

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 July, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 10 July and includes an update on the task group review.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25 JULY 2019

Health Scrutiny Update

2. Councillor Margaret France updated the Committee on the recent LCC Health Scrutiny Steering Group meeting.
3. At the meeting on 17 July the Steering Group considered the future of acute services in Central Lancashire and the Delayed Transfer of Care (DToC). The Steering Group assessed thirteen options with regards to the future of acute services. These were shortlisted to seven options to be explored, which would subsequently be going out for public consultation. It was also reported that in the last twelve months, the Delayed Transfer of Care was at 10% across Lancashire but reassurances were made that improvements had been made in June/July.
4. Councillor Holgate requested an update on the planned Our Health Our Care Joint scrutiny with South Ribble. Officers would get an update on this and refer back to Members. We noted the report.

Notice of Executive Decisions

5. We considered the Notice of Executive Decisions for July 2019 which gave notice of key and other major decisions Executive Members are expected to make.
6. With regards to the Task Group report that was going to Executive Cabinet, Councillor Lynch stated his disappointment that some of the recommendations made as part of the review would not be carried forward. We therefore agreed that clarification be sought on this at the Executive Cabinet meeting in August. We noted the Notice of Executive Decisions.

GRT Encampments

7. The Chair welcomed Lesley Miller, Public Protection Manager to the meeting. An update was provided on the action taken with regards to Gypsy-Romany-Traveller (GRT) Encampments following an initial Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in March 2019 to discuss a number of unauthorised GRT Encampments in the borough.
8. We noted that since this meeting the council's GRT procedure had been updated to accurately reflect the activities undertaken by all teams and partners. Further legal advice was sought from Counsel which confirmed that the process and legal procedures followed by Chorley Council are appropriate and the most expedient use of legislation. The Council also completed works to install height barriers on two of the town centre car parks and had received estimated costs for further deterrents. We were advised that no negative feedback had been received regarding the installation of the barriers.
9. We thanked officers for their work in updating the procedure and a special thanks was given to Carol Roscoe, the Council's Animal Welfare Officer, for her work with the animals, particularly dogs, associated with the GRT groups. We also requested that officers contact Counsel for further clarity on the powers of the police and GRT encampments. We noted the report.

Scrutiny Reporting Back: Chorley Council's Annual Report on Overview and Scrutiny in 2018/19

10. Members received the annual report that summarised the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Performance Panel and the task groups which had taken place in 2018/19.
11. We recognised how much work had been undertaken over the last year and the Chair thanked Members and Officers involved for all their work. We noted the annual report and recommended that it be forwarded to the Council meeting on 17 September as required in the Council's constitution.

Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

12. The Committee were provided with the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in May 2019. The guidance was published to ensure that local and combined authorities are aware of the purpose of overview and scrutiny and how to conduct its functions effectively.
13. We were satisfied and reassured that the Council already complied with a lot of the criteria included in the guidance. One area which could be addressed was creating an Executive/Scrutiny protocol. However, following discussion we agreed that this was not required due to the small nature of the Democratic Services Team and the absence of a specific scrutiny team. We noted the guidance.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

14. We considered the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Performance Panel and task group topic areas for 2019/20.
15. Councillor Holgate requested that a review be considered on the topic of reducing the council's carbon footprint, with a particular focus on single-use plastics. After a short discussion, the Chair proposed that this topic would be the focus of the next Task Group review to start without delay, and that Councillor Steve Holgate be nominated as Chair.
16. We also discussed reviewing the current bus services within the borough to address the isolation of residents in rural districts. It was agreed that an update report on the previous public transport issues task group be presented at the next meeting of the Committee in September 2019. We noted the work programme.

Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme

17. Lesley Miller, Public Protection Manager, presented the confidential report of the Director of Early Intervention and Support which updated Members on the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme in the borough.
18. Councillor Gabbott requested the exact cost to Chorley Council for the resettlement programme and it was agreed that officers would retrieve this information. We thanked the Housing Solutions Team for all their work on the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme. We noted the report.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL – 10 JULY 2019

Performance Focus – Customer and Digital Context

19. We welcomed Asim Khan, Director (Customer and Digital), Adrian Lowe, Executive Member (Customer, Advice and Streetscene) and Alistair Morwood, Executive Member (Public Protection) to the meeting. The report outlined performance at quarter four 2018/19.
20. Rebecca Aziz-Brook, Transformation Programme Co-ordinator, presented the report. The services within the directorate are;
 - Planning
 - Customer Services
 - Streetscene
 - ICT
 - Enforcement
21. Asim Khan welcomed Cllr Alistair Morwood as the new Executive Member for Public Protection which included the responsibility for the regulatory services. We noted that Customer and Digital is a diverse directorate which consisted of the majority of front-line services. Performance had been successful, and the directorate continued to meet aspirations. With regards to the financial position, the budget for the Directorate underspent by £60,000 which had created a 0.9% variance against the original cash budget.

Enforcement

22. Asim Khan advised that over the last year the new Enforcement Team had been established and the enforcement services were consolidated to deliver services in an effective way. Additional powers such as Section 215 notices have been exercised, and a continued focus and response to community concerns to address fly tipping and dog fouling is being made.

ICT

23. We noted that work to support the delivery of the council's ICT and Digital strategies had continued, including the roll out of worksmart principles to many teams in the council and the delivery of Office 365. In order to support this work, additional ICT staffing had been appointed to, to ensure that the team could support this work effectively. A notable successful project has been the introduction of public town centre Wi-Fi which was completed on time.

Council Tax

24. At 98.14%, the percentage of council tax collected was slightly behind target at quarter four in comparison to 2017/18, although this was in line with the trend across other Lancashire authorities. Following queries, Asim Khan ensured the Panel that any arrears were tracked and advised on the recovery cycle with regards to Council Tax and the debt policy in place for circumstances where payment couldn't be made.

Streetscene and Waste

25. We noted that new waste procurement exercise had been concluded with a focus during the fourth quarter to mobilise the contract in April 2019. New refuse collection vehicles had been ordered and supported with technology realising significant savings for the council.

26. Following discussion, Asim Khan advised that the annual target for garden waste subscriptions was circa £710,000. There had been 22,370 subscriptions last year which indicated a shortfall against projected figures.
27. Promotion had taken place but further marketing had been scheduled later on in the year as greater focus had been made on the mobilisation of the new waste contract to mitigate the impact of this. However, in the fourth quarter a paper-based direct debit campaign had taken place to provide support to senior citizens unable to pay by card but could do so through the bank. This exercise had proved successful and we agreed that this be undertaken again next year.
28. There had been a one-month grace renewal period for garden waste bin collections to facilitate late subscriptions. There had also been a number of cases where residents had subscribed and received the new label but had not placed this on their bin. Under the new waste contract, the team will have devices which enabled them to identify whether a property had subscribed.
29. Councillor Adrian Lowe advised that the council had procured new street cleansing vehicles which would soon be operational. The service and maintenance of the vehicles was built into the new contract to improve breakdown performance.
30. Following discussion, we agreed that there had been a drastic improvement with regards to grass cutting with 94% resident satisfaction.

Planning

31. We noted that the Planning team had performed extremely well over the last year. There had been changes to staff with a new member of staff due to start soon. Councillor Alistair Morwood reiterated the planning team's efficient progress and advised that there had been a decrease in the number of major planning applications the council was receiving.

Customer Services

32. The Panel recognised that there had been an improvement with customer service call times. Cllr Adrian Lowe advised that the council would be changing phone suppliers which meant that the out of hours numbers would be unavailable overnight on Tuesday 16 July 2019, however there was an emergency contact number in place and information would be sent out about this. This work would provide the wider transformation of front-line services by supporting staff to have more phone functionality.
33. We thanked Asim Khan and Councillors Adrian Lowe and Alistair Morwood for their attendance. We noted the report.

Chorley Council Performance Monitoring – Fourth Quarter 2018/19

34. The Performance Panel considered a monitoring report from the Director (Policy and Governance) which was represented at the Executive Cabinet on 14 June 2019.
35. Vicky Willett, Performance and Partnerships Manager advised that the report set out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the fourth quarter of 2018/19, 1 January to 31 March 2019.
36. Overall, performance of key projects was very good, with nine (75%) of the projects rated as green or scheduled to start in quarter one 2019/20. Three (25%) projects were rated amber and the action plans for each of these were contained within the report.

37. Performance of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures were also very good with 75% of Corporate Strategy measures and 89% of key service delivery measures performing on or above target within the 5% threshold. Those indicators performing below target have action plans outlined with measures to improve performance.
38. We expressed concerns regarding the levels of staff sickness absence, in particular with 611.08 days being lost to mental health and 45% leaving the organisation following a period of long-term sickness due to mental health. We also recognised the pressure this put on existing staff and the potential for losing work.
39. We were reassured that a comprehensive piece of work had been undertaken to support existing staff and there was a shared point of access for teams work to reduce risk of work being lost. Proactive steps had been taken to address mental health issues and mental health first aiders would be established. We welcomed this work and suggested that this be looked into again and be discussed at the upcoming Overview and Scrutiny meeting. We noted the report.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUPS

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Developing the Council’s Green Agenda

40. The first meeting of the Task Group will take place on Thursday, 12 September 2019.

Recommendation

41. That the report be noted.