

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 22 June 2009

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Peter Malpas (Executive Member (Business))

Officers in attendance: Lesley-Ann Fenton (Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)), Jane Meek (Corporate Director (Business)), Carol Russell (Head of Democratic Services) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

09.OS.41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Harold Heaton, Adrian Lowe and Rosie Russell.

09.OS.42 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 May 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

09.OS.43 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

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

09.OS.44 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

09.OS.45 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 25 JUNE 2009

The Committee considered two reports from the Executive Cabinet agenda.

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

The Corporate Director (Business) outlined the report and advised that the Sustainable Communities Act does not limit the type of proposals that can 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.

The Executive Member (Business) explained that the three proposals selected were considered to bring the best outcomes for Chorley. It was noted that the consultation with the Citizens Panel would involve a meeting and discussion of the proposals in full.

A query was raised in relation to one of the alternative proposals within the report regarding the government giving local authorities the power to retain revenue from business rates to be spent on locally decided priorities. This would be clarified with the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation).

The Committee noted that the process of making proposals would be repeated next year enabling other proposals to be considered.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

(b) Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

(c) Affordable Housing Task Group - Service Improvement Plan

The Corporate Director (Business) outlined the report and answered several queries from Members.

RESOLVED – The report be noted.

09.OS.46 REINTRODUCTION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - That the meeting be reopened to the press and public.

09.OS.47 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Forward Plan for the period 1 June to 30 September 2009.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

09.OS.48 EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY INTO STREETSCENE ISSUES

The Committee received a copy of the report considered by the Executive Cabinet at their meeting in June. 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.49 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY - LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Councillor Mike Devaney presented the report to the Committee and advised that the inquiry had increased Members' understanding of the Local Strategic Partnership.

RESOLVED – That the report be presented to the Executive Cabinet in August, subject to the deletion of the word “male” in paragraph 6 of objective 3 of the report.

09.OS.50 POTENTIAL REVIEW TOPICS FOR 2009/10

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Governance) 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 and within the report a potential way forward for the topics had been outlined.

The membership and objectives for the two reviews agreed at the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also discussed.

RESOLVED

1. The report be noted.
2. The review topics be taken forward as suggested in the report (paragraphs 8, 9 and 10) with the exception of de-regulation of licensing which would be firstly considered by the Licensing and Public Safety Committee.
3. The membership of the Town Centre vitality task and finish group be Councillor Peter Wilson (Chair), Councillors Alistair Bradley, Marie Gray, Pat Haughton, June Molyneaux, Iris Smith and Stella Walsh. The key issues would be how to encourage people into the town, taking into account town centre health checks, best practice from other local authorities, events, marketing and parking issues.
4. The membership of the Highways issues task and finish group be Councillor Mike Devaney (Chair), Councillors Nora Ball, Alan Cullens, Doreen Dickinson, Roy Lees, Adrian Lowe, Marion Lowe and June Molyneaux. The key issues would be to consider the draft Streetscene Services agreement with Lancashire County Council, including pavements, speed restrictions, traffic regulation, pedestrian crossings gritting, and funding issues.
5. A third review topic potentially be selected later in the year.

09.OS.51 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORTS FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Members considered the work programme and noted the revised format.

RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.

(a) Joint Scrutiny Inquiry with Preston and South Ribble on Affordable Housing

Councillor Edgerley reported that the final report for the 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.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

09.OS.52 ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THE CHAIR DECIDES IS/ARE URGENT

Councillor Edgerley advised that Committee Members were invited to Bengal Street on Wednesday, 24 July at 11.45am to contribute to a self-assessment and peer review process is being promoted by Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS), Local Authority Better Regulation Office (LABRO) and Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA) as a means of producing evidence of robust self assessment for Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) purposes. Further information would be provided by email.

RESOLVED – That the invitation be noted.

Chair