

Executive Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 4 October 2007

Present: Councillor Peter Goldsworthy (Executive Leader in the Chair), Councillor Pat Case (Deputy Leader of the Council) and Councillors Eric Bell, Alan Cullens, Peter Malpas and John Walker

Also in attendance:

Lead Members: Councillors Mrs Marie Gray (Lead Member for Town Centre), Harold Heaton (Lead Member for Development Control), Geoffrey Russell (Lead Member for Finance) and Iris Smith (Lead Member for Licensing)

Other Members: Councillors Alan Cain, Henry Counce, Dennis Edgerley, Anthony Gee, Daniel Gee, Catherine Hoyle, Laura Lennox and Adrian Lowe

07.EC.104 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mark Perks.

07.EC.105 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest by any of the Executive Members in any of the agenda items.

07.EC.106 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 6 September 2007 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

07.EC.107 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Executive Cabinet had not received any requests from members of the public to ask a question(s) on any of the meeting's agenda items.

07.EC.108 FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Cabinet received the Council's Forward Plan setting out details of the potential key decisions to be made by the Executive Cabinet or individual Executive Members during the four months period commencing 1 October 2007.

Decision made:

That the October Forward Plan be noted.

07.EC.109 CHORLEY PROFILE - A STATE OF THE BOROUGH REPORT

The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Corporate Director (Business) enclosing a copy of the updated Chorley Profile for 2007, also known as the State of the Borough Report.

The profile contained a wide range of statistical and contextual information arranged around 13 topic areas, highlighting the Borough's strengths and weaknesses. The profile revealed a Borough with a growing population, generally high average household incomes, high educational standards and facilities, a crime rate below the Lancashire average, and high employee and business growth rates. While there

remained pockets of deprivation through the town, there was ample opportunity in Chorley for economic and social growth.

The Members welcomed the Borough Profile as a useful reference source and evidence base for the Local Development Framework and bids for external funding. The Executive Cabinet accepted the migration of the majority of residents to employment outside the Borough, with a consequent need to improve the sporting, cultural and retail provision in the town to retain this sector of the population.

Decision made:

That the Chorley Profile for 2007, as now presented, be noted.

07.EC.110 ANNUAL REFRESH OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY FOR 2007/08 - 2009/10

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) seeking approval to the re-freshed Corporate Strategy for 2007/08 – 2009/10.

The re-freshed Strategy set out the Council's vision, priorities and strategic objectives for the next three years and how the Authority would measure its achievement of the key projects.

Whilst the overall vision and priorities of the Strategy had remained constant with the 2006/07 Corporate Strategy, a few changes had been made to the strategic objectives and long-term outcomes to enable the development of local solutions to climate change issues and to reflect the main strategic 'Big Issues' facing the Authority (eg citizen engagement, improvement of front line universal services; regeneration; use of resources and attraction and retention of high quality staff; and climate change).

The refreshed Strategy also contained a reduced number of key projects (ie 30) which aimed to assist the achievement of the long-term objectives. The projects had been selected on the basis of their potential feasibility and funding. The number of measurable targets, linked to both the key projects and long-term outcomes, had been increased to 47.

The revised Strategy had been compiled after a series of extensive consultations with internal stakeholders, while taking account of the experiences in delivering the current Strategy, the re-freshed Community Strategy and the new challenges facing the Authority.

Recommendation made:

That the Council be recommended to approve and adopt the re-freshed Corporate Strategy for 2007/08 – 2009/10, as now presented, as the key strategic document for the Authority.

Reason for recommendation:

The Corporate Strategy is at the heart of the Council's corporate business planning process and is a key driver for delivering Chorley Council's vision, priorities and strategic outcomes. In line with the corporate business planning process, the three year Corporate Strategy is reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis and, where appropriate, changes are recommended, including the introduction of new key projects which will deliver real improvements for the community.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

07.EC.111 REVISED CORPORATE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) seeking endorsement of a revised Equality Scheme for the Council.

Since the publication of the Council's first Equality Scheme in December 2006, the Government had published a revised Equality Standard for Local Government which set out a number of new requirements for local authorities in relation to the equality and diversity agenda. In addition to ethnicity, disability and gender issues, the revised Equality Standard had extended its elements to cover age, sexuality and religion. The opportunity had also been taken to include rurality as a seventh strand of diversity within the revised Equality Scheme in order to make the Scheme more meaningful and relevant to a Chorley context.

The scheme also included a revised relevance review, which provided a framework for the design and delivery of services by the various Directorates after reviewing the relevance of their functions and policies against the seven identified strands of equality and diversity.

The Council hoped to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard by March 2009, which would require external validation.

Decision made:

That the revised Equality Scheme, as now presented, be approved and adopted.

Reason for decision:

To ensure that the Council is able to respond effectively to changes to the Equality Standard for Local Government and is recognised as an excellent and proactive organisation.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

07.EC.112 CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGY, 2007/08

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) submitted a report presenting for approval a new Consultation and Participation Strategy for 2007/08.

The Strategy had been compiled to encourage effective engagement with the Council's customers and local communities and to ensure that consultation exercises were undertaken in a consistent and effective manner.

The Strategy set out the main principles that the Council would need to adhere to when consulting the public. An action plan for projected consultation exercises in the coming year was also included, the feedback from which would be used to inform policy development and service improvements. In addition, a toolkit was developed to offer detailed guidance to staff responsible for the consultation exercises.

Decision made:

That the Consultation and Participation Strategy for 2007/08, as now presented, be approved and adopted.

Reason for decision:

To ensure that the public consultation is carried out in a consistent and effective manner, in line with best practice and to ensure that guidance is provided to officers undertaking consultation projects.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

07.EC.113 CAPITAL PROGRAMME, 2007/08 - MONITORING

The Executive Cabinet considered a joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director (Corporate and Customer) and the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation and Improvement) updating Members on the progress of the 2007/08 Capital Programme.

The report outlined the principal reasons for the recommended revision and increase of the agreed capital budget of £8,383,450 to £8,798,310, within which a sum of £40,000 was to be allocated for alleygate schemes.

Recommendation made:

That the Council be recommended to approve the revised Capital Programme for 2007/08 in the sum of £8,798,310 and the appropriate financing arrangements, as set out in the appendices to the submitted report.

Reason for recommendations:

To ensure that the Capital Programme reflects and is capable of assisting the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

07.EC.114 VALUE FOR MONEY SELF ASSESSMENT

The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation and Improvement) enclosing the Council's 2007 Value for Money Assessment to be presented to the Audit Commission for consideration as part of the annual review of the Authority's management of its resources.

The assessment report provided an update on the Council's achievements in relation to value to money since the last Audit Commission inspection which had awarded the Council the available maximum score of 4.

The report highlighted the Council's continual drive towards excellence, containing examples of further efficiency savings and good practice that were resulting in the improvement of services to the public and the delivery of required outcomes. The self-assessment demonstrated clearly the Authority's continued focus and delivery of value of money that would be beneficial to the impending judgment on the Council's Direction of Travel and future CPA re-assessment.

Decision made:

That the 2007 Value for Money Self-Assessment report be noted.

07.EC.115 CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS PAPER 2

The Executive Cabinet received a report considered by the joint meeting of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble Council's Local Development Framework Working Groups on the second version of the draft Core Strategy Issues and Option Paper.

The Paper represented the second phase in the exploration of major planning issues facing the Central Lancashire area served by the three authorities taking account of the recommendations of previous reports and the responses to the consultation on the first Issues and Options report.

In particular, the second Paper identified the places and communities included within the combined area and the particular spatial issues that affected them. The Paper also set out and explored the following three spatial options for growth within the area over the next 20 years, examining the impact each of the options would have on the different communities:

- Focus development on Preston City and other main urban areas;
- Limit development to a few priority urban locations, but protect suburban ones;
- Spread development between all main urban areas and identified rural service centres.

Decision made:

That the draft Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper No 2, as now presented, be approved for the purposes of further community and stakeholder consultation, subject to the Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration being authorised to agree the final consultation document.

Reason for decision:

Agreement of the second draft of the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper will provide the basis for public consultation on the spatial options for further development within the Central Lancashire area.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

07.EC.116 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision made:

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 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

07.EC.117 MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE COUNCIL'S KEY PARTNERSHIPS

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation and Improvement) presented a report providing a corporate update on the performance of the Council's key partnerships, in accordance with the recently approved Framework for Partnership Working.

The report summarised the Council's key partnership arrangements, outlining the organisation involved, main objectives, potential value and progress achieved against targets set by the Management Action Plan for the current year.

The report revealed that good progress had been achieved against the Management Action Plan with no significant issues of under-performance having been identified. Many of the Council's key partnerships had yet to complete joint risk registers, but plans were in place to ensure completion before the end of 2007.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

07.EC.118 HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTORATE - RESTRUCTURE

The Corporate Director of Human Resources presented a report on the proposed restructure of her Directorate.

The report explained the background to the restructure plans in the light of the recent internal and external changes within the organisation and the move towards partnership arrangements and shared or outsourced services in some instances.

The report put forward proposals to rename the Directorate to the Human Resources and Organisational Development Directorate, and to replace the present structure, which was divided into three distinct areas of work, by two distinct functions, a Transactional Team and a Transformational Team. A new Manager post was to be established to manage the day to day functions of the teams and to act as Deputy to the Corporate Director when required.

The proposed new structure had been compiled to reflect the recent organisational changes and was aimed at providing a multi-skilled Human Resources team and function capable of supporting the Council's role as the enabler and facilitator of improved services.

Decisions made:

(1) That the proposals now presented for the restructure of the Human Resources Directorate be approved for the purpose of consultation with affected staff and trade unions.

(2) That opportunities for joint working shared services and pursuing the Transformational agenda be progressed.

Reason for decisions:

The restructure proposals will provide a 'fit for purpose' structure aligned to the needs of the service.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

Executive Leader