

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 28 March 2011

Present: Councillor Adrian Lowe (Chair), Councillor Alan Cullens (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Julia Berry, Marie Gray, Alison Hansford, Pat Haughton, Harold Heaton, Mark Perks, Rosie Russell and Peter Wilson

Also in attendance: Councillors Eric Bell (Executive Member - Places), Cllr Paul Moon (Wyre Borough Council) and Inspector Geoff Hurst (Lancashire Constabulary)

Officers in attendance: Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy), Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy and Communications), Simon Clark (Head of Health, Environment & Neighbourhoods), Paul Lowe (Merged Crime and Disorder Reduction Manager), Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager), Melissa Russhard (Community Safety Officer (Policy and Projects)) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

10.OS.01 THANK YOU AND BEST WISHES

The Chair expressed his thanks to Councillors Pat Haughton and Edward Smith for their contribution to the work of the Committee following the news that they would not be standing as Councillors in the forthcoming Borough Elections.

10.OS.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Edward Smith and Joyce Snape.

10.OS.03 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Councils Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct the following interest was declared:

- Councillor Mark Perks declared a personal interest in Item 5: Chorley Community Safety Partnership and Anti Social Behaviour.

10.OS.04 MINUTES

a) Confirmation

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 February 2011 be held as a correct record for signing by the chair.

b) Matters arising from the minutes

10.OS.69 – Executive Cabinet – 9 December 2010

(10.EC.237) – Core Funding, 2011/12 – Review of process

The Chair reported that he had made representations on the review processes of Core Funding in line with the resolution contained within the minutes.

10.OS.70 – Executive's Response to Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry into Allotment Issues.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Allotments, sought clarification on the present status of the review

10.OS.05 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair reported that no requests had been received by any member of the public.

10.OS.06 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Chair welcomed acting Chief Inspector Geoff Hurst to the meeting.

To fulfil their statutory duty to scrutinise Community Safety, the Committee concentrated on the scrutiny of antisocial behaviour as an issue which affected everyone and had strong links to neighbourhood working.

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 antisocial behaviour amongst young people:- Operation Cherub and Smart Response.

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 categories of anti social behaviour
- Threats relating to anti social behaviour
- Past performance relating to anti social behaviour including confidence and perception
- Structures and arrangements in place to prevent and tackle anti social behaviour
- Support 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.

The Joint Community Safety Partnership Manager and Acting Chief Inspector Geoff Hurst took a variety of questions from Members that included how information is disseminated and how the Council measures the outcomes of the various operations and initiatives to ensure value for money.

10.OS.07 ALLEYGATES AND THEIR IMPACT ON COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Committee received a report of the Chair of the Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership that provided an update on the impact on community safety of the removal of funding for alleygate schemes in the Borough.

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 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that the Executive Members for Places be invited to a meeting of the Committee in six months time, to report on the effects of withdrawing the scheme.

The alleygate scheme had been very popular, perhaps for perception of safety, rather than any statistical evidence that they contributed to crime and anti social

behaviour reduction. 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.

To date only one request for an alleygate to be used as a tool to combat anti social behaviour issues, received through the MATAC process had been considered and had been dismissed in favour of other initiatives thought more appropriate to the situation.

Some Members had concerns that some areas would be disadvantaged as they were not presently covered by a MATAC or mini MATAC and that the local Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings did not provide the necessary support or avenues to report through. Acting Chief Inspector Hurst reported that this had been recognised and the PACT process was currently under review. Assurances were given that there were other reporting mechanisms in place across the whole of the Borough that would ensure that any crime and disorder issues were addressed.

The Chair thanked Councillor Eric Bell, Executive Member for Places, acting Chief Inspector Geoff Hurst and the Joint Community Safety Manager for attending the meeting.

10.OS.08 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 17 FEBRUARY 2011

10.OS.247 – Executive’s response to recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny Task Group’s Inquiry into Allotments

Issue raised:

Comments were made to the Executive Member for Places regarding the deferral of some of the accepted recommendations on concessionary based charges and that the change in approach had been reported first in the newspapers instead of being communicated to Members of the Council, in particular the Chair of the Allotments Task Group.

11.EC.251 – Section 106 Funding for Youth and Community Activities at Buckshaw

Issue raised:

Some Members had concerns about the criteria that was to be used for the allocation for the Section 106 monies.

The Head of Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods explained that each application would be judged on its own merits.

11.EC 2.55 – Capital Programme, 2010/11 to 2012/13 – Monitoring Report

Issue raised:

Members sought assurances that the improvements works to the highways around the site of the ASDA development, on Bolton Street and Pall Mall, Chorley would still be carried out following the reduction in Town Centre Investment.

The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy clarified that this would be the case and that the improvements would be implemented by ASDA ahead of the store development.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

10.OS.09 JOINT AFFORDABLE HOUSING - MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy updating 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.

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 showcase the remaining 45 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.

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.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10.OS.10 TOWN CENTRE VITALITY - MONITORING REPORT

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.

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 time frame for the erection of the brown motorway signs
- A policy for dealing with the siting of A boards on public footpaths
- The possibility of herringbone parking bays on Market Street and St Georges Street
- Coach operator tours of Chorley
- Leaflet drop to promote the range of shops in Chorley

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10.OS.11 UPDATE ON THE CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP

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.

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, also the two statutory thematic groups. The new structure would be in place from April, with the first Network annual conference taking place in October.

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.

Members had raised concerns about the availability of the minutes of the Partnership and its thematic groups and it had been agreed that the minutes would be published in draft form on the website within ten working days of the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10.OS.12 JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COUNCILS LIBERATING THE NHS TASK GROUP

The Vice Chair of the Committee 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.

The Councillors representing Chorley were as follows:

- Councillor Alan Cullens
- Councillor Rosemary Russell
- Councillor Peter Wilson

The Task Group had met twice and a draft scoping document was circulated at the meeting for information. Councillor Alan Cullens would provide regular updates as the review progressed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10.OS.13 REPORTS FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Lancastrian Suite presented the draft scoping document for approval.

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 better be 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 need to be investment in the facilities to make them more usable.

RESOLVED – That the scoping document for the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Lancastrian be approved.

10.OS.14 ANNUAL REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2010/11 AND POTENTIAL TOPICS FOR 2011/12

The Committee received a report of the Director of Transformation that provided an overview of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2010/11.

In the past the Committee had been very focused on the Council's performance. Following the 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.

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 Scrutiny

Members were invited to submit topics for scrutiny reviews in 2011/12.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10.OS.15 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Forward Plan for the period 1 March to 30 June 2011.

RESOLVED - That the Forward Plan be noted.

Chair