

**MINUTES OF:           OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting:**    31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

**Present:**             Councillors Barnes (Chair), Neal (Vice Chair), Ashworth, Belli, Woods (sub) and Eaton (sub).

**In attendance:**     David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development  
Clare Law, Head of People and Policy  
Hannah Callan, Executive and Democratic Services Officer

**Also Present:**       Councillor Lythgoe

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**1.     Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Harrison (Councillor Eaton subbing), Councillor McMahon and Councillor Smith (Councillor Woods subbing).

**2.     Minutes**

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025 be approved as a correct record.

**3.     Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4.     Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

**5.     Question Time**

There were no public questions.

**6.     Chair's Update**

At the previous meeting members were asked to note and recommend Cabinet to approve the Corporate Priorities, Budget, Council Tax and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2025/26. These reports were approved by Cabinet on 12th February 2025 and recommended for approval at Council on 5th March 2025.

Members were also asked to make recommendations on the proposed new Valley Plan 2025/29. This was approved by Cabinet on 19th March 2025 and recommended for approval at Council on 2nd April 2025.

In advance of the meeting, a response was circulated to members in relation to the questions asked at the previous meeting.

**ORDINARY BUSINESS**

**7.     Quarter 3 Performance Management Report**

7.1    Members considered the Quarter 3 Performance Management Report.

- 7.2 In response to members questions the following clarification was given:
- The vacant post for the Planning Enforcement Officer had now been filled and they were due to be in post shortly.
  - In relation to the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), although the figures were improving from last year the target was not being met as there were several large-scale projects that were taking longer to complete.
  - DFG targets were reviewed every year.
  - There were no direct incentives for empty shops in the towns. The approach we were taking was to try and lift the towns as a whole in order to then drive footfall and fill the empty shops. Government were looking into a scheme to prevent shops being empty for long periods of time.
  - The Haslingden Public Realm works covered the shop fronts works.
  - Haslingden Market was being actively managed.

**Resolved:**

The committee noted the Council's performance as detailed in the report.

**8. Communications Strategy and Annual Action Plan Update**

8.1 Members considered the Communications Strategy and Annual Plan Update.

8.2 In response to members questions the following clarification was given:

- The strategy was for 2025-29 in line with the Valley Plan.
- There were a range of communication channels internally including: Chief Executive Huddle, Your Voice, consultations in relation to policies, Lunchtime Learn, and there were also set agenda for team meetings and a suggestion box.

**Resolved:**

The committee noted the Communications Strategy and Annual Plan Update.

**9. Forward Plan**

9.1 Members were updated on the Forward Plan and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. Members were encouraged to submit their questions in advance in relation to items on the next agenda and suggest services to attend future meetings in relation to the performance report which would be distributed when it had been published for Cabinet.

**Resolved:**

The Forward Plan and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme items were noted.

**(The meeting commenced at 6:30pm and concluded at 7:16pm)**

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date .....