

Executive Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 6 September 2007

Present: Councillor Peter Goldsworthy (Executive Leader in the Chair), Councillor Pat Case (Deputy Leader of the Council) and Councillors Eric Bell, Alan Cullens, Peter Malpas and Mark Perks

Also in attendance:

Lead Members: Councillors Mrs Marie Gray (Lead Member for Town Centre), Harold Heaton (Lead Member for Development Control), Geoffrey Russell (Lead Member for Finance) and Rosie Russell (Lead Member for Health and Older People)

Other Members: Councillors Ken Ball, Henry Counce, David Dickinson, Dennis Edgerley, Kevin Joyce and Laura Lennox

07.EC.91 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor John Walker.

07.EC.92 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest by any of the Executive Members in any of the agenda items.

07.EC.93 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 9 August 2007 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

07.EC.94 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Executive Cabinet had not received any requests from members of the public to ask a question(s) on any of the meeting's agenda items.

07.EC.95 SPORTS VILLAGE - FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services submitted a report introducing the findings of a feasibility study into the development of a Sports Village project in the Borough. The study had been undertaken by Strategic Leisure Limited on the Council's behalf and funding from the North West Development Agency.

The Executive Leader welcomed Mr P Woodland from Strategic Leisure who had been invited to the meeting to make a short presentation on the outcome of the feasibility study.

Mr Woodland outlined the Consultant's approach and methodology in conducting the research, which had assessed the need for a Sports Village and considered the location, scale and facility mix of the facility if the concept was to be developed in the Chorley Borough.

The report had, however, identified the following issues which would impact significantly on plans to progress the initiative:

- The development of a Sports Village was not currently included in either the Borough's Community Strategy or Corporate Strategy, nor was it a strategic

objective of major partner organisations. The diversion of resources to the project would impede delivery of other key priorities.

- The capital costs for the project had been envisaged at approximately £10m, with annual revenue costs of around £300,000. The Council was not currently in a position to commit funding on that scale and potential external funding from other sources could not be guaranteed.

Consequently, both the Consultants and the Officers had not recommended pursuance of the project at the present time. However, the Consultant's report had also identified the following actions that could be explored as a prerequisite to any further re-examination of the project:

- Establish the position of Chorley Football Club;
- Conclude the PPG17 audit and assessment of open space;
- Undertake a Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy;
- Develop a Sport and Leisure Facility Strategy;
- Include the Sports Village proposal in the Local Plan;
- Undertake a more detailed site assessment;
- Await the outcome of the evaluation and appraisal of the Orford Park Development scheme;
- Establish a Partnership for the project.

The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services confirmed that the Officers would review the suggestions with respective Executive Members and include them in future Directorate Improvement Plans, as appropriate.

Decision made:

That the Sports Village project be not currently progressed owing to a lack of either capital or revenue funding and the lack of any identified strategic content.

Reason for decision:

The revenue and capital costs of the proposed project would, if it were to proceed, have a significant impact on the Council's revenue and capital budgets. There is no local strategic context for the project. If it were to proceed, the Council and its partners would need to revisit all other previously agreed priorities. This course of action is not considered to be appropriate in the light of the feasibility study.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

The alternative option to progress the project has been rejected on financial and strategic grounds.

07.EC.96 FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Cabinet received the Council's Forward Plan setting out details of the potential key decisions to be made by the Executive Cabinet or individual Executive Members during the four months period commencing 1 September 2007.

The Members noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested the officers to ensure that the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel would be consulted during the preparation of the draft Streetscene Strategy document.

Decision made:

That the September Forward Plan be noted.

07.EC.97 THE CHORLEY PARTNERSHIP - PROGRESS REPORT

The Executive Cabinet received a report from the Director of Policy and Performance (Assistant Chief Executive) on the progress of recent endeavours to improve the structure and effectiveness of Chorley Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership for Chorley).

The membership of the Board had been expanded to 40 representatives of the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors and the report outlined the initiatives currently being pursued by the Partnership (eg the projects being taken forward by the LSP's Theme Groups with LSP and partner funding; a re-fresh of the Community Strategy; a quarterly newsletter; and a revamp of the Chorley Partnership website). The future challenges facing the Partnership included the publication of the Community Strategy and Action Plan; the development of performance management; and preparations for the impending IDeA Peer Review of the LSP.

In answer to a Member's query, the Director confirmed that the Borough Council had invested £85,000 capital pump priming into the LSP projects, which had attracted an additional investment of around £330,000 from other sources.

The Members acknowledged the positive progress that had been made in the development of the LSP, which would strengthen the Council's bid for Comprehensive Area re-Assessment in 2008.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

07.EC.98 A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR CHORLEY, 2007 - 2025

The Director of Policy and Performance (Assistant Chief Executive) submitted a report seeking Members' comments on the draft re-fresh of the Community Strategy, now re-branded by the Government as the Sustainable Community Strategy for Chorley for 2007-2025.

The new Strategy had been developed around the base of the existing Strategy, whilst taking account of the improved LSP structure, new priorities and the need to coincide with the refreshed County-wide Strategy 'Ambition Lancashire'. The amended Sustainable Community Strategy was to be developed around the following five key priorities under which a series of objectives and indicators would be identified:

- Ensuring that Chorley is the pulse of a thriving central Lancashire economy;
- Improving life chances for all;
- Development local solutions to global climate change;
- Developing the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live, work and play;
- Building Stronger Communities with improved access to services.

The Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Performance explained that the revised Strategy had been developed by the Chorley Partnership following an extensive consultation exercise, which included a series of workshops with LSP partners. The Strategy document was due to be presented for endorsement to the Chorley Partnership Board on 13 September 2007. The Director of Policy and Performance (Assistant Chief Executive) indicated, however, that a presentation on the Sustainable Community Strategy would be given to the Local Development Framework and Community Strategy Working Group at its next meeting on 20 September 2007, to which all Councillors would be invited.

Decision made:

That the re-freshed Sustainable Community Strategy for Chorley for 2007-2025 be noted and that any comments received from Members be reported to the 13 September 2007 meeting of the Chorley Partnership Board.

Reason for decision:

In order to ensure that the Council Members' views are able to be taken into account before the Strategy is considered by the Chorley Partnership Board.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

07.EC.99 CHORLEY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT PLAN - SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Director of Development and Regeneration seeking endorsement of the Sustainable Resources Development Plan document to be submitted to the Government as the first policy document within Chorley's new Local Development Framework.

The Development Plan had been compiled and refined following a series of consultation exercises. The Borough was well placed to contribute to the reduction of the impact of climate change and the document aimed, through the development control process, to achieve more sustainable methods of construction of developments which would reduce carbon emissions and enable renewable energy generation across Chorley

A further six weeks' consultation period would commence following the submission of the documents to the Government, during which time formal representations could be made, with objectors having the right to appear at a public hearing before an independent Inspector. Ultimately, the Inspector's recommendations on the document would be binding.

Decisions made:

That the Council be recommended:

(a) to approve the Sustainable Resources Development Plan document in the form presented for submission to the Government, subject to two minor textual changes and to the Director of Development and Regeneration being delegated with authority to make minor textual and presentational amendments to the document;

(b) to grant delegated power to the Director of Development and Regeneration to approve minor amendments to the Development Plan document during the examination stage.

Reason for decisions:

The Submission Document requires approval by the Executive Cabinet and the full Council to comply with the Development Plan Regulations. Approval of the Development Plan Document and the granting of delegated authority to make minor amendments would enable progress on the Corporate Strategy key project to comply with the published timetable.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

The only alternative open to the Council is not to proceed with the Submission Document. However, this course is not justified by the need to address climate change issues and the potential role the Council can play.

07.EC.100 STRATEGIC HOUSING PRIORITIES

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Director of Development and Regeneration on the strategic key priorities to be addressed by the Strategic Housing Team established in the wake of the transfer of the housing stock to Chorley Community Housing in March 2007.

The report identified and commented on each of the priority areas and objectives. Detailed action plans for each work area were currently being devised to take account of collected data on the local and sub-regional housing market.

The principal focus of Members' discussions centred on the following two priority areas:

(a) Homelessness and Housing Options

Concern had been expressed at the increasing use of bed and breakfast accommodation and the frequency of judicial challenges to the Council on decisions on applications from homeless applicants. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested the preparation of a report analysing the homelessness statistics to explain the principal causes of homelessness and general data on applicants.

A Housing Options Partnership Strategy Group had been formed to address the current issues, including the review of the policies and procedures used for the determination of applications from homeless people.

(b) Affordable Housing

The report commented on the factors influencing the difficulties in providing sufficient numbers of affordable housing units to meet increasing demands for social rented accommodation and home ownership.

Members discussed the feasible means of bringing vacant private sector houses back into residential use and, in response, to a Member's enquiry on the possible use of Council owned land for future development, the Executive Member for Resources confirmed that a review of Council owned assets was currently underway.

The Director also confirmed that the Strategic Housing Manager had been tasked with examining creative and innovative ways of increasing the provision of affordable housing units throughout the Borough.

The report also outlined the proposals to establish a Chorley Strategic Housing Partnership between all key stakeholders to monitor the delivery of the existing Housing Strategy's objectives and to inform the development of a new strategy for 2009-2012.

Decision made:

That the report be noted.

07.EC.101 CAR PARKING STRATEGY

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment on means of providing additional car parking spaces in the town centre to meet the temporary shortfalls expected in 2008/09.

The construction of a new Register Office on part of the West Street Car Park and the proposed extension of Market Walk on part of the Flat Iron Car Park was likely to result in the loss of up to 271 spaces until the second phase of Market Walk was completed. The increase in parking spaces envisaged within the Market Walk development equated to around 560 spaces, which would more than offset the temporary losses.

However, in order to address the expected temporary loss of car parking spaces, the report put forward proposals aimed at increasing the number of car parking spaces in the town centre during the construction periods. A total of up to 307 extra spaces could be provided by a re-marking and reconfiguration of a number of town centre car parks and a reduction of the maximum short stay period on identified car parks.

Decisions made:

1. **That, subject to the completion of the necessary statutory processes, approval be given to the implementation of the following proposals to increase the capacity of town centre car parks.**
 - **By amendment of the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders, the reduction of the maximum stays on the remaining areas of the Flat Iron, Portland Street, Farington Street, St Mary's and West Street Car Parks to 3 hours, which will increase turnround, giving a benefit equivalent to approximately 60 short stay spaces.**
 - **Remarking the Portland Street Car Park, gaining around 35 spaces.**
 - **Remarking the Fleet Street Car Park, removing redundant fences and converting the former staff parking area to general use, providing 70 and 52 spaces respectively.**
 - **Developing feasible options for the Flat Iron Car Park and the remaining parking areas in consultation with interested parties.**
2. **That the Officers be authorised to implement the necessary statutory procedures to effect the above proposals.**
3. **That the works required to increase the capacity of the Fleet Street and Portland Street Car Parks at an estimated cost of £10,000 be implemented at an early date from unallocated Section 106 monies, subject to compliance with the Council's spending procedures.**

Reason for decisions:

The proposals represent the most efficient and cost effective measures to offset the envisaged temporary loss of car parking spaces in the town centre.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

07.EC.102 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Decision made:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item 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.

07.EC.103 REFUSE AND RECYCLING CONTRACT - OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment which outlined a number of options for a redesigned household refuse and recycling collection contract to commence on 1 April 2009 and sought instructions on the preferred options through which to progress the central procurement process.

A recent customer consultation exercise had concluded that there was widespread support for both the continuation of an alternate weekly collection service and for the re-designing of the recycling collection service to one that utilised a wheeled bin for recycled materials.

The Officers had recommended the selection of Option B identified in the report as the basis for further consultation and negotiation with potential bidders. The adoption of the recommended option was expected to assist the Council's achievement of the long term recycling target of 58% by 2015 and provide a service that would increase customer satisfaction levels.

An appendix to the report illustrated the relevant estimated costs associated with each of the identified options and a table within the report summarised the principal advantages and disadvantages associated with each option.

Decisions made:

- (1) That the refuse collection and recycling service to operate from 1 April 2009 be tendered on the basis of a 10 year contract life.**
- (2) That the service be tendered with a specification where Option B as identified on the submitted report is the preferred service design.**
- (3) That early market soundings be taken to judge the potential marketability of the service and likely competitive environment.**

Reason for decisions:

In order to pursue the ultimate delivery of a refuse and recycling collection service that will satisfy recycling targets and customer expectations.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Pursuance of identified Options A or C.

Executive Leader