

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING - THURSDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2020

Present:

Councillor Mrs Callow JP (in the Chair)

Councillors

Burdess
Galley

Hugo
Mitchell

Mrs Scott
Stansfield

Walsh

In Attendance:

Kate Aldridge, Head of Commissioning
Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Ruth Henshaw, Corporate Performance Officer

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council who was on official Council business.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 5 MARCH 2020 AND SPECIAL MEETINGS HELD ON 1 AND 22 JULY 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2020 and the special meetings held on 1 July 2020 and 22 July 2020 were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

3 PERFORMANCE REPORTING 2020/2021

Ms Kate Aldridge, Head of Commissioning reported that the Council's performance indicators had been revised to reflect the unusual performance year caused as a result of the pandemic. She advised that the indicators were being presented to the Scrutiny Leadership Board for input on any other areas Members might wish to see measured and explored as part of the overall reporting process. She added that the draft report from the Corporate Peer Review that had taken place in early 2020 had been received and had recommended that greater prominence be given to organisational resilience.

Ms Ruth Henshaw, Corporate Performance Officer presented the indicators in relation to Priority 1: 'Economy – maximise growth and opportunity across Blackpool' and highlighted the suggested changes made from the previous indicators within the priority. Members queried whether it would be possible to record the number of people who had claimed universal credit because they had been furloughed. In response, Ms Henshaw advised that she was unsure whether the reasons why new claimants had applied for universal credit was recorded and that she would explore this as a possibility.

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In regards to housing, the Board queried whether it would be possible to make suggestions regarding the questions asked during the Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) tenant's survey to include thoughts on carpets and other soft furnishings being removed prior to each change in tenant and the extent to which tenants were allowed to decorate inside and outside of their home to gain a broader view of satisfaction. Ms Aldridge advised that she would contact BCH in order to determine whether further questions could be asked during the survey and how the extent to which tenants could redecorate was determined and report back to Members.

The Board discussed economic development in detail and queried whether the indicators could be further developed to encompass gross domestic product, human poverty and digital literacy with a view to producing what the local economy could and should look like. Ms Aldridge suggested that a more detailed conversation take place on this particular issue outside of the Board meeting in order to identify how best to incorporate such thoughts as indicators.

The Board went on to consider the indicators in relation to Priority 2: 'Communities – create strong communities and increase resilience'. In relation to the priority of 'supporting families to provide stable home lives', Members expressed an interest in expanding the indicators to include the number of looked after children both within the borough and surrounding area in comparison to the number being looked after outside of the area and the number of children being cared for by foster carers rather than in other forms of care. It was considered that this indicator would tie in to the recently approved strategy regarding foster care.

It was noted that it was not yet clear how data regarding educational attainment would be provided and the indicators relating to education might require further review. There was absolutely the intention to record educational attainment, however, additional context and narrative could be required following the cancellation of exams.

Members discussed the 'improving health outcomes' priority in detail and suggested that social prescription was key in improving mental health and queried whether an indicator in that area would be appropriate. Members also suggested the inclusion of indicators around the number of drug related deaths, the impact of long term Covid on individuals and the impact of increasing demands due to Covid on health services. Ms Aldridge advised that the Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group and Director of Public Health could be contacted to explore what indicators, if any, should be included in these specific areas.

Members noted with concern that indicators relating to how safe residents felt had been removed and commented that measuring how safe residents felt both regards to Covid and with regards to crime both inside and outside of their homes was important. Ms Henshaw advised that the Council was unable to carry out the residents' survey this year, which was where the data from the safety indicators was traditionally gathered. It was agreed that how safe residents felt was important and Ms Aldridge agreed to liaise with partners through the Community Safety Partnership in order to identify potential other means of collecting such data until the residents' survey could be undertaken again. A suggestion was also made that the Members Enquiry system could be utilised to measure how many contacts to Councillors related to safety issues.

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Ms Henshaw highlighted the additional priority relating to organisational resilience which had been included as a result of the Corporate Peer Review. The Board was advised that there had been no Blackpool Council staff furloughed, however, a number had been redeployed and refocussed during the pandemic. The indicator included the number of staff furloughed as it was a national indicator and public sector organisations could furlough staff should they work in income generating roles. Discussions also focussed on the mental health and wellbeing of staff and the effect on sickness absence and work related pressure as a result of the pandemic. It was noted that the indicators relating to sickness already included would demonstrate any such impact.

It was considered that it would be important to continue with the indicator relating to the gender pay gap. Ms Aldridge added that it might also be appropriate to explore the inclusion of additional equality measures rather than considering the single issue of gender within the indicators.

Members noted that the indicators did not include reference to collection of social housing rent and Ms Henshaw advised that this was measured by Blackpool Coastal Housing and reported to the Shareholder's Advisory Board.

The Scrutiny Leadership Board agreed that the suggestions detailed in the minute above be considered for inclusion in the final version of the Council's performance indicators for 2020/2021.

4 FINANCIAL AND BUDGET SCRUTINY PROPOSALS

Mrs Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager presented the proposals for financial and budget scrutiny to the Board.

The Scrutiny Leadership Board approved the proposals to be put in place with immediate effect.

5 SCRUTINY WORKPLANS

The Chairman invited updates for each of the Chairs in attendance on the work of their Committees.

The Chair of Audit advised that focus remained on the impact of Covid and the financial sustainability of the Council. He noted that there were no current issues for referral from the Audit Committee to scrutiny.

In regards to the work of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee, the Chair of the Committee reported that Members were ensuring the whole of Children's Services was reviewed with regular consideration of the Youth Offending Team and Children's Social Care improvement as well as education matters. The Committee had also recently provided input into the 10-Year Education Strategy.

The Chair of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee advised that Members' focus remained on economic recovery from Covid, tourism and regeneration. The Committee was also regularly reviewing progress made towards the declaration of a climate emergency. He added that the Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review had

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been resumed following a break due to the pandemic and would be concluded shortly.

In regards to the work of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee, the Chair advised that the Committee continued to focus on improvement following the Care Quality Commission inspection at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and transfers of care. She added that the special meeting on mental health services had been rearranged and would take place on the 19 October 2020.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Leadership Board commended the work of the Committees and highlighted the recent input into the development of the Tree Strategy and the impact assessment carried out on the Whole System Transfers of Care Scrutiny Review.

The Scrutiny Leadership Board:

- 1) Approved its workplan for 2020/2021 subject to the inclusion of the agreed budget and financial scrutiny proposals.
- 2) Noted the workplans of the three Scrutiny Committees.
- 3) Noted the update from the Chair of Audit.
- 4) Noted the updates on the Community Engagement Strategy.

6 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date and time of the next meeting was noted as the informal meeting on 10 December 2020, commencing at 6.00pm.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.50 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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