

OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

Thursday, 9th September, 2021

Present:-

Councillor Flood (Chair)

Councillors	Blakemore	Councillors	T Gilby
	Borrell		Hollingworth
	Brittain		Kellman
	Catt		Kelly
	L Collins		Snowdon
	Coy		
	Dyke		

Donna Reddish, Service Director - Corporate +
Charlotte Kearsey, Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

+ Attended for Minute No. 21

14 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No declarations of interest were received.

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Caulfield and Fordham.

16 FORWARD PLAN

The Forum considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

17 SCRUTINY MONITORING

The Forum considered the Scrutiny recommendations implementation monitoring schedule.

RESOLVED –

That the Scrutiny monitoring schedule be noted.

18 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

The Work Programme for the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum was considered.

RESOLVED –

That the Work Programme be approved.

19 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS

There was no update.

20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 1 July, 2021 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

21 DEPUTY LEADER - COUNCIL PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

The Service Director - Corporate attended to present a report updating the Forum about the progress of the Chesterfield Borough Council Plan. The report included an update on 2020/21 performance and the impact of Covid-19, the development a delivery plan for 2021/22 and quarter one milestone performance.

The Council Plan 2019 – 2023 had been agreed by Council in February 2019. The plan identified the Council's key priorities, objectives and

commitments over a four year period. Annual delivery plans were developed to track and challenge progress across the four years.

The outturn of the Council Plan Delivery Plan 2020/21 and the impact of Covid-19 were outlined in the officer's report. During 2020 and into 2021 Council staff were re-deployed to support key Covid-19 response activities. This included ensuring that delivery of key services, such as the crematorium, were maintained but also to support new areas of work including business grant allocations, food and medicine deliveries, supporting testing facilities, town centre ambassadors and support for the community and voluntary sector volunteering programmes.

The re-prioritisation of Council resources and Covid-19 related safety measures, for example social distancing, had a significant impact on the Council's ability to deliver elements of the delivery plan for 2020/21. This impact had been assessed throughout the year alongside performance progress and led to additional challenge, re-prioritisation and innovative alternative activities to ensure that outcomes were achieved.

The officer's report noted that 73% of milestones within the delivery plan for 2020/21 had been impacted to a medium or high extent. At the half year point 46% of the milestones remained on target. Following challenge and discussion with Finance and Performance Board, Scrutiny and Cabinet, the Corporate Leadership team were tasked to develop improvement strategies and alternative options for delivering outcomes. At year end 68% of the milestones had been achieved and a further 15% were scheduled for completion in 2021. Challenge and new approaches enabled a significant increase in performance.

Potential barriers to the achievement of milestones remained as 27% of milestones were currently rated as amber and presented some delivery challenges. This was due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which included reduced availability of supplies, ongoing restrictions, impact on educational settings and Council capacity challenges due to previous and ongoing response efforts.

Members thanked all staff for their hard work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members enquired about the impact of Covid-19 on the ICT Improvement Programme, which affected many areas of the Council and the way staff and communities interacted with the Council. The Service Director

advised that there had been reprioritisation of some milestones as some needed to be sped up in response to Covid-19, such as enabling staff to work from home and community access to services through My Chesterfield. There were now 13k people using the My Chesterfield service. The key issue would be what was next for the ICT Improvement Programme because it was in the third year of the programme.

Members enquired about the policy for handling staff in the Covid-19 recovery period and whether there were plans to continue flexible working. The Service Director advised that there had been surveys and consultation with staff to understand how staff had coped during the pandemic and how roles could work going forward. The Council remained cautious, and Health and Safety continued to be the priority. It was also noted that it was important to remember that for employers a case of Covid-19 remained a reportable incident to the Health and Safety Executive.

Members noted the impact of the potential barriers over the past two years and enquired about the mitigation strategies in place. The Service Director gave an example from her own Directorate; all available staff would usually work Civic and Remembrance events but risk assessments included holding back some staff from activities to ensure that essential activities could go ahead, such as committee management, should there be the need for staff to self-isolate following the events.

Members asked the Service Director to thank staff involved in organising the activities to encourage people to get outside over the last year, within the Year of Outdoors campaign, because they had a positive impact on people's mental health.

Members enquired about the future plans for education engagement and Local Democracy activities which were impacted by Covid-19. The Service Director advised that there had been big plans in place, such as, the HS2 & You events which were set to involve hundreds of children and which had to be adapted into virtual events. There had also been very large plans in place for Local Democracy events about climate change. Education packs had been prepared and sent out to schools and they had also been offered virtual events.

Members noted the cautionary tale of outsourcing of services by some local authorities and recognised the hard work of staff including in the procurement team.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Council Plan Progress Update report be noted.
2. That another Council Plan Progress Update be brought back to the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum in six months.
3. That the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum thanked all staff, including staff who were furloughed, for their hard work during the Covid-19 pandemic.