

REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

GENERAL REPORT – 18 JANUARY 2010

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 18 January. This report summarises briefly the principal items debated and decisions reached.

Value for Money Review of the Corporate Support Services - Determination of response to final report

2. At a previous meeting we had requested the Value for Money Review of the Corporate Support Services. The review includes the office of the Chief Executive, HR&OD, ICT, Corporate Governance (Civic Services, Legal Services and Democratic Services) and Policy and Performance.
3. The review concludes that, in general, the Corporate Support Services provide good value for money, but the findings have identified a number of improvements and service revisions that have the potential to streamline the use of resources and provide better value for money.
4. We noted that the Executive Cabinet have approved the recommendations for development and implementation.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

5. We considered a report outlining options for the future scrutiny of crime and disorder and received performance information requested at the last meeting. Information on the Sanctuary and Families First scheme was also received.
6. We agreed that training on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and crime and disorder issues be delivered via several Member Learning sessions, including topics like alcohol misuse, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour. The provision of joint training with South Ribble Council Members has been agreed in principle.
7. We also agreed to ask South Ribble Council to undertake some joint scrutiny of the merged CDRP. This joint scrutiny is envisaged to take place in the new municipal year and before each Council's Executive makes a decision on the future of the merged partnership. It will focus on the efficient use of officer time and stakeholder satisfaction with the merged CDRP.

Performance of Key Partnerships

8. At the meeting on 9 November 2009 we received a copy of the performance of Key Partnerships - 2008/09 Year End Progress report as one of the topics raised at the "review of the year" event last March had been outsourcing and the effectiveness of subcontractors.
9. We discussed how in the future we will scrutinise the performance of key partnerships. We noted the Executive Cabinet has agreed to include alternative solutions to monitor and reassess financial strength of key partners using recent, relevant information in addition to last published financial accounts within the existing report.

10. We concluded that a report be presented to our meeting in March focussing on the financial stability of certain key partners and to constitute a task and finish group to consider aspects of one key partnership in the new municipal year to be discussed at our review of the year event.

Future agenda items

11. A review of the year session is planned for 22 March. This will include suggestions for topics next year and will be open to all non-Executive Members.
12. We will consider broad principles of the 2010 budget at the next meeting.

Overview and Scrutiny Inquiries - Highways issues

13. I accepted this item as urgent to enable the report to be considered by the Executive Cabinet in February. The Chair delivered a brief presentation outlining the key findings and recommendations that will have a positive impact on the delivery of services for the people of Chorley.
14. Our recommendations include for Lancashire County Council to provide a separate reporting mechanism for officers and Councillors rather than the current single telephone number and to reduce avoidable contact with the contact centre (NI14) by keeping customers updated, with text messaging, email alerts or use of postcards for "work in progress" or "work completed".
15. Others are to enter into negotiations with respect to Chorley delivering some enforcement functions, such as advertising boards, highway encroachment and overhanging vegetation and to formalise arrangements and resources to enable Chorley Council to deliver gritting services in an agreed town centre area on behalf of Lancashire County Council.
16. We accepted the report with thanks and referred it to Executive Cabinet.

Recommendation

17. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS EDGERLEY
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RR

There are no background papers to this report.