

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel

Wednesday, 20 March 2013

Present: Councillor Steve Holgate (Chair) and Julia Berry, Graham Dunn, Hasina Khan and Roy Lees

Also in attendance

Officers: Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places), Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Partnerships and Planning), Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy and Communications), Zoe Whiteside (Head of Housing), Michael Coogan (Strategic Housing Officer) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

12.OSP.26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Kim Snape.

12.OSP.27 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of any interests.

12.OSP.28 PARTNERSHIPS, PLANNING AND POLICY DIRECTORATE - BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2012/13

The Panel received a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy on progress made to date in delivering the key actions and performance indicators in the Partnerships, Planning and Policy Directorate Improvement Plan for 2012/13.

Of the 28 action/projects contained within the Directorate Business Plan only three projects were rated amber, the delivery of the second year of the S106 Play and Recreation Fund, the Introduction of supported accommodation for 16/17 year olds and the trial re-opening of Market Street, Chorley. An explanation about the issues and action being taken to address them were provided for the Members.

Of the 17 indicators that can be reported, three were below target and outside the 5% threshold. The processing of minor planning applications was still under performing, although Members were highlighted to the fact that the target had been exceeded for the past couple of months.

Members asked a number of questions relating to a actions contained within the report and information was given on the makeup and remit of the newly established Welfare Reform Group, the difficulties the Council were facing in delivering a consistent Court Desk Service at the Courts and assurances were also given as to how unplanned departures were dealt with at Cotswold House.

Members also asked if the information contained within the Business Plan Monitoring reports could be presented differently to include more detail behind the statistical figures and would show evidence of how the administrations corporate priorities are being delivered.

It was explained that this was an area that had already been discussed at Strategy Group and that in future a direction of travel would be incorporated into the reports which would provide the type of detail that Members were requesting.

RESOLVED – That the information contained within the report be noted.

12.OSP.29 PEOPLE AND PLACES DIRECTORATE - BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2012/13

The Director of People and Places presented a report on the progress made to date in delivering the key actions and performance indicators in the People and Places directorate business plan for 2012/13.

At the end of January 19 actions were rated green and had been completed or are on-going. No actions were rated amber and none rated red.

The Director of People and Places reported that the review of neighbourhood working was complete and that 24 projects had been identified in the last round of neighbourhood meetings. A number of changes had also been made to internal reporting procedure and process that would improve how day to day activities were carried out that would ensure better response times to both Elected Members and the public. It was important to know if these changes were effective and Members were encouraged to give feedback as and when required. The Panel were happy with how the neighbourhood working agenda was progressing but there was a view that additional meeting may be needed going forwards to effectively monitor the work of the priorities.

The Chair asked about the present position of the Councillor Community Grant funding and it was reported that over £11,000 had been allocated to various groups and community organisations across the borough with more application pending. There was still funding available; however the deadline for applications was fast approaching on 28 March 2013.

Members received a list of all the performance indicators that the service reported against. Only one, Overall Crime Rate was below target and outside the 5% threshold. A combination of factors had impacted on the performance of this indicator.

Crime levels in the previous year had been low and the 2012/13 target was always going to prove challenging from such a low base. In addition, an Integrated Offender Management framework which was due to be in place had continued to have delivery issues in recent months, and as a consequence, had not effectively managed offenders on release.

The Panel asked if more information could be provide on the type of work that was involved on the Integrated Offender Management framework so that a more holistic view could be achieved and how Councillors could help to influence by having a better understanding of the problems, challenges and work needing to be done.

Members were informed about the implementation of high profile campaigns to highlight to potential victims of acquisitive crime the need to ensure vehicles, property and personal belongings are effectively secured to deter opportunistic crime.

The Panel also requested information on the usage figures at Tatton Community Centre. The type of activity and attendance would be useful for Members in this ward.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. That usage figures for all activities at Tatton Community Centre be provided to the Panel.**

12.OSP.30 TRANSFORMATION DIRECTORATE - BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2012/13

The Panel received a report of the Chief Executive on progress made in delivering the key actions and performance indicators in delivering the Transformation directorate business improvement plan for 2012/13.

Good progress had been made with a number of key projects completed and large proportion was rated green with notable progress of ICT projects. Where projects were rated as amber; actions were in place to ensure that the project delivers on schedule and by the end of the year.

A number of performance indicators were off track, in particular those relating to sickness absence which was being closely monitored given links with service capacity. Customer satisfaction also continued to be in decline since the change in measurement and the report explained the reasons and actions in place to address this.

Members commented on a number of issues contained within the report that included action being taken to address the reduction in customer satisfaction, identifying patterns in relation to long term sickness across the authority and current take-up figures of the collective energy switching programme that was being pushed to residents across Lancashire.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

12.OSP.31 SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN CHORLEY

The Panel received a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy informing them of the nature of Supporting People in Chorley and the Council's role.

The report explained that the Supported People funding pays for Housing Related Support to assist vulnerable people to live in their own home whilst remaining independent. Members received information on the history of the funding along with the details of support which is eligible and how this is distinct from care.

All supported People funding was now allocated from Lancashire County Council's mainstream funding after being a ring fenced grant until 2009 then part of the area based grant until 2011. The total value of the supporting People programme for Chorley is £1.34M.

There is an established governance structure that oversees the programme and through which decisions regarding services, for example, the commissioning and decommissioning are made. A Locality Group, comprising of a small cluster of local authorities discuss initial recommendations by each district council or partner before being agreed at the Lancashire wide Commissioning Body. Chorley Council are the joint Chair of the Commissioning Body and therefore plays an important role.

However, Members were informed that whilst Chorley had some influence on services commissioned in its area, all decisions had to be made through the governance structure including both the relevant Locality Group and Commissioning Body.

Members were also given a list of Supporting People funding services that were commissioned in Chorley or joint commissioned for a wider area taken from Lancashire County Council Supporting People Team's directory of support services. All services were commissioned on fixed term contracts with the majority up for review at the end of 2013/14.

Members raised concerns that the implementation of one project could have a knock-on effect that would be detrimental to another project. This was because there was simply not enough funding to support all the projects that were needed and had to be prioritised according to need. Partners continued to work together more effectively and the Council were starting to see the benefits of more joined up working that were addressing local need and starting to fill the gaps in service provision.

Officers assured Members that the work of the Supporting People was a more co-ordinated approach than had previously been and that all the relevant partners were collectively making the key decisions that needed to be taken. With the current economic climate there were going to be some difficult decisions to be taken around the delivery of services over the next twelve months as Lancashire County Council have indicated that Supporting People Funding may be reduced in future years.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Chair