

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 1 December 2008

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor Alan Cain (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Nora Ball, Mike Devaney, Marie Gray, Harold Heaton, Kevin Joyce, Mark Perks, Rosie Russell and Peter Wilson

Also in attendance: Councillors Eric Bell (Executive Member (Neighbourhoods)), Julia Berry and Anthony Gee

Officers in attendance: Gary Hall (Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation)), Ishbel Murray (Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods)), Lorraine Charlesworth (Corporate Director of Human Resources), Carol Russell (Head of Democratic Services), Zoe Whiteside (Strategic Housing Manager) and Ruth Hawes (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

08.OS.88 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Adrian Lowe and Joyce Snape. The Chair advised that there had been bereavement in Councillors Lowe family. It was AGREED to send condolences from the Committee.

08.OS.89 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct, Councillors Dennis Edgerley and Alain Cain declared a personal interest in items 5, Matters arising from the minutes and 8, Overview and Scrutiny Inquiries - Chorley Community Housing.

08.OS.90 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public requested to speak at the meeting

08.OS.91 MINUTES

The minutes, enclosed with reports sent to follow on 27 November 2008, were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment below.

The resolution at minute 08.OS.79 "The Council investment process and the deposit in Landsbanki" to read

"RESOLVED –

- 1. That the proposal for the Committee to undertake a review into the Council's investment process and the deposit in Landsbanki was defeated.**
- 2. That the proposal for the Committee to review the draft Treasury Management Strategy was defeated. Councillors would have the opportunity to consider the Council's Treasury Management Strategy as part of the budget consultation process in January and February 2009.**

08.OS.92 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Chair introduced Zoe Whiteside, Strategic Housing Manager, who had been invited to provide further information on National Indicator 156, number of households in temporary accommodation.

Zoe outlined the process for young people to use assured short-term tenancies rather than the homelessness process. Members raised several queries, in particular relating to the Charnocks at Astley Village. Zoe advised that such detailed information was not recorded, although the length of tenancies ranged between 3 and 12 months.

RESOLVED - The Strategic Housing Manager prepare a briefing note on this issue to be emailed to the Committee.

08.OS.93 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1982.

08.OS.94 EXECUTIVE CABINET - 4 DECEMBER 2008

(a) Item 10 "Strategic housing issues"

Councillors Dennis Edgerley and Alain Cain declared a personal interest. Councillor Mike Devaney took the Chair for this item.

The Committee considered item 10 "Strategic housing issues" from the Executive Cabinet agenda. Zoe Whiteside, Strategic Housing Manager, advised that the Council was moving forward with a new Allocations Policy and Choice Based Lettings.

Members noted that the new Allocations Policy, currently subject to consultation, was essential for the use of assured short-term tenancies to ease the pressure on the homelessness process. The Committee discussed the importance of the policy and Members awareness of it going forward. The Council would be working with partners on the implementation of the policy.

RESOLVED –

- 1. The Committee support the introduction of a new allocations policy.**
- 2. The members of the CCH task and finish group meet to consider the new allocation policy and feed their views into the ongoing consultation process.**

(b) item 11 "Performance of Key Partnerships - 2008/09 Mid-term Progress Report"

The Committee considered item 11 "Performance of Key Partnerships - 2008/09 Mid-term Progress Report" from the Executive Cabinet agenda.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) answered several queries from Members.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

08.OS.95 REINTRODUCTION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - That the meeting be reopened to the press and public.

08.OS.96 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the Forward Plan for the period 1 December 2008 to 31 March 2009.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

08.OS.97 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY - STREETSCENE

The Chair welcomed Councilor Eric Bell, (Executive Member (Neighbourhoods)), and invited his comments on the report of the Streetscene task and finish group.

Councillor Bell welcomed the report and advised that several of the actions were already being implemented.

The Committee discussed the recommendations and certain points were clarified by Ishbel Murray, (Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods)).

RESOLVED – That the report be presented to the Executive Cabinet in January, subject to the amendment of recommendation 21 to read “That in the light of the review, all Parish Councils be requested to give consideration to how the Council can assist them in keeping their areas clean and tidy”.

08.OS.98 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRIES - CHORLEY COMMUNITY HOUSING

Councillors Dennis Edgerley and Alain Cain declared a personal interest. Councillor Mike Devaney took the Chair for this item.

The Committee considered a report and recommendations of the Chorley Community Housing task and finish group. Further information received from Chorley Community Housing in response to queries from the task and finish group was also tabled at the meeting.

The Chair reported that there were concerns regarding certain aspects of the relationship between the Council and Chorley Community Housing. This included the detail and evidence behind performance information, the delivery of the affordable housing target and the detail of how extra funding in the business plan generated by the recent restructuring has been spent.

RESOLVED –

1. **The report be presented to the Executive Cabinet in January, subject to the amendment of the following recommendations:**
 - 1: **The format of the report monitoring progress on all six promises made to tenants should be amended to include the targets, achievement against the target, sufficiently detailed evidence to support this and actions to be taken where the target has not been met. Perhaps short, medium and long term targets could be identified. Any tenant perception and satisfaction surveys and tenant complaints should be included with this report.**
 - 2: **a form of words will be agreed with the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) to strengthen this recommendation.**
 - 3: **It is noted that the provision of affordable homes is a key issue and progress on this should be monitored closely. Adactus are requested to produce a plan (by a date to be determined by the Executive Cabinet) on how the targets will be delivered and funded. An updated plan is to be received by the Council every six months.**
 - 12: **The Development Control Committee focus Section 106 agreements on rented houses rather than shared ownership.**
An additional recommendation be included as 7 reading “To support the Council’s Neighbourhood Working arrangements by strengthening the reporting and monitoring systems between the Council and Chorley Community Housing”.
2. **A copy of the letter from Colin Campbell regarding the affordable housing units on the Gillibrand estate is requested from Chorley Community Housing for the attention of the Council’s Legal Services.**

08.OS.99 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME AND REDUNDANCY DISCRETIONARY PAYMENTS

The Chair welcomed Lorraine Charlesworth (Corporate Director (Human Resources and Organisational Development)) who advised that the report would be considered at the meeting of the Council the following night requesting that Members approve several recommendations as a result of changes to the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) Regulations 2006.

The Chair reported the report had been presented to this Committee to enable Members to raise any queries. It was noted that the Trade Unions had made a request relating to augmentation, but it was accepted that this would have a huge cost implication for the Council.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

08.OS.100 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORTS FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Chair reported that the Joint Scrutiny of Affordable Housing with South Ribble and Preston task group would be meeting tomorrow.

The Chorley Partnership task group had met last week and had finalised their scoping document for approval by this Committee.

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the updates from task groups be noted.**
- 2. That the scoping document for the review of Chorley Partnership be agreed.**

Chair