



MINUTES OF	EXECUTIVE CABINET
MEETING DATE	Thursday, 19 November 2015
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Councillor Peter Wilson (Deputy Executive Leader in the Chair), Councillor Alistair Bradley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beverley Murray, Graham Dunn, Adrian Lowe and Paul Walmsley
MEMBER RESPONSIBLE:	Councillors Danny Gee, Hasina Khan and Matthew Lynch
COUNCIL CHAMPIONS:	Councillors Jean Cronshaw and Gordon France
OFFICERS:	Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Customer and Advice Services), Jamie Carson (Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community), Chris Moister (Head of Governance and Property Services), Simon Clark (Head of Health, Environment and Neighbourhoods), Jamie Dixon (Head of Streetscene and Leisure Contracts), Asim Khan (Head of Customer, ICT and Transactional Services), James Thomson (Principal Management Accountant), Andrew Daniels (Communications Manager), Victoria Willett (Performance and Partnerships Manager), Lindsey Blackstock (Parks and Open Spaces Officer) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
OTHER MEMBERS:	Councillors Eric Bell, Charlie Bromilow, Paul Leadbetter, June Molyneaux, Greg Morgan, Mick Muncaster and Richard Toon

15.EC.157 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 22 October 2015 of Executive Cabinet

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 22 October 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Executive Leader.

15.EC.158 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of any interests.

15.EC.159 Public Questions

The Chair reported that there had been no requests from members of the public to speak on any of the meeting's agenda items.

15.EC.160 Review of Scrap Metal Licensing Fees

The Chair advised that this item would be considered first on the agenda.

The report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community was presented by the Executive Member (Public Protection). The purpose of the report was to consider the proposed update to the fees and charges associated with Scrap Metal Dealer Act 2013.

The Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 came into force in October 2013 and provided an updated licensing scheme for scrap metal sites and collectors. In May 2015 the regulatory services team was subject to an internal audit in relation to the setting of licensing fees, this included those relating to scrap metal dealers and collectors.

The report recommended that the fees set in 2013 should be reviewed and any changes implemented in April 2016 so that the licence renewals in December 2016 reflected any changes in fees. The fees had been reviewed and the processes checked to ensure that fees corresponded to the costs incurred by the council in administering the application and issuing the licence.

Seven scrap dealer site licences had been issued by the council since the introduction of the Act.

Decision: Approval granted to agree the new fees be implemented from 1 April 2016.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The proposed fees reflect the costs to the Council in administering the Scrap Metal Licences in line with Home Office guidance.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

The option to maintain the current level of fees was considered. However, we are required to ensure that the fees reflect the actual costs to the Council in administering the licences and the existing fees included additional costs associated with setting up the regime and the pay scale of the officers at that time. Therefore those fees were no longer applicable.

15.EC.161 Empty Residential Properties - Policy

The Chair advised that this item would be considered second on the agenda.

The report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community was presented by the Executive Member (Public Protection). The purpose of the report was to update members of the Councils approach to dealing with problem of long term empty residential properties and to seek approval for a policy to address the issue.

Empty residential properties were increasingly an issue of concern, both in terms of local impact on neighbourhoods, and the wider issue of housing supply. For a number

of years the Council have monitored the level of long term (over 2 years) empty residential properties and there was currently a corporate performance target of 195 properties.

In the past 12 months the Council had directed resource to address the empty residential properties that might or might not be classed as long term empty but cause particular nuisance or concern to local residents. This concern might arise due to the appearance of the property, the state of the buildings and grounds or the perceived blight that the presence of the property.

Using an informal approach over twenty five empty residential properties of concern had been either placed on the open market, been reoccupied or works had been undertaken to reduce the detrimental impact they had on the surrounding area.

There were a number of formal measures available to the Council that could be used to further encourage property owners to bring them back into residential use. In addition, there were specific measures through the application of a Council Tax premium that could be applied to unoccupied residential properties that could incentivise property owners to get the property occupied through the owner occupier or rental market.

The policy appended to the report outlined these measures and the circumstances in which they might be used. The application of the Council Tax premium measure would be the subject of a consultation process and a further report would be brought before Members.

The benefits of benchmarking and comparing best practice were noted.

Decision: Approval granted to the Empty Residential Property Policy.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

To ensure the Council has a coordinated and consistent approach to dealing with empty residential properties and uses a range of interventions to bring them back into use.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

Councillor Paul Walmsley left the meeting at 6.15pm.

15.EC.162 Executive's response to the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group inquiry into Public Transport issues in Chorley

The report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources).

An Overview and Scrutiny task group looked at public transport issues across Chorley and their final report was presented to Executive Cabinet in August 2015. The report contained the Executive Cabinet's response to the 15 recommendations within the report.

Decision: Approval granted that the recommendations be agreed as follows:

Recommendation	Executive Cabinet Response
<p>1. That when the revised Lancashire County Council (LCC) criteria is applied to subsidised services operating in Chorley and appear to be detrimental, any issues or concerns will be referred to full Council requesting approval to lobby LCC to minimise the impact in Chorley.</p>	<p>Agreed. Executive Cabinet anticipate the revised criteria is likely to be applied as part of LCCs budget planning from 2016/17 and beyond.</p>
<p>2. Should LCC take forward the 'Parish Partnership Offer' it is recommended that LCC consult and work with Cumbria County Council to explore how a Community Wheels type scheme could be undertaken and fully funded by LCC in Lancashire.</p>	<p>Agreed. It is currently unclear whether this offer will be pursued by LCC. However, should this proposal from LCC be taken forward, the Executive Cabinet or its representative will notify LCC and encourage them to engage with Cumbria CC.</p>
<p>3. That Chorley Council contact Cumbria County Council to gather more information on their approach to recruiting volunteer drivers and to work with LCC and parishes to implement best practice in Chorley.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>4. That the 'Parish Partnership Offer' (should it be progressed by LCC in the future) and the recruitment of volunteer drivers should be included as projects in the Rural Communities Action Plan and monitored accordingly.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>5. That Chorley Council write to Lancashire County Council and all relevant operators to progress any issues raised by the parishes that have not already been covered as part of this review.</p>	<p>Agreed. Public Transport Issues can be included as a discussion item at a future Parish Liaison meeting.</p>
<p>6. To explore the offer from Stagecoach to meet on a regular basis to develop better working relations and improve communications and include Lancashire County Council Representatives.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>7. That upon completion of the West Coast Strategic Studies process (expected April 2016) the Council will seek an update from,</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>

<p>and continue to lobby Lancashire County Council and Network Rail on the establishment of a railway station in Coppull.</p>	
<p>8. That Chorley Council follows up Northern Rail's Commitment to looking at the lighting at Adlington station and if necessary also follow up the delivery of the Customer Information Screens if installation does not take place in Summer 2015.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>9. Once the Council is aware of the new franchise holder (from February 2016), the Executive Cabinet to continue to lobby and raise the current rail issues, in particular to include additional rail services to Manchester Airport from Adlington from December 2016.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>10. That consideration is given to including railway station enhancements and other public transport infrastructure across the borough in the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) 123 list revisions and be monitored by the Council to ensure funding is allocated and commitments are fulfilled.</p>	<p>Agreed. The CIL 123 list is to be reviewed shortly.</p>
<p>11. That any conditions made through the Buckshaw Village S106 agreement regarding the upgrading and re-opening of Alker Lane Bridge which will improve access to Buckshaw Railway Station from Astley Village is followed up by the Council to ensure commitments are fulfilled.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>12. That the Future Governance Viability Working Group notes the contents of the report on the benefits and potential areas of focus for a Combined Transport Authority for Lancashire in order to improve public transport for Chorley residents and the Council to use the findings to influence any future discussions regarding the establishment of a Combined Authority and its role in transport</p>	<p>Agreed. A report to November Council is expected on the formation of a Combined Authority for Lancashire, part of which will include a Combined Transport Authority.</p>

provision.	
13. That Lancashire County Council reconsiders the displaying of bus timetables at all bus stops and shelters across the borough and explores the possibilities of funding this service by the use of advertising by local companies.	Agreed. Executive Cabinet or its representative will inform LCC and encourage them to consider this recommendation.
14. That Lancashire County Council in conjunction with the operators explores better ways of communicating increased bus fares to its customers.	Agreed. Executive Cabinet or its representative will inform LCC and encourage them to consider this recommendation.
15. To highlight to the Executive Cabinet the importance of considering all public transport needs for its residents when undertaking all relevant Council projects. For example, the provision of bicycle racks and storage units and positioning of bus stops as part of the Market Walk development proposals.	Agreed.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

If the recommendations are approved they provide a response to the Overview and Scrutiny task group and also when implemented, should lead to an improvement to public transport in the area or at the very least seek to prevent a reduction in the current transport provision.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

15.EC.163 Vacant Property and Shop Front Grants - Programme Evaluation

The report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources). The purpose of the report was to provide an evaluation of the vacant property and shop front grants programme and to make recommendations on developments for the future.

The Vacant Property Grant (Shop Floor/Business Rate Subsidy) and Shop Front Grant programme had been in place since June 2012. Due to demand for support from other areas of the town, including local service centres, there had been a number of expansions to the eligible areas.

The report set out the funding which had been committed since May 2012 and that the total number of applications received was 101. This equated to 45 town centre shop front grants, 40 vacant property grants/business rate subsidies and 16 local service centre/other areas vacant property and shop front grants.

35 new business start ups and 28 existing businesses had been supported through the programme. 117.5 jobs had been created via the programme, with the cost per

job to the Council being approximately £3,000, which demonstrated excellent value for money within the remit of publicly funded grant programmes.

There were currently 25 pipeline grant enquiries, including seven from within the established local service centres and six from the wider Chorley area. Publicity surrounding the programme in rural areas was being undertaken.

Decision:

- 1. Approval granted that the take-up and successful delivery of the programme be noted.**
- 2. Approval granted for a further £75k for the current financial year using the surplus generated from Market Walk.**
- 3. Support given for the continuation of the programme into 2016/2017 and proposal to consider a financial allocation of £100k as part of the 2016/2017 budget setting process.**

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The demand for the programme continues to be high, and with the opening up of the programme to the wider Chorley area in June 2015, there are now increased opportunities for more Chorley businesses to access the programme, and for the benefits to be seen across the Borough.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

15.EC.164 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2015/16: Report 2 (End of September 2015)

The report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources). The purpose of the report was to set out the provisional revenue and capital outturn figures for the Council as compared against the budgets and efficiency savings targets set for the financial year 2015/16.

The projected revenue outturn currently showed a forecast underspend of £380k against budget. The latest forecast excluded any variation to projected expenditure on investment items added to the budget in 2015/16. These projects were forecast to fully expend in 2015/16 and should there be any balances remaining at year end they would be transferred into specific reserves and matched to expenditure in future years.

In the 2015/16 budget the expected net income from Market Walk after deducting financing costs was £0.980m. The latest projection showed that the forecast outturn was £1.132m, the surplus being driven by lower than budgeted financing costs.

The forecast of capital expenditure in 2015/16 was £6.502m. The Council set a savings target of £150k in 2015/16 from the management of the establishment. Excellent progress had been made in this area and the full savings target for 2015/16 had been achieved.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy proposed that working balances should reach £3.0m over the 3 year lifespan of the MTFS to 2017/18 due to the financial risks facing the Council. A budgeted contribution into General Balances of £350k was contained within the new investment package for 2015/16. The current

forecast to the end of September indicated that the General Fund balance would be £2.993m by the end of the financial year.

Decision:

1. **Approval granted that the full year forecast position for the 2015/16 revenue budget and capital investment programme be noted.**
2. **Approval granted that the forecast position on the Council's reserves be noted.**
3. **To request Council approve the use of £75,000 surplus generated from Market Walk to invest in the Retail Grants Programme.**
4. **To request Council approve the use of £25,000 from the budget provision for Chorley Youth Zone to finance the Chorley Grand Prix cycling event in March 2016.**
5. **To request Council approve to set aside around £70,000 of additional revenue income from Council Tax Summons and Liability Order charges in 2015/16 to offset any future increased liability in bad debts as a result of these charges.**
6. **To request Council approve the proposed additions, deletions and re-phasing of the Capital Programme to better reflect delivery in 2015/16.**

Reasons for recommendation(s)

To ensure the Council's budgetary targets are achieved.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

15.EC.165 Chorley Council Performance Monitoring - Second Quarter 2015/2016

The report of the Chief Executive was presented by the Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources).

The report set out performance against the Corporate Strategy, and key service delivery measures for the second quarter of 2015/16, 1 July to 30 September 2015. In addition, this quarter the report also provided a summary of the results of the 2015 Residents Survey and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IOMD) 2015.

Performance of the Corporate Strategy was assessed against the delivery of key projects and corporate performance measures in the 2014/15 – 2016/17 Corporate Strategy. A basket of key service delivery measures were also reported on each quarter.

Overall performance of 2014/15 key projects was good, with 89% of the projects on track or complete. Two projects had been rated amber; 'develop and agree plans for delivery of the Friday Street Health Centre', and 'deliver improvements to Market Street'.

These rating were due to issues relating to funding and scope, but in each case actions to address these issues had been identified and were being progressed.

Overall performance on the Corporate Strategy indicators and key service delivery measures was excellent. 95% of the Corporate Strategy indicators and 90% of the key service measures were performing above target or within the 5% tolerance.

The Corporate Strategy measure performing below target was a resident's survey indicator; the percentage of people who regularly participate in volunteering. An action plan had been developed, and was included within the report, to outline what action would be taken to improve performance.

The key service delivery measure performing below target was the average working days per employee per year lost through sickness absence. Again, an action plan was included within the report which outlined what actions were being taken to improve performance.

Overall performance of the indicators in the resident's survey 2015 was excellent with 89% of the indicators performing above target or within the 5% tolerance. Similarly the Indices of Multiple Deprivation results were also positive and showed Chorley to be less deprived with only eight areas now in the bottom 20%, compared with 10 in 2010.

Decision: Approval granted that the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

To facilitate the on-going analysis and management of the Council's performance in delivering the Corporate Strategy.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

15.EC.166 Approval for the procurement approach including the award procedure, evaluation methodology and criteria to purchase fifteen 3.5 tonne tipper vans, one refuse collection vehicle, one skip wagon and three ride on mowers

The report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community was presented by the Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources). The purpose of the report was to seek approval for the procurement approach, including the award procedure, evaluation methodology and criteria.

A number of the Vans were currently on short-term lease and by procuring these together with the vehicles owned, the Council was likely to achieve savings. This would also standardise the Council's vehicle fleet simplifying administration and maintenance arrangements.

The four 'Beavertail' / Tipper vehicles above 3.5 tonne were subject to additional inspection and maintenance costs as they fell under the Council's Vehicle Operator Licence. In order to make savings, the Streetscene team had been trialling the use of 3.5 tonne tipper vans with / without a trailer to value if they could operate the service without impacting on delivery.

The benefits to this change in working methods were a reduction in initial purchase price, as 3.5 tipper vehicles were cheaper, and also offer ongoing savings in terms of fuel, maintenance and no requirement for regular inspections (as required for vehicles above 3.5 tonne). Therefore, these four vehicles would be replaced by 3.5 Tonne Tipper Vans.

The report set out the reasons for the Ride On Mowers, RCV and Skip Wagon. It was anticipated that the procurement for the purchase of the above vehicles would commence in late 2015 with orders being placed during early 2016.

Decision:

- 1. Approval granted to the procurement approach for the Vans via a further competition through the Chest under Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Public Sector Vehicle Purchase Framework agreement RM1070. Lot 2 on this framework covers purchase of these Vans and was undertaken by CCS using the Open Procedure in compliance with the public Procurement Regulations.**
- 2. Approval granted that the procurement approach for the RCV and Skip Wagon via two further competition exercises under separate lots of the EU compliant ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) Specialist Vehicle Framework Ref 215R-324 via further competition through the Chest.**
- 3. Approval granted to the procurement approach for the Mowers via a further competition through the Chest under ESPO Grounds Maintenance Machinery framework agreement No.274- 14.**
- 4. Approval granted to the evaluation criteria for the Vans, RCV, Skip Wagon and Mowers as follows**

Vans, RCV and Skip Wagon:

Cost = 65% covering purchase price.

Quality = 35% including warranty, technical support, delivery and environmental impact.

Training will be an unscored specified requirement.

Mowers:

Cost = 70% covering purchase price.

Quality = 30% including warranty, technical support, delivery and environmental impact.

Training and a requirement that the Mowers will be delivered during the week commencing 22nd February 2016, will be an unscored specified requirement.

The evaluation criteria for all the vehicles may be subject to a minor amendment following clarification from the Framework Managers.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

Under the Council's contract procedure rules approval by the Executive Cabinet of contract award procedure and evaluation criteria for tenders greater than £75,000 in value is required.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

To not agree contract award procedure and evaluation criteria and fail to comply with the Council procurement rules.

15.EC.167Astley 2020 update

The report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community was presented by the Executive Member (Community Services). The purpose of the report was to update member on progress towards implementing the Astley 2020 action plan.

In February 2014, the Executive Cabinet approved a five year development plan for Astley Hall and Park – Astley 2020. The Astley 2020 development plan detailed actions covering five key areas:

- 1. Astley Hall and Park conservation.**
- 2. Improving the visitor offer and experience.**

3. Business development to support a sustainable business model.
4. Heritage partnership development.
5. World War I commemoration.

Significant progress had been and the latest action plan was detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. Projects delivered over the last 18 months included a new exhibition space in Astley Farmhouse, a fountain on the lodge and the lighting of Memorial Arch. In addition, a sensory garden including new footpath linking into woodland, destination play area and essential work to the wall in the Great Hall at Astley Hall, including completion of conservation plan and technical drawings for Astley Hall.

Projects currently in progress included developing a green stage in the Walled Garden, events car parking, footpath lighting and a new glasshouse in the Walled Garden.

There were a number of further areas for development that required additional funding which were set out in the report

Decision:

1. **Approval granted that the update on progress towards implementing the Astley 2020 action plan as detailed in the report be noted.**
2. **Approval granted that the remaining Astley 2020 budget be allocated as detailed in the report.**
3. **Support given for a growth bid for £350K to be put forward to fund further investment in footpath lighting and events infrastructure as part of the 2016/2017 budget setting process.**

Reasons for recommendation(s)

To ensure the continued development of Astley and implementation of the Astley 2020 including provision for improved events infrastructure.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

None.

15.EC.168 Financial Delivery of the play, open space and playing pitch strategy

The report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community was presented by the Executive Member (Community Services).

The Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan were consulted on and given approval in September 2014. The five year plan ran from 2014 – 2019. The plans took into account all open spaces, play areas and playing pitches in the Borough and was not just focused on Council owned land. Priority was given to parish council, private and Council sites, as identified on a need basis, generally working to improve the lowest scoring sites first.

The first year was almost complete and the Council were now working to deliver year two. Year one projects, such as Astley Park Play Area, Carr Brook Trim Trail, Jubilee Rec Play Area, Stansted Road Play Area, Allotments in Coppull and mini football pitch in Adlington were delivered using money from S106 allocations, revenue and capital funds.

Year two and subsequent years would be funded in a similar way with the option of also bidding for external funding to make existing money stretch further.

All of the sites identified in the action plan were those which scored low for quality or value, or those which were located in areas of high usage and subsequently need investment to improve and modernise facilities and infrastructure. The Council would also support other sites, not in the action plan, if there was an evidence of need and part funding was in place.

It was proposed to allocate the existing receipts of S106 to deliver years two to five projects where possible. This was because S106 money was time limited and had to be spent within five years of receipt or returned. The money had to be spent on Play Areas, Allotments, Open Space and Playing Pitches as dictated by the S106 agreement, some on specific sites and areas and some on borough wide sites. Much of the money in receipt had to be spent by 2019. It was proposed to spend the S106 money on the site closest to the development from which the money was obtained, therefore directly benefiting the local community. For example, if the money was allocated from a housing development in Adlington, it would be spent in Adlington.

Decision:

- 1. Approval granted to allocate the existing S106 money in receipt to schemes as outlined in this report.**
- 2. Approval granted to subsequently not open up the play and recreation fund to bids, but instead allocate the S106 money to specific projects within the strategy.**
- 3. Approval granted to review and update the action plan schemes in the executive summary scheduled for 2017/18 and 2018/2019.**
- 4. Support given to request additional funding for Coronation Recreation Ground and Tatton Recreation Ground to make improvements as evidenced by green flag judges feedback and public consultation, as part of the 2016/2017 budget setting process.**

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy and 5 year action plan have already been approved. It has been agreed which sites need investment and improvement in a priority order from 2014 - 2019. The strategy is in the process of being delivered and finance is needed to deliver the schemes. The existing S106 needs to be spent within 5 years of receipt in line with the legal S106 agreement.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

- To put the Borough Wide S106 contributions into a Play and Rec Fund (as delivered in 2011). This has been rejected as the money needs to be allocated to deliver the Action Plan, and therefore has a predetermined need. Where sites are owned by Parish Council's and private owner's money will be allocated accordingly and schemes worked up in partnership.
- To not spend the money and give it back to the developers.

15.EC.169 Improving the quality of recycling collected from households

The report of the Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community was presented by the Executive Member (Streetscene Services). The purpose of the report was to note the issues with quality of the recycling materials collected from households across the Borough.

Chorley residents were asked to separate their plastic bottles, cans and glass for recycling in a 240-litre blue bin which had a 40-litre black pod insert for paper. A 55-litre green box was provided for cardboard.

Lancashire County Council (LCC) carried out random sampling on the co-mingled dry recycling (blue bin) that Veolia delivered direct to Farington Waste Technology Park (FWTP): a requirement of the new Materials Recovery Facility Regulations and an ongoing exercise. Concerns had been raised about the quality of the material. Contamination levels of between 5 to 39% had been recorded, the target was less than 5%. The main materials contaminating the loads were paper and cardboard and non-target plastic e.g. yoghurt pots, black plastic trays, plastic toys and film.

If the quality of the material did not improve it could mean loads being rejected and lead to additional costs being incurred by the Council. An action plan which included working with our waste management contractor, Veolia and a trial of collecting paper and cardboard together was proposed.

A number of actions had also been identified in conjunction with the Council's communications team to improve the quality of the recycling collected. These messages would be positive to reinforce correct practise. These included a Right Stuff, Right Bin week using social media to highlight to residents what materials we could accept for recycling, stickers for new or replacement bins detailing what materials go in that bin and changes to the annual waste collection calendar. These actions would take place over the next six months.

Decision: Approval granted to the proposed actions to improve the quality of recycling materials.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

To take the necessary steps to improve the quality of the recycling collected from households.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

To not improve the quality of the recycling collected would lead to a reduction in our recycling rate and potentially additional costs for collection and disposal.

15.EC.170 Exclusion of the Public and Press

To consider the exclusion of the press and public for the following items of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

15.EC.171 Council Tax Support Scheme and Local Discounts 2016/17

The confidential report of the Director of Customer and Advice Services was presented by the Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources).

The purpose of the report was to summarise some forthcoming changes to Housing Benefit and the welfare system. The report also outlined options for Chorley's Council Tax Support scheme and considered a change to the Local Discount and Exemption scheme for Council Tax.

Decision:

1. Approval granted that the CTS scheme remain unchanged for 2016/17.
2. Approval granted for consultation in 2016 to align the Council's CTS scheme with changes to Housing Benefit legislation effective April 2017.
3. Approval granted for consultation with interested parties on an increase to the Council Tax Empty Homes premium to 50% effective April 2016.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

1. A close alignment of Housing Benefit and the local CTS scheme for administration purposes is operationally efficient and consistent.
2. To make the various changes to the scheme together from April 2017 would be the most prudent approach.
3. The change to the empty property premium will support the policy decisions to encourage the occupation of empty properties.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected

1. The CTS scheme could be amended from April 2016 to remove the Family Premium in the calculation in line with changes for the Housing Benefit Scheme.
2. This option has been rejected because there are other changes that need to be made to the scheme from April 2017 and to align all of the changes in that year is the most prudent approach. It will also enable time to incorporate further government changes that may arise from the autumn statement.
3. To leave the empty property premium unchanged would mean that the Council has not used all available measures to incentivise the return to use of long term empty properties.

Chair

Date