

Minutes of **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting date **Thursday, 17 March 2022**

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

Committee Members present virtually (non-voting): Councillors Hasina Khan, Samir Khan, June Molyneaux and Kim Snape

Other Members Councillor Adrian Lowe (Executive Member – Customer and Streetscene Services)

Officers: Asim Khan (Director - Customer and Digital), Zoe Whiteside (Service Lead - Spatial Planning), Sally Green (Climate Change Programme Officer), Ruth Rimmington (Democratic Services Team Leader), and Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillor John Dalton

22.OS.60 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 27 January 2022 of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

It was confirmed that prior to the 2023 Budget, a Member Learning Session will be held for Members on Special Expenses.

Members requested that an updated Community Safety Partnership report returned to the Scrutiny Committee in the next Municipal Year.

Decision: The minutes were approved noting the above.

22.OS.61 Minutes of Meeting, Thursday 10 March 2022 of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel

It was raised that a request was made for the Commercial Services Performance Panel to return in six months.

Decision: The minutes were approved noting the above.

22.OS.62 Declarations of Any Interests

No interests were declared.

22.OS.63 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

22.OS.64 Executive Cabinet Minutes

It was clarified that the allocation of £260,000 was a top up to bring the Green Agenda fund back to £500,000.

Resolved: The Executive Cabinet Minutes were noted.

22.OS.65 Notice of Executive Decisions

It was agreed that on the first of the month, all Councillors would receive a copy of the Executive Decisions. It was noted that the document was frequently updated, and the latest version was always accessible on the Chorley Council website.

Members agreed to keep the full document in the Overview and Scrutiny agenda pack.

Councillors requested more information about the Clean Air Strategy and an update on the public consultation. It was agreed that more information would return to the Committee and to Cabinet.

22.OS.66 Health Scrutiny Update

It was acknowledged that due to unforeseen circumstances, there was no Member of Chorley Council present at the Health Scrutiny Meeting that took place 1 February 2022. Clarity was to be sought from Lancashire County Council related to the rules around substitutes. It was noted that each meeting was web streamed, and open to all observing.

Considerations were underway for a joint health/local hospital scrutiny between Chorley and South Ribble, and a Member Learning Session in June 2022.

Members felt that the minutes of the Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee did not provide evidence of a deep dive into the scrutiny of health. Members raised questions as to how the local NHS was funded.

The upcoming Health Scrutiny Committee contained items on the new hospital programme, Members expressed the desire to formulate a view and to be involved as much as possible as 'Our Health Our Care' fell short due to a lack of public engagement.

Members questioned if there was scope for district involvement in the Community Mental Health Transformation Programme.

Decision: The Health Scrutiny Updated was noted.

22.OS.67 Grass Cutting and Verge Update

The Committee welcomed, Councillor Adrian Lowe - Executive Member Customer and Streetscene Services and Asim Khan - Director Customer and Digital.

The Council responded to the growing awareness and concern for green issues and biodiversity in part by the establishment of mini meadows and wildlife corridors. The first project began in April 2020. Across the borough, there were 52 wildflower meadows with a total of 16,000 wildflower bulbs planted in the previous two years. The mini meadows were viewed most favorably, whereas the wildlife corridors have received both positive and negative comments.

The Wildlife Corridors were maintained as required, and if issues were identified then action was taken.

The grass cutting season ran from April to October, and weather dependent, areas were cut every three weeks.

In 2021/22:

- There was a 40% reduction in grass related service requests totaling 127, in 2016/17 there were 304.
- 4 complaints were made about ground maintenance, grass cutting or the wildlife corridors.
- 722 general enquiries were made, 6 related or referred to grass cutting or the operation of the wildlife corridors.
- An analysis of comments made on social media about the wildlife corridors or mini meadows revealed 115 were compliments and 29 were complaints.

It was highlighted that if there was missed cuttings, the Streetscene team should be notified.

Members believed that there was great opportunity for community engagement with the mini meadows and wildlife corridors, and they demonstrated tangible initiatives of the green agenda, through developing a wide variety of biodiversity in the borough.

Members requested that the criteria for the mini meadows and wildlife corridors was provided to members to assist in any potential suggestions for further sites.

Decision: The report was noted.

22.OS.68 Sustainable Public Transport Second Monitoring Report

The Committee welcomed Zoe Whiteside, Service Lead - Spatial Planning to present the Second Monitoring Report.

A recommendation was to establish a cycling task group. It was proposed that instead of a Task Group, a project of work was undertaken to achieve key objectives and to gain a wider understanding of cycling within the borough.

Through the use of social media, awareness of cycling was to be raised, and information shared including updates to the highway code while encouraging cycling for all ages.

Lancashire County Council was the responsible body for cycling, the Council aimed to engage to gain a greater understanding of their plans, schemes and improvements and lobby for Chorley to receive funding and focus.

As part of the creation of the new Local Plan, an emphasis would be placed on active travel and cycling.

The Committee welcomed Andy Hunter-Rossall, invited to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following his public question related to cycling at Council 22 February 2022.

It was clarified that the cycling project would be Officer led, however, progress would be reported at the Climate Change Working Group, providing Member input and oversight, however, as a Working Group, it was not open to members of the public.

If the project was endorsed, the consultation for cycling would begin in the summer to prevent any overlap with the current Climate Change consultation.

Members raised the potential of utilising the concept of a scrutiny rapporteur to enable a proactive, deep dive, Member led approach to a scrutiny topic.

The County Council felt strongly that the franchising and regulation of buses would remain a County power. Andrew Varley, Lancashire County Council's Public Transport Manager explained that the County felt that as Chorley Council was not a combined Authority, it would not be appropriate to consider franchising and felt that the Enhanced Partnership was the way forward.

Chorley Liaison received a presentation by Tracy Keating from Dial a Ride. It was explained that the service faced financial limitations, and that the capacity at present was for booked rides into town, supermarkets, or appointments. The greatest issue they faced was the shortage of volunteers. Every parish council was encouraged to promote the service to raise awareness and source volunteers. It was noted that Adlington Town Council were already working with Dial a Ride.

In response to the reason car sharing required an HR review, Zoe Whiteside would seek clarity and report back.

Cycle pods had been ordered for Bengal Street, it was uncertain if they had arrived and been installed.

Decision: The report was noted.

22.OS.69 Developing the Councils Green Agenda - Monitoring Report 3

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed Sally Green, 'Climate Change Programme Officer' to provide the Third Monitoring Report for 'Developing the Council's Green Agenda'.

The Task Group made 23 recommendations. 13 had been completed. 3 were completed and awaiting approval. 7 were long term and ongoing, some of which were part of the draft Climate Strategy Draft.

The carbon footprint of the Town Hall was successfully mapped prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019. The baseline provided was 1,662,632 kg CO₂e.

A new 'Air Quality and Carbon Officer' was in post.

To support sustainable developments, the Council and the Business Engagement Team developed a 'green plaque' scheme to identify buildings in the Borough with strong green credentials.

The Council was exploring a wide variety of renewable energy sources to decarbonise the Town Hall.

Networking groups were established within the community, ranging from local schools, the Youth Zone and local businesses.

Andy Hunter-Rossall expressed his disappointment with the Council's lack of engagement with Green Living Chorley. Due to the pandemic, there was limited pathways for adults to engage. It was agreed that Zoe Whiteside and Sally Green would attend a meeting of Green Living Chorley to discuss the ongoing work at Chorley Council.

Members understood that there were significant costs for institutions and businesses to become more 'eco-friendly'. It was agreed for grant information and support to be provided by the Climate Change Programme Officer. It was added that a significant amount of information around decarbonising had been provided to businesses, including how they could calculate their own carbon footprint.

Members expressed the importance of the Council not overstepping and taking over community projects, but to be available to act as an intermediary, offer advice and to be transparent about its activities.

Following the success of the Climate Change Business Event in November 2021, another was planned for November 2022 and aimed to utilise information provided in the follow up questionnaire.

Attached to the agenda was the draft letters from the Leader of the Council. The letters had required updating due to the delay in the release of strategies and legislation. The letters discussed the gaps required to be filled to meet the climate change targets. Members questioned the wording used to describe Chorley's geographical location as a 'rural area of the north' due to its proximity to major metropolitan areas.

In response to Members, it was confirmed that air quality was measured with NO_x tubes across the borough, but the latest data was not yet available.

Decision: The report was noted.

22.OS.70 Quality of Housing Provided by Social Landlords - Monitoring Report 2

This Item has been deferred to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee taking place 7 July 2022.

22.OS.71 Reports from the Task and Finish Groups

Vice Chair of the Select Move Task Group, Councillor Sarah Ainsworth updated and informed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the progress of the Task Group.

The most recent meeting took place 15 March 2022, representatives of Jigsaw Homes and Progress Housing attended and engaged with Members.

Future Task Group meetings aimed to engage with the Select Move Coordinator, when the position was filled and with the MP Sir Lindsay Hoyle.

The Task Group was also in the process of delivering a survey to users of Select Move.

It was estimated that the Task Group would be prepared to submit the report to Cabinet in July.

Decision: The update was noted.

22.OS.72 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Decision: The work programme was noted.

Chair

Date