

## **REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

1. This report summarises the business transacted at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 March 2011, as well as a brief summary of the recent activities and matters discussed at the meetings that have taken place of the Task and Finish Groups.

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28 MARCH 2011**

#### **Community Safety Partnership and Anti Social Behaviour**

2. To fulfil their statutory duty to scrutinise Community Safety matters, the Committee concentrated on the scrutiny of anti social behaviour as an issue which affects everyone and has strong links to neighbourhood working.
3. Members attended Chorley Police Station to visit the Council's CCTV unit ahead of the meeting and two Members reported back on their participation in two of the initiatives currently taking place to combat alcohol related crime and anti social behaviour amongst young people:- Operation Cherub and Smart Response.
4. The Committee also received a report of the Chair of the Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership providing information on the work of the Partnership in response to anti social behaviour issues, that included:
  - Defining identifiable categories of anti social behaviour
  - Threats relating to anti social behaviour and signal crime in Chorley
  - Past performance relating to anti social behaviour including Confidence and Perception
  - Structures and arrangements in place to prevent and tackle anti social behaviour
  - Support in place for residents
  - Links to anti social behaviour and neighbourhood working; and
  - How members can engage in this work including the reporting and receipt of information relating to anti social behaviour in their neighbourhood area.
5. The Joint Community Safety Partnership Manager and Chief Inspector Geoff Hurst took a variety of questions from Members that included how information is disseminated, how the Council measures the outcomes of the various operations and initiatives to ensure value for money.

#### **Alleygates and their impact on Community Safety**

6. The Committee received a report of the Chair of the South Ribble Community Safety Partnership that provided an update on the impact on community safety and of the removal of funding for alleygate schemes in the Borough.
7. At the Executive Cabinet meeting in August the decision was taken to withdraw the capital funding for the alleygate scheme and that the use of alleygates as a tool for

tackling community safety issues and criminal activity be administered on a case by case basis through the MATAC process. At this time the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that the Executive Member for Places be invited to a meeting of the Committee in six months time to report on the effects of withdrawing the scheme.

8. The alleygate scheme had been very popular and perhaps for the reasons of feeling safe and perception, rather than any statistical evidence that they contributed to crime and anti social behaviour reduction against a backdrop of low baseline figures. The move to a case by case assessment of schemes based on intelligence led methodology was deemed to be a more appropriate use of limited resources in tackling community safety issues across the Borough.

### **Executive Cabinet minutes – 17 February 2011**

9. Members considered the minutes of the last Executive Cabinet meeting and discussions took place in relation to the following items:

#### Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry – Allotments

- Comments to the Executive Member for Places regarding the deferral of some of the accepted recommendations on concessionary based charges.
- Concerns that the change in approach was not communicated to Members of the Council, in particular the Chair of the Task Group.

#### Section 106 Funding for Youth and Community Activities at Buckshaw

- Comments about the allocation criteria for the Section 106 monies.

#### Capital Programme, 2010/11 to 2012/13 – Monitoring Report

- Clarification that the improvement works to the highways around the site of the ASDA development, on Bolton Street and Pall Mall, Chorley would still be carried out.

### **Monitoring Report – Joint Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group**

10. The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy presented a report to update Members on the progress made following the Executive's response to the recommendations made by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry on Chorley Community Housing in June 2010.
11. Since the Inquiry, there had been a number of changes announced by the Government which had implications for Affordable Housing delivery, and Members attention were drawn to the following:
  - The new Affordable Rent Model whereby social landlords will be able to offer fix term tenancies at up to 80% of the local market rate creating revenue to invest in building new homes.
  - A promotion day for the Plumlife Scheme on 10 May, that would show case the 45 remaining properties.

- £210m for a new first buy investment scheme that would target around 10,000 people.
  - £100m through the HCA in supporting housing associations to refurbish empty properties and manage them at an affordable rent for up to 10 years.
12. Clarification was sought and given on 'pepper potting' of affordable housing on new developments and the roles and responsibilities of the Council and developers in informing prospective buyers of their location.

### **Monitoring of Inquiry Recommendations – Town Centre Vitality**

13. The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy updated the Committee on the actions taken following the general endorsement of the recommendations of the Town Centre Vitality Task Group by the Executive Cabinet in June 2010.
14. The report set out the recommendations and the progress made against each one. Members asked questions about the following areas:
- Encouraging the Market Traders to work more on their own initiative
  - The brown motorway advertising
  - A policy for dealing with the siting of A boards on public footpaths
  - Herringbone parking on Market Street and St Georges Street
  - Coach operator tours of Chorley
  - Leaflet drop to promote the range of shops in Chorley

### **Update on the Chorley Partnership**

15. The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive that provided an update on the changes being made to the Chorley Partnership. Following the refresh of the Corporate Strategy in autumn 2010, the structure of the Partnership had been changed to ensure that it was more streamlined and focussed on delivering the partnerships new priorities.
16. The new structure would include a decision making Executive, a wider Network, three Champions for You and Your Family, You and Your Community and You and Chorley and the two statutory thematic groups. The new structure would be in place from April, with the first Network annual conference taking place in October.
17. To ensure that the voluntary, community and faith sector are properly represented on the partnership, a consortium of VCFS organisations has been commissioned to develop and manage a forum to organise and support this sector.
18. Members had raised concerns about the availability of the minutes of the Partnership and its thematic groups and it had now been agreed that the minutes would be published in draft form on the website within ten working days of the meeting.

## **Joint Scrutiny Committee – Councils Liberating the NHS Task Group**

19. It was reported that Chorley would be working with Members from South Ribble on a Joint Scrutiny project that would enable Scrutiny councillors to carry out engagement, research and learning on NHS reform around GP Consortia, to improve the health and well-being of communities.
20. The Councillors representing Chorley were as follows:
  - Councillor Alan Cullens
  - Councillor Rosemary Russell
  - Councillor Peter Wilson
21. The Task Group had met twice and the draft scoping document was circulated at the meeting for information. Councillor Alan Cullens would provide regular updates as the review progressed.

## **Annual Review of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2010/11 and potential review topics for 2011/12**

22. The Director Transformation submitted a report providing an overview of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2010/11.
23. In the past the Committee had been very focused on the Council's performance. Following a review earlier in the year, it was agreed that although some monitoring reports would still continue to be produced quarterly for the Executive Cabinet agenda, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would only receive them every six months allowing the Committee to focus on the Scrutiny of Executive decisions.
24. The report outlined the work undertaken by the Committee in the following areas:
  - Challenging the Executive
  - Scrutiny Reviews that have taken place or are currently being undertaken.
    - Allotments
    - Asset Management
    - Lancastrian
  - Challenging Performance
  - Financial Scrutiny
  - Community Safety ScrutinyMembers were invited to submit topics for scrutiny in 2011/12.

## **Reports from the Task and Finish Groups**

### **Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Lancastrian**

25. The Committee approved the scoping document for the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Lancastrian. The Chair, Councillor Alan Cullens reported that the main objective of the Group was to undertake a review of the Lancastrian Room to see how it could be better utilised and outlined the following terms of reference:

- To look at the current function, suitability, space and operational costs of the Lancastrian Suite within the Town Hall
- To look at current and future working arrangements and alternative methods of service delivery
- To assess the need for the type of facilities offered by the Lancastrian Suite – both commercially and for community facilities.
- To look at other options for the future management of the Lancastrian Suite including use of external companies on a commercial basis and not for profit organisations for a community use facility
- To consider whether there needs to be investment in the facilities to make them more usable.

### **Recommendation**

26. The Council is recommended to note the report.

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LOWE

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DS

There are no background papers to this report.