

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 10 August 2009

Present: Councillor Alan Cullens (Chair) and Councillors Nora Ball, Harold Heaton, Adrian Lowe, Rosie Russell, Edward Smith, Iris Smith, Joyce Snape and Peter Wilson

Officers in attendance: Lesley-Ann Fenton (Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)), Ishbel Murray (Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods)), Lorraine Charlesworth (Corporate Director of Human Resources), Tim Murphy (Corporate Director of Information and Communication Technology and Chief Information Officer), Dave Hewson (Active People Manager), Carol Russell (Head of Democratic Services) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

09.OS.53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dennis Edgerley, Mike Devaney and Marie Gray.

09.OS.54 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 June 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

09.OS.55 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct the following interests were declared:

- Councillor Adrian Lowe declared a personal interest in item 6: Executive's response to Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry into Chorley Community Housing and item 11 Chorley Partnership's Performance Report - First Quarter 2009 / 2010.
- Councillor Alan Cullens declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 5: Executive Cabinet - 13 August 2009 (Annual Treasury Management report 2008 / 2009 and interim review 2009 / 2010) and a personal interest item 6: Executive's response to Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry into Chorley Community Housing.

09.OS.56 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public requested to ask a question at the meeting.

09.OS.57 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 13 AUGUST 2009

Councillor Alan Cullens declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and left the room. Councillor Harold Heaton took the Chair for this item.

The Committee considered the Annual Treasury Management report 2008 / 2009 and interim review 2009 / 2010 from the Executive Cabinet agenda.

In response to a query officers confirmed that the current position based on the latest guidance from the Local Government Association was that a recovery of 83p in the pound was now predicated on money invested in Landsbanki.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

09.OS.58 EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY INTO CHORLEY COMMUNITY HOUSING

Councillors Alan Cullens and Adrian Lowe declared a personal interest in this item.

The Committee received a copy of the report considered by the Executive Cabinet at their meeting in June. The report endorsed all the recommendations made by the Chorley Community Housing inquiry and outlined how the actions would be delivered.

RESOLVED – The response of the Executive Cabinet to the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group inquiry report on Chorley Community Housing be noted with thanks.

09.OS.59 UPDATED ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Corporate Director (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented the updated attendance policy. One of the outcomes of the Committee's 2008 inquiry into the authority's attendance management was to update this policy.

Members noted that a Pandemic Flu Plan and a Human Resources Response Toolkit had been developed to address what the Council should do if staff fall ill, had to care for affected relatives or if schools and nurseries are forced to close during a flu pandemic. The Council would use the flexible working arrangements to support staff as much as possible.

RESOLVED – That the updated Attendance Policy be noted.

09.OS.60 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan and the Council's Forward Plan for the four month period 1 August 2009 to 30 November 2009.

Members noted that under the new Overview and Scrutiny responsibilities crime and disorder was scheduled to be scrutinised at the meeting on November 30.

The item on the Forward Plan relating to the Approval of Central Lancashire Local Development Framework Core Strategy Delivery Supplement would be presented to this Committee when it was considered by the Executive Cabinet.

RESOLVED – That the work programme and Forward Plan be noted.

09.OS.61 BUSINESS PLAN AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING STATEMENTS - FIRST QUARTER 2009 / 2010

The Committee received the Business Plan and Performance Monitoring Statements.

(a) Business Directorate

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators.

Members queried whether rental bonds had been issued to individuals or families and whether there was a proactive approach to issuing bonds to families.

Clarification was requested on the terms of reference for the Section 106 task group and a query was raised relating to if planning permission was required for allotments, including any buildings on allotments.

RESOLVED –

- 1. The report be noted.**
- 2. A response to the queries on rental bonds and allotments be forwarded by email.**
- 3. An update report outlining the terms of reference for the Section 106 task group be presented to a future meeting.**

(b) Business Transformation Directorate

The Corporate Director (ICT and Chief Information Officer) and Corporate Director (Human Resources and Organisational Development) reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators.

Members queried aspects of the Customer Relationship Management System and noted that the customer would receive notification of the resolution of their call, for example, if their bin hadn't been collected they would receive a phone call or text message to inform them the bin had been collected.

A report was requested on the Citrix implementation outlining issues, such as downtime.

A breakdown of undisputed invoices processed within 15 and 30 days to show whether the Council was speeding up payments given the impact the recession is having on businesses was requested. A breakdown of the expenditure (£56k within the buildings fund) relating to the Lancastrian was also requested.

RESOLVED –

- 4. The report be noted.**
- 5. A response to the queries on undisputed invoice payment and expenditure within the buildings fund be forwarded by email.**
- 6. A report be presented to the next meeting regarding Citrix implementation.**

(c) Neighbourhoods Directorate

The Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators.

Members noted that £5,000 expenditure for bus shelters should be accounted for within the Business Directorate budget, this was payment for the bus shelter located outside of Booths and was to be funded via slippage from 2008/09. £3,000 expenditure attributed to burglar alarms was for improvements to the existing system at Bengal Street Depot, including additional coverage for the new workshop area and additional alarm points.

For off-street parking the figure should read £52,000 rather than £85,000. The ongoing condition of the economy, the increase in concessionary travel use and recent increase in fees continued to impact on income. The Directorate would be reviewing the fees/tariffs for all uses of the car parks. Recoverable costs related to the income recovered from South Ribble for the temporary shared Community Safety Manager post.

Officers undertook to respond to a query relating to assistance that could be given to Heskin Parish Council relating to the relocation and provision of play equipment.

RESOLVED –

7. **The report be noted.**
8. **A response to the query on Heskin Parish Council be forwarded directly to Councillor Edward Smith.**

Councillor Nora Ball left the meeting at 7.20pm.

(d) People Directorate

The Active People Manager reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators.

Members had requested more specific information about the development of allotment provision in the borough and discussed details of work undertaken to date and activity planned in the near future. Queries were raised regarding the percentage of people who accept the offer of an allotment and the status of the land by the cemetery in Adlington that had been proposed for allotments.

A query was raised whether the free swimming initiative had increased the usage figures for Brinscall Baths.

RESOLVED –

9. **The report be noted.**
10. **A response to the queries on allotments and Brinscall Baths be forwarded by email.**

(e) Policy and Performance Directorate

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators. There were 8 rather than 12 new LSP projects approved by the LSP Executive for 2009/10.

A Member queried who determined the allocation of Grass roots grants.

RESOLVED –

1. **The report be noted.**
2. **A response to the query on Grass root grants be forwarded by email.**

09.OS.62 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - FIRST QUARTER 2009 / 2010

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presented the report setting out performance against the Corporate Strategy and the Council's National Indicators for the first quarter of 2009/10, 1 April to 30 June 2009.

The Corporate Strategy 2008/9 – 2010/11 identified 36 Key Projects. At the end of the first quarter 92% of the key projects (33) were on track, 8% of projects (3) were rated 'Amber' and no projects were rated 'Red'.

At the end of the first quarter 11 national indicators could be reported. All of these indicators had targets set and have been reported previously. Of the 11 the majority (8) had matched or exceeded target and 3 had missed the target by 5% or more.

In response to a query a Member advised that Age Concern had undertaken some research into volunteers, but would not release it for data protection purposes.

RESOLVED –

3. The report be noted.

4. A response to the query on research into volunteers be forwarded by email.

09.OS.63 CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP'S PERFORMANCE REPORT - FIRST QUARTER 2009 / 2010

Councillor Adrian Lowe declared a personal interest in this item.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presented the report which updated Members on the progress of the Local Strategic Partnership in the first quarter of 2009/10, including the first year's performance of the Local Area Agreement.

The Local Strategic Partnership had now commissioned a new programme of projects for 2009/10, designed to deliver the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy. There were plans to fund projects relating to alcohol misuse and abuse later in the year in line with the recommendations of the recent scrutiny inquiry into the Local Strategic Partnership.

An overview of the Sustainable Community Strategy indicators that could be monitored on a quarterly basis were included within the report. Members were particularly interested in the overview of a basket of credit crunch indicators. These showed that the Job Seekers Allowance claimant count figures showed a fall over the last three months in claims within Chorley. There had been approximately 47 jobs created or preserved through the creation of new employment/retail premises in the first quarter.

The Committee considered the performance of the Local Strategic Partnership against the first year of the Local Area Agreement 2008/9, in relation to district level targets.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

09.OS.64 REPORTS FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Joint Scrutiny Inquiry with Preston and South Ribble on Affordable Housing

On behalf of Councillor Edgerley the Democratic and Member Services Officer updated the Committee. A meeting of the three Chairs had been scheduled for that morning to sign off the final report - this had been postponed due to sickness and would be rescheduled in the next few weeks.

Highways Issues Task and Finish Group

On behalf of Councillor Mike Devaney, Councillor Alan Cullens advised the Group had met twice to scope this inquiry and determine the key issues, which related to the draft Streetscene Services Agreement and reporting and monitoring repairs. It was requested that Councillor Ken Ball be added to the membership of the Group.

Town Centre vitality Task and Finish Group

Councillor Peter Wilson reported the Group had met once to begin the scoping of the inquiry. Many queries had been raised and Members had commented on how large the topic area was. The priorities for the inquiry would be set at the next meeting. It was requested that Councillor Anthony Gee be added to the membership of the Group.

RESOLVED –

- 1. The updates be noted.**
- 2. Councillor Ken Ball be added to the membership of the Highways Issues Task and Finish Group.**
- 3. Councillor Anthony Gee be added to the membership of the Town Centre vitality Task and Finish Group.**

Chair