

MINUTES OF

EXECUTIVE CABINET

MEETING DATE

Thursday, 26 June 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chair), Councillor Peter Wilson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beverley Murray, Adrian Lowe and Paul Walmsley

MEMBER RESPONSIBLE:

Councillors Steve Holgate, Danny Gee and Steve Murfitt

COUNCIL CHAMPIONS:

Councillors June Molyneaux, Jean Cronshaw, Julia Berry and Alan Whittaker

OFFICERS:

Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Customer and Advice Services), Jamie Carson (Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community), Chris Moister (Head of Governance), Jamie Dixon (Head of Streetscene and Leisure Contracts), Andrew Daniels (Communications Manager), Rebecca Huddleston (Performance Improvement Manager), Natalie Taylor-Proctor (Policy and Partnerships Officer) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Graham Dunn

OTHER MEMBERS:

Councillors Eric Bell, Charlie Bromilow, Henry Counce, Matthew Crow, John Dalton, Mike Handley, Paul Leadbetter, Matthew Lynch, Greg Morgan, Mark Perks and John Walker

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Two

14.EC.41 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 20 March 2014 of Executive Cabinet

RESOLVED - The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 20 March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Executive Leader.

14.EC.42 Declarations of Any Interests

No Members declared an interest in respect of items on the agenda.

14.EC.43 Public Questions

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

14.EC.44 Croston Flood Risk Management Scheme

As there were members of the public present for this item the Chair agreed to take this item of business first.

The report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community was presented by the Executive Member (Resources).

Croston was the primary location across Chorley where serious flooding incidents had occurred. The Environment Agency (EA), together with the Council and other partners had been developing a flood risk management scheme that would reduce the risk of flooding in Croston.

The proposed scheme would create a Flood Storage Area (FSA) upstream of Eccleston Bridge, on the River Yarrow. The FSA would comprise a long embankment dam across the River Yarrow, incorporating a structure designed to restrict the volume of water passing downstream towards Croston. The scheme would provide a 1 in 100 year storm protection to 438 properties.

Members wholly supported the Scheme and noted the positive action undertaken by the Lower Yarrow Flood Action Group, which had been set up by local residents.

Members discussed the history of the Scheme and noted that, initially, it had been proposed as fully funded by the Environment Agency, but since then, as one of the key partners, the Council had been asked to identify ways to provide £1.1 million towards the scheme. The total cost of the scheme was £6 million and the Environment Agency had secured £4 million, providing work starts by March 2015.

Members, including the Opposition, felt this was not appropriate and supported the recommendation to write to the Government, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Member of Parliament for South Ribble requesting that the £1.1 million funding gap to deliver the Scheme be resolved.

(This decision was made with cross party support).

Decision:

1. That the update provided in the report be noted.
2. Support granted to the scheme to construct a Flood Storage Area as detailed in the report, subject to planning approval.
3. That the Executive Cabinet write to the Government, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Member of Parliament for South Ribble requesting that the £1.1 million funding gap to deliver the Scheme be resolved.
4. The decision on consultation with local stakeholders regarding the budget gap be brought back to the Executive following the receipt of the responses to the letters referred to in recommendation 3.

Reasons for decision: To support the proposed flood risk management scheme for Croston and to seek approval for an approach to raise a £1.1M funding contribution.

Alternative options considered and rejected: None.

14.EC.45 Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Select Move

The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group was presented by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Mark Perks.

The Scrutiny inquiry into the Select Move choice based lettings scheme had been requested by Members after concerns were raised about the accessibility and user-friendliness of Select Move. In addition, there was a perception that people from outside the sub region and without local connection were accessing properties in Chorley.

The objectives of the inquiry were to investigate and evidence whether Select Move was meeting the needs to the satisfaction of the applicants, by reviewing the application processes, the allocation processes and the standard of allocated properties.

The desired outcomes were to secure a choice based lettings service that met the needs of Chorley residents, to identify areas of improvement on condition of property at handover and to reduce waiting times and lists.

The findings were mainly positive and Select Move had been demonstrated to be a fit-for purpose, effective way for a number of partners over a sub-regional footprint and to work collaboratively to allocate social housing.

There were some important improvements which could be made to the scheme, including ensuring necessary safeguards for those who were not equipped to access digital services. The Task Group had made 15 recommendations, which had been supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Some of the recommendations were to be actioned by partner organisations.

Decision: To receive the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group and accept it for consideration, with a view to the Executive Cabinet's recommended response to the recommendations being reported to a future meeting.

14.EC.46 Provisional Revenue and Capital Budget Outturn 2013/14

The report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Executive Member (Resources).

The report presented the provisional revenue outturn figures for the Council as compared against the budgets and efficiency savings targets it set itself for the financial year 2013/14.

The provisional outturn figures for the 2013/14 Capital Programme were presented and the Capital Programme was updated for financial years 2014/15 to 2016/17 to take account of the re-phasing of expenditure from 2013/14 and other proposed budget changes.

The accounts were provisional at this stage and subject to final checking and scrutiny by the Council's external auditor. Should there be any significant changes to the

outturn as a result of this process a further report would be submitted to Executive Cabinet.

Members noted that in November 2013 the Council acquired the Market Walk Shopping Centre. Executive Cabinet had previously approved that the net rental income from the shopping centre over the four months to financial year-end be transferred to two reserves. It was proposed to amend the share of resources to an 80:20 split between the Change Management Reserve and Market Walk Equalisation Reserve.

The net income to 31 March 2014, once all costs that fall on the Council had been deducted, was £326k. This had increased compared to the initial forecasts and was largely due to the Council reducing the costs of financing the acquisition. This had been achieved by the fact that some borrowing had been financed via internal cash balances that had been available, that alternatively would have been invested and only realised a very small rate of return.

The transfer to the change management reserve would help to fund future service reorganisation across the Council. The creation of an equalisation reserve would smooth any possible adverse movement in income generation from the shopping centre should that occur in future years. Variations in income levels were also mitigated against within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy which contained a further minimum £100k ongoing contribution to this reserve over the next three years to 2016/17.

Members noted that the Business Rates Retention (BRR) scheme had been introduced in April 2013. It provided a direct link between business rates growth or decline, and the amount of money the Council had to spend on local people and local services. The Council was able to keep a proportion of business rates revenue, as well as growth generated on that revenue, within their local area. Conversely any decline in Business Rates revenue levels reduced the income received by the Council.

A key element of the new regime was the impact that appeals had on the level of income received. Should business rate payers be successful in appealing against the valuation placed on premises, upon which the charge was based, this would reduce the subsequent rate yield in 2014/15. This might potentially lead to a further deficit chargeable in 2015/16.

Decision:

1. Approval granted to the slippage requests and other transfers to reserves outlined in Appendix 2 of the report to finance expenditure on specific items or projects in 2014/15.
2. Approval granted to the transfer of £326k net income from Market Walk in 2013/14 split 80:20 between the Change Management Reserve and Equalisation Reserve (to limit the future impact of any potential reduction in income).
3. The impact of the final capital expenditure outturn and approval of the re-phasing of capital budgets to 2014/15 be noted.
4. Approval granted to the financing of the 2013/14 Capital Programme to maximise the use of funding resources available to the Council.

Reasons for decision: To ensure the Council's budgetary targets are achieved.

Alternative options considered and rejected: None.

14.EC.47 Chorley Council Performance Monitoring - Fourth Quarter 2013/14

The report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Executive Member (Resources).

The report set out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the fourth quarter of 2013/14.

The report reviewed the performance of key projects and performance indicators from the new Corporate Strategy for 2013/14. It also presented an update on the outcomes of key projects identified within the 2012/13 Corporate Strategy.

Overall performance of 2013/14 key projects was excellent, with all the projects on track or scheduled to start later in the year.

Overall performance of Corporate Strategy and key service measures remained strong. 72% of the Corporate Strategy measures and 86% of the key service measures were performing above target or within the 5% tolerance.

The Corporate Strategy measures performing below target were; the number of town centre visits, growth in the business rate base, the percentage of customers dissatisfied with the way they were treated by the council, the percentage of domestic violence detections and the number of long term empty properties in the borough. Action plans had been developed to outline what action would be taken to improve performance.

Decision: That the report be noted.

Reasons for decision: To facilitate the on-going analysis and management of the Council's performance in delivering the Corporate Strategy.

Alternative options considered and rejected: None.

14.EC.48 Draft Statement of Community Involvement June 2014

The report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community was presented by the Executive Member (Public Protection).

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) provided the community and other interested parties with clarity on the levels of involvement in the planning process. It detailed how the Council would consult in relation to preparing planning policy documents and in determining planning applications.

Once finalised, the Council was required to act in accordance with the adopted document. The Council adopted an SCI in 2006, however this was now out-of-date.

A revised draft SCI had been prepared, which would be subject to a 4 week consultation between 30 June and 28 July 2014.

The main changes incorporated into the SCI were:

1. Local planning authorities were required to make information on their planning activity available to their communities as soon as it is ready, and to do so on-line;

2. The new regulations prescribed additional bodies that were subject to the 'duty to cooperate' under section 110 of the Localism Act 2011.
3. The preparation and adoption stages by local planning authorities of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents including as to consultation with interested persons and bodies and the documents which must be made available at each stage.

Decision: Approval granted to publish the draft Statement of Community Involvement for four weeks consultation.

Reasons for decision: To ensure that the Council fulfils its commitment set out in the Local Development Scheme to produce such documents in a timely fashion.

Alternative options considered and rejected: None as subject to statutory regulations as how prepared.

Chair

Date