

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 21 May 2009

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor Alan Cullens (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Mike Devaney, Marie Gray, Adrian Lowe, Rosie Russell, Edward Smith, Iris Smith, Joyce Snape and Peter Wilson

Officers in attendance: Lesley-Ann Fenton (Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)), Jamie Carson (Corporate Director (People)), Jane Meek (Corporate Director (Business)), Ishbel Murray (Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods)), Andrew Docherty (Corporate Director of Governance), Tim Murphy (Corporate Director of Information and Communication Technology), Carol Russell (Head of Democratic Services), Bernie Heggarty (Children and Young Peoples Development Officer) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

09.OS.28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those Members new to the Committee. Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Nora Ball and Harold Heaton.

09.OS.29 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 March 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

09.OS.30 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No Members declared an interest in respect of items on the agenda.

09.OS.31 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public requested to ask a question at the meeting.

09.OS.32 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 28 MAY 2009

The Committee received a copy of the report to be considered by the Executive Cabinet at their meeting next week. The report endorsed all the recommendations made by the Streetscene inquiry and outlined how the actions would be delivered.

RESOLVED – The response of the Executive Cabinet to the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group inquiry report on Streetscene be noted with thanks.

09.OS.33 BUSINESS PLAN AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING STATEMENTS - FINAL QUARTER 2008 / 2009

The Committee received the Business Plan and Performance Monitoring Statements for the final quarter of 2008 / 2009.

It was AGREED that the summary report would no longer be required.

(a) Business Directorate

The Corporate Director (Business) presented the report and outlined the key messages, including the work undertaken on the Buckshaw Group 1 major planning application. It was noted that a leaflet promoting rural tourism and businesses had recently been produced.

RESOLVED –

- 1. The report be noted.**
- 2. Further training be provided for Development Control Committee members particularly relating to site inspections.**
- 3. A pre-application briefing for the Buckshaw Group 1 application for all Members be provided.**
- 4. The Local Development Framework be considered by the Committee in the autumn.**

(b) Neighbourhoods Directorate

The Committee received the report of the Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) who highlighted key messages. These included the finalisation of the Neighbourhood Action plans, a new workshop at the Bengal Street depot and the delivery of the new bins.

There were currently 15 families on the Families First project with some families having been signing off successfully. The recent training for Licensing and Public Safety Committee members regarding equality and diversity was welcomed.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

(c) People Directorate

The Corporate Director (People) outlined the key messages in the report.

Members noted the completion of the coach house building and café at Astley Park and the refurbishment of Clayton Green Sports Centre. The Customer Relationship Management system was on track and had gone live on 1 April.

Members noted that work was ongoing in relation to the provision on allotment sites and that work would shortly be undertaken on a play area in Clayton Green. The provision of free swimming at All Seasons Leisure Centre was discussed.

RESOLVED –

- 1. The report be noted.**
- 2. An update on the provision of allotments be presented within the next Business Plan and Performance Monitoring Statements.**

(d) Business Transformation

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation).

The Corporate Director (Information, Communication Technology and Chief Information Officer) advised that a report was expected shortly from the contractor on web accessibility project. The progress on the thin client project and gov connect was noted. The demands on the ICT team and the need for reprioritisation of projects as other projects come up, was discussed.

Members noted that the Strategic Asset Review would be considered by Executive Cabinet shortly and the affordable housing action plan would be considered in June.

The recent training for Members on equality and diversity was welcomed.

RESOLVED –

- 1. The report be noted.**
- 2. Clarification be provided on appeals to the commissioner regarding benefit costs for support where the Council is currently not receiving any subsidy from Government.**

(e) Policy and Performance Directorate

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) outlined the key messages in the report. The Council had received a positive Direction of Travel report as part of the annual Audit Letter.

It was noted that Comprehensive Performance Assessment had been replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessment which covered Lancashire as a whole. A Member learning session would be scheduled on this topic.

Members were advised that the Locality Plan would be considered by Chorley Council Executive Cabinet and Lancashire County Council Executive Cabinet.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

Councillor Peter Wilson left the meeting at 7.40pm.

09.OS.34 GET UP AND PLAY RANGERS

Members received the report of the Corporate Director (People) which had been requested by the Committee.

The Children and Young Peoples Development Officer advised that work was ongoing with Parish Councils to improve the numbers of children attending sessions and to ensure that provision was appropriate for the area.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

09.OS.35 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - FINAL QUARTER OF 2008 / 2009

Members considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) which set out performance against the Corporate Strategy and the Council's National Indicators for the fourth quarter of 2008/09, 1 January to 31 March 2009. Performance was assessed based on the delivery of Key Projects in the Corporate Strategy and the performance against the National Indicators for which the Council is responsible.

The Corporate Strategy 2008/9 – 2010/11 identifies 36 Key Projects. 97% of projects (35) were complete or rated 'green' and 3 projects (8%) had been completed since the last quarterly report. 1 project was now rated as being 'red' due to falling behind schedule.

19 national indicators were reported, with 12 had matched or exceeded targets, 1 had missed the target but by less than 5% and 4 had missed the target by 5% or more. The Place Survey had been undertaken last September although the figures were still provisional.

Members discussed the ongoing works to the covered market as there had been some issues with the installation of the entrance canopies. The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) was dealing with the contractor to resolve any impact on the Council's budget.

The indicator relating to street and environmental cleanliness was discussed. Tight targets were set and the indicator was now measured slightly differently, in fact only 3 streets out of 900 had not met the target.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

09.OS.36 CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2008 / 2009

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presented the annual report.

The recession was having an impact on Chorley just like the rest of the UK. The unemployment benefit claimant count for Chorley had risen by almost double since last year. In February 2009 it was at 3.2% of the working age population, compared to 1.7% in March 2008. The recession had also taken its toll on house prices this year.

The health profile summary published by the North West Public Health Observatory in 2008 showed significant health inequalities within Chorley, by gender and level of deprivation.

Members noted potential future impact on finances, such as enforcement on council tax payments.

RESOLVED –

- 1. The report be noted.**
- 2. A request was made for information relating to unemployment broken down by age to be presented to a future meeting.**

09.OS.37 ANNUAL REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2008/09 AND TOPICS FOR 2009/10

The Committee considered a report by the Corporate Director (Governance) which outlined topics suggested at the “Scrutiny – A review of the year session” held on the rising of the last meeting.

RESOLVED -

- 1. The outcomes of the review of 2008/09 be noted and that the final Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of the year be used as a review session in future years.**
- 2. Two review topics for 2009/10 be: Lancashire County Council Highways and Town Centre Regeneration, the membership to be agreed at the next meeting.**
- 3. A report be presented to the next meeting on a potential third review with alternative ways of pursuing topics raised.**
- 4. Two topics for review by Lancashire County Council be suggested as requested: Health scrutiny of the PCT performance and outcomes and Enforcement issues in two tier Councils.**

09.OS.38 SCRUTINY REPORTING BACK: ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN 2008/09

Members considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and noted that the “Scrutiny – A review of the year session” held on the rising of the last meeting had been used to inform the document.

RESOLVED – The report be noted and presented to Council in July.

09.OS.39 NEWLY IMPLEMENTED LEGISLATION AFFECTING SCRUTINY

The Committee received the report of the Corporate Director (Governance) advising on recent legislation which impacts on the role of scrutiny, including individual decision making within wards, Councillor Call for Action and powers relating to crime and disorder. Members discussed the report and queried several points.

RESOLVED -

- 1. The existing arrangements were sufficient to deal with the Community call for action provision.**
- 2. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to include the role of scrutinising the crime and disorder function in its terms of reference. One meeting per municipal year would consider this topic.**

09.OS.40 PRACTICAL GUIDE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the revised "Practical guide to overview and scrutiny in Chorley Council – 2009". In the light of new regulations and changes to current practice the revised document was welcomed.

RESOLVED - The Practical Guide to Overview and Scrutiny in Chorley be adopted as a replacement to the existing Scrutiny Toolkit, subject to updates.

Chair