

REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

This report summarises the business considered at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 October and the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 22 September and 1 December, including an update on the Task Group review.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6 OCTOBER 2016

LCC Health Scrutiny Committee: A & E Services at Chorley Hospital

At the invitation of the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee, County Councillor Steve Holgate, Chair of LCC Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee attended the meeting to present the final report into the inquiry undertaken by the Health Scrutiny Committee into the temporary closure of the Accident and Emergency Department at Chorley Hospital. Also in attendance was Councillor Hasina Khan as the council's representative on that committee.

Discussion at the meeting was dominated by the recent announcement that the Accident and Emergency Department would be re-opened on a part-time basis from mid-January 2017 following the occupation of the Integrated Urgent Care Unit. This announcement followed an independent report that had been commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement on the temporary closure of the Accident and Emergency Department following public pressure. The report's findings concluded that the department could re-open on a part-time basis from mid-January once the Urgent Care Unit was fully operational.

At the meeting it was agreed that the Chair, on behalf of the committee, would write to the Governing Body of Chorley and South Ribble's Clinical Commissioning Group seeking the early occupation of the Urgent Care Unit to November 2016, so that staff could be redeployed sooner to reinstate the Accident and Emergency Department.

The committee thanked County Councillor Holgate and Councillor Khan for their attendance.

Following the meeting and in response to the letter sent to the Chair of the Commissioning Group, a response was received which explained that it would not be possible to bring forward the early occupation of the Integrated Urgent Care Unit as it was a new service and all roles need recruiting to prior to service commencement to ensure the safe and sustainable delivery of the services. It was also stated that the Integrated Urgent Care Service and the Emergency Department were two separate services with different workforce requirements.

Flooding issues across the borough

The Director of Customer and Digital presented a report which was considered at a recent meeting of the Senior Management Team on flooding issues across the borough.

A total of 426 properties in the borough had been confirmed as flooded as a result of Storm Eva on 26 December 2015. Following guidance and criteria issued by DCLG and LCC (to help those people affected) the council was required to set up its own Flood Relief Scheme. The council's scheme was made up of a number of different elements based upon the guidance and criteria issued.

The report detailed a breakdown of financial assistance awarded to those properties affected.

214 residents also applied to the government for a Property Level Resilience Grant worth up to £5,000 per property. As part of the application process a survey carried out by Pell Frischmann (the surveyors appointed through a joint procurement exercise with South

Ribble Borough Council) of each property was carried out to ascertain the most effective form of prevention work appropriate.

LCC was also in the process of undertaking a Section 19 investigation to ensure that their legal obligations had been met and that affected communities had been identified and appropriate county-wide prioritised actions put in place. Although LCC was aware of a number of areas within the borough prone to flooding, those areas would not necessarily be treated with the highest priority when the whole of the county footprint was taken into consideration.

Following the meeting and in response to a query raised during debate, the Director of Customer and Digital informed members of the Performance Panel that the council had received one report of a farm being flooded due to Storm Eva. After initial contact was made with the resident, further approaches from the council had proved unsuccessful.

Section 106 update

The committee received an update on the position regarding Section 106 Agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) following an Internal Audit investigation into the identification of missed Section 106 trigger points.

To date, 50 of the 65 agreements had been invoiced totalling over £1 million pounds. The remaining 15 agreements, totalling over £100 thousand pounds could not be pursued for various reasons.

The Performance Panel was informed that the Governance Committee had received an update which detailed the work undertaken following the identification that trigger points had been missed and to minimise the loss of income to the council. The report also highlighted current arrangements and actions taken to ensure that a robust system was now in place and operating effectively. The Governance Committee would continue to monitor this activity to ensure the process was delivered correctly.

Final monitoring report of the task group review into Neighbourhood Working

The committee received the final monitoring report which provided an update on progress received on the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Working task group undertaken in 2014. Members of the committee highlighted the lack of information which was being communicated to members against each recommendation, with members stating that they had been unaware of the initiatives and events which had taken place as detailed in the report. There was also a general consensus that information was not forthcoming from lead officers about the progress of a number of neighbourhood area projects. The Director of Policy and Governance acknowledged that better communication was required and that the matter would be addressed.

First monitoring report of the task group review into Public Transport

The committee received a report which provided an update on progress in delivery against the recommendations made at the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group review of public transport issues in Chorley. The position of LCC subsidised bus services operating in Chorley now differed to when the review took place. It was reported that unless the service was commercially viable, no subsidised bus service would operate in Chorley. However, Chorley Council had temporarily agreed to subsidise two services whilst a sustainable solution was identified.

Staff sickness absence task group review – response of the Executive Cabinet

The committee considered a report which confirmed that all the recommendations of the task group review on the topic of staff sickness absence had been accepted by the Executive Cabinet, and detailed the progress made to date.

It was reported that 30 questionnaires had been completed by employees a minimum of three weeks following their return to work after a period of sickness absence. A full analysis had not been carried out as HR was waiting for more responses. However, initial feedback received indicated that employees were satisfied with the council's procedures for managing sickness absences.

The figure for quarter one showed an increased level of staff sickness absence which totalled 2.01 days lost per employee compared to the target figure of 1.75 days lost per employee. However, there had been a reduction in the number of days lost when compared with the previous years which totalled 2.19. It was confirmed that the figures for quarter 2 were reducing slowly.

Members of the committee expressed their satisfaction with progress made.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL - 22 SEPTEMBER 2016

Performance Focus – Customer and Digital Context

The Director of Customer and Digital attended the meeting, to answer questions in relation to the Customer and Digital directorate.

The primary focus of the directorate was on providing end to end customer services, dealt with at the first point of contact wherever possible and promoting the use of digital channels as a straightforward and efficient way of managing services.

As the contact centre was undergoing a period of change, the panel focused their performance questions towards council tax and benefits processing, planning, streetscene and waste services.

Members of the Panel received information about each service, feedback on their performance and any changes that had been implemented since the senior management restructure took place in 2016.

Performance Monitoring - First Quarter 2016/2017

Overall performance of 2015/16 key projects was good, with 88% of the projects on track or complete. Two projects (12%) were rated as off track. The Delivery of Community Action Plan was rated amber following a review of scope and the Progress the delivery of Friday Street Health Centre was rated red due to external factors. Actions to address the issues had been identified in both cases and were currently being implemented.

Performance of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measure was also good. 80% of the Corporate Strategy indicators and 86% of the key service measures were performing above target of within the 5% tolerance. The report outlined what actions were being taken to improve performance.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL – 1 DECEMBER 2016

Performance Focus - Review of PCSOs

The Performance Panel considered a report from the Director of Policy and Governance which detailed the council's current funding arrangements of part-time PCSOs which was presently £297,000 per year (equated to 27 part funded posts).

The Performance Panel was referred to a table within the report which had been presented to the Joint Management Board of the Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner in August which considered the HR establishment of the police. The table clearly demonstrated that Chorley Council made the highest contribution to part-funding PCSO posts across the county, and was significantly higher than other district council.

It was reported that for the southern division (Chorley, South Ribble, Preston and West Lancashire), there were 47 part-funded posts, 27 of those being funded by Chorley Council. It was further reported that Lancashire Police had 51 fully-funded PCSO posts across the division. However, none of those posts were provided to Chorley. It was therefore suggested that the fully funded posts were deployed elsewhere in the southern division, where partner contributions were lower.

The report concluded that any change would need to be undertaken through negotiation with the police, with the potential for the council to suggest that the police identify the number of PCSOs that should be deployed to the borough through their risk and threat analysis. The council would then be able to choose to 'top-up' the provision if it was determined that it supported its priorities.

The Performance Panel raised concern about the report's findings and it was their view that Chorley Council was not receiving value for money on its investment. During debate, it was agreed that the report be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration at its meeting on 26 January 2017, and circulated to all elected members in advance of the Special Council meeting on 28 February 2017 which will consider the council's budget position for the next financial year.

Performance Focus - Shared Services

The Performance Panel considered a report which detailed the performance of those services which were shared with South Ribble Borough Council.

The Business Improvement Plan translated those output and measures into specific deliverables and targets which needed to be achieved during 2016/17. The plan also covered the shared procurement service which continued to perform strongly. A number of other smaller shared service arrangements existed, which included the Chorley and South Ribble Joint Community Safety Partnership.

To address the challenges facing local government it had been agreed that the council would pursue an ambition to achieve integrated public services for the borough which would need to include further sharing of back office functions under different structures. The council's Transformation Strategy also included an action to proactively investigate shared service opportunities.

The Director of Policy and Governance informed the Performance Panel that there was a potential for more shared services in the future with South Ribble Borough Council, as both councils employed broadly the same number of people, and the performance and demographics were also similar.

Chorley Council Performance Monitoring - Second Quarter 2016/17

The Performance Panel considered a monitoring report which set out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy, and key performance indicators during the second quarter of 2016/17 (1 July to 30 September 2016).

It was reported that overall performance of 2015/16 key projects was good, with 88% of the projects on track or complete. The project to 'Deliver the Chorley Skills Framework' was rated amber. Actions to address the issues had been identified and were being implemented. One project was rated red, 'Progress the delivery of Friday Street Health Centre'; the cause for which was due to external factors.

Performance of the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures was also good. 83% of the Corporate Strategy indicators and 80% of the key service measures were performing above target or within the 5% tolerance. The report outlined that actions being taken to improve performance of those Corporate Strategy indicators performing below target.

It was also reported that action plans had been developed to improve performance of those key service delivery measures performing below target.

The Performance Panel was advised that no rough sleepers had been recorded as part of the annual rough sleepers count recently. It was also reported that a lot of early intervention work had been carried out with those who were vulnerable to becoming homeless.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The task group looking at the topic of child sexual exploitation has completed its review.

Over the course of five meetings between August and November, the task group received representations from Lancashire Police, The Children's Society and Parklands Academy, the purpose of which was to gain a better understanding of the topic and the responsibilities of other organisations. The task group also received a presentation which detailed the role of the council and how it worked with partners to raise awareness of this type of child abuse.

The task group also commissioned a report about the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. It was reported that an applicant applying for a DBS check had to demonstrate they met the strict criteria for a disclosure check to be carried out. In terms of elected members, it was considered that in their role as a councillor they would not meet the criteria and as such it would not be lawful to apply for disclosures through the DBS. An alternative provision did exist through Disclosure Scotland, although this would only provide information on unspent convictions (which members are legally obliged to disclose), and was unlikely to be recognised as being comparable to a DBS certificate. It was therefore considered that this type of check would be of little value and clarified that the council was not in a position to BDS all councillors as a matter of course.

The final report which included a list of recommendations for Executive Cabinet approval on 16 February 2017 will first be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 26 January 2017.

**COUNCILLOR JOHN WALKER
CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**