

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Monday, 12 December 2011**

**Present:** Councillor Adrian Lowe (Chair), Councillor Debra Platt (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Julia Berry, Magda Cullens, Harold Heaton, Keith Iddon, Beverley Murray, Rosie Russell, Joyce Snape, Paul Walmsley and Peter Wilson

**Officers in attendance:** Gary Hall (Director of Transformation), Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places), Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

## **10.OS.60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Doreen Dickinson, Alison Hansford and Steve Holgate.

## **10.OS.61 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS**

No declarations of any interest were declared.

## **10.OS.62 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 7 November 2011 be held as a correct record for signing by the Chair.**

## **10.OS.63 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions by any member of the public were received.

## **10.OS.64 EXECUTIVE CABINET MINUTES**

No issues were raised by any Member of the Committee for the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 24 November 2011.

## **10.OS.65 INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY (IDVA) SERVICE**

The Committee received the report of the Chair and Vice Chair that had been submitted to the Executive Cabinet meeting on 24 November 2011 and were informed that the Cabinet had agreed to consider funding of the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) service at budget setting time.

The Leader had also requested that letters be sent out to all the partners asking them to consider making a financial contribution towards the IDVA service and this had now been done.

The Chief Executive also reported that at a recent meeting between the Police and the Leader, the Borough Commander had already made the commitment to consider funding and that he would continue to update the Committee on any further developments.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

## **10.OS.66 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

The Committee received the progress made against the key actions and performance indicators contained in each of the three Directorates Business Improvement Plans for the first six months of 2011/12.

**(a) Partnerships, Planning and Policy Directorate**

The Chief Executive reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators for the Partnerships, Planning and Policy Directorate.

There had been a number of notable achievements for the Directorate that included:

- The implementation of the Flat Iron Market improvement project, which introduced the new gazebos to enhance the look and feel of the market.
- The expansion of the Farmers Market onto Fazackerley Street that had seen an increase in traders from 6 to 25.
- A successful launch of a range of grant schemes targeted at key areas in the town centre that had resulted in a number of shop facelift improvements and refurbishments as well as five new businesses being established.
- As a result of a review of Planning Services, processes had been revised to increase efficiency and quality, with plans being developed to maximise IT systems to bring about further improvements to the service.

It was reported that there was a slight overspend at present on the budget but measures had been put into place and it was expected to get back on track by the end of the financial year.

Analysis of the key performance indicators showed that the majority of performance targets across the directorate were either better than or on track.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted.**

**(b) People and Places**

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

There had been a number of notable achievements that included:

- Successfully gaining a 'Golden Paws' award from the RSPCA.
- The successful launch of a new service to local businesses that provides help and support to promote physical activity in the workplace.
- The Sports Development and Play Activity Team had been successful in gaining the 'Inspire Mark' for its active Generation 'Raising the Bar' project.
- The provision of a new play area in Yarrow Valley Park
- The Council were awarded the North West in Bloom Best Town Centre Award 2011 and also the silver Gilt for the Best City/Large Town Category.

Members were also updated on the delivery of other key projects covered in the plan that included:

- The Lex S106 open spaces scheme would be completed by May 2012. Discussions were ongoing with ward councillors in consultation with local residents and talks had taken place with the local school regarding the provision of allotments.
- The delivery of the S106 Play and Recreation Fund for the completion of the four Chorley Council schemes.
- A reviewed approach to grounds maintenance and street cleansing which would form part of a broader modernisation of the Streetscene project that would be completed by March 2012.
- An audit of all sports pitches within the Borough

Members were reminded that the grounds maintenance and street cleaning schedules had been communicated to Members via intheknow and would continue to be communicated in this way on an annual basis.

Members asked if the vandalism at the play area on the Gillibrand Link Road had been repaired and the Director of People and Places advised that this play area had now been formally adopted by Chorley Council and brought up to a reasonable standard.

The budget had a current underspend of £109,000, various savings were identified including information that the dog waste collection service had now been integrated into the normal skip service for the authority which had resulted in a £13,000 saving for the Council. The Director agreed to investigate using this saving to make further improvements in the service.

Analysis of the key performance indicators showed that the majority of performance targets across the directorate were either better than, or on track.

The Director of People and Places also informed Members that Integrated Impact Assessments that had been undertaken across a range of services within his directorate.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted.**

**(c) Transformation Directorate**

The Chief Executive reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators for the Transformation Directorate.

Notable successes for the directorate included:

- The local and parish elections had been delivered successfully and the relevant actions relating to the canvass were on track.
- The new shared financial system with South Ribble Council had been implemented; and
- The Council's accounts had been signed off by the Audit Commission and given a clean bill of health.

Progress in relation to the transformation of the Council's information technology had been slower than expected but the upgrading of the ICT infrastructure had been completed so that software upgrades could now be implemented.

The next major change that would impact on Members, would be the refresh of the Council's website and intranet that was shortly to receive a new look and feel.

Members were also updated on other key projects covered in the plan that included:

- A number of services have now migrated to the Contact Centre, including Licensing and Parking services. In addition Inland Revenue now work out of the Contact Centre and Lancashire County Council have a permanent presence offering services to residents.
- Work was also well advanced in terms of preparation for the 2012/13 budget and a number of examples had recently been presented to various Executive Cabinets.
- The accommodation review, enhanced by the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was now complete and actions to implement the recommendations are in hand.

The Directorate was also on track to deliver its services within the cash budget allocated for 2011/12.

Analysis of the key performance indicators showed that the majority of performance targets across the directorate were either better than, or on track, with only two indicators that were not performing as well as they should.

The introduction of the new financial system had caused performance to drop in the first quarter of the year. Action subsequently taken meant that current performance had considerably improved and was getting nearer month by month to the expected target. This was against all three directorates.

The amount of Council Tax collected was around 0.5% down on target and whilst not significant for Chorley Council, a set of actions had been implemented to try to boost recovery to ensure that previous good performance was maintained.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted.**

#### **10.OS.67 FINAL REPORT OF THE LANCASTRIAN ROOM TASK GROUP**

The Committee received and considered the final report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Lancastrian Room. The Chair, Councillor Debra Platt, outlined the work that had been undertaken and reported that there were a number of key findings and recommendations within the report that would make immediate improvements to the facilities on offer to both existing and new users, that would in turn support the reviews overall objective of increasing use of the venue for both Commercial and Community events.

The Chief Executive explained that the decision could be taken by the Executive Member for Resources to enable the recommendations to be implemented as soon as possible.

**RESOLVED – That the report be approved and be considered by the Executive Member (Resources) as suggested.**

#### **10.OS.68 BUS INFORMATION DISPLAYS AT CHORLEY INTERCHANGE**

Members of the Committee received a copy of a letter that had been sent by Lancashire County Council in response to the letter sent by the Chief Executive of the Council concerning the withdrawal of the Bus Information Display Systems at Chorley Interchange.

Members discussed the responses that had been given and were disappointed with the level of detailed contained within.

**RESOLVED – That the Chief Executive write back to Lancashire County Council on this matter to ask further questions and try to obtain additional clarification on this matter by asking the following:**

- 1. For a more detailed answer regarding the amount of money that is being saved in Chorley and the need for a cost benefit analysis of the proposals.**
- 2. How the Information Display System is considered obsolete when the Bus Interchange is relatively new.**
- 3. Why has the issue not been raised with the Leaders of the District Councils?**
- 4. Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?**
- 5. That the system still seems to be operational but is being used for a different reason.**

#### **10.OS.69 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received the Forward Plan for the period 1 December 2011 to 31 March 2012 which had been updated in line with decisions made at the last meeting.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted.**

#### **10.OS.70 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12**

The Committee received a copy of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2011/12.

**RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be noted.**

#### **10.OS.71 TOPIC FOR POTENTIAL TASK GROUP**

As the Lancastrian Task Group had now concluded, Members were asked to consider another review from the list of reserve topics on the Work Programme.

After a short discussion it was

**RESOLVED – That the next review topic would be:**

- **Rented Property Inspection – Chaired by Councillor Beverley Murray**

#### **10.OS.72 REPORTS FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

The Committee received a verbal update report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Tourism and Promoting Chorley.

Councillor Peter Wilson presented the scoping document of the review for Members of the Committee to approve.

At the Groups last meeting, Council managers were invited to give an overview of the key tourism assets and events that they were responsible for in the Borough.

External representatives had been invited to the next meeting that would now take place in January and the Group would be asking them questions around the following areas:

- What they do now to promote tourism and events in Chorley
- What are their plans for the future
- How the Council could work with them in this area.

**RESOLVED**

**1. That the scoping document be approved.**

**2. That the update report be noted.**

#### **10.OS.73 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair reminded Members that the next meeting of the Group was on the first day back after the Christmas Closedown on Tuesday 3 January 2012, at 6.30pm.

Chair