

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel

Thursday, 26 September 2013

Present: Councillor Steve Holgate (Chair), Councillor Mark Perks (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Julia Berry, Keith Iddon, Marion Lowe and Kim Snape

Also in attendance

Councillors: Councillors Alistair Bradley (Executive Leader)

Officers: Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Victoria Willett (Performance Improvement Officer) and Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager)

12.OSP.38 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 25 July 2013 be confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

12.OSP.39 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

12.OSP.40 SCRUTINY FOCUS - TRIAL RE-OPENING OF MARKET STREET

The Panel considered a report of the Chief Executive on the key corporate project of the trial reopening of Market Street which was one of two areas of performance focus for the meeting. The project aim was to revitalise the top end of Market Street to attract more shoppers and to boost trade in the area. The allocated budget for the project was £47,000.

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Leader attended for this item and provided an outline of the challenges experienced earlier in the year in progressing the project alongside Lancashire County Council (LCC) as the highway authority. Progress had proved slow and in order to reduce delay, the Council had sought the services of Pendle Engineering Services as a third party contractor to draw up a design for the scheme. LCC had recommended changes to the design and a new scheme had to be drawn up resulting in both a delay and additional costs to this Council. The project was now back on track and completion expected by December.

Delivery of the project had resulted in a number of lessons learned to ensure effective joint working, including the need for much greater forward planning and understanding the priorities of both Councils.

Member raised queries regarding the recent request from LCC for projects to be included in their 2014/15 Commissioning Plan for highway and other environmental works. It was important to achieve a strategic approach to highway issues across the borough rather than based on individual ward or county division based requests. A similar approach was needed to the consideration of LCC's Transport Plan. The Executive Leader suggested that it was possible that the Council's LDF Working Group could play a role in these issues now that the Local Plan had been adopted.

RESOLVED – that the Executive Leader and the Chief Executive be asked to develop mechanisms to ensure there is strategic consideration of highway and transport matters where LCC is asking for the borough’s input and ideas for future schemes.

12.OSP.41 SCRUTINY FOCUS - CUSTOMER DISSATISFACTION

The second area of scrutiny focus was on customer dissatisfaction and Members considered a report of the Chief Executive on performance information on this issue which was one of the areas selected in November 2012 as a key measure of success in the Corporate Strategy. The performance target was a maximum of 20% of customers dissatisfied with the service they receive from the Council and whilst this had been a challenging target, it had been set to reflect the Council’s ambitions. An email survey of customers had replaced the previous phone and face to face survey in May 2012.

The report detailed the performance in 2012/13 and to date in 2013/14, showing that the target was not being met and was consistently well above the 20% level. The reasons for dissatisfaction had been investigated and it showed that the major cause was customers not receiving a response or not receiving a response in a timely manner. This could be further drilled down by service area and individual officers.

The Executive Leader reported that drilling down into the detail of why customers were not happy with the Council, enabled the Council to instigate changes in staff behaviours or approach. The highest number of complaints related to waste/bin collection but this was reflective of the high volume of customers for this service and is in proportion with the performance of other services across the Council. Responses to customers regarding missed bin collection for example, should be realistic so as not to create false expectations and generate further complaints. In response to a query as to whether Ward Councillors should be provided with information about complaints, the Chief Executive agreed this information could be mapped in line with the My Ward system. Members were starting to use this system and finding it useful. Councillor Kim Snape was trialling the My Account system and gave feedback on her experience to date.

RESOLVED – that the information be noted and that the Chief Executive investigate mapping of customer complaints on the My Ward system.

The Chair thanked Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Leader for attending to report on the two areas of scrutiny focus. Councillor Bradley left at this point in the meeting.

12.OSP.42 ORGANISATIONAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT

The Chief Executive reported that there had been a change in reporting on business plan monitoring with the introduction of one organisational business plan in 2013/14 rather than departmental ones. He presented a report monitoring the Organisational Improvement Plan for 2013/14 which updated on the delivery of business improvement actions, highlighting those which were not delivering to target or which had not yet been started. The report further highlighted performance indicators which weren’t delivering to target.

Vicky Willet, Performance Improvement Officer gave a demonstration of the My Projects feature on the new intranet. This enabled staff and Members to view

progress and key milestones for all corporate strategy and business improvement projects across the Council.

Councillor Berry raised the issue of Councillor performance being measured and it was agreed this was a topic for discussion in political groups.

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the organisational improvement plan information be noted and that future similar reports include a directional arrow to indicate performance trends.**
- 2. That in response to comments about measuring councillor performance, political groups be invited to consider the matter and report back on their findings.**
- 3. That Vicky Willet respond directly to Councillor Mark Perks on his query about the impact of Academy Status at Parklands High School's involvement in the Chorley School Enterprise Challenge.**

Chair