

Executive Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 22 November 2012

Present: Councillor Alistair Bradley (Executive Leader in the Chair), Councillor Peter Wilson (Deputy Leader of the Council) and Councillors Beverley Murray, Terry Brown, Dennis Edgerley and Adrian Lowe

Also in attendance

Lead Members: Councillors Julia Berry

Other Members: Councillors Henry Counce, John Dalton, David Dickinson, Anthony Gee, Harold Heaton, Steve Holgate, Keith Iddon, Kevin Joyce, Hasina Khan, Paul Leadbetter, June Molyneaux, Greg Morgan, Mick Muncaster and John Walker

Officers: Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy), Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places), Chris Moister (Head of Governance), Simon Clark (Head of Health, Environment & Neighbourhoods), Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy and Communications), Asim Khan (Head of Customer, ICT and Transactional Services), Andrew Daniels (Communications Manager) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

Members of the public: One

12.EC.157 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were submitted.

12.EC.158 MINUTES

RESOLVED - The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 18 October 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Executive Leader.

12.EC.159 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No Members declared an interest in respect of items on the agenda.

12.EC.160 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Executive Leader reported that there had been a request from one member of the public to speak the agenda item relating to the trial re-opening of Market Street and new parking layout for St George's Street.

The question was read out by Peter Loughlin and the detail is set out below.

Could you please confirm that all surveys will be carried out before and after the re-opening of Market Street (if it goes ahead) so that a fair comparison can be obtained; and that the full details of all such surveys will be fully available to the public?

12.EC.161 TRIAL RE-OPENING OF MARKET ST AND NEW PARKING LAYOUT FOR ST GEORGE'S STREET

The Chair brought this item forward on the agenda as it related to the question raised by the member of the public.

The Executive Member (Homes and Business) updated Members on proposals for the trial re-opening of Market Street and new parking layout for St George's Street. The report summarised the main points from the consultation process and sought approval to progress the schemes through to delivery.

The plans for re-opening Market Street had been prepared with the full involvement of highways practitioners at both Pendle Borough Council and Lancashire County Council. The proposal addressed the highway's requirements of Lancashire County Council, as the Highway Authority. With the use of signage, raised table crossings, bollards and planters (to restrict the carriageway width) traffic speeds would be at a minimum.

There would be periodic monitoring and evaluation with qualitative feedback from town centre stakeholders (pre-scheme scenarios would be drawn from consultation), and quantitative analysis of footfall surveys (from current footfall count practice), pedestrian and vehicle flows (at Park Road, Junction of St George's St/Market St and other routes into Market St (namely St Thomas's Road)) and parking usage (from current monitoring of car park usage). There would also be monitoring of pedestrian and vehicle flows for pre and post scheme analysis.

Monitoring and evaluation would be made fully available to the public, including pollution monitoring which would be undertaken in a similar fashion.

It was clarified that there had been extensive consultation undertaken, including the Council's Equality Forum and Shop Mobility to ensure that there was provision for wheel chair users. Once the work had been undertaken feedback from members of the public would also be monitored and the details of this were under consideration. It was noted that the consultation had been targeted and extensive. The Citizens Panel had been replaced by a Citizens Jury, and due to the targeted and extensive nature of the consultation the Citizens Jury had not been consulted about the proposals.

It was hoped that the area would be safer going forward than it was currently as cars currently weren't monitored, road safety was of paramount importance for this scheme.

Decision made

- 1. Approval granted to the proposals for the trial reopening of Market Street and new parking layout for St George's Street to be progressed through to delivery as outlined in paragraphs 14, 15, 17 and 18 of the report, with approval of any scheme amendments being delegated to the Executive Member for Homes and Business.**
- 2. The reversal of a decision in relation to the St George's Street Management Proposal in relation to an aspiration to reduce the impact of cars in the Conservation Area be noted.**

Reason(s) for decision

These schemes will help to revitalise the top end of Market Street and Chorley Town Centre, provide additional parking which in turn will attract more shoppers and boost trade in the area.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

12.EC.162 REFRESH OF CHORLEY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Executive Leader and Executive Member (Economic Development and Governance) presented a report which updated Members on the refresh of Chorley's Economic Development Strategy, summarised the main changes and sought adoption of the Strategy.

It was noted that the strategy would be updated to include the installation of rural broadband.

In response to a query the Executive Leader advised that one of the motivations behind the Strategy was to encourage independent businesses and to expand the offer of shops. There were a lot of potential visitors who lived within half an hour and Chorley needed to attract these people. The wording of the Strategy regarding competition would be reworded to reflect this.

To monitor the progress in delivering against the priority areas, key long term outcomes and measures had been identified, which would be reported on an annual basis, at the same time as refreshing the strategy and actions. The base level for the measures would be set shortly and would take into account the kind of measures that businesses within Chorley would find useful.

Decision made

- 1. Approval granted to adopt the refreshed Economic Development Strategy (contained in Appendix A of the report).**
- 2. Delegated powers granted to the Executive Leader to make minor amendments to the Strategy.**

Reason(s) for decision

The refreshed Strategy will ensure that our priorities and actions are clearly aligned to current issues and strengths facing the borough.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

12.EC.163 98-102 MARKET STREET - FORMER MCDONALDS SITE: PROPOSED REFURBISHMENT WORKS

The Executive Leader and Executive Member (Economic Development and Governance) updated Members on the purchase of and proposals for the future use and occupation of the former McDonalds site.

One of the key factors within the proposal was to retain influence over the type of shops within the town. The development would be of an arcade style and the design of this would be considered carefully. The development of a car park would give the Council's options, both in terms of a potential commercial partner in the operation that car park and potential to use current Council car parks for other purposes.

Members noted that the site would form a key part of the Town Centre Master Plan. A further report would be presented to Executive Cabinet with firm proposals for the redevelopment of the buildings and car park in the New Year.

Decision made

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. Agreement granted, in principle, to refurbish 100-102 Market Street for retail units, to the demolition of 98 Market Street and the creation of a car park in the area between the Fleet Street Car Park and Gillibrand Street.**

Reason(s) for decision

Market Street is a link between the two retail centres, Market Walk/ Market/ Booths and the proposed Asda development. On this basis retail is the better option for this site. The need in Chorley is for smaller retail sites rather than larger stores and it is appropriate to split the site into smaller units. The creation of the arcade provides a direct access to the car park behind and means a more attractive shop frontage.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

- 1. Create 2 retail units one at 100 Market Street and the other at 102 Market Street. Although a cheaper alternative to the recommendation there is not the need for a large retail unit in this location and there is concern over its subsequent letting.**

2. Demolish the whole site and rebuild purpose built units. The existing units at 100 and 102 Market Street, are sound, and whilst they require some works the recommendation proposed is more cost effective.

12.EC.164 REFRESH OF THE KEY PARTNERSHIPS FRAMEWORK

The Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance presented the updated key partnerships framework for approval.

The Council's key partnerships framework had been approved in 2007 in response to Audit Commission feedback. The framework identified the extent of the Council's key partnerships and put in place effective governance controls and monitoring arrangements to ensure the success of the partnerships and the achievement of the Council's priorities.

Responsibility for the key partnerships framework and its monitoring transferred from Procurement to Policy and Communications in late 2011 as part of the review of shared financial services. This was in order to free up some capacity in the procurement team and strengthen the performance and equality monitoring, while also reducing the duplication in reporting. The review of the framework had included an update to the list of key partnerships.

Decision made

Approval granted to the updated key partnerships framework.

Reason(s) for decision

To ensure that the Council has an up to date and robust framework in place to support the effective governance and monitoring arrangements of the Council's key partnerships.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

12.EC.165 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13 REPORT 2 (END OF SEPTEMBER 2012)

The Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance presented a report which set out the current financial position of the Council as compared against the budgets and efficiency savings targets it set itself for the financial year 2012/13.

The Council had expected to make overall target savings of £ 200,000 in 2012/13 from management of the establishment and the full savings target for 2012/13 had been achieved. The projected outturn currently showed a forecast underspend of around £ 312,000.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy proposed that working balances were to be no lower than £ 2.0m due to the financial risks facing the Council. The current forecast to the end of September showed that the General Fund balance would be around £ 2.334m. This put the Council in a strong position and should help to mitigate against future risks associated with the Local Business Rates Retention scheme from April 2013.

Members noted that projects to improve Chorley Town Centre, to be funded from the £ 300,000 reserve created for that purpose, had commenced.

Decision made
The report be noted

Reason(s) for decision

To ensure the Council's budgetary targets are achieved.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

12.EC.166 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2012/13 - 2014/15

The Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance presented a report which requested an update to the Capital Programmes for financial years 2012/13 to 2014/15 to take account of proposed budget changes and the rephasing of expenditure to 2013/14. The report gave details of the budgeted receipt and use of contributions from developers for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15.

Members discussed that Network Rail had moved closer to finalising payments for Buckshaw Parkway Station, which would be financed with the Section 106 contribution held by this council. It was likely that the 2012/13 budget for the project should be available to provide enhancements to the station, but expenditure would not be committed until the construction contract was finalised. This could mean that some budget provision would have to be rephased to 2013/14 later in the year if improvements could not be implemented during 2012/13.

Decision made

- 1. That Council be recommended to approve the proposed amendments to the Capital Programmes for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15, as presented in columns (3), (7) and (10) of Appendix 1.**
- 2. That Council be recommended to approve the rephasing of capital budgets between 2012/13 and 2013/14, as presented in columns (2) and (6) of Appendix 1.**

Reason(s) for decision

1. The 2012/13 to 2014/15 Capital Programme should be increased to include budget provision for refuse and recycling bins that reflects increased costs and meets demand for new and replacement bins.
2. A home repair grant is repayable, and the usual practice is to top up the Housing Renewal budget with the repaid grant. The cash has not yet been received so expenditure should not be committed until it is.
3. Two small sums should be transferred to the revenue budget to cover minor repairs to the Town Hall (£2,030); and minor improvements to the Covered Market (£7,110). These relate to existing capital projects, but this particular expenditure should not be capitalised.
4. The likelihood of completing the Chorley East Health Centre during 2012/13 has reduced because agreement has not yet been reached with the NHS. Three small Streetscene schemes cannot be completed over the winter so budget provision should be rephased.
5. Improvements to fire doors at Cotswold House are required on health and safety grounds.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

12.EC.167 CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE MONITORING - SECOND QUARTER 2012/13

The Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance updated the meeting on the performance of the Chorley Partnership during the second quarter of 2012/2013, from 1 July to 30 September 2012.

Performance of the Chorley Partnership in achieving the key performance targets remained good, with latest figures available for alcohol related hospital admissions showing a year to date reduction of 11% at quarter four 2011/12 compared to quarter four 2010/11. Figures for primary fires in Chorley were lower than anticipated.

Crime overall had increased by 6.7% in quarter one and two compared to the same period last year, although there had however been a significant decrease in anti-social behaviour, and domestic abuse detections was performing above target.

Overall performance on the key projects / priorities in the Chorley Partnership delivery plan was good, with 74% rated green or completed.

Members noted that discussions were ongoing with the Police regarding the crime figures. When the percentages were so low a slight change could have a distorted effect on the figures.

Decision made

That the report be noted.

Reason(s) for decision

To facilitate the on-going analysis and management of the Chorley Partnership's performance and delivery of funded projects.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

12.EC.168 CHORLEY COUNCIL PERFORMANCE MONITORING - SECOND QUARTER 2012/13

The Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance outlined the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the second quarter of 2012/13, 1 July to 30 September 2012.

Overall performance of key projects remained excellent, with a majority of the projects on track or completed. Only two projects were rated 'amber', 'explore the development of a service package for accommodation for 16/17 year olds', and 'Implement the framework for strategic partnerships'. Explanation of the reasons and the actions being taken to bring the projects back on track was provided within the report.

Following the refresh of the Corporate Strategy, the report provided a progress update on all projects which have not yet been completed and identified those that would be managed and monitored through service improvement plans from now on. The report included details of the one project that had been carried over into the new corporate strategy; to implement the customer services migration plan.

Decision made

That the report be noted.

Reason(s) for decision

To facilitate the on-going analysis and management of the Council's performance in delivering the Corporate Strategy.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

12.EC.169 REVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING

The Executive Member (Places) advised Members of the outcome of a review into neighbourhood working. The report requested approval to develop and improve service delivery and community engagement at a neighbourhood level.

The current neighbourhood working model had evolved since its launch in 2008. There were seven neighbourhood areas and each area had a Ward Member meeting twice a year which discussed issues arising in the particular area and received retrospective reports on neighbourhood activities delivered by Council and partner services.

This review provided an opportunity to revise the delivery of neighbourhood working in Chorley and Members discussed and welcomed the proposed arrangements, particularly the redrawn boundaries and extended membership. The Parish representative should not be the clerk, or someone who was not also a Borough Councillor. There was potential for areas, like the town centre and Buckshaw Village for a representative from the community to be involved.

Parishes would receive details of the new arrangements shortly and be invited to submit their Parish Plans to form part of the information basis for the Neighbourhood work plans. The proposals had been discussed at the Borough Parish Liaison meeting the previous evening and had been well received.

Decision made

1. **The definition of neighbourhood working approved as "Working with our partners to improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of all our citizens and to improve the environment of the neighbourhoods in which they live".**
2. **Approval granted to the redrawn boundaries of the neighbourhood areas, increasing the number of areas from seven to eight as described in paragraph 29 and Appendix 1 of the report.**
3. **Approval to the level of representation at the twice yearly round of neighbourhood area meetings to include County Council Member representation and Parish Council Member representation in accordance with the Table 1 within the report.**
4. **Approval granted to the process described in paragraph 35 outlining the establishment of annual neighbourhood work plans.**
5. **The business as usual activities undertaken as part of neighbourhood working come from a number of service teams baseline budgets but that work or services provided over and above will need to be provided through a separate budget yet to be agreed with a means for Members to access it be noted.**
6. **The resource implications arising out of this review be noted.**

Reason(s) for decision

To ensure the neighbourhood working model continues to develop and meets the needs of Members and the communities they serve.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

The option to retain the current neighbourhood working model and framework was considered but it is appropriate to develop and adapt neighbourhood working as described in this report.

12.EC.170 LANCASHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING RELATING TO ENFORCEMENT WORK

The Executive Member (Places) presented a report which sought authorisation for the sign up to two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and the Councils housing standards and workplace health and safety enforcement function.

The Councils workplace health and safety enforcement and housing standards enforcement teams had been approached by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service to sign up to two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between the two organisations. These related to the Councils enforcement work in these areas.

The MoU's sought to formalise an unwritten arrangement that had existed between the two organisations so that there was clarity in terms of where responsibility lay in relation to both enforcement of fire safety provision in domestic dwellings and enforcement of electrical safety in workplaces that fell within Chorley Council's enforcement responsibility.

Decision made

- 1. Acceptance of the terms of the Electrical Safety in Workplaces Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and authorisation for the Director of People and Places to sign.**
- 2. Acceptance of the terms of the Housing Standards Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and authorisation for the Director of People and Places to sign.**

Reason(s) for decision

To ensure that partnership working in the areas of housing fire safety enforcement and electrical safety in work places enforcement is effectively coordinated and the roles and responsibilities of both organisations are fully understood.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

An alternative option would be not to sign up to the MoU's and continue with the informal arrangement between the organisations in determining enforcement responsibility and the agency best place to take action.

12.EC.171 LOW COST HOME OWNERSHIP (LCHO) SCHEMES - POLICY AMENDMENT TO ALLOW OWNERS TO RENT OUT THE PROPERTY ON A TEMPORARY BASIS

The Executive Member for Homes and Business presented a report requesting approval to allow owners of LCHO properties to be able to rent out the property with certain conditions attached.

There were currently 11 LCHO schemes in the borough representing 120 properties. The option of deed of release i.e. the owner was able to buy out the discount was available on 2 of the 11 schemes. Currently, there was no option for the owner to rent out the property on any of the 11 schemes.

Due to market conditions some owners were having difficulty selling their property and were asking if the Council would be willing to change the policy rules to allow them flexibility to either buy out of the scheme or rent out the property.

In reality it is unlikely that many owners would be able to afford to buy out the discount but a number would be able to rent out the property which would ease their hardship.

Members noted that the recommendations would enable properties to be rented out at affordable rates rather than being empty. It was not anticipated that there would be a great demand for this. Each case would be determined on its own merits and the policy would be kept under close review.

Decision made

Delegated authority granted to the Executive Member for Homes and Business to consider each application on its merits to allow LCHO owners to rent out their property at an 'affordable' rent until either their personal circumstances change to allow them to return to the property to take up residence or until market conditions improve and they are able to sell the property. If approved LCHO owners renting out their home would need to meet the conditions listed in section 8 of the report.

Reason(s) for decision

To give owners of LCHO properties the option to rent out the property with the intention of easing hardship until market conditions improve.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

1. Retain the status quo, this option has been rejected because of the level of dissatisfaction with the terms of the scheme and the difficulties owners are having selling their home.
2. Allow owners to be able to buy out the discount on their home and sell the property at a future date without any price restriction i.e. at open market value. The Council would reinvest the proceeds from the buyout in affordable housing elsewhere in the borough. This option has been rejected because it is unlikely that any LCHO owners will be in a position to buy out the remaining equity in the property.
3. The option of renting out the property will allow LCHO owners to obtain some income to be able to continue to pay the mortgage and move elsewhere for reasons of employment or because of a change in their circumstances.

12.EC.172 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – To exclude the press and public for the following item of business on the ground that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

12.EC.173 KEY PARTNERSHIPS MONITORING REPORT

The Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance presented a report which updated Members on the progress on the performance of the Council's key partnership arrangements.

The key partnerships performance report was produced in accordance with the requirements of the Council's key partnerships framework. It informed Members of the performance of the Council's key partnerships against targets set for the current year, any emerging issues including whether the contract was on budget or subject to any overspend or underspend of budget. It also provided an assessment of the key partner's financial strength and stability.

Overall performance of all of the key partnerships was good and the financial assessments of the partnerships were positive with the financial standing of all key partnerships either remaining the same or improving.

Decision made

That the report be noted.

Reason(s) for decision

To keep members updated on the performance of key partnerships and to ensure effective governance arrangements are in place.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

12.EC.174 EXTERNAL MAIL HANDLING - CREATING A VIRTUAL POSTROOM

The Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance advised Members of proposed changes to the way the council handles external mail requirements, as part of a wider programme of business transformation. The report advised Members of the current costs associated with external mail handling and postage and suggested various options and recommendations on how these could be reduced.

Decision made

- 1. Support granted for the drive to streamline mail handling through a phased introduction of a hybrid mail solution across the council. Mail received and sent by the Council would therefore be dealt with by external suppliers.**
- 2. Support and approval granted to the suggested changes for the circulation of agenda papers to be distributed electronically and paper copies available only at meetings. This would be supported by a review of the technology used by Members in 2013.**
- 3. Agreement that steps be taken internally to stop mail being sent by first class post unless there were exceptional circumstances (to include mail sent to Members) such as time related constraints or legal requirements. However effective planning of mail despatch could help with the management of this.**
- 4. Support granted for the drive to reduce costs by increasing the level of electronic applications for services through the provision of the new website and intranet.**
- 5. To note that where appropriate the Council would partner with existing suppliers i.e. for the provision of rail cards where this would not disadvantage the customer and reduces costs. Service improvements would continue to be supported by a variety of existing access channels such as by phone or in person for advice and support through the Councils Customer Service Centre.**
- 6. To note the efficiency savings that would be achieved through the reduction in internal staff resource deployed to deal with mail and also the copying equipment used to produce it.**

Reason(s) for decision

- 1. To enable the council to secure a better value mail handling solution to help drive efficiency savings.**
- 2. To help support the plans for reducing staffing numbers through the organisational review.**
- 3. To reduce the current cost of first class mail and other associated postage costs.**
- 4. To help achieve our aspirations to create a virtual post environment within the council.**

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

The current arrangements could be maintained but that would impact on the level of efficiency savings attainable through the proposed organisational structure and would mean the current unacceptable cost of external mail postage and associated costs would also remain.

12.EC.175 TRANSACTIONAL SERVICES REVIEW

The Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance presented a report which advised that the drivers for the proposals outlined were to achieve the Council's strategic ambition to migrate services in to the front office, increasing flexibility, productivity and customer satisfaction whilst reducing back office costs.

Decision made

To approve the new structure set out at Appendix's C and D for consultation, and grant delegated powers for the final approval of the structure following consultation to the Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance.

Reason(s) for decision

To enable back office support to be realigned in the front office, therefore reducing back office costs and increasing performance of the front office to deal with customer requests efficiently and effectively.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

Executive Leader