

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Thursday, 29 January 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor June Molyneaux (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Julia Berry, Charlie Bromilow, Doreen Dickinson, Robert Finnamore, Mike Handley, Mark Jarnell, Matthew Lynch, Greg Morgan, Alistair Morwood and Kim Snape

OFFICERS: Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Customer and Advice Services), Simon Clark (Head of Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods), Susan Guinness (Head of Shared Financial Services) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Eric Bell and Margaret France

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Peter Wilson (Executive Member (Resources))

15.OS.22 Minutes

15.OS.22a Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

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

15.OS.22b Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 4 December 2014 be noted.

15.OS.23 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of any interests.

15.OS.24 Public Questions

There were no questions from any member of the public.

15.OS.25 Scrutiny of Executive Cabinet

A request was made for the Committee to consider future agenda items to be determined by the Cabinet instead of scrutinising the minutes of those decisions.

It was explained that this request had recently been explored by the Committee and following member's discussions at a scrutiny training session it had been decided that the current arrangements were appropriate and would continue.

The Committee was urged to use the notice of executive decisions more effectively to identify anything of interest that warranted further information to be sought and presented to the Committee before a decision is taken by Cabinet.

15.OS.25a Executive Cabinet Minutes

Members considered the minutes of meetings of Executive Cabinet held on 23 October, 20 November and 11 December 2014.

Executive Cabinet minutes – 20 November 2014

14.EC.82 Fleet Street Master Plan – Extra Care Scheme

An update on the business case and design for an extra care scheme on Fleet Street was provided. The facility would provide care that is more than just accommodation for people over the age of 55, enabling care and support to be provided as part of an independent living environment.

The Lancashire Extra Care Strategy had stated that Lancashire County Council would seek to support an Extra Care scheme in each district and would provide capital funding up to 30% of the total cost. In addition, they would provide revenue funding to commission care packages for eligible residents. HCA grants towards the build costs are available through the Affordable Homes Programme for 2015/18 and other funding sources may include NHS and Clinical Commissioning Group in addition to a capital contribution by Chorley Council.

The Council were currently undertaking the development of a number of design options that would inform the financial modelling and ultimately the final design and business case for the scheme should the Council decide to go ahead. The authority will continue to work closely with the County Council and other partners as part of the project group for this scheme.

RESOLVED - that the minutes be noted.

15.OS.25b 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.

Further information was requested to be brought to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Big Grant Funding scheme which was focused on supporting existing businesses in Chorley to grow and create additional permanent jobs in the Borough.

RESOLVED – that the Notice of Executive Decisions be noted.

15.OS.26 Budget Scrutiny - Draft Budget and Summary Budget Position over the Medium Term

The Committee considered a report on the draft budget position for the medium term that set out:

- the budget position for 2015/16 including the forecast for the following two years to 2017/18
- presentation of relevant proposals in respect of potential investment in the Council's Corporate Strategy priorities in 2015/16, increasing draft budget resilience in the longer term;
- the budget consultation.

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources attended the meeting to give an overview of the proposals and answer any questions of the Committee.

It was proposed that Council Tax be frozen and not increase in 2015/16. This would be the third consecutive year that the Council had achieved a balanced budget position for the forthcoming financial year without increasing Council Tax.

The Council had seen large scale reductions in Central Government grant placing unprecedented levels of pressure on the budget.

The proposed budgeted new investments for 2015/16 were set out within the report, and included a Chorley Flower Show and additional events at Astley Hall and Park. Proposed capital schemes included a community centre at Buckshaw Village, a Youth Zone, improvements to Market Street and the delivery of CCTV provision, which would mean improvements to the existing service and was in response to recommendations made by a scrutiny task group.

The projected budget position consistently showed a significant budget gap in future years 2016/17 and 2017/18. This shortfall, together with heightened uncertainty and risk in the form of year on year variable new funding regimes, meant that budget austerity measures would continue to impact on the Council's budget.

Despite the additional funding cuts announced on 18 December 2014, a planned early budget preparation process had enabled the Council to apply its New Homes Bonus (NHB) funds to invest in the corporate strategy priorities in 2015/16 of involving residents in improving their local area, providing greater equality of access for all, clean safe and healthy communities, and an ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of the residents and the local area and a strong local economy. The decision on whether or not to use the New Homes Bonus fund to bridge the funding deficit in future years may be something the Executive Cabinet may have to consider, bearing in mind that future year rewards would be dependent on the level of housing development.

The consultation on the proposed budget would focus on obtaining feedback on the key investment areas in order to help prioritise activity. It would also highlight the impact of a reduction in Council funds and ask residents to give the Council their views on the budget. The consultation would invite responses from residents, partners, parish groups and other stakeholders through a variety of methods including a short survey. Results would be analysed and published in February for consideration as part of budget finalisation.

The Executive Member for Resources commented that they were pleased with the current budget managing arrangements and confident of their plans for the future.

Members of the Committee asked a variety of questions that included the reasons for the provision of an additional community centre at Buckshaw Village, the improvements works to Yarrow Valley Car Park and the funding allocated to some of our partners.

The Council's decision to invest in the provision of an additional community centre in Buckshaw Village was in response to feedback from the local residents that existing facilities were inadequate to support the size of the residential area. Exploration on how to fill this need had included extending the existing centre; however, with the development of the new Aldi supermarket taking place in the area, the Council seized the opportunity to extend existing provision by providing a new additional facility to address the local need. Consultation with local residents, parish councillors and other users of the facilities had taken place and would continue to do so as the project progressed.

Members were informed that the works to be undertaken to the Yarrow Valley Car Park will substantially upgrade the main car park on the site to provide up to 135 car parking spaces including drainage and create an improved visitor experience for those that travelled to the venue by car.

Continued support for the Food Bank in Chorley would build on existing provision to allow the scheme to effectively support those who are most vulnerable and in need of food parcels and related assistance. The Council would continue to work with partner agencies and the Storehouse themselves to ensure that the funding was allocated according to need.

A project to procure a grant finder tool that would support internal services and external partners to work with local community groups and organisations to access grant funding to improve services and facilities in the local area.

The Public Services Reform Board wanted to deliver on more schemes, like those being developed to address some of the issues associated with social isolation. The aim of the Board was to take advantage of the opportunities available within the shifting public sector landscape, maximise the impact of partnership working in areas to ensure better services for communities and more effective spending of joint resources. Work was progressing to develop resilience within the voluntary group sectors.

The Committee queried the additional capital funding being allocated to the Bengal Street site and asked for further details on this project. Other questions were also asked in relation to the improvements being made to Market Street, Chorley, the Councils funding contribution to the provision of PCSO's and the implementation of a Chorley and Wellbeing and Resilience Service.

The Chair thanked Councillor Peter Wilson for attending the meeting and it was **RESOLVED to note the report.**

15.OS.27 Overview and Scrutiny Task Group: CCTV provision and Infrastructure Review - Response from the Executive Cabinet

The Committee received a report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community on the Executive's response to the final report of the CCTV Provision and Infrastructure Task Group that had been chaired by Councillor Robert Finnamore.

The report had recommended a significant upgrading of the current CCTV provision that would mean a capital budget commitment of £250,000 to fund the capital works over a three year period. This had been approved in principle by the Executive Cabinet on 23 October and subsequently approved by Council.

The report also listed the additional six recommendations of the Task Group and a response was provided by the Cabinet to each one.

The Chair thanked the members of the Task Group on the work that had been undertaken through the review that had resulted in improvements being planned to the existing service.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

15.OS.28 Overview and Scrutiny Task Group: Disabled Facilities Grant Funding - Final Report by Lancashire County Council

The Committee received for information, the final report of the Disabled Facilities Grant Funding review that had been undertaken by Lancashire County Council following a request made by this Committee in January 2014.

The review included assessment of the funding allocation process, consistency of approach across the county, different ways of working and member involvement and enhancing their role.

A number of recommendations had been identified that included:

- the development of a single consistent approach to the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants across Lancashire
- Commitment from the Chief Executives of the 12 Lancashire District Councils and Lancashire County Council to work in partnership with Clinical Commissioning Groups to redesign the system to deliver an integrated service across Lancashire
- Areas of best practice identified, acknowledged and shared across the different aspects of the system.

The Director of Customer and Advice Services for the Council commented that Chorley was one of the districts that had good working practices already in place and applications were dealt with efficiently.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

15.OS.29 Reports from the Task and Finish Groups

Neighbourhood Working Review

The Chair of the Task Group, Councillor June Molyneaux presented the Final Report of the Neighbourhood Working Review to the Committee.

Overall feedback from parish councils, community groups and organisations involved in Neighbourhood Working was generally positive with regards to the current approach being taken to implement and develop neighbourhood working in Chorley.

The recommendations of the group were mainly around improving communication mechanisms and building on existing relations to encourage greater involvement at all levels.

The Chair thanked the Members of the Group for all their hard work and it was **RESOLVED that the report be approved and submitted to the next meeting of Executive Cabinet for determination.**

Public Transport Review

The Chair of the Task Group, Councillor Finnamore updated the Committee on the work of the group to date. Unfortunately a recent meeting to interview representatives from Cumbria County Council on their Community Wheels Scheme had to be cancelled and rearranged due to inclement weather.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

15.OS.30 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2014/15

The Committee received the updated Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2014/15

Councillor Julia Berry requested that a report on the Public Service Reform Board to provide information on the role, priorities and performance of the board be considered at a future Performance Panel meeting.

RESOLVED – that the work Programme be noted.

Chair

Date