

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 12 February 2008

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

08.OS.01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Ken Ball.

08.OS.02 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

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

08.OS.03 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

08.OS.04 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 December 2007 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

08.OS.05 CENTRAL LANCASHIRE PRIMARY CARE TRUST

The Committee at its meeting held on 28 June 2007 (Minute 07.05.61 refers) had noted that the Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust would have been established for 12 months in September 2007 and agreed that the Statement of Strategic Interest and Financial Strategy overview documents be requested and that a representative of the organisation be invited to attend a future meeting.

The Chair welcomed Mark Wilkinson the Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust to the meeting to present to Members the organisation strategy for improving the health and well-being of the population the PCT served and to make a difference in terms of life chances and outcomes.

The following goals had been set by the PCT for the Chorley area.

- To improve the length and quality of life for the people of Chorley.
- To expand health services where they are most needed.
- To enable people to take greater responsibility for their own health.

Based on this Councils "You Said, We Did" the Chief Executive responded to the key issues members of the public had requested.

The PCT would be responding to the following local needs.

- Teenage pregnancies
- Binge drinking
- Road injuries and deaths. - A figure higher in Chorley than the North West and England averages.

The area of Chorley East was focused upon, with the proposal for a Health Centre in Friday Street progressing well with an aspiration for construction on the site by the turn of the year.

The area of Buckshaw Village was raised with land set aside on the village site with outline planning permission granted for a health centre for the area.

Additional 4 new dentists would shortly be secured to cover the Chorley area.

A concern had been raised that with the expansion of the new Primary Care Trust which now covered West Lancashire that Chorley would lose out. In response the financial strategy which was currently being worked up would be focused on those disadvantaged areas and would be concentrating on needs and health.

The Chair thanked Mike Wilkinson for attending the meeting and welcomed his informal presentation.

08.OS.06 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 14 FEBRUARY 2008

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 14 February 2008 meeting of the Executive Cabinet.

08.OS.07 BUDGET SCRUTINY FOR 2008/2009

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) that had also been submitted to both Scrutiny Panels setting out the spending and performance context for key spending areas at the Councils, details of the rationale between the Executive draft budget proposals and the details of the key budget prospects for 2008/09.

The analysis of comparative data had shown that in the main the Council continued to drive down costs as measured by our relative performance against our nearest neighbours, whilst continuing to improve better performance and in the main satisfaction with services.

The budget proposals aimed to achieve the key targets and increase in terms of Council's Corporate Strategy with some of those requiring additional resources whilst others required working in a different way. New targets included climate change and older and younger people activities.

The Council continued to demonstrate good value for money resulting in maximum scores for better use of its resources and value for money in the annual use of resources assessment.

The report set out an analysis of service costs against our nearest neighbours using the value for money profile tool for the following services within the remits of the two Scrutiny Panels.

The Chair put forward a proposal for officers and Executive to consider, by which steps could be taken to reduce the cost of bed and breakfast accommodation for the homeless as it was costing the authority in the region of £100,000 per year. The demand for Bed and Breakfast accommodation had increased and the proposal would be the creation of a fund to implement measures to reduce the cost of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

The Committee received from both Scrutiny Panels a number of suggestions, which would form part of this year's budget consultation exercise and which would be put forward to the Executive Cabinet for consideration. A number of the suggestions reflected those received from public consultation.

RESOLVED - That the under mentioned suggestions and comments received from the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and be submitted to the Executive Cabinet as part of the 2008/09 budget consultation exercise;

1. To increase the number of Environmental Wardens.
2. To provide another vehicle for the Environmental Wardens.
3. That the hours of the Environmental Wardens be made flexible as currently they work to a restriction core time pattern.
4. To improve the process of requesting the cleaning of footpaths, cleaning of hedgerows and ditches outside the urban core and reporting of faulty streetlights. Currently there can be confusion as to where the responsibility lies with them.
5. To increase the use of the machine that removes chewing gum throughout the Borough.
6. To distribute Members the schedule of work for the street cleaning and grass cutting for their information and comment.

7. To identify areas where there is a lack of recreational facilities and either provide additional facilities or improve transport links to existing facilities nearby.
8. To explore concessionary arrangements with South Ribble where residents would be entitled to concessions within Chorley but South Ribble recreational facilities are closer.
9. That the proposed increase for grant of right of burial fees be phased.

08.OS.08 REVENUE BUDGET, 2007/08 - THIRD QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

The committee received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) setting out the current financial position of the Council as compared against the budget and efficiency savings targets it set itself for 2007/08 for the General Fund.

Excellent progress had continued to be made in achieving the Corporate Savings Target of £278,000 from the management of the establishment and a further £60,000 of savings to come from efficiency and procurement related activities.

The last report to Committee indicated a projected outturn forecast overspend of £91,000 at the end of September. This position had since improved and the current projection was a small overspend of around £30,000.

The report identified the significant variations since the last monitoring report to Committee.

At this stage of the year no major action was required as the position was as expected and the Council was on track to balance its budget for 2007/08 with the vast majority of savings required already achieved.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

08.OS.09 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT - POLICY AND PERFORMANCE DIRECTORATE

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) submitted the Business Plan Monitoring Statement relating to her Directorate, identifying the progress made against the key actions and performance indicators for the period 1 October 2007 to 31 December 2007.

The report indicated the activities of the Directorate and reported that all the actions set out in the Business Improvement Plan schedule for completion during the third quarter of 2007/08 had been delivered. In particular there had been considerable activity to support the work to continue the development of the Chorley Partnership, the highlight of which was a successful IDeA Peer Review of the Local Strategic Partnership.

The third quarter period had also been a busy time for the Communications and Marketing Team particularly with regard to marketing campaigns and for developing and publishing key council documents.

All risks had been managed and were on track to deliver planned cashable and non-cashable efficiencies.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

08.OS.10 CORPORATE 3RD QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT, 2007/08 - MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2007

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) setting out performance against the Corporate Strategy and the Councils Best Value Performance Indicator for the third quarter of 2007/08, 1 October to 31 December 2007. The performance was assessed based on the delivery of Key Projects in the Corporate Strategy and the performance of national Best Value Performance Indicators.

The report indicated that this was the first monitoring report on the key projects since the Corporate Strategy was refreshed in October 2007 and already the overall performance of the key projects was excellent, with 84% of the projects either completed, progressing ahead of plan or on plan.

Overall BVPI performance trend showed a positive picture of continued improvement with limited instances of deteriorating performance, which are being carefully monitored and managed into the final quarter. 67% (26) of indicators showed improved or consistent performance with 33% (13) showing a downturn in performance when compared with the third quarter of 2006/07. Most of these indicators had shown a small deterioration and were not causing great cause for concern.

The Committee focused its attention on the action plans that had been drawn up to address deteriorating performance and to drive up the number of BVPI showing improving performance in the year. The report detailed the analysis of those BVPI's, which should deteriorate.

An explanation was given on each of these areas and the contributing factors impacting on the poor performance as well as outlining the corrective action to be undertaken.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

08.OS.11 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Councils Forward Plan setting out details of the key executive decisions expected to be taken between 1 February 2008 to 31 May 2008.

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

RESOLVED - That the Forward Plan be noted.

08.OS.12 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 inquires and the planned monitoring of past inquiry recommendation.

RESOLVED - That the work programme be noted.

Chair