



MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL

MEETING DATE Tuesday, 21 November 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Margaret Lees (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Aaron Beaver, Martin Boardman, Alistair Bradley, Charlie Bromilow, Terry Brown, Henry Counce, Paul Clark, Jean Cronshaw, Alan Cullens, John Dalton, Doreen Dickinson, Graham Dunn, Christopher France, Gordon France, Margaret France, Jane Fitzsimons, Anthony Gee, Danny Gee, Tom Gray, Keith Iddon, Mark Jarnell, Hasina Khan, Zara Khan, Paul Leadbetter, Roy Lees, Adrian Lowe, Marion Lowe, June Molyneaux, Greg Morgan, Alistair Morwood, Mick Muncaster, Steve Murfitt, Beverley Murray, Debra Platt, Kim Snape, John Walker, Paul Walmsley, Alan Whittaker and Peter Wilson

OFFICERS: Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Chris Sinnott (Director (Early Intervention and Support)), Mark Lester (Director (Business, Development and Growth)), Rebecca Huddleston (Director (Policy and Governance)), Chris Moister (Head of Legal, Democratic & HR Services) and Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mark Perks, Eric Bell, Sheila Long, Matthew Lynch, Joyce Snape, Ralph Snape and Richard Toon

17.C.467 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 19 September 2017 of Council

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the last Council meeting held on 19 September 2017 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Mayor.

17.C.468 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interest received.

DEPUTY MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Margaret Lees reported that she was chairing the Council meeting this evening as the Mayor, Councillor Mark Perks was unwell. All Councillors joined in wishing the Mayor a very speedy recovery.

The Deputy Mayor referred to the forthcoming retirement of Carol Russell, Democratic Services Manager as this would be her last Council meeting. Along with Councillors Alistair Bradley, Alan Cullens and Anthony Gee, the Deputy Mayor thanked Carol for her work and support for Councillors over the years and wished her well for her retirement.

Councillor Alan Cullens referred to Remembrance Sunday on 12 November and thanked all those involved on the day. The numbers present at the Cenotaph Service in Astley Park were larger than ever, and in 2018 were likely to be even greater.

17.C.469 Public Questions

The following public question was submitted by Malcolm Allen on behalf of the Chorley Traders Alliance:

“Following the closure of Woolworths and having attended various meetings over a 15 year period organised by the council with consultants, reports were published and then nothing happened. I called a meeting of all the traders in the town and from that the CTA was formed, one of the first things we wanted was the north end of Market Street reopened with limited parking for customers which took us 5yrs to get and was a great success with town centre customers which helped get back to feeling like a market town.

But with the building of Buckshaw Village and all the new houses in the borough over the last few years our town centre has not expanded to meet there needs.

As Chair of Chorley Trader’s Alliance I wish to comment on recent coverage regarding the re-development of Market Walk in the town. Whilst the recent news of Marks & Spencer’s decision to review all of their planned store openings nationwide and including Chorley is a set-back, I believe that Town Centre Traders wish to see the overall scheme continue to be developed out to make our Town Centre fit for the future. We have a thriving town centre and work closely with the Council to ensure that shoppers can have the best facilities that Chorley has to offer. At the moment there are several false stories with regard to phase 2 doing the rounds in the town and on social media which is not helping trade in the town centre.

Whilst I appreciate that some people can find change challenging and will always find reasons not to do things, the members I have consulted are encouraging Chorley Council to carry on with the development. Can I ask on behalf of Chorley Traders Alliance that we do just that? The development is necessary if we want to see Chorley prosper in the future but do not want to take as long as the reopening of Market St.”

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Leader responded to this question saying that the debate on Market Walk would be held later in the meeting in public, and would address many of these issues. The Council was working with groups in the town centre to make sure that Chorley did thrive and prosper into the future. However change did mean just that and there would be inevitable disruption to achieve the longer term aim of developing the town centre.

17.C.470 Market Walk Update

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Leader presented a report of the Director of Business, Development and Growth updating Members on Market Walk.

The report summarised the decisions the Council had made regarding the development of the Market Walk Extension in terms of agreed leases and the recent decision by Marks and Spencer to review all proposed new Simply Food stores following a change in senior personnel at the company. All proposed new sites would be subject to re-appraisal including Chorley and so despite having a signed agreement in place with Reel Cinema, the Council could not currently progress with the scheme under the existing terms for approval for delivery.

To minimise the Council's financial exposure on the scheme and mitigate against any short term negative impacts the construction work might have, Eric Wright Construction had been instructed to:

- Complete the drainage and service diversion works that are already underway.
- To complete the final design works as already commissioned.
- Cancel the order for piling and piling mat
- To not confirm any orders that would commit the Council to further expenditure including structural steel and cladding system.
- To move back the fixed hoarding line by 15.11.17 to make existing hard standing available for 24 public parking spaces
- To lay an area of temporary tarmac surface to create c.30 car parking spaces to be available for public use by the afternoon of 18.11.17
- To lay an area of temporary tarmac surface to create an additional c.30 car parking spaces to be available for public use by the afternoon of 25.11.17
- To further condense the area of the site to the minimum required to enable delivery of remaining scheduled works.

Reel Cinema had been made aware of the situation and had responded positively. There was also interest from a major chain restaurant which was being pursued. To date £2.6m had been approved and committed and the report contained a number of options going forward:

Option 1 – Continue with the extension at the earliest opportunity and that may include seeking a partner to mitigate some of the costs/risks and/or possibly amending the current scheme.

Option 2 – Retain the temporary car park surface and site infrastructure and continue to seek alternate tenants for the existing design.

Option 3 – Consider a redesign of the scheme or other financial models.

Option 4 – Stop and reinstate the Flat Iron Car Park to a high quality permanent finish.

In presenting the report, the Executive Leader referred to a 200 signature petition he had received opposing the development and stated that this would be taken into account, however there was other evidence to be considered:

- The existing Market Walk units were all fully occupied with other interest from businesses
- The Council needed a revenue stream going forward to help meet the increasing budget gap

- Meetings were taking place with traders to listen to their concerns, but ultimately it was for everyone to work together to demonstrate Chorley was open for business now and into the future
- The public would like to see the delivery of a cinema and also food/restaurant opportunities in the evenings when smaller independent businesses didn't necessarily want to trade.

In conclusion Councillor Bradley felt the Council needed to pause, to work up further options that would benefit the interests of the town residents and traders and recommended that those proposals be submitted to the Market Walk Steering Committee and then to the Council meeting in January 2017.

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources supported the proposal to pause the scheme, referring to the need to consider the bigger picture and the Council's achievements in reducing parking fees, bringing former sites back into use, holding major events and purchasing Market Walk with an income to the Council of £1m a year. The review of the provision of an M&S Simply Food store was a setback but it was important not to lose sight of the value that a cinema would bring to the night time economy of Chorley.

Councillor Alan Cullens, Leader of the Opposition, was pleased the debate on Market Walk was being held in public and supported looking at other schemes, however he stated that his group was wholly opposed to any further development on the Flat Iron which would reduce car parking. He referred to the petition and the impact on business and traders from the loss of car parking and requested:

- That all work related to the scheme be halted, that it be confirmed that no scheme will go ahead by the end of January, and car parking be fully reinstated
- Remove existing hoardings so that the town centre looks open for business; and
- Consider compensation for the loss of business during this time.

Councillor Bradley agreed to consider these proposals and seek to make improvements where possible but the timetable in place had not been just to suit M & S but also Reel Cinema and discussions needed to continue with them as they were keen to come to Chorley. Car parking was the main concern of traders at the current time and work was taking place with them to maximise parking space in the centre.

Other councillors referred to the availability of other car parking which was just a few more minutes walk from the centre; the new park and ride facility at both Morrisons and Woodlands; and comparisons with other larger towns where parking was always considerably further away from the shops. Councillors Paul Walmsley and Peter Wilson reiterated the need to pause the work on the Market Walk extension to evaluate the options. It was essential to generate more income for the Council and whilst the M & S stance was disappointing there was still a great deal of confidence in the scheme and the ability to let all units.

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the Council agrees to pause and suspend operations on the site until the end of January with a view to doing a more detailed analysis of the various options going forward, being presented to Market Walk Steering Group and Council in January.**

2. That Council approves an additional £54,200 expenditure incurred in creating temporary parking, suspend the site and continuing professional fees until the end of January 2018.

17.C.471 Chorley Council Corporate Strategy 2017/18 - 2018/19

Members considered a report of the Director of Policy and Governance, presented by Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources and seeking approval to the refresh of the Council's Corporate Strategy for 2017/18 and 2019/20.

The report provided a summary of the performance of the Corporate Strategy in 2016/17 and the changes proposed as part of the Corporate Strategy refresh for 2018/19. A comprehensive review of the strategy had been undertaken by the administration which incorporated ongoing major projects like Market Walk and Primrose Gardens but included new projects to reflect the increasingly challenging national context and with a focus on meeting the fundamental needs of local residents like health, housing and employment.

There had been minor changes to the Corporate Strategy key priorities which were now:

- Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all;
- Clean, safe and healthy communities;
- A strong local economy; and
- An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.

The presentation of the new Corporate Strategy had been refreshed with a new design to clearly set out the commitments of the Council for 2017/18 to 2018/19 and the following projects would be included:

1. Improve the look and feel of local neighbourhoods across the borough
2. Develop Astley Hall and park as a visitor destination
3. Support people from across the borough to be digitally included
4. Deliver the Primrose Gardens retirement village
5. Deliver the Youth Zone
6. Develop a strategy for housing in Chorley and implement a programme of work
7. Bring forward key sites for development
8. Deliver the Market Walk extension
9. Deliver a borough wide programme to help people overcome barriers to employment
10. Transform the way the Council delivers services
11. Deliver a borough wide programme of improvements to street services
12. Integrate public services through the Chorley Public Service Reform Partnership

Before taking a decision on these proposals, Members considered alternative proposals put forward by the Conservative Group in the following agenda item.

Alternative Corporate Strategy

Councillors Alan Cullens and Martin Boardman, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, presented the Conservative Group's Alternative Corporate Strategy for 2017/18 which was guided by the six themes of:

1. **Health and wellbeing** – making Chorley a place where people start well, live well and age well
2. **Town centre and retail** – making Chorley a better place to shop
3. **Education** – making Chorley a better place to be educated
4. **Business** – making Chorley a better place to do business
5. **Tourism and leisure** – making Chorley a better place to enjoy and visit
6. **Housing** - Making Chorley a better place to live

The projects to be delivered under those headings were proposed as follows:

- Create an additional Digital Inclusion Officer Post
- Establish a community connectivity and inclusion fund
- Develop targeted wellbeing schemes
- Establish a community projects lead
- Reinvigorate Chorley's retail offer
- Establish and deliver independent retail grants
- Deliver a programme of improvements to the Chorley Markets
- Improve the look and feel of the town centre streetscene
- Undertake a needs analysis of educational requirements in Chorley
- Undertake a borough-wide land usage assessment
- Appoint an Inward Investment Officer
- Develop and deliver a Chorley apprenticeship scheme
- Establish a Tourism Manager post
- Improve the borough-wide leisure offer for young people
- Develop an action plan and programme of work to establish Lifetime Homes Standards in Chorley
- Establish a strategic housing delivery board with local stakeholders, housing providers and developers
- Review options to accelerate alternative housing delivery across the borough
- Undertake initial feasibility work to improve borough wide connectivity

Members debated the Alternative Corporate Strategy and noted it in the development and approval of the Council Corporate Strategy for 2017/18 to 2019/20.

RESOLVED - That the Corporate Strategy for 2017/18 – 2019/20 as submitted by the Director of Policy and Governance be approved.

17.C.472 Polling Station Update

The Chief Executive submitted a report as Returning Officer on suggested changes to polling station premises.

Following the last elections there had been a small number of requests to change polling station premises in the Euxton North, Adlington and Anderton and Chorley South West wards. However since the announcement of the Borough Ward Boundary Review, it was proposed that two of the three requests for alternative premises be deferred until the Boundary Review was complete in 2020 at which point all premises would need to be appraised. The third request was more straightforward and was a

proposal to use the new Buttermere Community Centre as a replacement for Gillibrand Primary School to allow the school to continue to remain open.

Councillor Alan Cullens asked that the use of the Primrose Hill Primary School be reconsidered, however Councillor Danny Gee reported that the head teacher felt that in 2018 the school would be able to remain open during election day.

RESOLVED –

- 1. That Buttermere Community Centre is designated as a replacement polling station to Gillibrand Primary School within the Chorley South West Ward.**
- 2. That any other polling station reviews be suspended and dealt with as part of the forthcoming borough ward boundary review.**

17.C.473 Adoption of Model Procedures

Members considered a report of the Director of Policy and Governance on the adoption of model procedures to deal with any grievance or disciplinary action in relation to the Chief Executive and Chief Officers of the Council. These were as set out in the Joint Negotiating Committee conditions of employment for both Chief Executives and Chief Officers and if approved, would be incorporated into the existing Employment Procedure Rules contained with the Constitution.

The model procedures, should they need to be implemented, required a number of committees/panels to be established and it was proposed that these be drawn from the existing membership of the Appointments Panel and HR Appeals Committee.

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the model procedures for dealing with grievance procedures and disciplinary action be adopted as set out in the Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Chief Executives Conditions of Service and the Joint Negotiating Committee Chief Officer Conditions of Service.**
- 2. That the Committees and Panels which are required to be established when dealing with grievance and disciplinary action, be established and appointed as set out in paragraph 8 of the report.**
- 3. That the Officer Employment Procedure Rules contained in Appendix 3 of the Constitution be amended accordingly to incorporate these changes.**

Mayor

Date