

REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND PANELS

GENERAL REPORT

1. This report summarises the business transacted at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 October 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. A note of the meeting of the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 18 October will be reported to the Council at its next meeting on 18 December 2007.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 1 OCTOBER 2007

Executive Cabinet – 4 October 2007

2. I requested that the item on the Executive Cabinet agenda for the 4 October meeting regarding the annual refresh of the Corporate Strategy for 2007/08 – 2009/10 be discussed with the Members of the Committee.
3. We received from the Chief Executive an outline of the changes to the Corporate Strategy which would be the Council's key strategic document. It would be at the heart of the Council's corporate business planning process and the key driver for delivering Chorley Council's issues, priorities and strategic outcomes. In line with the corporate business planning process, the three year Corporate Strategy was reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis and where appropriate changes recommended, including the introduction of new key projects which would deliver real improvements to the community.

Chorley Markets Update

4. The Committee at its meeting held on 2 August 2007 agreed that a report be submitted to this meeting on the progress made with Chorley Markets.
5. The report submitted by the Corporate Director (Business) indicated that a Markets Steering Group had been formally established in May 2007 with trader representatives from both the covered and flat iron markets meeting with Council Officers, with a jointly prepared Action Plan. The Action Plan showed that considerable progress had been made and the report indicated the key achievements that had been made to date. We noted that some of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Inquiry into Chorley Markets had been utilised by the Working Group.

Capital Programme 2007/08 – Monitoring

6. We received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation and Improvement) updating the Committee on the progress of the 2007/08 Capital Programme and setting out a recommendation from the Corporate Improvement Board for approval by the Executive Cabinet.
7. The report indicated that the latest Capital Programme forecast for 2007/08 showed an increase in the programme of £414,860 to £8,673,310 and the significant reasons for the increase were set out in the report.

A customer focussed Council – Implementing the outcomes of Chorley’s Business Process Review

8. I accepted as urgent, consideration of this item, not included on the agenda in order for Members of the Committee to receive clarification on the Council’s shared financial services arrangements with South Ribble.
9. The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation and Improvement) clarified the proposals for Chorley and South Ribble Councils to share financial services. He also clarified the robustness of the projected financial arrangements and explained how the proposed joint working arrangements would be delivered as well as the contingency plans in the event of joint working arrangements not being realised. A report setting out the proposals and arrangements would be submitted to the December Executive Cabinet.

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 13 SEPTEMBER 2007

10. The Panel received the first quarter Business Plan Monitoring Statements for the period 1 April 2007 to 30 June 2007 relating to the undermentioned Directorates whose service and functions fall within the remit and responsibility of the Panel.
 - Leisure and Culture
 - Development and Regeneration
 - Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment
11. The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation and Improvement) attended the meeting to answer Members questions specifically relating to the process changes and their effect on the system of payment of invoices.
12. The previous Monitoring Statements that had been submitted to the Panel had shown that the performance target for the processing of invoices within 30 working days for many Directorates had not been achieved and that immediate action was required to improve the performance.
13. The Panel was informed that the process of the payment of invoices was moving away from the previous paper system to a new e-enabling process. There was now a change in emphasis in terms of financial control and it had taken time for key members of staff to become acquainted with the new system. Staff were now trained up and there was now a marked improvement in performance.
14. The Panel also received the Business Plan Monitoring Statement for the Leisure and Culture Directorate with Members asking questions about the transfer of community centres into community management and that the Tatton Community Centre has now been transferred, even though it had not met the target date of 1 September 2007. There would be other transfers taking place, including Eaves Green and Gillibrand.
15. The Corporate Director (Business) introduced the Business Plan pointing out the impact upon her Directorate of the vacant posts and the progress made on filling these posts. Some posts had been filled and those currently being advertised, an encouraging response had been received.
16. The Business Plan for the Neighbourhoods Directorate was submitted which highlighted those areas of performance below target, which included missed collections per 100,000, percentage racist and offensive graffiti removed within 2 working days, percentage of graffiti removed within 28 working days and sickness absence. Action Plans had been compiled to address all these issues.

17. The Panel noted that two working groups had been established to find improvements in customer satisfaction with kerbside recycling and cleanliness in the Borough. Service Improvement Plans had been prepared with some implemented. The Working Groups were required to report by 30 November with a thorough review of satisfaction and dissatisfaction issues with recommendations for improvement.
18. The Panel requested that it receives the reports of the Working Groups at a future meeting.

CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 25 SEPTEMBER 2007

19. This report sets out a brief summary of the main items considered at the meeting of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 25 September 2007.

Decriminalised Parking Enforcement – Monitoring of Inquiry Recommendations

20. The Panel received the report of the Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) outlining progress following recommendations made by the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel to the Executive Cabinet on 29 June 2006.
21. The recommendations were discussed and it was noted that excellent progress had been made. Since the agenda was published the agency agreement had been signed. The recommendation relating to the creation of recognised permit for registered carers within Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust area had been actioned by Chorley Borough Council and South Ribble Council rather than by Lancashire County Council.
22. The Panel agreed that this was to be the last update report for this Inquiry.

Quarterly Business Plan Monitoring Statements

23. The Panel received the Business Plan Monitoring Statements for the period April 2007 to June 2007 for Human Resources, Information, Communication Technology Services, Customer, Democratic and Legal Services and Financial Services.
24. Members clarified aspects of the Business Plans and Performance Indicators with those Directors present at the meeting.
25. The Panel noted the key messages and service developments in each Directorate as outlined in the reports. Members noted that the indicator for invoices processed within 30 days was improving and that the overall figure was on target.

Scrutiny Inquiries – Efficiency Gains and Absence Management

26. The Panel heard that the first meeting of the Absence Management Sub-Group would be held on 3 October 2007 at 6.30pm. A briefing meeting had taken place with the Chair to set the agenda for the meeting.
27. The next meeting of the Efficiency Gains Sub-Group was scheduled for the following night and would be considering the evidence gathered so far and determining the witnesses to receive feedback from.

Recommendations

28. 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.