

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Monday, 23 June 2008**

**Present:** Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair) and Councillors Nora Ball, Mrs Marie Gray, Harold Heaton, Kevin Joyce, Adrian Lowe, Mark Perks, Rosie Russell and Joyce Snape

## 08.OS.35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Alan Cain, Mike Devaney and Peter Wilson

## 08.OS.36 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

## 08.OS.37 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

## 08.OS.38 MINUTES

(a) Confirmation

**RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 May 2008 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.**

(b) Matters arising

(i) Business Plan Monitoring Statements - (minute: 08.OS.32)

The Committee agreed a way forward for the future consideration of quarterly business plan monitoring reports. A summary including exception reporting would be produced covering all the quarterly business monitoring reports. Members would still receive the full information but if they had particular questions for directors, they would need to give advance notice to ensure that the relevant officer was present. Members would be provided with the new procedure.

(ii) Corporate Final Quarter Performance Report, 2007/08 – Monitoring Report for the period ending 31 March 2008 – (minute: 08.OS.33)

The Committee received an update on the Vulnerable Families Project. The Co-ordinator for the project had started in post on 10 June 2008 and whilst no families had been identified at this stage, the Committee asked to be kept informed at their next meeting in August.

## 08.OS.39 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 26 JUNE 2008

The Chair reported that there had been no requests made by any Member of the Committee for special consideration of any of the reports to be presented to the 26 June 2008 meeting of the Executive Cabinet.

#### **08.OS.40 CAPITAL PROGRAMME - PROVISIONAL OUTTURN FOR 2007/08 AND UPDATE ON 2008/09 PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) on the provisional outturn of the Council's Capital Programme for 2007/08 and a progress update for the 2008/09 Capital Programme. The provisional report showed a net reduction in capital expenditure of £818,991 giving an outturn of £6,473,979.

The largest expenditure increases were reported under the executive summary of the report and were in respect of the Buckshaw Village Railway Station and Eaves Green Link Road. The County Council had now provided an invoice for this contribution so that payment should be made early in 2008/09.

The proposed financing of the 2007/08 Capital Programme had not required any borrowing giving revenue saving in 2008/09.

Consideration needs to be given as to whether there may be a shortfall of capital receipts during 2008/09 compared to the budgeted total, particularly in respect of 'Preserved Right to Buy' income from Chorley Community Housing as Preserved Right to Buy sales are expected to reduce following the credit crunch. The availability of capital resources should be reviewed in detail and the implications of any shortfall on the financing of the Capital Programme be taken into account.

An appendix attached to the report provided a detailed analysis of the provisional outturn for 2007/08 compared to the revised budget. Members of the Committee were invited to comment on and ask any relevant questions.

Members expressed concern at the lack of progress in the development and possible projected shortfall for the funding of the Buckshaw Village Railway Station. The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) reported that the Council would be looking at a number of alternative funding sources.

Members requested an update at their next meeting on the Astley Park Coach House Project including the Adventure Playground and information on the figure of £320,000 for play, which had been recently reported in the Chorley Guardian.

A project update was requested on the Common Bank Reservoir Project particularly in relation to the de-silting of the site.

Members noted that Memorial Safety had cost the Council £50,000 to date and as it was considered there would be further implications for the Council, a report was requested for the next meeting.

#### **RESOLVED – That**

- 1. The report be noted**
- 2. That the Corporate Director (People) submit a report on the progress of the Coach House project.**
- 3. That the Corporate Director (Business) provides a project update on the Common Bank Reservoir to the relevant Member (copy to the Chair).**
- 4. That the Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) submit a report to the Committee on 11 August on the implications to the Council of Memorial Safety in Closed Churchyards.**

#### **08.OS.41 REVENUE BUDGET - PROVISIONAL OUTTURN FOR 2007/08**

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) containing the provisional outturn figures for the Council's revenue budget for the financial year 2007/08, and information on both the General Fund and

the Housing Revenue Account. In line with predictions, the Council had shown a balanced budget in 2007/08 and met all savings targets for the year.

The level of working balances were greater than previously recommended in the financial strategy but it was proposed to maintain them at this level in the interim as the costs of concessionary travel were still unknown and the economic position has shifted significantly. The credit crunch and oil prices both affecting the Councils revenue and expenditure position in a negative way.

Members expressed their concerns that the initial information regarding concessionary travel had not yet been received. It was their understanding that this was a pooling arrangement and that this could fail if the information was not available. The Committee sought to ask for an officer from Lancashire County Council to attend a future meeting of the Committee if the data had not been received before August.

Members also raised concerns that under the Concessionary Travel Scheme, disabled users were restricted to travelling after 9.30am, which put those who were working at a financial disadvantage. The Executive was requested to investigate the cost of the introduction and implementation of allowing peak travel (ie before 9.30am) for all concessionary travel users; and also for just disabled users.

**RESOLVED – That**

- 1. the report be noted.**
- 2. Executive Cabinet be asked to investigate the cost of introducing and implementing peak travel for all concessionary travel users; and also for just disabled users.**
- 3. if the information requested from LCC on concessionary travel has not been received, a representative from LCC be invited to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss the matter.**

**08.OS.42 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received the Forward Plans for the periods 1 June 2008 to 30 September 2008 and 1 July 2008 to 31 October 2008.

The Committee had received two plans as the agenda had been published shortly before the latter plan had been published. It was decided that where this happened in the future, the plan be sent to follow.

The plans identified matters for potential decisions by the Executive and the Committee was requested to indicate those that it wished to examine in advance of consideration by the Executive.

The Committee had previously requested to examine with the appropriate Director the under mentioned report prior to any decision being taken by the Executive.

- Chorley Community Safety Partnership – Local Action Plan

**RESOLVED – That**

- 1. the Forward Plans be noted.**
  - 2. the Executive Cabinet be notified that this Committee wishes to examine the under mentioned report with the appropriate Executive Member and Director, before a decision is taken by the Executive.**
- **Approval of the Neighbourhoods Directorate – Value for Money Review and Structure.**

## 08.OS.43 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

### Chorley Community Housing

The Task Group met in June and July and agreed that the key themes for the review should be the delivery of home improvements, service improvement and decision-making and regeneration. The scoping of the review will be completed in July and presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in August.

It was agreed that Councillors Kevin Joyce, June Molyneaux and Stella Walsh would join the membership of the Group and that Councillor Terry Brown would come off the Group.

### Streetscene

Members were informed that this review would hold its first meeting on 24 July 2008.

It was agreed that Councillors Terry Brown and June Molyneaux would join the membership of the Group and that Councillor Keith Iddon would come off the Group.

### Joint Scrutiny Inquiry with Preston and South Ribble on Affordable Housing

The meeting dates for the Group had been agreed and whilst the scoping of the review was not yet complete, it had been agreed that the issues to be looked at should be:

- Regeneration of Terraced Properties
- Shared Ownership
- Maximising use of S106 monies
- Land availability
- Social Rented
- Maximising Housing Corporation Grant/Joint Strategy
- New initiatives/practices to deliver more affordable housing.

### Chorley Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy

Members were reminded that there would be a presentation on the Draft Design Strategy by the architect on 10 July 2008 and were informed that after a consultation period, the strategy would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before going to Executive Cabinet for approval.

#### **RESOLVED – That**

1. **the reports be noted.**
2. **Councillors Kevin Joyce, June Molyneaux and Stella Walsh join the Chorley Community Housing Task Group and that Councillor Terry Brown would come off the Group.**
3. **Councillors Terry Brown and June Molyneaux join the Streetscene Task Group and that Councillor Keith Iddon would come off the Group.**

## 08.OS.44 SCRUTINY INQUIRY

Members requested a report/and or presentation to the next meeting of the Committee on the new Waste Management Contract, particularly relating to:

- A breakdown of service, including costs;
- How the new contract addresses previous issues of customer satisfaction with the service.

**RESOLVED – That the Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) and the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods) be invited to the next meeting of the Committee on 11 August 2008 to discuss the new Waste Management Contract.**

**08.OS.45 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08**

The Committee received the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report outlining the achievements and activities of the Overview and Scrutiny function for 2007 2008.

The report highlighted the work of the Committee and the two Panels, included various Inquiries, involvement in the budget process and monitoring of the budget and performance and business monitoring. The report also covered the new structure for the scrutiny function.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted and forwarded to the Council meeting in July.**

**08.OS.46 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME - 2008/09**

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

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

**RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.**

Chair