

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 2 August 2007

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Ken Ball, Alan Cain, Mrs Marie Gray, Margaret Iddon, Margaret Lees, Greg Morgan, Geoffrey Russell, Edward Smith and Iris Smith

07.OS.62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of the Vice-Chair, Councillor Laura Lennox.

07.OS.63 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No Members declared an interest in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

07.OS.64 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 June 2007 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

A Member of the Committee enquired as to whether the recommendations that came out of the Scrutiny Inquiry into Chorley Market would be utilised by the Working Group currently working on the future of Chorley Markets.

It was reported that the Scrutiny recommendations would be examined by the Working Group with a report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive Cabinet.

RESOLVED – That the Director of Development and Regeneration submits a progress report to the next meeting of this Committee on the future of Chorley Markets.

07.OS.65 LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Committee received a request from Lancashire County Council inviting the authority to take part in a piece of work with the County Council Overview and Scrutiny on an undertaking regarding Every Child Matters.

It was intended to look at how partnership working could help to deliver the outcomes of Every Child Matters and examine partnership working between the County Council and District Council.

The Committee was notified that a two tier Overview and Scrutiny session was to take place on the morning of the 28 August in which the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being and the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services would be attending the event.

RESOLVED – That the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being and Director of Leisure and Cultural Services be requested to report on the outcome of the Lancashire Overview and Scrutiny session regarding ‘Every Child Matters’ on 28 August to the next meeting of this Committee.

07.OS.66 CORPORATE FOURTH QUARTER PERFORMANCE - RECEIPT OF INFORMATION REQUESTED

At the meeting of the Committee held on 21 May 2007 (Minute 07.05.45 Refers) it was requested that the Director of Development and Regeneration submit information relating to the undermentioned issues and queries that arose from the Corporate Fourth Quarter Performance Monitoring Report.

- Number of affordable housing units completed

An Action Plan was submitted by the Director of Development and Regeneration explaining the reasons why the performance measure had not reached target and the corrective action being undertaken to improve performance in the next financial year including the timescales for implementation.

Reports on Strategic Housing and affordable housing were due to be submitted to the Executive Cabinet in the future and it was **AGREED** that the reports would also be submitted to that Committee.

- Vacant Town Centre Floor Space in various areas of the Town Centre verbal update on the action taken to drive up performance

The Director of Development and Regeneration reported on the strategic objectives for improving the Town Centre. The Strategy had been prepared to enable improvements to be made to the viability and vitality of the Chorley Town Centre and to attract the right combination of activities to the town. The vacancy levels for Chorley Town Centre tended to fluctuate with rates at 8% in April 2007 and between April to June 2007 7%, but generally it had been between 8-9% over the last 5 years.

- Local Plan Milestones – What were the stages, which were missed? Are there likely to be further delays in the Municipal Year?

An Action Plan had been compiled setting out the reasons why the performance measures had not reached target and the corrective action being undertaken to improve performance in the next financial year, including details of timescales for implementation.

07.OS.67 BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT - POLICY AND PERFORMANCE DIRECTORATE

The Director of Policy and Performance (Assistant Chief Executive) submitted the Business Plan Monitoring Statement relating to her Directorate, identifying the progress made against key actions and performance indicators for the 1st quarter of 2007/08 (1 April to 31 June 2007).

The report indicated the activities of the Directorate and in particular the significant progress that had been made on developing and strengthening our approach to data quality relating to business planning, project management and equality diversity, all areas which will have a positive impact on any future CPA re-assessment.

Large key pieces of work that were of high quality and delivered by their end of June deadline were the production of the Annual Report (Best Value Performance Plan) and the development of the Beacon bid for "Transforming Services, Citizens Engagement and Empowerment".

The Directorate had now a full complement of staff covering the Directorates Policy and Performance and Communication function.

Members explained that they were not involved in the discussions regarding the new action plan and targets are developed to ensure delivery of the re-fresh Community Strategy.

Members expressed concern that they were not receiving a full and complete picture of the outcome of consultation exercises with the public, in particular an example was given of the Council's "Listening Day" event which took place on Saturday, 14 July.

Under the Equality and Diversity update the Council's complaints system was reviewed for recording complaints which would allow the Council to analyse complaints by race, gender and disability. The new recording procedure was due to be introduced over the Summer of 2007.

RESOLVED – 1) That the report be noted.

2) That Members be invited to get involved in discussions around the new action plan and targets being developed to ensure delivery of the re-freshed Community Strategy.

3) That Members receive a fuller and complete outcomes of consultation exercises undertaken by the authority.

4) That the Committee receives a 6 monthly reports on the complaints received following the new process devised for recording complaints for race, gender and disability.

07.OS.68 CORPORATE 1ST QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT, 2007/08 - MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 30 JUNE 2007

The Director of Policy and Performance (Assistant Chief Executive) submitted the first quarter performance monitoring report including the authority's performance in relation to the Corporate Strategy and the Council's Best Value Performance Indicators for 2007/08.

The report indicated that the overall performance of the key projects was excellent with 66% of projects now completed and (an increase of 7% since the last quarter) and a further 25% of projects rated green. This demonstrated that 91% of the projects in the Corporate Strategy were either completed, progressing ahead of plan or on plan.

Only four BVPI's were performing at 5% or more below target and performance was deteriorating compared with the first quarter of 2006/07. Action plans had been developed for all these four indicators and progress in addressing these areas will be reported in the second quarterly report.

Members were notified that performance in the first quarter was particularly prone to seasonal influences and did not facilitate the development of strong conclusions regarding performance trends but rather presented an indicative picture of where the Council wished to focus attention in the coming months in terms of performance and project management.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.69 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY - FEEDBACK OF EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

The Committee was informed of the response by the Executive Cabinet on the recommendations of the Equality and Diversity Sub-Group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the review of the Council's approach to the embodiment of equality and diversity in the culture of the Authority.

The report received by the Executive Committee contained a series of recommendations for measures aimed at ensuring that the Council's services were delivered against equality and diversity objectives to all communities were afforded equality of access, outcome and opportunity.

The Executive Cabinet's decision on the recommendations was as follows:

"That approval be given to the implementation of the recommended measures contained in the report which can be implemented within existing resources and that consideration of the measures and actions which are likely to incur additional costs be deferred to await details of the estimated costs".

Those measures and actions likely to incur additional costs would be implemented by virement of alternative measures.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.OS.70 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for the ensuing Municipal Year.

The programme included the envisaged timescale for the ongoing scrutiny inquiries and the planned details of the respective scrutiny of past inquiries.

The Chair of the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel reported that the Panel at its meeting held on 16 July 2007 had made a request for this Committee to include the following issues in the Panel's Work Programme.

- To investigate the Council's environmental footprint and what the Council is currently doing to reduce its carbon emissions.
- To examine the poor public attendance at the Chorley Community Forums providing an analysis of the attendance across each Forum.
- Town Centre issues and management.

It was reported that there was already action in progress on all these issues and it should be noted that duplication of effort should be avoided.

RESOLVED – 1) That the work programme be noted.

2) That the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel only provide an overview of the identified issues, assisting and developing ideas with the responsible Officers and seeking views on the way forward.

07.OS.71 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Council's Forward Plan setting out details of the key executive decisions expected to be taken between 1 August 2007 to 30 November 2007.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Chair