

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

GENERAL REPORT OF MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2006

1. The Executive Cabinet has met twice on 9 November and 7 December 2006 since the last Ordinary Council meeting. This report summarises briefly the principal matters considered at 9 November meeting. Separate reports have been prepared in respect of both the items which require Council decisions and the matters considered at the 7 December 2006 meeting.

A Play Strategy for the Borough

2. The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services presented the Executive Cabinet with a report seeking approval to the adoption of a Play Strategy for Chorley.
3. The Strategy has been compiled by the Chorley Play Partnership following a wide consultation exercise and is designed to cover a 10 year period up to 2016. The Strategy is supported by a preliminary action plan which identifies a wide range of projected initiatives and activities designed to improve access to quality play opportunities. The delivery of the proposals will be dependent on the attraction of external funding, effective partnership working and the alignment of available Council resources.
4. We took on board opinions expressed by some members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approved the Play Strategy for Chorley, subject to the Officers' examination of the ethics and appropriateness of a non-Executive Member of the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel being appointed to the small panel to be set-up to assess projects to form part of the bid for Big Lottery funding. The Executive Leader has been granted delegated power to agree the finalised Play Strategy for adoption.

Lancashire Partnership – Strategy for an Ageing Population

5. We considered a report of the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services seeking the Executive Cabinet's agreement to a response to the Lancashire Partnership's Strategy for an Ageing Population.
6. The strategy has been developed following an extensive consultation exercise and aims broadly to improve equality of opportunities and services to meet the changing needs of an ageing population. The strategy includes a framework for the delivery of its objectives through five identified outcomes to maximise the opportunities for older people and to promote their health, safety and independence.
7. We welcomed the Strategy and accepted the response to the consultation suggested by the Director which highlighted a few elements that could be strengthened or reviewed, augmented by the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to encourage greater use of the resource and contribution older people can make to the community with their skills and experience.

Forward Plan

8. We received and noted the Council's Forward Plan which set out the key decisions which the Executive Cabinet, individual Executive Members and Officers are expected to take during the four months period between 1 November 2006 and 28 February 2007.
9. We were reminded that, following a thorough review, the Forward Plan has been made more inclusive and transparent.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment – Direction of Travel Self Assessment 2006

10. The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Director of Policy and Performance to which was attached the Authority's Direction of Travel Self Assessment for 2006.
11. The Self Assessment is required to inform the work of the Audit Commission in its annual assessment of the Council's progress in delivering key outcomes and improvements. It is important, therefore, that the assessment reflects the Council's achievements during the period September 2005 to September 2006 and clarifies the key areas of focus for future work. The document highlights the significant service improvements the Council has delivered to its customers and the instances where the Authority has been recognised externally as a model of excellence and innovation.
12. The Self Assessment will also, of course, be critical to the Council's application for re-assessment under the revised Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework.

Collaborative Working Update

13. The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Director of Finance which referred to a number of areas where opportunities for collaborative working arrangements are either being delivered or pursued.
14. An arrangement has been agreed with Stockport Council for the provision of part-time senior management support to the Human Resources Directorate pending the arrival of the newly appointed Director. As a result of the recent loss of Health and Safety staff, a temporary arrangement has also been agreed whereby Bolton Council will provide health and safety support to Chorley Council for an initial trial period of 12 months.
15. Limited staffing resources within the Finance Units of both Chorley and South Ribble Councils has also prompted an exploration, with the North West Centre of Excellence into shared working opportunities. Consequently, both Councils are currently producing a detailed business case into the feasibility of future partnership working in the areas of Accountancy and Audit services; Exchequer services; Property Services; and Procurement. It is expected that the business case including the likely financial and governance implications, will be available for consideration before the end of the financial year.

Groundwork Wigan and Chorley – Proposed Merger

16. The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Director of Development and Regeneration and endorsed the proposed merger of Groundwork Wigan and Chorley and Groundwork Lancashire West, subject to a Service Level Agreement being drawn up and agreed prior to the establishment of the new Trust.
17. The new Groundwork Trust will cover a much wider area, encompassing Wigan, Chorley, Preston, South Ribble, West Lancashire, Blackpool and Lancaster, and will be able to focus on areas of high level deprivation. This will allow new Trust work to be targeted against identified areas of Chorley.
18. The Authority will continue to appoint a representative to serve on the Board of the proposed new Groundwork Wigan and Lancashire West.

Appointment of Service Provider for the Property Services Function

19. Following consideration of a report of the Executive Director – Corporate and Customer, the Executive Cabinet approved the award of a contract to Liberata UK Ltd for the delivery of a comprehensive property services function on behalf of the Council.

20. The Executive Cabinet authorised pursuance of a procurement exercise to secure a partner service provider for the Property Services function as a consequence of the budget process for 2005/06.
21. With the aid of an external consultant, a Project Team has evaluated three detailed bids, as a result of which the Team has recommended acceptance of the bid from Liberata UK Ltd. This bid complies with the identified specification, cost model and contractual requirements, and the company has demonstrated a capacity and capability to deliver the full range of property services required by the Council.
22. We have awarded the contract for a fixed annual capital and revenue sum, with the contractor standing the risk of overspend, particularly on revenue repair costs. It is expected that the contract will general annual revenue savings in the region of £80,000.

Recommendation

23. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR P GOLDSWORTHY
Executive Leader

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There are no background papers to this report.