

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 27 March 2007

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillors Thomas McGowan, Kenneth Ball, Terry Brown, Francis Culshaw, Harold Heaton and Geoffrey Russell

Also in attendance: Councillors John Walker (Executive Member for Customer, Democratic and Legal Services) and Hasina Khan

07.OS.30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Thomas Bedford, Mrs Marie Gray, Greg Morgan, Mrs Iris Smith and Christopher Snow.

07.OS.31 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

None of the Members declared any interest in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

07.OS.32 MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the previous meeting and in relation to Minute 07.OS.24 "Budget Scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel" received a copy of a report submitted to the Council on 27 February 2007 on the Executive Cabinet's response to the issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panels in relation to its review of the 2007/08 budget.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 February 2007 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

07.OS.33 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public requested the opportunity to ask a question(s) on an item(s) on the agenda.

07.OS.34 LANCASHIRE SHARED SERVICES CONTACT CENTRE EFFICIENCIES AND PARTNERSHIP WITH LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL INQUIRY

The Committee received the draft final report of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel Inquiry into the Lancashire Shared Services Contact Centre.

The Inquiry had been conducted by two Sub-Groups of the Panel with remits to examine

- (i) a contribution of the Contact Centre to the achievement of the Council's efficiency agenda.
- (ii) the effectiveness of the partnership arrangement with the Lancashire County Council
- (iii) ensuring the delivery of a high quality customer service.

The Panel after taking account of all the evidence, made recommendations in the following areas:

- efficiencies generally within the Contact Centre.
- the Customer Relationship Management System and customer access to services
- effectiveness of the partnership arrangements and the desired benefits of partnership work.

RESOLVED – That the report be endorsed and subject to one minor correction recommend that the report’s findings and recommendations for approval and adoption by the Executive Cabinet.

07.OS.35 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 29 MARCH 2007

No reports on the agenda for the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 29 March 2007 were considered for discussion.

07.OS.36 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/07- MONITORING

The Committee received a joint report of the Executive Director (Corporate and Customer) and the Director of Finance on the committed Capital Programme for 2006/07 and bringing the Committee’s attention to a number of recommendations from the Corporate Improvement Board which would be considered by the Executive Cabinet at its meeting on 29 March 2007.

The report indicated that the Corporate Improvement Board was continuing to make good progress ensuring a more controlled and successful delivery of the Programme.

The latest Capital Programme forecast for 2006/07 showed a reduction in the programme of £1,442,770 with a summary of changes relating to slippage and an increase in the budget for capitalised restructuring.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.37 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY

The Committee received a report of the Director of Policy and Performance on the work that had been undertaken by the Equality and Diversity Sub-Group.

The Chair of the Sub-Group gave Members a presentation on the key findings of the Sub-Group and gave examples of the good work already being done by the authority in equality and diversity.

The report set out the recommendations identifying the clearest ways in which the authority could achieve this, using the tools at our disposal and learning from the journey that others have already taken in embedding equality and diversity in their organisations. By achieving these aims the authority would also be meeting many requirements of the CPA and embedding best practice across the organisation.

The Committee also received the position of the Capacity/Achievement Sub-Group on the deliberations on key issues relating to the CPA with expected findings and recommendations early in the next Municipal Year for consideration. There had been a poor response from Members on the questionnaire on Scrutiny in Chorley.

RESOLVED – 1) That the recommendations outlined in Section 7 of the submitted report be approved for implementation and monitoring.

2) That the questionnaire requesting Members to respond to a number of topics relating to scrutiny in Chorley be resubmitted.

07.OS.38 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the work programme for 2006/07 and for 2007/08.

The programme included the envisaged timescales for the ongoing scrutiny inquiries and the planned details of the periodic monitoring of past inquiries.

The Committee considered that the next inquiry to be undertaken by the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel in the next municipal year would cover Gershon Efficiencies and staff sickness absence. The Panel would decide whether they take these issues together or separately.

The Committee also received notification of the progress of the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the Neighbourhood Working Inquiry and that it would submit its findings and recommendations to the first meeting of the Panel in June.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

07.OS.39 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Council's Forward Plan setting out details of the key executive decisions expected to be taken between 1 April 2007 to 31 July 2007.

RESOLVED - That the Forward Plan be noted.

Chair