

REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

This report summarises the business transacted at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 July 2012.

The top ten priorities of the Executive Cabinet

1. The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley and the Deputy Executive Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson attended the meeting to talk about the top ten priorities that the new administration aimed to deliver. The Executive Leader welcomed the Committee scrutinising how well the proposals were working.

Encouraging volunteering

2. Work had commenced on the Spice uplift and Council older peoples volunteering projects. A project coordinator had taken up post in May and had met with relevant partners and groups and an initial 'design' event with over 20 organisations had been organised for 17 July. The uplift time credits project would initially target older people and those with long term health conditions and it was hoped that the project would be launched in September.

Improving neighbourhood working

3. A review of neighbourhood working was currently being undertaken to identify the key priorities and issues so that the service could be better shaped for future delivery. The review would also include an examination of the neighbourhood areas.
4. Changes had also been made to staff processes to remove dog fouling more quickly and changes around the fixed penalty notice payments. The Council was also launching a new dog fouling and control campaign that would focus on increased and targeted enforcement.

Reducing NEETS

5. The Council had increased its overall number of apprentices to 20. Fourteen apprentices had now been appointed and arrangements had commenced to place the remaining six with local public sector bodies and partners, with expressions of interest received from Chorley Community Housing and other RSL's. The Council would continue to work with partners through the NEETS taskforce including improving information sharing and provision. Work had also started with Lancashire County Council to offer a private sector apprenticeship scheme, to encourage businesses to create new apprenticeships.

Housing and Homelessness

6. A review of the allocations policy was being undertaken and discussions were taking place with partners about strengthening the local connection element. A refocus of the LDF process has identified a number of small sites which could be developed for

affordable housing and discussions were also taking place with Chorley Community Housing to develop the Douglas House site. Consultation on a draft prevention for homelessness strategy would be complete in September. Work had already commenced on developing local solutions for hot spots of homelessness, and options would be developed.

7. Assurances were sought that all new builds for affordable housing were constructed to the lifetime home standard, so that homes did not need to be adapted in the future.

Improving the economy

8. A draft economic regeneration strategy had been developed. Unify Credit Union had extended its remit to cover Chorley and had been offered accommodation within Union Street. Discussions were taking place with regard to the arrangements and ensuring that the service covers the whole borough.

Develop the town centre

9. The criteria had been changed for town centre grants packages, increasing the amount available in each grant and extending the geographic area that the scheme covers. Discussions had taken place through the town centre team, and work had been undertaken to develop options for changing car park tariffs and reopening Market Street. Options had also been considered for the initial regeneration of the Market Street/Gillibrand Street site that included temporary short stay car parking.
10. Members of the Committee asked if more could be done to reduce public transport fares, including loyalty bonus schemes for regular shoppers. The Leader explained that this was outside the Councils remit and needed partner involvement to progress.
11. The Town Centre Team members were looking at various ways of increasing shoppers to Chorley and all Councillors were welcome to attend meetings to give their input.

Business start-up programme

12. The new business start-up advisor had started in post to provide business advice and support to new businesses. 17 potential clients had been seen in the first month, with one business being established.

Open and accessible local government

13. A discussion was held about the development of councillor wide use of social media, and an approach for setting up Twitter and Facebook accounts for all Councillors. Training and advice sessions would be available for all Councillors and an extended programme of events to promote local democracy to the public was being developed.

Increasing consultation and engagement

14. Work had been undertaken to change the regular customer satisfaction survey and extend the scope of questions.
15. Work to increase consultation and engagement between members and residents would be undertaken through the member development programme and the review of neighbourhood working.
16. Further work would be undertaken in the development of a new civic pride campaign, which would be ready to launch in October.

Re-branding

17. Initial brand options had been developed with logo options and concepts being fully developed. Work had also started to identify any Chorley Smile branded items. The new administration had developed a strap line 'Making it happen' and the launch of the new brand was likely to be linked to the launch of the new civic pride campaign.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13

18. The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Steve Holgate submitted a report which summarised proposals put forward at an informal overview and scrutiny meeting held in June. The Committee was asked to agree a way forward for scrutiny and to set the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for the year.

Performance Panel

19. The Committee agreed to the implementation of an Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel with the following Membership:
 - Councillor Steve Holgate (Chair)
 - Councillor Julia Berry
 - Councillor Graham Dunn
 - Councillor Hasina Khan
 - Councillor Roy Lees
 - Councillor Kim Snape
20. The Panel would meet quarterly to look at Council and Local Strategic Partnership performance, with relevant Executive Members attending and answering questions on their service areas. This meant that the main Committee meetings would be reduced from eight to six and the following dates for the Panel were agreed:
 - Monday 23 July 2012
 - Monday 17 September 2012
 - Monday 10 December 2012
 - Monday 11 March 2013

Review Topics

21. The Committee would aim to undertake around three reviews for the year and it was noted that some topics could lend themselves to a lighter touch or a quick response review. Whilst the Conservative Group have decided not to take up any seats on Overview and Scrutiny Committee, all Members of the Council would be invited to sit on any of the up and coming Task Group reviews that will be held throughout the year and all Members would be invited through intheknow.
22. After a discussion of potential review topics, it was agreed that the first Task Group would review the Adoption of Estates, Chaired by Councillor Matthew Crow, with potential topics being left on the work programme for discussion at a later date.

Crime and Disorder

23. The Committee discussed several options to fulfil their requirement to scrutinise the Community Safety Partnership that included the new role of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the roles and responsibilities of the Police and Community Support Officers in the Town Centre. They also considered a joint letter from Lancashire Constabulary and Lancashire Police Authority that provided information on a report that had been published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC) – Policing in austerity: One year on.
24. The Committee agreed to scrutinise Lancashire Constabulary's response to the Comprehensive Spending Review through its duty to scrutinise the Community Safety Partnership; and also receive information on the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner role and likely impact.
25. Under the crime and disorder scrutiny responsibilities the Chair requested that the Director of People and Places provide a report on the roles and responsibilities of the Police and Community Support Officers in Chorley Town Centre to the next meeting of the Committee.

Health Scrutiny

26. Each year the Committee appoints one Councillor to sit on the Lancashire County Councils Adult Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This year the Committee requested that Councillor Julia Berry, assisted by council officers, provided a short written update report to the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to help Members keep up to date with what the LCC Committee is looking at, both locally and across Lancashire.
27. Councillor Berry gave a verbal update on a recent meeting which had focused on improving Engagement with District Councils and understanding the role of Health and Well Being Boards.

Recommendations

28. The Council are recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR STEVE HOLGATE
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

There are no background papers to this report.
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