

REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

1. This report summarises the business transacted at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 May 2008 and 23 June 2008, as well as a brief summary of the recent activities and matters discussed at meetings that have taken place of the Task and Finish Groups.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 MAY 2008

Forward Plan – Workforce Development Plan 2008/11

2. The Committee had previously indicated its wish to have the opportunity to consider and comment on the Pay and Workforce Strategy in advance of the consideration by the Executive Cabinet.
3. The Committee received from the Corporate Director (Human Resources and Organisational Development) a short presentation on a report that was being considered by the Executive Cabinet on 29 May on the Workforce Development Plan 2008-2011.
4. The report indicated that the introduction of a Workforce Development Plan was an essential part of the Council's improvement planning and ensured that we have the skills, attitude and commitment needed with the workforce to deliver the Council's vision.
6. The aim of the plan was to maximise our people assets to deliver effective and efficient public services.
7. Members raised issues and concern was expressed on the process of how new Members receive information on how the Council works and gain experience, with an example given of a system developed by Lancashire County Council whereby the Executive Member/Lead Officer updates Members on information relating to their specific portfolio.
8. The Committee agreed that the Executive Cabinet be recommended to adopt a process with Executive Members providing regular individual portfolio briefings.
9. The Committee expressed a wish to examine at a future date with the appropriate Director the report on the Forward Plan entitled Chorley Community Safety Partnership – Local Action Plan.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

10. The Committee at its previous meeting requested the Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) to report back on the proposed pilot merge of the Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire Community Safety Partnership following an extended period of consultation.
11. During the period of extended consultation the report indicated that West Lancashire would not be included in the pilot proposal to merge at this point in time and confirmation to proceed with the proposed pilot had been confirmed from South Ribble.
12. The report indicated the feedback received from the consultation and it was proposed that the pilot would commence at the earliest on 1 July 2007.
13. The Committee gave its support to the pilot proposal to merge the Community Safety Partnership of Chorley and South Ribble into a Strategic Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Committee requested the Executive Cabinet to amend the period of key

milestones to a 6 month period (rather than 12 months) as part of the measures for success criteria.

Business Plan Monitoring Statements – 1 January 2008 to 31 March 2008

14. We received the final quarter Business Plan and Performance Monitoring Statements for the following services and noted the activities, performance and actions taken to address those areas not reaching the necessary target.
 - Leisure and Culture (People Directorate)
 - Development and Regeneration (Business Directorate)
 - Streetscene, Neighbourhood and Environment (Neighbourhoods Directorate)
 - Customer, Democratic and Legal Services
 - Human Resources
 - Financial Services
 - Information and Communication Technology Services
 - Policy and Performance

CORPORATE FOURTH QUARTER PERFORMANCE, 2007/08 – MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2008

15. We received from the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) the fourth quarter performance monitoring report including the authority's performance in relation to both the Best Value Performance Indicators and the Council's Key Performance Indicators for 2007/08.
16. The report included the full list of Best Value Performance Indicators that are relevant to this Council and which are collated in accordance with definitions issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government.
17. The report indicated that although performance overall was a picture of very good and improving performance, there remained a need to understand and carefully manage performance where it was not meeting the Council's expectation or not showing improvement.
18. Members raised issues on the progress of key projects, in particular a concern was expressed at the delays in the delivery of the vulnerable families project and clarifying the Community Plan for Buckshaw, highlighting the use of Section 106 money.
19. The Committee requested that they be updated at its next meeting on the 23 June 2008 on the number of families who had been identified for assistance through the Vulnerable Families Project and be kept informed of any proposals to omit the Adventure Playground element of the Astley Park scheme. A request was also made that alternative funding sources be investigated, including LCC's 'Play Builder Starter Grant' to enable this key part of the Council's play strategy to be implemented.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23 JUNE 2008

Vulnerable Families Project

20. The Committee received an update on the above proposal. The Co-ordinator for the project had started in post on 10 June 2008 and whilst no families had been identified at this stage, the Committee asked to be kept informed at their next meeting in August.

Business Plan Monitoring

21. The Committee agreed a way forward for the future consideration of quarterly business plan monitoring reports. A summary including exception reporting, would be produced covering all the quarterly business monitoring reports. Members would still receive the full information but if they had particular questions for directors, they would need to give advance notice to ensure that the relevant officer was present. Members would be provided with details of the new procedure.

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2007/08 and Monitoring 2008/09

22. Members discussed aspects of the above report and:
- Expressed concern at the lack of progress in the development of Buckshaw Village Railway Station.
 - Requested an update at their next meeting on the Astley Park Coach House Project including the Adventure Playground.
 - Discussed memorial safety in closed churchyards and the implications for the Council, requesting a report for the next meeting.

Provisional Revenue Outturn 2007/08

23. In considering this report, Members raised concerns about the lack of information on the cost of the Concessionary Travel Scheme and requested that a representative from Lancashire County Council attend the next meeting to discuss this matter.
24. Members also raised concerns that under the Concessionary Travel Scheme, disabled users were restricted to travelling after 9.30am which put those who were working at a financial disadvantage. A recommendation was put to the Executive to investigate the cost of the introduction and implementation of allowing peak travel (ie before 9.30am) for all concessionary travel users; and also for just disabled users.

TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE

26. The Committee appointed Members to Task and Finish Groups undertaking inquiries into the following issues :
- To examine the contract and other issues relating to the services provided by Chorley Community Housing (CCH)
 - Streetscene Issues
 - Joint Central Lancashire Scrutiny Inquiry into Affordable Housing

Chorley Community Housing

27. The Task Group met in June and July and agreed that the key themes for the review should be delivery of home improvements, service improvement, tenant involvement and decision making and regeneration. The scoping of the review was agreed in July and will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in August.

Streetscene

28. This review will hold its first meeting on 24 July.

Joint Scrutiny Inquiry with Preston and South Ribble on Affordable Housing

29. A series of meeting dates have been agreed and whilst the scoping of the review is not complete, the issues which will be looked at are:

- Regeneration of Terraced Properties
- Shared Ownership
- Maximising use of S106 monies
- Land Availability
- Social Rented
- Maximising Housing Corporation Grant/Joint Strategy
- New initiatives/practices to deliver more affordable housing

Chorley Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy

30. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had chosen to scrutinise the Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy, welcoming the views of all Members of the Council.

31. In January 2008 a consultant from Landscape Projects had given a presentation to all Members on the Town Centre Audit with the findings then being presented in March.

32. The draft Design Strategy has now been completed and the same consultant gave a presentation on his findings to all Members on Thursday 10 July 2008.

RECOMMENDATION

33. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR D EDGERLEY
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

GKB/CR

There are no background papers to this report.