



MINUTES OF	EXECUTIVE CABINET
MEETING DATE	Thursday, 21 January 2016
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chair), Councillor Peter Wilson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beverley Murray and Adrian Lowe
MEMBER RESPONSIBLE:	Councillors Danny Gee, Matthew Lynch and Alistair Morwood
COUNCIL CHAMPIONS:	Councillors Julia Berry, Jean Cronshaw and Gordon France
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 and Property Services), Simon Clark (Head of Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods), Susan Guinness (Head of Shared Financial Services), Asim Khan (Head of Customer, ICT and Transactional Services), Chris Sinnott (Project Director), James Thomson (Principal Management Accountant), Vanessa Fitzgerald (Policy and Engagement Assistant) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
APOLOGIES:	Councillors Graham Dunn and Paul Walmsley
OTHER MEMBERS:	Councillors Aaron Beaver, Charlie Bromilow, Margaret France, Tom Gray, Marion Lowe, June Molyneaux, Eric Bell, Paul Leadbetter and Greg Morgan

16.EC.182 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 10 December 2015 of Executive Cabinet

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 10 December 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Executive Leader.

16.EC.183 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of any interests.

16.EC.184 Public Questions

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

16.EC.185 Transformation Strategy

The report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Executive Leader and set out the Transformation Strategy that had been developed following the council's consideration of the future governance models overview report and supporting evidence in November. The Strategy sets out the challenges to face public services in the coming years, the key areas that would need to be considered in delivering the change required, and also identified key actions to be implemented over the next year.

Key themes identified within the strategy aimed to set out the key elements that would need to be addressed throughout its implementation. Following its approval, an overview action plan will be developed alongside the implementation of a new management structure for the organisation, to be overseen by an all-party working group.

Decision: Approval of the Transformation Strategy was granted.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The Transformation Strategy has been developed following the council's consideration of the future governance models overview report and supporting evidence. It provides a framework to support the organisation in the change that will be required to respond to the challenges in the coming years and to reach the ambitions set out in the November council reports.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

To not produce a transformation strategy, would mean that the council would not have a clear framework to manage the implementation of a major change programme.

16.EC.186 2016/17 Draft Budget and summary budget position over the medium term

The report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Executive Member (Resources), Councillor Peter Wilson.

It was proposed that Council Tax be frozen and not increase in 2016/17. This would be the fourth consecutive year that the current administration had achieved a balanced budget position for the forthcoming financial year without increasing Council Tax.

The recent Local Government Finance Settlement included provisional core grant allocations for the forthcoming four years, from 2016/17 to 2019/20. The announcement continued the programme of Central Government core grant reductions across all four years adding to previous cuts. The Revenue support Grant would also be reduced to zero over this time.

Due to the successful implementation of the MTFs, budget efficiency savings totalling £0.214m have been applied to the budget to achieve a balanced budget position for 2016/17 achieved mainly by the Council entering into a Business Rates Retention Pooling agreement within Lancashire effective from 1st April 2016.

In addition contributing to the New Investment Packages for 2016/17, totalling £2.845m for both Revenue and Capital projects, the New Homes Bonus also provides an opportunity for the Council to invest in three other additional areas to protect public services within the borough and increase financial resilience given the revolutionary funding changes.

A budget of £0.500m would be available for the next two years to assist in the transactional period public services currently provided for and funded by Lancashire County Council and a £0.500m provision per annum to increase General Balances to mitigate against the financial risk of a core grant income shift to 100% local taxation sources. £0.603m would all be available for use to invest in projects that will provide income streams to the Council.

Potential investment proposals were summarised in the report and set out in detail in project mandates. Funding has been achieved by not building all the New Homes Bonus income received since 2013/14 into the base budget. An approach taken to enable the council flexibility and resilience in order to address the volatile and variable nature of future core funding which continues to be under review by Central Government. The latest round of projects would bring the total new investment on the Councils corporate priorities to £12.008m since 2013/14

The consultation on the proposed budget would focus on obtaining feedback on the key investment areas in order to help prioritise activity. It would also highlight the impact of a reduction in Council funds and ask residents to give the Council their views on the budget. The consultation would invite responses from residents, partners, parish groups and other stakeholders through a variety of methods including a short survey. Results would be analysed and published in February for consideration as part of budget finalisation.

The Executive Leader commented on the ambitious nature of the budget and Members supported the projects proposed.

Decision: Approval granted to start the Budget Consultation process and to note the following proposed budget items, in particular:

- **Council Tax to be frozen in 2016/17**
- **The proposed new investments for 2016/17**
- **The balanced budget position for 2016/17**
- **The forecasted budget position to 2017/18**

Reason for recommendation(s)

To progress the Council's 2016/17 Budget setting process to achieve an approved and balanced budget.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

Setting the budget is a statutory responsibility.

16.EC.187 Stray Dogs, Kennelling Arrangements and Charges

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

The report advised Members of the current and proposed arrangements for dealing with stray dogs and sought agreement to a revision in service provision and charges.

The Council has a long standing stray pick up dog service that includes the use of an external kennel contractor to retain dogs for the statutory 7 day period whilst the owner is traced or comes forward to claim their dog. The current kennel contract ends in March 2016, providing the authority with an opportunity to review its current arrangements. A number of kennel providers are now offering a stray dog collection service and although this service is currently part of the neighbourhood officer's duties, around 30% of collections are dealt with outside of normal Council hours, incurring additional costs to the Council. It was therefore proposed to include this element of the service within the new procurement specification.

Currently the Council makes a charge to dog owners seeking to reclaim their dogs that have been picked up as strays. This charge is made up of a flat rate release fee of £32.50 plus the kennel costs incurred during the dogs stay in kennels. Currently these amount to £10 per day up to the statutory maximum stay of seven days (£70).

Other authorities make a significantly greater charge which is inclusive of the maximum kennelling costs (up to seven days) irrespective of length of stay as well as a release fee. It was considered that a flat rate charge at this level would reflect more accurately the cost in officer time and administration for dealing with a stray dog and the report proposed amending the charging structure to reflect this in line with neighbouring authorities.

Any charge may be subject to a discretionary waiver in exceptional circumstances and on a case by case basis to be determined by the Director following written representation to the Council by the dog owner"

As part of the Council's commitment to tackling stray dogs, the authority would continue the provision of a microchipping service free of charge to any Chorley resident, encourage dog owners to neuter their dogs and the offer of a transfer service for dog owners who no longer want to keep their dog, facilitated through kennel contacts, dog rescue centres and local contacts.

Decision:

1. Approval granted that the Council's stray dog pick up service be provided through an external contractor should out of hours neighbourhood officer cover be unavailable and that this service element is included in the forthcoming procurement of a kennel provider.

2. That subject to discretionary waiver in exceptional circumstances and on a case by case basis to be determined by the Director following written representation to the Council by the dog owner, approval be granted to an increase in the kennel release charge from £32.50 to £80 for owners who wish to recover their dogs from the Council and the per day kennelling costs to be met by the dog owner on release and recovery of the dog at the daily kennelling fee agreed between the Council and the kennel provider.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

To ensure the Council has a stray dog service appropriate to meet demand with a charging scheme that reflects actual costs incurred and is commensurate with neighbouring local authorities.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

Retain the current means of stray dog service operation without testing the market and retain the current charges for the release of kennelled dogs.

16.EC.188 Exclusion of the Public and Press

To exclude the press and public for the following items of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

16.EC.189 Proposed Acquisition of former Stagecoach Depot, Eaves Lane, Chorley

The confidential report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Executive Member for Resources. The report sought approval for the purchase of the former Stagecoach Depot.

Decision:

Approval granted to purchase the Stagecoach Depot, Eaves Lane, Chorley and authority granted to for the Head of Governance and Property Services to complete the acquisition.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The acquisition of the building will provide the Council with a facility that can be used as it currently stands as a Council depot which will assist the Council in its future town centre strategy requirements.

The use of the depot can continue as an employment site rather than being converted for housing or other commercial use. There are very few depots currently on the market that can be utilised within the same reasonably close proximity to the town centre and on a main commuter route.

The acquisition of this building will mean that the existing facility at Bengal Street belonging to Chorley Borough Council could be used for other purposes and regeneration, which will assist with its economic delivery of the town centre.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

A decision not to purchase the building will prevent the re-location of staff from an existing depot,

16.EC.190 Council Tax Local Discounts and Exemption Scheme 2016/17

The confidential report of the Director of Customer and Advice Services was presented by the Executive Member for Resources. The report sought approval of changes to the Local Discount and Exemption Scheme for Council Tax from April 2016.

Decision: Recommendations approved.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The change to the Council Tax empty premium is one of several measures that will help support an effective Empty Property Policy to encourage the occupation of empty properties and will have financial implications.

Alternative option considered and rejected.

The premium could remain at its existing level but may be interpreted as the Council not using all available measures to incentivise the return to use of long term empty properties.

Chair

Date