

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

1. This report summarises the business transacted at the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 12 December 2011, 3 January and 12 March 2012, as well as a brief summary of the recent activities and matters discussed at meetings that have taken place of the Task and Finish Groups.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12 DECEMBER 2011

Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Service

2. The Committee received the report of the Chair and Vice Chair of Committee that had been submitted to the Executive Cabinet meeting on 24 November 2011 and was informed that the Cabinet had agreed to consider funding of the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) service at budget setting time.
3. The Leader had also requested that letters be sent out to all the partners asking them to consider making a financial contribution towards the IDVA service and this had now been done.
4. The Chief Executive also reported that at a recent meeting between the Police and the Leader, the Borough Commander had already made the commitment to consider funding and that he would continue to update the Committee on any further developments.

Business Improvement Plans

5. The Committee received directorate Business Improvement Plans for the first half of 2011/12. In each case, reports highlighted key achievements and actions in directorates, including those projects which were not on schedule, along with performance and revenue budget information.

Partnerships, Planning and Policy Directorate

6. The Chief Executive reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators for the Partnerships, Planning and Policy Directorate. There had been a number of notable achievements for the Directorate that included:
 - The implementation of the Flat Iron Market improvement project, which introduced the new gazebos to enhance the look and feel of the market.
 - The expansion of the Farmers Market on to Fazackerley Street and an increase in traders from 6 to 25.
 - A successful launch of a range of grant schemes targeted at key areas in the town centre that had resulted in a number of shop facelift improvements and refurbishments as well as five new businesses being established.

- As a result of a review of Planning Services, processes had been revised to increase efficiency and quality, with plans being developed to maximise IT systems to bring about further improvements to the service.
7. There had been a slight overspend on the budget but measures had been put into place and it was expected to be back on track by the end of the financial year.
 8. Analysis of the key performance indicators showed that the majority of performance targets across the directorate were either better than, or on track.

People and Places Directorate

9. The Director of People and Places reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators for the People and Places Directorate. There had been a number of notable achievements that included:
 - Successfully gaining a 'Golden Paws' award from the RSPCA
 - The successful launch of a new service to local businesses that provides help and support to promote physical activity in the workplace.
 - The Sports Development and Play Activity Team had been successful in gaining the 'Inspire Mark' for its Active Generation 'Raising the Bar' project.
 - The provision of a new play area in Yarrow Valley Park.
 - The Council was awarded the North West in Bloom Best Town Centre Award 2011 and also the Silver Gilt for the Best City/Large Town category.
10. Members were also informed that the budget had a current underspend of £109,000, various savings had been identified including information that the dog waste collection service had now been integrated into the normal bin emptying service for the authority which had resulted in a £13,000 saving for the Council. The Director agreed to investigate using this saving to make further improvements in the service.
11. The Director of People and Places also informed Members about a number of Integrated Impact Assessments that had been undertaken across a range of services within his directorate and an analysis of the key performance indicators showed that the majority of performance targets across the directorate were either better than, or on track.

Transformation Directorate

12. The Chief Executive reported progress against the key actions and performance indicators for the Transformation Directorate that included:
 - The local and parish elections had been delivered successfully and the relevant actions relating to the canvass were on track.
 - The new shared financial system with South Ribble Council had been implemented; and
 - The Council's accounts had been signed off by the Audit Commission and given a clean bill of health.

13. Progress in relation to the transformation of the Council's information technology had been slower than expected but the upgrading of the ICT infrastructure had been completed so that software upgrades could now be implemented. The next major change that would be the refresh of the Council's website and intranet that was to receive a new look and feel.
14. Predominately, the key indicators were being achieved, but action had been necessary to correct deterioration in performance on creditor payments during the first quarter of the year, caused by the introduction of the new financial system.

Final report of the Lancastrian Room Task Group

15. The Committee received and considered the final report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Lancastrian Room. The Chair, Councillor Debra Platt, outlined the work that had been undertaken and reported a number of key findings and recommendations within the report that would make immediate improvements to the facilities on offer to both existing and new users, and would in turn support the review's overall objective of increasing use of the venue for both commercial and community events.

Bus information displays at Chorley Interchange

16. Members of the Committee received a copy of a letter that had been sent by Lancashire County Council in response to the letter sent by the Chief Executive of the Council concerning the withdrawal of the Bus Information Display Systems at Chorley Interchange.
17. Members discussed the responses that had been given and were disappointed with the level of detail contained within and it was agreed that the Chief Executive write back to Lancashire County Council on this matter to ask further questions.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3 JANUARY 2012

Budget Principles

18. The Committee received the report of the Statutory Finance Officer advising Members of the current budget forecast position for 2012/13 based upon a set of core principles that had been discussed and agreed by Members at Executive Cabinet on 15 December 2011.
19. The key principles to be adopted were similar to the last financial year in that they represented the essence of what the Council wanted to achieve, but had been adapted to reflect the current issues facing the Borough and to represent key areas for investment.
 - continuing to be a high performing Council

- the freezing of Council Tax for 2012/13
- continuing to provide value for money
- developing schemes to assist NEETS in the Borough
- developing programmes to support current health reforms
- safeguarding frontline services
- looking for opportunities to share services and generate additional revenue
- preparing for the future and uncertainty over public finances
- reducing debt and the consequent financial charges

The principles would be the subject of public consultation.

20. Members discussed the report in full and raised several points with the Executive Member for Resources (Councillor Kevin Joyce) in particular relating to support to the voluntary sector, core funding and debt reduction.

Second Quarter Performance Report 2011/12

21. The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive setting out performance against the Corporate Strategy and the key performance indicators during the second quarter of 2011/12, 1 July to 30 September 2011.
22. Overall performance of the key projects remained good, with the vast majority of the projects either completed, or on track. One project was rated red - progress on the refresh of the Council's website which had been slow due to a number of reasons. Timescales had been amended to reflect this and the transactional functionality of the website was now complete. The Council had since commissioned additional design support to complete the new improved branding of the site.
23. Performance on the key measures and performance indicators was strong, with 83% performing above target or within the 5% tolerance. Only two indicators were performing below target.
24. The number of health checks accessed via the One Stop Health Shop had continued to fall in the last quarter and the decision had been taken to close the Town Centre base, with alternative arrangements being made to take the health checks into communities to work with individual employers.
25. It was explained that many of the people that had undertaken a health check at the One Stop Health Shop had been referred to the Council's various sports and leisure programmes and Members asked if demographic information could be provided on:
- number of people that used the One Stop Health Shop
 - number of people who had then participated in the various sports and leisure programmes
26. Members commented that although the performance against the Corporate Strategy key measures relating to street and environmental cleanliness for litter, detritus and

graffiti, were better than on target, these figures were an average across the Borough and they asked if specific targets could be reported on for Chorley Town Centre.

Second Quarter Chorley Partnership Performance Report 2011/12

27. The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive providing an update on the performance of Chorley Partnership during the second quarter of 2011/12, which highlighted the performance of Chorley Partnership in achieving the key performance targets and the progress made in the delivery of the key projects. Performance remained excellent, with four of the five projects currently rated 'green'.
28. Although crime overall had increased by 3.0% in quarter two compared to the same period last year, the year to date figure showed a reduction. Although the indicator for burglary dwelling had continued to rise during the second quarter, increased and focused targeting of identified groups of local offenders had resulted in Chorley having one of the highest detection rates in Lancashire.
29. Domestic violence and domestic violence detection rates had seen significant increases due to the changes in reporting procedures. Members requested that further information be provided on the number of victims of domestic violence from ethnic minority backgrounds in these two areas.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12 March 2012

Monitoring of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Inquiry into Highways Issues

30. The Committee received a report of the Director of People and Places providing an update on the implementation of actions agreed following the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's Inquiry into Highways Issues.
31. The Head Streetscene and Leisure Contracts outlined the report and highlighted a number of measure that had now been implemented to address some of the issues identified, that included, a severe Winter Weather Action Plan that would be implemented during a severe weather period and notice that from 2012/13, the Council would now undertake the highway verge cutting that had previously been done by Lancashire County Council.
32. Information regarding the Borough's adopted/unadopted roads, and other definitive lists regarding the ownership of grass verges and land were now available through the Contact Centre and would be made available through intheknow.

Third quarter Performance Report 2011/12

33. The Chief Executive submitted a monitoring report setting out performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the third quarter of 2011/12, 1 October to 31 December 2011.

34. Overall, performance of the key projects remained good, with the vast majority of the projects either completed, or on track. Only one project, the website refresh had been rated as amber due to on-going delays. However actions were now in place to improve on this and Members were informed that the Council expected it to go live towards the end of May.
35. It was reported that a lot of work had gone in to improving the content of the website, in response to consultation. His team planned to roll out the site to all members of staff, in advance of its launch date, so that they could view the changes and practise navigating around the site, before the system went live. This invitation would now be extended to Members and would be accessible via intheknow.
36. Performance on the key measures in the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators was strong with 92% of the measures performing above target. Only one indicator, the number of families in temporary accommodation was currently performing worse than target and Members were provided with details of the action plan that had been developed to improve performance.

Third quarter Chorley Partnership Performance Report 2011/12

37. The Chief Executive submitted a report providing an update on the performance of the Chorley Partnership during the third quarter of 2011/12, from 1 October to 31 December 2011.
38. The performance of the Chorley Partnership in achieving the key performance targets remained good and the following targets were highlighted to Members:
 - Alcohol related hospital admission had shown a reduction of 8%.
 - Accidental Dwelling Fires were lower than anticipated.
 - Although crime overall had increased by 5.9% in quarter three compared to the same period last year, the year to date figure showed a reduction of 1.8%.

Overall performance on the key projects/priorities in the Chorley Partnership delivery plan was excellent, with 94% rated green.

Call in of an Executive Member Decision

39. The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive informing them of a recent request to call in an Executive Member decision, the process that had been followed and the outcome.
40. The call in had been received on 6 February 2012 and had been accepted by the Chair. As the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was not until 12 March and this delay would hold up the implementation of a major organisational review, the Chair had felt it appropriate to make arrangements to consider the call in with three other members of the Committee, in line with call in procedure.

41. The Members considered both the call in request and the report which had formed the basis of the Executive Member decision. The decision of the group was not to call in the decision and Members were unanimously in agreement in not accepting the objections that had been put forward.

TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Rented Private Housing Inspection Task Group

42. The Group, Chaired by Councillor Beverley Murray, has now held two meetings and at the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had submitted its scoping document for approval. The review's main objective would be around identifying and tackling poor housing standards in some private rented properties with its desired outcome to improve housing conditions for tenants of private rented property in the borough.

Tourism and Promoting Chorley Task Group

43. The Group, Chaired by Councillor Peter Wilson, were approaching the end of the review and Members were satisfied that they had asked questions of all the relevant witnesses that had a key interest or responsibility in tourism in the Borough of Chorley.
44. The Group are hoping to present its Final Report and recommendations to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LOWE
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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