

Chief Executive's Office

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Date: 30 June 2005

Chief Executive:
Jeffrey W Davies MA LLM

Chorley
Borough Council

Town Hall
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Dear Councillor

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to be held in the Committee Room, Town Hall, Chorley on Thursday, 7th July, 2005 commencing at 6.30 pm.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**

2. **Declarations of any interests**

Members of the Committee are reminded of their responsibilities to declare any personal interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. If the personal interest is a prejudicial interest, then the individual member should not participate in the discussion on the matter and must withdraw from the room and not seek to influence a decision on the matter.

3. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 June 2005 (enclosed)

4. **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2004/05 (Pages 5 - 24)**

To receive and consider the enclosed Annual Report for 2004/05.

5. **Parliamentary and Lancashire County Council Elections, 2005 - Issues Arising**

The Head of Customer, Democratic and Office Support Services will attend the meeting to make a verbal report on the May, 2005 elections, highlighting the issues that will need to be addressed for future elections.

Continued....

6. **The Council's Timetable of meetings for 2005/06**

This item was included on the agenda for the last meeting on 16 June as an opportunity for Members to comment on the number of meetings in the meetings' timetable for 2005/06, but was deferred to this meeting.

7. **Overview and Scrutiny Panels**

To receive update reports from the three Associate Chairs on the recent activities of their respective Panels (Item deferred from last meeting).

8. **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2005/06**

(Please pages 22 and 23 of the Agenda Pack)

9. **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 for attendance.
2. Agenda and reports to Deputy Chief Executive/Group Director, Group Director, Director of Finance, Head of Customer, Democratic and Office Support Services and Assistant Head of Democratic Services for attendance.
3. Agenda and reports to Councillors J Wilson, Edgerley, Goldsworthy and Ball for information.
4. Agenda and reports to all remaining Chief Officers for information.
5. Agenda to all remaining Members of the Council for information.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 June 2005

Present: Councillor Walker (Chair), Councillors Davies, Goldsworthy, Parr and Perks.

05.0S.19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Case, McGowan, Mrs Walsh and Mrs Wilson.

05.0S.20 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No Member disclosed any interests in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

05.0S.21 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2 March 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

05.0S.22 BUSINESS PLANS UPDATE TO THE YEAR END (2004/05)

The Committee received the year end for 2004/05 update of the Business Plans relating to Corporate and Policy Services, Human Resources, Finance and Legal Services whose remit and area are the responsibility of the Committee.

RESOLVED - That the Business Plans and comments received be noted.

05.0S.23 INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN CHORLEY

The Committee received from the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel their draft final report on their inquiry into the provision of youth activities in the Borough.

The report identified the findings and recommendations that had come out of the Inquiry.

RESOLVED - That the report and the undermentioned recommendations be approved and forwarded to the Executive Cabinet for consideration.

1) All available services, activities, advice sources and training and vocational programmes through, for example, the Borough Council's 'Get Up and Go' Programme and the Lancashire Youth and Community Service should be advertised and promoted as extensively and vigorously as possible.

2) The Lancashire County Council be requested to provide and/or support endeavours to establish dedicated 'Youth Centres' in local areas with advice and guidance to voluntary youth groups from the Borough Council.

3) The Council lobbies and encourages more extensive use of school facilities out of school hours for young people's activities.

4) The Council supports the establishment of a link between the web sites of the Lancashire County Youth and Community Services and the Borough Council to highlight information on available services and activities.

- 5) The Council aims to develop more effective links and liaison with Parish Councils on youth activities programmes and services and explores the potential for appropriate Parish Councils taking on the role of 'Cultural Champions' for the Borough.
- 6) The Panel recognises the valuable contribution a vibrant Youth Council makes to an area and recommends the Council to request the Lancashire County Council to re-establish a vibrant Chorley Youth Forum as a matter of urgency.
- 7) The Council to continue to encourage more local Groups to compile Development Policies to encourage young people's activities and to enable them to qualify for available financial aid from a variety of sources.
- 8) The Council explores the potential for the establishment of a 'Chorley Lads and Girls Club' by setting up an Officer Working Group to assess the feasibility of the facility.
- 9) The Council recommends and promotes better and more effective co-ordination between service delivery agents/bodies and funding sources.
- 10) The Panel recognises the need for the correct balance to be achieved between the direct provision and the sustainability of young people's activities and services and recommends the Council to support all measures to achieve this goal through, for example, the encouragement of local groups to pursue volunteer training and development courses.
- 11) The Panel supports the Council's commitment to its support of youth activities (evidenced by the growth item in the 2005/06 budget) and requests the Council to sustain its commitment to the provision of facilities for young person's activities by continuing a budget provision in future years for a continued rolling programme of improvement. This will enhance, but not replace, the activities and services provided by the Lancashire County Council and local voluntary groups throughout the community.
- 12) The Panel accepts the responsibility of parents/guardians to encourage their children to participate in activities, to participate themselves (whenever practicable) and to contribute (in whatever manner) to the resources required to stage the activities; and the Panel recommends the Council to examine means of promoting this principle.

05.05.24 INQUIRY INTO THE ONE STOP SHOP

The Committee received from the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel their report on its inquiry into the One Stop Shop.

The reports identified the findings and recommendations that had come out of the Inquiry.

RESOLVED - That the report and the undermentioned recommendations be approved and forwarded to the Executive Cabinet for consideration.

- 1) That after consideration of the evidence presented to the Panel the One Stop Shop has been effective in improving customer service.
- 2) To consider further the feasibility of the planning officer on Customer Services duty, to be based from within the One Stop Shop.
- 3) To consider amendments to the arrangements for "on duty" planning officers to address the issue of customers having to wait.
- 4) To let staff know how often the panic buttons are tested.
- 5) To have Customer Services advisors, in particular the supervisors, join in on regular training sessions and new starters to have training with the

back office sections, such as Revenues and Benefits and Planning Services.

6) To train some Customer Services staff to a higher level in certain services to serve as reference points within Customer Services.

7) To establish a policy to ensure that the dialogues used by the advisors are kept up to date for all services provided by the One Stop Shop.

8) To clarify the point where the customer query requires back office attention.

9) To load the planning software on more than one computer in the One Stop Shop.

10) To promote the use of the Chorley Borough Council Internet site to access information and services.

11) To publish Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) in the One Stop Shop on the different services provided, potentially via the plasma screen.

12) To increase the advertisement of facilities available at the One Stop Shop, for example a leaflet to libraries and community centres or an article in Chorley Borough News.

13) To produce a breakdown of the range of inquiries to Customer Services between Revenues and Benefits, Planning Services etc to aid future resource provision.

14) To record the number of queries requiring back office resolution. .

15) To record the numbers of Black and Minority Ethnic customers to aid future comparisons.

16) To set up a One Stop Shop user group with management and staff from all of the Council's Service Units involved and a Member of the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

17) To use footsteps/arrows to direct customers to the Fast Track Reception.

18) To train staff in basic sign language and to liaise with deaf organisations on other ways to provide services to deaf customers, such as the provision of sign language interpreters by appointment by an external or internal identified resource.

19) To make the internal entrance and exit doors to the One Stop Shop more accessible, potentially by making the doors semi-automatic push button operated.

20) The layout of Interview Room Three to be reconsidered.

21) To provide a disabled parking space in the vicinity of the One Stop Shop.

22) To advertise the "Language Line" service.

23) To target Black and Minority Ethnic communities for open evening events in the One Stop Shop and promotion of facilities available in the community.

24) To extend the opening hours to provide additional ease of use for in-work customers

eg appointments outside opening hours and extended hours phone lines.

25) To introduce text phone facilities for people with speech and hearing difficulties.

26) To support progress on the implementation of the Lancashire Shared Services Contact Centre to publicise the services available.

05.OS.25 MONITORING OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Committee received and considered an update report of the Head of Human

Resources on the monitoring of sickness absence across the authority and the process of reducing absence within the authority.

The report indicated that the performance indicator for 2003/04 was 13.45 days lost per employee.

The targets set for 2005/06 was significantly challenging at 8 days sick per employee equating to a 3.4% absence rate which was comparably low compared to the national and local targets for both public and private sector companies.

The year-end (2004/05) target of 10 days was met, with a final rate of 9.69 days per employee. The reduction equating to cashable savings of £250,000, which would have had to be found from elsewhere in the budget if it had not been for such an impressive turnabout.

The report outlined the major factors of the future action plans aimed at a continuing reduction in sickness absence levels and improving the health and well being of employees. A practice approach had been taken to manage better long and short-term absence within the organisation.

RESOLVED – That the Head of Human Resources continue to monitor and manage sickness absence in consultation with the Senior Management Group to effectively reduce absenteeism within the authority and report to the Committee at 6 monthly intervals.

05.0S.26 FORWARD PLANS

The Committee received for information the latest Forward Plan showing the revised format and the financial threshold for the identification of 'key decisions' that had been the subject of consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and which had been approved by the Executive Cabinet on 7 April 2005.

RESOLVED - That the revised Forward Plan be noted.

05.0S.27 THE COUNCIL'S TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS FOR 2005/06

RESOLVED - That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee on 7 July 2005.

05.0S.28 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

RESOLVED - That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee on 7 July 2005

05.0S.29 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2005/06

The Committee received the Work Programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the three panels for the Municipal Year 2005/06, which illustrated the status of current inquiry ongoing items and issues presently being monitored.

Chair

Chorley

Borough Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2004/2005



Councillor Walker - Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Mrs S Walsh - Chair Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Councillor Brownlee - Chair Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Councillor Perks - Chair Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel



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1. Introduction

By Councillor John Walker – Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

“I was delighted to be asked to Chair the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the year 2004/05 and continue the effective work that the committee had produced in previous years. I feel we have continued to make Overview and Scrutiny a key issue in the working of Chorley Borough Council and now Officers and Members feel they are involved in a process which benefits all aspects of Council business.

Our successes include the re-drafting of the Call-In Procedure and the Forward Plan. We had our first Call-In of an Executive Cabinet decision which did not result in any change to the decision but, it did give an insight into the procedures involved and lessons were learnt from it. We completed three investigations by all three panels into matters of public interest and two more are in the final draft form.

We are continuing to look at ways of engaging with the public.

Again we were not successful in scrutinising the Budget to our satisfaction but will endeavour to improve our procedures for the next round of budget proposals.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow Chairs, Members and Officers for their dedication and hard work during this last year and hopefully we can continue scrutinising in a constructive, robust and purposeful way during this coming year.”

June 2005

2. What is Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny is still a comparatively new function for local authorities. It has been introduced as part of the modernisation agenda for local government and the Local Government Act 2000 requires Councils to have at least one overview and scrutiny committee.

The main role of Overview and Scrutiny is to help improve the Council's performance through monitoring and review, to look at decisions taken by the Executive Cabinet, to help develop and monitor the Council's policies and strategies. The Overview and Scrutiny is based upon the model of Select Committees at Westminster. It is an effective method by which Councillors who are not on the Executive Cabinet can challenge and influence those making decisions.

There is no single definition of overview and scrutiny. It therefore should be viewed as an umbrella term covering a wide range of possible roles.¹ However, the four key legislative roles are:

- holding the Executive to account
- policy development and review
- best value reviews
- external scrutiny

This suggests an emphasis toward:

- acting as a watchdog for Executive decision making
- checking on whether existing policies are effective and helping to share new ones
- contributing towards the continuous improvement of Council services
- reviewing or investigating matters of particular concern either within the Council or within the community

The scrutiny role also provides new opportunities for public involvement and debate. This can support elected members in taking a community-orientated approach and bring new ideas and experience to scrutiny.²

¹ See for example, Chapter 2. The Development of overview and scrutiny in Local Government, ODPM, Sept 2002

² Developing the scrutiny role, LGIU April 2003

3. **Overview and Scrutiny in Chorley - A Background**

The Council first established and appointed Overview and Scrutiny Committees in September 1999 as part of the proposals for the introduction of a new system of Executive Leader and Cabinet style of local governance. Chorley was one of the first authorities to introduce its new political management arrangements.

The Council initially appointed two Overview and Scrutiny Committees to discharge the functions covering the whole of the Council's services (one Committee overseeing the Service Group A and the other overseeing Service Group B) comprising 17 members, excluding those members who have Executive responsibilities and serve on the Executive Cabinet.

The Council has recognised the key role Overview and Scrutiny has to play within its new modernised structure. This role is emphasised in the overarching objectives for the Council's overview and scrutiny functions.

In May 2003, the Council established and appointed an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three standing Overview and Scrutiny Panels. The three standing panels are the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The purpose of the Committee is to discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and any Regulations made by the Secretary of State under Section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Committee and the Panels are intended to play an important role in ensuring that all the services of the Council are efficient and effective and meet the needs of the local community. See Appendix 1 for the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the three Panels.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will normally refer a matter which falls within the cross-cutting theme of any of the Panels to the appropriate Panel for investigation and reference back to the Committee with recommendations. As well as the Standing Panels, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may appoint additional ad hoc Overview and Scrutiny Panels to assist it in carrying out its functions should the need arise.

See Appendix 2 for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Structure, Functions and Responsibilities.

4. The Achievements and Activities

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Training and Development

The Committee continues to receive update reports on the training and development for Members. It highlights the need for Members to have training in order to develop their existing skills and equip them to carry out their scrutiny roles in a robust and effective manner.

Over the past year Members have received two comprehensive questionnaires to identify their training needs and of the responses received priority for training would be on the following subjects:

Overview and Scrutiny - Scoping of inquiries, gathering evidence for inquiries, toolkit and interview techniques.
Local Government Finance - Budget and Financial Awareness
One to One on Information Technology
Public Speaking

Best Value Performance Plan

The start of the Municipal Year saw the approval of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2004/05 which sets out the Authority's performance and achievements over the past years and outlines the measures the Council proposes to adopt in order to achieve its strategic effectiveness and in particular the targets for the three year period.

The Plan incorporates the Corporate Improvement Plan which had been compiled in response to the issues raised by the CPA inspection.

Best Value Performance Plan - Satisfaction Surveys

The Committee received the findings of the 2003/04 Best Value Performance Plan Satisfaction Surveys which had been carried out by Beacon Research, under the Best Value Performance Indicator regime. The Council was required to undertake satisfaction surveys in the following areas:

- General Satisfaction
- Housing Services
- Planning
- Benefits

The information contained in the surveys would be used in future Overview and Scrutiny inquiries.

Chorley Markets – Occupancy of Stalls and Associated Matters – Inquiry conducted by the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The first meeting of the Committee saw the draft final report on the inquiry into Chorley Markets their occupancy of stall and associated matters that the Customer Panel had conducted during the previous Municipal Year.

The Committee approved the recommendations and the Executive Cabinet deferred a decision on a number of recommendations in order not to fetter the scope that could be offered in the investigation of partnering or outsourcing opportunities.

Grass Cutting Service

In July 2004 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a request from the Executive Cabinet for an inquiry to be conducted into the Council's grass cutting services.

Members attention had been drawn to the performance of this service following the high volume of complaints that had been made against the Authority's grass cutting service throughout the Borough.

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel was requested to carry out the inquiry and more details can be found later on in the report under the activities of the Panel. (See page 11)

Balance of Funding Review

The Executive Cabinet also requested the Committee to analyse the problems with advice from the Director of Finance, inherent in the current system of Local Government finance and make recommendations on possible solutions.

The Government had established an independent inquiry chaired by Sir Michael Lyons to identify and recommend for pursuance the most feasible option and Members views were sought as to the means by which the Council could contribute to the initial debate.

A small Working Group was established and their findings were reported to the Executive Cabinet.

Monitoring of Sickness Absence

The Committee continued to receive reports from the Head of Human Resources on the sickness absence levels across the authority and there continues to be a reduced trend in sickness absence levels and improving the health and well-being of employees, including targeting of short-term persistent absence.

Executive Decision 'Call in' Request Procedure

The Committee considered the process and sought clarification of the 'call in' request procedure for Executive decisions. Anomalies existed between the Council's Constitution and the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit, and the Council approved amendments to the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution at its meeting on 19 April 2005.

The Minutes of the Executive Cabinet are now made available in advance of the publication of the next Executive Cabinet agenda and a mechanism adopted allowing notices of decisions taken by Executive Members to go on the Internet as soon as they are made.

Forward Plans

The Committee raised the issue of the content and publication of Forward Plans following a comparison made with other local authorities. The Committee took account of the Local Government Information Unit guidance note and considered that the format of the Council's Forward Plan should be revised to incorporate:

- a specific definition of a key decision, including the identification of an agreed financial threshold;

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- the names and portfolio of Executive Members;
- the identification of prospective decision makers (Members or Officers) and likely decision dates.

In April 2005 the Executive Cabinet and Council approved the financial threshold of £100,000 and a revised format for the Forward Plan document.

Executive Decision 'Call-in' Request - Extension of CCTV System to Outlying Areas

In December 2004 the Committee received its first request from a Member to 'call-in' a decision that had been taken by the Executive Cabinet. The decision taken by the Executive Cabinet was the refusal to meet the annual line rental associated with CCTV schemes in outlying areas of Chorley.

The reasons for objecting to the decision as well as proving an alternate decision/proposal was submitted to the Committee.

A small panel of Members selected from the Committee was established to review and scrutinise the decision to enable views to be formulated and then considered by the Executive Cabinet.

Written and verbal representations from Parish Council representatives and appropriate officers were made to the Panel and the recommendations from the Panel were accepted by the Overview and Scrutiny, however these were not accepted by the Executive Cabinet and the original decision stood as the Executive Cabinet considered that acceptance of the line rental costs of CCTV equipment in outlying parts of the Borough would place an additional burden on the Council's revenue budget when the costs could be funded by other sources.

Draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2005/06, and Business Plans for 2005/06

Throughout January 2005 the Committee and Panels met to seek Members views on the Council's spending priorities for 2005/06 and to assist the Executive Cabinet when it considered the budget.

The Council had adopted a more rigorous corporate planning process than previous years to focus on the priorities to support the development of its budget.

The basic approach was the draft Business Plans for each service unit would be used as a means of scrutinising the budget. The draft plans had been initially constructed on the basis of continuing current service levels, and growth options which might be recommended by the Cabinet would be incorporated prior to the Council's final approval.

The Business Plan for each service unit was submitted to the Committee/Panel which have the remit for that service.

Chorley Borough Community Strategy (2005 – 2016) and Action Plan (2005 – 2008)

At the beginning of the year the Committees' views and comments were sought on the draft Community Strategy for 2005 – 2008.

The Strategy had been produced in accordance with legislative requirement after intensive consultation sessions with the Chorley Partnership member organisations and partners including the Borough Council, Parish Councils, the Primary Care Trust, Police, local businesses and organisations and several voluntary and ethnic groups.

(b) **Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

The areas of responsibility of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel relate to:

- Community Safety
- Social Inclusion and Community Development
- Housing Strategy and Renewal
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Culture and Leisure

The Community and Overview Scrutiny Panel has met seven times.

Town Centre Autumn Fair

At the beginning of the Municipal Year the Panel submitted its findings into the review of the location of the Town Centre Autumn Fair.

A sub group of the Panel had been established and concluded that the Friday Street Car Park remained the most practicable and appropriate place for the adult fair, provided a number of conditions, stipulations and requirements aimed at safeguarding local residents amenities were imposed.

The Panel's reports and recommendations were submitted to the Executive Cabinet on 13 July 2004. The Cabinet did not consider that the Inquiry report's arguments overrode the level of noise and disturbance caused to residents around the Friday Street site and rejected the report's recommendations. The Cabinet considered that the Fair should, in future, be confined to Market Street and Fazakerley Street and, if practicable, St Georges Street.

Review of Juvenile Nuisance

The Panel continued the inquiry into juvenile nuisance. This inquiry has been looking at the activities perceived as threatening and contribute to the community's feelings of insecurity. The Panel has attempted to define the extent of the problem and obtain the public's perception of 'juvenile nuisance'.

The Panel's final report suggested a number of measures and initiatives to address juvenile nuisance to be focussed initially on the three wards of Chorley South East, Chorley South West and Coppull and implemented either by the Council or external agency. The Panel's report and recommendations were approved to the Executive Cabinet on 4 November 2004.

Provision of Youth Activities in Chorley

During October 2004, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested the Panel to conduct an inquiry into the provision of youth activities throughout the Borough.

The objectives of the inquiry was to identify and explore the current provision of youth provision and facilities (including statutory and voluntary bodies), to identify relevant future issues highlighted by the Youth Services and other key partnerships, to compare with best practice elsewhere and to identify relevant issues relating to funding, budgets and capacity.

To establish baseline information on currently available activities and facilities for young people and to obtain suggestions for future activities, a questionnaire was produced and distributed to selected persons and organisations.

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A number of representatives from key organisations were interviewed and the Panel visited innovative schemes operated by the Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.

The inquiry's findings and recommendations have been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and are due to be presented to the Executive Cabinet on 30 June 2005.

Public Participation in the Council's Decision-Making Process

As a means by which the Council could engage more effectively with its local community, it had been advocated that the Council should consider the establishment of Area Forums for defined localities. The proposal had regard to the objectives contained in both the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan and the draft Community Strategy Action Plan for 2005/08.

The Chief Executive submitted a report to the Panel on 7 October 2004 on issues relating to Community Engagement and Members of the Panel, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Deputy Leader of the Council undertook a visit to the Preston City Council Rural Area Forum meeting held on 9 December 2004. The Chair of the Panel and the Deputy Leader of the Council undertook a further visit to the Preston Central Area Forum meeting held on 27 January 2005 to gain an understanding of how the Area Fora in Preston operate differently within rural and urban areas of the City.

The consensus of the Panel members views following the site visit to the Preston Rural Area Forum meeting was that a draft scoping document on an Inquiry into Public Participation in the Council's Decision - Making Process should be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel for consideration and approval.

The Panel considered at its meeting on 9 February 2005 a further report by the Chief Executive on proposals for the implementation of Area Fora in three pilot areas and the Panel agreed a scrutiny inquiry into Public Participation in the Council's decision-making process.

The Inquiry which will commence in July 2005 will investigate the means by which the Council may more effectively engage with the local community on the provision of services provided by the Council and other key partner organisations in the Borough of Chorley. This will include the provision of (1) Area Fora or Committees and (2) the introduction of public speaking at meetings of the Council on a trial basis and the administrative arrangements involved.

During the course of the Inquiry the Panel will examine/review the operation of the Area Forum Pilot scheme in the Borough to be introduced later this year following consideration by the Area Forum Working Party and the Executive Cabinet.

Other issues the Panel dealt with were:

- Draft Budget proposals and Business Plans, as well as Business Plan updates relating to services within the Panel's remit.
- Audit of Crime & Disorder 2004/05. The Panel acted as the Authority's consultative body during the preparation of the Council's Community Safety Strategy for Chorley.

(c) **Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

The areas of responsibilities of the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel relate to:

- Customer Service
- Housing Management
- Service Standards
- Customer Charter
- e-Government
- Health Matters

The Panel has met 12 times during the 2004/05 Municipal Year.

Enhanced Recycling Scheme - Marketing and Promotion

The Panel was requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the marketing and promotion of the enhanced recycling scheme and to consider the most appropriate method of introducing the new scheme.

The Panel made recommendations in December 2004 as to how the positive elements and rationale behind the scheme could be highlighted in the promotional campaign with suggestions on other measures (eg Mini Bank sites, recycling roadshows and leaflet promotion) which might be taken to enhance the service.

The report was submitted to the Executive Cabinet in January 2005 and it adopted the recommendations.

One Stop Shop Inquiry

Throughout the year the Panel has been carrying out an inquiry into the Council's 'One Stop Shop' service at the Union Street offices. The service objective was 'to provide customers with a single point of access to Council and partner services using their preferred method of contact and to provide a quality service that fully meets customer requirements'.

The Panel received evidence in connection with the inquiry and had discussions with representatives from the Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee, Disability Liaison Group officers on how the facility operates.

The final report of the Panel's findings and recommendations has been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and is due to be presented to the Executive Cabinet on 30 June 2005.

Other issues the Panel dealt with were:

- Reviewing the Panel's recommendations following the Inquiry into the performance of Chorley's markets that had taken place the previous year.
- Reviewing the progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Housing Maintenance Appointment System Inquiry.
- Review and monitoring of the Council's comments, compliments and complaints procedure and proposals to change the procedure.
- Receipt of Draft Budget proposals and Business Plan as well as Business Plan updates relating to the Panel's remit.

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- An item referred from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the Panel to examine the information pack issued to new residents when first registering for Council Tax.
- Lancashire County Council's arrangements for the scrutiny of health functions.

(d) **Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

The areas of responsibility of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel relate to:

- Planning
- Highways and Transportation
- Environment
- Public space and sustainability

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel has met eight times during the 2004/05 Municipal Year.

Grass Cutting Service Inquiry

Several meetings of the Panel were taken up following a request made by the Executive Cabinet for a scrutiny inquiry to be undertaken into the Council's grass cutting service.

The inquiry had been requested following the receipt of a high volume of complaints about the service in the Spring of 2004.

The Panel received background information and comments on the service from Councillors, Officers and Parish Councils as well as from the Executive Member for Effective Service Delivery. The Panel received financial costings for the service, funding from Section 106 agreements and the specification of works for the urban core and rural areas.

A small group of Councillors were charged with considering financial issues, the specification of works and inventory of works with the Head of Public Space Services.

Follow receipt of the initial complaints, a range of initiatives had already been put in place to avoid the difficulties experienced, but the Panel had identified a number of other initiatives.

The recommendations contained in the report were aimed at improving the service and minimise the potential for further complaints. The majority of the recommendations were of an organisational nature and did not entail any major budget implications.

The Executive Cabinet in January 2005 accepted the recommendations.

Leisure Side of Cycling and Dual Use of Areas

The Panel's main inquiry this year has been the gathering of evidence for the leisure side of cycling and dual use of areas. The objectives of the enquiry are:

- to assess the dual use areas (ie recreation grounds, car parks, parkland);
- to highlight the areas for development and improvement;
- to identify the current areas and can they be extended;
- to reduce confrontation between the various activities.

Several witnesses have been called to give evidence on the various activities associated with the inquiry, and the inquiry is still on-going.

Other issues the Panel dealt with were:

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- receipt of Draft Budget proposal and Business Plan, as well as Business Plan updates relating to services within the Panel's remit.
- renewal energy study that the Council was progressing in partnership with Renewablesnorthwest, Sustainability Natwest and the Government Office for the North West.

5. The Way Forward

As can be seen from this second Annual Overview and Scrutiny report, like the previous year has been a busy one for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panels. A number of inquiries have been undertaken and completed as well as smaller reviews. If Overview and Scrutiny is to be seen as workable it must be seen to be making a difference to the organisation. The ultimate test of effectiveness of overview and scrutiny is not how much work is done but 'whether the decision (or policies or services) which result from its intervention are better than those which would have resulted had that intervention not taken place' (S Leach, De Montfort University). This can be demonstrated by the inquiries that have taken place.

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment identified a number of weaknesses in the Overview and Scrutiny process and these are being addressed.

The following subjects will assist in the development of Overview and Scrutiny:

- Continuing the monitoring and progress of the recommendations from inquiries.
- Ensure that there is appropriate induction and training for Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members especially to any new members on the Council following the elections.
- Ensure that there is awareness training to all members and relevant officers to promote an understanding of the role and importance of Overview and Scrutiny.
- To continue to consider the issues raised from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and continue to monitor the CPA Corporate Improvement Plan.
- To continue to improve the holding of the Executive to account.

Following consultations with the Chair and Associate Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Executive submitted proposals to the Executive Cabinet in April 2005 for a workshop session to be held to which all Members of the Council, Management Team and the Senior Management Group will be invited to attend, to complete the Centre for Public Scrutiny self evaluation framework for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function and enable the production of an Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan. The workshop will be held on 20 October 2005 to identify areas and means for improvements.

The Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit will be reviewed to reflect the amendments to the 'call in' provision in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and other changes that may come from the self evaluation workshop session.

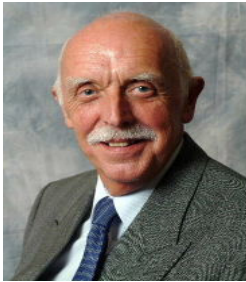
The Council continues to meet officers/Councillors from neighbouring authorities by way of the North West Scrutiny Support Officers Network and the Lancashire Scrutiny Partners Forum.

The subject of adequate support for Overview and Scrutiny identified in last year's Annual Report has been addressed with the recruitment of the Assistant Head of Democratic Services and Trainee Democratic Services Officer. The principal source of support is from the Democratic Services Section where all Overview and Scrutiny members can seek advice and guidance. In addition to the traditional 'Committee' functions the officers also provide the research and analysis to Overview and Scrutiny. The Corporate and Policy Services Section will also continue to provide support for each scrutiny inquiry.

Appendix 1

Membership of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panels

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Chair John Walker

- Members**
- Eric Bell
 - Lesley Brownlee (Associate Chair)
 - Mrs Patricia Case
 - Michael Davies
 - Peter Goldsworthy
 - Mark Perks (Associate Chair)
 - Thomas McGowan
 - June Molyneaux
 - Mrs Stella Walsh (Associate Chair)

Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel



Mrs Stella Walsh

- Andrew Birchall
- Alan Cullens
- Mrs Doreen Dickinson
- Thomas Gray
- Marion Lowe
- Peter Malpas
- Geoffrey Russell
- Edward Smith
- Mrs Joyce Snape

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel



Lesley Brownlee

- Henry Counce
- David Dickinson
- Daniel Gee
- Harold Heaton
- Margaret Iddon
- Roy Lees
- Roger Livesey
- Ray Parr
- Shaun Smith

Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel



Mark Perks

- Nigel Baxter
- Thomas Bedford
- Peter Buckley
- Frank Culshaw
- Mrs Marie Gray
- Mrs Margaret Lees
- Mrs Iris Smith
- Christopher Snow
- Alan Whittaker

Overview and Scrutiny Structure, Functions and Responsibilities

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The Committee has an overall responsibility for all scrutiny work including that undertaken by the three standing scrutiny panels.

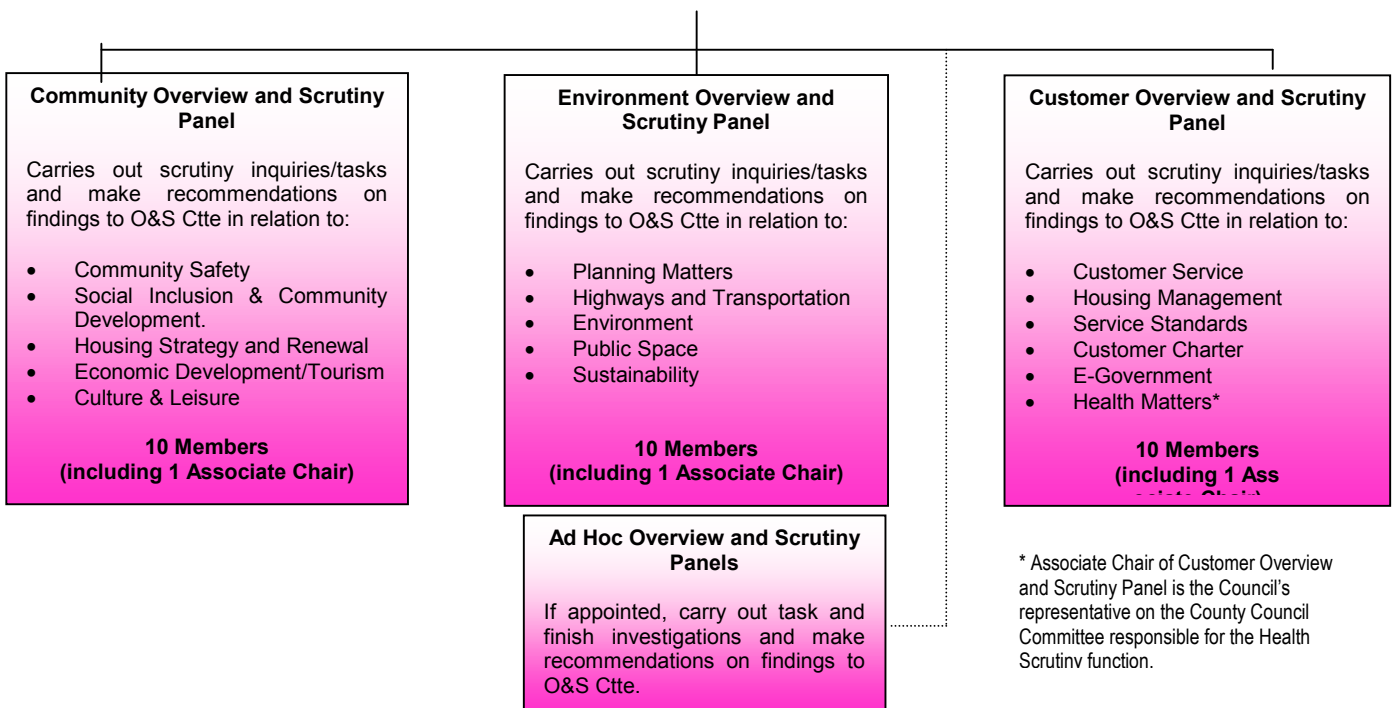
The Committee may exercise the full range of overview and scrutiny powers and functions including the 'call-in' of executive decisions. It may consider any topic appropriate for scrutiny but will normally focus on:

- Holding the Executive to account
- Performance, resources and corporate governance matters
- Consideration of recommendations from the standing scrutiny panels
- Making recommendations to the Executive and/ or the Council flowing from its own work and that of the scrutiny panels
- Setting and monitoring the annual scrutiny work programmes.
- Selection of inquiry topics and approval of project outlines and plans.

Matters falling within the crosscutting themes of the standing scrutiny panels will normally be referred to the relevant panel for full investigation and consideration.

The Committee may appoint ad hoc scrutiny panels to assist it in carrying out its functions should the need arise.

**10 Members
(including Chair + 3 Associate Chairs)**



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME – 2005/06

Function/topic	Assigned to	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
1. Holding the Executive to Account	OSC												
Annual Budget/Council House Rents								3					
Annual Budget Consultation						3		3					
Provisional full year Performance Indicator										3			
Business Plan Updates	ESP				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Com SP				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Cust SP				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	OSC				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
BVPP (Corporate Plan overall performance)		✓											
Monitoring of Sickness Absence (6 monthly update)							✓						✓
Housing Maintenance Budget							3						
Corporate Building Maintenance & Repair Service (6 monthly update)					3						3		
2. Policy Development and Review													
Other to be identified													
3. External Scrutiny/Community Concern Full Scrutiny Inquiry													
Public Participation/Communication	ComSP												
LCC's arrangement for the Scrutiny of health function - Periodic Review	CustSP												
Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit	ESP												
Parkwise Scheme	CustSP												
4. Monitoring of Inquiries													
Housing Maintenance Appointments System	CustSP			✓						✓			
Flooding, Flood Prevention and Contingency Plan/Proposals	ESP						✓						✓
Chorley Markets - Occupancy of Stalls & Associated Matters	CustSP			✓						✓			
Friday Street for the Chorley Town Centre Fair	ComSP									✓			
Juvenile Nuisance	ComSP												
Grass Cutting	ESP						✓						✓
Provision of Youth Activities in Chorley	ComSP												
One-Stop Shop	CustSP												
5. Other													
O & S Training Programme	OSC			3						✓			

OSC - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Panel
 ComSP - Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

ESP - Environment Overview and Scrutiny
 CustSP - Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Overview and Scrutiny Topics/Issues to be Programmed

Ref	Topic/Issue Title	Date Included	Priority Score	Source	Brief Description
	<p><u>Full Scrutiny Inquiries</u> Priority List IEG Measurement of Council's progress (Cust SP)</p>	26/06/03	4 and 4	Overview and Scrutiny Committee A	Referred to Customer O & S Panel
	<p>Reserve List</p>				
	<p><u>Policy Development/Review</u> Priority List</p>				
	<p>Reserve List</p>				

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