

21 January 2010

Dear Councillor

**COUNCIL - TUESDAY, 26TH JANUARY 2010**

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the above meeting of the Council, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

**Agenda No    Item**

9.     **Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Task and Finish Groups (Pages 33 - 34)**

To consider a general report of the meeting held on 18 January 2010 (attached).

10.    **Audit Committee (Pages 35 - 38)**

To consider a general report of the meeting held on 14 January 2010 (attached).

11.    **Questions Asked under Council Procedure Rule 8**

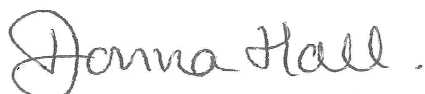
The following two questions have been submitted by Councillor Dennis Edgerley under Council Procedure Rule 8:

1. Would the Executive Leader report on the Local Government Ombudsman's decision with reference to the charge of maladministration over the Go Ape planning application? Would he detail the criticisms within the report and explain what steps will be put in place to prevent similar charges of maladministration in future?

2. Would the Executive Member give details of the alley gate programme as follows?

- the annual budget for alley gates
- the number of alley gate installations scheduled for this year (2009/10)
- the total number of outstanding requests for alley gates

Yours sincerely



Donna Hall  
Chief Executive

Carol Russell  
Head of Democratic Services  
E-mail: carol.russell@chorley.gov.uk  
Tel: (01257) 515196  
Fax: (01257) 515150

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આ માહિતીનો અનુવાદ આપની પોતાની ભાષામાં કરી શકાય છે. આ સેવા સરળતાથી મેળવવા  
માટે કૃપા કરી, આ નંબર પર ફોન કરો: 01257 515822

ان معلومات کا ترجمہ آپکی اپنی زبان میں بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ یہ خدمت استعمال کرنے کیلئے براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر ٹیلیفون

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**REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****GENERAL REPORT – 18 JANUARY 2010**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 18 January. This report summarises briefly the principal items debated and decisions reached.

**Value for Money Review of the Corporate Support Services - Determination of response to final report**

2. At a previous meeting we had requested the Value for Money Review of the Corporate Support Services. The review includes the office of the Chief Executive, HR&OD, ICT, Corporate Governance (Civic Services, Legal Services and Democratic Services) and Policy and Performance.
3. The review concludes that, in general, the Corporate Support Services provide good value for money, but the findings have identified a number of improvements and service revisions that have the potential to streamline the use of resources and provide better value for money.
4. We noted that the Executive Cabinet have approved the recommendations for development and implementation.

**Crime and Disorder Scrutiny**

5. We considered a report outlining options for the future scrutiny of crime and disorder and received performance information requested at the last meeting. Information on the Sanctuary and Families First scheme was also received.
6. We agreed that training on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and crime and disorder issues be delivered via several Member Learning sessions, including topics like alcohol misuse, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour. The provision of joint training with South Ribble Council Members has been agreed in principle.
7. We also agreed to ask South Ribble Council to undertake some joint scrutiny of the merged CDRP. This joint scrutiny is envisaged to take place in the new municipal year and before each Council's Executive makes a decision on the future of the merged partnership. It will focus on the efficient use of officer time and stakeholder satisfaction with the merged CDRP.

**Performance of Key Partnerships**

8. At the meeting on 9 November 2009 we received a copy of the performance of Key Partnerships - 2008/09 Year End Progress report as one of the topics raised at the "review of the year" event last March had been outsourcing and the effectiveness of subcontractors.
9. We discussed how in the future we will scrutinise the performance of key partnerships. We noted the Executive Cabinet has agreed to include alternative solutions to monitor and reassess financial strength of key partners using recent, relevant information in addition to last published financial accounts within the existing report.

10. We concluded that a report be presented to our meeting in March focussing on the financial stability of certain key partners and to constitute a task and finish group to consider aspects of one key partnership in the new municipal year to be discussed at our review of the year event.

#### **Future agenda items**

11. A review of the year session is planned for 22 March. This will include suggestions for topics next year and will be open to all non-Executive Members.
12. We will consider broad principles of the 2010 budget at the next meeting.

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Inquiries - Highways issues**

13. I accepted this item as urgent to enable the report to be considered by the Executive Cabinet in February. The Chair delivered a brief presentation outlining the key findings and recommendations that will have a positive impact on the delivery of services for the people of Chorley.
14. Our recommendations include for Lancashire County Council to provide a separate reporting mechanism for officers and Councillors rather than the current single telephone number and to reduce avoidable contact with the contact centre (NI14) by keeping customers updated, with text messaging, email alerts or use of postcards for “work in progress” or “work completed”.
15. Others are to enter into negotiations with respect to Chorley delivering some enforcement functions, such as advertising boards, highway encroachment and overhanging vegetation and to formalise arrangements and resources to enable Chorley Council to deliver gritting services in an agreed town centre area on behalf of Lancashire County Council.
16. We accepted the report with thanks and referred it to Executive Cabinet.

#### **Recommendation**

17. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS EDGERLEY  
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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There are no background papers to this report.

## **REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE**

### **General Report**

1. This report summarises briefly the principal elements of the items discussed at the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 14 January 2010.

### **Annual Audit Letter, 2008/09**

2. The Engagement Lead and the Temporary Audit Manager from the Audit Commission attended the meeting to present the Annual Audit Letter, which summarised the findings of the Audit Commission's audit of the Council's accounts for 2008/09 and its assessment of the authority's arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources.
3. The Audit Commission have issued both an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements for 2008/09 and an unqualified conclusion on the Council's value for money arrangements. We have been awarded the maximum overall score of 4 for the Council's use of resources in recognition of the authority's excellent performance in demonstrating innovative practices in the delivery of positive outcomes for the local community. This also recognises the skills and competencies of Members and Officers in managing and utilising the Council's resources wisely and targeting those resources to appropriate priority areas.
4. The authority's commendable achievement can be shared as best practice with other authorities and we will be liaising with the Audit Commission with a view to sharing our experiences and achievements with other authorities.
5. The Committee welcomed the report and expressed its appreciation to all of the Council's staff for their continuing commitment and efforts to maintain a high level of service delivery.

### **Use of Resources Report, 2008/09**

6. The Committee received and considered the Audit Commission's report on its assessment of the Council's management and use of resources to deliver value for money and sustainable outcomes for local people.
7. We were pleased to note that the Council has been awarded the maximum score of 4 for its use of resources in recognition of the authority's overall excellent performance. This is particularly commendable when considering that the assessment entailed a more stringent test than previous years, with a stronger focus on the achievement of positive outcomes.
8. Chorley Council is one of only two District Councils, and five authorities nationally, to achieve the top score of 4.

**Organisational Assessment, 2009**

9. The Committee considered the Organisational Assessment report published by the Audit Commission in December 2009 to inform and complement the Comprehensive Area Assessment report. The assessment examined how the Council measures and takes action to achieve its corporate priorities and how it continually monitors and reviews performance to ensure that services are improved, whenever necessary, to achieve the priority objectives.
10. The Council's performance has been rewarded with a maximum score of 4 for its management of performance. The auditors are satisfied that the Council is providing high quality services and delivers the priorities that local people have identified as important. The report referred to the challenges facing the Council and its partners, in areas such as housing and health, but accepts that work is proceeding to address the issues.

**Strategic Risk Update Report**

11. The Head of Shared Assurance Services presented the Committee with a progress report on the implementation of the projects and actions contained in the projects and actions aimed at addressing the risks and opportunities identified in the 2009/10 Strategic Risk Register.
12. The report details the risks and opportunities to the achievement of the Council's strategic objectives and the actions planned to mitigate the risks. A separate appendix identifies the current status of the planned actions, which shows that the vast majority are on track, are being managed effectively and are, thus, rated 'green'. Only four strategic risks have been rated 'amber', but corrective action has been put in place to bring these projects back on track.
13. The Strategic Risk Register is currently being reviewed to identify both the risks that can reasonably be deleted and other risks associated with new projects that should be included on the Register.

**Internal Audit – Interim Report on 2009/10 Activities**

14. The Head of Shared Assurance Services submitted the second interim report on the progress of the work undertaken on the Annual Internal Audit Plan between April and November 2009.
15. Appendices to the report provide both a general summary of the overall progress made in relation to the 2009/10 Internal Audit Plan, together with a more detailed analysis of the projects undertaken to date. We accepted that the Audit Plan needs to be flexible and capable of altering priorities according to circumstances and adding new audit projects as necessary.

16. The Committee accepted the report and agreed to the deferment of the planned Audit reviews of Contract Standing Orders, Asset Management, the Refuse Collection/Recycling Contract and Equality and Diversity issues to the 2010/11 Audit Plan. A number of these audit subjects has already been included in other recent assessments or reviews and the postponement of the audit of the Refuse Collection/Recycling contract will allow a sufficient operating period before a meaningful review of the contract. The reviews will, however, be given priority in the 2010/11 Audit Plan.

**Recommendation**

17. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR ANTHONY GEE  
Chair of the Audit Committee

There are no background papers to this report.

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