

# **REPORT OF EXECUTIVE CABINET**

## **GENERAL REPORT**

1. The Executive Cabinet has met twice since the last Ordinary Council meeting on 15 November and 6 December 2007. This report summarises briefly the principal items considered at the 15 November meeting. A report summarising the main issues and decisions taken at the 6 December meeting will be issued in advance of the Council meeting. Separate reports on the matters that require a specific Council decision appear elsewhere on the Council's agenda.

### **Audit Commission – Application for Re-Categorisation**

2. We welcomed the receipt of a letter from the Audit Commission confirming that the Regional Panel that considered the Council's application for CPA re-categorisation is satisfied that the Council has submitted sufficient evidence of improvement to warrant a corporate re-assessment of our current CPA score. The application has been assessed against a criterion that there will be a reasonable prospect of the Council ultimately achieving a reclassified score. We will be advised shortly when the Audit Commission's re-assessment will take place within a national programme.

### **Jointly Working with Blackpool Council on Policy and Performance Issues**

3. The Executive Cabinet has authorised a joint working initiative between Chorley and Blackpool Borough Councils in the field of policy and performance management.
4. This follows an approach from Blackpool Council for Chorley's Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) and her team of Performance Advisors and Communications Manager to advise and assist the restructure of Blackpool's Policy Team, a review of the Authority's LSP and its Community, Corporate and Marketing/Communications Strategies, as well as strengthening its performance management frameworks.
5. The part-time joint working venture is expected to operate initially up to March 2008 and to generate a flat fee income to this Council of £25,000.
6. In addition to benefiting Blackpool Council, the joint initiative, which accords with the concept of shared value for money services, will provide Chorley's professional staff with valuable work experience with a Unitary Authority and will generate extra income for the Council.

### **Performance Monitoring – Second Quarter of 2007/08**

7. The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) reviewing the Authority's performance in the delivery of the key projects and measures in the Corporate Strategy and against national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) during the second quarter of 2007/08.
8. The report reveals an overall commendable performance in the delivery of the Corporate Strategy's key projects, with 30 of the 44 projects having been completed and the remaining 14 progressing on course. 75% of these indicators have either met or exceeded their respective targets.
9. In respect of the Council's BVPI performance, 58% of BVPIs have shown consistent or improved performance, with 18 (55%) indicators being included in the national top quartile and 66% of indicators being on course to meet their respective targets by the year end. Only two indicators relating to early retirement and the average length of stay in bed and breakfast

accommodation are included in the bottom quartile nationally and action plans have been produced for each of the BVPs which has failed to reach its target over the last two quarters.

10. In response to the comments of a few Members present at the meeting, we were assured that each of the broader strategic housing issues impacting on the current demand to accommodate homeless people will be assessed in advance of a further report on these matters being brought to the Executive Cabinet.

### **Direction of Travel Self Assessment, 2007**

11. The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presented the Council's Direction of Travel Self-Assessment report for 2007. The report will be taken into account by the Audit Commission in the production of its Direction of Travel Assessment of the Council to be included in the Annual Audit and Inspection letter to be published in March 2008.
12. The report demonstrates and highlights each of the significant achievements of the Authority across each of its four priority areas over the past 12 months in its quest to deliver better services and outcomes for Chorley residents. The recognition of those achievements by a number of external bodies through several awards and commendations is highlighted in the Self Assessment document.

### **Moving Forward with Project and Programme Management**

13. We were presented with a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) reviewing the Council's project and programme management achievements and outlining planned actions to further strengthen the systems.
14. The report contains an overview of the Council's past achievements, including the development of a management toolkit, which has been recognised nationally as a best practice tool, and outlines actions put in place to address a small number of risks identified by a recent internal audit of project management. In addition, the report comments on the outcome of a regional survey commissioned by the North West E-Government Group, which had compared the Council's project management with other neighbouring authorities. This survey has revealed the maturity of the Council's management approach and processes to be above average for six of the nine themes measured.
15. We were pleased to note that the report concludes that, overall, the Council's project management systems are robust and effective and that the Officers are actively addressing means of improving a small number of areas (eg training, capacity and governance arrangements) in our efforts to maintain the Authority's high reputation in the field of project management.

### **Chorley Council's Actions to reduce Carbon Emissions and Impact on Climate Change**

16. The Executive Cabinet received a report of the Corporate Director (Business) on the actions and measures that the Council has either instigated or are proposing to develop in order to reduce its carbon emission and, thus, mitigate the impact of global climate change.
17. We welcomed the report and expressed our support of the various actions and initiatives being instigated by the Council in its community leadership role. These measures include:
  - the formation of the Climate Change Task Group comprising all Heads of Service with a remit to examine all the Council's activities and produce a Climate Change Strategy within the next 6 months to reduce the Council's environment footprint;
  - the Council's membership of the Local Government Information Unit Carbon Trading Pilot Project set up to assist and advise local authorities and organisations on the reduction of carbon emissions;

- the provision of a baseline survey by Liberata on energy consumption within the Council's operational properties;
- the introduction of a sustainable procurement policy; and
- the addition of a new priority to develop local solutions to global climate change in the LSP's refreshed Community Strategy.

### **Central Lancashire Health and Well-Being Board**

18. We sanctioned the Council's membership of the Central Lancashire Health and Well-Being Board to be established by the Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust.
19. The principal intention of the Board is to maximise partnership working between the PCT and its constituent local authorities. The Board will enable senior decision makers to foster good relationships, develop joint training opportunities across these structures and explore innovative approaches to means of improving the population's health and well-being and reducing health inequalities.

### **Refuse and Recycling Contract – Procurement Evaluation Model**

20. The Executive Cabinet approved the use of the criteria and assessment processes outlined in a report of the Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment in the evaluation of the tenders received for the new Refuse and Recycling Collection Contract.
21. Adoption of the criteria, based on an evaluation of various weightings, forms part of the procurement process laid down in the Council's Contract Procurement Rules and will assist the Council's aim to secure the most economically advantageous bid for the service.

### **Revenue Budget, 2007/08 – Monitoring**

22. We received and considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) monitoring the Council's financial performance during the second quarter period of 2007/08 in comparison with the budgetary and efficiency savings targets for the current financial year in respect of the General Fund.
23. An overspend of £91,000 was anticipated within the report, but we envisage that sufficient savings will be identified during the remainder of the financial year to ensure that a balanced budget is achieved at the year end. While no specific remedial action is considered necessary at this stage, we accepted that a number of budget areas will need to be monitored closely (ie corporate savings and efficiency targets; refuse collection costs; and concessionary travel and benefits costs).
24. After taking account of recent concerns about the effective and satisfactory delivery of the Homelessness service, we agreed to give notice to Chorley Community Housing of the Council's intention to terminate the current Housing Agency Agreement in respect of the provision of the homelessness service. The transfer back to the Council of responsibility for the management of this service will allow the Council more direct control and supervision of the service and the adoption of more satisfactory and effective processes.

**Recommendation**

25. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR P GOLDSWORTHY  
Executive Leader

AU/LM

There are no background papers to this report.