

Executive Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 27 March 2008

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), Geoffrey Russell (Lead Member for Finance) and Iris Smith (Lead Member for Licensing)

Other Members: Councillors Ken Ball, Alan Cain, David Dickinson, Dennis Edgerley, Daniel Gee, Catherine Hoyle, Laura Lennox, Adrian Lowe and Mark Perks (Lancashire County Councillor / Chorley Borough Councillor)

08.EC.14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Rosemary Russell (Lead Member for Health and Older People).

08.EC.15 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

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

08.EC.16 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 14 February 2008 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

08.EC.17 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There had been no requests from any member of the public to speak at the meeting on any of the agenda items.

08.EC.18 SCRUTINY INQUIRY REPORTS

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Councillor D Edgerley) presented for the Executive Cabinet's consideration the findings and recommendations of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel as contained within the Panel's reports of its inquiries into (a) Absence Management and (b) Efficiency Gains.

(a) Absence Management

At the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a Sub-Group of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel, under the Chairmanship of Councillor M Devaney, had undertaken a review of absence management throughout the Authority.

The inquiry had aimed to assess whether the current attendance policy was sufficiently robust and was being applied consistently, and to identify any means of improving attendance levels.

The Panel had, at the conclusion of the review, agreed nine specific recommendations which had been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(b) Efficiency Gains

At the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a Sub-Group of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel, under the Chairmanship of Councillor Stella Walsh, had undertaken a review into efficiency gains throughout the Authority.

The inquiry had aimed to assess the performance of the Council in its achievement of the Government's efficiency targets, whilst ensuring that the efficiencies did not adversely affect customers, and to identify the Council's future plans in relation to the efficiency agenda.

The Panel had, at the conclusion of the review agreed 12 specific recommendations. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had endorsed 11 of the recommendations, but had suggested that Recommendation 12 be revised to read:

'To investigate the extent to which Members might be included in the health and well-being initiative provided for Council staff.'

Decision made:

That the findings and recommendations of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel on its inquiries into (a) Absence Management and (b) Efficiency Gains, as amended by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be received and accepted for consideration, with a view to the Executive Cabinet's decision on the recommendations being reported back to a future meeting.

Reason for Decision:

In order to allow the Executive Cabinet the opportunity to consider, evaluate and determine the recommendations of the two scrutiny inquiry reports.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None

08.EC.19 'ONE CHORLEY FORWARD TOGETHER' - COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY FOR CHORLEY

The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presenting the Community Cohesion Strategy for the Borough entitled 'One Chorley Forward Together'.

The strategy had been produced by the Chorley Local Strategic Partnership and agreed at its Board meeting on 11 March 2008 following an extensive period of consultation with a wide range of authorities, agencies and local voluntary, community and faith groups.

The strategy set out the Borough's response to the national community cohesion agenda, addressing its three priorities to improve life chances for all; develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live, work and play; and build stronger communities with improved access to public services.

The Borough Council was identified as the lead agency to progress a number of key actions contained in the strategy, the delivery of which would be monitored by the relevant Sub-Group of the LSP.

Decision made:

That the Community Cohesion Strategy for Chorley entitled 'One Chorley Forward Together', as now presented, be noted and endorsed.

08.EC.20 CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP - THIRD QUARTER UPDATE

The Executive Cabinet received an update report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) on the current activities and future plans of the Chorley Local Strategy Partnership (LSP).

The report detailed the recent deliberations of the Partnership's Executive and the progress of each of the projects being pursued by the LSP's six Thematic Groups, including the teenage pregnancy action plan, the MATAC community safety initiative and the Vulnerable Households project being operated in conjunction with South Ribble Council. The Children and Young People's Partnership on the LSP was to be superseded by the new district Children's Trust which would appoint occasional task groups to pursue operational matters.

Following the Council's allocation of £90,000 to pump prime LSP joint projects in 2008/09, the LSP's Executive would shortly select the projects to be implemented over the coming year from the projects put forward by the Thematic Groups.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

08.EC.21 JOINT WORKING WITH PRESTON AND SOUTH RIBBLE COUNCILS ON THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Corporate Director (Business) submitted a report following the Executive Cabinet's agreement in principle at its meeting on 15 November 2007 to formalise the joint working with Preston and South Ribble Councils on the Local Development Framework (LDF) processes.

The report sought endorsement of a proposal to establish a Joint Advisory Committee, comprised of a small number of Councillors from the three Borough Councils and one Lancashire County Councillor, to oversee the preparation of a Joint Core Strategy and any other relevant LDF documents. The Joint Advisory Committee would not be granted delegated powers, but would produce the respective plans and documents and advise the three Authorities on their adoption. The ultimate decision making power would remain with each of the three Councils.

The financial and staffing arrangements for the operation of the Joint Committee and preparation of the relevant draft LDF documents would meet to be assessed by the participating Authorities.

Decisions made:

That the Council be recommended to approve:

- (1) the establishment under Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 of a Joint Advisory Committee with Chorley, Preston and South Ribble Borough Councils to advise upon the preparation of any Joint Local Development Framework Documents;**
- (2) delegated authority being granted to the Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration to deal with the practical implementation of the joint working;**
- (3) to agree the nomination at the Annual Meeting on 13 May 2008 of three Councillors (including one Executive Member), together with substitute Member(s), to serve on the Joint Advisory Committee.**

Reason for decision:

A more formal dimension to the existing inter-authority co-operation on planning policy matters needs to be agreed. By providing a formal arena in which key issues are aired, the potential for delay in the LDF programme will be minimised, while enhanced financial support may ensue.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

While maintaining the existing informal co-operation was feasible, the benefits of a more formal approach would be missed. Alternatively, a section 29 Joint Committee could be established which would take some time to set up and would also involve each authority delegating its planning powers to that joint body.

08.EC.22 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOTANY/GREAT KNOWLEY SITE

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director (Business) on the outcome of the additional consultation undertaken on the instruction of the Executive Cabinet on the Guiding Principles document for the development of the Botany/Great Knowley site at Chorley. The land was allocated in the Chorley Borough Local Plan Review for Class B1 (Offices/Light Industry) and Class B2 (General Industry) use.

The report indicated that the Guiding Principles document, which had been produced to provide guidance and advice to potential developers of the site in order to ensure the highest quality design and layout of the development site, had been amended to include a comprehensive checklist of planning application requirements as a result of the further consultations.

Whilst accepting the rationale behind the production of the Guiding Principles document and welcoming the fuller stage of consultation, which had included a public meeting, a number of Members questioned the expediency of comments within the report referring to the appropriateness of the land being earmarked for employment development. The report did, however, affirm the Members earlier instruction for the officers to seek a re-allocation of the site, having regard to the statutory constraints and lengthy processes that would be involved in pursuing that option.

Decisions made:

- (1) That approval be given to the amended Guiding Principles document for the development of the Botany/Great Knowley site, as now presented, with delegated authority being granted to the Corporate Director (Business) to make any necessary minor textual alterations.**
- (2) That the Council reaffirms its stance that it will make all reasonable endeavours to seek a re-allocation of the site through the formal Local Development Framework process.**

Reason for decisions:

The adopted Guiding Principles document will provide positive guidance to developers on the promotion of a high quality design development of the site.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

The withdrawal of the document is unwarranted.

08.EC.23 ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN, 2008/10

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) presented a report seeking agreement to the draft Asset Management Strategy and Plan for consultation purposes.

The Council was requested to prepare an annual Asset Management Strategy Plan and the draft plan produced had incorporated each property and land holding (including parks and spaces) that the Council currently owned and managed.

The Strategy aimed to examine whether the asset resources were currently fit for purpose and how they could be used for maximum effectiveness and contribute to the Council's corporate objectives.

Decisions made:

That approval be given to:

- (1) the Draft Asset Management Strategy and Plan for 2008/10, as now presented, being circulated for consultation; and**
- (2) the Executive Member for Resources being granted delegated authority to agree the final document, subject to there being no significant changes required following consultation.**

Reason for decision:

The Council is required to produce and adopt an Asset Management Strategy.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.24 CAPITAL PROGRAMME - 2007/08 - MONITORING

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) updating Members on the progress of the 2007/08 Capital Programme and recommending changes to the programme, including additional slippage of expenditure to and from 2008/09.

The Council at its meeting on 26 February 2008, had agreed a reduction in the 2007/08 Capital Programme from £10,175,240 to £7,411,780, including the slippage of £2,144,420 to 2008/09 and a total reduction of £619,040 in respect of other schemes.

Since that date, a further slippage of £499,850 to 2008/09 had been identified, offset by budget increases of £381,040 and the acceleration to the 2007/08 programme of the implementation of new financial systems to ensure continuity in respect of cash receipting. The principal change related to the capitalisation of the interest on the land assembly costs for the Gillibrand Link Road scheme, which would result in the revenue budget saving of £213,000 being transferred to the 2007/08 working balances.

Consequently the changes had resulted in a net reduction of the 2007/08 Capital Programme to £7,292,970.

Decision made:

That the Council be recommended to approve the changes to the Capital Programme for 2007/08, as set out in Appendix A to the submitted report, together with the recommended slippage of expenditure to/from 2008/09.

Reason for decision:

To ensure that the 2007/08 is accurately updated and represents a realistic estimate of the outturn for the financial year.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.25 CORE FUNDING, 2008/09 - AWARDS IN EXCESS OF £5,000

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director (People) seeking the Member's instructions on applications for grant assistance in excess of £5,000 from the Council's Core Fund budget provision in 2008/09. The Executive Member for Resources would be considering under his delegated powers, the request for grants of less than £5,000 from a number of non-profit making organisations.

Decision made:

That approval be given to the making of the following Core Fund grants in excess of £5,000, subject to the Corporate Director (People) agreeing and signing off a Core Funding Agreement with each organisation.

- **Chorley and South Ribble Shopmobility – Grant of £10,150;**
- **The Lifestyle Centre, Chorley – Grant of £2,385, plus £4,200 towards accommodation costs, the latter by internal transfer;**
- **South Lancashire Arts Partnership – Grant of £7,000, subject to the Partnership providing an analysis of activity across Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire Districts and funding from each district, together with the provision of satisfactory plans to safeguard the Co-ordinator's post and maintain its delivery at the current level, as a minimum;**
- **Chorley and District Sports Forum – An in-principle grant of up to £5,435, subject to the Forum meeting with the Corporate Director (People) and the Executive Member for Resources to review the remit of the Forum given the development of the Sport and Physical Activity Alliance and the allocation of grants to talented individuals;**
- **Chorley, South Ribble and District Citizens' Advice Bureau – Grant of £67,240 to be paid in two 6 monthly payments in advance, plus £17,850 to cover accommodation costs, subject to the Bureau providing the same level of service in 2008/09 as provided in 2007/08, as a minimum, and maintaining the Community Legal Service Quality Mark;**
- **Chorley and South Ribble Homestart – Grant of £5,125;**
- **Lancashire Sport – Grant of £5,125.**

Reason for decision:

The Core Funding grants to key local organisations will enable them to continue their work which contributes towards the achievement of the Council's strategic objectives and strategic themes in the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Not to award Core Funding grants in 2008/09.

08.EC.26 ACHIEVING SERVICE EXCELLENCE IN CHORLEY

The Corporate Director (People) presented a report which encapsulated and outlined the Council's plans to design and deliver services around the needs and aspirations of its customers.

The report outlined a set of principles for service design and delivery based around clear customer insight and intelligence, whilst taking account of the need to improve customer satisfaction and effect efficiency savings.

The report clarified:

- the Council's current position which highlighted the tremendous achievements so far attained in relation to the transformation of business processes and services;
- the position to which the Council would strive in order to meet the future needs and demands of customers;
- plans of action to achieve the objectives; and
- proposals for the future monitoring and review of progress.

The Chief Executive also reported that she had been asked to Chair a National group to examine Customer Insight as a result of the pioneering initiatives introduced by Chorley Council.

Decision made:

(1) That the Council's approach to improving service design and delivery, based on a clear understanding of customer need, together with the timescales for action, as outlined in the submitted report, be noted.

(2) That approval be given to the inclusion of the "Circle of Need" project within the work programme and the acceptance of £50,000 of Department for Communities and Local Government funding for the project through the National Process Improvement Project.

Reason for decision:

The report provides clarity and raises awareness of the various elements involved in the customer insight service design and delivery concept.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.27 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Governance recommending changes to the Council's Committee structure as a means of streamlining decision making.

In particular, the report proposed changes to the Authority's overview and scrutiny function, which would continue to be overseen by an overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with power to establish and appoint Task and Finish Groups to undertake selected reviews. The licensing function would be administered by an overarching Licensing and Public Safety Committee responsible for policy, consultation, enforcement and monitoring matters, and a Licensing and Public Safety Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee would meet as a Licensing Act 2003

Sub-Committee to deal with personal and premises licences and reviews or as a General Licensing Sub-Committee to deal with hackney carriages/private hire and other miscellaneous licence matters.

The report also sought approval to a suggested calendar of meetings for 2008/09 and referred to the expediency of reviewing and altering Executive portfolios to reflect recent managerial and Department restructures.

Decision made:

That the Council be recommended to approve and adopt the following recommendations:

(1) That the following recommendations for changes to the structure of overview and scrutiny be approved:

- **One overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee, meeting 10 times a year with a membership of 12 Councillors. The two current scrutiny panels, Corporate & Customer and Environment & Community, to be disbanded.**
- **The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be the Committee which hears any call-ins of decisions; sets the workplan for scrutiny for the whole year and also consider corporate issues including:**
 - **overall performance information;**
 - **business planning for the Council;**
 - **overall budget scrutiny.**
- **The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish and appoint task and finish groups to undertake reviews. A Task and Finish Group should generally consist of Councillors from the membership of the main committee but should also include other Council Members (other than Executive Members) who are interested in the topics under scrutiny.**
- **The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be from the main opposition group, and the Vice Chair to be from the ruling group.**
- **Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups must be chaired by a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- **That the Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to look at the special responsibility allowances for scrutiny roles.**

(2) That the structure of decision making for licensing be revised to provide for:

- **An overarching Licensing Committee meeting four times a year, with a membership of 17, to consider all licensing matters (including policy, monitoring and enforcement issues and matters formerly considered by the Statutory Licensing Committee) other than decisions on individual applications for licences or the review of licences. In addition, the Council's functions in respect of Alcohol Designation Orders be allocated to this Committee. In recognition of its proactive role in promoting public safety, the Committee be renamed the Licensing and Public Safety Committee.**
- **That all individual applications and reviews (including those under the Licensing Act 2003, the Gambling Act 2005 and all hackney carriage/private hire and any other miscellaneous licences) be delegated to a Licensing Sub-Committee made up of three Councillors**

to meet once a month at 10am. Membership to be on a rotational basis as at present.

- The Licensing Sub-Committee will meet either as a Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee (to deal with personal and premises licences and reviews under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005) or as a General Licensing Sub-Committee (dealing with hackney carriage/private hire and any other miscellaneous licences) depending on the business to be considered.

(3) That the membership of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Working Group be reduced to 12 to reflect its status as a Working Group and that membership include both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Development Control Committee and the Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration. The Working Group's terms of reference to be amended to reflect its revised role in considering just LDF issues rather than the wider Community Strategy.

(4) That, having succeeded in achieving the Charter for Member Development, the Member Development Steering Group be given an extended remit to include all aspects of Members' support, including the responsibilities of the Civic Events Working Group. The group to be renamed the Members Support Working Group, to meet just 5 times a year with membership to include the Executive Member for Customer, Democratic and Legal Services. The Civic Events Working Group to be disbanded.

(5) That the potential changes to Standards Committee be noted only at this stage but that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to seek to recruit a further two independent members and one Parish Councillor and that the Council membership be increased to five, appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

(6) That in order to consider the wider equalities agenda, consultation take place on the establishment of an Equalities Forum, meeting 4 times a year with a Council membership of 6 to include the Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Performance. The Equalities Forum to establish Task and Finish Groups to consider specific issues. The existing disability and ethnic minority consultative fora to be disbanded but the wider membership of those groups to be retained for consultation purposes and potential involvement in Task and Finish Groups.

(7) That consideration be given to changes in the current Executive portfolios to reflect recent managerial and departmental restructuring.

(8) That the calendar of meetings for 2008/09, incorporating the above changes, be approved as set out in the revised draft timetable circulated at the meeting.

(9) That the Director of Corporate Governance be authorised to make the appropriate Constitutional changes to ensure the above recommendations can be implemented, including the removal of references to the Community Forum meetings.

Reason for decisions:

The recommendations seek to make improvements to ensure that the Council's decision-making structure continues to meet local requirements, fits with best

practice nationally and changes in the light of new legislation and Government thinking.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Retention of the current structure of decision making.

08.EC.28 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) on proposals currently under examination to merge the Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire Community Safety Partnership into a Lancashire South Strategic Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

The proposals had evolved from a statutory strategic assessment of the current Partnerships, with the rationale of creating a single Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership aligned to the Policing area that would operate at a strategic level whilst maintaining local service delivery. The establishment of one strategic body, supported by the Home Office, would facilitate the pooling of intelligence and resources to increase capacity and the ability to access more centralised funding sources, which could be focused on front line actions.

A number of Members at the meeting alleged that inadequate consultation on the plans had been undertaken, particularly amongst the local partner organisations. In this context, the views and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were circulated at the meeting. The Committee had suggested that the implementation of the merger plans be delayed by 6 weeks to allow for greater consultation and that, subsequently, a pilot project be operated for 12 months, with an interim review after 6 months.

The Executive Cabinet accepted both the concerns on the level of the consultation exercise and the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to delay implementation of the merger plans pending a further round of consultation. The Chief Executive also confirmed that the deferment would accord with the need to reassess the role of the current local Partnership as part of the review of the Chorley Community Safety Strategy.

Decision made:

- (1) That the implementation of the proposals to merge the Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire Community Partnerships into a Lancashire South Strategic Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership be delayed by 6 weeks in order to allow for greater consultation on the proposals.**
- (2) That the proposals be considered further by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its proposed meeting on 22 May 2008.**
- (3) That the suggested pilot project be operated over a 12 months period.**
- (4) That appropriate criteria be developed against which the success of the project can be measured.**
- (5) That an interim review of the project be carried out 6 months after the initial implementation of the pilot.**

Reason for decision:

The deferment of the proposals to form a strategic Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership will allow a wider ranging consultation exercise to be undertaken and an examination of the future role of the local community groups within the new strategic body.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

The only alternative options would be to pursue the early implementation of the merger plans or to take no immediate action.

08.EC.29 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision made:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

08.EC.30 PEOPLE DIRECTORATE - RESTRUCTURE

The Corporate Director (People) presented a report reviewing and making recommendations for the revision of the structure of his Directorate subsequent to the recent changes made to the senior management structure.

The proposals affecting each of the Directorate's separate functions (ie Customer Services, Parks and Culture; and Leisure and Inclusion) had been compiled to address the pertinent issues facing the Directorate. In particular, the planned structure aimed to redress the current disproportionate allocation of resources across some service areas; provide capacity for the Directorate's increased involvement in the new neighbourhood agenda and Astley Park; and take advantage of available external resources.

The report recommended the deletion of 12 existing posts and the creation of 18 new posts, five of which would be funded from external sources. Consequently, it was anticipated the restructure could be implemented on a cost neutral basis.

Decisions made:

(1) That the proposals for the restructure of the People Directorate, as outlined in the submitted report, be approved for consultation purposes with staff and trade unions.

(2) That the Executive Member for Resources be granted delegated power to determine any necessary changes to the proposals arising from the consultation.

Reason for decisions:

The proposals have been devised to provide a structure that will fit the purpose of the Directorate and meet the needs of the service.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

To retain the present establishment structure.

Executive Leader