

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

## **GENERAL REPORT**

1. This report summarises the business transacted at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 October 2006, as well as a brief summary of the recent activities and matters discussed at meetings of the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The report of the meeting of The Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 19 October will be reported to the next Ordinary Council on 19 December 2006.

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 4 OCTOBER 2006**

### **Revenue Budget 2006/07 – Monitoring**

2. We considered a report of the Director of Finance monitoring the current 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 and Revenue Account.
3. The previous report to Committee received 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.
4. 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, increased income streams from Development and Regeneration, Concessionary Travel and benefit costs and agency staff costs.
5. Another area, which required close monitoring, was the budget for concessionary travel. Following changes in the statutory requirements placed on the Council, the cash budget this year had increased to £514,000 from £217,000 in 2005/06. Concern was expressed that there had been insufficient information received to determine if the increased budget would adequately cover the increased costs, arising from the enhanced scheme. The County Council had provided an initial estimate but a number of questions had been raised that required clarification.
6. We agreed that a report be submitted to this Committee and the Executive Cabinet on Concessionary Travel on the element of financial risk to the authority of this scheme.

### **Chorley Town Centre Strategy**

7. The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report and gave us a presentation on the representations received on the Chorley Town Centre Strategy.
8. We had previously indicated our wish to have sight of this report and discuss with the Executive Member and Director before the Executive took any firm decision.
9. The Director explained the background to the development of the strategy, which had evolved from the Economic Development Strategy and the study undertaken by White Young Green in May 2005 into the town centre and the wider retail and leisure needs of the Borough. The resultant draft strategy had undergone a wide consultation exercise, the responses to which were summarised in an appendix to the report.

10. The main aims of the 10-year strategy were to realise the potential of the town centre and improve its vitality and viability. The strategy aimed to provide a co-ordinated framework for policy and actions that would build on the town's strengths and attract investment through a greater range of quality outlets.
11. 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
  - Town Centre Environment
  - Accessibility and Movement
  - Business Promotion and Support
12. We expressed concern that there seemed to be no mention of elements of Community Safety issues in the Strategy and requested that this be addressed in the priority element for the Town Centre Environment, with this priority element to be taken up by the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

#### **Quarterly Best Value Performance Indicators 2006/07 – Monitoring Report as at 30 June 2006**

13. We received from the Director of Policy and Performance 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 as at 30 June 2006.
14. The report indicated the full list of Best Value Performance Indicators that were relevant to the Council and which are collected in accordance with the definitions issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government.
15. The Quarterly Business Plan monitoring statements had also been produced by the Directorates and these had been considered by the Committee.
16. We were informed that in those areas where there had been a decline in performance, action plans had been prepared to address this with more detailed reports on those areas not achieving a target of 5% tolerance.

#### **Quarterly Business Plan Monitoring Statement – Policy and Performance Directorate**

17. We received from the Director of Policy and Performance the Business Plan Monitoring Statement relating to her Directorate, which identified the progress made against the key action and performance indicators for the period 1 April 2006 to 30 June 2006.
18. 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 newly established in April 2006.

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry**

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

20. The Audit Commission for those authorities wishing to apply for re-categorisation had set out a timetable and it would be these authorities, which the Committee would be looking at to gain information.
21. It was proposed to invite to a future meeting the Council's Relationship Manager (Audit Commission) to gain background information as well as receiving a presentation from the Director of Policy and Performance on the key issues and progress the Council has made since the last CPA in 2003.

### **Forward Plan**

22. We 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.
23. The Plan identified several matters for potential decision by the Executive in November 2006 and the Committee was requested to identify the items it wished to examine in advance of consideration by the Executive.
24. In response, we indicated that we would wish to have sight of the reports on the following matters, and discuss them with the appropriate Executive Members and Directors before firm decisions are taken by the Executive.
  - Agreement of Pay and Workforce Strategy
  - Approve of Police Community Support Officer Pilot Scheme

### **CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL - 12 SEPTEMBER 2006**

#### **Monitoring of inquiry Recommendations – Housing Maintenance Appointment System**

25. The Panel received an update report from the Director of Housing Services on the final recommendation of the Housing Maintenance Appointment System Inquiry to be completed relating to the monitoring the detail and accuracy of fault reporting.
26. We recommended and noted that the transfer of the Council's houses to Chorley Community Housing has resulted in repair reporting not being carried out by the Call Centre, indicating that the automated telephone monitoring had not taken place. However, a local performance figure has been set up to monitor the percentage of repeat visits. It was considered that this would, amongst other factors, be an indication of the detail and accuracy of the fault reporting.
27. We queried several points and noted that the number of repeat visits would be monitored and analysed after the transfer of the Council's houses.

#### **Ongoing Inquiry – Contact Centre Efficiencies and Partnership with Lancashire County Council**

28. The Assistant Head of Customer Services delivered a presentation outlining the background information about the Contact Centre.
29. The Government agenda had challenged Council's to think beyond the traditional methods of service delivery and to create efficiencies. There was a desire to create a single point of contact for the customer to access both district and county services and to improve access to public services. A feasibility study was undertaken in 2002 and following this, from the three models put forward, a decision was taken by partners to go forward with a virtual contact centre approach. The primary contract is between the Contractor Northgate and Lancashire County Council. There are further back-to-back contracts between the County Council and six District Councils, including Chorley.

30. The presentation summarised the development of the Chorley Contact Centre, the project management methodology and the technology required.
31. We discussed the challenges facing the partnership as a whole; such as there are different speeds and approaches to the implementation of the Partnership across the various Partners. There was a need to refocus the Customer Relationship Management at Chorley but good progress was being made in relation to the migration of services.
32. Two Sub-groups would meet in October, to consider detailed information about the efficiencies of the Contact Centre and the partnership aspect.

## **CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 10 OCTOBER 2006**

### **Business Plan Monitoring Statements – First Quarter**

33. The Panel received the Business Plan Monitoring Statements for the period 1 April 2006 to June 2006 for the following Directorates:
  - Financial Services
  - Human Resources
  - Information, Communication Technology Services
  - Customer, Democratic and Legal Services
34. We queried several aspects of the Plan with the relevant Directors present and questioned some of the performance figures relating to the Best Value Performance Indicators.

### **Monitoring of Inquiry Recommendations – One Stop Shop Inquiry**

35. The Assistant Head of Customer Services submitted a report updating the Panel on the progress on the implementation of the recommendations made to the Executive Cabinet on 30 June 2006, in respect of the One Stop Shop Inquiry.
36. The Panel had carried out the inquiry to assess the effectiveness of the new implemented One Stop Shop and to identify improvements, which would benefit both the customer and the workforce.
37. The report listed the recommendations with the action taken against each one. We welcomed the format of the report and the progress that had been achieved since the recommendations were approved.

### **Ongoing Inquiry – Contract Centre Efficiencies and Partnership with Lancashire County Council**

38. The Executive Director Corporate and Customer, Deputy Chief Executive advised the Panel that the following documents had been recently published which may have a bearing on the development of the inquiry into the Contact Centre.
  - Lancashire County Council Scrutiny Inquiry into the Shared Services Contact Centre.
  - Audit Commission report on Lancashire County Council and Shared Partnership – A Performance and Critical Report.

The two documents would be relevant to the inquiry.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL - 14 SEPTEMBER 2006**

### **Neighbourhood Working Inquiry**

39. The Panel discussed the proposed arrangements for the Neighbourhood Working Inquiry and considered a schedule of services to appoint a consultant produced by the Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment and the Inquiry scoping document.
40. The objectives for the Inquiry set out in paragraph 6 of the schedule were considered in detail. Panel members queried several points and noted that Neighbourhood working was an extremely large topic and that there was a lot of research information available.
41. It was agreed that the objectives for the Scrutiny Inquiry on Neighbourhood Working be:
  1. Improving service delivery of the Council and its partners.
  2. Localising consultation and improving satisfaction in neighbourhoods.
  3. Acting jointly, with partners, to reduce pockets of deprivation and social exclusion.
  4. Promoting community development and cohesion.
  5. Maximising community involvement in neighbourhood management from active citizens, including young people, voluntary and private organisation.

### **Recommendation**

42. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR D EDGERLEY  
CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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There are no background papers to this report.