

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL

THURSDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER 2015, 6.30 PM
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, TOWN HALL

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda.

If you have a pecuniary interest you must withdraw from the meeting. Normally you should leave the room before the business starts to be discussed. You do, however, have the same right to speak as a member of the public and may remain in the room to enable you to exercise that right and then leave immediately. In either case you must not seek to improperly influence a decision on the matter.

2 MINUTES

(Pages 3 - 8)

To confirm the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel meeting held on 22 June 2015 (enclosed)

3 PERFORMANCE FOCUS - PLANNING CONTEXT

(Pages 9 - 14)

Report of the Chief Executive (enclosed)

4 MONITORING OF THE ORGANISATIONAL PLAN 2015/16

Report of the Chief Executive (to follow)

5 ANY URGENT BUSINESS PREVIOUSLY AGREED WITH THE CHAIR

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Hasina Khan (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Paul Clark, June Molyneaux, Alistair Morwood and Debra Platt.

Councillor Paul Walmsley – Executive Member (Public Protection)

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MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL

MEETING DATE Monday, 22 June 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Hasina Khan (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Paul Clark, June Molyneaux, Alistair Morwood and Debra Platt

OFFICERS: Jamie Carson (Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community), Victoria Willett (Policy and Partnership Officer) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: None

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Beverley Murray (Executive Member (Community Services))

15.OSP.1 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

15.OSP.2 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 12 March 2015 be confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

15.OSP.3 Performance Focus: 1. Time Credits; 2. Delivery of the Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy

The Chair welcomed Councillor Beverley Murray, Executive Member for Community Services to the meeting who was attending to answer questions on the scrutiny performance focus topics that had been identified for further discussion by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Panel received a report on the Time Credit project and the progress of the Play, Open spaces and Playing Pitch Strategy.

Time Credits:

Councillor Murray gave an overview of the scheme and explained that Time Credits was a three year programme funded by the Council as a positive and proactive means of encouraging and developing volunteering effort to benefit local communities. Work undertaken in year one had focussed on existing groups to build up the service and encourage already established organisations to sign up, year two was concentrating

on embedding the process into service delivery and encouraging new organisations and volunteers to engage. The programme has generated positive outcomes for users and although growth has slowed in the second year performance has been consistently good and exceeded targets, particularly in comparison to the national scheme with Chorley being notably higher, with 72% of Chorley Time Credit volunteers giving their time at least once a week.

Time Credits has opened many opportunities for people to get involved in new activities and people now regularly do things that they didn't do before. The scheme has incentivised its members to start new community groups and it helps people to adopt healthier lifestyles and improves physical and mental wellbeing.

Councillor Murray explained that it is difficult to put checks in place to stop abuse of the system and that there has to be an element of trust; however, the Council do make regular checks of the hours that volunteers claim to have worked with organisations. The Council also monitors the spend uptake.

The Panel requested more information on the spend opportunities and commented that sometimes the booklets made available were out of date, a booklet is available on the website <http://chorley.gov.uk/Documents/lancs%20brochure%202015%20FINAL.pdf> but has it was difficult to keep up to date the Council were exploring ways to improve upon this information by using new technology to deliver a mobile platform.

The Time Credits Facilitator, Angela Barrago spends most of her time out in the community promoting the scheme and encouraging people to get involved. Councillor Murray explained that part of the work being undertaken in year two was to engage the wider community and the Council had recently engaged with a Polish mum's group and the LGBT. The Panel requested further information on how the schools across Chorley were engaging in the process and Councillor Hasina Khan offered to provide contacts for BME groups across the borough.

The Panel felt that all Elected Members of the Council should be encouraged to be actively involved with the scheme, to help promote engagement within their neighbourhoods and recommended that a Member Learning Session be delivered on the Time Credits scheme.

RESOLVED

That the information on Time Credits be noted.

That details on how the schools are engaged in Time Credits be provided.

That the Panel be provided with the timescales for the introduction of the mobile platform.

That a Member Learning Session on Time Credits be delivered.

Play, Open Spaces and Playing Pitch Strategy:

The Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch strategy 2013 – 2018 had been approved and formally adopted by the Executive Cabinet in September 2014. The Strategy provides a five year action plan to protect, manage, enhance and secure sites and identifies deficiencies and future priorities.

The first year of delivery was now complete and it was considered appropriate to review the progress of actions and outcomes to date. The Panel were provided with a

list of actions that had commenced in October 2014 and were updated on the details and progress made. Some works, for example the Westway playing pitches had been identified within the strategy but were planned to commence later and some timescales for delivery had been revised compared to the dates originally identified in the strategy.

The new Astley Park destination play area had now been completed and had been delivered within budget. Members commented on how well received this play area had been and it was reported that visitor numbers to the park had increased despite inclement weather. There had been some initial issues with older children congregating on the play area but measures had now been implemented to address this and would continue to be monitored over the coming months. Although difficult to quantify, the success of the play area is currently being investigated and an update report will be brought to Cabinet later in the year.

It was reported that S106 money that had already been identified to support the Strategy was nearer to £1M but that the majority of this funded was allocated to specific projects. The strategy highlights sites which are low quality and low value. Housing developers are asked to allocate S106 to the nearest lowest scoring site to the development. Much of the strategy will be funded via future development in the Borough as well as Council funds and external funding. Around £170K of current funding was money that would have previously funded the play and recreation fund that parish councils could bid for, however, however, as the planning laws on how this money was to be received and spent in the future had changed, the Council were exploring how best to allocate this money against the remainder of works that had been prioritised in the Strategy. A report outlining the options would be considered at a future Executive Cabinet meeting.

Members felt that the absence of bowling green provision was a major oversight in the Strategy and asked if the Council had assessed the need for demand across the borough. Some of the existing provision had either closed or was under threat of closure and members felt that this could be something that the Council could help to support. Bowling greens had not been included within the strategy as they are mainly privately owned but there was an acceptance that the Council could do more and it was agreed that the Council would undertake a register of bowling facilities and work with existing clubs to prevent closure. The Councils neighbourhoods teams and PCSO's were working together to combat vandalism issues on the Tatton and Coronation Recreational grounds bowling greens.

The Panel also discussed allotment provision across the borough. A lot of work had been undertaken to try to address demand and Chorley is one of the top performing providers in Lancashire. The waiting list has been refreshed to ensure it is up to date and the terms and conditions of the leases are more strenuously enforced. Some sites that had been identified have been found to be unsuitable; however two new sites, Rangleys Recreational Ground in Chorley and St. Oswald's in Coppull have recently been developed. Councillor Murray explained that the Council are willing to undertake any investigatory grounds work to assess suitability on any suggested sites. The Panel asked if the old Yarrow Depot had been considered and Councillor Platt mentioned that Euxton Parish Council had put forward a couple of sites but that they had not heard anything further and officers promised to look into the progress of these sites and report back.

Other questions included clarification on the amount of funding available for projects through the neighbourhood priorities the works undertaken to support football clubs achieving FA Charter Standard grounds and the remaining improvement works at Astley Park.

The Chair thanked Councillor Murray for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

That a register of bowling facilities be undertaken across the borough.

That an update on the suitability for the old Yarrow Depot and suggested Euxton sites be provided.

15.OSP.4 Organisational Plan 2015/16

The Panel received the single organisational business plan for 2015/16 that reviewed the programme of projects that would be delivered over the coming year. The Plan pulled all the Council's key activity into a single programme that focused on the administrations strategic priorities, encouraging ownership and accountability, increasing viability and promoting cross cutting working.

All the projects within the 2013/14 organisational plan had been reviewed and were either complete or a revised completion date had been identified. A small number of projects had been carried forward into 2015/16 due to the scale or complexity of work that included:

- Single Front Office
- Astley 20:20
- Friday Street Health Centre
- Youth Zone
- Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy (specific actions)

There are a total of 58 projects in the organisational plan for 2015/16, 18 are corporate strategy projects, of which 10 have attached budget investment, 23 are budget investment work streams and 15 business improvement projects. A brief overview of each project was provided within the plan.

The SharePoint based MyProjects system has now been adopted across the organisation as the primary tool for the day to day management and monitoring of all actions and projects and Members were urged to log into the system to monitor the detailed milestones and timescales. Not all members are aware of this system and how it can be accessed so the Chair proposed a member learning session be considered.

A revised list of local performance measures have also been developed to support the delivery of the plan and indicators selected to give an accurate picture of the organisations performance whilst ensuring ease of reporting.

Councillor Platt asked if it would be appropriate to capture the works being undertaken to the town hall on the organisational plan due to the significance of the building for the town. It was explained that the town hall works were programmed maintenance that were captured in the Governance and Property Services business plan rather than contributing to the overall corporate strategy of the Council.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

That a Member Learning Session be delivered on MyProjects.

Chair

Date

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel	24 th September 2015

PERFORMANCE FOCUS: PLANNING CONTEXT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To provide contextual information and initial questions for focus to the performance panel for planning performance.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the context and questions be discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny performance panel, with a view to understanding performance.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

BACKGROUND

- In its terms of reference, the overview and scrutiny performance panel agreed that at each meeting, as well as considering performance reports, the panel have the opportunity to focus in on any specific area of service delivery. For the September meeting the panel selected planning performance.
- This report provides contextual information and suggests some initial questions to initiate discussions. This will enable the panel and relevant officers and Members to prepare in advance of the meeting.

PERFORMANCE CONTEXT

- Planning performance at the end of 2014/15 was above target for 'major' applications and off track but within threshold for 'minor' and 'other'. At the end of quarter 1 2015/16, performance for 'major' applications remains excellent however 'minor' applications are now off track and 'other' applications significantly off track.

Indicator Name	Polarity	Target	Performance Quarter 1	Symbol	Trend	% Change (year on year)
Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'major' application types	Bigger is better	70%	100%	★	↑	+39.99%
Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'minor' application types	Bigger is better	65%	59.61%	▲	↓	-5.88%
Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'other' application types	Bigger is better	80%	70.37%	▲	↓	-21.31%

7. The council takes part in regular benchmarking with its statistical nearest neighbours group, to compare performance in a range of performance indicators. The tables below show the council's performance compared to its nearest neighbours, based on the performance in the first quarter.

NI 157a - Processing of major planning applications (%)			
Rank	Authority	2014/15	2015/16
		Year End	Qtr 1
1	Chorley	--	100
1	Gedling	77.8	100
1	Kettering	77.27	100
1	North Warwickshire	94	100
5	East Northamptonshire	89	90
6	High Peak	82	88
7	East Staffordshire	90	85
8	Bassetlaw	93.18	84.62
9	Broxtowe	61	50

NI 157b - Processing of minor planning applications (%)			
Rank	Authority	2014/15	2015/16
		Year End	Qtr 1
1	Kettering	76.71	100
2	Broxtowe	87	96
3	High Peak	77	90
4	Bassetlaw	87.7	89.87
5	East Northamptonshire	72	77
6	East Staffordshire	97	74
7	North Warwickshire	55	72
8	Chorley	--	60

9	Gedling	63.6	55
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NI 157c - Processing of other planning applications (%)			
Rank	Authority	2014/15 Year End	2015/16
			Qtr 1
1	Kettering	88.89	100
2	Broxtowe	93	95
3	Bassetlaw	91.75	90.16
4	High Peak	78	90
4	North Warwickshire	84	90
6	East Northamptonshire	86	89
7	East Staffordshire	99	81
8	Chorley	--	70
9	Gedling	73.6	65

8. As the performance for ‘minor’ and ‘other’ applications was more than 5% off target at the end of the first quarter, an action plan was prepared to set out the issues and action that would be taken to improve performance. The action plan is presented below.

Performance Indicator	Target	Performance
Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'minor' application types	65.0%	59.61%
Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'other' application types	80.0%	70.37%
Reason below target	<p>On 28 November 2014, the Government issued new advice within the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) on Section 106 Planning Obligations which provides that ‘tariff style’ planning contributions should not be sought from developments of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1,000 square metres. Prior to this Officers were given delegated authority to impose section 106 agreements on applications of 1 or 2 dwellings, with applications of 3 or more referred to Committee. Following the new Government advice, delegated authority was removed from Officers and all applications were therefore referred to Committee before the section 106 process could be started. This has therefore had an impact on the length of time taken to process these types of applications although where possible extensions to time were agreed with the applicant.</p> <p>There have also been performance issues with regard to the external supplier of the householder planning application service which was intended to relieve the pressure due to a vacancy within the planning team.</p>	
Action required	<p>The outcome of the legal challenge has now been released and Officer delegated powers are to be returned, this will in turn remove the need for a significant proportion of applications to be referred through Chairs brief to Committee.</p> <p>There is however an accumulation of applications where applicants and agents</p>	

	<p>were waiting for the outcome of the legal challenge and it should be noted that this could have an effect on performance during quarter two.</p> <p>The staffing vacancy has now been advertised and is expected to be established within the next two months; the external provider has been reproached and closer supervision is being taken by them, including the allocation of a more senior officer to undertake the work.</p>
Trend:	Performance at the end of quarter one 2014/15 was 63.33% for 'minor' and 89.42% for 'other'.

9. Despite performance being off track, customer satisfaction with the planning service is currently high, 83.3% at the end of June 2015.

Data Quality

10. In early 2015, the council's internal audit team carried out a review of data quality within the planning service which considered data management, collection and reporting protocols. On concluding the review, a controls assurance rating of 'red 8' was awarded which indicates a critical impact on the council should systems fail with adequate controls in place but opportunity for improvement. The final audit report included an action plan to achieve the necessary improvements in data quality.
11. Planning indicators are reported on a monthly basis through the council performance management system although no data has been formally entered since April 2015 for key indicators. The availability of complete, accurate and timely data is important in supporting customer care, corporate governance, management, decision making, service planning, accountability and transparency. A lack of regular performance reporting prevents the monitoring of trends and early identification of service delivery issues.

QUESTIONS:

- a) Please provide an update on the current situation with regard to performance.
- Has the corrective action identified at the end of quarter 1 taken effect?
 - Has the performance of the external supplier improved as a result of the measures put in place?
 - Is any action being taken to address the back log of applications and prevent further deterioration in performance in quarter 2?
- b) The data quality audit identified inaccuracies in the data being input into the performance management system.
- What has been done to rectify this and how confident are you in the current quality of the data being reported?
- c) The data quality audit also referred to working with ICT to improve monthly reporting capabilities and reduce the level of manual intervention involved in calculating the data.
- Has this action been progressed?

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area	✓	Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

13. No comments

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

14. No comments

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Victoria Willett	5248	11/09/2015	Planning Context

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