



**Minutes of** **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date** **Tuesday, 1 August 2023**

**Committee Members present:** Councillor Aidy Riggott (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Kim Snape, Michelle Le Marinel, Dedrah Moss, Arjun Singh, Ryan Towers, Michelle Brown, Christine Heydon, Samantha Martin and Joan Williamson

**Other Members Present** Councillor Margaret France

**Officers:** Zoe Whiteside (Project Director – Local Plan), Matt Evans (Climate Change & Air Quality Officer) and Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**Apologies:** Councillor Pauline McGovern

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on [YouTube](#)

**1 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 16 March 2023 of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting Thursday, 16 March 2023 of Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved as a correct record.**

**2 Declarations of Any Interests**

No interests were declared.

**3 Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**4 Executive Cabinet Minutes**

**Resolved: That the Executive Cabinet minutes were noted.**

**5 Notice of Executive Decisions**

The purpose of the item was highlighted and **resolved: that the notice of Executive Decisions be noted.**

## 6 Health Scrutiny Update

Councillor Margaret France presented the Health Scrutiny Update.

In addition to the written update provided, the most recent Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee took place 12 July 2023. There were three substantive items on the agenda.

### 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. There were also concerns with construction materials, and the requirement to use iron props to reinforce the existing structure.
- The cost to maintain Royal Preston was considerable. It was noted that it was uncertain if there would be additional funding to provide ongoing upkeep and maintenance.
- No decision had been made in relation to the location of the sites, but must be within 10 miles of the existing sites. The required sites would need to be 30 to 60 acres in size.
- Expectation for 100% single rooms with modern technology to allow safety and monitoring. Buildings set to be carbon net zero.
- Plans to improve services and outcomes for Chorley Hospital were discussed, it was agreed for it to be a specialist elective centre. This would aim to ease delays and protect routine planned operations.
- The procurement process was underway with encouragement for local companies to bid.
- Life expectancy of each new hospital was believed to be 50 to 60 years.

### 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.

**Resolved: That the update be noted.**

## 7 Cycling Project 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.

**Resolved: that the report be noted.**

## **8 Scrutiny Reporting Back - Chorley Council's Annual Report on Overview and Scrutiny 2022/23**

The Chair presented the Report to the Committee and sought comment.

It was raised about a concern with the levels of staffing, vacancies, and a lack of succession planning.

**Resolved: that the report be noted.**

## **9 Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Empty Properties Final Report**

Chair of the Empty Properties Task Group, Councillor Sarah Ainsworth presented the final report to the Committee.

The background to the task group and the key takeaways were presented, which included consideration for the position of empty properties within the organisational structure, and if there was a need for an existing staff member to take on the responsibilities, or if the post should be filled, on either a part time basis, or shared with South Ribble. A recommendation was also made to update the Empty Homes Policy which was last updated in 2015, and a Member Learning Session to raise awareness and spread knowledge.

Members requested an update or an amendment to the report, and wished for the table showing the number of empty properties to be broken down by Ward rather than by parished areas, as this did not provide the full picture and missed figures for empty properties in non parished areas, such as the town centre.

It was also noted that there appeared to be potential for further information sharing on properties that were long term empty due to legal disputes, with ownership in question. During the time they were not being charged council tax, but were a burden and were in poor state of repair

**Resolved: that the report be noted, and the recommendation updated.**

## **10 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme**

Members discussed the proposed Work Programme for the forthcoming year and reached agreement on the following topics;

- Antisocial Behaviour in the Town Centre
- Cost of Living
- Water Safety
- Wheelchair Accessibility
- Youth Services Outreach

Following the meeting the report authors would be sought and their placement on the forthcoming calendar of meetings would be decided and agreed by the Chair.

It was agreed that two Task Groups would be set up and completed within the municipal year, the first would explore internal staff retention and recruitment. Following its completion, the second would explore mental health support following suicide bereavement.

**Resolved: that the Work Programme for 2023/24 be agreed and noted.**

Chair

Date