

Scrutiny Chair Report to Council

Since the last report to you at January's Full Council, the Scrutiny Committee met on 8th March.

The Committee received the Annual Report presentation from Burnley Leisure Trust. The presentation set out that the Trust had been focussing on recovery from the pandemic in 2021/22, alongside working alongside the Council to develop a 3-year strategy.

Members discussed the issues around attracting entertainment to the Mechanics, and how new links with Blackburn with Darwen had increased buying power to attract acts. Despite increased capacity the theatre side was still in deficit, but work was ongoing with the new Cultural Strategy Manager, including around funding for festivals.

Members asked questions around future areas of concern for the Leisure Trust and the Council's contribution. The current cost-of-living crisis was presenting challenges, around increased food costs for hospitality venues. Other contracts were being looked at to try to reduce costs elsewhere.

Following discussions it was agreed that although the report submitted was the same as that submitted to meet the requirements of Companies House, the format would be adapted to meet the needs of the Scrutiny Committee, and would be brought to Scrutiny closer to the end of the related financial year. The Finance Officer would also attend to answer any detailed financial questions.

We received a report on the extension of the Council's involvement in the Cosy Homes in Lancashire (ChiL) project. This was also looking to appoint a new delivery agent for the Project. Members were pleased that the project took a 'whole house' approach and that the scheme was working alongside the Council's Home Improvement Agency, establishing links with health services.

Finally the committee received a report which sought to accept funding to support ex-offenders to access settled accommodation in order to reduce re-offending. The committee were pleased that although not specifically about mental health support it was linked and the project officers would support this. Additional funding had been secured which would be used to encourage private landlords to work with the scheme.

Cllrs Howard Baker & Ann Royle, Scrutiny Committee Chair & Vice-Chair – April 2023