

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Present: Councillor Steve Holgate (Chair), and Councillors Julia Berry, Graham Dunn, Robert Finnamore, Hasina Khan, Keith Iddon, Roy Lees, Marion Lowe, Mick Muncaster and Kim Snape

Also in attendance

Councillors: Councillors Alistair Bradley (Executive Leader)

Officers: Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager), Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer), Cath Burns (Head of Economic Development), Simon Clark (Head of Health, Environment & Neighbourhoods) and Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy and Communications)

13.OS.44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apologies for absence was received from Councillor Mark Perks (Vice Chair)

13.OS.45 MINUTES

a) Confirmation

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 July 2013 be held as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

b) Matters arising

13.OS.33 b) Overview and Scrutiny Review – Private Rented Housing Inspection Update

Some Members still felt that the Council needed to investigate a suitable system of registration/accreditation for private landlords across the borough. The Head of Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods advised that a Private Rented Housing Policy was being taken to Executive Cabinet in November and that this was something that could be looked into as part of that work.

Members were informed that additional IDVA funding from partners had been progressed any further. The service continued to be funded by the Safer Lancashire Board and there had been no loss in service. The Council would write to County to ask for an update on funding arrangements.

13.OS.46 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of any interests.

13.OS.47 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions were received by any members of the public.

13.OS.48 EXECUTIVE CABINET MINUTES

Executive Cabinet minutes – 15 August 2013

13.EC.72 – Chorley Council Performance Monitoring Quarter One 2013/14

The Chief Executive gave a further update in relation to the Friday Street Health Centre. The Council were hoping to hold a meeting of all the relevant stakeholders to progress things further in the near future.

The Chair advised that he would try to pursue the matter with the Clinical Commissioning Groups through his position as Chair of Health Scrutiny at Lancashire County Council.

Executive Cabinet minutes – 12 September 2013

None.

13.OS.49 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel be noted. In response to a query about unmet performance targets it was agreed the request would be circulated to all Members not on the Performance Panel.

13.OS.50 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF TOURISM AND PROMOTING CHORLEY - MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received the final monitoring report that updated against the progress made in implementing the Executive's response to the tourism and promoting Chorley task group recommendations. Progress had been made in all areas, with further events and attractions being staged to encourage more visitors to the borough.

Information was provided on the work that had been undertaken since the last update against each of the group's recommendations under the four main headings of:

- Town Centre and Markets
- Astley Hall
- Promotional
- Partnership Working

In addition, Members were informed that the town centre master plan was currently being finalised and would be presented to the Executive Cabinet later in October. A campaign would then be developed to promote the town centre.

The traffic management plan had continued to be developed for events taking place at Astley Park and the Council now had in place a system of coning and signage for all major events. The provision of an additional car park had also been included in the consultation for the Parks development plan.

Work had continued to develop working relationships with United Utilities around the use of the Rivington Pike area. It was accepted that this area was an asset that could be used more for one off events but was largely dependent on the main landowner becoming more involved. The Council were working with Lancashire County Council's tourism services to better promote the area and different parking solutions were being investigated. The Council were also assisting Groundwork and the Heritage Trust in their lottery bid to support a larger development/initiative at the Chinese Gardens.

The monitoring of visitors to Astley Hall and the Chorley Remembers exhibition had begun at the start of the season and was due to be reviewed shortly. The works that had been agreed to be carried out at the Farmhouse had just gone out for tender.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13.OS.51 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE LANCASTRIAN

The Committee received the final monitoring report that updated against the progress made in implementing the Executive's response to the Lancastrian task group recommendations.

There continued to be improved usage of the Lancastrian Suite and income had more than doubled in 2012/13. The updated income position indicated that the Council were on target to meet its 2013/14 target of £11740. The Lancastrian was also being monitored on its internal use to show the added value as an asset to the organisation.

The flexible pricing policy that had been introduced, following the review in 2012, continued to provide a means of offering discounted initial bookings or for frequent or regular bookings.

A full refurbishment of the bar had now been completed with new furniture that made it a more attractive and welcoming facility that could also be used for small/informal meetings and events.

Work had been undertaken to better promote the Lancastrian as a wedding/party venue and the facility now had an improved website presence with a dedicated page. There had been an increase in enquiries and potential bookings for Asian weddings.

Members were informed that the provision of Wi-Fi would be investigated but at the current time was not a priority.

The Council would also look into the use of the venue by local sports clubs for events and training classes, incentivising to attract regular bookings.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13.OS.52 CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY

The Committee were provided with options for the scrutiny of crime and disorder under their statutory duty to scrutinise the work of the Community Safety Partnership to ensure that local community issues were being dealt with effectively.

Members were given three options that included:

- The role of the Community Safety Strategy Group since the advent of the Police and Crime Commissioner had been established in Lancashire.
- The impact of reduced or decommissioned CCTV services in Chorley.
- To explore best practice in the use of Community Alcohol Network (CAN) programmes considering the increase in under 18's admissions to hospital for alcohol related illness.

Chorley's CCTV provision had undergone a recent review on operational hours and effectiveness and it was reported that a number of local authorities had reduced their CCTV provision and in some cases had decommissioned them altogether. The Committee decided to examine what the impact of such a decision had meant in these areas in order to inform any future CCTV investment programmes that the Council may wish to make.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee examine the impact of a reduced or decommissioned CCTV service in other local authority areas.

13.OS.53 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Head of Economic Development and Executive Leader of the Council attended the meeting to talk about the work that was being undertaken to deliver Chorley's Economic Development Strategy.

The authority's priorities were to create a vibrant town promoting and increasing inward investment, providing support to new and existing businesses, supporting young people through education, training and fostering entrepreneurship and to help reduce the gap in our most deprived communities.

At present there was no growth in the business rate base as the success business examination had been negated by larger companies closing. However, Chorley had a fantastic record for new business start-ups with 145 in September 2012 with the potential to create 542 new jobs and an 8.1m turnover. Geographically there was a borough wide spread which was pleasing as rural land is often seen as more valuable for housing land rather than employment and business use.

Inward investment was particularly important to Chorley as a lot of its residents commute to areas outside the borough for employment. The authority also continued to work extensively with existing businesses, providing 46 businesses with a dedicated service that would generate an additional 765 new jobs with an increased 3.3m turnover.

The Council was currently supporting 24 apprenticeships that were placed either with the Council or with its partners and were undertaking a joint employment support initiative with Runshaw College. Although not far off target, the quarter 1 figures for 16-18 year olds who are NEET were worryingly high, although it was hoped that this could be the result of a number of young people who had recently left educational establishments and were not yet registered in education or on a suitable apprenticeship programme.

Councillor Kim Snape left the meeting at 7.30pm.

Additional work was being undertaken to work with schools and colleges to create positive activities for NEET. Working with young people to offer alternatives was important such as considering self-employment opportunities. The Council was also holding the Chorley Schools Enterprise Challenge and was working on a Science and Engineering initiative.

Councillor Marion Lowe left the meeting at 7.40pm.

The Leader commented that the authority was extremely passionate about the town's regeneration and development and was proud of its significant increase in new businesses and low closures of existing businesses. These statistics had caused a national spike and other authorities across the country were interested in our approach.

In response to a Member, it was explained that the median workplace earnings were based on Full Time Equivalent and it was accepted that this could skew the figures as many jobs were currently on a part time basis.

The town also benefited from businesses that were established just outside its borders, in areas such as Bamber Bridge and Leyland. The new Waitrose development had provided a number of jobs that Chorley residents could access and it was agreed that Members would be provided with the information on employment numbers.

The Chair thanked the Head of Economic Development and the Executive Leader for their attendance and expressed satisfaction that the work being undertaken was providing encouraging results for the town.

13.OS.54 REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - SELECT MOVE

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Select Move, Councillor Graham Dunn updated the Committee on the work that had taken place to date on the review.

The Group had undertaken two meetings and had received a wide range of background information so that they could effectively scope the review and this included a presentation of statistical information.

The Group's desired outcomes was for a choice based lettings service to meet the needs of Chorley residents; to identify areas of improvement in the condition of property at handover; and to reduce waiting times and lists.

The Group intended to conduct a survey of Select Move customers and had invited the Registered Providers to a future meeting to obtain their views and opinions of the online lettings service.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13.OS.55 REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - PLAY AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

At the last meeting of the Committee it had been agreed that the whole membership would undertake a review of the emerging Play and Open Space Strategy to ascertain if our Impact Assessment methodologies were robust enough.

Councillor Julia Berry presented a verbal report of the work that had recently been undertaken. Members had received information about the improved strategy and a list of all play areas, playing pitches and open spaces had been circulated to all borough councillors and parish councils for comments.

The Group were looking at the four case studies that were identified and using the Integrated Impact Assessment were considering how health and wellbeing benefits could be maximised and what needed to have taken place to achieve this.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13.OS.56 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

The Committee received the updated Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14.

The Chair reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received a number of call-in requests in 2012/13. How these requests were dealt with had prompted a procedural review of existing arrangements to be carried out.

RESOLVED – That a mini review of the Call-in arrangements would be undertaken and that the membership would be as follows:

Councillor Steve Holgate (Chair)
Councillor Mark Perks (Vice Chair)
Councillor Roy Lees
Councillor Keith Iddon

13.OS.57 NOTICE OF KEY DECISIONS

The Committee received the current notice of Executive decisions for information.

Chair