

Executive Cabinet

Thursday, 9 March 2006

Present: Councillor J Wilson (Executive Leader in the Chair), Councillor D Edgerley (Deputy Leader of the Council) and Councillors K Ball, T Brown, A Gee, D Gee, C Hoyle, L Lennox, A Lowe and R Snape

Also in attendance: Councillors J Walker and Mrs S Walsh

06.EC.40 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest by any Member in any of the meeting's agenda items.

06.EC.41 MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 9 February 2006 and the non-scheduled meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 23 February 2006 were each confirmed as a correct record.

06.EC.42 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Chief Executive seeking endorsement of the draft Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan.

The Plan had been compiled to take account of the outcome of the recent Members' workshop to complete the self-evaluation framework for Overview and Scrutiny produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

The improvement plan which had emerged from the workshop identified 13 actions aimed at improving the delivery of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function. The actions required to be undertaken in order to:

- ensure that the Plan adds value to the Council's wider improvement programme and delivery of the Corporate Strategy and Community Strategy;
- communicate the potential of scrutiny to local communities;
- encourage involvement in the process of scrutiny;
- strengthen the confidence of persons undertaking scrutiny activities;
- demonstrate the value of the scrutiny role.

The draft improvement plan had been accepted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the plan was commended for approval by the Chair of the Committee, Councillor J Walker, who also highlighted the need for continued training of Members on the overview and scrutiny function.

Decision made:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan be approved and adopted.

Reason for Decision:

The improvement plan will assist and improve the delivery of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

Alternative Option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.43 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS:SHAPING THEIR FUTURE - CONSULTATION PAPER

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Head of Corporate and Policy Services on a Consultation paper issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister entitled 'Local Strategic Partnerships : Shaping their future' on which responses had been requested by 3 March 2006.

The consultation paper emphasised the significant role Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) would be expected to play in the delivery of many of the Government's objectives in defining and delivering local priorities across the respective areas rather than work being confined to separate agencies. Local services were increasingly being delivered through partnerships between local authorities, public sector agencies, businesses and the voluntary and community sectors, with LSPs identified as the vehicle for collaborative working.

The consultation document proposed that LSPs should be the primary partnership vehicle responsible for the development of Sustainable Community Strategies, the effective delivery of Local Area Agreements (LAA) and the production of combined Community Strategy and LAA action plans.

The Government expected local authorities' involvement to be vital to the effective operation of an LSP, with the authority being responsible for the production of Sustainable Community Strategies and the accountable body for the LSP's actions.

The future role of LSPs would be defined in a Local Government White Paper to be issued later in the year, together with draft guidance on the production of Sustainable Community Strategies.

The report contained the Officers' recommended responses to the key questions in the consultation paper. The report had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 2 March, which had, in fact, endorsed the suggested responses.

Decision made:

That the report be noted and that the responses to the key questions within the consultation paper on the future shape of Local Strategic Partnerships, as outlined in the submitted report, be accepted and endorsed.

Reason for Decision:

The considered responses to the consultation paper will ensure that the Borough Council's views and suggestions are presented to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister within the specified deadline.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.44 CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP - A WAY FORWARD

The Head of Corporate and Policy Services presented a report reviewing the structure of the Chorley Partnership and making recommendations to make the organisation more 'fit for purpose'.

The report highlighted the Council's commitment within the adopted Corporate Strategy to strengthen its community leadership role by developing its relationship with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and other partners. This entailed a target to assist the LSP in achieving 'green status' in an LSP Self Accreditation exercise by March, 2009.

The report argued that, in order to achieve the 'green status' outcome, the Chorley Partnership would need to alter its structure to become more 'fit for purpose'. The present status of the organisation as a company limited by guarantee was no longer either appropriate or practical.

Following an analysis of the best national practice and an assessment of the needs of the LSP in achieving the Community Strategy priority outcomes, the report recommended the removal of the LSP's company status and the creation of an LSP comprising the following elements:

- an overarching Board of approximately 40 members;
- a smaller Executive of 20 members
- 6 Sub-Groups to focus on the delivery of the priorities of the Community Strategy; and
- a Public Service Board comprising the key public sector agencies operating in the Borough

The suggested composition, terms of reference and expected roles of the LSPs proposed component elements were outlined in the report.

Decision made:

(1) That the proposals outlined in the submitted report to alter the structure of the Chorley Partnership be endorsed and the Partnership Board of Directors be recommended to approve the proposals.

(2) That the composition of the Partnership Board of Directors include six Chorley Borough Councillors and four Lancashire County Councillors.

Reasons for Decisions:

The revision of the Chorley Partnership arrangements and structure is aimed at strengthening its community partnership role and ability to ensure delivery of agreed priority outcomes and targets.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

To allow the Partnership to continue in its present status.

06.EC.45 CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE STRATEGIC HEALTH AUTHORITY, THE PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS AND THE AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUSTS IN LANCASHIRE AND CUMBRIA

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services seeking Members' views on the Authority's response to the Government's three consultations on proposals to make changes to the present arrangements for Strategic Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and Ambulance Service NHS Trusts in Cumbria and Lancashire.

The consultation documents had each been considered by the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, whose recommendations on a suggested response to each element of the NHS review had been provided to the Executive Cabinet.

The Cabinet Members agreed with the conclusions of the Overview and Scrutiny bodies and emphasised their views that Ambulance Trusts should be small enough to be capable of responding to local needs. The Members also supported the creation of a PCT to cover the districts of Chorley, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire, but with the proviso that any reconfiguration proposals takes account of any impending plans to review local government structures.

Decision made:

That the following comments suggested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved to form the basis of the Council's response to the three consultations on the NHS service.

Strategic Health Authorities

- 1. To support the proposals for dissolving the existing three SHA's to create a new Strategic North West Strategic Health Authority covering the area of the existing three SHA's and the regional boundary for the Government Office for the North West.**
- 2. To question whether it is true consultation if only one option is given to choose from.**

Ambulance Trusts

- 1. To note the disappointment of the Council that only one option was given to choose from.**
- 2. To note that the proposed Ambulance Trust for the North West would be too large and, therefore, less responsive than several smaller trusts to local needs.**
- 3. To propose that the Ambulance Trusts cover Lancashire and Cumbria, to align with the proposed reorganisation of the Police Authorities.**
- 4. To request that local performance data is available to monitor the situation in Chorley.**

PCT Reconfiguration

- 1. To support Option Three; meaning that Chorley could be part of a PCT co-terminous with the local authority boundaries of Chorley, South Ribble, West Lancashire and Preston.**
- 2. To highlight that Option One and Option Two would create a Trust too large and, therefore, less responsible to local needs.**
- 3. The Council recognises that the consultation only offers three options but would want any reconfiguration to tie in with the outcome of any future review of local government.**

Reason for decisions:

The views expressed in the response to the consultation exercises are aimed at achieving the best outcomes for the Borough in terms of reducing health inequalities.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Not to respond to the consultation exercises.

06.EC.46 A PLAN FOR ALL THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF LANCASHIRE - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services on a consultation from the Lancashire County Council on a draft 'Plan for all the Children and Young People of Lancashire'.

The draft Plan identified 28 priority areas of work aimed at delivering the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes (ie Be Healthy; Stay Safe; Enjoy and achieve; Make a positive contribution; and Achieve economic well-being). The Lancashire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership would be responsible for ensuring co-operation between local partners on the delivery of the priority outcomes.

The report contained a suggested response to the consultation, which had been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief Executive indicated that the Executive Cabinet would need to review the Borough Council's contribution, as a major partner, to the achievement of the "Every Child Matters" agenda.

Decisions made:

- (1) That approval be given to the comments contained in Paragraphs 22 to 26 of the submitted report forming the basis of the Council's response to the County Council's consultation on the draft 'Plan for all the Children and Young People of Lancashire'.**
- (2) That a report highlighting the Council's endeavours and current and future plans to provide services for children and young people in the Borough be presented to a future meeting of the Executive Cabinet.**

Reason for decisions:

The views expressed in the response to the consultation exercise are aimed at achieving the best outcomes for the children and young people of the Borough.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Not to comment on the consultation document.

06.EC.47 CAPITAL PROGRAMME, 2005/06 - MONITORING

The Executive Cabinet considered a joint report of the Group Director A and the Director of Finance on the progress of the 2005/06 Capital Programme and seeking approval of a number of recommendations from the Capital Programme Board.

In response to the comment of an Executive Member on the possibility of Section 106 monies being utilised to fund the required drainage of football pitches, the Director of Finance confirmed that a Working Group of Officers had been set up to review the use of Section 106 monies.

Decisions made:

That the Council be recommended to:

- (1) approve the revised Capital Programme for 2005/06 in the sum of £15,079,800 as outlined in the submitted report; and**
- (2) to approve the following recommendations of the Capital Programme Board:**

Exception Reports

- (a) approval to a £6,500 increase to the Fleet Management System project budget to be funded from savings in other schemes;
- (b) approval to the revised Housing Revenue Account programme as outlined in Appendix 1 to the submitted report and the inclusion of the Cotswold House CCTV scheme within the 205/06 Capital Programme, to be funded from restricted housing receipts;
- (c) to defer consideration of the start of Phase 3 of the Chapel Street Enhancement Scheme, together with proposals for Phase 4 of the scheme, until a feasible Business Plan has been produced.

New Capital Schemes and Projects

- (d) that the following new schemes be placed on the reserve list (Category C) for future consideration when resources become available:
 - Additional resources for the disabled facilities grant;
 - Hic Bibi scheme;
 - Common Bank - Big Wood Reservoir;
 - Thin Client;
 - Data Storage Solution.
- (e) that the new scheme for 'Pitch Drainage at Bishop Rawsthorne School' be placed in Category B of the 2005/06 Capital Programme, and that £19,944 from the Fairclough Homes, Jubilee Mill, Croston Section 106 Agreement monies be used as match funding for the project.

Reasons for recommendations:

The revisions to the 2005/06 Capital Programme have been made on the advice of consultants and project managers. The decisions have taken account of schemes that are either overspending or require additional resources.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.48 REVENUE BUDGET, 2005/06 - MONITORING

The Director of Finance submitted a report on the present financial position of the Council in respect of the 2005/06 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, and their comparison with the identified efficiency savings targets.

The report revealed that the situation with the General Fund continued to improve, with the forecast overspend having been reduced from £101,000 to £13,000 since the previous monitoring report.

Only minor alterations had occurred in the Housing Revenue Account since the last report and, while the forecast for the HRA balances had reduced by £4,000, the overall budget remained close to target.

Decisions made:

That the report be noted.

06.EC.49 TENDER FOR THE RENEWAL OF COUNCIL INSURANCES

This item had been deleted from the meeting's agenda.

06.EC.50 CHORLEY ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY

The Head of Development and Regeneration presented a report seeking approval of an Economic Regeneration Strategy for the Borough.

The Strategy had been compiled from the findings of the consultants commissioned in 2005 to undertake a study of the area, in consultation with public sector stakeholders and businesses. The Strategy identified Chorley as a 'Contemporary Market Town' and provided a framework to support sustainable growth, within which economic activity and social inclusion could be promoted.

The key priority actions were identified in the Strategy document, together with the partners whose role would be vital in achieving delivery of the planned targets.

The Strategy would provide a framework for action over a 10 -15 year period and would be reviewed on a regular basis.

Decision made:

That approval be given to the Chorley Economic Regeneration Strategy, subject to the Head of Development and Regeneration being delegated with authority to make any necessary minor textual amendments to the Strategy document.

Reason for decision:

The Economic Regeneration Strategy is a key document that will assist the Council to deliver sustainable growth.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.51 CHORLEY TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY - CONSULTATION DRAFT

The Head of Development and Regeneration submitted a report to which was attached a consultation draft of a Chorley Town Centre Strategy which had been compiled to take account of the findings of a recent consultants' study of the town centre and the wider retail and leisure needs of the Borough.

The Strategy identified the following four priority elements, against which the key measures and action plans had been focused:

- Town Centre Diversification;
- Town Centre Environment;
- Accessibility and Movement;
- Business Promotion and Support.

The Strategy had been prepared to provide a co-ordinated framework for action, investment and partnership working over a 10 year period. The Strategy aimed to realise the full potential of the town centre by improving its vitality and viability by building on its unique character and strengths by a combination of activities including town centre management, environmental improvements and regeneration, promotion and marketing.

Decisions made:

That the Draft Chorley Town Centre Strategy be approved for consultation and community involvement purposes, subject to the Head of Development and Regeneration being granted delegated authority to make any necessary mirror textual amendments to the Strategy document.

Reason for decision:

Planning Policy Statement 6 : Planning for Town Centres states that Council's should be proactive in their approach to town centres, produce Town Centre Strategies and plans for future development in the town.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.52 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - JOINT WORKING WITH PRESTON AND SOUTH RIBBLE COUNCILS

The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Head of Development and Regeneration on a proposed collaborative working arrangement with Preston and South Ribble Borough Councils on the production of a joint Core Strategy document and other aspects of the Local Development Framework.

Officers from the three Authorities had, over recent months, established a close working relationship on strategic planning policy and economic development issues and it was considered that the preparation of a joint Core Strategy would represent a natural progression of the working arrangement. This would ensure that the Core Central Lancashire Sub-Regional Strategy and Preston City Vision being prepared were implemented through each Authority's Local Development Framework.

It was proposed to set up a joint Authority Steering Group to ensure that a co-ordinated approach was adopted and the Council's Local Development Framework and Community Strategy Member Working Group would continue to advise Officers on the content of the Core Strategy.

Decision made:

That the proposal for the Borough Council's collaboration with South Ribble and Preston Councils on the preparation of a joint Core Strategy development plan document covering all three areas, and other aspects of the Local Development Framework, be approved.

Reason for decision:

The joint working arrangement between the three authorities will be beneficial to the central area of Lancashire and will ensure the production of a joint Core Strategy in a cost and time effective manner.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

An alternative option would be for each authority to prepare its own Core Strategy, but a combined, joint Strategy is likely to be more effective in developing and implementing the sub-regional spatial strategy and Preston City Vision.

A further option would be to establish formal joint working arrangements entailing the setting up of a Joint Committee. This would require additional resources, be time consuming and would not necessarily result in a better joint Core Strategy.

06.EC.53 REVIEW OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The Head of Corporate and Policy Services presented a report on the changes to be made to the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as a result of the Government's recent review and White Paper.

The report highlighted the likely impact of the changes on the Chorley Community Safety Strategy and Partnership, explaining, in particular, the effect on how the partnership works at a strategic level and how the services are delivered at an operational level. The report also commented on the failure of the review to take into account the current consultation exercise on the future shape of Local Strategic Partnerships and the probable debate on the review of local government structures, which would impact further on community safety issues.

Decision made:

That the report be noted and that the comments contained within paragraph 11 form the basis of the Council's representations to the Government Office for the North West on the proposed revision of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998.

Reason for decision

The comments articulated in the report express the Borough Council's considered views on the proposed revision of the current community safety regime.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.54 CORE FUNDING, 2006/07 - AWARDS IN EXCESS OF £5,000

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services seeking the Members' instructions on applications for grant assistance in excess of £5,000 from the Council's Core Fund budget provision in 2006/07.

The Executive Member for Life and Leisure would be considering, under her delegated powers, the requests for grants less than £5,000 to a number of non-profit making organisations.

The Chief Executive indicated that the Council would need to review the situation in respect of the provision of advice services throughout the Borough.

Decisions made:

(1) That approval be given to the making of the following Core Fund grant in excess of £5,000, subject to the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services agreeing, and signing off, a Core Funding Agreement with each organisation:

- **Chorley and South Ribble Shopmobility - grant of £10,150;**
- **Age Concern, Chorley - grant of £2,385, plus £3,550 towards accommodation costs via internal transfer;**
- **South Lancashire Arts Partnership - grant of £6,795, subject to the organisation providing an analysis of activity across Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire districts and details of the funding from each district;**
- **Chorley and District Sports Forum - grant of £5,435, subject to the Forum agreeing an appropriate methodology for assessing talented individuals' applications and a fixed budget for the year with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services; and**
- **Chorley, South Ribble and Districts Citizens' Advice Bureaux - grant of £65,600 (to be paid in two six monthly payments in advance), plus £16,719 to cover accommodation costs; subject to the CAB providing the same level of service during 2006/07 as they have in 2005/06, as a minimum, and maintaining the Community Legal Service Quality Mark.**

(2) That a review of the provision of advice services throughout the Borough be undertaken.

Reason for decision:

The grant assistance to key local organisations will enable them to continue with their work, which contributes towards the achievement of the Council's strategic objectives.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Not to award the Core Fund grants in 2006/07.

06.EC.55 ALBANY SCIENCE COLLEGE

The Executive Leader allowed consideration of an item not on the meeting's agenda in order to inform Members of an important educational project.

Councillor Lennox drew the Executive Cabinet's attention to Albany Science College's proposals to undertake a major educational project in constructional engineering for Year 10/11 pupils, which was being supported by Runshaw College.

Decision made:

That the educational venture be supported by the Borough Council.

Reason for decision:

The venture will enhance the education curriculum for 14 - 19 year old students.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

06.EC.56 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 Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

06.EC.57 MINUTES

The non-public minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet fell on 23 February 2006 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

06.EC.58 IMPACT OF HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER - ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Management Team on its recent review of the likely impact on the organisation of the proposed housing stock transfer to Chorley Community Housing.

The Management Team now advocated a more strategic approach to the transfer operations, which would allow Service Heads to identify and consider alternative structures and approaches, whilst acknowledging the likely impact on the projected transfer timetable.

Decision made:

That the report be accepted and that the Management Team be requested to undertake a more strategic review and identify and assess how savings based upon the identified criteria can be delivered; and report their findings to a future meeting of the Executive Cabinet.

Reason for decision:

The alternative strategic approach will allow an opportunity to consider both the impact of the projected senior management restructure on the delivery of services and the need to take account of the requirements of the Corporate Strategy and priorities.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

Executive Leader