

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 3 December 2007

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor Laura Lennox (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Ken Ball, Alan Cain, Mrs Marie Gray, Harold Heaton, Greg Morgan, Geoffrey Russell, Edward Smith and Iris Smith

07.OS.107 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Margaret Iddon and Margaret Lees.

07.OS.108 CHIEF INSPECTOR DEBBIE HOWARD

The Chair welcomed Chief Inspector Debbie Howard, who had been invited to attend the meeting to participate in the discussions on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (Minute 07.OS.116).

07.OS.109 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest by any of the Committee Members on any of the items on the agenda.

07.OS.110 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public had requested the opportunity to raise question(s) on any of the agenda items.

07.OS.111 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 November 2007 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

07.OS.112 EXECUTIVE CABINET

The Chair reported that there had been no requests from any of the Committee Members for specific consideration of any of the reports to be presented to the 6 December 2007 meeting of the Executive Cabinet, other than the reports already included on this meeting's agenda.

07.OS.113 CAPITAL PROGRAMME, 2007/08 - MONITORING

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) updating Members on the progress of the 2007/08 Capital Programme and seeking recommendations for the revision of the Programme which would need to be determined by the Executive Cabinet at its meeting on 6 December 2007.

The report outlined the reasons for the recommended revision and increase of the agreed capital budget of £8,798,310 to £10,175,240. Appendices to the report included a scheme-by-scheme analysis of the programme, and identified the proposed changes and slippages to 2008/09.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) commented on the proposed alterations to the capital programme, highlighting in particular, the recommendation for the Executive Cabinet to approve an increase in the overall

budget for the Astley Park project as match funding for the additional grant offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund, following a redesign of certain elements of the scheme.

In addition, a number of Members raised issues in relation to a few identified projects, including concerns regarding the design, quality of material and maintenance costs associated with the Market Street paving scheme. In response to Members' comments, the Officers confirmed that the Market Street environmental improvement scheme was currently being re-examined with a view to a further report being presented to a future Executive Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.114 JOINT DISTRICT AND LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LOCALITY PLAN FOR CHORLEY

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presented a report introducing the Joint Locality Plan for Chorley which had been produced by the Lancashire County Council and Chorley Council.

The Plan had evolved from the enhanced two-tier working arrangements and aimed to identify a number of the main objectives and projects linked to each Council's corporate priorities to be pursued over the next 12 months by both Authorities either separately or jointly.

The Joint Locality Plan was due to be presented to each Council's Executive Cabinet for approval and adoption.

In response to a number of comments implying that the Plan should be more specific on project implementation and management, the Officers stated that the Plan represented an indicative listing of the principal schemes for which both Authorities would be responsible, in order to assist the community's understanding of the two Authorities' distinct functions. More detailed action plans would be produced as part of the delivery process for the Community and Corporate Strategies.

RESOLVED – That the Joint Locality Plan be received and the Chair be requested to advise the Executive Cabinet that, while this Committee considers that there are areas of the Joint Locality Plan which could be improved or made more specific, the Members generally welcome the production of the Plan.

07.OS.115 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Council's Forward Plan setting out details of the key executive decisions expected to be taken between 1 December 2007 and 31 March 2008.

The Committee had previously indicated its wish to have the opportunity of considering and commenting on the Draft Pay and Workforce Strategy in advance of its consideration by the Executive Cabinet.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Forward Plan be noted.

(2) That the Executive Cabinet be notified that this Committee wishes to examine, with the appropriate Director, the draft Streetscene Strategy document before a decision is taken by the Executive.

07.OS.116 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION STRATEGY

The Committee received and considered a report of the Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment reviewing the delivery of the Community Safety Strategy.

The Chorley Community Safety Strategy, launched in March 2005, was due to expire in March 2008 and the report recommended a review of the past achievements of the Strategy and consideration of the arrangements that could replace both the Strategy and, potentially, the Community Safety Partnership from April 2008. The new arrangements should, in particular, encompass means of engaging with the public on community safety issues.

The report reminded Members that the baseline for the current 3 year strategy was to reduce the annual number of crimes within the Borough from 4,901 to 4,166 through the implementation of a range of actions and interventions. The number of recorded annual crimes had, so far, been reduced to 3,774 which represented a reduction of 18% on the previous year's statistics. The Police and Officers were confident that the strategy's overall target would be achieved by a further reduction of crime levels by 1.8% before the end of March 2008. A copy of a letter from the Home Office recognising and commending the continuing high performance of Chorley's Community Safety Partnership was attached to the report.

The Chair raised issues around the continuing funding for, and recruitment of, Police Community Support Officers and Chief Inspector Howard confirmed that it was the Police's policy to aim to recruit as full a complement of PCSOs as possible.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertakes a review of the past achievements and effectiveness of the current Community Safety Strategy in April 2008.

(3) That the Committee undertakes a further review of the new arrangements to be introduced in Chorley for community engagement in crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

07.OS.117 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the updated Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

The programme included the envisaged timescale for the on-going scrutiny inquiries and the planned monitoring of past inquiry recommendations.

RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.

Chair