

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

GENERAL REPORT

1. The Executive Cabinet has met twice on 26 May and 30 June 2005 since the last ordinary Council meeting. This report summarises briefly the principal matters considered at each of the two meetings. Separate reports have been prepared in respect of those items considered which require Council decisions.

26 May 2005 meeting

Revised Sanction and Prosecution Policy - Housing Benefits and Council Tax Benefits

2. We approved recommended changes to the adopted Sanction and Prosecution Policy. The amendments have been made in order to make the policy document more relevant and practical and to reflect advice from the Department for Work and Pensions. The reputation of the Council can be compromised if prosecutions are instigated on outdated policies and the revision will enable joint prosecutions to be implemented in a more effective manner.

Learning and Development Strategy, 2005/08

3. The Executive Cabinet endorsed for consultation purposes a draft Learning and Development Strategy for 2005/08, which has been produced by the Head of Human Resources, partly in response to the comments of the Inspectors who undertook the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment in November 2003. The objective of the strategy is to provide a strategic focus for the development of the capacity of all Members and Officers, in order to equip them with the right knowledge and skills to help deliver improved services.
4. I was granted delegated authority to approval the final Strategy document after the expiry of the consultation period.

Chorley and South Ribble Local Compact

5. We approved the Council's signing-up to and adopting the Local Compact for Chorley and South Ribble, along with our other partners to the Compact (South Ribble Borough Council, Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust and the voluntary, community and faith sectors).
6. A Compact is an agreement that commits its participants and signatories to improve relations for mutual advantage. It is a practical framework document which sets values, principles and commitments as to how the various partner organisations can best work together, with and for the local community.
7. The Local Compact will be officially launched on 9 July and a Compact Steering Group will meet regularly to monitor and review progress on the achievement of its goals.

Implementation of Job Evaluation and Equal Pay Review

8. Under the terms of the 2004/07 pay settlement, the Council is required to implement a Job Evaluation Scheme by March 2007.
9. On the advice of the Head of Human Resources, we agreed, for consultation purposes, a methodology for implementing the Job Evaluation process. We also approved the

establishment of a dedicated team of Officers to manage the implementation of the process and to carry out a subsequent Equal Pay Audit. In addition, the Director of Finance and the Head of Human Resources have been authorised to carry out an analysis of Pay and Grading structures concurrently.

Housing Services Unit - Homelessness Accommodation Service Review

10. We were presented with a confidential report by the Head of Human Resources advising us of the Temporary Accommodation Service Review. The aim of the review was to improve the management and security of Cotswold House Homeless Hostel for the benefit of the vulnerable people temporarily residing in the Hostel.
11. We approved, in principle, for consultation purposes, a revised staff structure and new staff working arrangements for the Hostel and a draft Keywork Support Policy and Procedure. We also endorsed a proposed new rent and service charge structure and proposals to make provision in the 2005/06 Housing Investment Programme to fund a CCTV installation at Cotswold House.

Eaves Green Link Road

12. We received and noted a confidential report of the Head of Planning Services and the Head of Property Services on the projected funding arrangements and proposed timescale for the construction of the Eaves Green Link Road.
13. The Executive Cabinet also authorised the submission of the requisite planning applications for additional works to the Link Road scheme to provide new access routes to both Holy Cross High School and the former Vertex Training Centre site.

30 June 2005 meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry Reports

14. We were presented with the final reports and recommendations of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel on their respective inquiries into the provision of youth activities in the Borough and the effectiveness of the One Stop Shop. Each report had been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
15. The overriding aim of the inquiry into youth activities had been to enhance and complement present efforts by helping to facilitate more effective co-ordination and co-operation between service providers and funding bodies and encourage maximisation of the use of current facilities. We approved the recommendations contained in the report, subject to the proviso, in relation to the recommendation which recommended the Council to sustain its commitment to the provision of facilities for young person's activities by continuing a budget provision in future years for a continued rolling programme of improvement, that this recommendation be considered during the budget cycle for 2006/07.
16. The inquiry into the One Stop Shop aimed to assess the effectiveness of the new initiative and to identify any improvements which could benefit both the Council's customers and staff. The recommendations contained in the report were approved by the Executive Cabinet for adoption.

Equality and Diversity Issues

17. We approved for immediate implementation and effect an Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy which has been produced by the Head of Human Resources to ensure that the Council, as an employer, takes into account all the relevant issues in relation to equality and diversity when recruiting new employees. In this context, we consider that all

Council Members should be afforded awareness training on the policy and have advised the Member Development Steering Group accordingly.

18. The Executive Cabinet has also agreed the principle of establishing a post of Equality and Diversity Officer to lead on diversity matters across all of the Council's services and authorised me to approve the post if it can be created on a cost neutral basis.

Economic Regeneration Strategy/Core Central Lancashire City Region

19. We considered an update report of the Head of Economic Regeneration on the 'Northern Way', a Government initiative aimed at redressing the economic balance between the North of England and the remainder of the UK.
20. The work on the Northern Way has revealed deficiencies in the information on Chorley and the need for the production of an Economic Regeneration Strategy. We have, therefore, allocated the sum of £65,000 towards the work on the production of the Core Central Lancashire Sub-Regional Study and an Economic Regeneration Strategy for Chorley, for which we have also agreed the appointment of specialist consultants, GVA Grimley.

Astley Park Heritage Lottery Fund Contract

21. The Executive Cabinet received a joint report of the Director of Finance and the Head of Economic Regeneration advising us of slight amendments to the scheme to enhance the quality of Astley Park and restore its historical character.
22. We agreed to a contract being entered into with the Heritage Lottery Fund for the execution of the works and to the appointment of a Project Officer to manage the Astley Park Restoration Scheme.

Housing Stock Transfer - Protocol for Members and Officers

23. On the advice of the Director of Legal Services, we approved a protocol to be observed by Members and Officers in respect of the proposed Housing Stock Transfer in order to avoid conflicts of interest arising during the transfer process and, particularly, after the intended ballot of tenants. The Monitoring Officer has been given delegated authority to agree any necessary amendments to the protocol, which should be reported to the Standards Committee.

Statement of Community Involvement

24. The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Head of Planning Services which detailed the representations received by the Council in response to the initial consultations on the draft Statement of Community Involvement. The Statement sets out the various ways and means of ensuring the engagement and involvement of organisations and the local community in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.
25. We approved the revised Statement of Community Involvement for the purposes of a further six weeks consultation period, prior to its ultimate submission to the Secretary of State.

Recommendation

26. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR J WILSON
Executive Leader

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There are no background papers to this report.