

REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 October, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panels on 24 September and 3 December and the work to date on the Task Group relating to the Single Front Office review.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8 OCTOBER 2015

PCSO's – Roles and responsibilities in Chorley

2. The Committee welcome DCI Jonathan Clegg and PS Neil Sladen from Lancashire Constabulary who were attending the meeting to answer questions of the members along with Councillor Paul Walmsley, Executive Member (Public Protection) and the Head of Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods for a report that enabled the Committee to meet our statutory obligation to undertake an annual scrutiny review of the Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership with the particular focus for 2015/16 being PCSO deployment in Chorley.
3. We were informed that PCSO's are employed by Lancashire Constabulary to support the work of the police particularly in the role of neighbourhood or community policing. For a number of years Chorley Council, through a Memorandum of Understanding, has augmented the base number through an arrangement with the Constabulary that originally part funded 50% of the cost of an additional PCSO, amounting to 22 additional PCSO's at a cost of £242,000 in 2009.
4. In 2012, the authority agreed with the Constabulary to part fund a further 5 PCSO's at the same rate, increasing our annual contribution to £297,000. This means that there are currently a total of 49 PCSO's in Chorley, of which 27 are additional provision, part funded by Chorley. However, whilst the Council's contribution of £11,000 per PCSO has stayed static, it no longer provides 50% of the cost of a PCSO. In real terms it now amounts to 33% of the cost, Therefore, the annual Council contribution of £297,000 levers in an additional £584,000 worth of resource from the Constabulary who fund the remaining.
5. Members are aware of the financial constraints being placed on the Constabulary and as a result of those constraints a review of PCSO numbers across Lancashire has been undertaken based on risk and threat. The Constabulary has determined that the base number of PCSO's for the Chorley area will be set at 14. However, given the authority's level of contribution the Constabulary are able to increase PCSO numbers deployed in Chorley to a total of 27 PCSO's.
6. In addition the Constabulary are seeking to task and deploy a small number of PCSO resources away from the geographic policing duties (i.e. patrols and visibility), to early intervention and prevention case work. This application of resources to early intervention and prevention work is one that accords with the Council's focus for resource allocation, in that directing resources upstream reduces the need for expensive crisis intervention later.
7. PS Neil Sladen delivered a presentation to the Committee on the work of the Police Early Action Team, explaining that the team had recently been allocated 4 PCSO's who had been deployed into the following areas of, Youth Intervention and Family Support, High Intensive Users and Cadet Support, with a further 4 PCSO's projected to be redeployed to the team in January 2016 which the Early Action Team were looking to utilise in areas like primary schools, restorative justice interventions and working in partnership with Barnardo's on organised crime gangs.

8. It was emphasised that all PCSO's were still undertaking late shifts and weekend working and continued to be highly visible, engaging with and reassuring the community and gathering intelligence and we were assured that police personnel whether it be community beat managers, neighbourhood police officers or PCSO's were allocated in response to risk and need. The work that the PCSO's were now undertaking for the Early Action team should be viewed positively as a different way of problem solving to prevent issues from worsening and both PS Sladen and DCI Clegg outlined the type of work that was currently being undertaken in the team.
9. Members asked how this new way of working would be promoted as they thought that the Constabulary needed to get the message out to residents about role changes. This had already been recognised by the police and there were plans for a force campaign to be delivered shortly. Some of this was also around changing attitudes internally within the force, to get officers thinking differently about their approach.
10. We discussed what performance monitoring information was available to evidence measurable outcomes. Members of the Committee were very clear that we would like to see both quantitative and qualitative data in terms of PCSO deployment and its impact. It was explained that whilst the Constabulary had masses of statistical data the main reliance on whether or not the early intervention was working was anecdotal evidence that could take a long time to build up a number of case studies that were often powerful stories, amounting to real changes in a person's life that were attributed to early intervention and in the longer term would save valuable resources. We agreed that these new ways of working would need time to embed into the service and we asked if they would be willing to return to a future meeting to update on the impact of the Early Intervention Team.
11. The Committee agreed that it would have been helpful to have had representation from the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NHPT) at the meeting to provide the detail on PCSO deployment in the neighbourhood policing arena and thought that it would be a good idea to invite them to our next meeting in order to gain their perspective of the changes as we still had some reservations about the impact that the reduction in PCSO's and deployment of some to Early Action would have on neighbourhood policing.

Final Monitoring Report of the Select Move Review

12. We received a report of the Director of Customer and Advice Services that provided the Committee with the final update on progress made to implement the fifteen recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group which looked in to Select Move. The final report of the task group was published in April and had been endorsed by Executive Cabinet in August 2014.
13. Reducing the waiting list was a desired objective of the review that had been achieved. A recent snapshot taken illustrated the total waiting list to be 938 which was dramatically reduced from 1522, the figure at the start of the review. Members requested further information on how many cases on the waiting list were 'transfer' cases, and if so how many 'transfers' had been made. This was in relation to reports of management moves or direct matching.
14. The implementation of the majority of recommendations required the willingness and cooperation of partners, particularly the Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs) as the Council no longer has any housing stock and we were provided with an update against each of the 15 recommendations with the following progress being highlighted:

- Net inward migration continues to reduce and the team are now able to demonstrate a figure of -2.7% in quarter one of 2015/16.
- The undertaking of a corporate project to promote digital inclusion that involves a series of drop in events across the borough to enable customers to learn digital skills that will include the Select Move online system
- Working in partnership with the Registered Providers, the successful delivery of a further 165 affordable housing units in 2014/15.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL – 24 SEPTEMBER 2015

Performance Focus – Planning Context

15. The Committee welcomed Councillor Paul Walmsley, Executive Member for Public Protection and Paul Whittingham, Development Control Team Leader to our meeting to answer questions on the Council's planning performance. We received a report that gave us an overview of performance against the different types of planning applications that the Council processed.
16. The majority of the Development Control Teams workloads is made up from the 'minor' and 'other' application categories with their timescales for completion being more stringent than for those of major applications.
17. It was also highlighted that the Council's Constitution was a major factor in the amount of applications that had to be determined at Development Control Committee with members having to determine all applications for housing developments of three houses or above instead of under delegated powers in line with other authorities. This was something that had been constitutionally changed a few years ago, in response to a large number of applications being submitted for smaller housing developments on garden land across the borough.
18. There was however a view by officers which was supported by the Panel and the Executive Member that the scheme of delegation was an area that could be reviewed and possibly tweaked to help ease the large volume of applications needing to be considered by Development Control Committee. Any reduction in the amount of applications to be determined by Committee would also help to save the Council money and increase efficiencies.
19. Planning performance at the end of 2014/15 was above target for 'major' applications and off track but within threshold for 'minor' and 'other'. At the end of quarter one, 2015/16, performance for 'major' applications remained excellent, however 'minor' applications are now off track and 'other' applications significantly off track.
20. Comparative statistical information was also provided of the authority's performance in relation to its nearest neighbours group, based on performance in the first quarter, although with not having information on the number of applications these authorities were processing, it was accepted that this information was difficult to quantify. As the performance for 'minor' and 'other' applications was more than 5% off target at the end of the first quarter an action plan had been prepared setting out all the issues and action to be taken to improve performance.
21. It was also explained that recent new advice issued by the Government within the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) on Section 106 had meant that the delegation of officers to determine applications of one or two dwellings had been removed and had to be referred to

Committee before Section 106 process could be started. Although, this had since been changed, it had had a massive impact on the length of time taken to process these types of applications.

22. There had also been performance issues with regard to an external supplier of the householder planning application service which had been intended to relieve pressure due to a vacancy within the planning team. This has since been resolved by a change of personnel and the team are starting to see improvements in performance targets.
23. Whilst the Executive acknowledged the reduction in the performance statistics, they were more concerned about quality rather than quantity and set the team a mandate that was more around the resident's experience of the service and that despite performance being off track, customer satisfaction with the planning service remains high.
24. We also received an overview of the difficulties the planning team were experiencing in producing accurate performance data for the service. Monthly data had not been input on to the Council's performance management system since April 2015 due to capacity issues, making it difficult for the policy team to effectively monitor and identify service delivery issues early. However the 1st quarter figures had been produced and submitted to Government as required.
25. It was explained that the authority's current IDOX reporting system that was used by many services across the Council was no longer fit for purpose for readily calculating planning performance due to recent change in legislation by central government on what should be taken into account of when calculating performance. Negotiations are currently underway to upgrade the system and it was hoped that this would be rectified by the beginning of April 2016. If not sooner. In the meantime, the Development Control Team Leader was spending two days each quarter manually inputting figures and was confident that the data now being produced was accurate. We received confirmation that the Director was seeking to address the capacity issues to ensure performance could be calculated and entered into the performance management system on a monthly basis.

Monitoring of the Organisational Plan 2015/16

26. The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive that reported progress on the delivery of the Organisational Plan 2015/16 and the performance of the corporate and local indicators. The Plan contained all priority improvement activity being undertaken by the organisation in 2015/16 and included information on the corporate strategy projects, business improvement projects, budget growth items and neighbourhood priority projects.
27. Overall progress was good with 86.5% of the Council's corporate priority projects set out in the Corporate Strategy rated green or complete and with 72.2% of the 72 indicators measured achieving or exceeding their target, with a further 11.1% performing within the 5% threshold.
28. All projects are recorded in the MyProjects system along with detailed milestones and tasks so that progress can be monitored and managed throughout the year. Only four projects were rated Amber and an explanation as to why along with the action being taken to address an issues was provided. Progress of the neighbourhood priorities is monitored regularly and reported at the neighbourhood area meetings, 50% of the projects are rated green with a further 20.8% having already been completed. Some projects, 16.6% not yet started were due to seasonal delivery targets.

29. The Panel received assurances that the Chorley Flower Show had been delivered within budget. However, this year had been mainly around establishing the show as a main contender in its field and feedback to date was extremely positive that this would be achieved. Preliminary talks had already taken place and a date identified for next year. Use of the Destination Play Area in Astley Park remained high and antisocial incidents had reduced considerably. A recent resident satisfaction survey had shown that satisfaction with the borough's play and open spaces had increased dramatically.
30. The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Advice Services has recently met with Lancashire County Council to discuss the Council's business case and justification for asking the County Council to contribute capital to the Fleet Street Extra Care project and were given reassurance that this was being looked at. A HCA bid of £2,868,750 to contribute to the capital costs of the construction of the scheme has been submitted. The Council has received feedback informally from the HCA that the proposal was the best scheme in the North West and has been referred to the evaluation Panel in London. An announcement on whether the Council's bid as been successful or not is expected sometime in October. Once funding is secured, the development will go before Council for approval to progress and subsequently the scheme proposals to be approved by Planning Committee.
31. Initial meetings have been held with Lancashire County Council Education service to enable an understanding of the processes used by the County Council for school place projections. Where CIL contributions have been obtained in some areas, part of the funds available is to increase school capacity and to facilitate this, the Council needs to understand the county's school expansion plans.
32. As the decision to lease part of the Bengal Street Depot site to Recycling Lives was not now taking place, I asked about the possibility of the whole site being used as car parking as part of the proposals for the extension of the Market Walk shopping development.
33. Financing of the development of the Friday Street Health Centre is extremely complex but we were assured that all partners are still committed to the project and that by continuing to highlight it on the Council's corporate plan it ensures that the delivery of the centre is kept high up on everyone's agenda.
34. Although sickness absence was currently performing off target, it was noted that the target value was extremely low at an average of 2 days per employee FTE lost through sickness absence. It was explained that the Council was not complacent regarding sickness absence and attempts are made to further improve absence rates. The target also showed that the wide range of health initiatives that the Council invested in was working in retaining such high standards.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL – 3 DECEMBER 2015

Performance Focus – Welfare Reforms

35. We welcomed Councillor Graham Dunn, Executive Member (Customer and Advice Services) and Fiona Daniels (Housing Options and Support Manager) to our meeting who were attending to answer questions in relation to Welfare Reform. The Council was in a good place for dealing with the continuing changes that the reform had brought. This was largely due to the steer of the

Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley and the dedication, hard work and diligence of officers in the housing services team.

36. The work that the authority is currently doing goes beyond any statutory requirements and have incurred some additional costs that the Council are committed to providing to ensure that the work being carried out is cost effective. It is expected that around 330 people will be affected by further welfare reform changes with average losses of £2,576 per annum. These cuts will affect families that are already on a low income and who may end up presenting themselves to the Council in the future for support.
37. A Welfare Reform Partnership has been created which included representatives from local Registered Providers, DWP and third sector organisations along with officers from the Council. The Partnership is responsible for contributing to the delivery of the Welfare Reform action plan that has been developed to mitigate the impact of the initial welfare reform changes.
38. The action plan identified four areas for focus as the main challenges identified for the authority and Councillor Dunn gave an appraisal of the work being undertaken and key challenges being addressed by the authority, that included:
 - Tackling worklessness and removing barriers to employment
 - Promoting social and financial inclusion
 - Promoting digital inclusion
 - Creating and sustaining affordable homes

Chorley Council Performance Monitoring – Second Quarter 2015/16

39. The Chief Executive submitted a report that set out performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy, and key performance indicators during the second quarter of 2015/16., 1 July to 30 September 2015. The report also provided a summary of the results of the 2015 Residents Survey and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IOMD) 2015.
40. Overall performance of 2014/15 was good with 89% of projects on track or complete. Only two projects were rated as 'amber', 'develop and agree plans for delivery of the Friday Street Health Centre' and deliver improvements to 'Market Street' and it was explained that these ratings were due to issues relating to funding and scope, but in each case actions to address these issues had been identified and were being progressed.
41. Performance on the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures were excellent, with 95% of the Corporate Strategy indicators and 90% of key service measures performing above target or within the 5% tolerance. Overall performance of the indicators in the Resident's survey 2015 was excellent with 89% of the indicators performing above target or within the 5% tolerance. Similarly the Indices of Multiple Deprivation results were positive and showed Chorley to be less deprived with only 8 areas now in the bottom 20% compared with 10 in 2010.
42. The Committee were pleased with the Council's continuing good performance of delivering the Corporate Strategy and were confident that the action plans put into place for those areas that were slightly underperforming would improve performance.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Single Front Office

43. The Group has undertaken a number of meetings and participated in the shadowing of Customer services staff in the Contact Centre as well as receiving a demonstration of the My Account system and the development of the new website prior to its launch.
44. The scoping of the review outlined the group's main objectives and outcomes as being to promote and increase the Council's digital self-service and online services for Members, Officers and Residents, to provide the best efficient and effective customer service experience for the residents of Chorley within the current financial resources of the service and that customer satisfaction of interaction with the Single Front Office remains of a high standard.
45. The final report is currently being pulled together and we are expecting its submission to our next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting at the end of this month.

COUNCILLOR JOHN WALKER
CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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