

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Thursday, 26 January 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Roy Lees (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Charlie Bromilow, Paul Clark, Jane Fitzsimons, Margaret Lees, Matthew Lynch, June Molyneaux, Greg Morgan, Alistair Morwood, Mark Perks, Debra Platt and Kim Snape

OFFICERS: Chris Sinnott (Director (Policy and Governance)) and Cathryn Filbin (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Gordon France

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Peter Wilson

16.OS.1 Declarations of Any Interests

There was no declaration of interest received.

16.OS.2 Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 6 October 2016

AGREED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 6 October be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

16.OS.3 Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 1 December 2016

AGREED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel on 1 December 2016 be noted.

16.OS.4 Public Questions

There were no public questions for consideration.

16.OS.5 Executive Cabinet Minutes

AGREED – That the minutes of the Executive Cabinet meetings held on 17 November 2016, 8 December 2016 and 19 January 2017 be noted.

Matters arising – minutes of the Executive Cabinet meeting on 19 January, minute number 17.EC.53 – Community Infrastructure Governance Arrangements and Allocation of Funding to Infrastructure

It was noted that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) 123 list was to be reviewed. At the request of the Chair of the Committee, the Executive Member for Resources confirmed that once the

outcome of the review had been presented at Executive Cabinet and a resolution made, the report would be made available to the Neighbourhood Area Meetings taking place in June and July 2017.

16.OS.6 Notice of Executive Decisions

Members considered the Notice of Executive Decisions published on 20 January 2017 which gave notice of key and other major decisions which the Executive Cabinet and Executive Members were expected to make.

AGREED – That the Notice of Executive Decisions be noted.

16.OS.7 Health Scrutiny

AGREED – That the Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee work plan be noted.

16.OS.8 PCSO deployment and funding

At the Chair's discretion, the order of agenda items was changed so that item 9 a report on PCSO deployment and funding, was received ahead of item 8 on the draft budget proposals for 2017/18.

The Committee considered a report which had previously been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel on 1 December 2016. At that meeting, it was agreed that the report be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration and circulated to Chorley's elected members in advance of the special council meeting on 28 February.

A table contained within the report, which had been presented to the Joint Management Board of the Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner, clearly demonstrated that Chorley Council made the highest contribution to part-funding PCSO posts across the county, and was significantly higher than other district councils.

In total, there were 47 part-funded posts in the southern division (Chorley, South Ribble, Preston and West Lancashire), of that number 27 posts were being part-funded by Chorley Council. It was also reported that Lancashire Police fully funded 51 posts across the division. It was therefore suggested that the fully funded posts were deployed elsewhere in the county where partner contributions were lower.

Since the meeting of the Performance Panel, Lancashire Police had confirmed that none of the fully funded PCSO posts had been deployed in the Chorley borough and that the authority part funded every post deployed.

Lancashire Police had been represented on a number of occasions at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide details of how the Council's funding was spent. On each occasion when challenged about the work the PCSOs carried out within the borough, the response of the Lancashire Police had not satisfied members that the Council was receiving value for money.

The Committee was also informed that the risk and threat analysis which identifies the optimum number of PCSOs for the borough (14 PCSOs in 2015) was based on matter of judgement by Lancashire Police rather than a specific calculation.

There was a consensus amongst members of the Committee that the amount of funding for the provision of PCSOs should be reviewed as part of the budget setting proposals.

AGREED – That the report be noted.

16.OS.9 Budget Scrutiny - 2017/18 draft budget and summary position over the medium term

Members of the Committee considered a report on the 2017/18 draft budget and summary budget position over the medium term which was presented at the Executive Cabinet meeting on 19 January 2017. The report detailed the relevant proposals in respect of:

- The use of forecast resources identified in 2017/18
- Budget consultation

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources attended the meeting to give an overview of the proposals and answer any questions of the Committee.

It was reported that the budget forecasts over the next three years had been updated to take account of the following:

- Council tax to be increased by 2% in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/2020
- The Draft Local Government Finance Settlement 2017/18 to 2020/21 published on 15 December 2016.
- Progress against the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) budget efficiency objectives including staffing reviews, contract savings and base budget reviews.
- Policy decisions taken to reduce the budget deficit and the movement to specific reserved to help the Council manage change and invest in future income generation
- Strategies to reduce the budget deficit in the medium term.

The Council had experienced significant reductions in funding since 2010/11. The funding received through the finance settlement had fallen from £8.5m in 2010/11 to £5.7m in 2016/17 with a forecast settlement of £4.221m in 2019/20. This figure excluded the New Homes Bonus grant that had recently been reduced by approximately £1.6m per year from 2018/19 onwards.

Despite the unprecedented decline in funding the Council had maintained effective budgetary planning so as to continue delivering investment in its priorities and maintain low Council Tax levels.

It was further reported that the Local Government Finance Settlement 2016 included core grant allocations for the forthcoming four years, from 2016/17 to 2019/20. To aide its medium term budget planning the Council opted to accept the government's offer of four year RSG allocations. In accordance with government requirements an Efficiency Plan was agreed at the Council meeting in September 2016.

Other notable issues contained within the report included –

- The revaluation on business in 2016 across the county increased by on average 6%, for Chorley Council's valuation, the figure actually reduced by 7%. This had led the government to reducing the Chorley Council's tariff to create a budget neutral effect of the revaluations.
- £339k of budget investment to be built into the base budget from 2017/18 onwards
- Budget efficiency savings totalling £416k had been achieved and identified for 2017/18.
- Proposed changes to the waste and recycling collection services
- The need to review and re-tender the Council's major contracts
- Achieve savings related to the Council's Transformation Strategy

In summing up the Council's budgetary position, the Executive Member for Resources reassured members of the Committee that although tough decisions had to be made, the authority was in a good position based on the assumptions detailed in the report.

During debate, members of the Committee agreed that difficult decisions had to be made and that it was important for a contingency plan to be in place in anticipation of any further government announcement which would affect Council funding. Members of the Committee noted that there was some budget saving potential in procurement and shared service arrangements. The Executive Member for Resources also impressed the importance of the Council continuing to

invest in major projects and events to generate income and attract businesses and home owners to the borough to ensure the Council's stability.

The consultation on the proposed budget for 2017/18 was due to close on 28 February.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Resources for attending the meeting and answering questions.

Agreed – That the report be noted.

At this point Councillor Debra Platt left the meeting.

16.OS.10 Final report of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Task Group Review - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The Committee received the final report of the CSE scrutiny Task Group, which was presented by its Chair, Councillor Roy Lees.

The CSE review took place between August and November 2016, during which time the group met 5 times. In order to gain a greater understanding of the topic, the task group interviewed witnesses from –

- Lancashire Police's Deter team,
- The Children's Society
- Parklands Academy

To gain a clearer understanding of the Council's roles and responsibilities in the detection and prevention of CSE, relevant officers of the Council were also interviewed.

It was reported that the Task Group was pleased with the work undertaken by the Council. However, it was felt that the authority could do more in regards to training and raising awareness. As a result the task group put forward ten recommendations to be considered by the Executive Cabinet.

The recommendations included

- Continue to support and deliver awareness raising initiatives with partner organisations
- Continuing to deliver training to specific officers
- Invite a representative from a high school and primary school to join the Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership
- Extend the current training delivered to member of the taxi trade to the wider licensing community.

The Chair of the Committee congratulated the Task Group for conducting a comprehensive review on this topic, and opened debate to the rest of the Committee. The report was met with general approval subject to minor formatting changes in regards to the positioning of the recommendations from the end of the report.

Both the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of the Task Group thanked members of the task group for their hard work and dedication shown during the review.

AGREED – That the report which included ten recommendations contained within the report be referred to the next meeting of the Executive Cabinet on 16 February 2017 for consideration, subject to the recommendations being detailed earlier in the report.

16.OS.11 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Members of the Committee considered the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Performance Panel and Task Group topic areas for 2016/17.

As the CSE review had been completed, the Chair asked members of the Committee to consider the topic for the next Task Group which would be a mini-review to be completed by the end of the municipal year. On deciding the topic, members of the Committee considered the work programme, and the suggestion of an additional topic relating to the leisure contract which was to expire in the year 2020.

AGREED –

- **That the topic for the next mini Task Group would be the Rollout of Superfast Broadband by BT,**
- **To include the Leisure Contract as a potential review on the work programme.**

16.OS.12 Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair

The Committee was informed that the Communities and Local Government Committee has launched an inquiry into the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny arrangements in England and whether local communities were able to contribute and monitor the work of their council.

As part of the review, councils had been invited to provide written evidence on a number of different aspects of the overview and scrutiny process.

AGREED - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee submit evidence to the review, and instructed officers to draft a response to be circulated to members of the Committee for approval.

Chair

Date