

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

GENERAL REPORT - 20 October 2011

1. The Cabinet's recommendations on the reports that require Council decisions appear as separate items on the agenda.

3 Tier Forum

2. I presented a report outlining the Council's involvement in the new 3 Tier Forum arrangements. The membership of the Forum will be all 7 local County Councillors and an equal number of District Councillors. We agreed to make representations to Lancashire County Council for the number of Parish/Town Councillor representatives to be increased from 1.
3. Chorley's membership of the Forum was agreed at the last Council meeting and the first meeting will take place shortly.

Chorley Rural Housing Needs Study

4. We received the major findings and recommendations of the Chorley Rural Housing Needs Study 2011. This was the topic for part of the Member Learning session on 21 November and Town/Parish Councils were invited to attend the session.
5. The report made several recommendations:
 - That the Council takes the report into account when considering any new residential development in a rural parish, especially the highlighted need for all tenures of affordable housing, and to balance the aspirations of new households for home ownership with the highly apparent need for increased numbers of social housing, including social rented accommodation.
 - Where housing need can only be met by new social rented properties, wherever possible local lettings policies should be applied to prioritise households with a local connection, along with similar criteria for the sale of intermediate ownership properties.
 - At planning application stage the Council's Strategic Housing function should look at models of intermediate ownership which will allow new households in rural parishes to fulfil their aspiration to buy given the affordability issues raised in the report.
 - The Strategic Housing function should do more to raise awareness of and promote intermediate home ownership models and availability, as the study highlights a possible gap in knowledge of the benefits of this tenure.
 - That new residential developments take into account older people's housing needs, which are for mainly 2 (and some 3) bedroom semi-detached bungalows.
 - That the Council promotes the borough's housing related support services, including the Home Improvement Agency, to ensure rural parishes are fully aware of Disabled Facilities Grants and support to enable people to live independently in their own homes.

Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2010

6. The Executive Member for Partnerships and Planning presented the report outlining the major findings of the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and how the information will be used.
7. The Private Stock Condition Survey is a sample survey carried out in 2010. The survey concentrates on the physical condition of Chorley's 38,236 occupied privately owned and rented residential properties. Survey forms were sent to 2,315 households and a target of 1,350 surveys was set and 1,359 surveys were achieved (1175 private 184 Registered Social Landlord).

8. The two most significant measurements used by the survey are the number of homes classed as Non-Decent and the number of households in Fuel Poverty. The data from the survey shows Chorley's stock condition compares favourably to national averages.
9. The stock condition survey will help to inform private sector housing policy, such as Chorley's Home Energy Saving Scheme which provides free loft and wall insulation to economically vulnerable households and people aged over 70. Both of these groups are at higher risk of experiencing fuel poverty.
10. The survey has highlighted the need for continuing the discretionary Minor Repairs Assistance grant which assists vulnerable home owners who could not otherwise afford to carry out repairs. The Minor Repairs budget for 2011/12 is £50k, with the maximum individual grant being £3,000. The survey data will help the Council prioritise areas that are in the most need of assistance and help to inform future housing and neighbourhood policy, and bids for funding.

Allotments Update

11. The Executive Member for People presented a report updating Members on the progress with the Manor Road and Duke Street elements of the allotments project. A report will be presented to the next meeting in relation to the Common at Adlington.
12. The initial work for the sites has focused on consultation, determining planning application requirements and issues concerning the transfer of land ownership at the Duke Street site. The previously reported legal issues at Manor Road, Clayton Le Woods concerning rights of access have now been resolved and there are no outstanding matters in this respect. Work required on the drainage should be completed in by November 2011 and a full planning application will then be submitted. Subject to planning approval the allotments will then be created.
13. At Duke Street, Chorley there have been discussions with the school regarding the exchange of a portion of Rangletts recreation ground, for part of the school land on Duke Street, to provide for 40 new allotment plots. Lancashire County Council (LCC) has commissioned a desktop study of the land to be exchanged which has a suspected old mineshaft under it. Following the investigation, it emerged that the Coal Authority has no record of how the pit was capped and LCC now require a further site investigation at a cost of approximately of £6,000. LCC have indicated that this cost would have to be met by the Council and / or school and without this work the land exchange can not proceed. If this work is undertaken it could lead to further costs with no guarantee that the land exchange will happen. Given that this land has been used as a play area for many years, without any reported land movement, it is doubtful that any further investigation offers any significant value.
14. If the land exchange does not take place, allotment provision for a similar number of new plots could be progressed on part of the Council owned land on Rangletts Recreation Ground. The estimated outline costs for 40 new plots on the school land at Duke Street or Rangletts Recreation Ground will be approximately £15,000. We discussed the options which needed to be agreed to progress the Duke Street allotments further and agreed the Council will not fund any further site investigation work but will continue negotiations regarding the land exchange to be concluded by 30 November 2011. If the land exchange does not proceed the Council will progress with a similar number of new plots on part of the Council owned land on Rangletts Recreation Ground. The project delivery timeframe will be reprofiled into 2012-13.

Duxbury Park Golf Course

15. The Executive Member for People presented a report updating Members on the improvement works at Duxbury Golf Course, the likely financial saving and the proposal to use this saving to improve the access road at Duxbury Park.
16. At the start of the 25 year lease with Glendale Golf in 2006 a number of improvement works were identified and it was agreed the capital cost of these works would be split 50:50 between Glendale Golf and Chorley Council. The amount of improvement works judged necessary at Duxbury Golf course has been reduced as they provided little added value. This resulted in a £45,000 capital saving to the Council.
17. The Council is responsible for maintaining the access road to Duxbury Golf Course and Park which is an unadopted road. The road is badly pot holed and, especially in the winter, numerous complaints about the state of the road are made by users of the golf course and workers based at the Coach House and Barn. The Council would be liable for claims resulting from the poor standard of the road surface and over the past four years has spent £14,500 on repairs.
18. We agreed that the capital saving of £45,000 from revision to the improvement works at Duxbury Golf course be earmarked for improvements to the access road to Duxbury Park and Golf Course, that Liberata be instructed to start negotiations on the Council's behalf with European Settled Estates (ESE) for a contribution to improvements to the access road and amendments to the golf course improvement works be included in the revised lease agreement with Glendale Golf.

Disposal of Parcel 10 Gillibrands

19. The Head of Governance presented a report seeking approval for Parcel 10 to be transferred at nil value to Adacutus Housing Group, subject to the assessment of further information on the financial viability. The report seeks approval to retain a small area of land in Chorley Council's ownership which is part of the access to Grundy's Farm.
20. Officers clarified that the land has been offered to various Registered Social Landlords (RSL) but Adacutus are the RSL who have pursued the option.

2009/12 Joint Procurement Strategy Performance Monitoring Report

21. The Statutory Finance Officer presented a report setting out performance against the 2009/2012 Joint Procurement Strategy with South Ribble approved at the Executive Cabinet in September 2009.
22. The service has embedded well across the two authorities and key officers are now contacting the team for procurement support and advice as a matter of course. Arrangements put in place during year 1, coupled with new procurement activity in year 2 has increased the level of savings achieved this year well in advance of the Year 2 target.
23. Officers advised the Chest was a North West e-tendering system, which is free of charge to suppliers, and provides suppliers with quick, easy and transparent on-line access to both Chorley and other North West public sector procurement opportunities. There is a link to the Chest on the Council's website.
24. We agreed the refreshed and extended Joint Procurement Strategy and the refreshed Sustainable Procurement Policy.

Free School Proposal

25. The Statutory Finance Officer presented a report updating Members on the Free School proposal. We agreed that the Council be authorised to enter into a lease with the Governors of the Chorley Career and Sixth Form Academy, or the appropriate legal body, for the use of either of two sites as a Free School and granted delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources, to settle terms. The Executive Member for Resources will report back to the Executive Cabinet as to any terms agreed.

Recommendation

26. That the report be noted.

COUNCILLOR PETER GOLDSWORTHY
Executive Leader

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