

## **REPORT OF EXECUTIVE CABINET**

### **GENERAL REPORT OF MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2006**

1. This report summarises briefly the principal matters considered at the 7 December meeting of the Executive Cabinet. Separate reports have been prepared in respect of the items which require Council decisions.

#### **Quarterly performance reports, 2006/07 – Monitoring Report for period ending 30 September 2006**

2. We considered a report of the Director of Policy and Performance monitoring the Council's performance during the second quarter of 2006/07 against the Council's Corporate Strategy and Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI).
3. Overall, the Council's performance on the delivery of the Corporate Strategy's key projects remains good.
4. The report also reveals a positive performance against the BVPIs during the second quarter. Action plans have been introduced to improve the areas where performance has declined for two consecutive periods and targets are being missed by more than 5%. While the timescale of the BVPI relating to the percentage of buildings accessible to disabled persons might require revision, the Directors are confident that the planned improvements will achieve the target soon after the year end.
5. In conclusion, the report confirmed that the organisation continues to perform satisfactorily, with service performance levels remaining high.

#### **Building on the Business Process Architecture**

6. We received a report of the Director of Finance on the Authority's involvement in a Building Process Architecture process with a significant Government funding contribution as part of the National Process Improvement Programme.
7. The project aims to build on work previously developed by Blackburn with Darwen Council and other organisations to identify principles and methodologies to enable other authorities to improve their customer processes and to determine a best delivery model for any District Council.
8. It is expected that the project will produce ultimately a new organisation structure for Chorley with a defined change management programme that will enable the Authority to respond more effectively to the needs and aspirations of its customers, whilst making optimum use of all available resources.
9. The report outlined the basic elements and processes of the projects entailing Consultant facilitated workshops, leading ultimately to the development of a blueprint for a transformed District Council organisation structure and a programme of work required to implement the blueprint.

#### **Value for Money Self Assessment and Framework**

10. The Director of Finance submitted a report which enclosed the Authority's Use of Resources Value for Money Self Assessment for 2006, which has been presented to the Council's external auditors for consideration. The Audit Commission is expected to publish final scores for all Councils in the spring of 2007.

11. The Council had scored 3 out of 4 for the Value for Money theme as part of the Use of Resources first round assessment in 2005. In the light of this commendation, a Value for Money Framework for 2006 – 2009 had been compiled. The framework sets out the Authority's strategic objectives and approach, key principles and plans for the embedding of a value for money culture throughout the organisation.
12. We were pleased to approve the Value for Money Framework for implementation as part of the Council's commitment to the adoption of a strategic approach to strive for value for money in the delivery of all our services.

### **Revenue Budget, 2006/07 – Monitoring**

13. We received a report of the Director of Finance monitoring the current financial position of the Council in comparison with the budgetary and efficiency savings targets for 2006/07 in respect of the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.
14. The report contains details of the significant budget variations that have occurred since the last monitoring report, which have effectively reduced the projected overspend of the General Fund from £170,000 to £67,000. Progress continues to be made towards the achievement of the overall corporate savings target of £278,000, but we will still need to monitor spending intensely, particularly in a number of identified areas, if we are to achieve the cost savings target.
15. The position in respect of the Housing Revenue Account has also improved, in that the forecast balance at the end of the year has increased to £973,000.
16. The Members also noted an additional report appended to the Director of Finance's report on the current position in respect of the concessionary travel scheme in Chorley. While there was likely to be sufficient funds to cover the likely increase in the budgeted sum for 2006/07, the Council will need to determine soon any recommended changes to the scheme to be introduced in 2007. A range of options aimed at reducing the costs of the scheme are currently being examined by the County-wide Concessionary Travel Working Group.

### **Draft General Fund Revenue Budget for 2007/08**

17. The Director of Finance presented the Executive Cabinet with a report which set out the savings targets, budget assumptions and relevant factors that will influence the proposals to deliver a balanced budget for 2007/08.
18. We agreed the adoption of the recommended consultation process on the draft budget plans which are aimed at the delivery of the objectives of the revised Corporate Strategy and the Council's new priorities.
19. The draft budget proposals include provision for limited growth and investment through a redistribution of resources in line with the Executive's strategy to freeze Chorley Council's proportion of the Council Tax for 2007/08.

### **Astley Park – Progress Report**

20. We received a report of the Director of Development and Regeneration on the progress on the substantial project to regenerate and restore Astley Park with Heritage Lottery funding.
21. We were advised that tenders for the main landscape contract are presently being evaluated with the work programmed to commence in December 2006. Tenders for the building work have been issued, and the works are expected to start in January or February 2007, following the evaluation exercise.

22. The Director's report highlighted a few aspects of the project that are being re-examined, including the uncertainty that remains in respect of the inclusion of the pets' corner in the park. We have agreed to consult the public to ascertain views on the retention or otherwise of the facility and we were reminded of the financial implications of a decision to seek the omission of the pets' corner from the overall scheme.
23. The Executive Cabinet was advised that the costs of the project remains currently within budget and that the overall forecasted completion date remains well within the period for the expiry of the Heritage Lottery funding on 31 December 2008.

### **Brinscall Pool**

24. The Executive Cabinet considered a confidential report of the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services on proposals to secure the completion of initial refurbishment works at Brinscall Pool, and subsequent operational arrangements, in order to secure the medium to long term future of the Pool.
25. A recent survey has revealed the necessity for initial essential repair and maintenance work to be undertaken at a capital cost of £190,000. The completion of additional non-essential repair and maintenance works will need to be addressed as a medium to long term project.
26. The report also recommends the incorporation into the new contract with Community Leisure Services for the management of All Seasons and Clayton Green Leisure Centres of provision for the operation of Brinscall Pool, subject to the insertion of break clauses to safeguard the Council's interest in the event of major failings. It is expected that the likely annual operation costs of £37,000 will be able to be met from the current contract provision for repairs and maintenance.
27. We supported the advocated approach to safeguard the future of Brinscall Pool and have agreed to consider the provision for both the initial capital investment of £190,000 for essential repair work at Brinscall Pool, and the ongoing revenue contribution of £37,000 for the operation of the Pool, as part of the deliberations on the 2007/08 budget. The Executive Cabinet has also delegated authority to the Indoor Leisure Committee to approve any consequent variations to the contractual arrangements.

### **Directorate Restructures**

28. The proposals contained within four separate confidential reports of the Director of Development and Regeneration, the Director of Information and Communications Technology, the Director of Finance and the Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment for the restructure of the four respective Directorates were approved by the Executive Cabinet for consultation with affected staff and trade unions.
29. I have been granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment and the Director of Human Resources, to agree variations to the proposals for the restructure of the Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment Directorate, following the consultation process, and to authorise implementation of the final recommendations.

## **Recommendation**

30. 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.