

**CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

HELD: Thursday, 13 July 2017

Start: 7.00pm

Finish: 9.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillor: N Hennesy (Chairman)

Councillors:	M Barron	Mrs M Blake
	T Blane	P Cotterill
	S Currie	J Kay
	D McKay	M Nixon
	D West	D Westley
	T Devine	G Owen
	R Pendleton	A Yates

In attendance: Mr M Orford (Director of ICT, BT Lancashire Services)
Ms C Hall (Director of Transactional Services, BT Lancashire Services)
Mr N Brooks (General Manager, WWT Martin Mere Wetlands Centre)

Officers: Director of Leisure and Wellbeing Services (Mr D Tilleray)
Borough Transformation Manager and Deputy Director of Housing and Inclusion (Mr S Walsh)
Economic Regeneration Manager (Ms P Huber)
Partnership and Performance Officer (Ms A Grimes)
Principal Solicitor (Mrs T Sparrow)
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs C A Jackson)

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Members noted the termination of membership of Councillors D Evans, G Hodson, Pryce-Roberts and Savage and the appointment of Councillors Yates, Devine, Owen and Pendleton respectively, for this meeting only, thereby giving effects to the wishes of the political groups.

3 URGENT BUSINESS, IF ANY, INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business.

(Note: The Chairman varied the order the items were considered. Item 10a WWT Martin Mere Wetlands Centre was dealt with following item 7 Public Speaking. The minutes follow the order as set down in the agenda.)

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 DECLARATIONS OF A PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of a Party Whip.

6 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 March 2017 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7 PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no items under this heading.

8 BT LANCASHIRE SERVICES ANNUAL REVIEW 2016/17

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Transformation Manager and Deputy Director of Housing & Inclusion as contained on pages 17 to 37 of the Book of Reports that detailed the Annual Review 2016/17 of the ICT and Revenues and Benefits Council services delivered by BT Lancashire Services as part of the partnership agreement with Lancashire County Council.

The Chairman welcomed the representatives from BT Lancashire Services (BTLS).

The meeting was attended by Mr Mark Orford (Director of ICT Services) and Ms Claire Hall (Director of Transactional Services) who provided an overview of the work that had been undertaken over the previous 12 months under the shared services agreement.

In his introduction, the Director of ICT Services referred to the financial benefits to the Council that, in 2016/17, had delivered direct savings of £56k and a combined ICT and Revenue and Benefits added Value of £645k. Mr Orford then went on to outline the support and provision of the service currently delivered. He highlighted the key achievements in the service and the projects that had been completed and briefly outlined some of the service plans, improvements and priority projects undertaken in the year.

The Director of Transactional Services provided an overview of key activity in the Revenues and Benefits service during 2016/17 highlighting details as set down in the report. Reference was made to the improvements to the service during the period and the targets that had been met or been exceeded as well as the service plans and the key challenges.

The presentation of the BT Lancashire Services Annual Report 2016/17 concluded with the challenges going forward and the planned activity for each of the Services

for 2017/18, referencing particularly the planned ServiceNow Customer Relation Management system for the Council and the 3C Logic telephony solution for the Contact Centre.

Comments and questions were raised in respect of the:

- digital agenda (automated payments) – roll-out of tablet/hand held devices;
- Feris Campaign (Fraud Error Reduction Incentive Scheme) – opportunity to opt-in;
- procurement of ICT services (challenges to the traditional delivery of the revenue service) – industry trend of “cloud” computing;
- introduction of CMR – resource implications; service provision;
- closure of Ormskirk Magistrates’ Court – impact on West Lancashire residents;
- Universal Credit (UC) (full implementation December 2017) – on-line application access; support for benefit applicants; preparation /awareness of the implementation;
- changes in revenues / benefits service – impact on personnel and the role of DWP;
- Member support – dedicated support service/ technical training.

The Directors of ICT and Transactional Services responded to questions and provided clarification on the issues raised, referring to detail as set down in their Annual Report. They also responded to queries on the on-going work related to the full introduction of the UC system by December 2017 and the Service Now initiative.

The Borough Transformation and Deputy Director of Housing and Inclusion also provided additional clarification in relation to staff retention, redeployment, the development of seconded staff and future training events for Members.

RESOLVED: A That, the BT Lancashire Services Annual Review 2016/17, attached at Appendix A, be noted.

B That, in consultation with the Borough Transformation Manager and Deputy Director of Housing and Inclusion, BT Lancashire Services provide a report, to the January meeting of the Committee, on progress in relation to the ‘Service Now’ initiative.

9 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS Q4 2016-17

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Transformation Manager and Deputy Director of Housing and Inclusion which detailed performance monitoring data for the quarter ended 31 March 2017 (Q4). The report had previously been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 13 June 2017.

The Performance and Partnership Officer attended the meeting introduced the item and referred to detail as set down in the report. Members noted, following feedback

at a previous meeting, that the introduction of Actions from Previous Performance Plans (Appendix C) was now included.

The Principal Solicitor (TS) also provided additional feedback in relation to PI TS13 (% LA properties with Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) outstanding, reporting that the 0.00% target had now been met and that all eligible properties were now certified.

Thanks was extended to all Officers involved in this achievement.

RESOLVED: That the Council's performance against the indicators set for the quarter ended 31 March 2017 be noted.

10 WEST LANCASHIRE TOURISM - THE VISITOR ECONOMY (WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17)

Consideration was given to the following three items:

THE VISITOR ECONOMY IN WEST LANCASHIRE – UPDATE

The Economic Regeneration Manager provided an update in relation to promotion of West Lancashire on the Visit Liverpool and Visit Southport web-site.

It was reported that a listing on the Visit Liverpool website and a presence in the Visitor Guide costs £3,500. Other promotional sites websites were referred to but it was felt that the joining of the Visit Liverpool website was worth pursuing.

11 WWT MARTIN MERE WETLANDS CENTRE

Consideration was given to the presentation by Nick Brooks, General Manager of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) Martin Mere Wetlands Centre, Burscough on recent projects and upcoming initiatives. The presentation was supported by a series of slides as contained on pages 107 to 121 of the Book of Reports.

The presentation opened with an explanation of the year round family-friendly visitor attraction and its contribution to the local economy. Mr Brooks reported that over 200,000 people visited Martin Mere each year and the facility provided employment for 65 people.

Information presented included reference to the wildlife viewing opportunities that brought to Martin Mere a wide range of visitors each year to see the variety of birds that migrate to or inhabit the site.

The General Manager referred to the income generated on-site at Martin Mere where a visitor averaged spending £4 per visit and contributed to the visitor economy in West Lancashire and the wider north west, through travel and overnight stays, estimated to generate £70 per visitor.

Members considered some of the projects and initiatives that were being pursued at

Martin Mere. These included:

- A focus on the Whooper Swan, 3,000 of which migrate from Iceland each winter, to Martin Mere. It was stated that this event attracted many visitors and Mr Brooks went on to explain that, in consultation with Burscough Parish Council, they were looking at opportunities to promote the Whooper swan as the possible “symbol of Burscough.”
- Town twinning and educational links – developing closer links with Akureyn, Iceland.
- Linking up with the Yew Tree Farm development – creation of filtration “reed beds” that are known to attract such rare species of birds as the Bearded Tit and Marsh Harriers. It was understood that the proposed reed beds site would be the second biggest in England.
- Cycle Routes – to link Martin Mere with Burscough and the wider rural landscape of West Lancashire.

In discussion comments and questions were raised in respect of the following:

- Excavation of the “reed beds” – investment costs.
- Facilities to encourage visitors to stay overnight or visit other parts of West Lancashire – advertising events to and through Martin Mere; targeting rail, cruise and coach companies; availability of accommodation in and around the Borough.
- Linking visits to two or more tourist sites in West Lancashire.
- Opportunities to attract specialist visitors to Martin Mere – promotion of the rarer migratory birds and habitat; events in the migration period.
- Exploitation of tourist opportunities at Martin Mere – what’s on in West Lancashire
- Involvement of local schools – artwork; special environmental events.

Mr Brooks contributed to the discussion and provided clarification on the points raised in relation to his presentation.

As a result of the discussion and presentation it was concluded that initiatives that could enhance the visitor experience at Martin Mere and provide a benefit to the wider visitor economy of West Lancashire be supported.

RESOLVED: That the General Manager of WWT Martin Mere Wetlands Centre be thanked for his attendance and presentation and contribution to the Committee’s review ‘West Lancashire Tourism – The Visitor Economy’.

Economy’.

Members discussed the report, its findings and the recommendations within it. It was noted that amendments in relation to the presentation from the General Manager WWT Martin Mere and additional information presented by the Economy Regeneration Manager would be included in the final report prior to submission to Cabinet.

In considering visitor accommodation within the Borough, Members felt, in order to promote tourism effectively, that the focus of the visitor economy should be shared across the wider functions of the Council.

As a result of the discussion it was concluded that the recommendations be amended to include reference to the following, at

(1)(iv) “draw on the experiences of Visit Southport and Visit Liverpool *to include joining Visit Liverpool to provide something similar for West Lancashire*”.

(1)(v) “continue to work with businesses and organisations within West Lancashire to promote projects and initiatives that benefit the local economy . . . *including bringing forward accommodation projects and increasing advertisement of accommodation.*”

(1)(vi) “seek to further improve the promotion of West Lancashire and the importance of . . .

(h) WWT Martin Mere, Burscough and its links with the community, local schools and Parish Council through initiatives, projects and future development of the visitor attraction.

In relation to actions on the recommendations it was noted that these would come back for consideration at the meeting of the Committee in March 2018.

RESOLVED: That the draft final report and recommendations therein be approved, subject to amendment as noted, be submitted to Cabinet on 12 September 2017 and Council on 16 October 2017, if appropriate.

13 PROCEDURE FOR THE PUBLIC AND APPLICANTS WHO WISH TO SPEAK AT THE PLANNING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS THAT MIGHT AFFECT THEM

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Solicitor on the ‘Procedure for the Public and Applicants who wish to speak at the Planning Committee on Planning Applications that might affect them’ as contained on pages 97 to 106 of the Book of Reports, that sought the views of the Committee on the revised protocol. The revised protocol had previously been considered by the Planning Committee and the Public Involvement in Meetings Working Group.

In discussion questions and comments were raised in relation to the following:

- Time allocated to speakers – advantages / disadvantages of increasing or removing the time limit.
- Practical support for public speakers prior to the Planning meeting.
- Retention of the perceived flexibility and discretion of the Chairman in relation to the protocol.

The Chairman of the Public Involvement in Meetings Working Group who attended the meeting provided further clarification in relation to the views of the Working Group in their consideration of the Procedure.

The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer also provided clarification on the administrative processes and support provided, particularly in the lead up to the Planning Committee meetings.

RESOLVED: As a consequence of the discussion on this item it was agreed that the comments to Council be:

1. That the success of the current planning committee public speaking procedure be noted.
2. That, in relation to paragraph 3 of the Procedure that the wording “the Clerk of a Parish Council” be retained.
3. That the practice of the Chairman using his discretion in respect of speaking at the Planning Committee be supported.

(Note: Councillor Cotterill requested that his vote against comment 1 above be recorded.)

14 MINUTES OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Member Development Commission held on 16 March 2017 as contained on pages 79 to 81 of the Book of Reports.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Member Development Commission meeting held on 16 March 2017 be noted.

15 WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Solicitor as contained on pages 83 to 93 of the Book of Reports that gave details on actions to be taken in relation to the future work programme of the Committee.

RESOLVED: A That the timetable attached at Appendix ‘A’ for establishing the Work Programme for the Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2017/18 be agreed.

B That arrangements be put in place to request items for the Work

Programme for 2017/18 from Members, the Corporate Management Team (CMT), by inviting members of the public to submit topics via a press release and by the inclusion of an article on the Council's web-site.

- C That all potential topics received by the deadline be published on the Council's web site.
- D That following the deadline for receipt of potential topics the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Conservative Spokesperson be requested to score each of the topics using the agreed selection criteria set out at Appendix B.
- E That a report on the Work Programme for 2017/18 together with the results of the scoring exercise, be considered at the next meeting of the Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Committee select one topic for Review.

16 WORK PROGRAMME - NEXT MEETING

Consideration was given to items on the work programme due to the considered at the next meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 12 October 2017.

RESOLVED: That the work programme for the next meeting, scheduled to take place on 12 October 2017, be noted.

17 MEMBERS' ITEMS/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (CCFA)

There were no items under this heading.

18 ITEMS FROM THE MEMBERS UPDATE

There were no items under this heading.

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Chairman