factors including different crews and different customer expectations.

The Director of Customer and Digital advised that there was regular contact with the contractor, Veolia Waste Management, to monitor contractual standards in terms of service delivery. Debate then turned to the waste contract which was in year eight of a ten year agreement and future procurement to ensure continued high service standards.

Members of the Panel also debated recent changes to recycling and the introduction of permits at Lancashire County Council recycling centres including any impact this had on fly tipping. There was an agreement that the amount of waste allowed at the recycling centres needed to be more widely publicised.

The Director of Customer and Digital welcomed the Chair suggestion that the Overview and Scrutiny may wish to review the waste management contract prior to the start of the procurement process.

Planning

Accurate performance monitoring was also a key focus for the Planning team.

At the moment there was an element of manual assessment. However, there was no way of validating these results. Changes would be introduced which would allow more accurate reliable monitoring by using information from IT systems. It was expected that the first set of monitoring figures under this new arrangement would be available by the end of the next quarter.

Members of the Panel also discussed staffing arrangements and the payment of Community Infrastructure Levy.

On behalf of the Panel the Chair thanked the Director of Customer and Digital for his attendance and congratulated him on the steps that he had already implemented to improve the services discussed.

16.OSP.24 Performance Monitoring - First Quarter 2016/2017

Members of the Panel received a report from the Director of Policy and Governance which set out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the first quarter of 2016/17 (1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016).

Overall performance of 2015/16 key projects was good, with 88% of the projects on track or complete. Two projects (12%) were rated as off track –

- Progress the delivery of Friday Street Health Centre – rated red due to external factors
- Delivery of Community Action Plan – rated amber following a review of scope.

(Councillor Matthew Lynch declared an interest in the discussion of the delivery of Community Action Plans in his role as Chair of the Clayton Brook Community Action Plan.)

Actions to address the issues had been identified in both cases and were currently being implemented.

Performance of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measure was also good. 80% of the Corporate Strategy indicators and 86% of the key service measures were performing above target of within the 5% tolerance. Those indicators performing below target were –

- % of 16-18 year olds who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) – it was reported that Preston College had changed the way it reported its figures, and as a result releases their figures early. It was expected that this % would even out.
- % of customer dissatisfied with the services they had received from the Council

Action plans had been developed and the report outlined what actions were being taken to improve performance.

During debate, members of the panel discussed various aspects of the report which included

- Number of homelessness preventions and reliefs
- Number of young people taking part in ‘Get Up and Go’ activities
- Chorley Public Service Reform Partnership – particular highlights included the delivery of a number of key test beds to inform future integrated working.

Councillor Perks reported that he had an understanding of what Chorley Public Service Reform Partnership had achieved in Chorley inner east but this was due to his role on the Combined Fire Authority. Councillor Perks added that it was important that all members were made fully aware of the activities of what the Council, with its partners are achieving as part of this partnership.

AGREED – That the report be noted, and further information be circulated to members on the success of Chorley Public Service Reform Partnership and the details of the measures relating to prevention of homelessness.

Chair

Date