

REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel on 12 March and the work to date on the Task Groups relating to Neighbourhood Working and Public Transport Issues in Chorley.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 29 JANUARY 2015

Executive Cabinet Minutes – 20 November 2014

2. At the Committee's request we were provided with an update on the business case and design for the provision of an Extra Care Scheme on Fleet Street, Chorley, 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.
3. 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 of up to 30% of the total cost. In addition they would provide revenue funding to commission care packages for eligible residents.
4. We were informed that the Council are 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.

Notice of Executive Decisions

5. Members noted the current notice of both key and other decisions that the Executive were expected to take over the forthcoming 28 days and we requested further information to be brought to our next meeting on the Big Grant Funding scheme.

Budget Scrutiny – Draft and Summary Budget Position over the Medium Term

6. Councillor Peter Wilson, the Executive Member for Resources attended the meeting to give an overview of the draft budget proposals for 2015/16 that included a forecast for the following two years to 2017/18 and presented relevant proposals in respect of potential investment in the Council's Corporate Strategy priorities in 2015/16 that would increase draft budget resilience in the longer term, along with information about the budget consultation.
7. This was the third consecutive year that Council Tax will not be increased which was commendable considering the large scale reductions that the Council had experienced in their Central Government grant, placing unprecedented levels of pressure on the budget. However, the projected budget position consistently shows 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 will continue to impact on the Council's budget.
8. Proposed new investments for 2015/16 were set out within the report that included a Chorley Flower Show and additional events at Astley Hall and Park and capital schemes that included a community centre at Buckshaw Village, a Youth Zone, improvements to Market Street, Chorley

and delivery of an enhance CCTV provision which would mean improvements to the existing service and was in response to recommendations made by Members of this Committee.

9. The Scrutiny 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 the next three years. This had been approved in principal by the Executive Cabinet last year and subsequently approved by Council.
10. A planned early budget preparation process had enabled the Council to apply its New Home Bonus (NHB) funds to invest in the corporate strategy priorities in 2015/16, however the decision on whether to use the fund to bridge the funding deficit in the future is something the Executive Cabinet would have to consider bearing in mind that future years rewards would be dependent on the level of housing development.
11. Consultation on the proposed budget had focused on obtaining feedback in key areas in order to help prioritise activity. It had also highlighted the impact of a reduction in the Councils funds and asked for resident's views on the proposed budget, the results of which were analysed and published for consideration as part of the budget finalisation.
12. The Committee asked a variety of questions that included the reasoning behind the provision of an additional community centre at Buckshaw Village, improvement works to the Yarrow Valley Car Park and allocated funding to some of our partners. Members also queried the additional capital funding that was allocated to the Bengal Street site, the Council's funding contribution to the provision of PCSO's and the implementation of a Chorley and Wellbeing and Resilience service.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group: Disabled Facilities Grant Funding – Final Report by Lancashire County Council

13. We received the final report of the Disabled Facilities Grant Funding review that had been undertaken by Lancashire County Council at the request of this Committee last year. The review had included an assessment of the funding allocation process, consistency of approach across the county; different ways of working; and Member involvement and enhancing the district's role.
14. A number of recommendations had been identified that included the development of a single consistent approach to the delivery of the grants across the County, a commitment from the Chief Executives of the 12 District Councils and County Council to work in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Groups to redesign the system to deliver an integrated service across Lancashire. Areas of best practice had also been identified and would be shared across different aspects of the system. It was noted that Chorley was one of the districts that already had exemplary working practices in place and applications were dealt with efficiently.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL – 12 MARCH 2015

Scrutiny Focus – The Chorley Public Service Reform Board

15. The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley attended a meeting of the Panel to present a report on the performance of the Chorley Public Service Reform Board. The Board has moved

from a traditional 'local strategic partnership' approach and structure, to one that has real focus and objective on improving services for the residents of Chorley by bringing together leaders from across public services that consider how they can make changes within their organisations to improve quality and access of services.

16. Chaired by Councillor Alistair Bradley, members of the board include, Chorley Council, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services, Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire Teaching Hospital, Chorley and South Ribble CCG, Lancashire Care NHS Trust, VCFS Network, Live Well Champion, Age UK Lancashire, Department for Work and Pensions, Runshaw College and a business representative from Porter Lancastrian.
17. The Board has been successful in securing funding from five main partners including the Council and other funding streams to enable them to appoint a programme officer and access to funding opportunities to pump prime transformation work. The jointly funded officer who is based at Chorley Council is currently funded for one year from the 1 October 2014 and is tasked with delivery of the work plan. The work plan for 2014/15 exists as a series of three enabling workstreams (data sharing, assets and commissioning) and it is thought that the board can deliver some agreements and improvements in these areas that will lay the foundations for future integration and joint working.
18. The development of a Chorley Wellbeing and Resilience system was currently underway that will bring together services that can promote and support wellbeing. The Board has successfully bid for a £1.23m Transformation Challenge Award along with Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Council which was due to begin in April 2015.
19. Performance of the priorities is monitored by quarterly highlight reports that are prepared for each of the workstreams. These contain information on progress made, as well as identifying any issues or risks. A performance dashboard will also be implemented in April, which will give additional information that the Board could use to monitor a range of key indicators for Chorley that would also be presented alongside the highlight reports. It will focus on the three themes of Start Well, Live Well and Age Well. It was envisaged that now that some of the workstreams are starting to produce tangible outputs, they could be monitored through this process to ensure that they are producing measurable outcomes in the future.
20. The Panel were keen to ensure that the outcomes from the Board are communicated to Elected Members to ensure that they were kept abreast of any changes. It was acknowledged that the Council is looking to new ways of collaboratively working with its partners and that a new regime will help to achieve this. However, in order to facilitate this, it is extremely important that Members were kept fully informed so that we too can adapt to the new roles and champion different ways of working.

Business Plan Monitoring Statement

21. We received a report of the Chief Executive that provided an update on the performance of the Organisational Plan that included the 20 key projects set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy. It was reported that overall good progress was being made with 84% of projects rated green or complete.

22. We were also provided with an update on all the corporate strategy and local performance indicators which could be reported at this time. Performance was good with 70% of the 40 indicators which can be measured achieving or exceeding their target and a further 17.5% performing within the 5% threshold. The seven indicators that are outside the target but within the 5% threshold included the overall employment rate, average days per employee (FTE) per year lost through sickness absence, percentage of minutes circulated with 10 days and percentage of occupancy at the Council's community centres.
23. The Organisational Improvement Plan for 2014/15 contained a series of projects and objectives that set out the main improvement actions to be undertaken during the year by the organisation. This included the key projects as set out in the 2013/14 Corporate Strategy. The Plan also set out a number of business improvement, budget growth and neighbourhood priority projects that had been agreed in April 2014 and were due to run until the end of the financial year and in some cases for larger projects into 2015/16 and beyond.
24. A breakdown of organisational plan projects by Corporate Priority was provided for the Panel. Where projects had been rated amber or red and explanation about the issue(s) and action(s) that are being taken to address them was provided. Delivery of 22 of the 24 neighbourhood priorities will be complete by 31 March 2015. The project to provide additional off-street parking in Croston is undeliverable due to lack of sites available and completion of the project to deliver improvement works at the Eaves Green centre is dependent on third party owners of land and property. The 2015/16 organisational plan is currently being developed, services should have by now held business planning sessions to discuss project delivery over the 2014/15 year and also identify any new projects beyond business as usual for 2015/16.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING

25. Councillor June Molyneaux, Chair of the Task Group presented us with the Final Report of the Neighbourhood Working Review. Overall feedback from parish councils, community groups and organisations involved in neighbourhood working was generally positive with regards to the current approach by the Council and recommendations were mainly around improving communication mechanisms and building on existing relations to encourage greater involvement at all levels.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES

26. The Group has now met on several occasions and considered a wide range of issues that has included exploring community and rural transport schemes and the new criteria for subsidised bus services. The group recently met with representatives from Transport for Greater Manchester who came to talk about the work being undertaken on transport through the Combined Authority.

Recommendation

27. To note the report.

COUNCILLOR JOHN WALKER
CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE