

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 9 August 2010

Present: Councillor Adrian Lowe (Chair), Councillor Alan Cullens (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Julia Berry, Alison Hansford, Pat Haughton, Harold Heaton, Mark Perks, Edward Smith, Joyce Snape and Peter Wilson

Also in attendance: Chief Inspector Richard Robertshaw (Lancashire Constabulary)

Officers in attendance: Gary Hall (Director of Transformation), Simon Clark (Head of Environment), Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager), Paul Lowe (Merged Crime and Disorder Reduction Manager) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

10.OS.22 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Chief Inspector Richard Robertshaw – Lancashire Constabulary to the meeting.

10.OS.23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marie Gray and Rosemary Russell.

10.OS.24 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 1 June be held as a correct record for signing by the Chair, following a revision to the wording of minute 10.OS.18 point 3, – that following the Member Learning Session on Chorley Community Housing, the Executive Cabinet be requested to obtain evidence that the transfer promises have, or are on course, to be achieved.

10.OS.25 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No declarations or interest were received.

10.OS.26 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions were received by members of the public.

10.OS.27 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 12 AUGUST 2010

The Chair reported that there had been no requests from Committee Members to consider reports on the Executive Cabinet agenda for the meeting on 12 August 2010.

10.OS.28 REFOCUSING THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair and Vice Chair of Committee presented a report to the Committee asking them to consider a range of changes to the current overview and scrutiny arrangements in Chorley.

In the past the Committee has been very focussed on the Council's performance and as such received quarterly monitoring reports. These monitoring reports would still continue to be produced quarterly for the Cabinet agenda but it was considered whether the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive the information six monthly instead. This would enable the agendas to be freed up and allow the Committee to focus on the scrutiny of Executive decisions.

Members acknowledged that Chorley' operated a very open style of Executive Cabinet whereby any Councillor can go along to any Executive Cabinet meeting, speak on any decision and try to influence the decision. It was felt that Overview and Scrutiny Committee would benefit more from scrutinising the decisions of the previous Executive Cabinet instead of the forthcoming reports.

The Committee would in future formally request that the Executive consulted the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at an early stage on the budget principles to be applied and share information available on the Council's financial position at the appropriate time. It was also felt that the relevant portfolio holder could be invited to attend this meeting to explain the reasons for their decisions.

In debating the two issues of frequency of performance information and scrutiny of Executive decisions, amendments were moved by Members who felt strongly that the Committee should retain the current arrangements.

RESOLVED

- 1. That all performance information be provided twice yearly rather than quarterly for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 2. That the minutes of the previous Executive Cabinet be reported on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda.**
- 3. That timely requests be made to the Executive Cabinet at an early stage on the budget principles to be applied and the Executive be asked to share information available on the Council's financial position at the appropriate time, and that the appropriate portfolio member be requested to attend that meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny to explain the reasons for their decisions.**

10.OS.29 OVERVIEW OF PACT MEETINGS; THE MATAAC AND MINI MATAAC PROCESS AND MEMBER COMMUNICATION

The Head of Environment, Joint Crime and Disorder Manager and Chief Inspector Richard Robertshaw presented a report that gave an overview of the Police and Communities Together meetings, the MATAAC and Mini MATAAC process and Member communication.

It was explained to Members that although the PACT meetings link with the Community Safety Partnership and the wider neighbourhood agenda, they were solely a constabulary function, so it was difficult for the Council to influence the ways these meetings were administered.

Members asked if consideration could be given to returning back to the old Chorley Police Forums in view of the fact that it was highly likely that we would have Elected Police Commissioners in the future. This meeting provided a wider forum for all types of issues to be reported, not just those that were police related.

MATAAC is an operational process that is intelligence led and officers sought clarification from the Members as to the type of information they wished to receive to reassure their constituents.

Members requested if a sanitised version of the minutes of the MATAAC and Mini MATAAC meetings could be made available to the ward Councillors and requested that the membership of the MATAAC could also include Elected Members for information purposes only.

Members also expressed some concerns around the actual amount of work that is carried out in Chorley in relation to drugs, as opposed to other areas in the southern division. Chief Inspector explained that the work undertaken was prioritised based on

intelligence and he extended an invitation to all Councillors to take part/observe in the Drug Warrant Days that were presently being organised.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a sanitised version of the minutes of the MATAC and mini MATAC meetings be distributed to Elected Members.
3. That officers continue to explore ways of involving Elected Members in the MATAC and mini MATAC process.
4. That officers in the Neighbourhoods Directorate be instructed to cascade any relevant information to the Ward Councillors via the new Neighbourhood Area emails
5. That all Elected Members be invited to take part/observe in future Drug Warrant Days

10.OS.30 EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY INTO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Committee considered the response of the Executive Cabinet to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny report on Affordable Housing.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10.OS.31 EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY INTO TOWN CENTRE VITALITY

The Committee considered the response of the Executive Cabinet to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny report on the Town Centre Vitality.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10.OS.32 REPORTS FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Committee received from the Chair of each of the Task and Finish Groups an update on their respective inquiries.

(a) Allotments

Councillor Berry reported that the Group had held its first meeting and that all the Members had attended a site visit of allotments in both the Chorley Borough and a neighbouring authority. The draft scoping document would be taken for approval at the next meeting of the Group on 11 August 2010.

(b) Asset Management

Councillor Cullens informed the Committee that the Group had held their first two meetings and asked for approval of the draft scoping document presented at the meeting.
circulated to all Members.

RESOLVED

1. That the reports be noted.
2. That the scoping document for the Asset Management Task and Finish Group be approved.

10.OS.33 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

The Committee received a copy of the proposed Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2011/12, including the specific outcomes of the Task and Finish Groups. It was reported that the Work Programme would be updated as follows:

- the reporting of performance information to be received every six months
- That the joint Crime and Disorder Scrutiny be moved to the March meeting
- That a review of Chorley Community Housing be removed following the successful Member Learning Sessions and the Committee's request to Executive Cabinet to seek further clarification in relation to the transfer promises.

RESOLVED – That the changes to the Work Programme be approved.

10.OS.34 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Forward Plan for the period 1 August 2010 to 30 November 2010.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

10.OS.35 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph.1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

10.OS.36 PERFORMANCE OF KEY PARTNERSHIPS - 2009/10 YEAR END REPORT

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report of the Director of Transformation providing Members with a corporate update on the performance of the Council's key partnership arrangements during 2009/10.

The report outlined information required by the Council's framework for partnership working, including the performance of the Council's key partnerships against targets set for the current year; an assessment of the partners' financial strengths and stability; and any emerging issues that required to be addressed.

It was reported that in the current financial climate the financial position of partner organisations was being monitored and several restructures were taking place. The Council had been informed that morning that British Legion who administer our car parking scheme had been bought out by another company.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted

Chair