

## **REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **General Report**

1. This report summarises the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 21 May 2009 and 22 Jun 2009.

#### Meeting held on 21 May 2009

### **Executive Cabinet - 28 May 2009**

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

### **Business Plan and Performance Monitoring Statements - Final Quarter 2008 / 2009**

3. We received the Business Plan and Performance Monitoring Statements for the final quarter of 2008 / 2009. The Directors presented each report, outlined the key messages and responded to queries from Members.
4. Members requested that further training to be provided for Development Control Committee members particularly relating to site inspections and the provision of a pre-application briefing for the Buckshaw Group 1 application for all Members. An update on the provision of allotments would also be presented within the next Business Plan and Performance Monitoring Statements.

### **Get Up and Play Rangers**

5. 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.

### **Performance Monitoring Report - Final Quarter of 2008 / 2009**

6. The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) advised that 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.
7. We 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.
8. 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.

## **Chorley Partnership Annual Report 2008 / 2009**

9. We discussed the report and noted that the recession was having an impact on Chorley just like the rest of the UK. The unemployment benefits claimant count for Chorley had risen by almost double since last year. 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.
10. Members noted potential future impact on finances, such as enforcement on council tax payments.

## **Annual Review of Overview and Scrutiny 2008/09 and Topics for 2009/10**

11. We considered a report which outlined topics suggested at the “Scrutiny – A review of the year session” held on the rising of the last meeting and agreed that the final Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of the year be used as a review session in future years.
12. Two topics for review by Lancashire County Council were suggested as requested: ‘Health scrutiny of the PCT performance and outcomes’ and ‘Enforcement issues in two tier Councils’.

## **Scrutiny Reporting Back: Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny in 2008/09**

13. We considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and noted that the “Scrutiny – A review of the year session” had been used to inform the document. We agreed that the Annual Report be presented to Council in July.

## **Newly Implemented Legislation affecting Scrutiny**

14. We 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.
15. We noted that the existing arrangements already go further than the new Community call for action requirements. We considered that it would be appropriate to include the role of scrutinising the crime and disorder function in the terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to make consequential amendments to the Constitution to ensure that the wording is consistent with the new legislation.

## **Practical Guide to Overview and Scrutiny**

16. We 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 and we agreed that the document be adopted as a replacement to the existing Scrutiny Toolkit, subject to updates.

Meeting held on 22 Jun 2009

**Executive Cabinet - 25 June 2009**

**(a) Sustainable Communities Act, 2007 - Implications for Chorley**

17. Officers advised that the Sustainable Communities Act did not limit the type of proposals that could be put forward however there are two main criteria for a valid proposal. The proposals must be ones that require action from the government and not be possible within the existing powers of the local authority; and the proposals must relate to actions that the local authority believe would better enable them to improve the social, economic or environmental well being of their area. Proposals were to be submitted by 31 July 2009.
18. The Executive Member (Business) attended the meeting and explained that the three proposals selected were considered to bring the best outcomes for Chorley. We noted that the consultation with the Citizens Panel would involve a meeting and discussion of the proposals in full and that the process of making proposals would be repeated next year enabling other proposals to be considered.

**(b) Affordable Housing Task Group - Service Improvement Plan**

19. We considered the confidential report and queried several points with the Corporate Director (Business).

**Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry - Local Strategic Partnership**

20. Councillor Mike Devaney presented the report and advised that the inquiry had increased Members' understanding of the Local Strategic Partnership. We agreed that the report be presented to the Executive Cabinet in August.

**Potential Review Topics for 2009/10**

21. We considered a report outlining potential review topics for 2009/10 arising from the review session held on 23 March 2009. Topics were raised and grouped under three headings of Corporate Strategy, Public concerns/service issues and external scrutiny. We agreed that the review topics be taken forward as suggested in the report.
22. The membership of the Town Centre vitality group and Highways issues group were confirmed, key issues were also identified. A third review topic could be selected later in the year.

**Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and Reports from the Task and Finish Groups**

23. We considered the work programme and noted the revised format.
24. I reported that the final report for the Joint Scrutiny Inquiry with Preston and South Ribble on Affordable Housing inquiry had been drafted. There were a number of recommendations within the report which would be signed off at a meeting of the joint Chairs in the next month or so. The report would then be presented to the Executive Cabinet of each Authority.

## **Recommendation**

25. The Council is recommended
  - a. To note this report.  
To instruct the Corporate Director of Governance to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution consequent upon the new scrutiny arrangements described in this report.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS EDGERLEY  
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RR  
There are no background papers to this report.