

EXECUTIVE CABINET

GENERAL REPORT OF MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2014

Croston Flood Risk Management Scheme

1. The report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community was presented by the Executive Member (Resources).
2. Croston is the primary location across Chorley where serious flooding incidents have occurred. The Environment Agency (EA), together with the Council and other partners has been developing a flood risk management scheme that will reduce the risk of flooding in Croston.
3. The proposed scheme will create a Flood Storage Area (FSA) upstream of Eccleston Bridge, on the River Yarrow. The FSA will comprise a long embankment dam across the River Yarrow, incorporating a structure designed to restrict the volume of water passing downstream towards Croston. The scheme will provide a 1 in 100 year storm protection to 438 properties.
4. We wholly supported the Scheme and noted the positive action undertaken by the Lower Yarrow Flood Action Group, which has been set up by local residents.
5. We discussed the history of the Scheme and noted that, initially, it had been proposed as fully funded by the Environment Agency, but since then, as one of the key partners, the Council has been asked to identify ways to provide £1.1 million towards the scheme. The total cost of the scheme is £6 million and the Environment Agency has secured £4 million, providing work starts by March 2015.
6. We, including the Opposition, feel this is not appropriate and support the recommendation to write to the Government, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Member of Parliament for South Ribble requesting that the £1.1 million funding gap to deliver the Scheme be resolved.
7. We note the update and support the scheme to construct a Flood Storage Area as detailed in the report, subject to planning approval. We agreed to write to the Government, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Member of Parliament for South Ribble requesting that the £1.1 million funding gap to deliver the Scheme be resolved.
8. The decision on consultation with local stakeholders regarding the budget gap will be brought back to the Executive following the receipt of the responses to the letters.

Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Select Move

9. The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group was presented by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Mark Perks.

10. The Scrutiny inquiry into the Select Move choice based lettings scheme was requested by Members after concerns were raised about the accessibility and user-friendliness of Select Move. In addition, there is a perception that people from outside the sub region and without local connection are accessing properties in Chorley.
11. The objectives of the inquiry were to investigate and evidence whether Select Move is meeting the needs to the satisfaction of the applicants, by reviewing the application processes, the allocation processes and the standard of allocated properties.
12. The desired outcomes had been to secure a choice based lettings service that meets the needs of Chorley residents, to identify areas of improvement on condition of property at handover and to reduce waiting times and lists.
13. The findings are mainly positive and Select Move has been demonstrated to be a fit-for purpose, effective way for a number of partners over a sub-regional footprint and to work collaboratively to allocate social housing.
14. There are some important improvements which can be made to the scheme, including ensuring necessary safeguards for those who are not equipped to access digital services. The Task Group has made 15 recommendations, which are supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Some of the recommendations are to be actioned by partner organisations.
15. We agreed to receive the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group and accept it for consideration, with a view to the Executive Cabinet's recommended response to the recommendations being reported to a future meeting.

Provisional Revenue and Capital Budget Outturn 2013/14

16. The report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Executive Member (Resources).
17. The report presents the provisional revenue outturn figures for the Council as compared against the budgets and efficiency savings targets it set itself for the financial year 2013/14.
18. The provisional outturn figures for the 2013/14 Capital Programme are presented and the Capital Programme is updated for financial years 2014/15 to 2016/17 to take account of the re-phasing of expenditure from 2013/14 and other proposed budget changes.
19. The accounts are provisional at this stage and subject to final checking and scrutiny by the Council's external auditor. Should there be any significant changes to the outturn as a result of this process a further report will be submitted to Executive Cabinet.
20. We noted that in November 2013 the Council acquired the Market Walk Shopping Centre. Executive Cabinet has previously approved that the net

rental income from the shopping centre over the four months to financial year-end be transferred to two reserves. It is proposed to amend the share of resources to an 80:20 split between the Change Management Reserve and Market Walk Equalisation Reserve.

21. The net income to 31 March 2014, once all costs that fall on the Council have been deducted, is £326k. This has increased compared to the initial forecasts and is largely due to the Council reducing the costs of financing the acquisition. This has been achieved by the fact that some borrowing has been financed via internal cash balances that have been available, that alternatively would have been invested and only realised a very small rate of return.
22. The transfer to the change management reserve will help to fund future service reorganisation across the Council. The creation of an equalisation reserve will smooth any possible adverse movement in income generation from the shopping centre should that occur in future years. Variations in income levels are also mitigated against within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy which contains a further minimum £100k ongoing contribution to this reserve over the next three years to 2016/17.
23. We noted that the Business Rates Retention (BRR) scheme has been introduced in April 2013. It provides a direct link between business rates growth or decline, and the amount of money the Council has to spend on local people and local services. The Council is able to keep a proportion of business rates revenue, as well as growth generated on that revenue, within the local area. Conversely any decline in Business Rates revenue levels reduces the income received by the Council.
24. A key element of the new regime is the impact that appeals has on the level of income received. Should business rate payers be successful in appealing against the valuation placed on premises, upon which the charge is based, this will reduce the subsequent rate yield in 2014/15. This might potentially lead to a further deficit chargeable in 2015/16.
25. We agreed the slippage requests and other transfers to reserves outlined in Appendix 2 of the report to finance expenditure on specific items or projects in 2014/15 and to the transfer of £326k net income from Market Walk in 2013/14 split 80:20 between the Change Management Reserve and Equalisation Reserve (to limit the future impact of any potential reduction in income).
26. We noted the impact of the final capital expenditure outturn and approved the re-phasing of capital budgets to 2014/15. We agreed to the financing of the 2013/14 Capital Programme to maximise the use of funding resources available to the Council.

Chorley Council Performance Monitoring - Fourth Quarter 2013/14

27. The report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Executive Member (Resources).

28. The report sets out the performance against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators during the fourth quarter of 2013/14.
29. The report reviews the performance of key projects and performance indicators from the new Corporate Strategy for 2013/14. It also presents an update on the outcomes of key projects identified within the 2012/13 Corporate Strategy.
30. Overall performance of 2013/14 key projects is excellent, with all the projects on track or scheduled to start later in the year.
31. Overall performance of Corporate Strategy and key service measures remains strong. 72% of the Corporate Strategy measures and 86% of the key service measures are performing above target or within the 5% tolerance.
32. The Corporate Strategy measures performing below target are; the number of town centre visits, growth in the business rate base, the percentage of customers dissatisfied with the way they were treated by the council, the percentage of domestic violence detections and the number of long term empty properties in the borough. Action plans have been developed to outline what action will be taken to improve performance.
33. We noted the report.

Draft Statement of Community Involvement June 2014

34. The report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community was presented by the Executive Member (Public Protection).
35. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) provides the community and other interested parties with clarity on the levels of involvement in the planning process. It details how the Council will consult in relation to preparing planning policy documents and in determining planning applications.
36. Once finalised, the Council is required to act in accordance with the adopted document. The Council adopted an SCI in 2006, however this is now out-of-date.
37. A revised draft SCI has been prepared, which will be subject to a four week consultation between 30 June and 28 July 2014.
38. The main changes incorporated into the SCI are:
 1. Local planning authorities are required to make information on their planning activity available to their communities as soon as it is ready, and to do so on-line;
 2. The new regulations prescribe additional bodies that are subject to the 'duty to cooperate' under section 110 of the Localism Act 2011.
 3. The preparation and adoption stages by local planning authorities of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents including as to consultation with interested persons and bodies and the documents which must be made available at each stage.

39. We agreed to publish the draft Statement of Community Involvement for four weeks consultation.

Recommendation

40. That the report be noted.

COUNCILLOR ALISTAIR BRADLEY
Executive Leader

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