

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 8 April 2013

Present: Councillor Steve Holgate (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Julia Berry, Matthew Crow, Graham Dunn, Robert Finnamore, Christopher France, Hasina Khan, Marion Lowe, Joyce Snape, Kim Snape and Ralph Snape

Also in attendance

Officers: Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places), Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager), Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy and Communications) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

13.OS.18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

13.OS.19 MINUTES

RESOLVED

- 1. That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 January 2013 be confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.**
- 2. It was noted that in relation to IDVA funding work was still continuing on the negotiation of the relevant funding contributions that had been identified for each of the partners. This process had been lengthier than expected and there was still an element of reluctance from some organisations.**

13.OS.20 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were declared.

13.OS.21 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions submitted by any members of the public.

13.OS.22 EXECUTIVE CABINET MINUTES

Executive Cabinet – 21 February 2013

13.EC.16 – Neighbourhood Working – Private Property Improvement Scheme

Further information was sought on the scheme and how the households that may qualify for this scheme would be identified. Members were urged to report any such properties in their ward to the Neighbourhood Officers.

There were no issues raised by any member of the Committee for the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 21 March 2013.

13.OS.23 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Performance Panel meetings held on 11 and 20 March 2013 be noted.

13.OS.24 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - ADOPTION OF ESTATES

The Committee received the draft Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Adoption of Estates review that had recently been undertaken on the issues that faced many of the Borough’s residents on the adoption processes.

The Task Group, Chaired by Councillor Matthew Crow had produced a set of recommendations that they felt would improve the present procedures and policies to better serve residents.

The 14 recommendations made had the capacity to improve on two main areas, the communication and provision of information for residents and partnership working with officers from other organisations and developers who were involved in the process.

Some of the recommendations were partly the responsibility of Lancashire County Council and support would also be sought from their Executive Cabinet, although initial feedback indicated support for their implementation.

RESOLVED – That the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Adoption of Estates be approved and submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Cabinet for consideration.

13.OS.25 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW : PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING INSPECTION - UPDATE

The Director of People and Places submitted a report that provided an update on the progress made to increase the level of programmed housing standards inspections in relation to the private rented sector housing stock in Chorley.

The report was in response to a recommendations from the Private Rented Housing Inspection Task Group submitted to the Executive Cabinet in June 2012 asking for additional resource to be directed to establishing a programme of inspection works for private sector housing.

The Committee was informed that a report providing a full response to the recommendations from the review would be submitted to a forthcoming Executive Cabinet, however in the meantime work had already commenced within the Environment and Neighbourhoods Team to establish a programmed inspection regime utilising existing resources of officers who were trained to inspect housing to the required standards.

In addition, the introduction of a new IDOX database system had enabled the team to build up a comprehensive database of private rented accommodation using local intelligence, housing benefits information and council tax details.

Members asked if the Council had a register for Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO’s) and the Director of People and Places advised that this was a very small number.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13.OS.26 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ASSET MANAGEMENT - MONITORING REPORT

The Head of Governance submitted a reported that updated Members on the progress made against the 13 Strategic Principles that had been proposed by the Asset Management Scrutiny Task Group and adopted by the Executive in February 2011.

In addition Members were informed that the Council had now accommodated as far as was realistically possible, the maximum amount of staff in the Union Street Offices,

without having to provide additional support facilities such as toilets. There was also an update on the proposed arrangements for the sharing of the Bengal Street Depot with the registered charity Recycling Lives.

Members asked questions in relation to the accommodating of the credit union Unify within the Town Centre.

This would be the final monitoring report and the Committee were satisfied of the progress that had been made against each of the principles.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13.OS.27 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE LANCASTRIAN - MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive that reviewed the implementation of the recommendations of the Lancastrian Scrutiny Task Group since their acceptance by the Executive Cabinet approximately 12 months ago.

Members were pleased to note that the use of the Lancastrian had increased significantly and that income had more than doubled in 2012/13. Members also discussed how the venue could be best marketed in the future.

A staffing restructure had recently been undertaken within the Governance team that had resulted in the creation of an additional part time Civic Attendant that would enable more dedicated support to Lancastrian events.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13.OS.28 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF TOURISM AND SUPPORTING CHORLEY - MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Executive submitted an updated monitoring report on progress made on against the implementation of the actions arising from the Executive Cabinets response to the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group on tourism and promotion of Chorley.

The Committee was provided with a summary of the work that had been undertaken under each of the four main headings from the inquiry on town centre and markets, Astley Hall and park; promotional and partnership working. Progress had been made in all areas, with further events and attractions staged to encourage more visitors to the borough.

The traffic management plan continued to be developed and used for all major events held at the park and a development plan for the Astley Hall complex was soon to be completed and would include plans for attracting more visitors to the Chorley Remembers exhibition that had been installed in the Coach House.

A Town Centre master plan was currently being undertaken and it was expected that this would incorporate greater promotion of town centre assets.

Members asked if more could be done to work with businesses in the town centre to ascertain if visitors to the town were spending in the town and thought that better transport arrangements needed to be negotiated as bus fares into the town from outlying areas appeared to be considerably higher in comparison to other areas across Lancashire.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13.OS.29 REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

The Committee received a report on the review of the work programme for overview and scrutiny in 2012/13 and the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel, twelve months after its introduction.

At the beginning of the municipal year, the Committee had decided to introduce a dedicated Performance Panel that would focus on the performance elements of scrutiny and to consider monitoring information. This was to enable proper focus on performance issues and consistency of approach.

The Performance Panel had met four times in the past 12 months and had considered the Council's Corporate Strategy key projects monitoring; Chorley Partnership monitoring information and directorate business plan monitoring reports. Each meeting also considered an additional performance focus that looked at a particular area of concern or poor performance and invited the relevant Executive Member to attend.

The scrutiny of performance is a key role for scrutiny and one of the main benefits to this dedicated resource was that a smaller number of Members had been able to drill down to the detail in key areas. There had also been a much greater involvement by Executive Members and it had allowed the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee to focus on other business.

Although the Committee had only undertaken one review in 2012/13, the Adoption of Estates proved to be a complex subject, meeting on nine occasions and had undertaken some public consultation and interviewed developers and officers. It also included a Member Learning Session for all Councillors and Members had received a presentation from an officer of Northamptonshire County Council on work that was taking place nationally on this issue.

The Committee had also looked at a number of topics under their duty to scrutinise crime and disorder and there had been three call-in requests for Members to consider.

It was proposed to hold a total of eight scrutiny meetings in 2013/14, with four meetings of the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee and four Performance Panel meetings. In addition Members proposed future review topics for inclusion on the work programme in 2013/14 that included:

- A review of Development Control processes and procedures
- Health related scrutiny, including the provision of health services in Chorley East
- Select Move
- The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Maintenance of highways, in particular pot holes
- Chorley's contact call centre
- Public Transport issues

RESOLVED

- 1. That there be four meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and four Performance Panel meetings held in 2013/14**
- 2. That the first scrutiny review of 2013/14 be Select Move, Chaired by Councillor Graham Dunn and supported by Councillor Hasina Khan.**

13.OS.30 NOTICE OF KEY DECISIONS

The Committee received the current notice of 'key' decisions for information.

Chair