

Report to:

SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD

Relevant Officer:

Antony Lockley, Director of Strategy and Assistant Chief Executive

Date of Meeting

12 October 2022

COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE – FEEDBACK FROM END OF YEAR REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update on the action taken as a result of feedback from Scrutiny Leadership Board on Council Plan performance 2021/22.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Scrutiny Leadership Board is asked to consider the content of the report and highlight any areas for further consideration.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure constructive and robust scrutiny of performance against the Council Plan.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 N/A

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"
- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

6.0 Background information

6.1 The end of year performance against the Council Plan was reported to Scrutiny Leadership Board on 13th July 2022. Below is an update on the action taken by the Corporate Delivery Unit as a result

of the queries raised by the Committee:

6.2 ***1. Explore the issue of unemployment and vacancies with the relevant officers and report back in writing following the meeting.***

Blackpool's context is particularly challenging when trying to support people into work. A [study by Sheffield Hallam University](#) highlights that we have a high proportion of people of working age who are unavailable for work. Those who are jobless who suffer from health problems or disabilities generally claim incapacity benefit instead of unemployment benefits, leading to the report estimating Blackpool's "real" unemployment level at 14.7%, the highest in the country. Generational worklessness is an issue.

The government has various measures in place as part of the Plan for Jobs (further information can be found on the [LGA website](#)). We deliver some of these programmes on behalf of the government department, generally without the use of any additional funding from the Council, but relatively speaking we are a small provider compared to other organisations such as G4S. This can also mean that we are unable to apply for and run projects which would directly target some of the biggest needs in Blackpool, for example supporting those with mild/moderate health issues. Other than Adult and Community Learning, which delivered basic skills support to 1,200 people last year, Council teams do not deliver skills training, with provision of traineeships, apprenticeships and further/higher education being undertaken by organisations such as Blackpool and the Fylde College.

The programmes delivered by the Council provided 641 people with employment support in 2021-22, 405 of whom were helped into work. 178 of these were via the Kickstart programme. Subject to government approval we will shortly have secured funding for the Platform job and training service to support 16-24 year olds until 2025. Other more targeted work with Horizon (drug and alcohol rehabilitation) and Lancashire Care NHS Trust (severe mental health) aims to support people with more intensive needs.

6.3 ***2. To receive the outcomes of the resident survey in due course.***

The contract for delivery of the resident's survey has now been awarded. Survey work will take place throughout October 2022 with a view to receiving the final survey findings in mid-November 2022. A report on the survey findings will be presented to this Committee in December 2022.

6.4 ***3. To include a detailed report on the number of empty retail premises including whether they were of a temporary nature and their quality be included within the next performance report.***

Further analysis of available data has been undertaken, the results of which will be presented at this meeting. A report is attached at Appendix 4(a).

6.5 **4. Explore the reasons for the delays for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and report back to the Board in writing following the meeting.**

The poor performance referenced in the end of year report is a result of the pandemic affecting the rate. Greater quality assurance was required in the current year to ensure that standards stayed high, which reduced the percentage of EHCP's that met the 20 week time scale.

Further detailed data analysis reveals that as at the end of September 2022, the proportion of new EHCP's issued within 20 weeks in the previous 12 months was 70%, however this has increased to 78% in the last 6 months.

Nationally, we compare well to the national picture. In 2021, 72% EHCP's were issued within 20 weeks, compared to 60% nationally.

6.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 4(a): Town Centre Unit Vacancies
Appendix 4(b): Business list

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 N/A

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 N/A

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 N/A

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 N/A

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 N/A

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 N/A

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 N/A