

## **REPORT OF EXECUTIVE CABINET**

### **GENERAL REPORT**

1. The Executive Cabinet has met on two occasions on 18 February and 25 March 2010 since the last ordinary Council meeting in January 2010. This report summarises briefly the principal items considered and decisions taken at each meeting.

#### **Meeting held on 18 February 2010**

##### **Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry – Highways Issues**

2. The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report on the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group that had been set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine highways issues.
3. The inquiry, in particular, reviewed the effectiveness of the current service and considered ways in which two tier arrangements can be improved by more efficient service delivery, communication procedures and performance monitoring systems.
4. We received the findings report and will present our response to a future Executive Cabinet meeting.

##### **Review of Council Meetings Calendar for 2010/11**

5. Following a review of the Council's meetings calendar for 2010/11 in the light of recommendations emanating from the recent Value for Money review of Corporate Support Services, we agreed to proposals contained within a report of the Director of Transformation to make a number of changes to the calendar and administrative arrangements for the next financial year.
6. The changes, in the main, will reduce slightly the number of meetings of the Council, Executive Cabinet, Informal Cabinet Briefing, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Member Support Working Group during the year and alter the servicing arrangements for Chorley Partnership bodies, the Local Development Framework Working Group and the Rivington and Brinscall Local Advisory Group.
7. The change to the meetings calendar will ensure a sufficient reduction in the workload of the Democratic and Member Services Team to allow the deletion of one post without compromising the continued good governance of decision making and the quick and efficient transaction of the Council's business.

##### **Chorley Council Performance Monitoring Report – Third Quarter of 2009/10**

8. We received and noted a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy, which set out and reviewed the Authority's performance both in respect of the key projects included in the refreshed Corporate Strategy and against the National Indicators for which the Council was responsible, during the third quarter of 2009/10 ending on 31 December 2009.
9. The report referred to the key outcomes from the seven projects that have been completed during the third quarter period and which, therefore, have not been carried over into the new Corporate Strategy. The 33 projects included in the new Corporate Strategy have all been rated as "green", which is indicative of the project performance being on or ahead of schedule, with costs falling within or under budget.

10. In addition, the report confirms that 11 of the 15 national indicators that have been measured during the third quarter have matched or exceeded target and that action plans have been prepared to reduce the four performance indicators that have missed their targets by more than 5%.

### **Chorley Partnership – Performance Monitoring Report for Third Quarter of 2009/10**

11. The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy also submitted a report on the activities of the Chorley Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), particularly through the delivery of the objectives of the Lancashire Area Agreement and the Sustainable Communities Strategy over the third quarter of 2009/10.
12. The following significant statistics and trends revealed in the report were highlighted by the Executive Member (Policy and Performance):
  - Crime figures have reduced, on average, by 0.8% over the past year, and whilst there has been a 7.5% overall decrease in violent crime, the number of acquisitive crimes (eg burglary and vehicle crime) has increased.
  - The number of primary fires in Chorley has fallen below target.
  - The number of households in Chorley living in temporary accommodation has fallen below target to 8.
  - Street cleanliness (eg clearance of litter, detritus and graffiti) has fallen below target, but action plans had been put in place to improve performance.
  - The number of benefit claimants has reduced over the last quarter period and the number of new business startups has exceeded the target figure.
  - All the LSP's projects for 2009/10 are underway and on track for the quarter period.

### **Gypsy Roma Travellers – Illegal Encampment Procedure**

13. Following consideration of a report from the Director of People and Places, we approved for adoption a multi-agency response procedure for managing illegal Gypsy Roma Traveller encampments developed by a task team of the merged Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
14. The new procedure will ensure that the action taken by the different agencies is fair and consistent. The urgent welfare needs of persons in the encampments will be assessed and early communication procedures with both members of the encampment and appropriate Council Members will be established.

### **Process for approving the Central Lancashire Local Development Framework Core Strategy**

15. On the recommendation of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy we agreed a process and timetable to ensure Member engagement in the production of the Publication Version of the revised Central Lancashire LDF Core Strategy in line with the Project Plan.
16. This approach entails a series of additional meetings of both the Local Development Framework Working Group and the Central Lancashire LDF Joint Advisory Committee, culminating in a joint meeting of the Cabinets of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble Councils on 31 March to endorse the revised Core Strategy for approval by the respective Councils.

### **Update on Transfer of Home Improvement Agency**

17. We received a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy on the current progress of the transfer of the Chorley Home Improvement Agency back to the Council from Anchor in accordance with the Cabinet's decision in November 2009. The Agency offers Disabled Facility Grants, Home Repair Assistance and Energy Efficiency grants and advice.

18. A project team has been set up to oversee and agree measures for the transfer on 1 April 2010, including an examination of the procedures and systems used, procurement of contractors and TUPE matters.
19. It is envisaged that one member of staff will be transferred to the Council under the TUPE regulations, in addition to the two Technical Officers originally seconded to Anchor. No additional revenue costs are likely to be incurred by the Council.

### **Lancashire Review of Home Improvement Agencies**

20. The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy on a review of the Home Improvement Agency network in Lancashire undertaken by Consultants, The Housing Quality Network Consultancy, commissioned by Lancashire County Council.
21. The review was authorised in order to advise future commissioning decisions by the Supporting People Commissioning Body, which provides funding to the Lancashire HIA's, and whose contracts are due to expire in 2010 and 2011. The outcome of the review will also support the attraction of funding from other partners.
22. Two of the key recommendations emerging from the review are that the number of HIA services in the County should be reduced and that a new approach to funding agencies, as based on needs, should be adopted.
23. We accepted the report and approved for submission to the Consultants and the Lancashire County Council the proposed responses to the Consultant's findings, as outlined in the Director's report.

### **Sub-Regional Allocations Policy and Choice-based Lettings Procedure**

24. The Council has been collaborating with Preston and South Ribble Councils and local registered landlords on the development of an allocations policy that can be applied across the three Council areas, utilising the transparent 5 band allocations policy currently applied by Chorley Council.
25. As a result of this initiative, the Executive Cabinet has approved in principle for adoption a Sub-Regional Allocations Policy and Choice-based Lettings Scheme, following a consultation exercise with various bodies and stakeholders.
26. The introduction of the Sub-Regional lettings scheme will provide greater choice and access for persons to housing. It will be a simpler, more comprehensible system, allowing greater transparency and choice of living location. It will also simplify the application processes, enabling one application to be made for all partners.

### **Revenue Budget Monitoring – Third Quarter of 2009/10**

27. We received and considered a report of the Director of Transformation monitoring the Council's financial performance during the third quarter of 2009/10 in comparison with the budgetary and efficiency savings targets for the financial year.
28. The report reveals that the expected overall target savings of £410,000 in 2009/10 has already been achieved and that the projected outturn envisages an underspend in the region of £169,000 at the year end. However, expenditure will still need to be continually monitored in order to offset lower than anticipated income levels in the financial year. In particular, major income streams (eg car parking and building control fees and concessionary travel and benefits costs) will be monitored closely.

29. We accepted the report and requested all non-committed revenue expenditure budgets to be identified, with a view to any possible savings being made to reduce the impact on the use of general balances in 2009/10.

### **2010/11 Budget Principles**

30. The Director of Transformation presented a report on the progress being made towards the preparation of the Council's budget for 2010/11, following confirmation of the expected Government funding allocation.
31. We accepted the report and endorsed the following principles around which our budget framework for 2010/11 would be constructed:
- containing Council Tax increases;
  - protecting businesses from the on-going impact of the recession;
  - continuing to provide value for money;
  - protecting front line services;
  - preparing for the future and the uncertainty over public finances.

### **Meeting held on 25 March 2010**

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry – Town Centre Issues**

32. The Executive Cabinet was presented with the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group that had been set up to consider Town Centre issues.
33. The report contains a number of recommendations aimed at enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre, including measures to improve the marketing and promotion of the town, the signage strategy and the development of short and long term action plans for the Markets.
34. We accepted the Task Group's report for consideration and will report our response to a future Cabinet meeting.

#### **Multi-Area Agreement for Mid-Lancashire**

35. The Executive Cabinet approved for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government a draft Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) for Mid-Lancashire. In Lancashire there is currently an approved MAA for Pennine Lancashire and an approved MAA for the Fylde coast. The Mid-Lancashire MAA will, therefore, cover the remaining districts of Chorley, Lancaster, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire.
36. The Mid-Lancashire Multi-Area Agreement will provide a mechanism and conduit for the attraction of funding for the regeneration and enhancement of the economic prosperity of the sub-region.
37. I have also been granted delegated power to agree any necessary amendments to the final version prior to submission, following consultation with the Executive Member (Business).

#### **Refresh of the Chorley Economic Development Strategy**

38. On the recommendation of the Chorley Local Strategic Partnership, the Executive Cabinet approved for consultation purposes the first draft refresh of Chorley's Economic Regeneration Strategy.
39. The current strategy was introduced in 2006 to maximise economic opportunity, drive up value added activity to achieve sustainable growth over the next 10 – 15 years. Following a

workshop event with the Chorley Partnership Board a revised draft Strategy had been drawn up both to highlight the past successful initiatives and to define future key priorities and actions to reflect current economic circumstances.

40. Since the delivery of the refreshed Strategy will be reliant on a cross-sector partnership and collaboration, it is important for the respective partners and stakeholders to be consulted before the finalised version is agreed.

#### **Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy**

41. The Executive Cabinet agreed in principle in December 2009 a Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy for consultation purposes. The consultation period expires on 13 April 2010, but we have approved a revised version of the policy which takes on board a number of changes made to reflect the consultation responses received to date.
42. The Policy is designed to offer a mechanism for the provision of housing assistance to customers in private housing, by integrating the various strands of housing assistance in a manner that will maximise the effective use of resources and target resources to customers in most need.
43. I have also been granted delegated authority to approve the final version of the Policy, to include any minor amendments required at the conclusion of the consultation period.
44. In response to a number of Member queries during the debate on the new Policy, we informed Members of our intention to pursue the introduction of a Private Sector Landlords' Accreditation scheme on a voluntary basis, with the aim of creating a list of accredited landlords that can be recommended to potential tenants and letting agents.

#### **Neighbourhood Working – 2009/10 Progress Report and Proposals for 2010/11**

45. The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Director of People and Places on the progress so far of the neighbourhood working regime and putting forward revised action plans and proposals for 2010/11.
46. The Head of Leisure and Neighbourhoods gave a short presentation which illustrated the progress and success of the on-going initiative and highlighted the plans for future projects and ways in which Member engagement could be developed.
47. The Executive Cabinet is committed to the introduction of the neighbourhood working initiative as a means of encouraging the development of more community links and partnership working, and generating external funding for the betterment of the seven neighbourhood areas. The Cabinet consequently approved the draft Neighbourhood Action Plans and proposals for 2010/11 as submitted.

#### **Core Funding Grants to local Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Organisations – Award for Grants for 2010/11**

48. Following consideration of a report and recommendations from the Director of People and Places, the Executive Cabinet authorised Core Funding grant assistance in varying sums to 15 non-profit making organisations operating throughout the Borough. The grant aid is dependent on the Director agreeing and signing-off a Core Funding Agreement with each organisation whose activities contribute towards the Council's strategic objectives and themes within the Sustainable Community Strategy. Two other applications are still being examined.
49. This year, the Core Funding aid is an amalgamation of Chorley Council Core Grants, Chorley Partnership funding and Central Lancashire Health Inequalities Grants. This streamlined

approach has reduced administrative procedures and has enabled the compilation of a central database for partners.

### **Update on Shared Services**

50. The Executive Cabinet received and considered a confidential report of the Director of Transformation on the progress and successes to date of the Council's collaborative working with South Ribble and Preston on a number of ventures.
51. In order to achieve the targets identified in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2010/11 – 2012/13, we have authorised the further development of collaborative working with South Ribble. This will entail the formulation of detailed plans for the prospective extension of joint working arrangements for presentation to a future Executive Cabinet meeting. These plans will be drawn up on the assumption that the venture will not result in any diminution of service and will effect financial savings.

### **Recommendation**

52. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR PETER GOLDSWORTHY  
Executive Leader

There are no background papers to this report.

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