

Executive Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 7 December 2006

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

Also in attendance:

Lead Members: Councillors Peter Baker (Lead Member for Information Communication Technology), Alan Cain (Lead Member Human Resources), Francis Culshaw (Lead Member for Housing), David Dickinson (Lead Member for Parish Councils), Mrs Marie Gray (Lead Member for Town Centre), Harold Heaton (Lead Member for Development Control), Geoffrey Russell (Lead Member for Finance), Rosemary Russell (Lead Member for Health and Older People) and Mrs Iris Smith (Lead Member for Licensing)

Other Members: Councillors Terry Brown, Dennis Edgerley, Anthony Gee, Daniel Gee, Adrian Lowe, Miss June Molyneaux and Ralph Snape

06.EC.141 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor A Cullens (Executive Member for Resources).

06.EC.142 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

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

06.EC.143 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision made:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

06.EC.144 MARKET WALK - PHASE 2

The Executive Cabinet considered a confidential report of the Chief Executive on plans to pursue a scheme to develop a second phase of Market Walk in the town centre.

The report recommended the appointment of the current owners of Market Walk, RREEF, as the preferred developers and sought authority for the Council to enter into detailed negotiations with the developers, subject to approval of the final terms of the development agreement by the Executive Cabinet.

The report outlined the development plans; analysed the financial implications of the proposals; and evaluated the arguments for the appointment of the preferred developer, which had concluded that, after taking account of the expected land receipt and other benefits, the Council was likely to receive full value from the transaction.

Mr D Masters and one of his colleagues from the Council's Consultants, GVA Grimley, attended the meeting to support the recommendations and answer Members' queries

on the development plans. A presentation on the proposals was to be given to all Councillors in the Town Hall on Tuesday, 12 December 2006.

Decision made:

That the Council be recommended:

- (a) **to endorse the appointment of RREEF as the preferred developers for the Market Walk Phase II scheme on the basis of the proposals outlined in the Chief Executive's submitted report, subject to the provisions detailed in paragraph 30 of the report;**
- (b) **to note the planned processes and timescales set out in paragraph 40 of the submitted report;**
- (c) **to authorise Officers to enter into detailed negotiations with RREEF and conclude a development agreement for a second phase of the Market Walk retail development, incorporating a multi-storey car park, subject to the Executive Cabinet's prior agreement of the final terms.**

Reason for recommendation:

To enable the early development of a second phase of the Market Walk retail scheme, together with enhanced town centre parking provision and public realm improvements, in line with the Council's corporate priorities, on a basis considered most likely to provide best value and to enhance and sustain the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Consideration has been given to inviting competitive bids for the development. Having sought independent specialist professional advice, this option has been rejected in favour of the recommended approach for the reasons set out in the submitted report. In addition, consideration has been given to doing nothing or seeking alternative proposals for a lower quality, lower cost scheme. Both alternatives were rejected in favour of the recommended approach as this is considered to be in the best interests of enhancing and sustaining the town centre's vitality and viability.

(The meeting was re-opened to the press and public at this point).

06.EC.145 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 9 November 2006 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

06.EC.146 MAXIMISING THE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which gave a general overview of the provisions contained in the new Local Government White Paper and their implications for Chorley.

The report highlighted, in particular, the Government's encouragement of two-tier Authorities to explore ways of improving the two-tier system for the benefit of local communities and services, including the submission of a limited number of two-tier pathfinder bids.

Decision made:

That the Council be recommended:

- (1) to enter into a discussion with Lancashire County Council and other Lancashire Authorities with a view to preparing an Improving Two-Tier Pathfinder bid for submission by 25 January 2007;**
- (2) to agree this Council's Director of Policy and Performance chairing of a meeting of officers across Lancashire to prepare the bid;**
- (3) to submit a bid to the North West Improvement Network's Communities of Interest programme for resources to support the development of the bid;**
- (4) to request the Leader of the Council to regularly update the Executive Cabinet and Members of the Council on the progress of the bid and the potential implications for Chorley Borough Council.**

Reason for recommendation:

In order to maximise the opportunities offered by the provisions of the White Paper for the benefit of local residents and service delivery.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.147 FORWARD PLAN

The Council's Forward Plan for the four months period 1 December 2006 to 31 March 2007 was submitted for the information and comment of the Executive Cabinet. The Plan set out the details of the key decisions which the Executive Cabinet, individual Executive Members or Officers were expected to take during the four months period.

Decision made:

That the Council's Forward Plan for the four month period 1 December 2006 to 31 March 2007, as now presented, be noted.

06.EC.148 DRAFT EQUALITY SCHEME

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Policy and Performance seeking agreement to a draft Equality Scheme.

The Council, in partnership with South Ribble Council, had commissioned Consultants in April 2006 to develop an Equality Scheme which would meet the Council's statutory requirements. The draft scheme produced would assist the Authority's delivery of the strategic objective requiring the improvement of the equality of opportunity and life chances for the Borough's residents by embedding equality and diversity outcomes across the Authority.

The Equality Scheme, which had been compiled following an extensive consultation with Council Members, Officers and community groups, outlined a commitment to the achievement of Level Three of the Equality Standard by March 2009. This Standard provided a framework for improving equality practice and producing equitable outcomes in service delivery, employment and pay.

Decision made:

That the Council be recommended to approve the draft Equality Scheme as now presented.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties in relation to equality and diversity and is able to use the document as the main driver for taking forward work around equality, diversity and community cohesion.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.149 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT, 2006/07 - MONITORING REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2006

The Director of Policy and Performance presented a report monitoring the Council's performance during the second quarter of 2006/07 against the Council's Corporate Strategy and Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs).

Overall, the Council's performance on the delivery of the Corporate Strategy's key projects was good, with the majority of projects performing as planned.

The report also revealed a positive performance against the BVPIs during the quarter. Action Plans had been introduced to improve those areas where performance had declined for two consecutive periods and targets had missed by more than 5%. Whilst the timescale for the achievement of the BVPI relating to the percentage of buildings accessible to disabled persons might require revision, the Directors were confident that the planned improvements would achieve the target soon after the year end.

The report confirmed that the organisation continued to perform satisfactorily with service performance levels remaining high.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

06.EC.150 BUILDING ON BUSINESS PROCESS ARCHITECTURE

The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Director of Finance on the Authority's involvement in a Business Process Architecture process with a significant Government funding contribution as part of the National Process Improvement Programme.

The project aimed to build on work previously developed by Blackburn with Darwen Council and other organisations to identify principles and methodologies to enable other authorities to improve their customer processes and to determine a best delivery model for any District Council.

It was anticipated that the project would produce ultimately a new organisation structure for Chorley with a defined change management programme that would enable the Authority to respond more effectively to the needs and aspirations of its customers, whilst making optimum use of all available resources.

The report outlined the basis elements and processes of the projects, entailing Consultant facilitated workshops, leading ultimately to the development of a blueprint for a transformed District Council organisation structure and a programme of the work required to implement the blueprint.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

06.EC.151 VALUE FOR MONEY SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Director of Finance submitted a report enclosing the Authority's Use of Resources Value for Money Self-Assessment for 2006, which had been presented to the Council's external auditors for consideration. Fixed scores for all Councils were expected to be published by the Audit Commission in the spring of 2007.

In the light of the Audit Commission's commendations of the Council's 2005 Use of Resources Assessment, a Value for Money Framework for 2006 – 2009 had been compiled. The framework set out the Authority's strategic objectives and approach, key principles and plans for the embedding of a value for money culture throughout the organisation. The document encouraged a corporate approach and commitment to the achievement and improvement of value for money principles at all levels of the Authority.

Decisions made:

- 1. That the Council's Use of Resources Value for Money Self Assessment for 2006, as now presented, be noted.**
- 2. That the Value for Money Framework for 2006 – 2009, as now presented, be approved for implementation.**

Reason for decisions:

The implementation of the Value for Money Framework will ensure a more strategic approach to the effective achievement of value for money in the delivery of services.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.152 CAPITAL PROGRAMME, 2006/07 - MONITORING

The Executive Cabinet was presented with a joint report of the Executive Director – Corporate and Customer and the Director of Finance on the progress of the 2006/07 Capital Programme.

The report recommended an increase in the 2006/07 Capital Programme to £16,682,490 and contained a number of recommendations of the Capital Efficiency Programme Board to revise the capital budget allocation for a number of projects requiring additional resources and to include a number of new Category 'B' and Category 'C' schemes within the capital programme.

Decision made:

That the Council be recommended:

- (1) to approve the revised Capital Programme for 2006/07 in the sum of £16,682,490, as presented in Appendix 1 to the submitted report;**
- (2) to agree the removal of the Ecclestone Community Centre bid from the reserve list;**
- (3) to approve the following recommendations of the Capital and Efficiency Programme Board.**

Exception Reports

- (a) a £12,910 increased in the Kerbside Recycling budget to be funded from prudential borrowing;
- (b) the additional design fee of £16,808 to be funded from existing resources.

New Capital Schemes and Projects

- (c) the inclusion of the following new schemes on the reserve list (Category 'C') for future consideration when resources become available:

1. Cemetery Development
2. Tree Management
3. Corporate Play Development Plan – Year Five Project 'Chorley Moor'
4. Grant towards a community centre in Ecclestone
5. Grant scheme for village halls and community centres
6. Astley Hall CCTV
7. Brinscall Swimming Pool
8. HR Management System

- (d) the inclusion of the following new schemes in Category 'B' of the 2006/07 capital programme:

1. Telephony Review
2. Brinscall Village Junior Football Club Pitch Improvements
3. Ulmes Walton Parish Council Schemes
4. Adlington Play Development

Reasons for recommendations:

To make provision for schemes that are either overspending or require additional resources and to bring forward new schemes for inclusion in the capital programme.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.153 CAPITAL PROGRAMMES 2007/08 TO 2009/10

The Director of Finance submitted a report which presented the committed Capital Programme for 2007/08 to 2009/10 and a schedule of the potential Category 'C' reserve list of schemes assessed by the Capital and Efficiency Programme Board.

The Capital Programme for 2007/08 to 2009/10 totalling £4,238,700 (of which £3,074,950 would be required from Council resources) was shown within Appendix 1 to the submitted report. The projected Category 'C' bids for inclusion in the Capital Programme were scheduled in Appendix 2 to the report, with additional information on the proposed schemes being outlined in Appendix 4 to the report.

A table set out in Paragraph 17 of the Director's report identified a number of proposed new Category 'C' schemes, totalling £1,095,990, which the Officers considered would accord with the Council's corporate priorities and complement the Council's community leadership programme. The report also referred to the proposed financing arrangements and anticipated revenue implications.

Decision made:

That the Council be recommended to approve, for consultation purposes, the draft Capital Programme for 2007/08 to 2009/10, as outlined in the submitted report of the Director of Finance, together with the proposed financing arrangements.

Reasons for recommendation:

The Council needs to review its medium-term capital investment requirements in the context of the investment that is required to achieve its strategic objectives and the consideration of affordability.

The use of S106 resources in 2006/07 instead of external borrowing will save borrowing costs in 2007/08.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.154 REVENUE BUDGET, 2006/07 - MONITORING

The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Director of Finance monitoring the current financial position of the Council in comparison with the budgetary and efficiency savings targets for 2006/07 in respect of the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.

The report contained details of the significant budget variations that had occurred since the last monitoring report, which had effectively reduced the projected overspend of the General Fund from £170,000 to £67,000. While progress continued to be made towards the achievement of the overall corporate savings target of £278,000, the intense monitoring of spending, particularly in a number of identified areas, would continue in order to achieve the cash savings target.

The position in relation to the Housing Revenue Account had also improved in that the forecasted balances at the end of the year had increased to £973,000.

The Executive Cabinet also noted an additional report appended to the Director of Finance's report on the current position in respect of the concessionary travel scheme in Chorley. While there was likely to be sufficient funding to cover the likely increase in the budgeted sum for 2006/07, the Council would need to determine any required changes to the scheme to be introduced in 2007. A range of options aimed at reducing the costs of the service were being examined by the Concessionary Travel Working Group.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

06.EC.155 DRAFT GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2007/08

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance setting out the savings targets, budget assumptions and relevant factors that would influence the proposals to deliver a balanced budget for 2007/08.

The report sought approval to the suggested consultation process on the draft budget plan aimed at delivering the objectives of the revised Corporate Strategy and the Council's new priorities. The budget proposals would make provision for limited growth and investment through a redistribution of resources in line with the Executive's strategy to freeze Chorley Council's proportion of Council Tax for 2007/08.

The report also incorporated the Director's initial statutory advice to the Council on the adequacy of resources and robustness of the budget proposals under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Decision made:

1. That the savings and draft budget proposals, as outlined in the in the Director of Finance's submitted report, be approved for public consultation purposes.
2. That approval be given to the outlined consultation process.
3. That the Director of Finance's advice on the draft budget proposals provided under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, particularly in relation to the maintenance of working balances within the range set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, be noted.

Reason for decision:

In order to commence the statutory budget consultation procedure for 2007/08.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.156 AREA FORUM PILOT SCHEME

The Chief Executive presented a report reviewing the outcome of the Area Forum Pilot Scheme, following the conclusion of the three rounds of meetings in the pilot areas of Clayton-le-Woods North Ward, Coppull Parish and Lostock Ward between February and October 2006.

As a result of the success and positive feedback from the pilot meetings, the Executive Cabinet was recommended to extend the pilot scheme Borough-wide by the introduction of four Community Forums (ie Central, East, South and West) that, collectively, would cover the whole of the Borough. A plan showing the boundaries and populations of each of the four projected Community Forum areas, and the recommended procedure rules to be applied to the Forums, were appended to the report.

A note summarising the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposals was circulated at the meeting. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had expressed reservations, in particular, on the size of the projected Community Forum footprints and the division and linkage of Parish Councils between the four Forum areas. In response, the Member for Customer, Democratic and Legal Services clarified that the Community Forum concept was aimed at enhancing and complementing Parish Councils and the Chief Executive confirmed that the Community Forum footprint would be reviewed on an annual basis.

Decisions made:

That the Council be recommended:

- (1) to give approval to the establishment of 4 Community Forums on the footprint as set out in the attached report with effect from February 2007, together with the enclosed draft terms of reference for the Forums;

- (2) to note that, in accordance with Paragraph 27.2 of the Council's Procedure Rules, the following recommendation is adjourned without further discussion to the next Ordinary Council meeting on 23 January 2007:

"To authorise the addition of the text of the Community Forum Procedure Rules, as outlined in the addendum to the attached Chief Executive's report, to the Council Procedure Rules set out in Part A of Appendix 3 to the Council's Constitution", and

- (3) to give consideration at the next Ordinary meeting of the Council on 23 January 2007 to the appointment of a Chair of all the 4 Community Forums, and the appointment of a Vice-Chair for each of the separate Community Forums.

Reason for recommendation:

The introduction of Community Forums will accord with the Government's promotion of neighbourhood working and will assist the achievement of the Council's corporate priority to involve people in their communities.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Abandonment of the Area Forum concept.

06.EC.157 ASTLEY PARK - PROGRESS REPORT

The Director of Development and Regeneration presented a report on the current progress on the multi-faceted project to regenerate and restore Astley Park with Heritage Lottery Fund grant money.

Tenders for the main landscape contract were being evaluated, with the work programmed to commence in December 2006. Tenders had been issued for the building contract with the work expected to start in January/February 2007, following the evaluations exercise.

The report highlighted a few aspects of the project that were currently being reviewed, including the uncertainty that remained in respect of the inclusion of the pets' corner in the park. A consultation exercise was to be undertaken to ascertain the public's views on the retention or otherwise of the facility and the report commented on the financial implications of a decision to seek the omission of the pets' corner from the overall scheme.

The report also confirmed that the costs of the project remained currently within budget and that the overall forecasted completion date remained well within the period for the expiry of the Heritage Lottery funding on 31 December 2008.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

06.EC.158 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

06.EC.159 BRINSCALL BATHS

The Executive Cabinet considered a confidential report of the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services on proposals to secure the completion of initial refurbishment works at Brinscall Pool, and subsequent operational arrangements, in order to secure its medium to long-term future.

A recent survey had revealed the necessity for initial essential repairs and maintenance work to be undertaken at a capital cost of £190,000. The completion of additional non-essential repair and maintenance works would need to be addressed as a medium to long term project.

The report also recommended the incorporation within the recently negotiated contract with Community Leisure Services for the management of All Seasons and Clayton Green Leisure Centres of provision for the operation of Brinscall Pool, subject to the insertion of break clauses to safeguard the Council's interest in the event of major failings. It was envisaged that the likely annual operation costs of £37,000 would be met from the current contract provision for repairs and maintenance.

Decisions made:

- 1. That approval be given to the recommended approach to safeguarding the medium to long-term future of Brinscall Pool as outlined in the submitted report.**
- 2. That provision for both the initial capital investment of £190,000 for essential major work at Brinscall Pool and the ongoing revenue contribution of £37,000 for the operation of the Pool be considered as part of the Council's budget deliberations for 2007/08.**
- 3. That responsibility be delegated to the Indoor Leisure Committee to approve any variations to the contractual arrangements outlined in the submitted report.**

Reason for decision:

The proposals are aimed at safeguarding the medium to long-term future of the Brinscall Pool.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

A decision not to invest in Brinscall Pool was rejected and it was likely that the decision could lead ultimately to the closure of the Pool.

The transfer of the Pool to community management was rejected as there was no local support for this model of delivery.

06.EC.160 DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION DIRECTORATE - RESTRUCTURE

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Development and Regeneration on proposals for the restructure of the Directorate.

The proposals, in particular, took account of the close links between Development Control and Building Control issues, the impact of technological advances and e-planning processes, the key roles afforded to economic regeneration and town centre strategies and the projected transfer of the housing stock to Chorley Community Housing.

It was anticipated that the proposals would deliver overall cost savings in the region of £108,500.

The overall aim of the proposals was to provide a more simplified structure that would be capable of delivering the Council's corporate strategy in an effective and efficient manner.

Decision made:

That the proposals to revise the staffing structure of the Development and Regeneration Directorate, as outlined in the submitted report, be approved for consultation with staff and trade unions.

Reason for decision:

The proposals are aimed at providing a 'fit for purpose' structure for the Development and Regeneration Directorate.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

A range of other structures have been considered and rejected because either they did not fulfil corporate objectives or had additional cost implications.

06.EC.161 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORATE - RESTRUCTURE

The Director of Information and Communications Technology presented a report on proposals to restructure his Directorate.

The restructure plans had been compiled in the light of the impending transfer of the housing stock and the outsourcing of the Property Services function, whilst having regard to the Directorate's involvement in key corporate projects and the need to maintain adequate support of the Council's complex technological environment.

Decision made:

That the proposals to revise the staffing structure of the Information and Communications Technology Directorate, as outlined in the submitted report, be approved for consultation with staff and trade unions.

Reason for decision:

The proposals are considered the most effective means of achieving the necessary savings, whilst maintaining a sustainable service.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.162 FINANCE DIRECTORATE - RESTRUCTURE

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance outlining proposals for the restructure of his Directorate.

The plans, in particular, had taken account of the significant emphasis to transfer front end services (including Benefits and Council Tax) into the Contact Centre, the need to achieve budget efficiencies as part of the budgetary process, the impending transfer of the housing stock, the efficiencies generated by e-government processes and the need to strengthen a number of sections within the Directorate.

The restructure proposals were envisaged to generate savings in the region of £116,000.

Decision made:

That the proposals to revise the staffing structure of the Finance Directorate, as outlined in the submitted report, be approved for consultation with staff and trade unions.

Reasons for decision:

The proposals are aimed at achieving the savings required to balance the Council's budget in 2007/08 and to meet the requirement for resources for the Contact Centre.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.163 STREETSCENE, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE - RESTRUCTURE, RECONFIGURATION OF SERVICES AND BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS.

The Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment submitted a report outlining details of proposals to alter the staffing structure of his Directorate.

The proposals, in particular, aimed to:

- deliver a revised operational management structure for the Directorate's activities as a consequence of the earlier Phase I restructure;
- deliver revised arrangements for the delivery of crime and disorder improvements by the development of a new Multi-Agency Tasking and Deployment process;
- support the establishment of up to 22 additional Police Community Support Officers, partly delivered by the closure of the Council's existing Neighbourhood Warden service; and
- strengthen a number of sections within the Directorate (eg Waste Management Team).

The restructure proposals were envisaged to generate total savings in the region of £339,000 in 2007/08.

In response to concerns expressed at the disengagement of the Neighbourhood Warden service, the Executive Cabinet was reminded that the proposals to strengthen the Police Community Support Officer service would enable the Council to take advantage of available Home Office funding, increase Officer presence within the community and establish close links with the MAPS Team and Environment Officers.

Decisions made:

- 1. That the proposals to revise the staffing structure of the Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment Directorate, as outlined in the submitted report, be approved for consultation with staff and trade unions.**
- 2. That approval be given to the capital expenditure detailed in the Outline Business Case for the Intelligence Management Infrastructure Development.**

3. That the Executive Leader, in consultation with the Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment and the Director of Human Resources, be given delegated authority to agree variations to the proposals following the consultation process and to implement the recommendations accordingly.

Executive Leader