

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

GENERAL REPORT

1. The Executive Cabinet has met once on 4 October 2007 since the last ordinary meeting and this report summarises briefly the principal matters considered at that meeting. Separate reports appear on the Council's agenda in respect of two matters that require a specific Council decision.

Chorley Profile – A State of the Borough Report

2. The Corporate Director (Business) made a short presentation to the Executive Cabinet on the updated Chorley Profile for 2007, also known as the State of the Borough Report.
3. The report contains a wide range of statistical and contextual information arranged around 13 topic areas highlighting the Borough's strengths and weaknesses. The profile reveals a Borough with a growing population, generally high average household incomes, high educational standards and facilities, a crime rate below the Lancashire average, and high employee and business growth rates. While there remains pockets of deprivation throughout the town, the report is optimistic in its identification of opportunities for economic and social growth.
4. The Executive Cabinet welcomes the Borough Profile as a useful reference source and evidence base for the Local Development Framework and future bids for external funding.

Revised Corporate Equality Scheme

5. We approved and adopted a revised Equality Scheme for the Council.
6. Since the publication of the Council's first Equality Scheme in December 2006, the Government has published a revised Equality Standard for Local Government which sets out a number of new requirements for local authorities in relation to the equality and diversity agenda. In addition to ethnicity, disability and gender issues, the revised Equality Standard has been extended to cover age, sexuality and religion. We have taken this opportunity to also add rurality as a seventh strand of diversity within the revised Equality Scheme in order to make the Scheme more relevant and meaningful to a Chorley context.
7. The new Scheme also incorporates a framework for the design and delivery of services by the various Directorates after reviewing the relevance of their functions and policies against the seven identified strands of equality and diversity.
8. We hope that the revised Equality Scheme will help the Authority to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard by March 2009.

Consultation and Participation Strategy, 2007/08

9. The Executive Cabinet approved and adopted a Consultation and Participation Strategy for 2007/08.
10. The Strategy sets out the main principles that the Council will need to adhere to when consulting the public. The Strategy contains an action plan for planned consultation exercises during the year, the feedback from which will be useful to future policy development and service planning. A toolkit is also being compiled for the guidance of staff responsible for consultation work.

11. The Strategy has been compiled to encourage effective engagement with the Council's customers and local communities and to ensure that consultation exercises are undertaken in a consistent and effective manner.

Value for Money Self-Assessment

12. We received and noted the Council's 2007 Value for Money Assessment report to be presented to the Audit Commission for consideration as part of the annual review of the Authority's management of its resources.
13. The report provides an update on the Council's achievement in relation to value for money since the last Audit Commission inspection which awarded the Council the maximum score of 4.
14. The 2007 report contains examples of further efficiency savings and good practice that are continuing to improve services to the public and deliver required outcomes in our continual drive towards excellence.

Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper No 2

15. The Executive Cabinet considered a report from the joint meeting of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble Councils' Local Development Framework Working Groups on the second version of the draft Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper.
16. The Paper has been produced as part of the exploration of major planning issues facing the Central Lancashire area covered by the three authorities, taking account of the recommendations within previous reports and the responses to the consultation on the first Issues and Options report.
17. The Paper, in particular, identifies the places and communities included within the combined area and the particular spatial issues that affect them. It sets out and explores the following three spatial options for growth within the area over the next 20 years.
 - Focus development on Preston City and other main urban areas;
 - Limit development to a few priority urban locations, but protect suburban ones;
 - Spread development between all main urban areas and identified rural service centres.
18. We approved the second draft Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper as presented to us for the purposes of further community and stakeholder consultation.

Mid-Term Progress on the Performance of the Council's Key Partnerships

19. The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation and Improvement) presented the Executive Cabinet with an update report on the performance of the Council's key partnerships. The report summarised the partnership arrangements and outlined the organisations involved, the main objectives and potential value of each partnership venture and the progress achieved so far against the targets set by the Management Action Plan for the current year.
20. The report reveals that satisfactory progress has been achieved against the Action Plan, with no significant issues of under-performance having been identified. A number of the key partnerships have yet to complete joint risk registers, but plans are in place to ensure completion before the end of 2007.

Human Resources Directorate – Restructure

21. The Corporate Director of Human Resources presented the Executive Cabinet with a report on proposals to restructure the Directorate.
22. The proposals entail the re-naming of the Directorate to the Human Resources and Organisational Development Directorate and the creation to two distinct functions (a Transactional Team and a Transformational Team).
23. The proposed new structure has been compiled to reflect the recent organisational changes and the move towards partnership arrangements and shared or outsourced services in some instances. The structure aims to provide a multi-skilled Human Resources team and function that will be capable of supporting the Council's role as the enabler and facilitator of improved services.
24. The Executive Cabinet approved the proposals for the purpose of consultation with affected staff and trade unions and agreed to pursue opportunities for joint working whenever appropriate and the progression of the Transactional agenda.

Recommendation

25. 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.