

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People and Places (Introduced by the Executive Leader)	Executive Cabinet	20 October 2011

3 TIER FORUMS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To approve Chorley Council's involvement in the new 3 Tier Forum arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- It is recommended:
 - that Chorley Council participate in the local forum to work towards enhanced joint working
 - that Chorley Council's involvement be for an initial period of 12 months. At this point a report will be brought back to the Executive Cabinet to report on the effectiveness of the local forum and decide on future involvement
 - that in signing up to the forum Chorley Council make representations for the number of Parish/Town Councillor representatives to be increased for Chorley 3 Tier Forum.
 - That a political balance is achieved. For the remainder of the current municipal year this would be::
 - Conservative representatives - 3
 - Labour representatives - 2
 - Liberal Democrat representatives - 1
 - Independent representatives - 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The report describes 3 Tier Forums and then recommends that Chorley Council should participate in the local forum.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To improve joint working between Chorley Council, Lancashire County Council and Parish/Town Councils.

ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- Not to participate

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Strong Family Support	✓	Education and Jobs	✓
Being Healthy	✓	Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods	✓
Safe Respectful Communities	✓	Quality Community Services and Spaces	✓
Vibrant Local Economy	✓	Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages	✓
A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money			✓

BACKGROUND

7. Lancashire County Council have produced the following information to explain what 3 Tier Forums are:

- 3 Tier Forums are informal joint business meetings of County, District and Parish Councillors to discuss issues of mutual interest in their districts and influence the priorities and forward planning of all three tiers of local government. The agendas and meetings are councillor led and councillors direct the agenda and the discussions. Each forum will be asked to appoint a Chair and Deputy Chair to rotate annually between the County Council and District Council. The Forum will aim to reach agreement by consensus, failing which the issue will be referred to the Leaders of the County Council and District Council to resolve.
- As the Forums are not formal committees of the County, District or Parish Councils the aim is that they will not be overly bureaucratic and will bring a fresh approach to three tier working. As a result Access to Information provisions do not apply and as they are not public meetings members of the public are not able to attend. The Forums will not duplicate other existing meetings such as Children's Trusts, Area Councils, LSP's etc.
- The membership of each Forum comprises of all local County Councillors with an offer that there be an equal number of District Councillors appointed by the District Council. It has also been agreed that one Parish/Town Council will sit on each Forum.
- The Forums will meet three times a year. Initially so that there is something tangible to refer to the Forum the district based Commissioning Plans from Lancashire County Council's Environment Directorate have been suggested as a discussion topic. It will be for the Forum to decide whether it wants to continue to monitor, review and agree in-year adjustments, where necessary, relating to the Commissioning Plan. The expectation is that the remit of the Forum will expand as it develops its own priorities and work programmes.
- The individual Forums will decide meeting dates and venues. However, if they wish to receive commissioning information it is recommended that they meet in November 2011; March/April 2012; and August/September, 2012 as these are the times when updated commissioning information is available and when the Forums will be able to most effectively review progress.

- The forums are essentially member led meetings and therefore officer support and attendance will be minimal unless required. However, an officer will always attend to take a note of the meeting to make sure that actions are picked up and dealt with outside of the meetings.
- The commitment of Lancashire County Council is that there will be an operational 3 Tier Forum in each district by November, 2011. In districts where the borough council and/or the Parish and Town Councils choose not to engage in the Forum it will still operate either as a two tier or single tier forum.
- The 3 Tier Forums have initially been piloted in Burnley and Wyre and have been focussed on the services provided by the Lancashire County Council's Environment Directorate. The longer term ambition is to broaden the scope to include other district based services from across Lancashire County Councils.
- Wyre and Burnley have both successfully held three meetings and feedback from these meetings has been positive in that councillors felt they gained a much greater understanding of our commissioning approach, the services we offer, where and how money is spent across their Borough, and the vast range of services delivered by the Environment Directorate. Some of the successes include:
 - Wyre 3 Tier Forum agreed to pursue the completion of improvements to Cleveleys Bus Station and work is now being progressed.
 - Burnley 3 Tier Forum has raised the profile of the Todmorden Curve and this is now included in the Lancashire Transport Plan.

CHORLEY COUNCIL'S INVOLVEMENT

8. Enhanced joint working between Chorley Council, Lancashire County Council and Parish/Town Councils is an outcome that all would subscribe to. That is at the core of the 3 Tier Forums, and for that reason, it is recommended that Chorley Council participate in the local forum to work towards enhanced joint working.
9. Given the lack of a full evaluation of the pilot forums, it is recommended that Chorley Council's involvement be for an initial period of 12 months. At this point a report will be brought back to the Executive Cabinet to report on the effectiveness of the local forum and decide on future involvement.
10. Local Parish/Town Councils have concerns about the limited Parish/Town Council representation on the forums. In an area such as Chorley, with 23 Parish/Town Councils, it is an extremely difficult task for one person to effectively advocate on behalf of all Parish/Town Councils. It is recommended that in signing up to the forum Chorley council make representations for the number of Parish/Town Councillor representatives to be increased for the Chorley 3 Tier Forum. To maximise to increase the opportunities for Parish Councillors to be involved, it is suggested that paces are taken by Parish Councillors, not their clerks, that are also either a Borough or County Councillor.

11. Chorley Council has seven representatives on the forum. It is recommended that:

- Conservative representatives - 3
- Labour representatives - 2
- Liberal Democrat representatives - 1
- Independent representatives - 1

This will ensure there is broad political involvement and it will give groups representing non-parished areas the opportunity to put members forward.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. 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	

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

13. There are no comments to be made at present. However, as the forums and their terms of reference are developed it will be appropriate to bring these proposals back for further consideration and input.

JAMIE CARSON
DIRECTOR PEOPLE AND PLAES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jamie Carson	5815	29 September 2011	