

Lancashire County Council

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 1st July, 2021 at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 'A' - The Tudor Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Phillippa Williamson (Chair)

County Councillors

A Vincent	M Green
G Gooch	J Rear
L Beavers	A Riggott
H Khan	C Towneley
P Buckley	S Turner
C Edwards	

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

County Councillor Lorraine Beavers replaced County Councillor Azhar Ali OBE.

2. The Constitution, Membership, Terms of Reference and Programme of Meetings for the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

A report was presented setting out the constitution, membership, revised Terms of Reference of the Cabinet Committee, and the programme of meetings for 2021/22.

Resolved: The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement noted:

- (i) The constitution and membership of the Committee, following the Full Council annual meeting on 27th May 2021.
- (ii) The revised Terms of Reference of the Committee.
- (iii) The agreed programme of meetings for 2021/22.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

No pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests were disclosed.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th April 2021

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

5. Corporate Strategy Monitoring report - Quarter 4 2020/21 performance update

A report was presented by Donna Talbot – Head of Business Intelligence, on performance update for Quarter 4 2020/21.

Appendix 'A' provided the latest performance updates available against the agreed Corporate Strategy indicators. In addition, it provided the latest available Quarter 4 2020/21 performance information and associated commentary on the current position against each indicator, including any related issues and required actions.

The Cabinet Committee noted the highlights of good performance, and those indicators performing below the desired level and/or those that were due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, as detailed in the report.

The following officers attended the meeting and provided details and updates on their respective service areas:

- Tony Pounder – Director of Adult Services
- Ian Crabtree – Director of Adults Disability & Care Services
- John Davies – Head of Service, Highways
- Andy Walker – Head of Service, Business Growth

It was noted that a representative from Children's Services could not attend the meeting due to the forthcoming Ofsted visit and that any questions from Committee would be passed on and a response obtained.

Specific areas were discussed as follows:

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Safety carriageway defects – it was reported that the majority of emergency and urgent defects were reported by members of the public and that the non-emergency defects were mainly picked up by Highway Inspectors. Committee's attention was drawn to the importance of noting that carriageway defects encompassed more than potholes. It was reported that the winter season had seen a much higher number of multiple daily gritting runs than usual, with 5500 treatments actioned over 91 days compared with 4191 in the previous winter. This had resulted in a reduction of resources available for daytime. In addition, the storm and heavy rainfalls in February and March had led to staff being deployed to flood incident management as part of our severe weather response. There were usually approximately 1,500 defects reported per day but in the winter of 2020/21, there was a substantial increase to 4,700 per day. A significant number of defects had been repaired within the required timescales although

mitigating factors as to why targets had not been met included Covid sickness, far more gritting runs and the weather preventing some repairs to be carried out. Going forward, it was reported that the county council would have new partners on board next year to assist with carriageway repairs, due to a new contract being set up from April 2021.

County Councillor Edwards pointed out that any indicators below target should be put into context due to the extenuating circumstances this winter and confirmed that innovative solutions were currently being looked into for future Winter Highways repair services.

Street lighting fault repairs – non-traffic management fault repairs had met the target. Traffic management faults had narrowly missed the target with just 3 faults repaired out of time.

The Covid pandemic had also resulted in several Highways staff members having to shield/isolate and increased numbers of staff working from home. Despite this, teams and managers had adapted very well to new working arrangements and were able to maintain the delivery of this service.

Children and Families Wellbeing Service – this target had been met. An increase in face-to-face support, in line with government guidance, had enabled positive outcomes for families and there had been a reduction in families withdrawing and disengaging from the Service.

Looked after who are actually living in Lancashire – although this target had been met, CC Beavers stressed the importance of decreasing the 20% of looked after children who were not currently living in Lancashire. CC Towneley confirmed that this was currently being worked on and that up to date figures would be brought back to Committee.

County Councillor Towneley wished to place on record her thanks to the Children and Families Service, stating that it was a highly innovative Team with some highly innovative working practices.

Key Stage 4 educational attainment – as the summer 2020 examinations were cancelled in 2020, pupils had been awarded either a centre assessment grade or their calculated grade using the Ofqual model, whichever was the higher of the two. Committee noted that each of the pupil level attainment statistics had increased more than would be expected, which reflected the change to how GCSE grades had been awarded, rather than improvements in pupil performance.

CC Rear wished to place on record her thanks to all staff working in the Education Service for their efforts throughout the Covid pandemic.

Health Checks - as health checks had to be delivered face to face, these had been adversely affected by the Covid pandemic, due to GP surgeries prioritising other activity and the population avoiding surgeries for all but essential visits.

Committee noted that whilst the programme was suspended, Public Health England had directed that no results were to be reported for 2020/2021. Discussions were ongoing with all commissioned providers to restart the NHS Health Check programme in 2021/2022 and it was hoped that figures would be available and improve over time.

Safeguarding outcomes for adults and older people – it was reported that plans to transform Adult Safeguarding Services which had been delayed due to the Covid pandemic had now been re-introduced. Progress had been made on this figure although it still needed improving. It was reported that 96% of people had indicated that their desired safeguarding outcomes were either partially or fully achieved. Committee noted there was no evidence to suggest the Covid pandemic had had any impact in relation to safeguarding reasons for concern.

Quality of care homes – this figure was above target. Regular briefings were held with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services in relation to the county council's care homes. Care Quality Commission inspections had significantly decreased due to the Covid pandemic with only 52 inspections published in the year to March 2021, compared to 160 in the same period for the previous year. Actions had been put in place to address issues and behaviours identified from care home inspections in 2019 currently rated as 'requiring improvement'.

Lancashire will be the place to work

Use of libraries – it was reported that libraries had been able to continue with their restricted services during lockdown 3 and that 1,700 individuals had attended virtual events in Quarter 4. In relation to e-downloads, the trend of a major increase in usage had continued in Quarter 4 and the target for 202/21 had almost been achieved just in this latest Quarter. County Councillor Buckley was pleased to see the quarter on quarter increase in e-downloads and passed on his congratulations to the Team. CC Buckley pointed out that 63 libraries had remained open in lockdown 3, providing residents with assurance that libraries were a safe environment. A special thanks went to volunteers in the Home Library and Befriending Services which had been escalated throughout the pandemic and which provided help to vulnerable people in the community. CC Buckley paid tribute to all the volunteers working in the Library Service.

Employment, Education or Training - the continued focus on this area of work and the excellent engagement seen from secondary schools and post 16 providers had seen a sustained improvement in performance in this area. This was despite the extremely challenging circumstances which the education sector, as well as children and young people, had faced over the past 15 months or so. The improvement in the December 2020 to February 2021 3 month average from the previous year showed how hard the team had worked to engage with the sector, which had been faced with various other priorities. This also reflected how hard the sector had worked to continue to support young people to make positive and sustained transitions to post 16 education, employment or training. There were fewer 'not knowns' although it was appreciated that this needed reducing further, with a view to working on positive outcomes for those young people.

County Councillor Rear thanked the Team for maintaining their success in these areas during difficult circumstances.

Adults with learning disabilities in employment - although the proportion of adults with learning disabilities in employment had risen since 2019/20 and continued to rise within 2020/21 (2.1% to 2.3%), this was still considerably below target and the national benchmark of 5.6%. Referrals had reduced dramatically and it was also appreciated that many adults with learning disabilities had vulnerabilities linked to Covid. Work had now resumed in this area and, once the pandemic was under control, it was hoped performance would improve. County Councillor Gooch reported that the county council had supported 71 adults with learning disabilities into employment and would need another 37 in order to meet the target. CC Gooch pointed out that the figures were only in relation to adults with learning disabilities who were known to the county council.

Lancashire will be the place to prosper

Rosebud loans – no new investment had been reported for Quarter 4 due to government backed loan schemes running until 31 March 2021, which had more favourable terms and no requirement of personal security. The Team were currently trying to control the costs of the programme by negotiating the management fee with the company who runs and develops the loan pipeline for the county council, in addition to managing the portfolio of existing loans. It was noted that many workflow opportunities were being carried into the next Quarter and that a significant uptick in new investments was forecasted.

Boost – due to decrease in outputs attributed to businesses responding to the pandemic, Boost had adapted their service offer to support businesses through enquiry and advisor provision. There had been an increase of 611 enquiries from 2019/20 to 2020/21 and we were starting to see businesses keen to take on new employees.

County Councillor Riggott thanked Andy Walker and his Team for all their efforts in reacting quickly and adapting to the pandemic, stating that the county council was now in a strong position to support businesses in Lancashire.

Lancashire will be the place to visit

Visitor economy – targets for the number of visitors to Lancashire, the economic impact of visitors to Lancashire and full time equivalent jobs supported by the visitor economy were being reviewed as part of a new tourism growth strategy. A schedule of reports to be presented to future CCPI meetings was currently being worked on.

Lancashire will be the place where everyone acts responsibly

Proportion of adults with learning disabilities who live in their own home – progress had been made since the last Quarter and the current performance

(83%) was above the national average (77.3%). Committee noted that the North West was leading on this and that Lancashire County Council was among the best of the North West authorities. The county council was looking to further develop opportunities for adults with learning disabilities to live at home, in accommodation more suited to their longer term needs.

County Councillor Gooch reported that good progress was being made with the new Supported Living Service where adults with learning disabilities lived in their own apartments, many of which were located in the centre of towns where they could feel part of a community.

Permanent admissions to care homes/reablement/support in the community – a significant improvement in performance was shown for permanent admissions to care homes, although it was appreciated that many had been reluctant to go into care homes due to the Covid pandemic. Reablement and discharge arrangements had changed significantly during the pandemic and the proportion of people supported at home had inevitably increased, due to a reduction in the number of people admitted to residential care. Going forward, we needed to look at how we could maintain these numbers as far as possible.

Number of working days per full time equivalent lost to sickness absence – this figure had shown a continuous decline since April 2020 and was at its lowest since the current form of monitoring began. A continual decline in absence days lost for both short and long term absences had also been observed with a slight decline in the number of days lost due to mental health related absences. Absences exceeding 12 months had increased although it should be noted that this was attributed to delays in treatment and operations etc as a result of the pandemic restrictions. Resources were being directed to provide more focussed support for long Covid sickness absences.

Revenue forecast outturn % variance to budget – although various different grants had been provided by Government throughout 2020/21, it was reported that the main reason for the underspend was due to a continued strong performance across Treasury Management, with a surplus of £24m generated.

6. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement would be held at 2.00pm on Thursday 9th September 2021.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston