

Overview and Scrutiny

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 August 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 27 July 2023, and an update on the Task Group: Recruitment and Staff Retention which met for the first time 6 September 2023.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1 August 2023

Health Scrutiny

2. We welcomed Councillor Margaret France to provide the update from the Lancashire County Council Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee that took place 12 July 2023.
3. Three substantive items were on the agenda, the Lancashire and South Cumbria New Hospital Programme, Virtual Wards, and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.
4. Two new hospitals to be built on two sites, the estimated start time for the project is delayed to 2030. The locations of the new sites are yet to be known, but they are required to be within 10 miles of the existing sites.
5. The cost to maintain Royal Preston is considerable, and there is not the certainty extra funding will be provided for ongoing upkeep and maintenance.
6. It is the expectation that modern technology will allow single rooms with effective patient monitoring.
7. There are 393 virtual beds across Lancashire and are utilised to free up beds at hospital while monitoring the patients in the comfort of their own homes.
8. The focus behind the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams is to allow services to work closer to the community to achieve better results and outcomes.
9. NHS England told the Integrated Care Board to reduce their budget by 30%.
10. The cost of using agency staff is significant, but a necessity to cover a skills, knowledge, and staff gap. The Trust does have a bank of doctors and nurses that are prioritised over agency staff.
11. We noted the update.

Cycling Project Update

12. We welcomed Matt Evans, Air Quality and Climate Change Officer to present the update and highlighted that the work is a recommendation from the Sustainable Public Transport Task Group. Following the unsuccessful formation of a cycling task group, the work has been picked up, and actioned by the Climate Change Working Group.
13. The council uses social media to communicate and direct the public to information and to promote various means of active travel in the borough.
14. An external consultation took place. The public feedback that improved cycling infrastructure and facilities are desired and would be a positive for the town.

15. Internally, efforts were made to understand the failure in the uptake in the number of staff cycling to work following the implementation of requested facilities and provisions. It was due to the lack of familiarity, and distance between Bengal Street and the Town Hall, in addition to concerns with damaging the newly provided ICT equipment. It has been decided that the bike pods are to be moved to Portland Street Car Park as a benefit to commuters, workers, and visitors to the town centre.
16. The council will continue its work with the County Council to ensure that Chorley is well represented in the Lancashire Cycling, Walking, and Infrastructure Partnership.
17. Work towards the new local plan aims to promote active travel, with an emphasis on walking, wheeling, and cycling when planning applications are considered.
18. We noted the report.

Scrutiny Reporting Back – Chorley Council’s Annual Report on Overview and Scrutiny 2022/23

19. We appreciated the good work that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee achieved in the last year, we thanked Members and Officers involved, however we raised a concern that it was frequently reported to the Committee and Performance Panel’s that there were issues with recruitment, and retention within the council.
20. We noted the report.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Empty Properties Final Report

21. Councillor Sarah Ainsworth, the Chair of the Empty Properties Task Group presented the final report to the Committee.
22. The recommendations and their reasons were explained and rationalised. It was discovered that the position of the empty properties within the organisation structure needs to be evaluated. There also needs to be consideration for a position of Empty Properties Officer to be recruited or to adjust an existing staff members job description to cover the role.
23. The Task Group encouraged an update to the Empty Homes Policy, which was last updated in 2015.
24. We amended a recommendation to ensure that figures of empty properties are presented by ward, rather than by parish. We also felt that further information could be shared on long term empty properties that were subject to long standing legal disputes, or where the ownership is in question.
25. We noted the report.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

26. We agreed for the following topics to come to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee this municipal year,
27. – Antisocial Behaviour in the Town Centre

28. – Cost of Living
29. – Water Safety
30. – Wheelchair accessibility
31. – Youth Services Outreach.
32. We agreed that the first Task Group to be set up and starting in September will be 'Recruitment and Staff Retention'. Following the completion of the first task group, the next will be exploring mental health support following suicide bereavement.
33. We agreed the work programme and it was noted.

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel – 27 July 2023

Performance Focus – Customer and Digital

34. We welcomed Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment) Adrian Lowe, with Asim Khan, Director (Customer and Digital) and Chris Walmsley, Head of Streetscene and Waste to present the report.
35. We were informed that there were inaccuracies within the report and a corrected report would be distributed following the meeting.
36. 11 of the directorate's performance indicators are on or above target. Of the 39 Business Plan Projects, 25 are rated green or completed, and 14 are rated amber, with both Corporate Strategy Projects rated green.
37. There is an underspend of £35,000 within the directorate.
38. A decline in performance for in the 'average days to process a new council tax support and housing benefit claim' is explained by the increase in complex cases throughout the year and there were matters outside the control of the council which impacts performance.
39. The council owns 83 bus shelters, and in accordance to the Corporate Strategy Project to improve the public transport network, there is a 5-year plan to make improvements to them all.
40. The contract with Dial-a-Ride is near its conclusion, and consideration is underway to review and evaluate options available to ensure that the community car scheme is attractive and accessible to users.
41. 18 vacancies are filled, but there remain vacancies which includes 4 apprenticeships and 3 other posts.
42. There is no correlation between the increase in online services and dissatisfaction with the service received.
43. The figures for recycling have stagnated and is impacting the figure for '% of waste recycled'. There are also operational issues present. For the figure to improve, there

needs to be behavioural changes from residents and further certainty from central government. In the absence of a firm central government position, the council is drafting its own waste and recycling strategy.

44. We noted the report.

Quarter Four Performance Report

45. We welcomed Victoria Willet, Director of Change and Delivery to present the report, which covers the period January to March 2023.
46. Of the 19 projects, 2 (11%) are completed, 16 (84%) are rated green, and 1 (5%) is rated amber.
47. Key measures of organisational performance have 4 (67%) performing at or above target, 1 (17%) performing below target but within the 5% threshold and 1 (17%) below target and outside of threshold
48. Following the completion of Tatton Gardens, the council is committed to the corporate strategy of developing further options for high quality, affordable and green housing.
49. The delivery of the local plan is rated yellow, this is due to the vacancies within the team, the complexity of the project, and working in close collaboration with two other local authorities. We were informed that despite the issues and difficulties, the project is not rated red as there is a plan in place to bring the project on track.
50. 117,000 trees have been planted in the borough which exceeds the target. A key priority of the council is to improve parks, open spaces and to enhance the natural environment. All five of the projects under the strategy are green and progressing according to plan and time scales.
51. The council held a development and job programme event in partnership with local schools and was attended by 500 students and 30 local businesses.
52. A cost of Living Action Plan is underway to support families that are struggling due to the price of food and energy. The project is extended over the summer and in total 6,744 households are being supported through the fund.
53. We noted the report.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Update – Recruitment and Staff Retention

54. The Task Group held its first meeting Wednesday 6 September.
55. Councillor Michelle Le Marinel is appointed Chair, and Councillor Ryan Towers is appointed as Vice Chair.
56. Hollie Walmsley, Head of HR, presented background information to the Task Group and aided the group to scope the review and outline the goals and objectives.

Recommendations

57. To note the report.

Councillor Aidy Riggott
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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