

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 11 July 2011

Present: Councillor Adrian Lowe (Chair), Councillor Debra Platt (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Julia Berry, Magda Cullens, Doreen Dickinson, Alison Hansford, Steve Holgate, Beverley Murray, Rosie Russell, Paul Walmsley and Peter Wilson

Officers in attendance: Gary Hall (Director of Transformation), Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy), Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places), Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy and Communications), Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

10.OS.16 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed those Councillors that were new to the Committee, in particular Councillor Debra Platt as Vice Chair. Councillor Adrian Lowe also thanked those Members that were no longer sitting on the Committee but had contributed effectively to the scrutiny work programme in 2010/11.

10.OS.17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harold Heaton, Keith Iddon and Joyce Snape.

10.OS.18 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct:

Councillor Alison Hansford declared a personal interest in Item 5, Executive Cabinet held on 23 June 2011 – 11.EC.05 Chorley Pals – Heritage Lottery Fund Bid.

Councillor Steve Holgate declared a personal interest in item 14 – 2010/11 year end progress report of Key Partnerships.

10.OS.19 MINUTES

a) Confirmation

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28 March be held as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

b) Matters arising from the minutes

10.OS.04 – 10.OS.69 – Executive Cabinet – 9 December 2010

(10.OS.69) – Core Funding, 2011/12 – Review of process

Further information was requested to satisfy members, on what processes had been put into place to ensure the consolidation of all available funding sources to ensure effective allocation in the current financial climate.

10.OS.20 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

10.OS.21 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 31 MARCH 2011

11.EC.263 – Council’s Community Engagement Strategy

Issue raised

Further information was sought on how the new Citizens Jury would operate and the cost of consultation to the Council.

10.OS.22 SCRUTINY REPORTING BACK - ANNUAL REPORT ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN 2010/11

Members considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report that detailed the work of the Committee in 2010/11, including the specific outcomes from the Task Groups and the Committee’s role in Finance Scrutiny and other performance and holding the Executive to account.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and be submitted to Council in July.

10.OS.23 BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENTS

The Committee received the Business Plan Monitoring Statements for the second six months of 2010/11.

(a) Partnerships Planning and Policy Directorate

The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy reported against the key actions and performance indicators.

There had been a number of notable achievements for the Directorate that included:

- The LDF Core Strategy had been agreed by the three Central Lancashire Councils and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by the deadline of 31 March 2011.
- In continuing to push forward the affordable housing action plan, 173 affordable houses had been delivered, exceeding the target of 50.
- The Select Move Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme had been launched in March 2011. Customers could now bid for properties on a weekly basis either online or in the Council’s One Stop Shop.
- The response to the trial of the new Gazebos had been very positive, 45 Gazebos would be erected in the first phase and implementation would commence in mid July 2011.

All except one of the key actions in the Business Improvement Plan had been delivered on schedule and an explanation was given as to why the action to deliver Landlord Accreditation with South Ribble Borough Council was currently off track.

Members asked if the Council’s new policy on back garden developments had had an impact with regards to property developers appealing against the refusal of permissions. The Director reported that the larger developers did not seem to be appealing or resubmitting applications at present, however there was also a view that the Planning Inspectorate did not seem to be taking local back garden development policies into consideration when determining appeals and the Council did expect further testing of this local policy in the future.

It was also explained that the recently improved performance indicators relating to the processing of planning applications was expected to be maintained due to changes

implemented through a recent planning review to streamline processes through the better use of Information Technology.

Information was also sought on the number of established businesses that were no longer trading in the current economic climate.

RESOLVED – 1. That the information in the report be noted.

2. That the information on the number of established businesses no longer trading be provided to the relevant Member.

(b) People and Places Directorate

The Director of People and Places reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators.

Key achievements for the directorate include:

- A significant senior management restructure within the directorate that had resulted in £150,000 worth of savings and had reduced the number of service heads to two. The new structure embedded neighbourhood working within the operation of the directorate and consolidated contract management.
- The Coach House Cafe had received a Civic Society Award.
- The Council-managed Community Centres usage figure had increased by more than 1,000 hours of usage compared to the same time next year.
- Yarrow Park had received Country Park accreditation.

The majority of key actions in the Business Improvement Plan had been delivered on schedule and a table containing those actions that were currently behind on schedule was included, giving reasons for the delay and what mitigating actions were being taken.

It was noted that the One Stop Health Shop was achieving well. The service was capturing certain groups of people who may not normally seek GP advice. The facility provided access to basic health checks and acted as a referral mechanism for other health services. Due to its success the service had been extended to March 2012.

Further information about the key actions contained within the Business Plan Monitoring Statement were requested as follows:

- Further details on the three successful bids that had been accepted by the S106 Play and Recreation Fund.
- New street cleaning arrangements had been put into place to improve on the litter and detritus performance measures and further details were sought.
- The specification of the five large funding bids that had been drafted, included the expansion of the Active Generation project to attract external investment in leisure and neighbourhood services.
- Further details about the IT solution that had been developed to allow the capture of anti social behaviour complaints.
- How the Health Inequalities Action Plan had been delivered and what outcomes had been achieved.
- What was included in the Cemetery Action Plan for 2011/12.
- What work would be undertaken by the Council to improve the food hygiene standards of those food catering establishments that had scored low under the 'scores on the doors' information system.

RESOLVED – 1. That the information in the report be noted.

2. That the information requested at the meeting be provided to the relevant Members.

(c) Transformation Directorate

The Director of Transformation reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators.

Notable successes for the directorate included:

- The Council's updated Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System had been developed and the delivery of public sector advice had been extended in Union Street with both the County Council and the HMRC now offering services from that location.
- The Council had retained its Government Connect accreditation meaning that the Council's data is as secure as it can be when transacting electronically.
- The Financial Shared Services had implemented a single Financial Information system across the two participating Councils of Chorley and South Ribble.

The report also highlighted those actions that were currently behind schedule, giving reasons for the delays and what action had been taken to get back on track.

This year the delivery of financial training for members had been a key action. Whilst targeted activity on treasury management had taken place for the Audit Committee and general financial training had since taken place but the session had been poorly attended by Members and arrangements were being discussed to provide a repeat session.

Analysis of the key performance indicators showed that the majority of performance targets across the directorate had been maintained, whilst tax collection had been slightly down, this was against increased targets. Staff satisfaction had also showed a slight reduction, however this had again been against an increased target and at a time of great uncertainty, when many restructures had taken place. The Director of Transformation reported that 100% of staff now had a Personal Development Plan and that any training skills required would be picked up through the Organisational Development Programme.

Members discussed the importance of quality affordable housing and its potential impact on health standards. The Council were trying their best to improve on housing standards within the private sector with the implementation of the Landlords Forum, primarily aimed at changing attitudes. This process was proving difficult but the Council continued to work effectively with the larger social housing providers and sampling procedures had indicated that no major problems existed.

RESOLVED – That the information in the report be noted.

10.OS.24 CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

The Chief Executive submitted a report on the activities and performance of the Chorley Partnership in 2010/11. The report commented particularly on the progress and impact of the Local Strategic Partnership sponsored projects and how they contribute to the achievement of the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy.

The following significant statistics and trends were revealed in the report:

- Crime is down overall by 1.7% compared to 2009/10.
- The rate of admissions had reduced and is lower than the North West average.
- 67 new business start-ups are recorded against a figure of 53.

The 'Healthy Shots' project was highlighted as having been particularly successful and had exceeded the initial target set of 500 young people accessing the project. Sessions had included alcohol awareness, alcohol safety and a harm reduction message competition.

Whilst the overall crime rate had reduced by 1.7% over the past 12 months, there had been significant increases in burglary dwelling, all violent crime and primary fires. It was explained that this had been caused by a small number of priority and prolific offenders, that had since been sufficiently dealt with.

Some Members had concerns that one of the key areas for action within the Health Inequalities Strategy should be to reduce the level of children with bad teeth and asked if this was something that could be addressed in the future.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10.OS.25 CHORLEY COUNCIL FOURTH QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2010/11

The Chief Executive submitted a report setting out the Authority's performance in respect of the key projects included in the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the fourth quarter of 2010/11.

The report revealed excellent performance with the vast majority of projects either on track, completed or scheduled to start later in the year. Of the two projects currently rated amber, one would now be completed in the original timescales, with the other set to be completed by the end of the second quarter.

Performance on the key performance indicators had been strong, with 95% of the measures performing above target or within the 5% tolerance and it was explained what measures had been put in place to improve on the performance of the three key service delivery measures that were currently below target.

It was also reported that in response to the reduction in numbers to the Town Centre, the Economic Development team were working on a number of projects to attract more people into the town.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10.OS.26 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

The Committee received a report of the Director of Transformation to agree a Work Programme for 2011/12.

It was noted that two of the existing task groups were only part way through their work and would continue to meet into this year. It was agreed that the Lancastrian Room Scrutiny Task Group would be chaired by Councillor Debra Platt and the new membership was confirmed. The joint NHS Reform Task Group with South Ribble Council had only recently started its work and due to changes following all out elections in South Rubble, the task group would continue but with significant changes in the membership. It was agreed that the membership for Chorley would remain the same.

Following potential scrutiny review topics that had been received from Members at the end of 2010/11, the Committee agreed to a review on Tourism, incorporating Astley Hall and Park, to be chaired by Councillor Peter Wilson. Play Area provision and the Rented Property Inspection Scheme were also identified as suitable topics for review.

An update report was also request on S106 monies to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee, and the topics of Play Area provision and Rented Property Inspection Schemes would be put on to a reserve list for potential scrutiny reviews.

To allow Members to consider what aspects of crime and disorder should be scrutinised, a report was requested on potential topics for the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED

1. **The membership for the Lancastrian Room Task Group be as follows:**
 - Councillor Debra Platt (Chair)**
 - Councillor Alistair Bradley**
 - Councillor Alison Hansford**
 - Councillor Steve Holgate**
 - Councillor Keith Iddon**
 - Councillor Adrian Lowe**
 - Councillor June Molyneaux**
 - Councillor Mick Muncaster**
 - Councillor Stella Walsh**
 - Councillor Geoff Russell**
 - Councillor Rosemary Russell**
2. **That Chorley membership for the NHS Reform Joint Scrutiny be as follows:**
 - Councillor Alan Cullens**
 - Councillor Rosemary Russell**
 - Councillor Peter Wilson**
3. **That the Committee undertake a further review on Tourism, incorporating Astley Hall and Park to be chaired by Councillor Peter Wilson.**
4. **That an update report on S106 monies be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.**
5. **That a report on potential crime and disorder topics be brought to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.**
6. **That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be drafted for 2011/12 in line with the recommendations set out in the report.**

10.OS.27 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Forward Plan for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 October 2011.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

10.OS.28 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

10.OS.29 EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ACCOMMODATION ASSETS

The Committee considered the response of the Executive Cabinet to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry into Accommodation Assets.

The Committee were please to note that the Executive Cabinet had accepted the set of principles that had been set out in the review of asset management, in respect of the Council's office accommodation and the report provided details demonstrating the

progress made to date, on each of the recommendations for each of the sites identified.

RESOLVED – 1. That the report be noted.

2. That the Committee continue to be kept updated on the progress made against each of the recommendations.

10.OS.30 2010/11 YEAR END PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF KEY PARTNERSHIPS

The Committee considered a confidential report of the Director of Transformation on the performance of the Council's key partnership arrangements. The report had been produced in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Framework for Partnership Working and any performance or risk issues identified were drawn to the attention of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Chair