

Executive Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 1 October 2009

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

Also in attendance:

Lead Member: Councillor Keith Iddon (Lead Member (Licensing))

Other Members: Councillors Henry Counce, Alan Cullens, Mike Devaney, David Dickinson, Marie Gray, Dennis Edgerley, Laura Lennox, Adrian Lowe, June Molyneaux, Debra Platt, Geoffrey Russell and Ralph Snape

09.EC.81 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Harold Heaton (Lead Member for Development Control) and Councillor Rosemary Russell (Lead Member for Health and Older People).

09.EC.82 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 3 September 2009 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

09.EC.83 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.

09.EC.84 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

09.EC.85 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY - CHORLEY LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) which set out the Executive's suggested response to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group which had conducted an inquiry into the Chorley Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The purpose of the inquiry had been to understand how the LSP operated with the Council and the extra added value it provided in the identified areas.

Councillor Devaney (Chair of the Task Group) and Councillor Edgerley (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) thanked the Executive for its generally positive response to the inquiry report and emphasised the Task Group's views on the following aspects of the inquiry:

- the Task Group supported the concentration of funding resources on fewer projects to assist effective delivery;

- the Task Group commended the work of the Preston Intervention Unit which provided direct advice and assistance to vulnerable persons and recommended the replication of the service in Chorley as part of the campaign to reduce the number of alcohol harm related hospital admissions.

Decision made:

That the recommended response of the Executive to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group following its inquiry into the Chorley Local Strategic Partnership, as contained in the submitted report, be endorsed for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision:

The Executive's endorsement of action on the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations will enhance and strengthen the effectiveness of the Local Strategic Partnership.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

09.EC.86 REFRESH OF THE LOCALITY PLAN

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presented a report which outlined the progress made in the delivery of the projects included in the 2008 Locality Plan and presented the draft Locality Plan for 2009.

The Plan clarified the projects expected of the Lancashire County Council and Chorley Council both separately and together over the next 12 months and was supported by an action plan which established timescales and clarified persons responsible for the joint working priority areas.

The draft Locality Plan incorporated amendments proposed by the Lancashire Local Committee for Chorley and was to be presented to the County Council's Cabinet for approval the following week.

In response to Members' comments, the Executive advised Councillors representing Chorley Town Wards to approach either the County Councillors representing Chorley Divisions or the Chorley District Partnership Officer in relation to bids for either support of projects to reduce road traffic accidents or resources for other priority initiatives.

Decisions made:

- 1. That the proposed Joint Locality Plan, as now submitted, incorporating the changes agreed by the Lancashire Local Committee for Chorley, be approved for adoption.**
- 2. That the Executive Member for Policy and Performance be granted delegated authority to agree any amendments to the Locality Plan recommended by the Lancashire County Council's Cabinet.**

Reasons for decisions:

1. The development and publication of a joint locality plan is a key driver in improving two-tier working between Chorley Council and Lancashire County Council. It supports the Corporate Strategy long term outcome 6.2, "An Excellent Community Leader".

2. The joint nature of the plan means that some minor changes may be made after approval by the Executive Cabinet. Delegating responsibility to the Executive Member for Policy and Performance will ensure the plan is published in an efficient and timely manner.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

09.EC.87 UPDATE ON THE FIRST YEAR OF THE COUNCIL'S CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Executive Cabinet considered a joint report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) and the Corporate Director (Business) on the progress made by the Council in its delivery of the first year's programme of the Climate Change Action Plan.

The Council had been assessed as being at Level 1 of the national standard for 'Planning to adapt to climate change' and was progressing in the establishment of baseline information on the amount and type of energy used and its subsequent impact on Chorley's carbon footprint.

In order to reach Level 2 of the indicator the Council needed to influence its Local Strategic Partnership partners' risk assessments of the effects of extreme weather conditions on local services, and the report outlined the actions that were required in 2010 in order to achieve the second level.

One of the actions included the offer of assistance towards the delivery of a combined heat and power source at All Seasons Leisure Centre and the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) confirmed that negotiations would be held on the possibility of energy cost savings being used to reduce the All Seasons Leisure Centre management costs.

Decisions made:

1. That the report be noted and that the actions put forward to achieve Level 2 of National Indicator 188 (Planning to adapt for climate change) be approved.

2. That the recommended virement of £90,000 from the under- utilised grants schemes for local businesses in order to support the delivery of a combined heat and power source at the All Seasons Leisure Centre be supported.

Reason for decisions:

Delivery of the Action Plan will enable the Council to achieve Level 2 of the national standard for 'Planning to adapt to climate change'.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

09.EC.88 ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presented a report seeking approval of the revised Allocations Policy for Chorley which clarified the authority's

policies and procedures in respect of social rented housing vacancies for which the Council had nomination rights.

The Policy, which had evolved over a comprehensive consultation exercise, introduced a simple banding system for the assessment of applicants' housing needs in order to ensure that those in the greatest need received priority. The policy also set out the procedures that would be adopted to ensure that applicants were offered the most suitable accommodation.

The report explained how the banding system would operate, and referred to the opportunity available to applicants to request a review of decisions on their applications.

Decision made:

That the Allocations Policy, as now submitted, be approved and adopted.

Reasons for decision:

1. The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, requires the Council to make all allocations and nominations to social housing in accordance with a published allocations scheme. The legislation requires that local authorities give reasonable preference to people in certain circumstances. This policy ensures that the scheme is legally compliant and fit for purpose.

2. The Allocations Policy will be easier to administer than the existing points system and will be much easier for customers to understand.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

The Council could continue to use the current Allocations Policy. This would, however, delay the Council from moving toward a banding system, which is now seen as best practice. Implementing the local policy first will mean that the Council will be able to prepare more effectively for the introduction of Choice Based Lettings.

09.EC.89 ST LAURENCE'S CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The Corporate Director (Business) presented a report on the principal findings of the St Laurence's 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:

- (i) examine opportunities to enhance the public realm and reduce the impact of indiscriminate street parking;
- (ii) encourage the redevelopment of negative sites or buildings;
- (iii) explore the potential for grant aid to assist with the reversal of inappropriate alterations to buildings, to help with repairs and appropriate improvements, including the reinstatement of original features for buildings within the Conservation Area; and

- (iv) change the Conservation Area boundary to enhance and further protect its setting.

Decisions made:

1. That the St Laurence's 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 co-ordinated approach to the conservation and enhancement of Chorley's historic environment. St Laurence's Conservation Area review is the second 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.

09.EC.90 RIVINGTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director (Business) on the principal findings of the Rivington 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 make 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:

- (i) explore with the Highways Authority options for enhanced traffic calming;
- (ii) examine opportunities for the introduction of an Article 4(2) Direction for the control of permitted development rights to further protect the buildings in the Conservation Area from harmful alterations.
- (iii) explore the potential for grant aid to assist with repairs and appropriate improvements, including the reinstatement of original features for buildings within the Conservation Area; and
- (iv) explore with the relevant agencies and landowners the options for the provision of alternative parking areas.

Decisions made:

1. That the Rivington 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.
3. That the introduction of a Direction under Article 4(2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 1995 to increase control over additions and alterations in the Conservation Area be supported.

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 co-ordinated approach to conserving and enhancing Chorley's historic environment. The Rivington Conservation Area Review is the third 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 would result in the continued decline of the quality of the Conservation Area. Similarly, failure to pursue the Article 4 Direction would undermine the Area, as its character would continue to erode through inappropriate developments currently permitted under permitted development rights.

09.EC.91 RURAL ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION - LANCASHIRE WEST LOCAL ACTION GROUP

The Corporate Director (Business) submitted a report on the opportunities available within the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme for England for the support of the diversification of Chorley's rural economy.

Following the successful delivery of the pilot Rural Economic Diversification Project, further financial resources totalling £2,391,636 had been made available from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) to support the creation of new businesses and the diversification of the rural economy in eligible Wards.

The Programme, which was to run for five years up to March 2014, was to be channelled through three Local Action Groups in Lancashire. The Lancashire West Local Action Group Forum, covering the Chorley, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire Boroughs, would comprise partners from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. The Council had been invited to appoint an appropriate Officer to the Local Action Group Forum, which would be responsible for determining applications for funding.

Decisions made:

1. That the Council supports the Lancashire West Local Action Group (LAG) in the implementation of the Development Strategy for Lancashire West and approves the nomination of the Corporate Director (Business), or her

representative, to serve on the Officer-based LAG Executive to provide regular feedback to the Executive Member (Business).

2. That the Council supports efforts to ensure that funding opportunities to support rural developments are maximised for Chorley and that any future bids for resources from the Rural Development Programme for England be reported to the Executive Cabinet.

Reason for decisions:

The proposals will ensure that the Council and its partners are best placed to maximise opportunities provided by the Lancashire West Local Development Strategy for sustainable economic diversification in rural areas.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

Executive Leader