



**Minutes of** **Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel**

**Meeting date** **Thursday, 16 December 2021**

**Members present:** Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Julia Berry, James Nevett and Aidy Riggott

**Officers:** Chris Sinnott (Deputy Chief Executive), Howard Anthony (Performance & Partnerships Team Leader) and Jon-James Martin (Performance and Transformation Officer), and Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**Other Members:** Councillor Peter Wilson

#### **21.OSP.13 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 28 October 2021 of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel**

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

#### **21.OSP.14 Declarations of Any Interests**

No declarations were made.

#### **21.OSP.15 Performance Focus - Policy and Governance**

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member Resources highlighted that the overall performance of the directorate had been good, 11 projects were rated green, 1 amber, and 1 completed. It was acknowledged that Covid-19 impacted performance.

There was a slight overspend on the budget, with the largest being the Lancastrian event space. Covid-19 restrictions limited the potential for revenue, although as restrictions eased, the number of bookings increased.

There was a decrease in engagements with social media and views to the Chorley Live website, this was concluded to be the results of fewer events being held than usual. Members enquired if there were further figures that related to site visitors to 'Check Out Chorley', as it was the default page users were navigated to after connecting to the free wi-fi, and if there was information on the number of users that immediately navigated away from the page.

There was a decrease in supplier payments within 30 days, appropriate actions had been taken to rectify this figure.

The complaints to the Chief Executive responded to within 10 working days was lower than Q2, 2020/21 but still above target, it was clarified that the complaints were usually more complex and substantial. It was confirmed that there was no figure for complaints received by Councillors as they were dealt within services or by Directors.

Transformation and Partnership's performance had been good, although there were one or two targets off track.

Work at Astley Hall progressed positively, although further structural issues were discovered which would require additional work. Members praised the Astley Hall work and felt that the G7 demonstrated the fantastic achievement.

It was clarified that the information related to the figures of 16 and 17 year olds that were not in education, employment or training (NEET) came from the County Council and the Department for Education. There was no personalised, broken down data available. Members believed further investigation was required into the numbers at ward level, and greater understanding of what caused young people to become NEET. It was proposed that future work could be completed at Neighbourhood Area Meetings and Scrutiny.

Some Members felt that too much Member Training was offered as there had been 23 training sessions in three months, with varied levels of attendance. It was noted that the training offered came from suggestions and requests from Members themselves. Members praised the World Café Event that was held to allow Members and Directors to interact and felt that it was a positive session and would like the event to run again in the future.

## **21.OSP.16 Quarter Two Performance Monitoring Report**

The Committee welcomed Howard Anthony, Performance & Partnerships Team Leader to present the report.

67% of Corporate Strategy indicators were on target or within threshold. 33% were below or not on target, each with an action plan in place.

As reported at previous Performance Panel's, issues related to capacity and gaps in recruitment was ongoing, but updates would be provided as recruitment continued.

A highlighted off target indicator was the number of people that had completed the Basic Digital Skills training. Sessions had been postponed until early 2022. With the spread of Omicron variant of Covid – 19, consideration was given on how to develop the future of the training. Members raised that participants of the digital skills training required the training in person considering the subject matter.

Within the report, further updates were provided to the four Corporate Priorities and their associated projects, which included Tatton Gardens, affordable homes, Alker Lane and Strawberry Meadows. It was highlighted that the number of projected jobs created through the Council's support or intervention was below target due to the pandemic impacting the local economy and businesses. The efforts of the Council during this time transitioned from supporting business with advice and grants to grow,

to providing advice and grants to survive. The indicator reflected this rather than work readiness of the local population. The overall employment rate was provided by the Office of National Statistics and although below the target of 80%, was ahead of the steadily decreasing figures regionally and nationally. It was noted that the figures only contained those 'economically active', those in full time education, maternity leave, full time carer's, etc. were not counted.

Phase 2 of Shared Services progressed, the partnership between Chorley and South Ribble was moving forward and an action plan was delivered. The first Annual Partnership Summit was hosted in November 2021 and focused on Economic Reform. Part of the discussions of the summit included the issues that employers faced with large numbers of vacancies and difficulties with recruitment. There was increased competition from London and Internationally, particularly with increased familiarity and utilisation of remote working.

Town centre vacancies were off track, but work was progressed to resolve any issue to promote Chorley as a place to do business. However, the vacancy rate of 10% was considered to be a good performance for towns located in the North West. The Council had some control of rents, including Market Walk and extension, but a considerable number were held by private commercial landlords.

It was clarified to Members that the figure of 100% for planning applications included those completed within the time limit, or within the time extension. Major applications were often granted extensions to ensure that all the information had been gathered and was accurate. Members requested an update as to what percentage of planning applications were approved extensions.

Chair

Date