

REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 October, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel's on 25 September and 4 December and the work to date on the Task Groups relating to Neighbourhood Working and Public Transport Issues in Chorley.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 OCTOBER 2014

Notice of Executive Decisions

2. The Committee considered the current Notice of Executive Decisions which gave notice of both key and other decisions that the Executive Cabinet expected to take, over the forthcoming 28 days. Further information on Land at Crosse Hall, Chorley was requested. The refresh of the Economic Development Strategy was discussed and we were informed that the Strategy would be subject to a four week period of consultation which would provide us with an opportunity to put forward our views.
3. We were also informed that due to its popularity, the Executive Cabinet had agreed that a further £100k from additional income from Market Walk would be invested in the Shop Front Grants scheme. The Committee was also provided with an explanation on the Big Grant Funding scheme which focussed on supporting existing businesses in Chorley to grow and create additional permanent jobs in the Borough.

Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder

4. We received a report of the Director of Public Protection, Street Scene and Community regarding proposals to scrutinise the Community Safety Partnership under the authority's requirement to scrutinise crime and disorder related activity in line with the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.
5. The Chorley and South Ribble Partnership consists of a number of key agencies that form a statutorily determined Responsible Authorities Group (RAG). In previous years the RAG had met on a quarterly basis to oversee the delivery of the Partnerships Strategic Assessment. It had recently been agreed that the number of meetings would be reduced to a single meeting per year. The Officer Working Group would continue to meet on a regular basis to carry out the detailed delivery of the projects contained within the Strategy.
6. The first annual meeting and its conference was to be held on 29 October in the Town Hall, Chorley. It was at this meeting, that the RAG would review the strategic priorities of the Partnership for 2015/16 and determine the action necessary to address them and it was decided upon to scrutinise the effectiveness of these new arrangements at a dedicated meeting in January.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group: Health Impact Assessment – Response of Executive Cabinet

7. The Committee received a report on the Executive's response to the final report of the Health Impact Assessments Scrutiny Review. The report set out the action taken to address each of the seven accepted recommendations of the Task Group.

8. A review of the Integrated Impact Assessment had been undertaken and the assessment criteria in relation to health and wellbeing had been amended to reflect the priorities of both the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board and the local Health and Wellbeing Partnership:
 - Starting Well
 - Living Well
 - Ageing Well
9. One of the review's key recommendations was the delivery of training for relevant officers and all Elected Members of the Council to help gain a greater understanding of the reviewed assessment toolkit and the process involved and all the Committee were encouraged to attend a Member Learning Session that had been scheduled for 3 November.
10. We were pleased with the Executive Cabinet response to our recommendation's and asked that a six monthly monitoring report of the implemented actions be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group: Select Move – Response of Executive Cabinet

11. We received a report on the Executive Cabinet's response to the recommendations made by the Task Group that undertook the review of Select Move. The majority of the Group's recommendations were the responsibility of the Registered Providers; however the Council was a represented partner on the Strategic Housing Partnership. This Partnership was chaired by our Executive Member responsible for housing, Councillor Graham Dunn, who had also chaired the Task Group review of Select Move.
12. We were informed that the final report of the Select Move review was on the agenda for the Partnerships next meeting and that the Chair, along with other representatives of the Council would encourage the registered providers to accept the recommendations. Council officers also hold regular meetings with the main providers of social housing in Chorley, Chorley Community Housing and Places for People and would use this opportunity to talk through the recommendations with them.

Disable Facilities Grant Funding Task Group with Lancashire County Council

13. The Committee received the scoping of the review for the Disabled Facilities Grant Funding Task Group that was currently being undertaken jointly with Lancashire County Council following a request made by this Committee in 2013/14.
14. We also received an update on the Group's progress to date following consultation event that had been taken place at County in August with officer and Member representatives from all the districts across the Lancashire. There appeared to be a lot of inconsistency in approach taken by the different authorities across the county and we discussed many of the points that had been raised at the consultation event that included, standard of approach, waiting lists, out of date assessments, lack of flexibility to changing circumstances, second hand adaptations and the policy in relation to adapted property.

OVERVIEW AN SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL – 25 SEPTEMBER 2014

Scrutiny Focus – Customer Dissatisfaction

15. We received a report of the Chief Executive that provide contextual information and proposed initial questions to initiate discussions regarding current levels of customer dissatisfaction with Council services. The Head of Customer and ICT Services, Asim Khan and Head of Policy and Communications, Chris Sinnott along with Policy and Partnership Officer, Natalie Taylor Proctor attended the meeting to answer questions of the Panel about the information contained with the report.
16. We were assured that ensuring customer satisfaction for the services they receive from the Council is a high priority for the authority. The Council measures satisfaction in a number of ways including a comprehensive residents survey every few years that captures residents' views on levels of satisfaction of the quality of life in their local area, the Council and its services, together with a monthly survey which seeks feedback from customers on specific services they have requested from the Council.
17. The 2013 resident's satisfaction survey showed that 73% of people were satisfied with the way in which the Council runs things, a significant improvement on the 50% satisfaction recorded in 2008. A target of less than 20% had been set to measure customer levels of dissatisfaction with the services that they receive from the Council. This target reflected the authority's ambitious approach in continually improving its services and levels of customer satisfaction. The latest figures taken at the end of August reported current performance levels at 22.6% which indicated that the figures were continuing to fall and officers were confident that the target could be achieved.
18. The main reason for customer dis-satisfaction was staff not getting back to customers in a timely manner and many steps have been taken throughout the Council to address this. The My Account application now available on the Council's website enables customers to track the progress of their requests 24/7 and contractors such as Veolia have been issued with mobile devices enabling them to provide up to date progress on customer requests.
19. We were informed that there has been an internal communications drive advising all staff to get back to the customer within two working days. Customer dissatisfaction levels are available via the Loop and articles appear on a regular basis reminding all staff of the importance of customer call backs. Everyone within the authority can use the My Tasks system to assess the current status of any request and work is progressing to ensure that the same standards are implemented across all services, whether by email, phone or face to face.
20. The sample survey is sent via the Attain system which enables the Council to maximise the number of respondents. The survey has been optimised to ensure that respondents are able to give their views quickly and easily and the Council has built up quite a comprehensive data base of emails that can be used in this way.
21. However, the Council is aware that there are some people that do not have an email address and a piece of work is currently being undertaken to establish the different pathways that people

access Council services. This will allow the authority to find alternative ways of gaining feedback from all strands of the community across the borough.

22. The Panel commented that they are impressed with the My Account application and the work that was being done in the One Stop to encourage people to use the system. We were satisfied with the work that was being undertaken to bring customer dis-satisfaction levels down.

Monitoring of the Organisational Improvement Plan 2014/15

23. The Chief Executive submitted a report giving progress made to date on the delivery of the Organisational Improvement Plan, including the delivery of key projects and the performance of key indicators. Good progress was being made with 83.6% of projects rated green or complete. One projected was rated amber and one, rated red. 13.11% of projects had not yet been started, with work scheduled to start over the next few months.
24. A breakdown of the projects by Corporate Priority was included within the report, there one project, development of the Buttermere Community Centre that was rated red and one project, provision of Off Street Parking in Croston, that had been rated amber, we were given explanations as to why and what action had been taken to get them back on track.
25. There were a number of key performance indicators that were off track and we were updated on each one:
 - Percentage of domestic violence indications
 - Number of long term empty properties in the borough
 - Average time taken to process new claims and change events for Housing and Council Tax Benefits
 - New customers requiring housing advice (monthly not year to date)
 - Number of older people (65+) visiting Council leisure centres

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL – 4 DECEMBER 2014

Chorley Council Performance Monitoring – Second Quarter 2014/15

26. The Panel considered a report of the Chief Executive that set out performance against the Council's Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators for the second quarter of 2014/15, 1 July to 30 September 2014. Overall performance of key projects was excellent, with the majority either completed or on track. Performance on the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures was also excellent, 71% of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures were performing above target or within the 5% tolerance.
27. The Home Office has introduced a new classification for the recording of crimes which is based on a positive outcomes framework. This has resulted in changes to the way Domestic Violence is measured with positive outcomes now being recorded rather than the number of detections. As result, this has meant that the Council is no longer able to report on one of its key performance indicators within the corporate strategy; the percentage of domestic violence detections, target 70% and the Panel were informed that alternative measures for obtaining this indicator were currently being explored.

28. There was one indicator that was performing below target, the time taken to process new claims and change events for Housing and Council Tax benefit was currently performing at 10.5 days against a target of 12.5 day. The service was still impacted by the high work volumes which occurred during the first quarter and overtime had been and still continued to be offered to help manage the workload. Performance has been further impacted by the ongoing implementation of the single front office transformation programme approved by Members in January 2014. We were informed that the programme of staff training and mentoring in this area is a two year programme, and to assist in keeping reductions in performance to a minimum while the training was being delivered, the Council were temporarily using the Capacity Grid to process some housing benefit work.

Performance Focus: Market Walk

29. We welcomed the Executive Member for Resources, Councillor Peter Wilson and Head of Governance, Chris Moister, who attended the meeting to answer questions of the Panel about the information contained within the report. The Market Walk shopping centre had been purchased by the Council on 29 November 2013 as the purchase supported the council's priorities in developing a vibrant town centre and would allow the authority have greater control and influence over the future development of the town centre.
30. The centre has 35 units with a good spread of tenants and the centre is not solely reliant on an anchor tenant. Vacancy rates are similar to the rest of the town centre in that they are low and at the time of purchase only four retail units were empty. The average footfall is 460,000 a month and is the highest concentration of footfall across the town centre. Following the purchase the Council had entered into a 12 month agreement with Deloitte regarding the day to day operational, financial and strategic management of the site. Following a review of the arrangements after the first 12 months, the Executive Cabinet have recently agreed proposals to bring the operational and financial management of Market Walk in house at the end of the existing contract in 2015.
31. We were updated on the work that has been undertaken to look into the feasibility of extending Market Walk. This work was being considered by the Market Walk Steering Group who has selected one of the six available options as a preferred option and as a basis for further detailed design and consultation work. Consultation has been undertaken with the residents of Chorley and we were informed of the feedback received.
32. We asked about the purchase price and confidence in being able to make the repayments in addition to achieving a reasonable income. Councillor Wilson explained that it was expected that the income from the 35units within the centre would not only cover the loan repayments, but also bring in additional income of at least £400,000 a year. At the request of the Executive Cabinet the Council's Chief Financial Officer had been able to explore different options for financing the centre that had resulted in the Council borrowing different amounts over differing lengths of time. The authority had also used some of its capital savings, to borrow a lesser amount which had helped the Council to increase its margins of profit and had already seen greater income generation than had been previously expected.
33. The centre has also been rebranded to demonstrate the change in ownership and in the summer the Council took on full responsibility for the marketing and promotion work. Since then work has been undertaken to improve the number of events to increase footfall. Currently 100% of the units

are taken up in terms of rental income, although there appeared to be one not actually in operation and there are some contracts to be re-negotiated in the New Year. There are currently no performance indicators against the centre at present but the Council does receive monthly monitoring reports that give information in relation to rent collections, works undertaken and insurance claims. The contract with Deloitte's will end on 31 March 2015 and the Council will take over the monitoring of its performance at that time.

34. Overall the Council are happy with its decision to purchase the Market Walk shopping centre and have been pleased with the additional income that has been generated over the past 12 months. They have greater confidence going forward in facilitating the actual management of the centre and have plans in place to develop the asset in the future.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING

35. The Group has met several times and is nearing completion of the review. A number of community and parish council representatives have been interviewed to ascertain their views on current neighbourhood working arrangements and to identify best practice. The task group will submit its final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the end of January 2015.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES IN CHORLEY

36. The Group has also met a number of times and has received a presentation from County Councillor John Fillis, Executive Member for Highways and Transportation as well as discussing the current criteria for subsidised bus services which was subject to consultation by LCC.

In considering community and rural transport schemes, the Task Group has invited a representative of Cumbria County Council to attend the next meeting to talk about their successful Rural Wheels programme.

COUNCILLOR JOHN WALKER
CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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