

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 9 January 2014

Present: Councillor Steve Holgate (Chair), Councillor Mark Perks (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Julia Berry, Doreen Dickinson, Graham Dunn, Robert Finnamore, Hasina Khan, Keith Iddon, Roy Lees, Marion Lowe, Geoffrey Russell, Rosie Russell and Kim Snape.

Also in attendance

Officers: Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Simon Clark (Head of Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods), Jamie Dixon (Head of Streetscene & Leisure Contracts) and Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager)

14.OS.58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mick Muncaster.

14.OS.59 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair with the addition of apologies from Councillors G and R Russell.

14.OS.60 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

14.OS.61 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from the public.

14.OS.62 SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE

(a) Executive Cabinet Minutes

Members considered the minutes of meetings of Executive Cabinet held on 24 October, 21 November and 12 December 2013.

Councillor Berry referred to the length of the Committee agenda and the difficulty in scrutinising past Executive Cabinet minutes without the associated reports. She proposed that the Committee reconsidered the way that it scrutinises Executive decisions with a view to reverting back to scrutinising Executive Cabinet agenda reports before Executive Cabinet meets. The Chair reported that if Members wanted to investigate this change of approach, it this would require a separate and detailed discussion at a future meeting.

A number of Members raised concerns about the review of Core Funding and Process, agreed at Executive Cabinet in December and in particular wanted to be sure that any group who had previously received Core Funding would be informed of the new arrangements. The Chief Executive gave that assurance and also referred to the event to be held on 24 January to raise awareness with voluntary sector groups.

RESOLVED –

- 1. That a discussion be held at the next meeting of the Committee on whether or not to pursue a different approach to the scrutiny of Executive decisions and the implications for future working.**
- 2. That Councillor Berry be provided with a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken for the Review of Core Funding and Process for 2014/15.**

(b) Notice of Executive Decisions

Members considered the current Notice of Executive Decisions which gave notice of both key and other decisions which the Executive expected to take, over the forthcoming 28 days.

RESOLVED – that the Notice of Executive Decisions be noted and this also be taken into consideration in the discussion regarding a change in the approach to the scrutiny of Executive decision making (referred to in the previous minute).

14.OS.63 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL MINUTES

Members considered the minutes of the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 5 December 2014.

The scrutiny focus for that meeting had been on health and wellbeing and a number of updates were provided.

The Chief Executive reported that in relation to the Friday Street Health Centre, a meeting had recently taken place with the health partners involved - namely the Lancashire Care Trust; Clinical Commissioning Groups; and GPs. The Care Trust was driving the process and awaiting CCG requirements within the centre so that they could progress to the design stage. A further meeting would take place in February regarding governance arrangements. It was estimated it would be at least two years before the centre would be open. Members of the Committee asked to be kept informed throughout the process.

Councillor Dunn referred to a request made at the Performance Panel for monitoring information to be provided to all Members of the Committee.

Councillor Berry asked that the Performance Panel undertake further health scrutiny and look at mental health provision in the Borough.

The Chair referred to the issue of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) which had been raised at full Council earlier in the week. From 2015/16 DFG would be paid to Lancashire County Council (LCC) to then allocate to district councils rather than them receiving it directly. The funding formula did not take account of housing conditions, deprivation levels or the prevalence of long term health conditions and LCC may take the opportunity to look at the allocations process and to include other services which support people in their homes. This potentially could result in Chorley not receiving the same DFG allocation as in previous years.

The Chair suggested that Councillors from Chorley should be involved in any review of how funds are allocated, and that LCC should be asked to lead a joint scrutiny task group on this topic with all District Councils being invited to take part. The Vice Chair supported this approach and referred to the fact that the new

arrangement was for 2015/16 and so there was a 12 months period in which to resolve this, allowing all districts to have an input.

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the minutes be noted.**
- 2. That the Committee be kept informed on progress on the Friday Street Health Centre Project.**
- 3. That all Members of the Committee receive the monitoring information submitted to the Performance Panel.**
- 4. That the Performance Panel consider a focus on mental health provision in the Borough at a future meeting.**
- 5. That the Chair writes to Lancashire County Council to ask that they establish a joint task group with district councils on the issue of Disabled Facilities Grant funding from 2015/16.**

14.OS.64 BUDGET SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the agenda papers being submitted to the Executive Cabinet on 16 January 2014 setting out the 2014/15 budget and summary budget position over the medium term. The Council's budgetary and policy framework required that any views submitted by the Committee should be taken into account in the final approval of the budget at Budget Council on 25 February 2014.

The Chief Executive gave an overview of the Council's position.

- The recent Local Government Finance Settlement for 2014/15 continued the programme of central government core grant reductions for the years 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- The Executive wished to propose a balanced budget for 2014/15 and to freeze Council tax for a further year. LCC was proposing a 1.99% increase and the police were also seeking an increase.
- £900,000 in savings had to be found for the forthcoming year; with a further £900,000 required in 2015/16; and over £2m by 2016/17.
- The purchase of Market Walk Shopping Centre would generate a surplus of £400,000 and internal staff reviews would generate a further £376,000 in efficiency savings in 2014/15.
- The Council continued to benefit from New Homes Bonus (NHB) which would fund a contribution towards the balanced budget and still provide £1m for project work – much of it funding projects brought forward from the current year eg economic development initiatives and improvements in Astley Hall and Park
- Areas of risk for the Council, continued to be:
 - continued austerity measures by central government until potentially 2020;
 - the increasing cost of pensions at broadly 10% of the Council's gross budget;
 - changes to the business rate collection and retention system.

Appended to the budget information were the proposed project mandates for those projects either new or continuing into 2014/15.

RESOLVED – that the budget documentation be noted.

14.OS.65 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER ENGAGEMENT WITH SCRUTINY

Members received a copy of a statement from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire about engagement with Local Authority Scrutiny Committees under the duty of Councils to undertake crime and disorder scrutiny.

The Police and Crime Commissioner had indicated that he was committed to partnership working and set out the parameters under which his office would send representation or provide information to Councils undertaking crime and disorder scrutiny.

RESOLVED – that the information be noted and the PCC be invited to input into any future crime and disorder scrutiny, as appropriate.

14.OS.66 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - that the press and public be excluded for the following item of business under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

14.OS.67 CCTV PROVISION

Under the requirement to undertake scrutiny of crime and disorder matters, the Committee considered a detailed report of the Director of People and Places on the current Chorley CCTV service and existing infrastructure and also information about CCTV systems in other authorities where the systems have been reduced or decommissioned.

The report included information about provision in the South Ribble area where the system was much smaller and also in Blackpool where the Council had decided, due to budgetary pressures, to stop staffing the system.

Details about Chorley's CCTV system - the hours of operation, infrastructure, staffing and maintenance issues were provided, along with overall comments on the impact of reducing CCTV coverage, cost implications and potential options for improvements in the future.

In discussion Members raised the public perception of safety provided by CCTV; how far cameras acted as a deterrent, the camera's role in preventing the escalation of crime or the prosecution of offenders including those involved in serious crime.

The Chair suggested that as the subject was complex, the topic be considered for a task group review and be deferred for consideration to the agenda item on the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted at this stage but be considered as a subject for a task group review as part of the Committee's work programme.

14.OS.68 READMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The meeting was reopened to the press and public for consideration of the remaining items of business.

14.OS.69 CALL-IN PROCEDURES

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive on the outcomes of a mini scrutiny review that had taken place looking into the current call in procedure. The Committee had agreed at its last meeting that the call in process needed to be revised following Member concerns about hearing call in requests as part of a wider Committee agenda.

Councillors Steve Holgate, Mark Perks, Keith Iddon and Roy Lees had met and looked at the key aspects of call in, including comparative information from other Councils across Lancashire.

The two main recommendations from that review were:

- To reduce the call in period from 10 days to 5 days. This was principally to allow speedier implementation of executive decisions as currently all such decisions require a period of 10 days before they can be acted upon. This was in line with most Councils in Lancashire which had call in periods of between 2 and 5 days.
- For a Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be convened to hear all call in requests, rather than hearing them as part of a wider Committee agenda.
- There were also a number of more minor clarifications to the procedure.

Any changes to the call in procedure required the approval of full Council as part of the Constitution.

RESOLVED – that following the mini scrutiny review of the call in procedure, the following changes be agreed and forwarded to full Council for approval as part of the Constitution.

- 1. The call in period after an Executive decision has been made, be reduced from 10 days to 5 days in order to speed up the implementation of decisions across the Council.**
- 2. That the call in procedure be revised so that on receipt of a call in request, a Special meeting of the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee be called; and**
- 3. The following clarifications be incorporated into the call in process**
 - **“Days” refers to working days.**
 - **After the Chair has agreed a call in as valid, notice of a full meeting of O & S Committee should be given within 5 days.**
 - **The person submitting the call in (whether councillor or public) should present their request/case at the meeting.**
 - **Meetings will normally be in public (unless the item is a confidential one) and the public can submit questions on notice, as with other meetings.**
 - **If the Councillor requesting the call in, is a member of the O & S Committee hearing the call in, he/she will present the item but should not take part in the vote on that item.**
 - **If the Committee asks the Executive Cabinet or Executive Member to reconsider the issue as a result of a call in, the subsequent decision of the Executive Cabinet or Executive Member should be reported back to O & S Committee.**

14.OS.70 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - PLAY AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

The final report of the scrutiny task group on the health and wellbeing benefits of the play, open spaces and playing pitch strategy was circulated to Members of the Committee for final approval before forwarding to the Executive Cabinet.

Members thanked Councillor Julia Berry for her chairing of the task group which had made seven recommendations around improvements to the health impact section of the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment and improving awareness and training on the process, with follow up monitoring and review systems in place.

RESOLVED – that the final report of the task group be approved and forwarded to the next meeting of the Executive Cabinet for consideration.

14.OS.71 EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP INQUIRY INTO THE ADOPTIONS OF ESTATES

The Committee received a report of the Director of People and Places on the Executive's response to the final report of the Adoption of Estates Scrutiny Task Group.

The report set out the 14 recommendations of the Task Group and the views of the Executive. Each recommendation had been accepted and would be implemented, in many cases, through representations to other partners, in particular Lancashire County Council as highway authority. Over time, the implementation of the recommendations would result in an improvement to the way estates are adopted.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

14.OS.72 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - SELECT MOVE

The Chair of the Select Move Task Group gave an update on the work undertaken so far. A meeting had been held with the Registered Providers who had provided useful feedback.

Questionnaires about the Select Move system had gone out to people currently waiting for a property and also to a selection of users who had recently been successful in gaining a property. There was also an opportunity for some of those interested, to meet with members of the Committee. 295 responses had been received and once the findings had been summarised, a further meeting of the Task Group would be organised.

RESOLVED – that the update be noted

14.OS.73 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

The Chair referred to the Committee's work programme, and asked Members to consider a topic for a future task group.

Following earlier consideration of the report on the provision of CCTV under the Committee's duty to scrutinise crime and disorder, a discussion was held about undertaking a review of that topic. Other suggestions were for a health scrutiny review topic and a review of public transport. It was suggested that health scrutiny should be considered under the wider piece of work about how Executive decisions should be scrutinised.

RESOLVED – that a scrutiny review on the provision of CCTV be undertaken with Councillor Fynamore as Chair; Councillor Kim Snape as Vice Chair; and Councillors Doreen Dickinson, Rosemary Russell, Graham Dunn and Roy Lees as Members of the task group. An invitation would go out to other none Executive Members to join the group which would aim to conclude its work by the end of the current Council year.

Chair