

Report of	Meeting	Date
Corporate Director (Business)	Overview and Scrutiny	26/01/2009

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(S)

- To note the report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- Business Plan Monitoring Statements form an important part of the Council Performance Management Framework and Business Planning Process. The statement gives the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to monitor the successful implementation of Business Improvement Plans.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- N/A

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		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	✓

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 1st October to 31st December 2008.

KEY MESSAGES

7. **Regeneration and Design**

The Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy was endorsed by Overview and Scrutiny and Executive Cabinet in November. 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. Fee proposals have been received for Market Street and Flat Iron enhancement schemes.

A Higher Density Housing Guidance Note has been drafted and is due to be reported to Executive Cabinet in February to approve further consultation. This guidance note aims to address concerns in respect of such housing and to secure well designed schemes, only in appropriate locations, that respect the quality of surrounding areas.

A Heritage and Conservation Strategy has now been endorsed by Executive. 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. In accordance with this Strategy, St Laurences and Rivington Conservation Area Reviews are currently under way, with a completion date for end March 2009. St Laurences Public Consultation event will be held on 11th February. That for Rivington will provisionally be held mid-March.

Planning Policy

In October 2008 the Central Authorities and Blackpool Council, with the help of Lancashire County Council submitted their first Programme of Development, a comprehensive delivery strategy for the Growth point area, and a bid for CIF funding. The Programme of Development bid was approved in December 2008.

A revised Sustainable Resources Supplementary Planning Document has been prepared to provide further details on the policies of the Sustainable Resources DPD and was approved in December 08 for a 6 - week consultation period in the New Year.

In LDF joint working there is continued partnership working with South Ribble and Preston Councils. The authorities are completing a detailed Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which will form an important part of the Local Development Framework evidence base. The Preferred Core Strategy, which will shape the future of Central Lancashire, was published for consultation between 30 September and 19 December 08. Chorley planners were involved in 20 public and stakeholder events. Julian Jackson Policy Team Leader at Chorley continues to be seconded to lead the joint team based at the County Council.

The Council's Climate Change Strategy was adopted in May 08. This Strategy should underpin and inform the Corporate work of the Council, and act as a public affirmation of the Council's commitment to address Climate Change. Actions established include £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 were 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 Peninne 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. This work is to be used as pilot work for the other Lancashire authorities within the LAA for NI 186.

Strategic Housing: Homelessness and Housing Advice

All posts within the Homelessness and Housing Advice Team have now been filled and the new staff started in January 2009. A programme of training and support is now being implemented which will enable the new officers to develop their skills and really drive forwards the service improvement. This includes a two-day visit from the CLG Regional Practitioner for Homelessness who will give expert advice on developing new systems and prevention tools. As a result of the significant improvement in performance, the team has attracted an additional £15k in Prevention Grant funding in 2008/9 and it is hoped this will be rolled out for future years.

The team are finalising the arrangements for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme and the Rental Bond Scheme, which are expected to go live in February 2009.

Use of bed and breakfast, as temporary accommodation remains consistently low, with occasional use in the last quarter being for one of two reasons

- a) Where CCH unreasonably refused a nomination to the hostel
- b) Where a customer was deemed too high risk for placement in the hostel or any other supported housing accommodation.

Executive Cabinet took the decision to bring the Council funded Homelessness and Housing Advisor post based at the CAB, back in house from 1st April 2009. This will enable the service to be increased to full time and therefore provide more customers with mortgage and repossession advice and advocacy.

The Transfer of Cotswold House is underway and negotiations are taking place with all partners.

Strategic Housing: Strategy and Enabling

The new Affordable Housing Task Force was launched and this group will be charged with removing any barriers to the delivery of affordable housing and overseeing the key projects pertaining to it. Delivery is improving with a projected 70 units expected to be delivered in 2008/9 and 149 units in 2009/10. A key projects is to be developed which will reflect the activities the team are leading on regarding Council Land holdings and also the use of our Section 106 Commuted sums to enable sites to be brought forward for affordable housing.

The final consultations are Equality Impact Assessment is being prepared for the draft Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and a very successful Homelessness Forum with partners was held in January 2009, during which, partners gave very honest and meaningful feedback on our strategy and shaped the strategy action plan.

Key Housing Actions

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been commissioned and the first draft report published. The Council successfully attracted £35k in Sub regional choice grant funding and the scheme is expected to be launched in Summer 2009.

Development Control

Performance on Major applications at the end of last quarter was 76% which is below the stretch target of 81% for this year. Following the recent committee decisions and approval of 3 more major applications the percentage has increased to 79%. This is moving in the right direction and was mainly as a result of the issuing of several decisions at the beginning of the year that had not been resolved for several years.

Performance on Minor applications where the target is 80% is 82% and on Other applications where the target is 89% the performance is 94%, performance for both these targets are above the local and national targets.

Pre application presentation to members has been piloted and was well received by Members who attended the session, this will in future become an important element of engagement with Members and part of an improved planning application process. That process will in future involve wider groups of stakeholders at key stages in the pre application process such as Parish Councils.

Member training has also been implemented in a new interactive way and has been well received by members and will be used by member services as a good example of how to produce such training. All the DC team with input from Policy and Urban Design resulted in an excellent event.

A lot of legislative changes have happened so that householders can extend their houses more easily and there are a number of new changes expected in the coming months relating to commercial development to make it easier to develop or apply for permission and there is a new Planning Act expected soon. This will introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy that will be imposed on every new property built.

Economic Development

In response to the Credit Crunch and recession a first paper has been prepared on the economic downturn. The paper provides economic impact data, details responses currently in place (such as the Redundancy Task Force, Connect to Work, New Business Start Up provision and 'Count on Us' media campaign) and highlights potential future responses. A project mandate has been prepared to develop and deliver an action plan to support Chorley-based businesses during the recession, maximise their survival and preserve jobs in the Borough.

Construction work has now started on the Covered Markets redevelopment. The £330,000 investment will create a new Market Hall with feature canopy entrances, newly decorated interior and exterior, new lighting and flooring, roof over the central aisle and an extended café. The scheme will be completed in February 2009.

Work has commenced to align the Town Centre Strategy with the planning policy process and identify sites and their potential redevelopment opportunities across the town centre. This key piece of work will help develop options for the next phase of development in the town centre.

The Transport and Services Accessibility Plan actions continue to be regularly monitored, and progressed/ initiated.

In LDF joint working the Preferred Core Strategy was approved on schedule in August 08 for public consultation between 30 September and 19 December 08

In Developing the Growth Point Opportunity the Second Round Growth Point was prepared and submitted on schedule. Following the successful bid, the Programme of Development, a comprehensive delivery strategy including identifying development sites and infrastructure funding for the Growth point area was prepared by October and approved in December 2008. All to schedule.

The Climate Change Strategy was adopted on schedule and work is continuing a pace on the actions such as the business grants, which will give businesses in Chorley a commercial advantage, as well as reduce carbon emissions within the Borough

The Sustainable Resources Development Plan document was adopted 2 months before schedule and has enabled work on the Sustainable Resources Supplementary Planning Guidance to progress at a faster pace.

9. **Planning Policy**

The Transport and Services Accessibility Plan Actions are progressing but there are a number of actions where the lead agency is Lancashire County Council and the actions are on hold because they have no staff or lack of resources to do this work:

- Investigate more effective ways of providing timetable information including a project that would enable personal travel planning
- Pursue personal travel planning via a web portal for those with learning difficulties and their carers
- Pursue additional car parking to serve Adlington railway station through drawing up a scheme and submitting a planning application.

Another action is delayed as a strategy is not in place yet:

- Renew efforts to achieve a new station at Coppull. Lancashire County Council will feed the Coppull Railway Station proposal into the West Coast Utilisation Strategy 2009. The WCUS is due out for consultation in Spring 2009 with a draft in Autumn 09. The WCUS will provide a definitive answer as to whether the proposal is a realistic option by summer 09. Will need supporting information from Chorley Council at the appropriate time.

10. SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2008/2009

BUSINESS DIRECTORATE

December 2008	£'000	£'000
ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET		935
Add Adjustments for In year cash movements		
Virements to/from other Services:		(35)
- 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)
Equal Pay Claims		8
ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET		1,045
Less Corporate Savings:		
Staffing		(15)
CURRENT CASH BUDGET		1,030

FORECAST

EXPENDITURE

>Staff Savings	(155)	
>Severance Pay	8	
>Agency Staff Costs	82	
>Legal Costs re 54 Lancaster Lane Planning Application	29	
>Reduced B&B requirement	(35)	
>Subscriptions	10	
>Utilities	10	
>eplanning Computacentre costs	7	
>Land Charges-service fees	(10)	
>Land Charges Fees	(10)	
>Insurances	2	
>Car Allowances	(2)	
>Publicity	5	
>Postage	(2)	
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Expenditure under (-) or over (+) current cash budget		(61)

INCOME

>Housing Planning and Delivery Grant	(27)	
>Homelessness Grant	(15)	
>Markets Income	40	
>Planning/Building Control Income	(10)	
>Land Charges	100	
>Recharge of Staff re LDF	(32)	
>Town Centre Promotion Income	(6)	
>General smaller income headings	6	
	<hr/>	
Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved		56 (5)

FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2008/2009**1,025****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] not anticipating recruitment before new year.
- >Two Planning Assistants]
- >Private Sector Housing Officer }
- >PT Principle Planning Officer }

Key Issues/Variables**Key Actions**

- >To invoice PCC and SRBC re: Staff time on LDF
- >Closely monitor all income
- >LDF costs to date are £93k, Chorley element to be funded by LDF Reserve (code 1855) £93k is the Gross figure and includes amounts that need to be recharged by Business Directorate to SRBC and PCC at the earliest opportunity.
- >A proportion of consultancy costs incurred by Planning section to be recharged to BAE.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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Indicator Description	Target 08/09	Target Quarter Three	Quarter Three Performance
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)	94.24%	89%	Paul Whittingham

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UPDATE

12. All staff in the directorate were asked to undertake corporate online equality and diversity training, which most have now completed. Equality Impact Assessments are underway for the Affordable Housing Framework, Economic Development, Planning Services and a Strategic Housing Action Plan

JANE MEEK
CORPORATE DIRECTOR (BUSINESS)

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Service Managers		27 th January 09	