

Executive Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 3 June 2010

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 Members: Councillors Harold Heaton and Keith Iddon (Lead Member for Licensing)

Other Members: Councillors Julia Berry, Judith Boothman, Henry Caunce, Alan Cullens, Anthony Gee, Alison Hansford, Adrian Lowe, Mick Muncaster, Alan Platt, Geoffrey Russell, Ralph Snape and Peter Wilson

10.EC.163 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Debra Platt.

10.EC.164 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest in any of the meeting's agenda items by any of the Executive Cabinet members.

10.EC.165 MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 25 March 2010, together with the minutes of the Special meeting held on 31 March 2010, were each confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

10.EC.166 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.

10.EC.167 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRIES - EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE

(a) Joint Inquiry into Affordable Housing.

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy which set out the Executive's suggested response to the findings and recommendations of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Task Group that had been set up by the Chorley, Preston and South Ribble Councils to consider issues around the provision and access to affordable housing for both rent and sale.

The joint inquiry had been instigated in response to concerns that the delivery of affordable housing would be unable to meet the needs of expanding communities and the Task Group had examined the measures that could be taken to overcome current barriers to the delivery of affordable homes.

The Executive Leader thanked the members of the joint Task Group for its efforts and recommendations and commended the suggested response for endorsement, whilst pointing out the possibility of new Government policy impacting on the development of rural exception sites.

Decision made:

That the recommended response of the Executive to the findings and recommendations of the joint Overview and Scrutiny Task Group following its inquiry into the delivery of affordable housing, as contained in the submitted report, be endorsed for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision:

The Executive's endorsement of the action in the joint Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations will enhance and assist the delivery of affordable homes throughout the Central Lancashire sub-region.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

(b) Town Centre vitality issues.

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy which set out the Executive's suggested response to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's inquiry into town centre issues.

The report had contained 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.

Councillor Peter Wilson (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group) thanked both the members of the Group and the Executive for its generally positive response to the inquiry report.

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 town centre issues, 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 in the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations will assist the delivery of plans to enhance town centre facilities and its environment.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

10.EC.168 CHORLEY COUNCIL PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - FOURTH QUARTER OF 2009/10

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy, which set out and reviewed the Authority's performance in respect of the key projects included in the Corporate Strategy and against the National Indicators for which the Council was responsible, during the fourth quarter of 2009/10 ending on 31 March 2010.

The report indicated that, of the 33 projects identified in the Corporate Strategy, two had been completed and the remaining 31 projects were progressing ahead of or according to plan.

The update report also revealed that the targets set for 17 of the 25 national indicators able to be monitored had been matched or exceeded. Action Plans had been prepared to address the matters covered by the 4 indicators that had missed the stipulated targets by 5% or more during the quarter period.

Councillor Adrain Lowe, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported the observations that had been made by the Committee at its meeting on 1 June 2010 on the performance statistics.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

10.EC.169 CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2009/10

The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy presenting the Chorley Partnership's end of year performance report for 2009/10.

The report reviewed the Partnership's activities and performance throughout 2009/10, commenting particularly on the progress and impact of the LSP sponsored projects and how they were contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The report also reviewed the Council's performance against the second year of the Local Area Agreement.

The Executive Member (Policy and Performance) highlighted the following significant statistics and trends revealed in the annual report:

- Unemployment had reduced over the past year.
- The number of persons in temporary accommodation had fallen considerably to its lowest ever level during the past year.
- Crime levels overall had reduced by 2.1% compared to 2008/09.
- The number of all types of crime in Chorley had decreased over the past year, with the exception of house burglaries and serious violent crime.
- Teenage pregnancy had fallen by 2.2% when the three year average for 2006/08 was compared to the three year average for 2005/07.
- 74 new business start-ups were recorded in 2009/10.
- The delivery of affordable homes in the Borough had increased significantly by 174% since the past year.
- Chorley's recycling rate had increased since 2008/09.

Decision made:

That the report be noted in advance of its presentation to the Chorley LSP Board.

10.EC.170 CENTRAL LANCASHIRE ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY

The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy submitted a report seeking endorsement of the final version of the Central Lancashire Economic Regeneration Strategy.

The Strategy for Central Lancashire had been jointly prepared by the Chorley, South Ribble and Preston Councils to align with the draft refreshed version of the Chorley Economic Regeneration Strategy, the Mid-Lancashire Multi-Area Agreement and the emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

The Strategy had been compiled as a tool by which to influence national and regional decisions and to drive forward the Central Lancashire economy. The strategy would also help to shape the economic development of the Central Lancashire sub-region over the next 15 years.

Decision made:

That the Central Lancashire Economic Regeneration Strategy, as now presented as an appendix to the submitted report, be approved and adopted.

Reason for decision:

The Economic Regeneration Strategy confirms the commitment of Chorley, South Ribble and Preston Councils to work in partnership to deliver managed sustainable economic growth in Central Lancashire.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Not to prepare an Economic Regeneration Strategy for Central Lancashire.

10.EC.171 CHORLEY AND SOUTH RIBBLE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - COLLABORATIVE MODEL

The Director of People and Places presented a report on the outcomes achieved since the adoption of the pilot merger of the Chorley and South Ribble Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships some 22 months ago.

The trial merger had been deemed a success and the report recommended the continuation of the arrangement on the basis of a collaborative model, rather than an official, formal merger, which was likely to be too prescriptive. A collaborative model would allow a degree of flexibility and enable the authorities to retain greater control over their respective budgets.

Councillor Adrian Lowe, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, advised the meeting that the proposal had been discussed at a joint scrutiny review between Members of Chorley and South Ribble Councils on 31 March 2010, a report on which had been presented to the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 June. The Members had been supportive of the planned collaborative model as the preferred basis for continuing the Safer Chorley and South Ribble Partnership arrangements, but had highlighted the need to take account of the role of elected Members on the Partnership.

The Deputy Leader of the Council also considered that the work of the Community Safety Partnership should be more closely linked and co-ordinated with the new Neighbourhood Working regime.

The Executive Member (Places) confirmed that the issues raised at the meeting would be borne in mind.

Decision made:

That approval be given to the adoption of the collaborative model of the merged Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership, as outlined in the submitted report.

Reason for decision:

The continuation of the arrangement will ensure that the successful collaborative partnership work, efficiency savings and synergies are maintained for the partner organisations involved in the partnership.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

An official merger of the Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership is deemed to be too prescriptive for the needs of the partnership arrangement.

Discontinuance of the partnership would result in the loss of the efficiencies already gained and the practices established.

10.EC.172 TREE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

The Director of People and Places submitted a report recommending the adoption of a Tree Management and Maintenance Policy.

The policy aimed to give clear guidance on the future management of the authority's tree stock by the introduction of more robust and coherent arrangements and procedures. The policy would introduce best practice systems for the inspection of all trees across the Borough and the apportionment of trees within risk zones. The policy would also provide guidance on the handling of requests relating to Council owned trees and the provision of available options to other service users.

Future requests for tree works would be assessed to ensure that the budget provision was targeted at those trees at greater risk and a tendering process for identified works would secure best value.

Decision made:

That the Tree Management and Maintenance Policy, as presented with the submitted report, be approved and adopted for application to trees situated within Council owned land.

Reason for decision:

Adoption of the Policy will ensure that the Council fulfils its legal obligations under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and will assist the highest standard of maintenance of trees for which the Council is responsible.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

10.EC.173 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN FOR 2009/10

The Director of Transformation presented a report on the provisional final outturns in respect of the General Fund Revenue Account and the Capital Programme at the end of the 2009/10 financial year.

The report revealed that, excluding the potential impact of the concessionary travel scheme, there was expected to be an underspend in the region of £181,000 in the General Fund revenue account at the year end. After taking account of the eventual reimbursement rate and pooling adjustment, the final outturn cost for concessionary travel in 2009/10 was estimated at £1,092,000 giving an envisaged underspend of around £231,000. The recent claim against HM Revenues and Customs, for the

reimbursement of VAT paid in earlier years had resulted in the refund of £741,000 to date, which could be increased by up to £240,000 if the claim for compound interest was successful.

Appendices to the report provided a detailed analysis of the Capital Programme provisional outturn for 2009/10. The envisaged outturn expenditure of £5,668,296 showed a reduction of £851,754 on the approved revised programme, owing principally to the rephrasing for £729,000 expenditure to 2010/11.

Decisions made:

(1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Council be recommended to approve the financing arrangements for the 2009/10 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix 3 to the submitted report.

Reason for decision:

To ensure that the Council's budgetary targets are achieved.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

10.EC.174 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

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 Paragraph 1 (Minute 10.EC.175) and Paragraph 3 (Minute 10.EC.176) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972.

10.EC.175 INCOME GENERATION PROPOSAL

The Chief Executive submitted a confidential report on an approach from the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership for Chorley Council's Management Team to provide assistance to Copeland Council in its review and acceleration of the Authority's ambitious improvement plans.

Chorley Council had been selected to offer its services to Copeland Council on the basis of its reputation for the successful delivery of transformation programmes.

The provision of the consultancy service would generate an income of £70,000 for the Council, which could be spent on the improvement of frontline services.

Decision made:

That approval be given to the proposal outlined in the appendix to the submitted report for the Chorley Council's Management Team to provide paid consultancy support to Copeland Council in the delivery of its improvement programme.

Reason for decision:

The joint working arrangement with Copeland Council will generate a significant income for this Council.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

The rejection of the offer would waste a good opportunity to raise income from products already developed by Chorley for use elsewhere.

10.EC.176 PERFORMANCE OF KEY PARTNERSHIPS - 2009/10 YEAR END PROGRESS REPORT

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Transformation providing Members with a corporate update on the performance of the Council's key partnership arrangements during 2009/10.

The report outlined information required by the Council's framework for partnership working, including the performance of the Council's key partnerships against targets set for the current year; an assessment of the partners' financial strengths and stability; and any emerging issues that required to be addressed.

Councillor Adrian Lowe (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) reported that a future Member Learning Hour would be dedicated to issues around the restructure of Chorley Community Housing and that the Task Group set up to examine the Council's assets would consider issues arising from the accommodation review.

Decisions made:

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That the Director of People and Places, in conjunction with Financial Services, continues to monitor closely and manage the risks arising from the trading position of Active Nation in relation to the Leisure Contract.**
- (3) That the Director of People and Places, in conjunction with Financial and Legal Services, clarifies the trading position of Glendale Grounds Maintenance Ltd/Glendale Countryside Ltd in relation to the management of Duxbury Golf Course and Clubhouse.**
- (4) That the removal of the Anchor Home Improvement Agency, the Shared Services Contact Centre and Parkwise from the "Key Partnerships" register be endorsed.**

Reason for decisions:

To keep Members informed of the performance of Key Partnerships and to ensure effective management of the Council's partnership arrangements.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

Executive Leader