

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 10 April 2014

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

Also in attendance

Councillors: Councillors

Officers: Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places), Simon Clark (Head of Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods), Jennifer Moore (Head of Planning), Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager), Michael Coogan (Strategic Housing Officer) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

14.OS.78 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Keith Iddon submitted his apologies.

14.OS.79 MINUTES

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 9 January 2014

Confirmation

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 January 2014 be confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

Matters arising from those minutes

14.OS.62 – Executive Cabinet Minutes

The discussion on whether the Committee should pursue a different approach to the scrutiny of Executive decisions would be deferred to 2014/15 so that its wider implications could be fully explored.

Councillor Julia Berry reported that she had not yet received a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment for the review of Core Funding and Processes that had recently taken place.

14.OS.63 – Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel Minutes

Following representations made to Lancashire County Council by this Committee on the issue of Disabled Facilities Grant Funding from 2015/16, it has been agreed for a joint task group between County and Chorley to be established. The task group will hold a day event to allow all the districts to contribute to the review before it making its recommendations.

(b) Special Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 5 February 2014

Members noted that since the meeting, Councillor Edgerley had reconsidered the proposal and had decided to uphold his original decision for the cessation of notification letters to contributors of planning applications. Councillor Edgerley provided reasons for his decision in an email to all Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Special Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 February 2014 be held as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel - 13 March 2014

The minutes to be amended to acknowledge that Councillor Mark Perks took the Chair for this meeting of the Panel in Councillor Steve Holgate's absence.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel on 13 March 2014 be noted.

14.OS.80 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No declarations of any interest were received.

14.OS.81 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions by any member of the public.

14.OS.82 MONITORING REPORT OF INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS - ADOPTION OF ESTATES REVIEW

The Committee received a joint report of the Directors of People and Places and Partnerships, Planning and Policy informing them of progress made against the recommendations of the Task Group review into the Adoption of Estates.

All the recommendations were essentially agreed by the Executive Cabinet. Responses to those recommendations accepted by Lancashire County Council were included within the report. Progress had been made against all of the 14 recommendations made by the Task Group and a summary of the action taken along with further information was provided to the Committee.

A number of recommendations require small projects to deliver the outcomes required. This includes a project currently being led by ICT to make 'mapzone' information about adoptions available to public users and a project led by People and Places to review the risk based approach to open space adoption.

The recommendations had also influenced an organisational restructure of the Council, in that a new role of 'Development Implementation Co-ordinator' has been established through a review of Transactional Services/ Planning Business Support to manage matters pertaining to Community Infrastructure Levy, Planning Obligations and Adoptions. The role was expected to be filled by the end of June 2014 and a number of recommendations would be the responsibility of the new post holder, that included the establishment of a robust data set on outstanding obligations using existing IDOX software, the development of a record of adoption case load and associated reporting and a pilot for the introduction of development/site exit meetings.

The Planning Service have been applying the standard conditions as proposed by the national Department of Transport Work Group on adoptions. Following attendance by Chris Bond at the scrutiny Panel, Chorley Council had been invited to attend a working group and invitation (by the request of Council officers) had been extended to Lancashire County Council. This working group will be advising the minister on adoption matters and the views of this Council through the finding of the task group would be heard. Progress would continue to be reported to the Executive Member for Planning and LDF.

Members welcomed the progress made to date. However there was still concern about the amount of estates that remained un-adopted and whilst the Committee accepted that this may be improved upon with the introduction of the new dedicated post within the planning services team, Members still considered that in order to

obtain effective improvements to the service there needed to be fundamental changes to planning conditions and the legal duty placed upon developers at national level.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and a further monitoring report be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in six months' time.

(Councillor Doreen Dickinson left the meeting).

14.OS.83 MONITORING REPORT OF INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS - PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR HOUSING

The Head of Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods updated the Committee on the work done to date against the recommendations of the Private Rented Sector Housing Inspection Task Group carried out in 2013.

The Task Group had proposed three recommendations, which had been accepted by the Executive Cabinet. The Group had not recommended the Council introduce a Landlord Accreditation Scheme but had asked that it be revisited in the future.

A dedicated staffing resource of inspection had been undertaken. However, instead of restricting this activity to one post holder, training had been undertaken by several officers to allow greater capacity from within existing resources. This had been recently expanded upon following the recent Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods restructure. All six Environmental Health Officers now held a generic role and had the skills and knowledge to undertake the inspection and enforcement processes to the Housing Health and Safety Regulation Scheme (HHSRS) standard.

Chorley has in the region of 4,000 private rented properties with an estimated 10% below standard. This information was provided by the 2010 Housing Stock Condition Survey. Since the implementation of programmed inspection regime, a total of 63 Inspections had been carried out in 2013/14 against a target of 80. Whilst below target, the Council were confident that the service would catch up and targeted property be brought up to standard. A private rented sector property database was being developed alongside a robust inspection and enforcement process.

A Housing Standards Enforcement Policy had recently been agreed at Executive Cabinet. This policy was available on the Councils intranet and sets out the process for inspection and enforcement. Of the 63 Inspections that had taken place this year, only two had warranted formal legal action.

Although some Members were disappointed that the Council had not decided to give further thought to the development of a Landlord Accreditation Scheme, they welcomed the changes that had been made within the service in response to the recommendations made.

However, in addition it was felt that other incentives such as a ranking or selective licensing scheme could be explored to ensure better private housing standards across the borough and the Head of Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods explained as to why the Council deemed such schemes would be unlikely to achieve the desired outcomes.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that a further monitoring report be present to the Committee in six months' time.

(Councillor Marion Lowe left the meeting).

14.OS.84 SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

(a) Executive Cabinet Minutes

Members considered the minutes of meetings of Executive Cabinet held on 16 January, 13 February and March 2014.

RESOLVED - that the minutes be noted.

(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.

14.OS.85 FINAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - SELECT MOVE

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group, Councillor Graham Dunn presented the Final Report of the Select Move review.

The review had examined in detail how the scheme operate, exploring the profile of customers who use it. This included looking at how customers used the system and establishing their views about it, the work of the Registered Providers who participate in the scheme and whether or not there was a consistency of approach.

The findings were mainly positive with the system being quite popular with the people who use it. There were however some inconsistencies identified in the level of service provided across the Registered Providers and some of the recommendations were around working more effectively with the Select Move Partnership to make service improvements.

Greater communications and accessibility to digital services were key findings and recommendations had been made to ensure that standards were raised.

The Committee were pleased to note that improvements on the standards of relets had been recommended as Members received many complaints on this issue. A request was made to consider language barriers when issuing relet standards.

The Chair thanked the Members of the Task Group for their work on the review and the Committee **RESOLVED to approve the recommendations to be submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Cabinet.**

14.OS.86 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - CCTV PROVISION IN CHORLEY

The Committee received the scoping document for the review on CCTV provision in Chorley. The Chair, Councillor Robert Finnamore updated the Committee on the work that had been undertaken by the Group.

The desired outcome was one recommended level of CCTV provision and a CCTV system for the future which takes into account the impact of surveillance for the Council, the police, partners and residents, balanced alongside the budget implications for the Council

In order to facilitate this, the Group were looking to undertake a thorough review of the CCTV system operating in Chorley in order to inform future CCTV provision and to provide options for future systems from “gold plated” through to minimal/no CCTV provision – with information on likely impact as well as an overall preferred option.

The Group had interviewed various stakeholders to obtain their views on the provision of the CCTV service in Chorley and received information from West Lancashire

Council on their CCTV provision following a recent review on their systems that had been recently undertaken by the authority.

The Group had recently interviewed the Council's existing CCTV provider to ascertain current arrangements and had considered what new technology is available to upgrade systems. More recently the Group had considered a report undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership's Analyst on the effectiveness of Chorley's CCTV provision. The Group hoped to have the final report of the review ready for the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2014/15.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

Councillors Hasina Khan and Roy Lees left the meeting)

14.OS.87 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING PROPOSAL

The Chief Executive submitted a report on a proposed Member training workshop for overview and scrutiny.

The Council had not undertaken training on overview and scrutiny for a number of years and the Chair felt that it would be useful to arrange a workshop in the new Council year. This was also a topic that has been requested through Member personal development plans and it was considered that a generic workshop session covering the key elements of good scrutiny would be both valuable for newer councillors and serve as a useful refresher for more experienced members.

The session would be open to all members of the Council, not just those members that sit on the Committee. The proposal would bring in external trainers to provide a more objective approach and perhaps give new direction and focus to scrutiny work in Chorley.

All Members of the Committee agreed that this was a good idea and something that would be advantageous to all Members, given that any Member can contribute to the work of the Task Group reviews.

RESOLVED – that the full day session to be opened to all Members of the Council be approved.

14.OS.88 BRIEFING NOTE REGARDING CHORLEY AND SOUTH RIBBLE HOSPITAL

The Committee received a briefing note on the proposed changes regarding integrating urgent care services at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital. An offer had been extended for a representative of the Clinical Commissioning Group CCG for Chorley and South Ribble to give a presentation on the proposals.

RESOLVED – The invitation be taken up and a Scrutiny Briefing be held for all Members of the Council.

14.OS.89 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the updated Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14

The consideration of a suitable topic for the next review of the Committee would be deferred to the first meeting of the next municipal year in June.

RESOLVED – that the work Programme be noted.

14.OS.90 THANK YOU AND BEST WISHES

The Chair on behalf of the Committee extended thanks and best wishes to Councillors Geoff and Rosie Russell who were retiring at the end of the year.

Chair