

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People and Places (Introduced by the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods)	Cabinet	25 March 2010

NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING 2009 – 2010 PROGRESS REPORT AND PROPOSALS FOR 2010-2011.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide an update on our first year's Neighbourhood Working progress, including the 2009-2010 Neighbourhood Action Plans.
2. To make recommendations for the facilitation and further development of Neighbourhood Working in 2010-2011 and beyond.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

3. It is recommended that the 2010-2011 progress be noted and that draft Neighbourhood Action Plans and proposals for 2010-2011 are approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

4. A December 2007 Executive Cabinet report highlighted a number of desired outcomes of neighbourhood working, including:
 - A Neighbourhood Team approach
 - Quality of life
 - Support for the neighbourhood
 - Confidence in local service providers
5. As our first full year of implementing a new neighbourhood working process, 2009 – 2010 has presented all partner organisations with a learning curve that has been challenging but very beneficial. New relationships and partnerships have developed, issues and concerns have been highlighted, and joint solutions promoted. All partners, including residents, have been able to question each other's systems and procedures and clarify how things actually work, at a very local level.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

6. Strong partnership working and community engagement are key to our priorities of involving people in their communities, improving equality of opportunity and life chances, developing the character and feel of Chorley as a great place to live, and ensuring that Chorley is a performing organisation.

7. Through neighbourhood working we can both engage with residents and partners at grass roots level, and strive towards continuous improvement in our own organisational performance, by further developing our understanding of Chorley's culture, needs and aspirations, in order to provide the best possible services through the most effective use of shared resources.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

8. We have tried other models of neighbourhood working through the previous Area and Community Forums, and have found that the current model appears to be a closer "fit" for Chorley's purpose and demographic.
9. Neighbourhood working and the action plans illustrate how we have responded to lessons learned, and could be key to our CAA (Comprehensive Area Assessment), providing evidence of how we implement, in partnership, our duty to involve and engage our local communities.
10. Discontinuing neighbourhood working could jeopardise the further development of community engagement and partnership working at a neighbourhood level.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

11. 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

12. During 2006-7, the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertook an extensive inquiry into Neighbourhood Working. The Executive Cabinet accepted the inquiry's initial findings and recommendations on 6 December 2007, and also, in February 2008, a further report outlining details of resources allocated for delivery and an overall action plan with timescales for implementation.
13. Monitoring reports were presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 September 2009, Executive Cabinet on 12 November 2009. A further report will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny on for 22 March 2010. Progress reports and recommendations were also received favourably by the Chorley Partnership Board in January and November 2009.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING – 2009-2010 FINDINGS

14. Partnership working

The seven "virtual" Neighbourhood Teams have been involved in a wide range of locally-based working groups and project teams. A recent informal consultation exercise through the Neighbourhood Teams provided this information:

	Council	Partners
Have made new contacts through Neighbourhood Working	70%	80%
Have gained new information about specific Neighbourhoods	80%	73%
Have been able to use the concept of Neighbourhood Working to support projects working on in 2009-2010	80%	67%
Have got to know Council Members better	70%	47%
Have got to know Parish Councils better	70%	40%
Have been able to use partners support to promote projects and activities working on in 2009-2010	50%	73%

15. Neighbourhood Action Plans

There are a total of 115 projects within the 2009-2010 Neighbourhood Action Plans. At the start of February 2010 progress had been made on 87% of these. In order to maximise local engagement, we adopted a somewhat groundbreaking, flexible approach to project development, and as a result, several projects have evolved in response to local needs and aspirations, and have been proposed as continuing projects for 2010-2011.

16. Draft Neighbourhood Action Plans that take this process of evolution into account have been prepared, and also include new projects highlighted by Council Members and partners, through Ward Walks, Neighbourhood Area Tours and the Neighbourhood Teams. The draft Neighbourhood Action Plans for 2010-2011 are included as an appendix to this report.

17. Community Environmental Action Projects

Environmental action projects, developed in partnership, have taken place in 6 of the 7 Neighbourhood Areas - Chorley Town West, Chorley Town East, North Western, North Eastern, Western and Eastern Parishes, in 2009-2010. No project requests came in from Southern Parishes. A further project is in the planning stages for Eastern Parishes, to take place in early summer 2010. These projects are funded through the Neighbourhood Working Pump Priming fund.

18. Promoting Neighbourhood Working

We have developed a specific Neighbourhood Working logo/strapline, using the Chorley Smile brand. This has been incorporated into, for example, Day of Action fliers, and will also be produced in the form of a plaque to promote completed Action Plan projects. We have developed a page for each of the Neighbourhood Areas on the Council website, and are looking at ways to further develop this opportunity. Several press articles have promoted the Borough's Neighbourhood Areas' projects, and some of these have reached publications elsewhere in the region. Some of our partners have also promoted their

involvement in Neighbourhood Working in Chorley through their own newsletters, web pages and press releases.

19. During the recent round of meetings Members requested more information about Neighbourhood Working and, in particular, examples of good practice that could be replicated in other areas. Raising the profile of Neighbourhood Working will be a priority in 2010/11.

20. Examples of specific initiatives

The following bullet points give a flavour of some of the successes during 2009/10, by Neighbourhood area

Chorley Town West

- Working with residents to help turn their vision of a community park into a reality
- Starting up a Chorley North West Partnership to increase networking opportunities
- Two community noticeboards to be installed in the near future

Chorley Town East

- Healey Nab partnership working and Heritage Trail
- Day of action in WTSLG Streets area, as the start of closer partnership approach to community and environmental issues.
- Plans for Community Open Day launch of new outdoor facilities at Lord Street Youth and Community Centre – part of general promotion of activities.

North Western

- Buckshaw community survey in partnership with SRBC
- Closer partnership working – older people's activities in Astley Village
- Plans for Astley Village Community Day to take place late May 2010

North Eastern

- Environmental improvement plan – Wilderswood pond
- Remedial works scheduled for Riley Green Pinfold
- Partnership approach to refurbishments at Hoghton Village Hall

Western Parishes

- Intergeneration activities in Eccleston – including recent Pancake Day event involving Scouts, Over 60's, Parish Council, local primary school, Library.
- New tools and secure storage, Mawdesley Millennium Green
- Ulnes Walton Community Action Project

Eastern Parishes

- Supporting Heapey and Wheelton Village Hall environmental works and development planning
- Canal banks walk project in conjunction with Chorley Town East, Adlington and Heath Charnock Parish Councils, British Waterways, Albany High School and others.
- Improvements to Withnell Fold Memorial Garden

Southern Parishes

- Contribution towards cost of fencing railway subway to reduce anti social behaviour

- Development of Longfield Community Hub
- Contribution towards costs of re-siting Heskin play area

21. Proposals for 2010-2011

Councillors within each Neighbourhood Area have reviewed progress on their 2009-20 Neighbourhood Action Plans and agreed priorities for 2010-2011. Their proposals are included as Appendix to this report.

22. Members have expressed a clear interest in developing greater opportunities to engage with the Neighbourhood Working process. To this end, in addition to the annual Action Plan setting meetings in January/February, and Neighbourhood Tours in September/October, we will be working together to identify the preferred options for Members in each Neighbourhood Area. Members are also encouraged to arrange periodic Ward Walks with their Neighbourhood Officers.
23. Now that the concepts and processes of Neighbourhood Working are more firmly embedded we will consider, with our partners, the potential for greater impact on wider, more strategic issues, at neighbourhood level. For example, health issues, leisure provision, environmental priorities, economic development, community safety, culture and heritage, volunteering, community management of local assets, support for families, and communities of interest.
24. During 2010-2011 we also intend to work both corporately and with partners at a more strategic level to identify and propose initiatives to address some of these wider issues in 2011-2012. This will include identifying clearer links within:
 - Our Sustainable Community, Community Cohesion and Community Engagement Strategies;
 - Promoting Neighbourhood Area connections and representation through Chorley Partnership's thematic groups, for example, Community Safety, The Children's Trust, Stronger and More Involved Communities, Neighbourhood, Environment and Streetscene;
 - Developing work around Public Realm issues with, for example, Lancashire County Council, parish/town council's, neighbourhood area partnerships and VCF groups
25. In addition to developing a more strategic approach to neighbourhood issues, we recognise that local residents, community organisations and Councillors are keen to retain a very local emphasis on efficient response to the environmental and street scene issues that are often key to people's wellbeing and quality of life. We are identifying ways in which we can improve our systems and procedures in order to raise awareness of the importance placed on having a good quality streetscene/environment, make it clear how people can report on failings to improve their neighbourhood, take action and let people know.

26. Neighbourhood Area Action Plan projects – Pump priming budget allocation and spend

Members will recall that £150,000 was allocated to the initial stages of neighbourhood Working. During 2009-2010 we have spent £44,000.00 of the pump priming fund, leaving £106,000 to carry forward into 2010-2011, and beyond.

Members have allocated the remaining project-related funding in support of their Neighbourhood Area Action Plan for 2010-2011.

The remaining Community Action/Environmental Projects, Communications/Promotional and Contingency funds are available to allocate throughout the year, in response to local proposals.

	Total Allocation	2009/2010	2010/11, and beyond
Chorley Town West	25,800	5,800	20,000
Chorley Town East	24,200	700	23,500
Eastern Parishes	16,500	4,000	12,500
Western Parishes	12,500	3,500	9,000
Southern Parishes	12,000	8,000	4,000
North Western Parishes	15,500	3,800	11,700
North Eastern Parishes	12,700	10,700	2,000
Community Action/Environmental projects	20,000	5,000	15,000
Communications/promotional	5,000	1,500	3,500
Contingency budget	5,800	1,000	4,800
TOTALS	150,000	44,000	106,000

27. External resources brought into Neighbourhood Action Plan projects 2009-2010, and options for 2010-2011

Each Neighbourhood Area saw wide range of additional partnership funding in support of specific Action Plan projects, and other area-based initiatives. Partners include Lancashire County Council, Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust, Chorley Community Housing, Places for People, British Waterways, Network Rail, Parish Councils and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations. We haven't yet been able to produce a breakdown of specific amounts but hope to do so within the first half of 2010-2011.

28. As Members have proposed that providing external funding application support should be a Borough-wide priority for Neighbourhood Working in 2010-2011, this will be included in our project management plans.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

29. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	✓

JAMIE CARSON
DIRECTOR PLACES AND PEOPLE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Liz Morey	5812	26 February 2010	***