

Executive Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 9 December 2010

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

Also in attendance:

Lead Members: Councillors Harold Heaton, Keith Iddon and Rosie Russell

Other Members: Councillors Julia Berry, Alistair Bradley, Alison Hansford, Roy Lees, Laura Lennox, June Molyneaux, Mick Muncaster, Geoffrey Russell and Peter Wilson

10.EC.230 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kevin Joyce and Greg Morgan (Executive Members), together with Councillors Henry Counce, Pat Haughton, Alan Platt and Debra Platt.

10.EC.231 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest by any of the Executive Cabinet Members in any of the meeting's agenda items.

10.EC.232 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 11 November 2010 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

10.EC.233 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Executive Leader reported that there had been no requests from any members of the public to speak on any of the meeting's agenda items.

10.EC.234 ALLOTMENTS - ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Director of People and Places presented a report on the progress of plans to create three new allotment sites within the Borough from the £40,000 allocated in the 2010/11 revenue budget.

The Executive Cabinet had, at its meeting on 12 August 2010, authorised public consultation on plans to provide additional allotment plots on potential sites at Rothwell Road, Anderton and Manor Road, Clayton-le-Woods, together with investigations into the feasibility of land at Duke Street, Chorley being converted into allotments.

Since then, the imposition of a weight restriction had rendered the Rothwell Road land as unfeasible, resulting in Council owned land at The Common, Adlington being identified as a potentially viable site on which to develop 40 allotment plots. Following the consultation exercise on land at Manor Road, Clayton-le-Woods, work was expected to commence on the site once an access rights issue had been resolved.

Decisions made:

- (1) That the report on the current position on the proposed provision and development of three new allotment sites in Chorley be noted.**

- (2) **That approval be given to the commencement of the public consultation process on the plans to provide additional allotment plots on the potential sites at The Common, Adlington and Duke Street, Chorley.**

Reason for decisions:

The decisions will allow public consultation to commence on sites identified for future development, with a view to an increase in the future allotments provision in order to address public demand for plots.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

10.EC.235 CONSERVATION AREAS

(a) Abbey Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals

The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy presented a report on the principal findings of the Abbey Village Conservation Area Appraisal and the content of the associated Management Proposals document, which had been compiled after an extensive consultation exercise.

The Appraisal report identified both the key characteristics that made the area special and the main issues that had given cause for concern and were likely to be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.

The comprehensive review and consultation exercise had resulted in the compilation of the Appraisal and Management Plan which highlighted the opportunities and challenges for the Conservation Area and contained a number of objectives and associated projects/actions to enhance the appearance of the area. In particular, the plan of action aimed to:

- examine opportunities for the introduction of an Article 4(2) Direction for the control of permitted development rights;
- explore options for enhanced traffic calming and sympathetic approval to highway design with the Highways Authority;
- explore funding opportunities to assist costs of repairs and appropriate improvements;
- examine options for the provision of alternative parking areas with relevant agencies and landowners;
- develop a residents' guide on the sensitive location of satellite dishes;
- extend the boundary of the Conservation Area and identify other buildings that make a positive contribution to its setting.

Decisions made:

- (1) **That the Abbey Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals Document, as now presented, be endorsed.**
- (2) **That the actions contained in the Management Proposals Document be adopted as the basis for future improvement and the control of development, subject to the availability of funding.**

Reasons for decisions:

1. Section 71 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their Conservation Areas.
2. A Heritage and Conservation Strategy, endorsed at the 8 January 2009 Executive Cabinet, promotes a structured and coordinated approach to conserving and enhancing Chorley's historic environment. The Abbey Village Conservation Area review is the fourth of a programme of reviews of all nine conservation areas within Chorley to be undertaken in accordance with the Strategy.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Failure to take action would be contrary to statutory guidance and result in the continued decline of the quality of the Conservation Area.

(b) Brindle Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals

The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy presented a report on the principal findings of the Brindle Conservation Area Appraisal and the content of the associated Management Proposals document, which had been compiled after an extensive consultation exercise.

The Appraisal report identified both the key characteristics that made the area special and the main issues that had given cause for concern and were likely to be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.

The comprehensive review and consultation exercise had resulted in the compilation of the Appraisal and Management Plan which highlighted the opportunities and challenges for the Conservation Area and contained a number of objectives and associated projects/actions to enhance the appearance of the area. In particular, the plan of action aimed to:

- examine opportunities for the introduction of an Article 4(2) Direction for the control of permitted development rights;
- explore funding opportunities to assist with repairs and appropriate improvements;
- explore options for enhanced traffic calming with the Highway Authority;
- explore options for the provision of alternative parking areas with relevant agencies and landowners;
- extend the Conservation Area boundary.

Decisions made:

- (1) That the Brindle Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals Document, as now presented, be endorsed.**
- (2) That the actions contained in the Management Proposals Document be adopted as the basis for future improvement and the control of development, subject to the availability of funding.**

Reasons for decisions:

Failure to take action would be contrary to statutory guidance and result in the continued decline of the quality of the Conservation Area.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

10.EC.236 COPPULL LEISURE CENTRE

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Director of People and Places on proposals that would impact on the ownership and operation of Coppull Leisure Centre.

The Centre was currently owned by Coppull Parish Council and leased to Chorley Council for a period expiring on 31 March 2011. The Centre was presently operated by Active Nation and the management fee was paid by Chorley Council.

The Borough Council had recently been notified that Coppull Parish Council had agreed to sell the Leisure Centre to Big Air Limited. The sale was envisaged to be completed on 7 February 2011, at which time the Borough Council's and Active Nation's direct involvement would cease.

Chorley Council were required to return the premises in a good condition and, with the endorsement of Liberata, the Cabinet were recommended to authorise a £50,000 dilapidation payment in resolution of any outstanding matters, which would be reimbursed, pro-rata, over a 4 year period, should the Centre cease to operate as a leisure facility during that period.

Several issues and concerns were raised by a number of Members in relation to the plans of Coppull Parish Council, particularly in respect of an alleged restrictive covenant; the impact on current staff; and safeguards to protect the Centre's continued leisure use. In response the Chair and Officers confirmed that the dilapidation fee would only be made upon completion of the sale of the Centre; a covenant guaranteed that the facility would remain in leisure use; and the Business Plan alluded to the commitment to provide excellent services at reasonable prices.

Decisions made:

- (1) That the report on the proposed sale and change of arrangements regarding the operation of Coppull Leisure Centre be noted.**
- (2) That approval be given to the payment by the Council of £50,000 in resolution of all outstanding dilapidation issues arising from the Council's current lease of the Centre, subject to the imposition of a charge on the Centre to secure the reimbursement of the sum, pro rata, for up to four years.**

Reason for decisions:

In order to resolve all outstanding dilapidation issues speedily in order to facilitate the sale of the Centre and the commencement of Big Air Limited's development plans.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Chorley Council's continuance of the operation of Coppull Leisure Centre until the expiry of the lease on 31 March 2011 would jeopardise the sale and development of the Centre.

10.EC.237 CORE FUNDING , 2011/12 - REVIEW OF PROCESS

The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy presented a report proposing changes to the current process for the allocation of the Core Funding budget, in order

to ensure that the management and monitoring of the grants was effective and provided value for money.

The Council currently received various applications for different amounts and for a variety of purposes, making it more complex both to allocate the funding and arrange appropriate contractual arrangements. It was, therefore, proposed to introduce the following three distinct funding streams to clarify the purpose of the funding and improve the management and monitoring arrangements:

- Small Core Funding – light monitoring of grants up to £2,000.
- Large Core Funding – quarterly in depth monitoring of grants over £2,000;
- Project Funding – Projects commissioned to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy.

It was intended that, subject to the Executive Cabinet's agreement, the recommended changes could be implemented in advance of the Core Funding allocation process in 2011/12.

Decision made:

That the changes to the process of allocating Core Funding grants in 2011/12, as outlined in the submitted report, to effect:

- (i) a review of the accommodation aspects of Core Funding;
- (ii) a refinement of the system by the introduction of three funding schemes (ie small core grants; large core grants; projects);
- (iii) a review of the application, contractual and monitoring processes for all Core Funding requests to ensure that they are proportional and will ensure better value for money.

Reason for decision:

Alteration of the process for allocating Core Funding grants will ensure that the purpose of Core Funding is clarified; funding is allocated in a more proportional way; and the outcomes of Core Funding can be managed and monitored.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Retention of the present process would not achieve maximum value for money for the Chorley Council.

10.EC.238 GENERAL BUDGET PRINCIPLES FOR 2011/12

The Director of Transformation presented a report which highlighted the following principles around which the Executive Cabinet expected the budget framework for 2011/12 to be constructed:

- continuing to be a high performing Council;
- containing Council Tax increases;
- protecting the community from the impact of the current economic situation;
- continuing to provide value for money;
- safeguarding front line services and focusing on the removal of bureaucracy and managerial posts;
- looking for opportunities to share services and generate additional revenue;
- preparing for the future and the uncertainty over public finances;
- looking to reduce debt and the consequent financing charges.

The Executive Leader indicated that all responses from Members, the Citizens' Panel and the community would be addressed and taken into account before the draft budget proposals to be presented to the 1 March 2011 Council meeting were compiled.

Decision made:

That the information and budget principles for 2011/12, outlined in the submitted report, be approved for consultation purposes.

Reason for decision:

Feedback on the general principles will assist the Executive to determine the budget priorities and allocations for 2011/12.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

10.EC.239 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 Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

10.EC.240 PERFORMANCE OF KEY PARTNERSHIPS - 2010/11 MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Transformation providing Members with a corporate update on the performance of the Council's key partnership arrangements during 2010/11.

The report outlined information required by the Council's framework for partnership working, including the performance of the Council's key partnerships against targets set for the current year; an assessment of the partners' financial strengths and stability; and any emerging issues that required to be addressed.

The Director of Transformation confirmed that the partnerships continued to operate and deliver effectively and reported an improved position in respect of Active Nation and Chorley Community Housing. Each of the partnerships, however, would continue to be monitored stringently to ensure that any action required to address evident concerns could be instigated.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

10.EC.241 ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURES

(a) Revenues and Benefits Shared Services

The Chief Executive circulated a report which highlighted the responses received from staff to the proposals for a phased implementation of a shared Revenues and Benefits service between Chorley and South Ribble Councils, including Benefit Fraud and

residual Exchequer functions, which had been approved for consultation purposes at the last Executive Cabinet meeting on 11 November 2010.

A note detailing the response of UNISON to the restructure proposals was also tabled at the meeting.

The report summarised the principal concerns, issues and arguments contained within the representations received, together with a summary of the Management's comments in response.

The Chief Executive's report suggested the delegation of authority to the respective Executive Member(s) to make firm decisions on the restructure proposals, in order to allow sufficient time for assessment of the representations.

Decision made:

That, in order to enable full consideration of representations received, decisions on the recommendations contained in the confidential report of the Director of Transformation submitted to the last meeting of the Executive Cabinet on 11 November 2010 for a phased implementation of a shared Revenues and Benefits service between Chorley and South Ribble Councils, including Benefit Fraud and residual Exchequer functions, be delegated to the appropriate Executive Member(s) responsible for the respective portfolios.

Reason for decision:

To allow the Executive Member(s) the opportunity of reading and assessing the feedback from staff and UNISON on the restructure proposals agreed at the last Executive Cabinet meeting for consultation purposes.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

The only alternative option would be to require firm decisions to be taken at the Executive Cabinet meeting.

(b) Shared Financial Services.

The Chief Executive circulated a report which highlighted the responses received from staff to the proposals to restructure the Chorley/South Ribble Shared Financial Services, which had been approved for consultation purposes at the last Executive Cabinet meeting on 11 November 2010. A note detailing the response of UNISON to the restructure proposals was also tabled at the meeting.

The report summarised the principal concerns, issues and arguments contained within the representations received, together with a summary of the Management's comments in response.

The Chief Executive's report suggested the delegation of authority to the respective Executive Member(s) to make firm decisions on the restructure proposals, in order to allow sufficient time for assessment of the representations.

Decision made:

That, in order to enable full consideration of representations received, decisions on the recommendations contained in the confidential report of the Director of Transformation submitted to the last meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 11 November 2010 for the restructure of the Shared Financial Services, be delegated to the appropriate Executive Member(s) responsible for the respective portfolios.

Reason for decision:

To allow the Executive Member(s) the opportunity of reading and assessing the feedback from staff and UNISON in the restructure proposals agreed at the last Executive Cabinet meeting for consultation purposes.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

The only alternative option would be to require firm decisions to be taken at the Executive Cabinet meeting.

Executive Leader