

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. This report summarises the business considered at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 October and 29 November, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 20 September and 29 November and includes an update on the task group review.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 11 OCTOBER

Notice of Executive Decisions

2. Members considered the Notice of Executive Decisions and noted that a report relating to the control of Invasive Non-Native Species is due to be considered at the Executive Cabinet meeting on 15 November. We noted the Notice of Executive Decisions.

Absence Policy

3. The Chair welcomed Jane McDonnell, HR Services Manager, and Hollie Walmsley, HR and OD Consultant, to the meeting to give a presentation. We noted that the target the Council has set itself is challenging and that Chorley is 6 out of 32 for the days lost per employee for 2017/18 across Councils in the surrounding area. Recent changes to the Policy have been made in consultation with Senior Management Team, the Union and staff. Staff have undertaken training on the revised Policy and positive feedback has been received. Monitoring information will be undertaken on a quarterly basis at Executive Cabinet.
4. We discussed that the Absence Policy is used in conjunction with the Emotional Wellbeing Policy to assist in managing stress. This is a holistic approach and takes into account issues outside of work. Staff can be referred to Occupation Health for assistance and can also attend funded six counselling sessions. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy can also be accessed and the Big White Wall which is a support network for emotional health. It was clarified that industrial injuries are not be dealt with under this Policy.
5. There are five members of staff within the Policy at the current time and as the revised Policy was only implemented in September it is too early to tell if the revisions are having a positive impact. We noted the presentation.

Impact of Garden Waste Charging

6. Asim Khan, Director (Customer and Digital), presented a report which updated Members on the impact of changes to garden waste collections. A charge of £30 per bin was introduced on 1 May 2017 for residents who wished to participate in the council's garden waste collection service. Prior to that date collections had been free at point of use if residents wished to participate in the scheme.
7. Currently there are 23,386 grey bin subscriptions generating an income of £702,616. Participation in the scheme for those properties with gardens is around 55%. We noted that the recycling rate has reduced by 5% since the change to garden waste collections, but that there has been no increase in fly tipping of garden waste following the introduction of a charge for this service.

8. We noted that the waste authority are monitoring the recycling figures and that there is some work to be done to improve recycling rates. The new contractor for waste collection will be introducing WEE collections and bulky waste collections.
9. We noted the report and requested an update on the the plans for the mobilisation of the new contract at the meeting in January.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Rollout of Superfast Broadband - Monitoring report

10. Gill Barton, Economic Development Officer, and Mark Lester, Director (Business, Development and Growth), presented a report which updated the Committee on the implementation of the recommendations made by the inquiry which was reported to Executive Cabinet in August 2017.
11. The Council is investigating an online digital skills platform and is looking for volunteers to test this. Councillors gave positive feedback on the training delivered by Simon Charnock, the Council's Digital Transformation Officer. There are now four digital hubs in Council owned community centres. An additional nine access points takes the total number across the Borough up to 26, including the more rural areas of Mawdesley and Charnock Richard.
12. We noted that the broadband is now considered the fourth utility that residents rely on. Difficulties arise when it is not commercially advantageous for providers. The Council has submitted a bid to the Government in relation to LFFN- Local Full Fibre Network which aims to address some of the areas of poor broadband coverage in Chorley.
13. There is now a Senior Business Engagement Officer (Digital), who will be based at the Digital Office Park, to give advice to businesses. We noted the report.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Child Sexual Exploitation - Monitoring report

14. The Director (Policy and Governance) presented the report of the Director (Early Intervention and Support) which updated the Committee on progress made in responding to the recommendations made by the Overview And Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
15. We considered the action plan and noted that training is ongoing for officers and Members in relation to CSE. There is extensive work with partners on this issue. We noted the report.

Health Scrutiny

16. Councillor Alistair Morwood invited Councillor Steve Holgate to update the Committee, as he had been at a conference during the last meeting. Councillor Holgate explained that a presentation had been given by the "Our Health Our Care" at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. South Ribble Borough Council has invited Chorley and Preston Councils to be involved in a joint scrutiny of "Our Health Our Care".
17. We supported the principle of participating in a joint scrutiny of "Our Health Our Care" and to appointing representatives at the next Council meeting.

SPECIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 29 NOVEMBER 2018

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

18. I introduced Chief Inspector Gary Crowe from Lancashire Constabulary to the meeting. The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 state that “A crime and disorder committee shall meet to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions as the committee considers appropriate but no less than once in every twelve month period”.
19. CI Crowe advised that he is usually an Inspector at South Ribble, but has temporarily been promoted due to the secondment of Chief Inspector Mike Adamson. He has 20 years’ experience in the Police, including neighbourhood policing and special ops. He has also had a career break in private industry.
20. CI Crowe outlined the different functions of Lancashire Constabulary and that uniformed officers previously undertook emergency response or neighbourhood policing. Previously resources have been prioritised by risk and this has worked to a point. Resources are stretched and the police are becoming involved in cases outside of crime. Roughly 20% of resources are spend on crime and 80% on vulnerable people who slip through the cracks of other services. This means that emergency response has overflowed into neighbourhood policing.
21. This has impacted in neighbourhood policing and the Assistant Chief Constable has commissioned a review. As a result some of the constables who had previously been engaged in neighbourhood policing have been moved to emergency response. There are no savings arising from the review, just a realigning of resources.
22. Over the last six months several Community Beat Managers (CBM) haven’t been replaced and neighbourhood policing is now moving to a new model of six CBM’s rather than 12. This has no impact on the PCSO’s. There has been an investment in an additional 50 call handlers and officers who undertake special investigations, for example, cybercrime. This includes assistant investigators who are not necessarily police officers. The amount of cybercrime had been greatly underestimated. We noted 19 PCSO’s are currently employed, this includes those engaged on early intervention. There is currently one vacancy on the team, but a new intake is expected in December. CI Crowe undertook to confirm this following the meeting.
23. CI Crowe advised that the force has learned a lot over the last few years about how to best use Special Constables. There is now a dedicated officer responsible for Special Constables. Once the review has finished there will be a recruitment exercise for Special Constables.
24. Members discussed the solutions in place for visiting football fans and the need to continue the positive joint working. The Police have to be agile and responsive, both in terms of a presence on match days and in taking actions against the minority who cause trouble. A meeting has taken place with the Chairman of Chorley Football Club as they have the power to exclude certain fans from the ground using an Acceptable Behaviour Contract.
25. CI Crowe outlined the process when processing information received from the public. Information must be corroborated, and the source tested. Information is invaluable when establishing a pattern and although the Police cannot act on all information it does contribute to the wider picture. The Police will focus on taking out the top tier of criminals.

26. Members noted that the fear of knife crime is an issue both nationally and elsewhere in the region, but CI Crowe said that locally the figures have not shown increases in the same way as some areas. The stop and search power was discussed and CI advised that this is a useful power, when based on intelligence. There has to be grounds for the use of stop and search and it has to be quality assured by a supervisor. In the wider UK there is a higher proportion of stopping certain groups and it is used more in high crime areas.
27. Members queried the relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and noted that the high-level priorities are set by the PCC, such as protecting vulnerable people.
28. Members reported that the communication tool “intheknow” and support for Neighbourhood Watch has not been as active in recent times. CI Crowe undertook to investigate this following the meeting. Members queried how the Police force has changed since CI Crowe joined the force 20 years ago. CI Crowe explained that being a Police officer, for him, is a vocation. The force has changed with the demands of the community it serves, with an increased focus on vulnerable people.
29. CI Crowe explained that there is currently a focus on cross border burglaries. ANPR technology is an effective tool. There is a need to educate residents to lock their homes and cars to protect themselves. Thanked CI Crowe for his attendance.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL - 20 SEPTEMBER

Performance Focus - Early Intervention and Support

30. I welcomed Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention and Support), Chris Sinnott and Deputy Chief Executive and Director (Early Intervention and Support). The report of the Director (Policy and Governance) set out contextual information on performance relating to the Early Intervention and Support Directorate.
31. Health and Wellbeing: We discussed the Neighbourhood Priorities and plans to work in a partnership approach with Parish Councils to make best use of any Community Infrastructure funding. The new post of Neighbourhood Priorities Officer will oversee delivery and support reporting and communicating of progress on neighbourhood priorities.
32. Members noted work relating to “barriers to employment” and that “Chorley Works” is aimed at assisting adults into work, rather than young people. Proposals will be presented to a future Executive Cabinet on the future direction of “Chorley Works”.
33. We discussed apprenticeships and noted that money can be drawn down from the Government to assist with apprentices. Eric Wright and Wilmott Dixon both have apprenticeship schemes.
34. Members discussed bed blocking and the positive impact the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) can have. This is a significant issue for hospitals in Central Lancashire. Officers have been able to utilise Occupational Therapists from within the Integrated Wellbeing Service to reduce waiting times for DFGs. DFG’s can eliminate the need for a social care package as the person returns to their own home.
35. Housing Solutions: We queried the performance for “% rent collected at Cotswold Supported Housing” and noted that this relates to the timing of housing benefits payments.

36. Regulatory Services: We were advised that a “proactive housing inspection” occurs when the Council write to tenants (mainly housing benefit claimants) and ask if they would like their home to be inspected. This was a recommendation from an Overview and Scrutiny inquiry and aims to give tenants another option to address any issues, without having to go through their landlord. Councillors can request these inspections on behalf of tenants.
37. Members requested the mix of private rented and registered providers and how the tenants are selected. It was suggested this would be helpful at the commencement of a tenancy.
38. Integrated Wellbeing Service: The Service is a partnership between Chorley Council and Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust involving around 170 members of staff. The teams within the Early Intervention and Support directorate work alongside teams from LCFT including, Mindsmatter, Community Restart, Community Therapies, Learning Disabilities and the 0 to 19 service with an aim of changing how we deliver services to improve prevention and early intervention and reduce demand on public services.
39. There are no current performance indicators and it is difficult to measure the lack of future contact averted through early actions undertaken. We requested performance indicators be developed for quarterly performance monitoring undertaken by Executive Cabinet.
40. There are plans to look at a refernet in the future – there is a need to look at the bigger picture in terms of helping vulnerable people, often with complex needs. The work done through PIVOT can greatly assist vulnerable people who have contact with a number of agencies.
41. We noted the report and I thanked Councillor Bev Murray and the officers for their attendance.

Progress update Business Planning 18/19

42. Rebecca Aziz-Brook, Transformation Programme Coordinator, presented the report of the Director (Policy and Governance) which provides an update on the progress of delivery for the service level projects outlined in the service business plans.
43. We requested that the projects be rated with a RAG status for future reports. The review of the “Householder Pre-application Process” is required as changes have been made in what planning permission is required for. We noted that the Chorley Flower Show event was insured. We noted the report.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL - 29 NOVEMBER

Performance Focus - Policy and Governance

44. I welcomed Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources) and Rebecca Huddleston, Director (Policy and Governance).
45. The Policy and Governance Directorate incorporates a number of services: Legal, Democratic and HR; Shared Financial Services; Performance and Partnerships; and Communications and Events. This report focuses on two specific areas of the work of the directorate; increasing digital inclusion in line with the Digital Strategy, and the improvement programme for Astley Hall and Park.

46. The work undertaken with young people includes code clubs, developing websites and creating animations and actively encourages girls to invest in skills for future jobs within the digital sector. Councillor Peter Wilson noted the success of the Digital Hubs and the potential to increase these in the future if required.
47. Members noted that residents are increasingly migrating onto digital channels when communicating with the Council, but that the contacts via face to face and the telephone have not reduced. Simon Charnock, Digital Transformation Officer, is working with Age UK to deliver training on how to use video calling and smart speakers with tailored and adapted sessions. Simon can give assistance with applications for Blue Badges and other online applications, either at one of the Digital Hubs, or other locations on request.
48. Rebecca Huddleston outlined the section of the report which relates to Astley Hall and Park. Members queried the plan in the event that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid is unsuccessful and noted that some of the planned work will go ahead in phases. The outcome of the bid will be known mid-December.
49. The spend on the Hall and Park is greater than other parks, such as Yarrow Valley, but Yarrow Valley has benefitted from improvement works to the car park and flood defences. Other play areas have also benefitted from improvement works, such as Coronation Rec and Harpers Lane Rec.
50. Members queried the performance target for the annual target of visitors to the Hall. Events such as Astley Illuminated have proven to be extremely popular, not just with Chorley residents, but people outside of the Borough as well. There are plans for a dog walk facility, which will be progressed in the New Year.
51. Turning to the performance indicators for the Directorate we noted poor performance against the target for payment of invoices within 30 days. This is due to issues with long term sickness within the team. We noted the report.

Chorley Council Performance Monitoring - Second Quarter 2018/19

52. Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources) presented the report of the Director (Policy and Governance) which sets out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the second quarter of 2018/19, 1 July – 30 September 2018.
53. We queried the target for the indicator relating “Number of projected jobs created through Chorley Council support or intervention” and noted that the current target is fair given the current uncertainty.
54. The Streetscene Modernisation project is currently rated amber but is a three-year project. The Council is progressing appointments to vacant posts and focusing on activity to support the procurement of replacement small sweepers which are no longer fit for purpose.
55. Members noted the impact of the Youth Zone on the “The number of young people supported through council health and wellbeing opportunities”. The success of the Youth Zone was commended. We noted the report.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUPS

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Quality of housing provided by social landlords

56. The results of the tenant's survey were presented to the Registered Providers and the Task Group in October. The draft final report will be considered on 23 January 2019.

Recommendation

57. That the report be noted.

COUNCILLOR JOHN WALKER
CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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