

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 16 April 2012

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

Officers in attendance: Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places), Simon Clark (Head of Health, Environment & Neighbourhoods), Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy and Communications), Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

12.OS.100 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Julia Berry, Magda Cullens, Harold Heaton and Joyce Snape.

12.OS.101 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of any interests.

12.OS.102 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 12 March 2012 be held as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

12.OS.103 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions were received by any member of the public.

12.OS.104 EXECUTIVE CABINET MINUTES

There were no issues raised by any member of the Committee for the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 29 March 2012.

12.OS.105 ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORTING BACK 2011-12 REPORT

Members considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report that detailed the work of the Committee in 2011/12, including the specific outcomes from the Task Groups and the Committee's role in finance scrutiny, other performance and holding the Executive to account.

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

12.OS.106 FINAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - TOURISM AND PROMOTING CHORLEY

The Committee received the Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Tourism and Promoting Chorley. The main objective of the review was to further develop Chorley as a tourist destination by promoting the Borough's key assets and events and identifying other opportunities for making the Borough more attractive to outside visitors.

The 21 recommendations made, had the capacity to increase visitors to Chorley and improve partnership working within the industry and were around the following headings:

- Town Centre/Markets
- Astley Hall
- Promotional
- Partnership Working

By improving the content and providing better links, it was anticipated that the current redevelopment of the Council's website would help to improve our relationships with external providers and organisations that held a key stake in tourism within the Borough. It would also help to build on and create new partnerships to better work together to promote Chorley.

RESOLVED – That the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Tourism and Promoting Chorley be approved and submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Cabinet for consideration.

12.OS.107 FINAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING INSPECTION

The Committee received the Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Private Rented Housing Inspection. The Group's aim had been to identify and tackle poor housing standards in some private rented properties in the Borough, to improve housing conditions for those tenants.

The Group recommended that the Executive Cabinet consider the introduction of a partially proactive scheme of inspection which would use current intelligence and data sources. The scheme would be reactive to tenant complaints and would provide a base service from which a full inspection programme could be developed.

In putting forward the recommendation for an increased resource to inspect private sector rented properties, the Task Group felt there would be a strong message going to those landlords who didn't address housing problems and that ultimately this should lead to improvements in the condition of private rented housing in the borough. The proposal put forward provided an enhanced service with reasonable financial implications.

RESOLVED – That the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Private Rented Housing Inspection be approved and submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Cabinet for consideration.

12.OS.108 INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY SERVICE FUNDING UPDATE

The Committee received a report updating them of the funding arrangements being sought for the Independent Domestic Violence (IDVA) service in 2012/13 and beyond.

Following the review of the service that had been undertaken by the Committee the Council's Executive Cabinet had accepted the recommendations of the Committee that focussed on the provision of budgetary support for IDVA and seeking to ensure that partners made appropriate contributions in order for the service to continue.

A recent study commissioned by Lancashire County Council had identified that, the level of IDVA service needed to increase to meet demand across the Chorley and South Ribble footprint in 2012/13 with a cost in the region of £89,000, which was twice the current level of funding provided by partners.

It was proposed that for 2012/13 the level of IDVA service be increased to meet the demand and that 50% of the funding would come from the Safer Lancashire Board with the remaining funding to be provided by the partner agencies on a scale that identified the percentile benefit they received through the operation of the service. As a result Chorley Council's contribution for 2012/13 would amount to only £1700.

In 2013/14, the funding from the Safer Lancashire Board would cease and the service would have to source the full cost of the service from its constituent partner agencies, that would mean a commitment to the doubling of their contribution. This would mean that Chorley Council's contribution for 2013/14 would be £3,400.

The Chair of the Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership had written to all the Responsible Authorities Group agencies outlining the funding models and seeking their support in making the appropriate budgetary provision as apportioned to them.

It was anticipated that the final funding arrangements would be agreed by June 2012 and Members would be updated accordingly.

Members were further informed that using the extra resources that Chorley Council had originally allocated within the budget, additional work was underway to identify how agencies might better tackle issues at an early stage to prevent domestic violence situations escalating to the point where the IDVA service was needed.

It was noted that the scrutiny of the service that had taken place towards the end of last year had helped to trigger activity across Lancashire and may ultimately lead to a more comprehensive IDVA service for Chorley and South Ribble residents.

RESOLVED – That the update report be noted and that further updates would continue to be provided to the Committee as progress was made on the funding arrangements for the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy service for 2012/13 and onwards.

12.OS.109 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

(a) Forward Plan

The Committee received a copy of the Forward Plan for the period 1 June to 31 July 2012.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(b) Work Programme

The Committee received the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2011/12. It was reported that a draft Work Programme for 2012/13 would be brought to the first meeting of the new municipal year. Members would be asked for any review topic suggestions for future Task Groups through intheknow and these, along with a report on Crime and Disorder related topics would also be brought to that meeting.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Work Programme be noted.**
- 2. That Members be asked for review topic suggestions for future Task Groups of the Committee via intheknow before the first meeting of the 2012/13 municipal year.**

12.OS.110 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

12.OS.111 KEY PARTNERSHIPS MID YEAR REPORT

The Committee considered a confidential report of the Chief Executive 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.

12.OS.112 THANK YOU FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair expressed his thanks to all the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the three Scrutiny Task Groups and Officers for their contribution to the work of the Committee in 2011/12.

Chair