

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 22 May 2008

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor Alan Cain (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Mike Devaney, Mrs Marie Gray, Harold Heaton, Kevin Joyce, Adrian Lowe, Mark Perks, Rosie Russell, Joyce Snape and Peter Wilson

Also in attendance: Councillor Eric Bell (Executive Member for Neighbourhoods)

08.OS.25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

08.OS.26 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

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

08.OS.27 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public had requested the opportunity to raise questions on any of the agenda items.

08.OS.28 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 March 2008 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

08.OS.29 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 29 May 2008 meeting of the Executive Cabinet.

08.OS.30 FORWARD PLAN

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

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

The Committee received from the Corporate Director (Human Resources and Organisational Development) a short presentation on a report that was being considered by the Executive Cabinet on 29 May on the Workforce Development Plan 2008-2011.

The report indicated that the introduction of a Workforce Development Plan was an essential part of the Council's improvement planning and ensured that we have the skills, attitudes and commitment needed with the workforce to deliver the Council's vision.

The aim of the plan was to maximise our people assets to deliver effective and efficient public services.

Concern was expressed at how new Members receive information on how the Council works and how experience can be gained.

An example was given of a system developed by Lancashire County Council of the Executive Member/Lead Officer updating Members on information relating to their specific portfolio.

RESOLVED – 1) That the report be noted.

2) That the Executive Cabinet be recommended that in order to keep all other Councillors better informed, Executive Members should provide regular individual portfolio briefings.

3) That the Executive Cabinet be notified that this Committee wishes to examine with the appropriate Director, the Chorley Community Safety Partnership – Local Action Plan.

(Councillor Mrs Marie Gray left the meeting at 7.15pm)

08.OS.31 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

Further to Minute 08.OS.18 the Committee received a report of the Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) following the request to the Committee to report back following an extended period of consultation on the proposed pilot merge of the Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire Community Safety Partnerships.

The report indicated that during this period of extended consultation it had been established that West Lancashire will not be included in the pilot proposal to merge at this point in time and confirmation to proceed with the proposed pilot had been confirmed from South Ribble.

The report indicated the feedback received from the consultation and it was proposed that the pilot would commence at the earliest on 1 July 2008.

RESOLVED – 1) That the pilot proposal to merge the Community Safety Partnership of Chorley and South Ribble into a strategic Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership be supported.

2) That the report be forwarded to the Executive Cabinet on 26 June 2008 for endorsement, including the proposed framework for local arrangements for Chorley and a request from this Committee be made to the Executive Cabinet for a 6 month (rather than 12 month) key milestones as part of the measures for success criteria.

08.OS.32 BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENTS - 1 JANUARY 2008 TO 31 MARCH 2008

The Committee received the final quarter Business Plan and Performance Monitoring Statements for the following services:

- Leisure and Culture (People Directorate)
- Development and Regeneration (Business Directorate)
- Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment (Neighbourhoods Directorate)
- Customer, Democratic and Legal Services
- Human Resources
- Financial Services
- Information and Communication Technology Services
- Policy and Performance

The Corporate Director (People) informed the Committee that good progress across all areas during 2007/08 with no significant variation to report. The report identified that all performance indicators were exceeding target or were within the acceptable limit.

The Corporate Director (Business) presented the Panel with her Business Plan indicating that the past 12 months had seen progress in a number of areas as well as some new challenges. Key posts at a management level have been filled and at the beginning of the year challenging targets for the time had been taken and in spite of staff shortages the targets had been achieved and with regards to major applications were in the upper quartile when compared with other authorities.

Members noted that the decision to bring the Housing Options and Allocations team back in house had already paid dividends with a reduction in the number of households in Bed and Breakfast reduced from 17 to 1.

The Panel received the Business Plan Monitoring Statement relating to the Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment Directorate indicating that during this final quarter and following the formation of the new Directorate, the Neighbourhoods Directorate had begun to establish itself as a collective team in response to the developing neighbourhoods agenda for Chorley. The report set out the key messages with members discussing the first "Week of Action" that had taken place in Chorley East.

RESOLVED – That the Business Plan Monitoring Statements be noted.

08.OS.33 CORPORATE FINAL QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT, 2007/08 - MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2008

The Committee received the fourth quarter performance management report indicating the Authority's performance in relation to both the Best Value Performance Indicators and the Council's Key Performance Indicators.

The report indicated that this was the second report on the key projects since the Corporate Strategy was refreshed in October 2007 and already the overall performance of the key projects was 81% of the projects were either completed, progressing ahead of plan or on plan.

Six projects had been identified as "amber" due to varying degrees of over-run on time and contingency budgets. However project managers were confident that they will be delivered in the foreseeable future. No projects had been identified as red this quarter.

The BVPI performance trend showed a positive picture of continued improvement, with limited instances of deteriorating performance.

The report indicated that although performance overall was a picture of excellence and improving performance, there remained a need to understand and carefully manage performance where it was not meeting the Council's expectations or had not shown improvement and to improve these areas action plans had been drawn up.

In terms of quartile comparisons and achieving targets it was also very positive, with 46% of indicators in the top quartile and 70% of indicators achieving target, an improvement on last year's position of 32% and 66% respectively.

Members raised issues on the key projects that had been rated as "amber". In particular concern was expressed at the delays in the delivery of the vulnerable families project and developing the Community Plan for Buckshaw, highlighting the

use of Section 106 money as an issue. Members also raised issues relating to the continuing improvement to the green corridor of Chorley especially in relation to the capital project of Astley Park.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Committee received a report at its next meeting on the 23 June 2008 on the number of families who had been identified for assistance through the Vulnerable Families Project.

(3) That in relation to improving the Green Corridor Project for Astley Park the Committee requested that it be kept informed of any proposals to omit the Adventure Playground element of the Astley Park scheme due to funding.

(4) That alternative funding sources be investigated including LCC's "Play Builder Starter Grant" to enable this key part of the Council's play strategy to be implemented.

08.OS.34 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Committee was requested to appoint Members to each of the following Task and Finish Groups:

- To examine the contract and other issues relating to the services provided by Chorley Community Housing (CCH).
- Streetscene issues.
- Chorley Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy (Continuation from 2007/08).
- Joint Central Lancashire Scrutiny Inquiry into Affordable Housing (Continuation from 2007/08).

The Committee received the agreed meeting dates for the Task and Finish Groups.

RESOLVED – That the membership and key dates for the Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups be as follows:

Chorley Community Housing Inquiry

Councillors M Devaney (Chair), A Bradley, T Brown, R Lees, M Lowe, H Heaton and R Russell.

First meeting to scope the inquiry – 10 June 2008.

Streetscene Inquiry

Councillors A Lowe (Chair), S Smith, D Platt, Doreen Dickinson, K Joyce, P Wilson and J Snape.

First meeting to scope the inquiry – 24 July 2008.

Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy (continued from 2007/08)

A presentation to all Members on the Draft Design Strategy by the architect will take place on 10 July 2008. Following a consultation period the draft strategy will go to Executive Cabinet (but will also be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee just prior to going to Executive Cabinet).

Joint Scrutiny of Affordable Housing with South Ribble and Preston

Councillors D Edgerley (Chair), A Cain and L Lennox. Dates to be arranged with South Ribble and Preston.

Chair