



MINUTES OF

EXECUTIVE CABINET

MEETING DATE

Thursday, 16 March 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBER RESPONSIBLE:

Councillors Matthew Lynch and Alistair Morwood

COUNCIL CHAMPIONS:

Councillors Gordon France and Margaret France

OFFICERS:

Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Chris Sinnott (Director (Policy and Governance)), Asim Khan (Director (Customer and Digital)), Mark Lester (Director (Business, Economic and Growth)), Chris Moister (Head of Legal, Democratic & HR Services), Louise Elo (Head of Early Intervention), Angela Barrago (Time Credits Facilitator), Vanessa Fitzgerald (Policy and Engagement Assistant) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES:

None.

OTHER MEMBERS:

Councillors Tom Gray, Tom Gray, Eric Bell and John Walker

17.EC.67 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 16 February 2017 of Executive Cabinet

DECISION: The meeting of the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 16 February were confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Executive Leader.

17.EC.68 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of any interest.

17.EC.69 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

17.EC.70 Purchase of Victory Park and Oak House and Associated Land

The Executive Member (Resources) presented the report of the Director of Policy and Governance requesting authorisation to purchase Victory Park, Oak House and associated land.

The Council had been in negotiations with Northern Trust concerning a proposed land swap whereby Northern Trust would transfer their interest of the land opposite the Town Hall (comprising the Royal Oak Public House, Oak House (the offices), the former Cash Converters site and offices occupied by Miller Metcalfe and Entwistle Green) and the Victory Park Football Ground site in exchange the Council would transfer their interest in the land at Southport Road.

The Monitoring Officer commented that the sale of Southport Road was expected to be completed by the end of the month.

Whilst a short-term licence would be issued to Chorley Football Club, the Executive Leader made it clear that the Council had purchased the land that the football club was sited upon, not the actual Football Club.

Decision:

- 1. Approval granted for the Council to purchase the land and buildings known as Victory Park, Duke Street, Chorley for the sum of £200,000 and the land and buildings known as Oak House, High Street, Chorley to include the former Converters site, High Street Chorley and other offices within that title for the sum of £2.05m. The total estimated cost of the purchase including stamp duty and land tax is £2.375m**
- 2. Approval granted that the Council approves the temporary use of prudential borrowing if the receipt from the sale of Southport Road is not received before the purchase of Victory Pak and Oak House.**
- 3. Delegated authority granted to the Head of Legal, Democratic and HR Services to prepare the necessary legal documentation to complete the purchase.**

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The purchase will support the Council's ambitions in the delivery of the Town Centre Masterplan and provide parking to support developments such as the Market Walk extension.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

To acquiring the leasehold titles to the site.

17.EC.71 Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Report 2017

The Executive Member (Early Intervention) presented the report of the Director of Early Intervention and Support that explained the Council's requirements in respect of the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) and to advise on HECA related activity carried out to date. The report also set out proposed HECA related activity for the future.

One of the key aspects of the Council's HECA report was the work being undertaken to address Fuel Poverty. The Council's corporate strategy target was for Chorley's rates to be below the North West average and although Members noted that this target had been achieved, they still felt that there was additional work that could be done in this area.

Decision:

Approval of the proposed Councils HECA related activities for the next two years as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

By accepting the HECA report the Council has ensured that it is meeting its statutory obligations to publish such a report by 31 March 2017.

Alternative options considered and rejected

There were no alternative options to be considered in terms of providing a HECA report, because the Council has a statutory duty to publish one.

17.EC.72 Care Leavers Council Tax Discount

The Executive Member (Customer and Advice) presented a report of the Director of Customer and Digital that highlighted the difficulties that Care Leavers can face when they leave care (aged 16 or over), and have to manage their own budgets for the first time.

To support care leavers, the report recommended making changes to our Council Tax Scheme (CTS) discretionary hardship policy to give Care Leavers who meet the CTS criteria 100% Council Tax relief until they reach the age of 25. It also recommended that where a Care Leaver didn't meet the CTS criteria, the Council offers Council Tax relief of Chorley Council's element, which is roughly a 10% discount.

The Council would then encourage all preceptors to offer the same support to Care Leavers, with the aim of enabling all care leavers to benefit from 100% council tax relief until they reach the age of 25.

Decision:

Approval granted to:

- a) **change the existing discretionary hardship policy which applies to council tax payers who receive Council Tax support (CTS) to make provision for Care Leavers who meet the CTS criteria to be granted 100% relief from paying Council Tax from 1 April 2017.**
- b) **change the Council's discretionary hardship policy which applies to council tax payers who do not receive CYS to provide 100% relief of Chorley Council's element of the Council Tax for all Care Leavers who do not meet the CTS criteria up until the age of 25.**
- c) **Write to all major preceptors to make them aware of the difficulties care leavers face, and asking them to support giving all care leavers 100% relief until the age of 25 by contributing to the cost chargeable to this council's General Fund in proportion to their share of council tax income for 2017/18.**

Reasons for recommendation(s)

Lancashire County Council has provided information that many young adults that leave the care of Lancashire County Council find it difficult to begin the transition out of care into adulthood.

Awarding former care leavers who meet the council tax scheme criteria council tax relief until they are 25 years will assist this vulnerable group to make the transition from care to adult life as smooth as possible, and will mitigate the chances of care leavers falling into debt as they begin to manage their own finances. It is recommended that they should be exempt from paying Council Tax until they are 25.

Changing the Council's discretionary hardship policy for care leavers who do not meet the CTS criteria, will provide them with some level of relief, and also show other major preceptors that the council consider it important to support Care Leavers. It is hoped that leading by example will encourage other preceptors to offer the same support and relief.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

The Council could choose to have no special provision for this group. The existing hardship policies could already be used to provide discretionary financial assistance, however, this would only be if all the current conditions in the policy were met.

Chair

Date