

## **REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

1. This report summarises the business transacted at the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2013 and the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel on 17 December 2012.
2. The business transacted at the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 April 2013 and Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panels on 11 March 2013 and 20 March 2013 and the work of the Task Group on the Adoption of Estates Review will be reported separately (to follow)

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 JANUARY 2013**

#### **Consideration of Call-in request: Chorley Remembers – Astley Coach House Gallery**

3. We were advised of the request submitted by Councillor Paul Leadbetter for the call in of an Executive Member decision on 15 December on Chorley Remembers – Coach House Gallery.
4. The Committee heard representations from both Councillor Paul Leadbetter and a member of the public who was speaking on behalf of a number of voluntary organisations who had made use of the gallery in the recent past. Two questions were also received in relation to this item and included the consultative processes that were undertaken by the Council about the use of the Coach House Gallery.
5. The Executive Leader explained that the Chorley Remembers exhibition had been gifted to Chorley Council and the Council would be responsible for managing the exhibition. The Heritage Lottery funding for the Coach House included the use as a museum / exhibition space, they had visited the Coach House and were supportive of the proposed changes.
6. Approval had been given to use part of the Coach House to accommodate the Chorley Remembers project. This decision was based in part upon the accessibility of the Coach House that would enhance the overall offer to visitors as it provides disabled access. There is no disabled access in Astley Hall, but two alternative rooms in the Coach House had disabled access. The proposed changes to the Farmhouse to provide additional exhibition space would also include disabled access.
7. We sought to establish the timeline of consultation that had taken place before the decision had been made by the Leader and asked for an officer of the Council to clarify this for the Committee.
8. We then asked further questions of the Leader and the Executive Member (People) around the consultation processes that had taken place, who had been consulted and why. The Committee expressed some concerns about the consultation that had been undertaken and felt that lessons could be learnt for the future. However, whilst it was acknowledged that there could have been some improvement on the consulting process, the request to call in the decision of the Executive Leader on Chorley Remembers – Coach House Gallery was refused.

## **Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy**

9. We received a report of the Chief Executive that had been presented to Executive Cabinet on 17 January 2013 setting out the budget position for 2013/14 and forecast for the following two years to 2015/16. The report also presented relevant proposals in respect of potential investment in the Council's Corporate Strategy priorities in 2013/14, increasing budget resilience in the longer term and budget Consultation.
10. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had been updated as there had been a number of significant changes locally and also within the public sector nationally during 2012/13. The main changes had been the election of a new administration in May 2012 and the first updated Local Government Finance Settlement since the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 which published confirmation of actual core funding levels for 2013/14 and 2014/15. In addition there had been wide ranging changes to fundamental public finance funding regimes, namely Council Tax Support and Business Rates Retention.
11. It was clarified that the future years New Homes Bonus had not been included in the base budget. This income was dependant on the number of houses built each year and it was not possible to forecast this. It was also not known how long the New Homes Bonus would remain as a funding stream. The New Homes Bonus was a one off payment per property but resulted in year on year service delivery financial implications for the Council.
12. The Executive Leader stressed the importance of generating funding streams independently of grants from the Government, given the uncertainty regarding the future of local government finance. Other local authorities had become reliant on funding streams and were now struggling as the Government had withdrawn these streams. It was also important to create job opportunities for people and enable them to be financially independent and contribute to the local economy.

## **Community Safety Performance Report**

13. The Committee received a report of the Chair of the Safer Chorley and South Ribble Partnership that gave an update on performance for the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for quarter 3 and year to date 2012/13 at the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel. The report focused on the main crime categories of All Crime, Serious Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime (including domestic abuse), Criminal Damage (including Arson) and Anti-Social Behaviour.
14. Whilst the CSP had recorded an increase in the All Crime category, upon review of the IQuanta data which made comparisons against other Partnerships, Chorley's All Crime figure is lower than the comparative group mean average with the Chorley and South Ribble partnership being 7th out of the cohort of 15.

15. These were the first increases experienced over a three year period. All crime and Serious Acquisitive Crime had both seen cumulative reduction since 2009/10. Violence had shown an increase over this period which was largely accounted for by a significant increase in the reporting of Domestic Violence, which was welcomed by the Partnership.
16. In addition to the core activity of the Partnership which included enforcement/prevention and the delivery of the Community Safety action plan. A number of multi-agency operations and initiatives had been conducted throughout the year which had contributed to the effective tackling of crime and anti-social behaviour across the borough.

### **PCSO Role, Duties and Productivity Report**

17. We also received a report of the Chair of the Safer Chorley and South Ribble Partnership informing us of the role, duties and the productivity of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) deployed in the Chorley Borough area and part funded by the Council. We were informed that day to day, Lancashire Constabulary PCSO's carry out a number of varied duties aimed at reducing crime, disorder and ASB along with helping to reduce reoffending, and work to improve community confidence and reassurance.
18. The Committee were informed that the roll and function of the PCSO's supported a number of Council, Community Safety Partnership and wider policing issues. They contributed to the priorities of the Community Safety Strategy including domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, night time economy, crime and anti-social behaviour. They also carry out a number of other functions that are integral to the delivery of the wider community and neighbourhood policing issues.
19. Members were encouraged by the number of Fixed Penalty Notices now being issued by the PCSO's compared to previous years as they felt that this was a good deterrent measure to others. We asked if more could be done around managing traffic related issues in the Town Centre. Presently the PCSO's did not have these powers, but we were informed that some Partnerships had recently applied to the Police and Crime Commissioner's to have their powers widened to include road related issues. Members asked if the Chair of the Partnership would pursue this initiative.
20. Some concerns were voiced that a repeated answer for the lack of Speed Indicator Devices (SPID's) was that PCSO's were not trained. As the Council were looking to train Neighbourhood Officers to carry out this process, the Committee felt that this was also a duty that the PCSO's could undertake and asked for this training issue to be addressed.

### **Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service Funding Update**

21. In response to a request by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel the Chair of Safer Chorley and South Ribble Partnership presented an update report of the

funding arrangements sought for the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service in 2013/14 and beyond. The required funding for the service will have to be completely sourced from its constituent partner agencies. As a number of these agencies cover the wider Lancashire footprint, as with the previous 2012 consultation, discussions at county level are underway to ensure these agencies make the necessary budget provision on a countywide scale to include the portion necessary for the Chorley and South Ribble service to continue.

22. The Council's contribution would be £9,000 pa (subject to cost increases in line with inflation and any service level increases based on service demand). This requested contribution is £5,000 below the Council agreed maximum recurrent growth budget for IDVA support. The Director of People and Places reported that officers had recently met with victims of domestic violence to talk through their journey and identify what improvements could be made to the service, particularly around suitable interventions and preventive measures.
23. There were concerns that some agencies would not contribute, in particular the Chorley and South Ribble Clinical Commissioning Group had not yet made a commitment. It was extremely important to the success of the service that all the partner agencies contributed their allocated amounts as the Safer Lancashire Board would not be able to fill the gap in budget provision going forwards.

### **Monitoring of Receipt and Use of S106 Contributions**

24. The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive that gave an update on the progress made in implementing the projects included in the revenue budget and capital programme that are to be funded with developers Section 106 contributions from 2011/12 onwards. The actual receipt and use of contributions in 2011/12 and budget receipt and use from 2012/13 to 2015/16 was confirmed with the largest scheme to be funded in this period being the Buckshaw Parkway railway station for £3.325m in total.
25. A new officer Task Group had now been established that would continue to meet quarterly to monitor the receipt and use of the contributions and we were made aware that changes to existing planning obligations could arise as a result of the Growth and Infrastructure Bill 2012/13, and that proposed regulations would require renegotiation of planning obligations agreed up to 6 April 2010. This could have an impact on the Buckshaw Group 1 and Group 4 North agreements.

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL – 17 DECEMBER 2013**

### **Chorley Partnership Performance Monitoring – Second Quarter 2012/13**

26. We received a report of the Chief Executive that set out performance against the Chorley Partnership delivery plan and key performance indicators for the second quarter of 2012/13. 1 July to 30 September 2012. The performance of the key priorities in the delivery of the plan was good with 74% rated either green or

completed. The performance of the key projects remained excellent with all four projects currently rated 'green'.

27. Latest figures available for the alcohol related admissions showed a year to date reduction of 11% at quarter four in 2011/12 compared to quarter four in 2010/11. However we asked if a more detailed breakdown could be provided on the different categories that were reported against and how these compared to other authorities within Lancashire.
28. Crime had increased by 6.7% in quarters one and two compared to the same period last year, although there had been a significant decrease in anti-social behaviour, and domestic abuse detections were performing above target.

### **Chorley Council Performance Monitoring – Second quarter 2012/13**

29. We received a report of the Chief Executive setting out performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the second quarter of 2012/13, 1 July to 30 September 2012.
30. Overall performance remained excellent, with the majority of projects on track or completed. Only two projects were rated 'amber' and an explanation of the reasons and actions being taken to bring them back on track was provided:
  - Explore the development of a service package for 16/17 year olds
  - Implementation of a framework for strategic partners
31. Following the refresh of the Corporate Strategy, measures and key service delivery indicators remained good with 67% of the measures and 80% of the key performance indicators performing above target or within the 5% tolerance.
32. The Council's new website had recently been launched and had received good feedback. The website would increase self-service functionality and encourage customers to transact with the Council online. The new my account facility was still in the process of being developed to ensure that the product was not only fit for purpose for Chorley residents, but was a secure platform for the Council. The Panel recognised that this was a fantastic application for residents and we asked to be kept informed of progress.
33. The Panel were informed that the percentage of 16-18 years olds not in NEETS had improved and as at 31 October 2012 the NEET figure was 5.2% young people against a Lancashire target of 6.2% and a Chorley target of 5.1%. College enrolment figures were now residency based which helps Chorley who has no 16-19 provision within the borough.
34. The new Customer Satisfaction survey had not been particularly well answered in terms of quality but the Council had been able to act upon the information received. One of the main areas for concern had been officers not getting back to people about more detailed services issues and we were assured that steps had been taken to address this.

## **Scrutiny Focus – Streetscene Modernisation**

35. The Panel received a report informing them that performance against the key indicators for the streetscene service was excellent when compared against the targets set, with all being achieved.
36. The service had recently undertaken a modernisation project over the last year, to review working practice and ensure they were fit for purpose. A strategy had been developed and the Panel was provided with an action plan that provided details on the development action taking place within the service under four main headings of Leadership Development, Modern Working Arrangements, Service Delivery and Support Services and Business Development Opportunities.
37. The Head of Streetscene attended the meeting and explained that the service was currently undertaking a benchmarking exercise that would provide them with appropriate data from which to develop a set of relevant performance indicators to further develop the service and we asked if a performance indicator could be implemented around grass cutting measures.
38. A customer satisfaction survey was now undertaken each month against a sample of customers who had been in contact with the service the previous month and a new structure had been implemented that brought all the teams together under one overarching Manager and two team leaders. The result had been that the service now had a multi skilled pool of staff that could better respond to the needs of the service. The service were also working more closely with the Customer Services Team to ensure that staff in Contact Chorley were adequately trained and informed on how to deal with the different services within Streetscene to enhance the customer experience.
39. The Council had invested in 300 (25% of total stock) new bins across the borough in 2012/13. The new bins had an increased capacity (20%) for the same price and can also accept dog waste. The Clean Up Chorley campaign that included the Dirty Dog campaign had been well received with more skip days and increased patrols planned for the New Year, the service had also rolled out a bus shelter improvement programme across the borough.

## **Recommendation**

40. That the report be noted.

**COUNCILLOR STEVE HOLGATE**  
**Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**