

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 2 March 2006

Present: Councillor J Walker (Chair), Councillors E Bell, Mrs P Case, M Davies, P Goldsworthy, T McGowan, R Parr, M Perks and Mrs S Walsh

06.OS.16 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Wilson.

06.OS.17 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

None of the Members disclosed any interests in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

06.OS.18 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny committee held on 19 January 2006 and the Special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 February 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

06.OS.19 BUSINESS PLANS AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Committee received the third quarter updates of the Business Plans for the period October to December 2005.

Under the Human Resources Business Plan reference was made to the continuing challenge of reducing sickness absence and the need to closely monitor the situation.

Under the Business Plan for Legal Services we were informed of the work dealing with the implementation of the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 and that no appeals had been lodged.

There had been a reduction in the number of local searches being processed by the Land Charges Unit following a down turn in the property market, resulting in a fall in income for the Unit.

Under the Business Plan for Financial Services it was noted that there had been a slight improvement in the percentage of invoices paid in 30 days but was not enough to make any significant progress to meet the target and that it was unlikely that the year end target would be met. The main reason for this was that in the early part of the year, during the introduction of the new financial system performance reached little more than 61% in the first quarter and it was therefore not possible to pull back performance. Individuals were now familiar with the new system resulting in a performance of 91% in the third quarter.

It was **AGREED** that the Business Plans for Corporate and Policy Services, Finance Services, Human Resources and Legal Services be noted.

06.OS.20 CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE STRATEGIC HEALTH AUTHORITY, THE PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS AND THE AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUSTS IN LANCASHIRE AND CUMBRIA

The Committee received a report of the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services which considered a response to the consultation on changes to the Strategic Health Authority (SHA), Primary Care Trusts (PCT) and Ambulance Service NHS Trusts in Cumbria and Lancashire.

The Committee discussed the three areas of the report in detail and queried several issues with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services.

The report was submitted to the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel and had requested that comments be made to this Committee.

RESOLVED - That the following comments made by the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 1 March 2006 be endorsed by this Committee and forwarded to the Executive Cabinet meeting on 9 March 2006.

Strategic Health Authority

- 1. To support the proposal for dissolving the existing three SHA's to create a new Strategic North West Strategic Health Authority covering the area of the existing three SHA's and the regional boundary for the Government Office for the North West.**
- 2. To question whether it is true consultation if only one option is given to choose from.**

Ambulance Trusts

- 1. To note the disappointment of the Panel that only one option was given to choose from.**
- 2. To note that the proposed Ambulance Trust for the North West would be too large and therefore less responsive than several smaller trusts to local needs.**
- 3. To propose that the Ambulance Trusts cover Lancashire and Cumbria, to align with the proposed reorganisation of the Police Authorities.**
- 4. To request that local performance data is available to monitor the situation in Chorley.**

PCT Reconfiguration

- 1. To support Option Three; meaning that Chorley could be part of a PCT co-terminous with the local authority boundaries of Chorley, South Ribble, West Lancashire and Preston.**
- 2. To highlight that Option One and Option Two would create a Trust be too large and therefore less responsive to local needs.**
- 3. The Panel recognised that the consultation only offers 3 options but would want any reconfiguration to tie in with the outcome of any future review of local government.**

06.OS.21 A PLAN FOR ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF LANCASHIRE - CONSULTATION

The Committee received a report of the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services inviting Members to consider a response to Lancashire County Council's draft 'Plan for all the Children and Young People in Lancashire'.

The report aimed to highlight the issues in the draft 'Plan for all the Children and Young People in Lancashire'.

Lancashire County Council were keen to hear responses to the following points:

- Do you share the vision for children and young people in Lancashire.
- Do you agree with the priorities set out in the plan.

The comments recommended to the County Council indicate that we should take an active involvement in the consultation exercise so that the best outcome for the Borough's children and young people could be achieved.

It was **AGREED** that the following comments form the basis of the Council's response to the consultation.

1. The Council shares the vision for children and young people in Lancashire as set out in the draft plan.
2. The Council is supportive of the county-wide priorities as set out in the draft plan, in principle. However, while the role of district councils can be seen clearly in some of the priorities, they do read as a set of County Council priorities. For example, there is no reference to housing and its impact on children and young people's well being. As partnership working develops further, it is recognised that the priorities should change to more accurately reflect all partners priorities.
3. In terms of the locality priorities for Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire, these have come to the fore as a result of the group sessions in the locality 'partners days'. Locality priorities need to be established on shared and agreed evidence, and take into consideration all partners' contributions to children and young people's services. As they stand at the minute, it is not possible to say with any certainty that the local priorities identified in the plan for Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire are the highest priority.
4. Some of the local priorities require further clarification so everybody knows what exactly is meant by them, for example 'workforce development across statutory agencies to improve staff retention'. Some of the actions in the plan reinforce the perception of it being a county document and a lack of ownership, to date, of partners. For example, under more things for children and young people it says it will be the Youth and Community Services' responsibility to provide sporting and leisure opportunities. Granted, they are a player, but not the biggest.
5. The Council welcomes the development of Children's Trust Arrangements, which function effectively in the diverse localities of Lancashire. The Council is of the view that decisions are best taken locally and would welcome the speedy development of decisions being taken at the locality 'footprint' level, previously agreed - in our case, covering Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire. The 'partner days' at locality level have been useful for the dissemination of information. However, if we are to deliver the maximum improvements for local children and young people, governance arrangements should be developed to allow for improved working at 'footprint' level, including decision-making.

06.OS.22 CHORLEY ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY

The Head of Development and Regeneration submitted a report on the draft Economic Regeneration Strategy.

Consultants had been commissioned to undertake a study of the area, in consultation with public sector stakeholders and business to produce the Economic Regeneration Strategy for the Borough. It provided a detailed evaluation of the economic strengths and challenges faced by the Borough and proposed to target action across a number of inter-linked strands to enable sustainable growth.

The Strategy provided a framework for action over a 10 - 15 year period and will be reviewed on a regular basis with action taken to implement the Strategy to be monitored annually against a programme of key actions and measures.

It was **AGREED** the draft Chorley Economic Regeneration Strategy be noted.

06.OS.23 CORPORATE STRATEGY,2006/07 - 2008/09

The Head of Corporate and Policy Services submitted a report on the Council's new Corporate Strategy for 2006/07 to 2008/09 which sought to redefine the Council's corporate priorities and provides a strategic framework for business and financial planning during the three year period.

The draft Strategy set out the Council's vision, priorities and strategic objectives for the next three year period up to 2009 and identified a series of measures, targets and key proposals for delivery in 2006/07.

The report accompanied by the Corporate Strategy Overview for 2006/07 to 2008/09, set out the background to the Council's approach to strategic and service planning since its first adoption in 1996.

Our Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) highlighted a number of issues in respect of the current Corporate Plan and these had been addressed as the new Strategy had been developed.

The Committee **AGREED** to endorse the Corporate Strategy for 2006/07 to 2008/09.

06.OS.24 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS: SHAPING THEIR FUTURE - A CONSULTATION PAPER

The Head of Corporate and Policy Services submitted a report informing the Committee of the consultation paper produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister which raised a number of specific questions in relation to the future role of Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP's) and suggestions as to how the Council should respond to the paper. Formal responses to the consultation paper were required by 3 March 2006.

The Committee **AGREED** to the draft responses contained under each question raised in the consultation paper and for them to be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 3 March 2006.

06.OS.25 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Chief Executive submitted a report seeking approval to the draft Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan, which had been produced following the completion of the Centre for Public Scrutiny self evaluation framework.

The Committee **AGREED** that the Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan be approved.

06.OS.26 DELIVERY OF THE CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Committee received a joint report of the Director of Legal Services and Head of Customer, Democratic and Office Support Services on the progress to date in respect of the measures taken to meet the appropriate milestones identified in the National Local Government Procurement Strategy and the targets set out in the Corporate Procurement Strategy approved in May 2004.

The report confirmed that, as at November 2005, 22 of the 24 national milestones had been achieved and that the total savings over the five year life of the strategy had been calculated at £1,078,044 which was far in excess of the savings target of £500,000. In addition, a number of additional areas where there was potential opportunity to achieve savings as a result of the procurement exercise had also been identified.

The Committee **AGREED** to note the report and welcomed the progress achieved on implementing the Corporate Procurement Strategy and meeting the milestones contained in the National Local Government procurement Strategy.

06.OS.27 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Council's Forward Plans for the four month period 1 February 2006 to 31 May 2006 and 1 March 2006 to 30 June 2006 which set out the key decisions which the Executive Cabinet's individual Executive Members or officers were expected to take during that period.

The Committee noted that a number of items had been dealt with and that only one item appeared on the Forward Plan for 1 March 2006 to 30 June 2006.

The Committee **AGREED** to note the revised Forward Plan.

06.OS.28 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and noted the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its three associated Panels for the remainder of 2005/06, which illustrated the status of current inquiries, ongoing items and issues currently being monitored.

Chair