

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 28 September 2009

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor Alan Cullens (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Nora Ball, Mike Devaney, Marie Gray, Adrian Lowe, Rosie Russell, Edward Smith, Iris Smith, Joyce Snape and Peter Wilson

Also in attendance: Councillor Eric Bell (Executive Member (Neighbourhoods))

Officers in attendance: Donna Hall (Chief Executive), Gary Hall (Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation)), Andrew Docherty (Corporate Director of Governance) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

09.OS.74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Harold Heaton.

09.OS.75 MINUTES

RESOLVED – The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 September 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

It was noted that the CIF2 fund is accessible to only Growth Point partnerships.

09.OS.76 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct the following interests were declared: Councillor Adrian Lowe declared a personal interest in item 10 The Willows, Coppull. Councillor Alan Cullens declared a personal interest in item 10 The Willows, Coppull.

09.OS.77 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public requested to ask a question at the meeting.

09.OS.78 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 1 OCTOBER 2009

The Chair reported that there had been no requests from Committee Members to consider reports on the Executive Cabinet agenda for the meeting on 1 October 2009.

It was noted that the Housing Allocations Policy (item 8 on the Executive Cabinet agenda) would be the subject of a Member Learning Session in the autumn.

09.OS.79 MONITORING OF INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS - NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING

The Chair welcomed Councillor Eric Bell (Executive Member (Neighbourhoods)) to the meeting.

Councillor Bell presented a report updating Committee on the actions taken following recommendations made by the Committee on 12 November 2007. Neighbourhood Working should be considered a journey, not a destination and the progress made so far was bearing results. The staff were now in place and projects with community groups and volunteers had been able to access match funding. The first of the Neighbourhood Tours had been held earlier that day.

In response to a query officers confirmed that the £150,000 pump priming fund earmarked to support Neighbourhood Action Plan projects was for 2009-2010 only and that Neighbourhood Working was subject to the Council's Project Management system with current status set at "green".

Further consultation would be needed going forward on the potential for Parish status. Members discussed how the PCT could contribute to projects.

RESOLVED –

- 1. The report be noted.**
- 2. A mechanism for information from mini matac meetings being forwarded to Councillors be explored.**
- 3. The total money accessed through pump priming be forwarded to Members at an appropriate time.**
- 4. A further update report be presented in the Spring.**

09.OS.80 NEW SCRUTINY POWERS

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Governance) advising Members of new powers available as result of the Local Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees) (England) Regulations 2009 coming into force.

These regulations gave the Council power to allow its Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make and publish reports and recommendations to the County Council on Local Area Agreement matters where the Borough Council have a role in delivering a target.

The Committee may also send a copy to any other partner to which the target relates and require it to have regard to the report or recommendation in the exercise of its functions. Health bodies are excluded from this provision.

There was a need to avoid duplication of work between Councils on issues that affected Lancashire as a whole.

RESOLVED - The report be noted.

09.OS.81 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Members noted the Overview and Scrutiny work programme and the Council's Forward Plan for the four month period 1 October to 31 January 2010.

RESOLVED - The work programme and Forward Plan be noted.

09.OS.82 REPORTS FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Joint Scrutiny Inquiry with Preston and South Ribble on Affordable Housing

Councillor Dennis Edgerley advised that the final report would be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November. A number of the recommendations had already been progressed, within the Action Plan for the delivery of affordable housing considered by Executive Cabinet in June 2009.

Highways Issues Task and Finish Group

Councillor Mike Devaney reported that Jo Turton, Executive Director for the Environment from Lancashire County Council, had attended the last meeting. There had been very useful discussions and a list of recommendations would be considered at the next meeting in October.

Town Centre Vitality Task and Finish Group

Councillor Peter Wilson outlined the progress of the inquiry and advised the Group would be undertaking a site visit to Burnley and another comparable town to consider best practice.

RESOLVED

1. **To note the verbal updates on the inquiries.**
2. **The scoping documents for Highways issues and Town Centre vitality be noted.**
3. **Councillors Harold Heaton, Mick Muncaster and Geoff Russell be added to the membership of the Town Centre vitality Task and Finish Group.**

09.OS.83 THE WILLOWS, COPPULL

The Chair accepted this urgent item under the special circumstance that there was a need to advise Members of a situation that had arisen since agenda publication and was of particular public interest.

The Chief Executive reported she had met with Chorley Community Housing and had come to an agreement that the Willows would not close imminently. The properties would be marketed to people on the Housing Register. Going forward there would be wider consultation on the future of the Willows.

RESOLVED – The update be noted.

Chair