

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 4 October 2006

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillors Thomas McGowan, Kenneth Ball, Thomas Bedford, Terry Brown, Alan Cullens, Francis Culshaw, Mrs Marie Gray, Geoffrey Russell and Mrs Iris Smith

Also in attendance: Councillor Peter Malpas (Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration), Councillor Greg Morgan (Executive Member for Resources)

06.OS.40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Harold Heaton.

06.OS.41 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

None of the Members disclosed any interests in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

06.OS.42 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 September 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

06.OS.43 REVENUE BUDGET, 2006/07 - MONITORING REPORT NO. 3

The Committee received a report of the Director of Finance monitoring the current financial position of the Council compared to the budget and efficiency saving targets it set itself for 2006/07 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.

The previous report to the Committee indicated that the projected outturn forecast an overspend of £66,000 but that the position had changed and the projection was now an overspend of £170,000, equating to 1% of the total budget.

Further savings would be produced with Directors being asked to identify cost reductions. A number of areas would be monitored closely in particular increased refuse collection costs, increase income streams from Development and Regeneration, concessionary travel and benefit costs and agency staff costs.

The Committee received information relating to the Concessionary Travel Scheme and that a number of questions had been raised with Lancashire County Council but none had been answered making forecasting unclear.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted and that the Committee and the Executive Cabinet receive a report at their next meeting on Concessionary Travel and the element of financial risk to the authority of this scheme.

06.OS.44 CHORLEY TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

Further to Minute 06.05.46 Overview and Scrutiny Committee 5 September 2006, the Committee received from the Director of Development and Regeneration a report and presentation on the representations received on the draft Town Centre Strategy.

The Committee had indicated that it wished to examine the report in advance of its consideration by the Executive Cabinet on 5 October 2006.

The report and presentation indicated that a consultant had undertaken a study of Chorley Town Centre and the wider retail and leisure needs of the Borough. The report provided a detailed health check of the town centre and identified how the Town Centre could successfully adapt through to 2015 to provide for the retail and leisure requirements of the Borough's community.

The process had been taken forward in production of the draft Town Centre Strategy which would be a 10 year policy and action plan until 2016 which would be reviewed every 3 years.

The following four priority elements had been identified in the Town Centre because there had been a number of inter-related opportunities running through each strategic objective. The priority elements helped to focus on the necessary key measures and actions required to secure and enhance the Town Centre's vitality and viability.

- Town Centre Diversification

The Strategy planned to broaden the town centre's economic base by encouraging new small and middle-range outlets and stimulating the expansion of the evening economy.

- Town Centre Environment

The Strategy required the significant enhancement and maintenance of the town's physical fabric through, for example, improvements to the town's gateway areas and design guides for shop fronts.

- Accessibility and Movement

The Strategy aimed to build upon the current high levels of accessibility by reviewing car parking provision and pedestrian linkages within the Town Centre. Special reference was made to the proposals to create a prestigious Town Hall Square feature.

- Business Promotion and Support

More effective marketing and promotion of Chorley as a 'Contemporary Market Town' and partnership working were crucial to the delivery of the Strategy.

Members expressed concern that no mention of elements of Community Safety could be seen in the Strategy.

RESOLVED - 1) That the report and presentation be noted.

2) That Community Safety issues be raised in the priority element of Town Centre Environment.

3) That Town Centre Management be taken up by the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

06.OS.45 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 5 OCTOBER 2006

No other reports on the agenda for the Executive Cabinet on 5 October 2006 were considered for discussion.

06.OS.46 QUARTERLY BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/07 - MONITORING REPORT AS AT 30 JUNE 2006

The Director of Policy and Performance submitted a report monitoring the Authority's performance in relation to both the Best Value Performance Indicators and the

Council's Corporate Key Performance Indicators during the first quarter period as at 30 June 2006.

The report indicated the full list of Best Value Performance Indicators that are relevant to this Council and which are collected in accordance with definitions issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Quarterly Business Plan monitoring statements had also been produced by the Directorates and these had been considered by the Committee.

The Committee were informed that in those areas where there had been a decline in performance, action plan had been prepared to address this with more detailed reports on those areas not achieving a target of 5% tolerance.

06.OS.47 QUARTERLY BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT - POLICY AND PERFORMANCE DIRECTORATE

The Director of Policy and Performance submitted the Business Plan Monitoring Statement relating to her Directorate which identified the progress made against the key actions and performance indicators for the period 1 April 2006 to 30 June 2006.

The report indicated the activities of the Directorate over the last quarter and the good progress made towards integration of the previously diverse section since the Directorate was established in April 2006.

An Action Plan had been developed proposing a way to improve the percentage of invoices processed in 30 days.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

06.OS.48 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY

The Committee received a draft inquiry outline document for the scrutiny inquiry to be undertaken by the Committee on the Council's performance against the key lines of inquiry to be assessed by the Audit Commission during CPA and Direction of Travel.

A timetable had been set out by the Audit Commission for authorities wishing to apply for re categorisation and it would be these authorities, which the Committee could be looking at to gain information from their mistakes as well as achievements.

The Committee would be looking to invite the Council's Relationships Manager (Audit Commission) to the next meeting to gain background information.

The next meeting of the Committee would receive a presentation from the Director of Policy and Performance on the key issues and progress made since the Council received its last CPA in 2003 within the key issues debated in small groups.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

06.OS.49 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Council's Forward Plan, which set out details of the key executive decisions expected to be taken between 1 October 2006 and 31 January 2007.

The Plan identified several matters for potential decisions by the Executive in November 2006 and the Committee were requested to indicate these items that it wishes to examine in advance of consideration by the Executive.

RESOLVED - That the Executive Cabinet be notified that this Committee wishes to examine reports on the following matters with the appropriate Executive Members and Directors, before final decisions are taken by the Executive.

- Agreement of Pay and Workforce Strategy.
- Approval of PCSO Pilot Scheme.

06.OS.50 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee were presented with the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2006/07.

The programme included the envisaged timescales for the on-going scrutiny enquiries and the planned debates for the periodic inventory of past inquiries.

RESOLVED - That the work programme be noted.

Chair