

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 25 June 2007

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor Laura Lennox (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Alan Cain, Mrs Marie Gray, Harold Heaton, Miss Margaret Iddon, Margaret Lees and Greg Morgan

07.OS.48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ken Ball, Geoffrey Russell, Edward Smith and Mrs Iris Smith.

07.OS.49 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No Members declared an interest in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

07.OS.50 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 May 2007 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

It was noted that the wording for the column headed Earliest Date decision can be taken on the Forward Plan was being considered by the Chief Executive and the Leader.

07.OS.51 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public requested to speak at the meeting.

07.OS.52 JOB EVALUATION

The Committee received a report of the Director of Human Resources as requested at the previous meeting. The Quality Assurance process is completed and the rank order of all posts was signed off by both Management and Trade Unions at the Project Steering Group on 13 April 2007. Following this management prepared options for the pay modelling and which terms and conditions of employment would form part of the negotiations.

Four successful meetings have been held with the negotiations progressing well. The target is to take recommendations to Council on 10 July 2007 for approval. It is likely that the union will need to have sign off at a national level, but it is hoped that this can be a “rubber stamping” exercise only due to the high level of regional involvement there has been in the negotiations.

The Director of Human Resources advised that there was an issue that due to the high number of restructures in the Council a significant number of new posts have been created. It is hoped these will be evaluated following further Job Evaluation training later this month.

There are two potential risks: equal pay claims and salary reduction. Steps had been put in place to manage these risks, including the completion of a detailed equal pay audit to assess the risks and the consideration of protection options for staff whose salary is reduced.

Ongoing work included the training of at least 12 members of staff and to combine both management and trade union representatives on joint panels for the ongoing process. There would be communication with staff on points, pay information and the appeals procedure, to implement the new pay and grading structure and embed job evaluation as part of the Authorities normal practices.

It was AGREED that the Committee should give further consideration to Job Evaluation with the view to a high level Inquiry being undertaken by the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel in due course. Issues to be considered would include the cost and impact on the organisation and the percentage of posts that went up, down and stayed the same. In addition, the impact on recruitment and retention and the current situation with other local authorities in Lancashire.

07.OS.53 CORPORATE FOURTH QUARTER PERFORMANCE - RECEIPT OF INFORMATION REQUESTED.

At the previous meeting the Committee requested Directors to submit information relating to issues and queries that arose from the Corporate Fourth Quarter Performance Monitoring Report.

Refuse and Recycling Collection

The Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment reported that the target of 100 per 100,000 missed collections had not been met and that the performance against this indicator was 108 per 100,000 in 2007-07. The Committee discussed the indicator, its validity and the method of its compilation from data supplied by the contractor and customers.

The Director of Streetscene Neighbourhoods and Environment expressed the view that there were pressures in the service over the remaining contract period which tended to depress reliability but that additional investment, as well as the investment profile in the original contract which were capable of improving this indicator over 2007/08 and 2008/09.

The Committee had asked about the performance of customer calls directly to the contractor. The Director of Streetscene Neighbourhoods and Environment informed the committee that a small number of complaints were made directly to the contractor but the Chorley Contact Centre officially dealt with complaint, comments and complements. The majority of complaints [approximately 85%] to the Contact Centre regarding refuse and recycling related to missed collections with the remainder concerning miscellaneous complaint categories such as failure to return containers etc.

There are around 800 properties registered for assisted collections from the point of storage of the refuse/recyclate. There is a higher rate of missed collections in this area. This was primarily due to problems with knowledge capture and retrieval particularly with crew rotations and the necessary use of agency staff.

The handling of complaints could be better managed with the introduction of the Customer Relationship Management System in the Contact Centre as customer advisors would be able to see the complete history of complaints for any property. This Customer Relationship Management introduction is an Information Communication Technology project in which Streetscene Neighbourhoods and Environment is participating.

The Committee heard that going forward the Council is holding a listening day with the public on 14 July looking at waste and recycling and that an options report would be presented to Strategy Group on the renewal of the waste management contract in July 2007.

It was AGREED that the results of the listening day be fed back to the Committee as there was a need for specific details as to why the satisfaction with the service had reduced and whether there was a need for one of the Panels to undertake an Inquiry into this issue.

Pollution Control Improvements

The Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment advised that there are licenses to authorise discharges to atmosphere and that technical improvements to reduce these were introduced statutorily from time to time. The responsibility for some of these lay with the Environment Agency through Integrated Pollution and Prevention Control and others with the Local Authority.

Technical standards were improved and there was a responsibility to ensure these were adhered to by a deadline. The pollution control improvements had been revalidated internally in Streetscene Neighbourhoods and Environment and there was a programme of improvements to ensure the improvements were met by the end of 2007/08. We were assured that the work was being undertaken, but the deadlines had not all been met.

It was AGREED that the Committee were satisfied by the assurances given.

Alley gate schemes

The Committee were advised that there are 20 schemes on the list for the current year. These had been measured up and awaiting the results of a tender process. All the schemes would go through a data refining exercise against the crime and disorder benefits.

The Committee noted that there was a great deal of interest in the alley gate schemes and that there were other benefits achieved in addition to crime and disorder issues.

Re-tendering the graffiti Removal and Public Toilet Cleaning and Maintenance Contracts.

The Committee were advised that under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 the Council has the responsibility to remove graffiti. The contract went through the tender process and the Council was taking action under contract terms to ensure the effective delivery of the service.

The Public Toilet Cleaning and Maintenance Contract went through the tender process, resulting in a cost saving in the provision of the service at the same standard.

Percentage of people satisfied with opportunities to participate in local decision-making

The Chief Executive and Principal Corporate Support Officer reported that in the previous year the work required during the annual canvass for the electoral register had increased.

Three forms were delivered to properties. On the third occasion if there was still no response the canvasser would knock on the door on two occasions to try and receive details of the occupants. From the door knocking stage there had been approximately 4,000 responses. The rate of return had increased from 87.5% in 2005 to 92% in 2006.

For five years the Council has offered electoral registration using the telephone and internet. The section worked with Council Tax who were now able to give details of properties where people have moved out. Electoral registration forms were sent out to these properties. The number of complaints from the public of not being on the register at election time had reduced since this collaborative working had been introduced.

There would be publicity in Chorley Borough News in August highlighting the need to be on the electoral roll to get credit. Additional information would be sent out to areas where there was a low rate of return. It was AGREED that information about the rate of return per ward to be emailed to the Committee.

Integration with the Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) was being investigated to match information about properties. The register did not start from scratch each year and rolling registration meant that electors no longer had to wait until the annual canvass to go on the register. It was key that the public understand and value the process, working with schools was a positive way of getting information and awareness out there.

07.OS.54 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 26 JUNE 2007

Communications and Marketing Strategy

The Committee considered the draft Communications and Marketing Strategy to be considered by the Executive Cabinet the following day.

The Chief Executive reported that the document set out the details of this important area of work for the Council. The "You Said, We Did" marketing thread is successful method of showing what the Council is doing to address issues raised by the public. It is a key challenge to find out who our customers are, to use this to shape information about our services and to ensure customers can easily recognise the Council and its services.

Communications and marketing has been bringing resource and expertise into the centre and creating a saving. The way forward is to know more about our audiences so we can break down messages and communicate in the way that suits them, to position ourselves nationally to raise the profile of the Council and the borough as a whole and what we do to look professional and be easy to understand.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.55 REVENUE BUDGET, 2006/07 - PROVISIONAL OUTTURN

The Committee received a report from the Director of Finance containing the provisional outturn figures for the Council's revenue budget for the financial year 2006/07. The Council has performed well throughout the year and the cash targets have been met. There has been a slight under spend but this is within acceptable tolerances.

The report indicated that the final Compensation payment for the Gillibrand Link Road, as yet not determined by the courts, would have an impact on the revenue budget. A report outlining the Compensation payment would be presented both to Executive Cabinet and this Committee in due course.

The final negotiated position in relation to the transfer of Housing Stock to Chorley Community Housing will have a significant impact on the final position. The Housing Revenue Account would close in 2007/2008.

Significant variations since the last report were noted, including concessionary fares at £88,000.00.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.56 CAPITAL PROGRAMME - OUTTURN FOR 2006/07 AND MONITORING OF 2007/08 PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report from the Director of Finance the provisional outturn for the Council's Capital Programme for 2006/07 and a progress update for the 2007/08 Capital Programme. The provisional outturn was £13,269,246.

The report indicated that the Council is proceeding well in the delivery of the Capital Programme. The most significant change was the addition of the Eaves Green Link Road to the 2006/07 programme. This scheme had slipped from 2005/06. The Committee discussed the proposed financing of the Gillibrand Link Road land assembly expenditure and noted the use of Section 106 resources.

Three new projects to be considered by the Executive Cabinet for approval were noted as Astley Park – Woodland Management, Coppull PlayZone and Charnock Richard Football Club – Pitch Improvements.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.57 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07

The Committee received the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report outlining the achievements and activities of the Overview and Scrutiny function for 2006 2007.

This included various Inquiries, involvement in the budget process and monitoring of the budget, consideration of Best Value Performance Indicators and Business Plan Monitoring Reports.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.58 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - UPDATE

The Committee considered the updated Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan.

The recent Overview and Scrutiny training delivered by the IDeA had been well attended and received. It was important that Members and officers now took the issues raised forward.

There are plans in place to improve the publicity surrounding the work of Overview and Scrutiny and to revise the structure of the function following the deliberations in Parliament on issues in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill, which include Community Call for Action.

RESOLVED – That

- 1. The report be noted and**
- 2. That quarterly meetings be arranged between the Leader, Chief Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs.**

07.OS.59 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Council's Forward Plan setting out details of the key executive decisions expected to be taken between 1 June 2007 to 30 September 2007.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.60 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for the ensuing Municipal Year.

The programme included the envisaged timescale for the ongoing scrutiny inquiries and the planned details of the periodic monitoring of past inquiries.

RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.

07.OS.61 CENTRAL LANCASHIRE PRIMARY CARE TRUST

The Chair noted that the Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust would have been established for 12 months in September.

It was AGREED that the Statement of Strategic Intent and Financial Strategy Overview documents be requested and that a representative of the organization be invited to a future meeting of the Committee.

Chair