

# **REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND PANELS**

## **GENERAL REPORT**

1. This report summarises the business transacted at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 March 2007, as well as a brief summary of the recent activities and matters discussed at meetings of the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27 MARCH 2007**

### **Lancashire Shared Services Contact Centre Efficiencies and Partnership with Lancashire County Council Inquiry**

2. The Committee received the draft final report of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel Inquiry into the Lancashire Shared Services Contact Centre.
3. The Inquiry had been conducted by two Sub-Groups of the Panel with remits to examine (i) the contribution of the Contact Centre to the achievement of the Council's efficiency agenda, (ii) the effectiveness of the partnership arrangement with the Lancashire County Council and other District Councils and, (iii) the delivery of a high quality customer service.
4. Whilst the innovative partnership had already made efficiencies, the Panel, after taking account of all the evidence, made recommendations in the following areas:
  - efficiencies generally within the Contact Centre
  - the Customer Relationship Management System and customer access to services
  - effectiveness of the partnership arrangements and the desired benefits of partnership working
5. The Committee endorsed the report subject to one minor correction and recommended that the report's findings and recommendations be submitted to the Executive Cabinet for approval.

### **Capital Programme 2006/07 – Monitoring**

6. We considered a joint report of the Executive Director – Corporate and Customer and Director of Finance on the committed Capital Programme for 2006/2007, which set out a number of recommendations from the Corporate Improvement Board for consideration by the Executive Cabinet at its meeting on 29 March 2007.
7. The report indicated that the Corporate Improvement Board is continuing to make good progress ensuring a more controlled and successful delivery of the Programme.
8. The latest Capital Programme forecast for 2006/07 showed a reduction in the programme of £1,442,770 to £12,324,570 with a summary of the changes relating to slippage and an increase in the budget for capitalised restructuring.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry**

9. We received from the Director of Policy and Performance a report on the work that had been undertaken by the Equality and Diversity Sub-Group.

10. The Chair of the Sub-Group gave Members of the Committee a presentation on the key findings of the Sub-Group and highlighted examples of the good work already being done by the Council in equality and diversity.
11. The report set out the recommendations identifying the clearest ways in which we can achieve this by using the tools at our disposal and learning from the journey that others have already taken in embedding equality and diversity in their organisations. By achieving these aims we will also be meeting many of the requirements of the CPA and embedding best practice across the organisation.
12. The Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Sub-Group and recommended that the report be submitted to the Executive Cabinet on 24 May 2007 for approval.
13. We also received the position of the Capacity/Achievement Sub-Group on the deliberations on key issues relating to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny structure. The Committee was advised that a questionnaire had been submitted to all Members of the Council seeking their views on the structure but a very limited response had been received. We therefore requested that the questionnaire be recirculated to all Members and that the findings be submitted to the Sub-Group early in the next Municipal Year, for consideration.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme**

14. We received the work programme for 2006/07 and for 2007/08 and it was agreed that the next inquiry to be undertaken by the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel in the next municipal year would cover Gershon Efficiencies and staff sickness absence. The Panel would decide whether they take these issues together or separately.
15. The Committee also received notification of the progress of the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the Neighbourhood Working Inquiry and that it would submit its findings and recommendations to the first meeting of the Panel in June 2007.

### **ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 22 MARCH 2007**

16. The Panel received the third quarter Business Plan Monitoring Statement (October 2006 – December 2007) for the under mentioned Directorates whose service and functions fall within the remit and area of responsibility of the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel:
  - Leisure and Culture
  - Housing Services
  - Development and Regeneration
  - Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment
17. The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services notified the Panel of the areas of his service that had not reached the performance target, which were, the number of visits by pupils in organised groups and the processing of invoices within 30 working days which every Directorate was currently coming to terms with and action taken to improve the service.
18. All key projects set out in the Business Plan for the Development and Regeneration Directorate were on track. The performance of Development Control in relation to the major planning applications processed on time had improved and was now on track following the implementation of an action plan.
19. The Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment indicated that the performance variation for the number of missed collections and 100,000 collection of households had improved following initiatives taken up with the contractor to drive up collection performance and reduce missed collection.

20. Other areas of poor performance which were 5% below target were waste composted, which was a seasonal variation and sickness absence where all practicable action was being taken to be addressed with action taken to support affecting staff members.

### **Neighbourhood Working – Inquiry**

21. The Panel received from the Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment the current position with regard to the Panel's inquiry into Neighbourhood Working indicating that a drop-in day was taking place on 26 March 2007 at St Laurence's Church Hall, Chorley with staff available to meet representatives from Parish Councils, members of the public and elected Members.
22. A final witness interview session would be scheduled to take place in the near future and the Panel would be invited to visit the Great Lever area of Bolton to see a good example of neighbourhood management partnership.
23. A draft report containing an action plan with recommendations would be submitted to the Panel in June 2007 for consideration.

### **CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 20 MARCH 2007**

#### **Business Plan Monitoring Statements**

24. The Panel received the Business Plan Monitoring Statements for the period October 2006 to December 2006 for Human Resources, Information, Communication Technology Services, Customer, Democratic and Legal Services and Financial Services.
25. We clarified aspects of the Business Plans and Performance Indicators with the Directors who were all present at the meeting. The Panel noted the service developments in each area as outlined in the reports.
26. The Panel congratulated Human Resources for the achievement of Investors in People and ICT on the Geographical Information System Team receiving the NLPG Exemplar Award.
27. The Panel agreed that the performance statistics for sickness be broken down into short and long term sickness and the number of staff per team who have not had a day off sick. The Director of ICT was requested to report back any mechanism for displaying plans electronically at meetings of the Development Control Committee in the Council Chamber.

#### **Monitoring of Inquiry Recommendations – One Stop Shop Inquiry**

28. The Panel received a report of the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services updating the Panel on the progress on the implementation of the recommendations made to the Executive Cabinet on 30 June 2004, in respect of the One Stop Shop.
29. The Panel had previously carried out an inquiry to assess the effectiveness of the newly implemented One Stop Shop and to identify improvements, which would benefit both the Customer and the workforce. The report listed the recommendations with the action taken against each one. There were only seven recommendations with action outstanding.
30. The Panel welcomed the format of the report, the progress that had been made since the recommendations were approved and agreed that this be the last update report for this Inquiry.

## **Contact Centre Efficiencies and Partnership with Lancashire County Council Inquiry**

31. The Panel considered the draft Final Report into Contact Centre Efficiencies and Partnership with Lancashire County Council Inquiry. The Efficiency and Partnership Sub-Groups had pulled their findings and recommendations into one report.
32. It was agreed that the two Chairs of the Sub-Groups and the Chair condense the recommendations into a more manageable number and to rewrite the Executive Summary. We thanked Councillors Peter Baker and Mrs Stella Walsh for their contributions as Chairs of the Sub-Groups.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

33. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR D EDGERLEY  
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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There are no background papers to this report.