

Report of	Meeting	Date
Corporate Director (Business)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10/11/2008

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT – BUSINESS DIRECTORATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report progress against the key actions and performance indicators in the Business Directorate Business Improvement Plan for 2008/2009.

RECOMMENDATION

To note the report.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the central Lancashire sub region	✓	Improved access to public services	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chance		Develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	✓
Involving People in their Communities		Ensure Chorley is a performing Organisation	

BACKGROUND

The Business Plan Monitoring Statement reports progress against the key actions and performance indicators included in the 2008/09 Business Improvement Plan for the directorate. The report covers the period July to 30th September 2008.

KEY MESSAGES

Strategic Housing:

The Chorley Strategic Housing Partnership was launched in September and was very well attended by local housing partners. This meeting will meet again in early 2009 and has been welcomed by the LSP Executive to become a sub group of the partnership.

The draft Prevention of Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 is almost complete and will be circulated for comment in November 2008. This will set out how the Council will deliver reductions in homelessness and improve early intervention and prevention of homelessness.

The Housing Options team continue to maintain very low use of bed and breakfast and are developing measures for prevention of homelessness including a prevention pot and a rental bond scheme.

Grant Services

The grants service continues to deliver much needed services to vulnerable households, with over 256 grants delivered in 2008/7 and over 203 jobs delivered as part of the handy person scheme. The Home Improvement Agency is now considered to be a key partnership within the Council. The Choice based lettings project is on track and is set to implement a scheme in Chorley by March 2009. A bid has been submitted by Chorley to the CLG for funding to develop a sub regional Choice Based Letting scheme across Chorley, South Ribble and Preston.

The Council have begun negotiations with CCH to bring the Cotswold House Management Agreement to an end in 2009, the service will be improved and linked more closely to the Homeless Prevention Strategy of the Council.

The Affordable Housing Framework, a key piece of work to secure the future affordable housing needs has been completed and approved by the Council. The framework will influence and contribute towards achieving the corporate objectives in respect of Affordable Houses.

Regeneration and Design

The Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy is now complete (subject to minor amendments). The Strategy highlights the opportunities and challenges for Chorley Town Centre and recommends a number of Urban Design Objectives and associated projects and implementation processes as a means to realise the vision.

A Higher Density Housing Guidance Note has been drafted and is due to be reported to Executive Cabinet in order to approve further consultation. Higher density developments (including back garden developments) are increasingly being proposed in Chorley. Whilst these are often in line with Government guidance on density, some have caused concern because of their perceived negative impact. This guidance note aims to address these concerns and to secure well designed, higher density housing schemes in appropriate locations that respect the quality of surrounding areas.

A Heritage and Conservation Strategy has been drafted and is to be reported to Cabinet for endorsement. Its broad objectives are to develop an information base on the condition and character of Chorley's nine conservation areas, listed and other historic buildings; identify and secure funding for initiatives to achieve the aim of the strategy; protect the built heritage from damaging change by the use of planning enforcement powers through the local plan and local development framework and the development control process; and promote good conservation practice by providing specialist conservation advice and to raise awareness and understanding of the built heritage.

St Georges Conservation Area Review has been completed and St Laurences and Rivington Conservation Area Reviews are currently under way, with a completion date for March 2009. The Listed Building and Locally Listed Building records have been updated and posted on the Council's website.

Development Control

Performance on Major applications is 70% for the first two quarters which is below the local target of 73% but this position has improved from the last monitoring statement. It is expected to continue to achieve the local target though some major applications will go over time.

Performance on Minor and Other applications is above the local target and well above the national target.

Buckshaw Village

Group 1 – Application has been submitted and is under consideration.

The application is an outline planning application for the redevelopment of the site to include up to 1,200 new residential dwellings and up to 27,500m² of commercial floor space.

Chorley has undertaken the consultation on behalf of Chorley and South Ribble and a number of amendments to the scheme have been requested.

Planning Policy

The Government announced on 16 July 08 that the expression of interest for a Growth Point for the Central Authorities, Blackpool Council and Lancashire County Council was accepted. The five authorities have put forward a Programme of Development and a bid for CIF funding. The result of this bid is due in the spring of 2009.

The Sustainable Resources Development Plan Document was found "sound" by an Inspector in July 2008. The Sustainable Resources DPD was adopted on 23 September 2008 and the adoption has been publicised.

A revised Sustainable Resources Supplementary Planning Document is being prepared to provide further details on the policies of the Sustainable Resources DPD and will be approved for consultation in December.

There is continued partnership working with South Ribble and Preston Councils. The Employment Land Review for the Central Lancashire Area has been finalised as evidence base. The authorities are in the final stages of completing a detailed Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which will form an important part of the Local Development Framework evidence base. A Draft Transport Strategy has been prepared for the authorities which explores the strategic impact of housing and employment growth across the three authorities and sets out the key infrastructure requirements in the future based upon an ambition to deliver a high quality public transport system.

The Preferred Core Strategy, which will shape the future of Central Lancashire, has been published for consultation between 30 September and 19 December. Chorley planners will be involved in 19 public and stakeholder events and will host a market stall event. The Planning Policy Team Leader continues to be seconded to lead the joint team based at the County Council.

The Regional Spatial Strategy was adopted on the 30th September 2008 and becomes the regional development plan for the northwest.

Chorley prepared a separate response to the consultation on the Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the north west have been informed housing issues including affordable housing will now not form part of this review. The Partial Review will only focus on Gypsies & Traveller's; Travelling Show people; and Regional Car Parking standards.

Economic Development

The Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy should drive forward key priorities for the town centre in the short, medium and long term. The Strategy reinforces Chorley's unique selling points as a contemporary Market Town, complimentary to the Preston offer in the Central Lancashire sub-region.

As a reflection of our positive work to build relationships and develop the Markets Action Plan with the Markets Steering Group, the Group has won the prestigious Action for Market Towns Award for Partnership and Strategic Working. The Markets Redevelopment has now received full planning permission, however, at the request of market traders, work will commence in January 2009 so as not to disrupt Christmas trade. Markets management policy and procedures have also been refreshed.

A new programme of town centre events, including new continental market, Richard Alker live food demonstration and pottery fair have been positively received; and preparations are well underway for Chorley's Christmas Celebrations.

The 'Arc of Commercial Opportunity' and The Revolution Strategic Regional Site will cater for Chorley's investment needs and job creation in the short to medium term. A desk top analysis is now to be undertaken to look at options for the longer term, having negotiated contributions from Lancashire County Developments Ltd to do this.

Following the successful pilot with Wolseley UK Ltd of the Chorley Employment Charter to reduce worklessness, and in recognition of the credit crunch and likely recession, a Redundancy Task Force has now been established. Led by the Council, the partnership is made up of a mix of committed professional public and private sector organisations who can provide quality advice, information, guidance and support to people in a redundancy situation.

Market Walk extension continues to be a priority for the Town Centre and all options are still being considered to look at the best way of taking this development forward. Positive progress is being made by entering discussions with other interested developers, whilst RREEF's preferred developer status has been extended. It is likely that the original "Market Walk Phase 2" project will be remodelled in readiness for an upturn in the economy.

SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2008/2009

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BUSINESS DIRECTORATE

September 2008	£'000	£'000
ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET		935
Add Adjustments for In year cash movements		
Virements to/from other Services:		(71)
- Allocation of budgets for 2008/09 LSP Projects		20
- Slippage - Stat Hsg - Agency Staff Provision for 08/09		40
- Provision for JE		15
- Town Centre Strategy		32
- Marketing Chorley		31
- S106 commuted sums to finance revenue expenditure		(1)
ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET		1,001
Less Corporate Savings:		
Staffing		(15)
CURRENT CASH BUDGET		986

FORECAST

EXPENDITURE		
>Staff Savings	(141)	
>Agency Staff Costs	95	
>Legal Costs re 54 Lancaster Lane Planning Application	10	
>Strategic Housing Restructure	15	
>Reduced B&B requirement	(30)	
>Subscriptions	4	
>Utilities	4	
>eplanning Computacentre costs	11	
>Land Charges-service fees	(5)	
>Land Charges Fees	(6)	
Expenditure under (-) or over (+) current cash budget		(43)
INCOME		
>Housing Planning and Delivery Grant	1	
>Markets Income	44	
>Planning/Building Control Income	(30)	
>Land Charges	70	
>Recharge of Staff re LDF	(32)	

Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved

53

10

FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2008/2009

996

Key Assumptions

Staff Assumptions

>Planning Salaries Growth Item - £16k for 2008/09, anticipated £5k spend on one Modern Apprentice, year two from 09/10 Directorate administration restructure.

>One Planning Officer

]

>One Principle Planning Officer

] anticipate recruitment of staff by December 08,

>Two Planning Assistants

] agency provision included until then.

Key Issues/Variables

Closely monitor all income

LDF costs to date are £18k, these to be funded by LDF Reserve (code 1855)

Key Actions

>To invoice PCC and SRBC re: Staff time on LDF

SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

The adoption of the Sustainable Resources Development Plan document was to schedule. A revised Supplementary Planning Document is being prepared that will give advice to developers on how to ensure that new development is both energy efficient and includes low carbon energy sources. It is intended that consultation will take place from December 08. This will result in Chorley having some of the most cutting edge “sustainable” planning policies in the country. This will initially require additional work by development control but is in line with Government policy and the Council’s Climate Change Strategy. It will also require the Council’s own developments to meet the high standards set.

Following on the Council’s adopted Climate Change Strategy a number of Actions were agreed by the Executive Cabinet. These included £60 000 for business grants, £20 000 for grants for innovative energy efficiency and micro generation measures, £10 000 for Greening Chorley Markets and £30 000 to bridge the match funding gap for individuals, the “third sector” and Small Medium Enterprises.

Although some of the project plans are being produced outside of the Directorate Jane Meek will sign off each Project Plan and is the lead Director for Climate Change issues.

The Business Grants will be publicised at the launched of the Lancashire Strategic Partnerships Climate Change Strategy in November 2008. These grants are the result of work undertaken by the Business Directorate, Corporate Policy and Groundwork Pennine in putting together a programme for working with businesses with grant funding for actions after diagnostic work has been undertaken. This would give businesses in Chorley a commercial advantage, as well as reduce carbon emissions within the Borough.

The Business Directorate has continued to drive the Climate Change agenda forward corporately in other ways. For example, Chorley is working jointly with the County Council on examining in detail how changes in the weather impact on the Council’s services.

There is continued partnership working with South Ribble and Preston Councils. The authorities need to finalise the detailed Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which will form an important part of the Local Development Framework evidence base. The Draft Transport Strategy which explores the strategic impact of housing and employment growth across the three authorities and sets out the key infrastructure requirements in the future based upon an ambition to deliver a high quality public transport system has been finalised.

The Preferred Core Strategy, which will shape the future of Central Lancashire, has been published for consultation between 30 September and 19 December. Chorley planners will be involved in 19 public and stakeholder events and will host a market stall event. Julian Jackson Policy Team Leader at Chorley continues to be seconded to lead the joint team based at the County Council.

Continued work will be required to respond to changes in the Regional and National Planning arena, including progressing the Growth Point ensuring that the interests of Chorley are well served. The Central Authorities, Blackpool Council and Lancashire County Council will need to continue to work closely in the future months as events unfold following the submissions of the Programme of Development and a bid for CIF funding.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Description	Actual	Target 2008/09	Lead Officer
NI 156 Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation (smaller is better)	36	30	Zoë Whiteside
NI 157a Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'major' application types (bigger is better)	70.59%	81%	Paul Whittingham
NI 157b Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'minor' (bigger is better)	81.99%	80%	Paul Whittingham
NI 157c Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'other' application types (bigger is better)	94.03%	89%	Paul Whittingham

VALUE FOR MONEY/EFFICIENCIES UPDATE

The directorate is currently working with a team led by Business Improvement to undertake a value for money review of the whole directorate. This review, which will complete in the final quarter of the year, will lead to an action plan to drive forward value for money in the directorate.

JANE MEEK
CORPORATE DIRECTOR (BUSINESS)

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID