

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Agenda and Reports

For consideration on

Monday, 3rd September 2007

In Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Chorley

At 6.30 pm



PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC QUESTIONS/SPEAKING AT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEETINGS

- Questions must be submitted to the Democratic Services Section by no later than midday, two working days before the day of the meeting to allow time to prepare appropriate responses and investigate issues if necessary.
- A maximum period of 3 minutes will be allowed for a question from a member of the public on an item on the agenda. A maximum period of 30 minutes to be allocated for public questions if necessary at each meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This will provide an opportunity for members of the public to raise and ask questions on any issue falling within the remit of the Committee.

Chief Executive's Office

Please ask for: Gordon Banks
Direct Dial: (01257) 515123
E-mail address: gordon.banks@chorley.gov.uk
Date: 23 August 2007

Chief Executive: Donna Hall

Chorley
Council

Town Hall
Market Street
Chorley
Lancashire
PR7 1DP

Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER 2007

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held in the Committee Room, Town Hall, Chorley on Monday, 3rd September 2007 commencing at 6.30 pm.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 August 2007 (enclosed)

3. **Declarations of Any Interests**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda. If the interest arises **only** as result of your membership of another public body or one to which you have been appointed by the Council then you only need to declare it if you intend to speak.

If the personal interest is a prejudicial interest, you must withdraw from the meeting. Normally you should leave the room before the business starts to be discussed. You do, however, have the same right to speak as a member of the public and may remain in the room to enable you to exercise that right and then leave immediately. In either case you must not seek to improperly influence a decision on the matter.

4. **Public Questions**

Members of the public who have requested the opportunity to ask a question(s) on an item(s) on the agenda will be asked to put their question(s) to the Committee. Each member of the public will be allowed to ask one question within his or her allocated 3 minutes.

Continued....

5. **Executive Cabinet - 6 September 2007**

To consider any reports on the agenda for the Executive Cabinet meeting to be held on 6 September 2007 which are not already on the agenda.

Members of the Committee are requested to notify the Democratic Services Section by 10.00am Friday 31 August 2007, to ensure the attendance of the appropriate Executive Member and officers.

Please bring your copy of the Executive Cabinet agenda previously circulated.

6. **Lancashire County Council Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny - Partnership Working**

The Committee to receive a report from the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being and Director of Leisure and Cultural Services on the outcome of the Lancashire Overview and Scrutiny session regarding 'Every Child Matters' that was held on 28 August, as had been requested by the Committee at its last meeting.

7. **Strategic Housing Priorities (Pages 5 - 10)**

Report of Director of Development and Regeneration (enclosed)

Members will recall that the Committee at its last meeting agreed to consider this report prior to its submission to the Executive Cabinet

8. **Overview and Scrutiny Workshop Sessions - Key Issues (Pages 11 - 14)**

Report of the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services (copy enclosed)

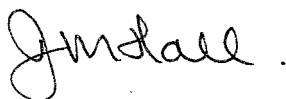
9. **Forward Plan (Pages 15 - 20)**

To consider the Councils Forward Plan for the four month period 1 September 2007 to 31 December 2007 (copy enclosed).

10. **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (enclosed) (Pages 21 - 24)**

11. **Any other item(s) the Chair decides is/are urgent**

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive

Distribution

1. Agenda and reports to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor Laura Lennox (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Ken Ball, Alan Cain, Mrs Marie Gray, Harold Heaton, Margaret Iddon, Margaret Lees, Greg Morgan, Geoffrey Russell, Edward Smith and Iris Smith for attendance.

2. Agenda and reports to Donna Hall (Chief Executive), Jamie Carson (Director of Leisure and Cultural Services), Jane Meek (Director of Development and Regeneration) and Tony Uren (Democratic Services Officer) for attendance.
3. Agenda and reports to Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being Councillor Mark Perks for attendance.

This information can be made available to you in larger print or on audio tape, or translated into your own language. Please telephone 01257 515118 to access this service.

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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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 2 August 2007

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Ken Ball, Alan Cain, Mrs Marie Gray, Margaret Iddon, Margaret Lees, Greg Morgan, Geoffrey Russell, Edward Smith and Iris Smith

07.OS.62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of the Vice-Chair, Councillor Laura Lennox.

07.OS.63 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

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

07.OS.64 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 June 2007 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

A Member of the Committee enquired as to whether the recommendations that came out of the Scrutiny Inquiry into Chorley Market would be utilised by the Working Group currently working on the future of Chorley Markets.

It was reported that the Scrutiny recommendations would be examined by the Working Group with a report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive Cabinet.

RESOLVED – That the Director of Development and Regeneration submits a progress report to the next meeting of this Committee on the future of Chorley Markets.

07.OS.65 LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Committee received a request from Lancashire County Council inviting the authority to take part in a piece of work with the County Council Overview and Scrutiny on an undertaking regarding Every Child Matters.

It was intended to look at how partnership working could help to deliver the outcomes of Every Child Matters and examine partnership working between the County Council and District Council.

The Committee was notified that a two tier Overview and Scrutiny session was to take place on the morning of the 28 August in which the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being and the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services would be attending the event.

RESOLVED – That the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being and Director of Leisure and Cultural Services be requested to report on the outcome of the Lancashire Overview and Scrutiny session regarding ‘Every Child Matters’ on 28 August to the next meeting of this Committee.

07.OS.66 CORPORATE FOURTH QUARTER PERFORMANCE - RECEIPT OF INFORMATION REQUESTED

At the meeting of the Committee held on 21 May 2007 (Minute 07.05.45 Refers) it was requested that the Director of Development and Regeneration submit information relating to the undermentioned issues and queries that arose from the Corporate Fourth Quarter Performance Monitoring Report.

- Number of affordable housing units completed

An Action Plan was submitted by the Director of Development and Regeneration explaining the reasons why the performance measure had not reached target and the corrective action being undertaken to improve performance in the next financial year including the timescales for implementation.

Reports on Strategic Housing and affordable housing were due to be submitted to the Executive Cabinet in the future and it was **AGREED** that the reports would also be submitted to that Committee.

- Vacant Town Centre Floor Space in various areas of the Town Centre verbal update on the action taken to drive up performance

The Director of Development and Regeneration reported on the strategic objectives for improving the Town Centre. The Strategy had been prepared to enable improvements to be made to the viability and vitality of the Chorley Town Centre and to attract the right combination of activities to the town. The vacancy levels for Chorley Town Centre tended to fluctuate with rates at 8% in April 2007 and between April to June 2007 7%, but generally it had been between 8-9% over the last 5 years.

- Local Plan Milestones – What were the stages, which were missed? Are there likely to be further delays in the Municipal Year?

An Action Plan had been compiled setting out the reasons why the performance measures had not reached target and the corrective action being undertaken to improve performance in the next financial year, including details of timescales for implementation.

07.OS.67 BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT - POLICY AND PERFORMANCE DIRECTORATE

The Director of Policy and Performance (Assistant Chief Executive) submitted the Business Plan Monitoring Statement relating to her Directorate, identifying the progress made against key actions and performance indicators for the 1st quarter of 2007/08 (1 April to 31 June 2007).

The report indicated the activities of the Directorate and in particular the significant progress that had been made on developing and strengthening our approach to data quality relating to business planning, project management and equality diversity, all areas which will have a positive impact on any future CPA re-assessment.

Large key pieces of work that were of high quality and delivered by their end of June deadline were the production of the Annual Report (Best Value Performance Plan) and the development of the Beacon bid for "Transforming Services, Citizens Engagement and Empowerment".

The Directorate had now a full complement of staff covering the Directorates Policy and Performance and Communication function.

Members explained that they were not involved in the discussions regarding the new action plan and targets are developed to ensure delivery of the re-fresh Community Strategy.

Members expressed concern that they were not receiving a full and complete picture of the outcome of consultation exercises with the public, in particular an example was given of the Council's "Listening Day" event which took place on Saturday, 14 July.

Under the Equality and Diversity update the Council's complaints system was reviewed for recording complaints which would allow the Council to analyse complaints by race, gender and disability. The new recording procedure was due to be introduced over the Summer of 2007.

RESOLVED – 1) That the report be noted.

2) That Members be invited to get involved in discussions around the new action plan and targets being developed to ensure delivery of the re-freshed Community Strategy.

3) That Members receive a fuller and complete outcomes of consultation exercises undertaken by the authority.

4) That the Committee receives a 6 monthly reports on the complaints received following the new process devised for recording complaints for race, gender and disability.

07.OS.68 CORPORATE 1ST QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT, 2007/08 - MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 30 JUNE 2007

The Director of Policy and Performance (Assistant Chief Executive) submitted the first quarter performance monitoring report including the authority's performance in relation to the Corporate Strategy and the Council's Best Value Performance Indicators for 2007/08.

The report indicated that the overall performance of the key projects was excellent with 66% of projects now completed and (an increase of 7% since the last quarter) and a further 25% of projects rated green. This demonstrated that 91% of the projects in the Corporate Strategy were either completed, progressing ahead of plan or on plan.

Only four BVPI's were performing at 5% or more below target and performance was deteriorating compared with the first quarter of 2006/07. Action plans had been developed for all these four indicators and progress in addressing these areas will be reported in the second quarterly report.

Members were notified that performance in the first quarter was particularly prone to seasonal influences and did not facilitate the development of strong conclusions regarding performance trends but rather presented an indicative picture of where the Council wished to focus attention in the coming months in terms of performance and project management.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.69 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY - FEEDBACK OF EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

The Committee was informed of the response by the Executive Cabinet on the recommendations of the Equality and Diversity Sub-Group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the review of the Council's approach to the embodiment of equality and diversity in the culture of the Authority.

The report received by the Executive Committee contained a series of recommendations for measures aimed at ensuring that the Council's services were delivered against equality and diversity objectives to all communities were afforded equality of access, outcome and opportunity.

The Executive Cabinet's decision on the recommendations was as follows:

"That approval be given to the implementation of the recommended measures contained in the report which can be implemented within existing resources and that consideration of the measures and actions which are likely to incur additional costs be deferred to await details of the estimated costs".

Those measures and actions likely to incur additional costs would be implemented by virement of alternative measures.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.70 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 respective scrutiny of past inquiries.

The Chair of the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel reported that the Panel at its meeting held on 16 July 2007 had made a request for this Committee to include the following issues in the Panel's Work Programme.

- To investigate the Council's environmental footprint and what the Council is currently doing to reduce its carbon emissions.
- To examine the poor public attendance at the Chorley Community Forums providing an analysis of the attendance across each Forum.
- Town Centre issues and management.

It was reported that there was already action in progress on all these issues and it should be noted that duplication of effort should be avoided.

RESOLVED – 1) That the work programme be noted.

2) That the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel only provide an overview of the identified issues, assisting and developing ideas with the responsible Officers and seeking views on the way forward.

07.OS.71 FORWARD PLAN

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

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Chair



| Report of | Meeting | Date |
|--|--|----------------------|
| Director of Development and Regeneration | Overview Scrutiny Committee Executive Cabinet | 03/09/07 06/09/07 |

STRATEGIC HOUSING PRIORITIES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To explain the strategic priorities of the Council and a brief summary of the focus of the team’s activity in the short term.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the report be noted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- There are a number of strategic priorities, which the Council will be taking forward over the next twelve months and which will be the focus of the Strategic Housing Team, following the successful transfer of the Council housing stock in March 2007. These priorities include the prevention of homelessness, increasing the provision of affordable housing in the Borough and developing a Choice Based Lettings scheme. In order to deliver these aims, it is essential that robust data be gathered regarding the housing market, both locally and on a sub-regional basis, which will inform these policies.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To ensure that the key strategic housing issues are properly addressed.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the central Lancashire sub region | | Improved access to public services | 4 |
| Improving equality of opportunity and life chance | | Develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live | |
| Involving People in their Communities | | Ensure Chorley is a performing Organisation | 4 |

BACKGROUND



6. The large-scale voluntary transfer of Council housing stock to Chorley Community Housing was completed in March 2007, with the remaining strategic and enabling function now led by the Strategic Housing Team, which consists of a manager, a Home Improvement Officer and two Housing Needs and Investment Officers. All local authorities are now required to understand the local housing market and to take appropriate steps in order to facilitate a balanced housing market, consisting of a mix of tenures and types of accommodation and associated products, which meet local need and aspirations. This team is now up to full capacity as from 4 June 2007 and this report is a summary of the strategic priorities, which the team have identified and which will inform the activities and programme over the next few months.

HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING OPTIONS

7. Chorley Council provides a Housing Options service for customers, incorporating homelessness and housing advice. This service was transferred to Chorley Community Housing (CCH), from March 2007 onwards. The Council remains accountable for the decisions made regarding homeless presentations and also for reporting on performance on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness.
8. The current situation in Chorley requires a systematic review of operational procedures and policy, coupled with the drafting of a robust prevention strategy for 2008-2012. For example, the total number of those presenting themselves as homeless in 2006/2007 was 689 compared to 465 in the previous year. This has occurred as a result of a number of factors, including a lack of affordable housing for rent and owner occupation in the Borough.
9. Nationally, there is a target for local authorities to eliminate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. However, in Chorley, the use of bed and breakfast accommodation is becoming increasingly common, with a total of 21 households housed in bed and breakfast accommodation for the whole of 2006/2007, compared to 34 households in just the first quarter of this year. The Council is committed to reducing its reliance on temporary accommodation especially bed and breakfast and we are developing an action plan in order to address this quickly and in partnership with CCH and other agencies.
10. Immediately following the transfer of the operational delivery of the Housing Options team, the frequency and vigour of legal challenges made to the Council upon decisions regarding homeless applicants (reviews of which, are carried out by officers within the Strategic Housing Team) has increased significantly.
11. Therefore in order to tackle these issues, a number of actions are being undertaken, including the establishment of a Housing Options Partnership Steering Group between the Council and the Chorley Community Housing. A revised procedure for determining homeless applications and associated documentation is currently underway along with a renewal of the partnerships between local agencies. This includes the engagement of the homeless agencies and social services, in order to review and revise procedures and so assist with improvements in delivery of outcomes and targets, including the increased use of preventative measures.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

12. There are a number of factors influencing the housing market in Chorley, which are creating an issue of affordability. The housing waiting list for social rented accommodation has almost doubled in recent years to approximately 6,000 applicants. Coupled with a lack of private rented accommodation and a buoyant housing market with above average house prices, which together with local aspirations for home ownership, has created a situation where many households within the Borough are unable to obtain accommodation.

13. A key measure included within the Corporate Strategy is for the Council to provide 250 affordable dwellings by March 2009. Since April 2006, 8 dwellings have been built for local residents, with a further potential 104 in the pipeline and other early negotiations taking place with regards to potential developments.
14. It is acknowledged that there is a need to review current policy and procedures including the definition of affordability for Chorley Borough and also the eligibility criteria for applicants seeking affordable housing.
15. On the 4 November 2004 the Council adopted a definition of affordable housing. The initial sale price being set in relation to average household earnings in the Borough. According to this definition, an affordable house is one sold initially at a maximum of average household earnings in the Borough multiplied by two point five.
16. It is proposed to update the lending multiplier, in order to bring it inline with national affordable housing policy and guidance and to those adopted by our sub-regional partner authorities. There is also a need to take into account changes in income and demography, which have occurred over the past three years. A report dedicated to affordable housing which will include a proposed definition of affordable housing for Chorley, in addition to action plan and projections for delivery for 2007-2009 will follow in September.
17. An action plan is currently being drawn up in order to increase the provision of affordable housing units in the Borough. This will include of the use of Section 106 Agreements and in particular, to ensure that affordable housing provision is maximised where possible and is in keeping with requirements of national policy, ie of a mixed, dispersed tenure obtained on site where appropriate.
18. Officers are also exploring more creative methods of increasing supply, including the use of private rented sector properties for voluntary leasing, (which involves the provision of a long lease on a private rented property, which is subsequently refurbished and let as a social rented property by an RSL (Registered Social Landlord). Shared ownership is also an option, where a private property is acquired by an RSL, through a partnership agreement and provided to eligible applicants, under a shared ownership scheme. It is recognised that in order to facilitate this new area of work, there is a need to establish an effective partnership with RSLs in the Borough and for further exploration and scoping work to be undertaken. A paper is expected to be submitted to Executive Committee regarding these types of schemes in the next few months.
19. The Housing Development Forum meeting was held on the 17 July 2007 and it is envisaged that this will become a more regular meeting, which will link into the proposed Chorley Strategic Housing Partnership (mentioned below).
20. Recent changes in national planning policy guidance have resulted in the reduction in the size threshold at and above which we can seek the provision of affordable housing as an element of overall development. The new threshold is a minimum of 15 dwellings, in contrast to the previous threshold of 25 dwellings or more (or 1 hectare or more). The Government published Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) in November 2006 and this will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for housing development.

STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET & NEEDS ASSESSMENT

21. In order to inform current objectives and strategic priorities of the Council, there is a need to gather market data and information about housing needs, property prices and income levels and to this end, the Council is exploring the joint procurement of the Hometrack Housing Market Intelligence System. This system is the market leader in providing income and property data to local and regional government. This date would provide a

baseline for the affordable housing policy and inform the drafting of the 2009-2012 strategy, in addition to informing planning policy. The cost of this system is £7,200.

CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

22. There is a commitment of the Council to introduce choice based letting in order to provide customers with a housing allocations service, which is based on the principle of choice and control over where applicants live. This provides an opportunity for authorities to develop robust partnerships with RSLs to make properties more accessible to applicants.
23. Choice based letting schemes are very different from the traditional way of allocating housing via the waiting list. Choice based letting allows applicants to apply for vacancies, which are advertised widely in the neighbourhood (eg in the local newspaper or on a website). Priority is given to those in urgent need but where possible properties are allocated on the basis of who has waited the longest. There is a local scheme jointly commissioned by South Ribble and Preston Councils and partnership to this scheme is to be considered, along with an appraisal of a stand-alone scheme for Chorley.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

24. As a strategic housing authority, the Council has a duty to identify strategic priorities for private sector housing and this incorporates a range of issues from dealing with empty properties and the poor management of private rented accommodation, to the need for disabled facility grants and energy efficiency measures, linking into the priority to reduce domestic carbon emissions. There is also a requirement by law to ensure that certain private rented properties are licensed and this needs to be progressed in Chorley.
25. One of the priorities identified by Government is that of decent homes, with a national target, which has been set to reduce the number of vulnerable households in non-decent accommodation to 70% by 2010. The 2004 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey in Chorley indicated that current levels are approximately 3% short of this figure and some of the work of the Home Improvement Agency is addressing this. However, there is a need to continue and build upon the work to improve on the monitoring of this, and to increase the number of empty properties back into use. There is money available for housing and some of this is to be allocated for the recruitment of a Strategic Housing Officer (private sector) to work proactively in the private sector.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

26. Energy efficiency in the home provides a significant contribution to the reduction (including carbon) of greenhouse gas emission and is a priority both nationally and locally. The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 requires all councils to devise strategies for reducing energy consumption, in order to meet national targets. The Council currently provide energy efficiency grants and it is intended to tender the installer contract to accord with procurement rules. As part of this process, it is proposed to add a discount scheme (able-to-pay) to expand the range of services we offer and thereby reach a wider range of people. There is also a plan being developed in order to bring in external funding so that insulation measures are not solely reliant on Council capital budgets; and to increase the number of Government-funded Warm Front Grants (WGF) carried out in the area. Officers have engaged in discussions with Eaga plc regarding WGF and should yield positive outcomes.

HOME REPAIR ASSISTANCE GRANTS

- 27. There is to be a revision of the grant-assisted domestic property condition assessment method carried out by the Home Improvement Agency, Anchor, which is in future, to be determined on the grounds of the Housing & Health Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and the Decent Homes standard, as opposed instead of the old ‘fitness’ standard. This will add value to the process as it will contribute to our target to meet decency and also highlight any issues of housing disrepair. Following the implementation of these changes, there is also to be a revision of the grant policy to reflect the above assessment criteria change.

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

- 28. The Council current provides disabled facility grants through Anchor and this service has been successful and is in demand. There are plans to submit a bid to GONW for additional funding, which will require Executive member approval.

STRATEGIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

- 29. It is recognised that in order to develop a strategy, which is fit for purpose and delivers real change for customers, all stakeholders must be part of the process, from early consultation to the delivery of objectives and tasks. Therefore it is proposed that a partnership be established, a “Chorley Strategic Housing Partnership” which will bring together key stakeholders in order to provide strategic direction in Chorley, to monitor delivery the existing Housing Strategy and to inform the development of the new strategy for 2009-2012.
- 30. The Partnership will consist of key public and private sector partners including the Council, Chorley’s RSL partners, developers, the community and voluntary sector, health and finance. The development and delivery of key projects, including Choice based lettings, stock rationalisation, the Homeless network and New Development, will be overseen by focus groups, which will feed into the strategic partnership.

CONCLUSION

- 31. The Strategic Housing Team now have a number of key priorities and objectives to achieve, in addition to the delivery of corporate and national targets, and detailed action plans for each work area are currently being devised. The effective use of project management and budgetary control will be key to the delivery of this programme and the associated outcomes, along with partnership working.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

- 32. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors’ comments are included:

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------------------|--|
| Finance | 4 | Customer Services | |
| Human Resources | 4 | Equality and Diversity | |
| Legal | | | |

There are a number of risks associated with proposals included within this report. Failure to deliver these strategic objectives could have an adverse effect on the reputation of the Council, particularly given that a number of these are required by statute. The CPA assessment in particular could be affected by the poor performance on targets around homelessness. Without appropriate and timely intervention, the costs associated with the use of bed and breakfast accommodation could spiral and reduce the availability of funding for more appropriate and long-term solutions for homelessness prevention.

Operationally, these proposals will have an impact on staffing and will require effective management of workloads and delegation of tasks, in order to ensure they are delivered.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

33. There are currently funds available in the Council's budget to finance some of these projects, specifically there are sums of £788k available to fund affordable housing schemes and other private sector initiatives. However some of the work may require a review of current resourcing levels once clear view of the work required is identified. Members may recall that the current Strategic Housing Structure is fairly new and that a review was scheduled after 12 months of operation to ensure it was fit for purpose. Any resource implications identified from that review will need to be considered in terms of the Council's progress on corporate priorities and the overall budgetary position.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

34. It is clearly essential that the Strategic Housing Team are suitably able to manage this work especially in terms of project management, financial/budget management and management of time and resources, as referred to in this report. Appropriate support through formal and/or informal training should be sought if required to assist staff with the delivery of the outcomes as stated, eg project management training and support. This would be supported through the Corporate Training Budget given the clear links with the delivery of a key corporate objective. Operationally, the Director of Development and Regeneration and Strategic Housing Manager will have a key role in ensuring that workloads and capacity are managed effectively within current staffing levels.

JANE E MEEK
DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

| Background Papers | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Document | Date | File | Place of Inspection |
| Planning Policy Statement (PPS3) | November 2006 | | |

| Report Author | Ext | Date | Doc ID |
|----------------------|------------|----------------|------------------|
| Zoe Whiteside | 5711 | 17 August 2007 | ADMINREP/1708LM1 |

| Report of | Meeting | Date |
|---|---------------------------------|----------|
| Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services | Overview and Scrutiny Committee | 03/09/07 |

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKSHOP SESSIONS – KEY ISSUES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To consider the key issues identified at the Overview and Scrutiny Workshop Sessions held in June 2007 for improving the delivery and effectiveness of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the Committee and the Executive Cabinet note the issues raised in the Workshop sessions and agree the content of this report to form the basis of a discussion document for submission to an early meeting of the Executive Leader, the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny bodies and the Chief Executive to consider the current Overview and Scrutiny structure and means of improving the delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To improve the delivery and effectiveness of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- None.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the central Lancashire sub region | | Improved access to public services | |
| Improving equality of opportunity and life chance | | Develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live | |
| Involving People in their Communities | 4 | Ensure Chorley is a performing Organisation | 4 |

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKSHOP SESSIONS

- Three workshops were held in the Town Hall, facilitated by Tom Russell, Principal Consultant from the Improvement and Development Agency and Graham Smith, Member Peer.

7. All Members of the Council, Directors, Policy and Performance Officers and Democratic Services Officers were invited to the sessions and the attendance at the Workshop Sessions was as follows:
- Effective Scrutiny (2 sessions) – 5 June 2007 – 31 Members and 18 Officers
 - Chairing Scrutiny (1 session) – 6 June 2007 – 12 Members and 6 Officer
 - Financial Scrutiny (2 sessions) – 11 June 2007 – 25 Members and 10 Officers
8. Copies of the presentation slides/information distributed at each workshop session have been circulated to the Members who were unable to be present for information
9. The overall feedback from the attendees was positive. The sessions improved the knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny process and Members/Officers were keen to move forward with the suggestions identified for improving the delivery and effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

EFFECTIVE SCRUTINY

10. The key issues highlighted at the Effective Scrutiny Workshop sessions were:
- Requirement for more formal liaison with Leader/Cabinet on Scrutiny Issues
 - Effectiveness of Forward Plan Document – Limited Content
 - Follow-up meetings and Agenda Setting Meetings for Chairs
 - Pre-Meeting for Chairs
 - Preparation of questions for witnesses in advance of meeting
 - More member involvement in content of Scrutiny Inquiry reports
 - Smaller working groups should be set up for Scrutiny Inquiries
 - Clear timetables for Scrutiny Inquiries
 - Annual Scrutiny Review by all Members
11. The following suggestions were made for holding the Executive to account:
- Executive Members to attend O&S meetings to respond questions on Directorate performance issues and financial monitoring reports
 - Members/public to attend Executive Cabinet meetings and be encouraged to ask questions
 - Introduction of written questions at Council and Executive Cabinet Meetings
 - Review implementation of scrutiny recommendations and invite Executive Member to attend every six months
 - Increase public involvement in meetings through more effective publicity in the Chorley Borough News
 - Be more investigative – Members should be more proactive in researching and examining issues
 - Encourage more Member participation in the scrutiny process through Group meetings
 - Executive Member and Directors to attend O&S meetings – to give account of reasons for proposals in policy documents
 - Scrutinise Forward Plan – power to influence plans before they are finalised

FINANCIAL SCRUTINY

12. The key influences of Overview and Scrutiny were identified as:
- Focus on high cost/poorly performing areas
 - Examples have been included the following scrutiny inquiries

- Grass Cutting
- Housing Maintenance
- Markets
- Scrutiny of Budget Proposals

13. It was considered that the Overview and Scrutiny function should add more value by:

- Holding Executive Member to Account
eg monitoring of Sickness Absence
- Involvement in Longer Term Financial Planning
- Beyond One Year
- Appointment of a Member Finance Specialist Sub-Group to examine the budget proposals in detail
- Reduce party politics as far as possible out of the Scrutiny process
- More/Improved Member Training on Budgets
- Introduction of budget for O&S Inquiries
- Examine Fees and Charges Policy in more detail
- Examine comparative data on income
- More information on Human Resources issues (Sickness, Recruitment and retention of staff/use of consultants)
- Comparison with similar authorities on staffing and performance on services
- Value for Money studies of all service areas

14. The key issues raised with regard to improving the monitoring of performance delivery and the Council's financial position were:

- Financial Monitoring Reports to be submitted quarterly
- Best Value Performance Indicators to be reported at same meeting
- Focus on problem area(s) – exception reports
- Request the Executive Member and Director to attend to discuss key issues
- Follow-up by a report back on any areas of concern/poor performance
Scrutiny decides when it stops to monitor
- Request the Executive Member to explain the impact of efficiency savings on the delivery of services

FUTURE SCRUTINY INQUIRY TOPICS

15. The following topics were identified as future scrutiny topics for consideration:

PROACTIVE

- Market Walk Phase 2 (car parking)
- Refresh of medium term financial strategy
- Astley Park management and maintenance
(parks in general)
5 year plan for maintenance for all parks and open space
- Waste Management Contract Renewal
- what do we want?
- Improve two-tier working
- Rural policy of the Council
(isolation/inclusion)
- Transport service from rural areas to Chorley Town Centre/Hospital
- Social Housing

REACTIVE

- Customer satisfaction – detail behind negative responses
- specific departments
- Issues arising from Community Forums
- highways juvenile nuisance
- Improvements to the Town Centre
- Community Forums and their validity
- Low performing service areas – performance management report
(format of information)
- Pubic participation at meetings/decision making process
- Effectiveness of Forward Plan – should it be restricted to key decisions?
- Capital Programme Management

CHAIRING SCRUTINY

16. One of the key issues raised at this session was the difference between chairing Scrutiny meetings and regulatory committees and the key aspects of chairing Scrutiny were identified as:

- Not Insular
- Set Own Work Programme
- Scrutinise Executive
- Call-in Power
- Challenge
- Check Performance
- Reviewing Policies
- Evidence Based

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

17. The key issues identified for improving the delivery and effectiveness of the scrutiny process should be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

18. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors’ comments are included:

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------------------|--|
| Finance | 4 | Customer Services | |
| Human Resources | | Equality and Diversity | |
| Legal | | | |

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

19. The recommendation in this report is to consider the findings in the wider context of the future delivery options for overview and scrutiny. As such there are no immediate financial implications associated with this report.

ANDREW DOCHERTY
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER, DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES

There are no background papers to this report.

| Report Author | Ext | Date | Doc ID |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------|
| Steve Pearce/Gordon Banks | 5196/5123 | 8 August 2007 | ADMINREP/0708LM1 |

CHORLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER 2007 TO 31 DECEMBER 2007

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key decisions which the Executive Cabinet, individual Executive Members or Officers expect to take during the next four month period. The Plan is rolled forward every month and is available to the public 14 days before the beginning of each month.

A Key Decision is defined as:

1. Any executive decision (as opposed to a regulatory decision) which is likely to result in the Council incurring significant expenditure or the making of savings where there is:
 - A change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more, or
 - A contract worth £100,000 or more, or
 - A new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more.
2. Any executive decision which will have a significant impact in environmental, physical, social or economic terms on communities living or working in two or more electoral wards - This includes any plans or strategies which are not within the meaning of the Council's Policy Framework set out in Article 4 of the Council's Constitution.
3. As a matter of local choice, the Forward Plan also includes the details of any significant issues to be initially considered by the Executive Cabinet and submitted to the Full Council for approval.

The current members of the Executive Cabinet are:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Councillor Peter Goldsworthy | Leader of the Council |
| Councillor Patricia Case | Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate, Policy and Performance |
| Councillor Eric Bell | Executive Member for Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment |
| Councillor Alan Cullens | Executive Member for Resources |
| Councillor Peter Malpas | Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration |
| Councillor Mark Perks | Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well Being |
| Councillor John Walker | Executive Member for Customer, Democratic and Legal |

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each key decision, within the time period indicated.

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a Key Decision may not be taken, unless:

- It is published in the Forward Plan;
- 5 clear days have lapsed since the publication of the Forward Plan; and
- If the decision is to be taken at a meeting of the Executive Cabinet, 5 clear days notice of the meeting has been given.

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan in accordance with Rule 18 (General Exception) and Rule 19 (Special Urgency) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

Copies of the following documents may be inspected at the Town Hall, Chorley, PR7 1DP or accessed from the Council's website: www.chorley.gov.uk

- Council Constitution
- Forward Plan
- Reports on the key decisions to be taken
- The minutes or decision notice for each key decision, which will normally be published within 5 working days after having been made

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Executive Cabinet which are held at the Town Hall, Chorley. The dates and times of the meetings are published on www.chorley.gov.uk or you may contact the Democratic Services Section on telephone number 01257 -515118 for further details.

D Hall
Chief Executive

Publication Date: 17 August 2007

| Details of the Decision to be taken | Decision to be taken by | Relevant Portfolio Holder | Earliest Date decision can be taken | Proposed Consultees | Method(s) of Consultation | Documents to be considered by Decision taker | Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated |
|--|--------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------|--|--|---|
| Approval of terms for acquisition of property required to construct the Gillibrand Link Road | Executive Cabinet | Executive Member for Resources | 4 Oct 2007 | None | None | Report of the Arbitrator appointed to determine compensation due | Director of Development and Regeneration Tel: 01257 515285 jane.meek@cho.rley.gov.uk Monday 20 August 2007 |
| Approval of the Council's revised Corporate Equality Scheme | Executive Cabinet | Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Performance | 4 Oct 2007 | Internal Stakeholders | Revised Equality Scheme to be circulated | Revised Equality Scheme | Director of Policy and Performance Tel: 01257 515323 ann.fenton@cho.rley.gov.uk Monday, 10 September 2007 |

| Details of the Decision to be taken | Decision to be taken by | Relevant Portfolio Holder | Earliest Date decision can be taken | Proposed Consultees | Method(s) of Consultation | Documents to be considered by Decision taker | Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated |
|--|--------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Approval of the Council's Corporate and Financial Strategy for 2007/08 - 2009/10 | Executive Cabinet | Executive Leader | 4 Oct 2007 | Internal Stakeholders | Draft Strategy to be circulated | Corporate Strategy | Director of Policy and Performance Tel: 01257 515323 lesley-ann.fenton@cho.rley.gov.uk Monday, 10 September 2007 |
| Approval of the Council's Consultation and Participation Strategy, 2007/08 | Executive Cabinet | Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Performance | 4 Oct 2007 | Internal and External Stakeholders | Draft Strategy to be circulated | Draft Strategy | Director of Policy and Performance Tel: 01257 515323 lesley-ann.fenton@cho.rley.gov.uk Monday, 10 September 2007 |
| Approval of Pay and Workforce Strategy | Executive Cabinet | Executive Member for Resources | 15 Nov 2007 | Trade Union's, Staff Members, Staff Forum and Strategy Group | Draft Plan to be circulated and available for comments on the website | Draft Plan | Director of Human Resources Tel: 01257 5151 lorraine.charlesworth@chorley.gov.uk Monday, 22 October 2007 |

| Details of the Decision to be taken | Decision to be taken by | Relevant Portfolio Holder | Earliest Date decision can be taken | Proposed Consultees | Method(s) of Consultation | Documents to be considered by Decision taker | Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated |
|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Approval of Neighbourhood Management and Engagement Strategy | Executive Cabinet | Executive Member for Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment | 15 Nov 2007 | Internal and External Stakeholders | Draft Strategy | Report of the Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment | Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment Tel: 01257 515720 john.lechmere@chorley.gov.uk Monday 22 October 2007 |
| Approval of a Joint District and LCC Locality Plan for Chorley | Executive Cabinet | Executive Leader | 6 Dec 2007 | Internal LCC and Stakeholders | Draft Document to be circulated | Locality Plan | Director of Policy and Performance Tel: 01257 515323 lesley-ann.fenton@chorley.gov.uk Monday, 10 September 2007 |

| Details of the Decision to be taken | Decision to be taken by | Relevant Portfolio Holder | Earliest Date decision can be taken | Proposed Consultees | Method(s) of Consultation | Documents to be considered by Decision taker | Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated |
|---|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Approval of Streetscene Strategy Document | Executive Cabinet | Executive Member for Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment | 6 Dec 2007 | Internal Stakeholders | Draft documentation to be circulated | Strategy Document | Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment Tel: 01257 515720 john.lechmere@chorley.gov.uk Monday, 12 November 2007 |

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME – 2007/08

| Function/topic | Assigned to | Scoping completed by | Evidence Sessions (detail) | Recommendations by | Executive Response | Feedback to Executive Repose |
|--|-------------|---|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Scrutiny Inquiries | | | | | | |
| Neighbourhood Working | ECOSP | Version 1 Sept 06 Version 2 Nov 06 | December 2006 to August 2007 | September 2007 | | |
| The Council's current performance against the key lines of inquiry to be assessed by the Audit Commission during the CPA and Direction of Travel | O&S | October 2006 | October 2006 to present (Capacity & Achievement element) October 2006 to March 2007 (Equality & Diversity element) | March 2007 | 24 May 2007 | 2 August 2007 |
| Gershon Efficiencies Attendance Management | CCOSP | July 2007 | Sept 07 to Dec 07 Sept 07 to Dec 07 | February 2008 February 2008 | March 2008 | |
| 2. Scrutiny Overview Subjects | | | | | | |
| To investigate the Council's environmental footprint and what the Council is currently doing to reduce its carbon emissions. | ECOSP | | | | | |
| To examine the poor public attendance at the Chorley Community Forums providing an analysis of the attendance across each meeting.. | ECOSP | | | | | |
| Town Centre issues and management. | ECOSP | | | | | |

| Function/topic | Assigned to | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March | April | May |
|---|-----------------------|-----|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|----------|-----|-------|-------|-----|
| 1. Holding the Executive to Account | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Annual Budget Consultation | OSC | | | | | | | | | | 12 | | | |
| Budget Scrutiny | OSC CCOSP ECOSP | | | | | | | | | 22 24 | 12 | | | |
| Provisional full year Performance Indicator | OSC | 21 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Quarterly Business Plan Monitoring Statements | ECOSP | | 7 | | | 13 | | 22 | | | | 13 | | |
| | CCOSP | | 12 | | | 25 | | 20 | | | | 11 | | |
| | OSC | 21 | | | 2 | | | 12 | | | 12 | | | |
| Quarterly Performance Report (Corporate Strategy and Best Value Performance Indicators) | OSC | 21 | | | 2 | | | 12 | | | 12 | | | |
| 2. Policy Development and Review | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan | OSC | | 25 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Corporate Strategy | OSC | | | | | | | 12 | 3 | | | | | |
| OSC – Overview and Scrutiny Committee | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ECOSP – Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CCOSP – Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

MONITORING OF PREVIOUS SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS – 2007/08

| Scrutiny Inquiry | Assigned to | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March | April | May |
|------------------------------------|-------------|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|
| Chorley Markets | CCOSP | | | | | 23 | | | | | 11 | | |
| Decriminalised Parking Enforcement | CCOSP | | | | 25 | | | | | | 11 | | |
| Contact Centre | CCOSP | | | | | | 20 | | | | | | |

| Monitoring of Budget Scrutiny Recommendations | Assigned to | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March | April | May |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|
| Environmental Services | ECOSP | | | | | | 22 | | 24 | | | | |
| Planning Services | ECOSP | | | | | | 22 | | 24 | | | | |
| Revenues and Benefits | CCOSP | | | | | | 20 | | 22 | | | | |

Rolling Programme of Scrutiny Inquiries to be Implemented

| Priority Order | Topic/Issue Title | Date Included | Priority Score | Source |
|--|--|---------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Full Scrutiny Inquiries</u> | | | | |
| Overview and Scrutiny Committee | | | | |
| 1. | Job Evaluation | June 2006 | All within the Corporate Strategy | Corporate Strategy |
| 2. | The effectiveness of the Community Safety Partnership in the delivery of reduced levels of crime in the Borough. | | | |
| Environment and Community Panel | | | | |
| 1. | Inequalities in the Borough Town Centre Strategy | | | |
| 2. | | | | |