

# **REPORT OF EXECUTIVE CABINET**

## **GENERAL REPORT**

1. The Executive Cabinet has met twice since the last Ordinary Council meeting on 18 December 2007. This report summarises briefly the principal items considered at the two meetings on 14 February and 27 March 2008. Separate reports on the matters that require a specific Council decision appear elsewhere on the Council's agenda.

## **MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2008**

### **Beacon Council Status**

2. The Chief Executive made a short presentation to the Executive Cabinet on the key elements of the Council's bid for Beacon Council status to be afforded to the Authority by the Government in recognition of the Council's initiatives related to 'Transforming Services for Citizen Engagement and Empowerment'.
3. The Chief Executive's address explained the rationale and basis of the bid, which had highlighted the strong customer oriented culture of the whole of the organisation that now underpins its service delivery. The Council's innovative and consultative approach has helped to shape the services around the needs and aspirations of local residents to the extent that the Authority's overall customer satisfaction rate has increased by 14% during the past year, placing Chorley amongst the five Authorities with the highest customer satisfaction ratings.
4. We are, of course, all aware of the success of the bid since the Executive Cabinet meeting. The prestigious award of Beacon status to Chorley Council announced by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is a testament to the innovative and pioneering initiatives and practices that the Council has introduced over the past year or so and national recognition of the concerted efforts of members, senior officers, staff and the Council's partners. The award brings access to funding in the region of £80,000 to promote and disseminate our good practice to other authorities and allows certain exemptions from the inspection regime.

### **Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places – Proposed Order under Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001**

5. Following the Executive Cabinet's consideration of a report of the Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods), the General Purposes Committee, at its meeting on 3 March 2008, approved the Executive Cabinet's recommendation that the Council undertakes a consultation with local residents, organisations and businesses on a proposal to make a Designated Public Place Order under Section 13 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 in respect of the area surrounding the Leisure Centre complex and Springfield Road, Coppull and in the vicinity of German Lane.
6. The Order, if implemented, will not introduce a blanket ban on the drinking of alcohol within the designated area, but will make any failure to comply with a Police Officer's requirements in respect of public drinking or surrender of alcohol, without reasonable excuse, an arrestable offence. The principal purpose of the Order is to provide the Police with a further tool to tackle anti-social and alcohol fuelled behaviour. If the initiative proves successful, the scheme can be replicated in other appropriate areas of the Borough.

## **Performance Monitoring Report**

7. The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presented her periodic review of 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 third quarter of 2007/08 ending on 31 December 2007.
8. We noted the Authority's commendable performance on the delivery of the refreshed Corporate Strategy's key projects, with 84% of the projects either having been completed or progressing on or ahead of plan. In addition, the report confirmed a good overall BVPI performance, with an increased 41% of BVPIs in the top quarter nationally and 67% of indicators having shown an improving or consistent performance. We were assured that the three Corporate Strategy projects that are behind schedule and the BVPIs that are failing to meet their respective targets will be monitored and action taken to bring them on course.

## **Child and Young Person Protection Policy**

9. The Executive Cabinet approved for adoption a Child and Young Person Protection Policy.
10. Under the terms of the Children Act 2004, the Council has a statutory responsibility to provide a safe environment for children and young people, in which their welfare is of paramount importance. This was of particular relevance in relation to the wide variety of services and activities provided either directly for, or with the participation of, children and young people, particularly in the field of sport, art and culture. The newly adopted policy confirms the Council's commitment to these responsibilities and set out various systems, guidance and procedures for Officers to follow in differing circumstances in order to protect children and young people.
11. The policy will apply to all permanent and temporary staff, Councillors, Contractors and volunteer workers. The role of Designated Child Protection Officer, who will provide a point of contact and take forward any concerns or disclosures on children at risk, will be undertaken by the new post of Active People Manager (Leisure and Inclusion).

## **Improving Neighbourhoods in Chorley**

12. The Chief Executive presented the Executive Cabinet with a report on the recommendations of the Cabinet Task Group that had been set up to examine further the findings of the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel's inquiry into new methods of neighbourhood working.
13. We accepted the Task Group's proposals and have approved an action plan to establish neighbourhood teams operating within seven Neighbourhood Areas which, collectively, will cover the whole of the Borough. The teams for each area will include a Neighbourhood Officer and will operate under the central control of a new Neighbourhood Co-ordinator/Analyst. Each team will be responsible for the completion of an Action Plan for its respective Area and for the management of a dedicated budget. A total of £250,000, including a one-off £100,000 revenue contribution to pump-prime the initiative, has been factored into the 2008/09 budget.
14. We are optimistic that this innovative model of neighbourhood working, with a firm emphasis on neighbourhood action, as opposed to a meetings led concept, will ultimately prove to be an effective means of improving the quality of life for all our residents.

## **MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2008**

### **Scrutiny Inquiry Reports**

15. The Executive Cabinet were presented with the findings and recommendations of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel as contained in the Panel's reports of its inquiries into (a) Absence Management and (b) Efficiency Gains throughout the Authority.
16. The Panel has made nine specific recommendations in relation to its review of absence management and twelve recommendations in its report on the Efficiency Gains inquiry, which have been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny, with the exception of one amended recommendation within the Efficiency Gains report.
17. We accepted the findings and recommendations of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel on its two inquiries, as amended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for further consideration by the Executive Cabinet. Our ultimate decisions on the recommendations will be reported back to a future Cabinet meeting.

### **Community Cohesion Strategy for Chorley – 'One Chorley Forward Together'**

18. The Executive Cabinet received and endorsed a Community Cohesion Strategy for Chorley entitled 'One Chorley Forward Together' produced by the Chorley Local Strategic Partnership following an extensive and wide ranging consultation exercise.
19. The strategy sets out the Borough's response to the national community cohesion agenda and addresses its three priorities to improve life chances for all; develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live, work and play; and build stronger communities with approved access to public services.
20. Chorley Council will be expected to lead and progress a number of the key actions contained in the strategy, the delivery of which will be monitored by a Sub-Group of the LSP.

### **Chorley Partnership – Third Quarter Update**

21. The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) presented the Executive Cabinet with the quarterly update report on the activities and future plans of the Chorley Local Strategic Partnership.
22. The LSP continues to thrive and harness the work and collaboration of its key partners in a wide range of community based projects being co-ordinated by the Partnership's Executive. Those initiatives include an action plan to reduce teenage pregnancies in the Borough, the MATAC community safety venture, the Vulnerable Household project being run in conjunction with South Ribble Council and a number of environmental improvement schemes.
23. Following the Council's allocation of £90,000 to pump prime LSP joint projects in 2008/09, the Partnership Executive will shortly be asked to select the projects it wishes to implement over the coming year from the projects put forward by the LSP's Thematic Groups.

### **Guiding Principles for Development of the Botany/Great Knowley Site**

24. The Executive Cabinet approved the amended Guiding Principles document for the development of the Botany/Great Knowley site at Chorley which is currently allocated in the Chorley Borough Local Plan Review for Class B1 (Offices/Light Industry) and Class B2 (General Industry) use. The purpose of the document is to provide guidance and advice to

potential developers of the site in order to ensure that the highest quality design and layout is achieved in the event of any ultimate development of the site.

25. The Guiding Principles document has been altered to take account of the outcome of the additional consultations and public meetings that have taken place since the original guidance was presented to the Members in June 2007, including the incorporation of a comprehensive checklist of planning application requirements.
26. Whilst accepting the rationale behind the production of the Guiding Principles document at this stage, we are aware of some Members' concerns at the appropriateness of the site being earmarked for employment development purposes. With this in mind, we have reaffirmed the Authority's stance that it will make all reasonable endeavours to seek a reallocation of the site through the formal Local Development Framework process.

### **Asset Management Strategy and Plan, 2008/10**

27. The Executive Cabinet approved, for consultation purposes, a draft Asset Management Strategy and Plan for 2008/10 prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) in accordance with statutory requirements.
28. The draft Strategy Plan encompasses each property and land holding (including parks and open spaces) that the Council currently owns and manages. The principal aim of the strategy will be to examine whether the Council's asset resources are currently fit for purpose and how they can be used for maximum effectiveness and to contribute to the Council's corporate objectives.

### **Core Funding, 2008/09 – Awards in excess of £5,000**

29. Following consideration of a report and recommendations from the Corporate Director (People), the Executive Cabinet have authorised Core Funding grant assistance in varying sums in excess of £5,000 to seven key non-profit making organisations operating throughout the Borough from the 2008/09 budget provision. The grant aid is dependent in each case on the Corporate Director (People) agreeing and signing-off a Core Funding Agreement with each organisation.

### **Achieving Service Excellence in Chorley**

30. We received and noted a report of the Corporate Director (People) which outlined the means by which the Council plans to achieve the optimum service delivery and customer satisfaction by building on the strong foundations already put in place.
31. The report set out a series of principles for the future design and delivery of services based around clear customer insight and intelligence whilst taking account of the need to effect efficiency savings wherever possible. Projected plans of action to achieve the services that will satisfy customer needs and aspirations were outlined in the report, together with details of how progress will be monitored and reviewed.
32. The Executive Cabinet endorsed the concept and action plans and approved the acceptance of the £50,000 aid from the Department for Communities and Local Government to fund the inclusion of the 'Circle of Need' project within the work programme.

### **Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership**

33. The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods) on plans presently under examination to merge the Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire Community Safety Partnerships into a Lancashire South Strategic Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

34. The proposals have emerged from a statutory strategic assessment of the current Partnership. The creation of a single Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership aligned to the policing area aims to provide a strategic body that will enable the pooling of intelligence and resources, which will, in turn, increase capacity and the ability to access more centralised funding resources. While the new Partnership would operate at a strategic level, the local service delivery arms (eg MATAC) would be maintained.
35. A number of Members present at the Executive Cabinet meeting expressed concern at the level of consultation that had taken place on the merger plans, particularly amongst partner organisations. In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended at its meeting on 25 March the postponement of the merger plans for 6 weeks to allow a more wide ranging consultation exercise to be carried out and, subsequently, the operation of a pilot project for a 12 months period, with an interim review after 6 months and performance measurement criteria being developed.
36. We accepted the concerns regarding the level of prior consultation on the amalgamation plans and have agreed the interim recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This will allow wider consultation on the proposals and an examination of the future role of the local community groups within the proposed new strategic body.

### **People Directorate – Restructure**

37. We considered a report of the Corporate Director (People) and approved for consultation purposes with staff and trade unions recommended proposals to alter the structure of the People Directorate.
38. The proposals, which follow on from the recent senior management restructure, are aimed at redressing the current disproportionate allocation of resources across some service areas; providing greater capacity for the Directorate to meet the new needs of the service (particularly in relation to the Neighbourhoods agenda and Astley Park); and securing all available external resources and assistance.
39. The restructure plans entail the deletion of a number of identified current posts and the creation of a greater number of new posts, several of which will be funded by external sources. Consequently, it is anticipated that the restructure plans will be cost neutral.

### **Recommendation**

40. 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.