

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 15 February 2010

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor Alan Cullens (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Mike Devaney, Marie Gray, Harold Heaton, Adrian Lowe, Rosie Russell, Iris Smith, Joyce Snape and Peter Wilson

Also in attendance: Councillor Kevin Joyce (Executive Member for Resources)

Officers in attendance: Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy), Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places), Susan Guinness (Head of Shared Financial Services), Carol Russell (Head of Democratic Services) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

10.OS.116 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Nora Ball and Edward Smith.

10.OS.117 MINUTES

RESOLVED – The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 January 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10.OS.118 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No Members declared an interest in respect of items on the agenda.

10.OS.119 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public requested to ask a question.

10.OS.120 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 18 FEBRUARY 2010

The Chair reported that there had been no requests from Committee Members to consider reports on the Executive Cabinet agenda for the meeting to be held on 18 February 2010 other than those already on the agenda.

10.OS.121 2010/11 BUDGET PRINCIPLES

The Committee received the report of the Director of Transformation advising Members of the current forecast position for 2010/11 based upon the latest available information and the aspirations of the Executive Cabinet in relation to the 2010/11 budget.

The budget framework to be adopted by the Executive in constructing its budget and which was currently being finalised will be built on the following principles:

- Containing Council Tax increases
- Protecting businesses from the ongoing impact of the recession
- Continuing to provide value for money
- Protecting front line services
- Preparing for the future and the uncertainty over public finances

Members discussed the report in full and raised several points with the Executive Member for Resources (Councillor Kevin Joyce).

RESOLVED – The information and budget principles be accepted.

10.OS.122 REVIEW OF FREE SWIMMING SCHEME

The Committee received the report of the Director of People and Places presenting the usage information the first six months of the free swimming programme. The report had been requested at the meeting of this Committee held on 9 November 2009.

The scheme started on 1 April 2009 and would be reviewed in 31 March 2011. Free swims were available for customers aged sixteen and under and sixty plus, during public sessions, but not lessons. Six months into the programme usage was currently up by 30,251 (50%) overall for swimming, with juniors having increased by 13,012 (56%) and adults having increased by 17,239 (47%).

Despite initial concerns across both centres, paying adults (17-59) year olds have increased by 1,412 (4%) since last year had also seen a 4% increase. Members welcomed the positive initial findings.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

10.OS.123 BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENTS

(a) Partnerships, Planning and Policy Directorate

The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators.

Representatives from the Equality Forum and town centre traders would be attending the Town Centre Vitality task and finish group next week. Members expressed concerns regarding the lack of enforcement on advertising boards and certain market traders who encroach onto the footpath. Officers advised that the Council was currently in discussion with Lancashire County Council regarding advertising boards. Members agreed that a balanced approach would be needed here.

It was noted that the use of bed and breakfast was well under control with the focus being on homelessness prevention. The introduction of a desk at Chorley County Court on a Tuesday to give people information and represent them regarding housing possession was proving worth while.

The virtual town hall project would soon go live. It was a website that would bring in discussions about Chorley from other sites such as blogs, discussion forums and social networking sites.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

(b) People and Places Directorate

The Director of People and Places reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators.

Members noted that the action plan for allotments would be produced in the final quarter to take account of funding provision and ensure that allotments were provided where the demand was.

The targets surrounding graffiti would be revisited next year to make them more representative. The target had been missed this quarter due to machine malfunction and inclement weather.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

(c) Transformation Directorate

The Director of People and Places, on behalf of the Director of Transformation, reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators.

It was anticipated that the budget would be balanced by year end. The number of reported indicators would be reviewed prior to the next monitoring report.

The indicator relating to debts over 90 days were considered. It was noted that some of this was Section 106 monies.

RESOLVED –

- 1. The report be noted.**
- 2. Confirmation of the monetary figure for debts over 90 days and the risk of the money not being paid be forwarded to Committee Members.**

10.OS.124 REPORTS FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Councillor Peter Wilson advised that representatives from the Equality Forum, town centre traders and Councillor Peter Malpas (Executive Member for Business) would be attending the Town Centre Vitality task and finish group next week.

The final report of the group was expected in March.

RESOLVED – The update report be noted.

Councillor Peter Wilson left the meeting at 7.45pm.

10.OS.125 CHORLEY COUNCIL PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2009/10

The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy presented the report setting out performance against the Corporate Strategy and the Council's National Indicators for the third quarter of 2009/10, 1 October – 31 December 2009.

The overall performance of the thirty-three key projects was excellent with 100% rated 'green' and progressing ahead of, or according to, plan by the end of December 2009.

At the end of the third quarter, fifteen national indicators were reported. All of the indicators have targets set and had been reported previously. Of these the majority (eleven) had matched or exceeded target and four had missed target by 5% or more. Action plans were considered for those indicators where performance was lower than anticipated.

Assurances were given that performance on "Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events" would be on track by the end of the year.

The three other indicators related to litter, detritus and graffiti were below target. These were measured by surveys and issues had been encountered this quarter because of the season. There was a role for partners as their land was included in the survey. The performance usually improved in the final quarter.

Members highlighted that some areas where the Council owned units e.g. Chorley North Industrial Estate, would benefit from improved cleanliness. There was also a need for grass cuttings on the highway to be removed as these could cause detritus.

Members noted that new, energy efficient light sensors had been installed within Council buildings. It was noted that the Members room sensor would need to be adjusted.

RESOLVED

- 1. The report be noted,**
- 2. Confirmation be sent to Councillor Iris Smith on the use of energy efficient light sensors within toilets.**
- 3. An intheknow article be submitted encouraging Members to report any litter, detritus and graffiti.**

10.OS.126 CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2009/10

The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy presented the report updating Members on the performance of the Chorley Partnership over the last quarter, covering the period from October to December 2009.

Crime was down, on average, by 0.8% on this time last year, with an overall decrease in violent crime of 7.5% compared to this time last year. However, there had been an increase in acquisitive crime, in particular burglary dwellings and vehicle crime.

Members queried the unemployment figures and noted that after six months people could not claim Job Seekers Allowance. The unemployment benefit claimant count had fallen from 3.1% at the end of the second quarter to 2.9% at the end of the 3rd Quarter. The situation in Chorley was better than many other authorities.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

10.OS.127 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Head of Democratic Services reported that arrangements were being made to undertake some joint crime and disorder training and a joint task and finish group to consider the merged CDRP.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

Chair