

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

GENERAL REPORT

1. The Executive Cabinet has met once on 22 February 2007 since the last ordinary Council meeting and this report summarises briefly the principal matters considered at that meeting. Separate reports appear on the Council's agenda in respect of the matters that require specific Council decisions.

Provision of Overview and Scrutiny Training Sessions

2. We received a report of the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services and gave approval to the provision of overview and training sessions for Members and officers in June 2007.
3. One of the key actions identified in the Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan seeks the provision of appropriate training on overview and scrutiny matters. This has also been included in the Member Development Programme for 2007/08 following an analysis of individual Members' training needs.
4. The training sessions will be delivered by the Improvement and Development Agency, in conjunction with the Centre for Public Scrutiny, and will focus on general overview and scrutiny issues, Chairing of Overview and Scrutiny bodies and scrutiny of financial matters. The total cost of the training programme will be funded from the Member Development budget.
5. During consideration of this item, we accepted a request from a Councillor for a review of the procedures for the publication of individual executive decisions in order to allow sufficient time for the lodging of requests for the decisions to be 'called-in'.

Maximising Opportunities in the Local Government White Paper – Improving Two-Tier Working in Lancashire

6. The Executive Cabinet received an update report from the Chief Executive on the action that has been taken since the Officer's report in December 2006 on the implications of the provisions contained in the new Local Government White Paper.
7. We noted that bids for Unitary status have been lodged by Preston Council and Lancaster Council, together with a joint bid by Burnley and Pendle Councils.
8. The Chief Executive's report was accompanied by a copy of a document which has been developed jointly by District and County partners across Lancashire. This document sets out the vision and long-term aspirations of the Authorities to improve the delivery of services to communities and how the vision can be realised through improved collaboration and working within the two-tier system across Lancashire.
9. The Chief Executive advised us at the meeting of the plans for the selection of Chorley as a pilot areas for a Locality Plan which will set out what the County Council and District Council plan to deliver in the area.
10. We welcomed the proposals outlined in the document and authorised the continuation of discussions with Lancashire and other District Councils under the Chairmanship of the Council's Director of Policy and Performance, with a view to progressing the 'Improving Two-Tier' proposal. We have also agreed the submission of a bid to the North West Improvement

Network's Communities of Interest programme for resources to support the development of the proposals.

Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee

11. The Executive Cabinet received, for information, the minutes of the meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee held on 24 June 2007.
12. We have previously requested sight of the Consultative Committee's minutes and were pleased to note the initiatives and activities being promoted or supported by the Committee.
13. The Chair of the Committee (Councillor P Malpas) referred, in particular, to the setting up of a Sub-Group to examine ways in which the Committee's role and operating practices might be altered to improve the effectiveness of the Committee.

Chorley Community Charter

14. We endorsed the wording contained in the draft Community Charter for Chorley which was attached to a report of the Chief Executive.
15. The Charter has evolved from on-going work with the faith community in Chorley which aims to build relationships with, and between, the various faith groups in order to build understanding and balance within the Borough's communities. The Charter promotes community cohesion and the right of every person to be respected and valued.
16. All Members and Officers of the Council, together with all residents of the Borough and locally-based organisations, are invited to sign up to the Charter. We will be examining various means of launching and promoting the Charter, particularly in local schools.

Third Quarter Performance Report, 2006/07 – Monitoring Report

17. The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report prepared by the Director of Policy and Performance monitoring the Council's performance during the third quarter period of 2006/07 against the key projects identified in the Council's Corporate Strategy and the Council's Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs).
18. The performance report confirms that, generally, the organisation is continuing to perform well, and service performance levels remain high.
19. The overall performance on the key Corporate Strategy projects continues to be good, with the majority of projects performing as planned. Only two Corporate Strategy performance targets have not been achieved this quarter and action plans have been put in place to enhance performance in these areas. Similarly, performance measured against the BVPs has improved since the second quarter monitoring, with 71% of indicators meeting target. Again, action plans have been introduced to improve performance in the areas where targets are being missed by more than 5%.
20. The Council will focus on new target setting in the next quarter in preparation for the forthcoming round of business improvement planning and performance round tables.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment Service Performance Toolkit, 2005/06

21. We were presented with a report of the Director of Policy and Performance which enclosed a copy of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Performance Information Toolkit for Chorley recently published by the Audit Commission.

22. The Audit Commission had produced in August 2006 a toolkit which examined the Council's 2004/05 performance information and set our level of improvement and relative positioning nationally in terms of that basket of indicators. The new toolkit published in December 2006 has been updated to examine the Council's 2005/06 performance in the same manner.
23. The Audit Commission's revised toolkit shows that 71% of BVPIs improved in 2005/06 when compared with 2002/03 (the date used for the last CPA categorisation). When compared to an improvement average of 55.3% for all District Councils, this clearly illustrates that Chorley continues to perform extremely well comparatively. In addition 57% of Chorley Council's indicators fell into the top quartile in 2005/06, compared to an average 30% for other 'fair' rated Authorities and a 34% average for 'excellent' Councils.
24. We welcomed the report and toolkit, which will be a powerful tool in our commitment to continuous improvement and quest for 'excellent' status. In this respect, the Council is currently working on a possible application for a reassessment of our CPA ranking in October 2007.

Householder Designer Guidance Supplementary Planning Document

25. We received a report of the Director of Development and Regeneration and endorsed for adoption the revised Householder Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document.
26. The guidance document, which has been compiled after taking account of the responses to the recent consultation exercise on the draft guidelines, aims to provide design guidance to people contemplating residential alterations and extensions and to assist consistency in the determination of planning applications.

Sustainable Resources – Preferred Options Document

27. The Executive Cabinet was presented with a report by the Director of Development and Regeneration and approved, for consultation purposes, the draft Preferred Options Document on Sustainable Resources that will form part of the Local Development Framework.
28. The Document sets out alternative options for measures to ensure both the incorporation of sustainable resources into developments and renewable energy. The Document has been revised to include alternative options following consultations with the Government Office for the North West.

Consultation on changes to Planning Obligations – A Planning Gain Supplement

29. The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Development and Regeneration seeking the Council's response to a consultation from the Department of Communities and Local Government on planned changes to Planning Obligations (ie Section 106 agreements or planning contributions and Highways Act Section 278 monies for road improvements).
30. The Government proposes to introduce a Planning Gain Supplement (PGS), a levy that will be applied to virtually all residential and non-residential developments. A total of 70% of the PGS will be returned to the local authority area from which the money is generated, with the remaining 30% being allocated regionally to provide for strategic infrastructure. It is envisaged that the use of Planning Obligations will be reduced to relate solely to site specific issues, such as 'direct impact mitigation' and affordable housing, but further consultation will be required on the detailed criteria to be used to define the range of Planning Obligations.
31. Members expressed concern at the meeting that the introduction of the Planning Gain Supplement will reduce the level of monies the Council could expect to receive from Section 106 Agreements and, consequently, will restrict the level of community benefits that could

otherwise be achieved. The proposed changes to Planning Obligations will eliminate the Authority's flexibility to use Section 106 monies to meet local needs and Councillors considered that monies generated from local developments should be re-invested to fund locally based improvement schemes.

32. We took on board the Members' and Officers concerns on the Planning Gain Supplement proposals which will be communicated to the Government Department as part of our response to the consultation.

Children's Play Initiatives Portfolio Bid – Big Lottery

33. The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services presented a report seeking the Executive Cabinet's endorsement of a portfolio bid for Big Lottery funding of a number of children's play initiatives.
34. The Executive Cabinet had, at its meeting in March 2006, authorised the development of a play strategy by the Play Partnership in advance of the compilation of a funding bid from the Big Lottery Fund's Children's Play Initiative. Subsequently, a Final Assessment Panel had evaluated a number of potential project bids, from which five were short-listed. The Assessment Panel then selected and recommended the schemes for inclusion in the initial funding bid.
35. We have endorsed the selection and approved the submission of the Chorley 'Able to Play' portfolio bid to the Big Lottery Play Initiatives Fund under the third bidding round which expires in March 2007. The portfolio proposals include the 'Get Up and Play' Play Rangers scheme to employ four part-time Play Rangers to work across the Borough; an 'Able to Play' designated worker to facilitate actions to address young people's concerns about play; and a lighting scheme on Coronation Recreation Ground.
36. In the event of the rejection of the proposals within this initial bid, we have granted delegated power to the Final Assessment Panel to re-assess the remaining short-listed schemes and agree a second portfolio submission

Gillibrand Development Agreement

37. We considered a report of the Director of Development and Regeneration and the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services seeking our approval to the negotiation of an amendment to the Gillibrand Development Agreement.
38. As the originally identified site on which to construct a Community Centre is not now suitable for the type of proposed Centre, it has been necessary to consider alternative locations for the Centre. Having regard to the volume of objections that were raised to the possible siting of the Centre on land off Burgh Wood Way (Site A), a widespread consultation was undertaken on the respective merits of Site A and Site B located between Lakeland Gardens and Ennerdale Road.
39. A member of the public attended the meeting to submit a question requesting to be advised of the intended procedures in the event of planning permission being refused for Site B. In response, the Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration indicated that, in this eventuality, the Council would need to undergo a further round of consultation on other available options.
40. We were informed that 78% of the households polled favour the development of Site B. The Community Centre, if located on this site will be more central to the wider community and will be closer to CCTV facilities. With this in mind, we authorised the Officers to negotiate amendments to the Gillibrand Development Agreement in order to allow the changing of the

play provision and the re-siting of the Community Centre to Site B and to lodge a planning application for the development.

Revenue Budget, 20096/07 – Monitoring

41. 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.
42. We were pleased to note that the overall corporate savings target of £338,000 from management of the establishment and efficiency savings has been achieved and that the forecasted overspend on the General Fund has now been reduced from £67,000 to £12,000.
43. With regard to the Housing Revenue Account, the report indicated that, owing to predicted changes during the year, the forecast balance at the end of the 2006/07 financial year will fall to £899,000.

Housing Revenue Account Budget, 2007/08

44. The Executive Cabinet, at its meeting in January 2007, approved changes to Council House rents and service charges in anticipation of the transfer of the housing stock to Chorley Community Housing.
45. We were presented with a further report of the Director of Finance putting forward for approval a contingency Housing Revenue Account of income and expenditure for 2007/08 in the eventuality of the stock transfer being delayed or abandoned. We accepted and agreed the HRA budget proposals, as presented, which forecast a year end surplus of £1,455,000.
46. We also agreed changes to the charges to be levied for homelessness accommodation at Cotswold House to become effective from 2 April 2007. Pending resolution of issues surrounding the funding to enable the refurbishment of Cotswold House or reconstruction, the facility will remain in the ownership of the Borough Council, but will be run by Chorley Community Housing.

Information and Communication Technology Strategy

47. We received a report from the Director of Information and Communications Technology and approved the new ICT Strategy.
48. The Strategy plans the development of all ICT and associated services delivered by the Directorate and defines the roles and strategic contributions of the Directorate in the distinct areas of Customer Services, Systems Development and Integration and Graphical Information System/Local Land and Property Gazetteer. The Strategy will help to continue our drive to improve the accessibility, efficiency and quality of our services and will contribute significantly to the delivery of the Council's corporate objectives through ICT workstreams and support of the work of other Directorates.

Restructure of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services Directorate

49. The Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services presented a confidential report on the proposals to restructure his Directorate.
50. The proposals have been compiled in the light of the need to address a number of managerial and operational issues and are aimed at providing a firm base for a more 'fit for purpose' Directorate.

51. We approved the restructure proposals for consultation with affected staff and trade unions, the responses to which will be reported to a future meeting of the Executive Cabinet.

Recommendation

51. 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.