

# REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND PANELS

## GENERAL REPORT

1. This report briefly summarises the business transacted at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 June 2005, as well as a brief summary of the recent activities and matters discussed at meetings of the Community, Customer and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panels. A report on the items discussed at the 7 July meeting of the Committee will be presented to the next Ordinary Council meeting.

### Business Plan Update to the Year End (2004/05)

2. The Committee received the year end update of the Business Plans relating to Corporate and Policy Services, Human Resources, Finance and Legal Services, whose remit and area are the responsibility of the Committee.
3. We discussed each Business Plan in turn with the officers answering Members' queries.

### Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel Inquiry into the Provision of Youth Activities in Chorley

4. The Committee considered the draft final report and recommendations of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel Inquiry into the provision of youth activities in the Borough.
5. The recommendations contained in the report were aimed at identifying the current provision of youth activities and facilities as well as identifying future issues highlighted by the Youth Service and other key partnerships. The Panel compared Chorley with best practice elsewhere and identified relevant issues relating to funding and capacity.
6. The Committee acknowledged the efforts of the Panel in this investigation and indicated our agreement with the reports' conclusions and recommendations and commended the report for presentation to the Executive Cabinet.

### Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel Inquiry into the One Stop Shop

7. The Committee considered the draft final report and recommendations of the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel inquiry into the One Stop Shop.
8. The recommendations contained in the report, which had been formulated by the Panel were aimed to assess the effectiveness of the One Stop Shop in improving Customer Service.
9. The Committee acknowledged the efforts of the Panel in this investigation and indicated our general agreement with the requests, conclusions and recommendations and commended the report for presentation to the Executive Cabinet.

### Monitoring of Sickness Absence

10. The Committee received the six monthly update report from the Head of Human Resources on the sickness absence across the authority and the process of reducing absence within the authority.
11. The report indicated that the performance indicator for 2003/04 was 13.45 days lost per employee.

12. The target set for 2005/06 was significantly challenging at eight days sick per employee (equating to a 3.4% absence rate) which was comparably low compared to the national and local targets for both public and private sector companies.
13. The year end (2004/05) target of 10 days had been met with a final rate of 9.69 days per employee. The reduction equates to a cash saving of £250,000 which would have had to be found from elsewhere in the Council's budget if it had not been for such an impressive turnaround.
14. The report outlined the major factors of the future action plans aimed at a continuing reduction in sickness absence levels and improving the health and well being of employees.

#### Forward Plans

15. We received for information the latest Forward Plans showing the raised format and the financial threshold for the identification of 'key decisions' that had been the subject of consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and which had been approved by the Executive Cabinet on 7 April 2005.

### **Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel - 9 June 2005**

#### Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit

16. As part of the ongoing inquiry into the 'Accessibility of cycling as a leisure pursuit' the Panel received a report from the Ranger for West Pennine Moors (West) on the leisure activities in the Rivington area and how they relate to the inquiry. The information would provide useful evidence for the Panel.

#### Review of Grass Cutting Inquiry Recommendations

17. The Panel received from the Head of Public Space Services the progress made on implementing the Panel's recommendations following the inquiry into the performance of the Council's grass cutting service and considered each of the ten recommendations that had been approved by the Executive Cabinet at its meeting held on 11 July 2001.
18. The Panel welcomed the improvement in the grass cutting service.

#### Review of Flooding, Flood Prevention and Contingency Inquiry Recommendations

19. The Panel received from the Head of Public Space Services the progress made on implementing the Panel's recommendations following the inquiry into the review of flooding, flood prevention and contingency.
20. The Panel considered the progress on each of the eighteen recommendations that had been approved by the Executive Cabinet at its meeting held on 15 May 2004.
21. The Panel welcomed the progress made on implementing the recommendations.

#### Enhanced Recycling Scheme

22. Members of the Panel received a progress report from the Head of Environmental Services on the implementation of the Enhanced Recycling Scheme which started on 18 April 2005 with collections for phase 1.
23. A total of 23,860 households had moved to the scheme with the second and final phase, a total of 17,754 households moving to the new service on or after the 22 June.

24. A preliminary analysis of the recycling rate for May showed an increase over the long term monthly average as follows:

Paper 21% increase from 169 to 204 tonnes  
Glass 69% increase from 80 to 135 tonnes

giving a predicted annual recyclate tonnage of

Paper 2,450 tonnes (2025)  
Glass 1,660 tonnes (960)

25. The following tonnages of cans/plastic and cardboard are all new recyclate tonnages:

Plastics/cans 53 tonnes  
Cardboard 35 tonnes

giving a predicted annual recyclate tonnage of

Plastics/cans 900 tonnes  
Cardboard 650 tonnes

26. This represents a recycling rate of around 40% for this period. There were preliminary estimates based on very small data.

27. A number of anticipated problems, such as an increase in side/extra/fly tipped waste, had not really materialised, concluding that a great majority of householders who recycle can manage easily with a fortnightly collection of 240 litres.

#### Business Plans Update to the Year End (2004/05)

28. The Panel received the 2004/05 year end update of the Business Plans relating to Environmental Services, Public Space Services and Planning Services, whose remit and area are the responsibility of the Panel.

#### **Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

29. The Panel has met twice on 7 June and 5 July 2005, when the following principal items of business were discussed.

#### **7 June meeting**

##### Business Plans, 2004/05 - Fourth Quarter Updates

30. The Panel were supplied with the Business Plan Updates for the quarter period ending 31 March 2005 in respect of the Leisure and Cultural Services Unit, measuring the Unit's performance against its Business Plan. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services explained to Members the reasons for the few exceptions that had occurred in his Unit's Business Plan.

31. The recent restructuring exercise had prevented a 2004/05 Business Plan for the Economic Regeneration Unit from being produced, but the Panel were assured that the Unit's performance targets in respect of its strategic areas were being achieved.

#### Inquiry into the Provision of Youth Activities in Chorley

32. The Panel received and approved (subject to the substitution of a word in Recommendation 6) the draft report on its findings and recommendations following the Panel's scrutiny inquiry into the provision of youth activities in the Borough.

33. The overriding aim of the inquiry recommendations is to enhance and complement present efforts by helping to facilitate more effective co-ordination and co-operation, particularly between service providers and funding bodies, and to encourage maximum use of current facilities. While some of the recommendations will not entail major immediate additional expenditure from the Borough Council, a number of the proposals will have financial implications for other service providers.
34. The inquiry report and recommendations were commended for approval by both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Cabinet.

### **5 July 2005 meeting**

#### **Public Participation in the Council's Political Decision-making process - Scrutiny Inquiry**

35. The Executive Member for Customers, Policy and Performance attended the Panel meeting to advise Members on the outcome of the discussions at the meeting of the Area Forum Working Group that had been held on the previous day, 4 July. The Working Group has recommended that early consultation commences with the prospective partners on proposals to introduce three pilot Area Forum schemes in Coppull, Clayton Brook and a rural area to be determined. The Working Group also recommended the Panel, as part of its scrutiny inquiry, to examine the arrangements that operate in Authorities (i) that have established Area Forum; (ii) that have established Area Committees; and (iii) that have adopted alternative methods of engagement.
36. Following a lengthy debate on the best means of progressing the Panel's scrutiny inquiry the Members chose not to revise the current terms of reference for its inquiry. A briefing note to explain the background to, purpose and future course of the inquiry, together with a timetable for its progression, will be produced for the Panel's next meeting. Comparative information on the Area Forums/Committees operated by other Lancashire District Councils will also be submitted to the Panel.

#### **Town Centre Autumn Fair**

37. The Panel received a report of the Head of Property Services on the operation of the 2004 Town Centre Fair, following the Executive Cabinet's decision on the Panel's recent Scrutiny Inquiry.
38. The Officers were satisfied that the combined use of Market Street and the private car park at QS Fashions had worked well in 2004. It was, therefore, intended that the same arrangements would apply for the 2005 Autumn Fair.

#### **Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

##### **One Stop Shop and Lancashire Shared Services Contact Centre**

39. At the meeting on 20 April we considered the evidence collected as part of the One Stop Shop Inquiry and an update report advising us of further information in relation to the Inquiry and the current position with the Lancashire Shared Services Contact Centre.
40. We considered the draft Final Report of the Panel into Final Report into the One Stop Shop and Lancashire Shared Services Contact Centre and discussed each recommendation in turn with the Executive Member for Customers, Policy and Performance; Councillor Edgerley.
41. At our meeting held on 8 June 2005 we received the report of the Assistant Head of Customer Services updating Members on further information in relation to the One Stop

Shop Inquiry. We made two additional recommendations in the light of further information received.

#### Customer Access and Focus Best Value Inspectors

42. We welcomed the Best Value Inspectors to our meeting held on 8 June 2005 and discussed the Council's focus on providing customers with service and the access to these services.

#### Customer Focussed Access and Service Design Strategy

43. We received a presentation by the eGovernment Manager regarding the Council's Customer Focussed Access and Service Design Strategy. We discussed the concept of the Strategy and noted that it would be consulted on with a wide range of stakeholders before being presented to the Executive Cabinet for approval in September 2005.

#### Business Plan Updates for the End of Year 2004/05

44. We considered the Business Plan updates for the end of year 2004/05 for Housing Services, Property Services, ICT Services and Customer, Democratic and Office Support Services. The respective Service Unit Heads gave a summary for their Unit responded to queries from Members.

#### Review of the Marketing and Promotion of the Enhanced Recycling Scheme Inquiry Recommendations

45. We received the report of the Head of Environmental Services reporting the actions taken following the recommendations made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2004. The progress on each of the recommendations was discussed. It was noted that more recyclates had been presented than had been anticipated with some areas presenting at a level of 90%.

#### Items Referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement

46. We considered a report from the Engineering Services Manager containing background information in relation to the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement. We briefly discussed the contents of the report and agreed to have a further discussion on this subject at a future meeting.
47. At our meeting on 6 July we received a further report from the Engineering Services Manager with additional background, financial and comparative information.
48. We drafted the project outline for the inquiry and deliberated the objectives, desired outcomes, key issues and risks. Evidence, witnesses, consultation and site visits were considered.

#### Review of Race Equality Scheme

49. The Panel received from the Head of Corporate and Policy Services a report informing Members of progress made by the Council towards the objectives set out in the Race Equality Scheme Action Plan.
50. We clarified several points and made comments on the progress so far.

#### Recommendation

51. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR J WALKER  
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

GKB

There are no background papers to this report.