

Executive Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 14 August 2008

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

Also in attendance:

Lead Members: Councillor Mark Perks (Lead Member for Neighbourhoods), Rosie Russell (Lead Member for Health and Older People) and Iris Smith (Lead Member for Licensing)

Other Members: Councillors Ken Ball, Henry Counce, Dennis Edgerley, Anthony Gee, Catherine Hoyle, Adrian Lowe, June Molyneaux, Ralph Snape, Stella Walsh and Peter Wilson

08.EC.57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of the Executive Leader (Councillor Peter Goldsworthy) and Councillor Eric Bell (Executive Member for Neighbourhoods).

08.EC.58 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

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

08.EC.59 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 26 June 2008 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Deputy Leader of the Council, subject to the correction of Minute 08.EC.54 (Household Refuse and Recycling Collections and Ancillary Services - Award of Contract) to clarify that, whilst the submitted report had recommended an executive decision, the nature of this item had required a Council decision.

08.EC.60 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.61 FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Cabinet received the Council's Forward Plan, which set out the details of the potential key decisions to be made by the Executive Cabinet or individual Executive Members during the four months period commencing 1 August 2008.

Decision made:

That the August Forward Plan as now presented be noted.

08.EC.62 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - FIRST QUARTER OF 2008/09

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) which set out and reviewed the Authority's performance both in respect of the delivery of the 31 key projects included in the Corporate Strategy and against the new National Indicators for which the Council was responsible, during the first quarter of 2008/09 ending on 30 June 2008.

The report revealed an overall commendable performance in the delivery of the Corporate Strategy key projects with 81% of the projects either having been completed or progressing on or ahead of plan. The report explained the reasons for six projects being currently behind schedule, indicating that four of the key projects were expected to be brought back on track shortly. A separate confidential report on one of the remaining projects was to be considered later in the meeting.

The former Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs) had been replaced by a new set of National Indicators which would alter the focus from service delivery to broader outcomes more related to quality of life issues. While baseline targets for a number of the new indicators had not yet been released, the report confirmed that the majority of the indicators that were currently able to be measured were on target. Action plans had been devised for those remaining indicators where performance was lower than anticipated.

Particular reference was made to the progression of the Vulnerable Households project being developed and administered by the National Children's Home with LSP funding. The Deputy Leader of the Council confirmed that a Project Coordinator had now been appointed to take forward the innovative venture that aimed to co-ordinate all sources of assistance to selected families in Chorley and South Ribble. One key partner was to be identified to act as the lead agency and central point for the co-ordination of the package of support and advice to each respective family, thus avoiding a multiplicity of interventions.

Decisions made:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That a representative of the National Children's Home be invited to attend an early Members Learning Hour session to update Members on the progress of the Vulnerable Households project and to clarify the intended management procedures.

Reason for decisions:

The presentation will allow an opportunity for members to be advised of an update position on the important LSP project.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.63 CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP - ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2007/08

The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presenting the Chorley Partnership's end of year performance report for 2007/08.

The report reviewed the Partnership's activities and performance throughout 2007/08 commenting particularly on the progress and implications of the LSP sponsored projects and how they were contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Community Strategy. 71% of measurable targets had been met, with an 86% improvement on the past year.

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) had undergone an external peer review by the Improvement and Development Agency in November 2007, which had recognised and commended the Partnership's progress over the year, particularly in relation to its encouragement of partners to contribute significant match funding. 11 projects had been identified for sponsorship by the LSP in 2008/09, which would be pursued by the respective Thematic Groups.

The Chief Executive also reminded the Members that the introduction of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment regime, which would place greater emphasis on the quality of outputs and not just service delivery, would take into account the performance of the District's LSP.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

08.EC.64 CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP - PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR FIRST QUARTER OF 2008/9

The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) updating the Members on the current activities and work being coordinated and planned by the LSP for the first quarter of 2008/09.

Allan Jones, Managing Director of Porter Lancastrian Limited, had been appointed as the new Chair of the Chorley LSP Board. A new Lancashire Local Area Agreement has been signed off with the Government and the LSP's Thematic Groups were pursuing 11 new cross-cutting projects, which had generated in the region of £300,000 additional funding from partners.

The Community Cohesion Strategy had been launched and the LSP's Annual Report had highlighted the areas where the LSP had added value to services and the quality of life for Chorley residents in 2007/08.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

08.EC.65 CAPITAL PROGRAMME, 2008/09 - MONITORING

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) recommending a number of alterations to the 2008/09 Capital Programme and reviewing the situation in relation to the capital resources required to finance the programme.

The report recommended changes which would increase the Capital Programme in respect of the Eaves Green Link Road, the play area scheme at Clayton Brook with Places for people and the Coronation Recreation Group lighting scheme by a total of £163,400, to be financed wholly from external resources.

The report also drew attention to the expected shortfall in the level of capital resources in 2008/09, could principally be a likely reduction in capital receipts from the disposal of assets and 'right to buy' sales. It was accepted that the implications of the expected capital shortfall would need to be addressed by the Executive Cabinet.

Recommendations made:

That the Council be recommended:

- 1. To approve the revised Capital Programme for 2008/09, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, at a total cost of £10,197, 590;**
- 2. To authorise a comprehensive review of the 2008/09 Capital Programme in the light of the expected available resources.**

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the 2008/09 Capital Programme is accurately updated and also feasible measures to secure the financing of the programme are examined.

Alternative option9s) considered and rejected:

The estimated increase in borrowing could be avoided or minimised by a combination of reducing or slipping expenditure to a later year; using other resources such as revenue reserves or "VAT shelter" income of up to £0.650m due from Chorley Community Housing or approving the disposal of more surplus assets.

08.EC.66 REVENUE BUDGET, 2008/09 - MONITORING

The Executive considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) monitoring the Council's financial performance during the first quarter of 2008/09 in comparison with the budgetary and efficiency savings targets for the current financial year.

While an overspend of £188,000 was forecast, savings in the region of £150,000 had already been achieved and it was envisaged that further efficiency savings would be made in order to achieve a balanced budget by the financial year end.

The report identified and commented on the most significant variations to the original budget, indicating the areas that would require to be closely monitored (eg income streams from car parking and markets fees, concessionary travel and benefit costs).

In response to the concern expressed by a Member at the ability of District Councils to meet the costs of the Government's recent concessionary travel scheme, the Chief Executive advised the Members that, whilst the precise level of the expected shortfall and local authorities funding of the scheme was not yet known, Chorley Council had been requested to make representations to the Government on behalf of the Lancashire authorities seeking Central Government aid in meeting the anticipated funding shortfall. The Government's response to the representations would be reported to a future meeting. The Chief Executive also reported that, in the interim, the Lancashire County Council had agreed to fund the costs of allowing disabled persons and companions to travel throughout Lancashire during peak time hours (ie prior to 9.30am).

Decisions made:

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. That the sum of £50,000 be transferred from working balances to a specific resource to meet anticipated costs of equal pay claims.**

Reason for decision:

To ensure that the Council's budgetary targets are achieved.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.67 NEIGHBOURHOODS DIRECTORATE - VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) presented a report which commented on the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained within the report of an internal Panel's value for money review of the Council's Neighbourhood Directorate.

The internal review had been set up to assess how well value for money as being delivered and improved within the Neighbourhoods Directorate and to produce a long-term action plan focused on the Council's Business Transformation agenda.

Each service and function within the Directorate have been evaluated and scored against five agreed criteria to assess how well value for money was being achieved. Conclusions and recommendations had then been compiled to identify any measures and actions that required to be taken in order to meet Government's efficiency targets and the Council's aspirations for neighbourhood working.

Decisions made:

- 1. That final report of the Value for Money Review of the Neighbourhoods Directorate be noted and approved for publication.**
- 2. That the recommendations contained within the report be approved for consultation.**
- 3. That the learning from the initial review be used to improve the methodology for future reviews undertaken within the next 3 year review programme.**

Reason for decisions:

To ensure that the recommendations of the Value for Money Review Team are implemented and used to inform and improve future Value for Money reviews.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

**08.EC.68 CENTRAL LANCASHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
PREFERRED CORE STRATEGY**

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director (Business) seeking endorsement for consultation purposes, of the Central Lancashire LDF Preferred Core Strategy.

The Acting Planning Policy Manager gave a short presentation on the background to and content of the Preferred Core Strategy document which, when approved and adopted, would constitute the key overarching document of the Local Development Framework, to which all other subsidiary documents within the Framework would need to conform. The Strategy had been produced as a preferred options type document in order to allow the evaluation of alternative options during the consultation stage.

The Members were reminded that the Core Strategy aimed to direct the future location of new development and infrastructure within the Central Lancashire area, focusing, in Chorley, on brownfield sites and regeneration sites. The report and presentation also highlighted the nine principal themes that underpinned the draft Core Strategy options, together with the criteria that would be used to ensure delivery of associated infrastructure.

The Executive Cabinet was also reminded that, in the event of the 'Growth Point' initiative proceeding, the Core Strategy would need a spatial option to accommodate accelerated growth. In this context, a note was circulated at the meeting containing alterations to the respective draft Core Strategy Chapter on the Growth Point Update and the Executive Member for Business also recommended the addition of the following text in the chapter.

"Although the Growth Point has been supported by the Government not all the respective Councils are firmly committed until more information on funding, timescales and other details is made available."

Decisions made:

1. That, subject to the revision of the respective chapter on Growth Point Update, as outlined in the circulated note and reported by the Executive Member for Business, the Central Lancashire Preferred Core Strategy be approved for consultation purposes.
2. That the Executive Member for Business be granted delegated authority to agree the indicator targets, presentation of sustainability appraisal results and any other minor text or graphical amendments.

Reasons for decisions:

It is a statutory requirement to produce a Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework process.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.69 FOOD SAFETY SERVICE - EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

The Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) presented a report drawing attention to a report of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on the outcome of its external audit of the Council's food safety service. The report had concluded that overall the Council's service provision was deemed to be effective and comprehensive. Consequently, a short action plan had been provided to implement the procedural improvements advised by the Agency.

In addition, the FSA had published revised Codes of Practice for the inspection of food premises, which effectively permitted local authorities to reduce the burden of inspection on low risk food businesses and, alternatively, provide advice and information and undertake targeted visits and surveillance exercises. A food hygiene intervention programme had since been prepared to recommend intervention strategy that took account of the FSA's revised guidance.

Decisions made:

1. That the report of the Food Standards Agency's audit of the Council's food safety service be noted.
2. That the proposed Food Hygiene Intervention Programme, as now presented, be approved for implementation.

Reasons for decision:

In order to meet the Food Standards Agency's governance and reporting requirements for local authority food safety services.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.70 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.

08.EC.71 COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING REVIEW

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive on proposals to alter and improve the structure of the Communications Section.

The importance of the Section had been recognised by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Inspectors and the projected restructure would strengthen the ability of the Section not only to maintain an effective communications and marketing functions, but also to achieve desired improvements in tourism and events activity.

The restructure plans entailed the redesignation and a refocusing of the responsibilities of the existing five posts and the creation of a Modern Apprentice post. The envisaged additional costs to be incurred were to be met from existing budget provision.

Decision made:

That the proposal to consult staff and Trade Unions on the plans to restructure the Communications Section as outlined in the submitted report be noted, and that the Executive Leader be granted delegated power to deal with any changes arising from the consultation.

Reason for decision:

To enable the Communications and Marketing Team to further improve and absorb responsibility for desired improvements in events and tourism activity.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

The creation of an additional specialised Event and Tourism Officer post was rejected on cost grounds.

08.EC.72 NEIGHBOURHOODS DIRECTORATE - RESTRUCTURE

The Executive Cabinet considered a confidential report of the Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) seeking approval to undertake consultations with staff and trade unions on plans to restructure a number of sections within the Neighbourhoods Directorate.

The report outlined the proposed staffing changes that had been formulated principally to implement the new Neighbourhood Working arrangements and the efficiencies highlighted within the recent Value for Money exercise; reflect the improved specification and resource requirements of the new Waste Management Contract; improve working relationships between directorate functions; support the integration of enforcement functions into the Neighbourhoods Directorates; improve service standards and delivery through the co-ordination of services at local level; and to ensure safer and more effective operations at the Bengal Street Depot.

The report detailed the specific posts identified for deletion from the establishment and the new posts to be created, highlighting the operational benefits that were likely to accrue from the restructure. It was envisaged that the proposals would generate annual savings in the region of £70,000.

Decision made:

That the proposals to restructure a number of sections within the Neighbourhoods Directorate, entailing the deletion and creation of the posts identified in the submitted report, be approved for consultation with affected staff and trade unions.

Reasons for decision:

The planned restructure is aimed at creating a more 'fit for purpose' Directorate capable of delivering, in particular, the new Neighbourhoods working agenda.

The Value for Money service identified opportunities to redress imbalances in the management and supervision elements of the existing structure. The new proposals take account of those opportunities and allow for greater resource allocation and decision making at the front line of service delivery.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.73 REVIEW OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AND AUTOMATED CALL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

The Corporate Director (People) presented a report on the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of the Northgate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system since its implementation in late 2007 to support the Shared Contact Centre partnership between the Lancashire County Council and six Lancashire Districts, including Chorley.

Whilst the CRM was now operational, its use was limited. Considerable problems had been encountered and it was apparent that the system was not operating and functioning as satisfactorily as planned. Consequently, a number of options to address the situation had been assessed, with the most viable and preferred option for Chorley being to opt out of the use of the Northgate CRM and Macfarlane Automated Call Distribution systems deployed in the Contact Centre. Acceptance of this option would require the procurement of an alternative business tool, and the Corporate Director of ICT recommended the procurement of the Microsoft CRM product at a cost effective alternative to the current system.

The Executive Cabinet was assured that the success of the partnership was not dependent upon the use of the same CRM product by each authority and the Council would remain committed to the principle of partnership service delivery. The Lancashire County Council had, in fact, developed its own software and it was understood that other authorities in the partnership were reviewing their own position in relation to the effectiveness of the CRM systems.

Decisions made:

That the Executive Cabinet agree to:

- (a) remain committed to the principle of partnership service delivery with the Lancashire County Council, but chooses to opt out of the use of the Northgate Customer Relationship Management and Macfarlane Automated Call Distribution systems;**
- (b) extend the enterprise agreement with Microsoft to include the supply of Microsoft Dynamics CRM and service licences;**
- (c) procure additional technical and configuration support for the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics CRM and hardware;**
- (d) extend the current corporate telephony installation to include the Siemens HiPath ProCenter ACD system; and**

- (e) **negotiate and reach a compromise in respect of the £50,000 annual revenue cost with the County Council.**

Reason for decisions:

The move to Microsoft Dynamics CRM and Siemens HiPath ProCenter ACD systems will provide an effective solution with the potential for financial savings, whilst protecting the integrity of the partnership's venture with Lancashire County Council.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

1. Continuance of the current system with the County Council as the primary supplier and CRM host with all partners having client access is unlikely to encourage technical confidence and could incur significant future costs.
2. The same arguments for rejection apply to the option that would entail the respective partners negotiating contracts for the supply, support and development of the solution from Northgate independent of the County Council and hosted at each partner site.

Executive Leader