

18 March 2010

Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 22ND MARCH 2010

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the above meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No Item

7. **Overview and Scrutiny Inquiries**

To receive and consider the following reports:

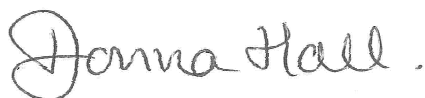
a) **Town Centre Vitality** (Pages 37 - 52)

To receive and consider the enclosed final report of the Town Centre Vitality task and finish group.

b) **Streetscene Issues** (Pages 53 - 58)

To receive and consider the enclosed monitoring report of the Director of Places and People.

Yours sincerely



Donna Hall
Chief Executive

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Democratic and Member Services Officer
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Distribution

1. Agenda and reports to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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માટે કૃપા કરી, આ નંબર પર ફોન કરો: 01257 515822

ان معلومات کا ترجمہ آپ کی اپنی زبان میں بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ یہ خدمت استعمال کرنے کیلئے براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر ٹیلیفون
کیجئے: 01257 515823



Town Centre Vitality

Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group



Beacon Authority
2008-2009
*Transforming Services:
Citizen Engagement
and Empowerment*



Beacon Authority
2009-2010
Cohesive and resilient communities



Beacon Authority
2009-2010
Better outcomes for people and places

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In March 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a “review of the year” event, from which emerged a number of suggestions for topics for scrutiny during the current municipal year. The topic of the town centre was selected and one of the top two issues to be scrutinised during the year and a Task and Finish Group was, accordingly, set up to examine issues around the vitality and viability of the town centre.

The Task Group has met on nine occasions since August 2009 to consider carefully the various issues and material considerations related to the following five project areas identified for scrutiny:

- Marketing/Promotional Issues;
- Markets Issues;
- Gateways into Town Centre/Signage/Car Parking;
- Use of Vacant Properties;
- Improvement of the Cultural Officer.

Terms of Reference

1. To investigate, consider and evaluate issues and factors relevant to the review of the vitality and viability of the town centre.
2. To make recommendations where appropriate.

Key Aims and Objectives

While the discussions at the Task Group meetings were focused within the overall framework agreed at the outset of the inquiry, the remit and objectives of the Task Group were widened over the course of the inquiry.

Ultimately, the Task Group’s deliberations and suggestions encompassed and extended range of matters related to the main topic areas, concluding in proposals being formulated in respect of the following areas:

- Formulation of a comprehensive marketing action plan;
- Preparation of a strategy for an evening economy;
- Signage strategy;
- Car Parking strategy;
- Town Centre living;
- Vacant property policy;
- Development and delivery of short and long term plans for the Markets;
- Development and delivery of a Pavement Café policy.

The Task Group’s findings and proposals are detailed and explained in the later sections of this report, with the Group’s recommendations being summarised on the following pages of the report.

Group Membership

Councillor Peter Wilson (Chair)
Councillor Julia Berry
Councillor Anthony Gee
Councillor Pat Haughton
Councillor June Molyneaux
Councillor Geoffrey Russell

Councillor Alistair Bradley
Councillor Marie Gray
Councillor Harold Heaton
Councillor Mick Muncaster
Councillor Stella Walsh

Officer Support

Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy)
Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places)
Cath Burns (Head of Economic Development)
Simon Clark (Head of Environment)
Martin Walls (Head of Streetscene)
Zoe Whiteside (Head of Housing)
Louise Finch (Acting Head of Communications)
Peter McAnespie (Planning Policy and Design Team Leader)
Conrad Heald (Town Centre and Markets Manager)
Lee Boyer (Sports, Play and Physical Activity Manager)
Christopher Bryan (Arts Development Officer)
Tony Uren (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

Meetings

The agenda papers and minutes for each of the meetings of the Town Centre Overview and Scrutiny Task Group can be found on the Council's website (www.chorley.gov.uk) by following the respective links from the Council and Democracy page.

Contribution of Evidence

The Chair and Task Group would like to thank all the Members, Officers and invited witnesses who have contributed evidence and contributed to the Inquiry.

Recommendations	Financial Implications
Objective 1: Formulation of a Comprehensive Marketing Action Plan	
<p>1. That the following concepts and ideas put forward by the Task Group be assessed by a Task Group of the Town Centre Forum, with a view to the formulation of a comprehensive Marketing Plan for the Town Centre with the ultimate aim of attracting more shoppers and visitors to the town centre (eg through quality and attractive environmental improvements; reasonable car parking fees structure; provision of sufficient restaurants and cafes (operating to accommodate evening shoppers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selected coach operators (eg Shearings) be reminded of the Markets and other attractions within the town centre and requested to contact the Town Centre and Markets Manager for information on available coach parks; • examination of the means of enhancing the localised nature of the Farmers’ and other themed markets to improve their distinctiveness by, for example, naming the “Chorley Farmers Market” or linking them to relevant themes (eg Cake Fairs, etc) with more effective advance promotion and advertising; • the expansion of the present marketing and promotional campaigns and strategy to encompass the whole of the town centre, with the wider distribution of promotional leaflets throughout the town centre; • address the currently insufficient co-ordination of town centre promotion and marketing between the Council and High Street and independent traders; • accept that the degree of business experienced by town centre traders is to a large extent, dependent on the commodity sold (eg shoppers are attracted to Markets on Tuesdays and Fridays; certain shops’ business is brisker on Wednesdays, etc), and target future promotions accordingly; • promote the wide variety of shops available in the town centre, particularly the number of quality independent retailers, in an attempt to attract both residents who do not normally visit the town centre and other visitors from the surrounding catchment area through the production of a user friendly A4 promotional leaflet and Parish Council newsletter inserts; • promotion of the late night opening of shops on Thursday evenings will be reliant on more town centre retailers being persuaded to extend their opening hours; • Council’s Officers be requested to consider the production of a small single sheet to promote the town centre, which could be used by retailers to accompany goods despatched to customers; • Council’s Officers be requested to consider the viability and cost implications of advertising the wide diversity of shops and goods available in the town centre on local commercial radio stations, particularly during the period leading up to Christmas; • the costs and manpower implications, and likely effectiveness, of producing an occasional Directory of forthcoming cultural and sports events and activities across the Borough as a means of improving the co-ordination, promotion and take-up of the events, be examined. 	<p>* (see note at foot of schedule)</p> <p>1,000 A5 double sided copies = £170 Local Radio Campaign = £3,000</p>

<u>Objective 2: Prepare a Strategy for an Evening Economy</u>	
2. That a review of the pricing structure and bureaucracy relating to the Lancastrian Room and the publicity/promotions strategy be undertaken, with the aim of making the facilities on offer more affordable and making local and regional groups more aware of the facilities.	* (see note at foot of schedule)
<u>Objective 3: Signage Strategy</u>	
3. That a recommendation be made to the Lancashire County Council for the erection of brown motorway advertising signs to promote the Markets and other visitor attractions in Chorley.	* (see note at foot of schedule)
4. That a review of the directional signage to and within the town centre for motorists and pedestrians be undertaken.	
5. That the Task Group supports and commends the need for an adequate and effective number of signs directing visitors to each of the town centre car parks to be placed at strategic locations within and around the town centre.	
6. That the Officers undertake a review of the current location of existing gateway signs, with a view to suggesting the location and estimated cost of any required additional signs.	
7. That the Officers be requested to liaise with the County Council to examine issues around the current state and security of pedestrian access routes to the town centre, particularly through underpasses and across car parks, and report recommendations to a future meeting of the Task Group.	
<u>Objective 4: Car Parking Strategy</u>	
8. That the Council's Officers be requested to examine the possible extension of the scheme currently operated with Booths, under which £1 vouchers were awarded by the Supermarket retailer to shoppers at the store as a discount off parking fees, with appropriate retailers being approached to ascertain if they would be willing to participate in a similar scheme.	* (see note at foot of schedule)
9. That the feasibility of the introduction of a herring-bone parking system on Market Street and St George's Street be considered.	
10. That needs of disabled drivers be taken into account when any revision of the car parking strategies are considered.	

<u>Objective 5: Town Centre Living</u>	
<p>11. That residential usage of town centre properties be encouraged by the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Neighbourhoods Directorate be requested to offer an advice service to owners of properties in the town centre that are capable in whole or in part of conversion to flats, in order to clarify the relevant regulations, directives and standards which require to be complied with; the Strategic Housing Services Section be requested to offer assistance in the marketing of new affordable housing units provided by Registered Social Landlords in the town centre, and provide details of applicants on the housing working list to the owners of the housing units; developers of new schemes in the town centre be encouraged to consider mixed use developments (comprising retail, storage, residential units, etc) whenever practicable. 	* (see note at foot of schedule)
<u>Objective 6: Vacant Property Policy</u>	
<p>12. That an Officer be identified to undertake the role of Lead Co-ordinator responsible for the implementation of an Empty Property Policy setting out the practices and procedures to be adopted and implemented in relation to vacant town centre properties, including a package of advice and guidance to prospective developers on relevant planning application procedures, licensing regulations, funding sources and business support services, etc.</p>	* (see note at foot of schedule)
<u>Objective 7: Develop and Deliver Short and Long Term Plans for the Markets</u>	
<p>13. That a short term action plan containing realistic and viable measures aimed at enhancing the appearance and vitality of the Flat Iron Market; achieving maximum occupancy of stalls; and reducing arrears of stall rents be compiled and costed. The action should include practical measures to encourage a uniform charging policy and offer of subsidies or discounts to market traders paying rents by direct debit or in advance, or occupying more than one stall, etc. The plan should also take into account the current economic situation and not impose any undue financial burden that would discourage traders from the market.</p> <p>Several suggested measures that could be explored for possible inclusion in the action plan are itemised in the Task Group's findings report.</p>	* (see note at foot of schedule)

<p>14. That the long term seeking to action the following objectives be approved in principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace existing stalls (5m x 5m) with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Gazebos stalls (3m x 3m) (b) Umbrella stalls (3.5m x 3m) • Examine the introduction of a standard pattern for market stall canopies, with a choice of colours being made available for individual stall holders; • Review the markets layout in conjunction with the Flat Iron urban regeneration scheme for integration into the Market Walk Phase II design scheme. • Install powerpoints for Flat Iron market stalls. • Pursue the provision of new transport (electric) equipment to move market equipment and waste. 	
<u>Objective 8: Develop and Deliver a Pavement Café Policy</u>	
<p>15. That the Task Group supports and wishes to participate in the production of the projected Pavement Café Policy, which the Members hope will take into account the need to balance the aim of preventing clutter and obstructions in the town centre with the need to protect commercial interests and the vibrancy of the town.</p>	<p>* (see note at foot of schedule)</p>

* The development of plans can be undertaken within existing resources. Whilst some costs are specified, it will not be until the full plans are in place that a detailed costing exercise can be carried out. Any detailed cost proposals will require further Executive Cabinet approval.

2. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Documentary Evidence

The Task Group were presented with and considered a number of documents and reports during the course of the inquiry. This documentary evidence included:

- Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy;
- Findings reports of recent scrutiny inquiries into the Chorley Markets and Parkwise;
- A summary note of the range of cultural and sport/leisure activities organised or assisted by the Council in, or within the general vicinity of, the town centre;
- The People and Places Directorate's Business Improvement Plan for 2009/10;
- The Executive Summaries of the Market Plans for Chesterfield and Ludlow.

Witnesses

The following Executive Member and external witnesses participated in discussions with the Task Group and contributed to the inquiry:

Councillor Peter Malpas (Executive Member (Business))
Eileen Bee (Disability Forum Co-ordinator)
Malcolm Allen (Chorley Town Centre Retailer)
Nigel Clare (Chorley Town Centre Retailer)
Peter Morgensoth (Chorley Town Centre Retailer)

3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A: Formulation of a Comprehensive Marketing Action Plan

A note prepared by the Head of Communications, Marketing and Tourism gave details of the work and action that had been instigated by the Council's Communications and Marketing Team since the publication of the findings of the last scrutiny review of the Markets in 2004, which highlighted all the measures and initiatives which had been implemented subsequently.

The Task Group accepted the benefits that had accrued from the enhancement of the marketing of the Markets and considered that future strategies should aim to encompass the whole of the town centre.

During the debate with the Acting Head of Communications, the Task Group focused on ways in which future initiatives and actions could complement and improve the current advertising and marketing strategies. Several suggestions were put forward and those are reflected in the following recommendations.

The recommendations have also taken account of the open discussions with a few selected Chorley town centre retailers, during which a number of worthwhile, innovative suggestions on ways in which the Council could collaborate with local retailers in the promotion of the town were put forward as a means of attracting more visitors and shoppers to the town centre.

Recommendations

That the following concepts and ideas put forward by the Task Group be assessed by a Task Group of the Town Centre Forum, with a view to the formulation of a comprehensive Marketing Plan for the Town Centre with the ultimate aim of attracting more shoppers and visitors to the town centre (eg through quality and attractive environmental improvements; reasonable car parking fees structure; provision of sufficient restaurants and cafes (operating to accommodate evening shoppers):

- selected coach operators (eg Shearings) be reminded of the Markets and other attractions within the town centre and requested to contact the Town Centre and Markets Manager for information on available coach parks;
- examination of the means of enhancing the localised nature of the Farmers' and other themed markets to improve their distinctiveness by, for example, naming the "Chorley Farmers Market" or linking them to relevant themes (eg Cake Fairs, etc) with more effective advance promotion and advertising;
- the expansion of the present marketing and promotional campaigns and strategy to encompass the whole of the town centre, with the wider distribution of promotional leaflets throughout the town centre;
- address the currently insufficient co-ordination of town centre promotion and marketing between the Council and High Street and independent traders;
- accept that the degree of business experienced by town centre traders is to a large extent, dependent on the commodity sold (eg shoppers are attracted to Markets on Tuesdays and Fridays; certain shops' business is brisker on Wednesdays, etc), and target future promotions accordingly;
- promote the wide variety of shops available in the town centre, particularly the number of quality independent retailers, in an attempt to attract both residents who do not normally visit the town

centre and other visitors from the surrounding catchment area through the production of a user friendly A4 promotional leaflet and Parish Council newsletter inserts;

- promotion of the late night opening of shops on Thursday evenings will be reliant on more town centre retailers being persuaded to extend their opening hours;
- Council's Officers be requested to consider the production of a small single sheet to promote the town centre, which could be used by retailers to accompany goods despatched to customers;
- Council's Officers be requested to consider the viability and cost implications of advertising the wide diversity of shops and goods available in the town centre on local commercial radio stations, particularly during the period leading up to Christmas;
- the costs and manpower implications, and likely effectiveness, of producing an occasional Directory of forthcoming cultural and sports events and activities across the Borough as a means of improving the co-ordination, promotion and take-up of the events, be examined.

B: Improvement of the Evening Economy

As part of the Group's assessment of the cultural *** within the town centre, the Council's Sports, Play and Physical Activity Manager and Arts Development Officer were invited to participate in a Group discussion.

The Members accepted that, within the limited resources and facilities available, the Council was pursuing a satisfactory arts and cultural programme in conjunction with the Chorley Arts Partnership and Chorley Little Theatre; particularly through its organisation of the Mid-Summer and other Arts Festivals. The festivals provide a range of free performances and street entertainment and the Arts Partnership provide numerous arts activities and music workshops for young people in particular.

A number of Members of the Task Group considered that the Lancastrian Room was not currently being used by the community as effectively as it might and was not realising its full potential. The Members did, however, appreciate the constraints on the use of the facility (eg limited seating and changing facilities; the inflexibility of the space available; lack of disabled persons' access to the stage; lack of catering facilities; heating costs, etc). The Task Group concluded after the debate to support a recommendation aimed at enhancing opportunities for the future use of the Lancastrian Room.

The Task Group also acknowledged the consequential benefits to the cultural life and the general economy of the town of the strengthening of the town centre's night-time economy. In this regard, the Planning Policy and Design Team Leader confirmed that the Town Centre Strategy recognised this aspiration and that the Strategy included appropriate targets and action plans to achieve the goal.

While minimal sports activities are organised within the town centre itself, the Council's investment in, and promotion of, grass roots community sports activities, including the annual "Get Up and Go" programme and the Play Day event on the Coronation Recreation Ground, were highlighted.

Recommendations:

That a review of the pricing structure and bureaucracy relating to the Lancastrian Room and the publicity/promotions strategy be undertaken, with the aim of making the facilities on offer more affordable and making local and regional groups more aware of the facilities.

C: Development and Delivery of a Pavement Café Policy

The Task Group was reminded of the role of the Neighbourhood Officers in helping to maintain a clean and tidy town centre. The Head of Streetscene advised the Members of the current negotiations with the Lancashire County Council to produce a practical enforcement policy to apply to the town centre in relation to Café and street furniture, "A" boards and potential distractions in the town centre.

The Task Group was also informed of a concurrent review of the Pavement Café Policy introduced in December 2007 in the light of past concerns at the encroachment of market stalls and café tables on to pavements in some instances.

Recommendations

That the Task Group supports the current review of the Pavement Café Policy, which the Members hope will take into account the need to balance the aim of preventing clutter and obstructions in the town centre with the need to protect commercial interests and the vibrancy of the town.

D: Signage Strategy

The Task Group's discussions on access and signage issues highlighted the lack of signs both to direct visitors to nearby car parks and to assist motorists and pedestrians seeking specific landmarks and locations around the town centre.

The Task Group supported representations for the installation of brown motorway signs to advertise Chorley's markets and other attractions, together with a prioritised programme of improvements to gateway signs, bearing in mind the wide variation in the appearance and attractiveness of gateway notices.

The external witnesses also drew attention to the unsatisfactory condition of the Chorley East Ward underpass and the pedestrian accesses to the town centre from the Chorley Interchange and the railway station.

Recommendations

1. That a recommendation be made to the Lancashire County Council for the erection of brown motorway advertising signs to promote the Markets and other visitor attractions in Chorley.
2. That a review of the directional signage to and within the town centre for motorists and pedestrians be undertaken.
3. That the Task Group supports and commends the need for an adequate and effective number of signs directing visitors to each of the town centre car parks to be placed at strategic locations within and around the town centre.
4. That the Officers undertake a review of the current location of existing gateway signs, with a view to suggesting the location and estimated cost of any required additional signs.
5. That the Officers be requested to liaise with the County Council to examine issues around the current state and security of pedestrian access routes to the town centre, particularly through underpasses and across car parks, and report recommendations to a future meeting of the Task Group.

E: Car Parking Strategy

The Task Group accepts that the vitality and viability of the town centre is largely dependent on the availability of sufficient easily accessible car parking areas.

A number of worthwhile proposals for ways of assisting a improving car parking facilities for shoppers and visitors to the town centre emerged from the discussions with the Disability Forum Co-ordinator and selected town centre retailers. The majority of the suggestions are reflected in the following recommendations.

Recommendations

1. That the Council's Officers be requested to examine the possible extension of the scheme currently operated with Booths, under which £1 vouchers were awarded by the Supermarket retailer to shoppers at the store as a discount off parking fees, with appropriate retailers being approached to ascertain if they would be willing to participate in a similar scheme.
2. That the feasibility of the introduction of a herring-bone parking system on Market Street and St George's Street be considered.
3. That needs of disabled drivers be taken into account when any revision of the car parking strategies are considered.

F: Town Centre Living

The Head of Housing informed the Task Group of Adactus' plans to make 8 flats at Halliwell Street in the town centre available for social rented housing. The Members were also reminded of the provisions of the Purchase and Repair scheme and Empty Property Management Orders which authorised the instigation of measures aimed at converting vacant properties into residential use.

Whilst accepting the limited funding and resources available, the Task Group considered that concerted efforts should be made to convert as many available premises as possible to residential use, particularly as a means of providing affordable accommodation for young people.

Recommendations

That residential usage of town centre properties be encouraged by the following means:

- the Neighbourhoods Directorate be requested to offer an advice service to owners of properties in the town centre that are capable in whole or in part of conversion to flats, in order to clarify the relevant regulations, directives and standards which require to be complied with;
- the Strategic Housing Services Section be requested to offer assistance in the marketing of new affordable housing units provided by Registered Social Landlords in the town centre, and provide details of applicants on the housing working list to the owners of the housing units;
- developers of new schemes in the town centre be encouraged to consider mixed use developments (comprising retail, storage, residential units, etc) whenever practicable.

G: Vacant Property Policy

A note circulated by the Town Centre and Market Manager revealed that the number of vacant retail square metres in the town centre had reduced over the past quarter period. Out of a total of 315 units, 31 were vacant at the time of the Task Group meeting in December 2009.

The Task Group proposed the formulation of a specific policy to define and guide future practices and actions in relation to empty town centre premises, under the leadership of an identified officer.

Recommendation

That an Officer be identified to undertake the role of Lead Co-ordinator responsible for the implementation of an Empty Property Policy setting out the practices and procedures to be adopted and implemented in relation to vacant town centre properties, including a package of advice and guidance to prospective developers on relevant planning application procedures, licensing regulations, funding sources and business support services, etc.

H: Development and Delivery of Short and Long Term Plans for the Markets

The Task Group were reminded of the recommendations from the previous Markets Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry that had so far been implemented.

A number of the Task Group members consider that action is required, in particular, to enhance the appearance and character of the Flat Iron Market. In this context, the Members were advised to take account of the Flat Iron Improvements Scheme Design Strategy being undertaken by Landscape Projects. The objective of the study is to complement the Chorley Town Centre Audit and Design Study and enhance the Flat Iron Market by allowing it to evolve into a multi-functional market/car park/civic space linked to the Market Walk Phase 2 plans.

At the conclusion of a comprehensive debate, the Task Group proposed the preparation of both a short-term and a long-term plan for Chorley's Markets, with particular emphasis on the Flat Iron Market. The long term plan should seek to express the Council's aspirations for the future of the markets, including a review of the fees structure to reflect any future improvement works undertaken in the event of an economic upturn. The Task Group expects that any long-term proposals will be linked with and incorporated within the objectives and schemes within the Consultants' study report.

Recommendations

1. That a short term action plan containing realistic and viable measures aimed at enhancing the appearance and vitality of the Flat Iron Market; achieving maximum occupancy of stalls; and reducing arrears of stall rents be compiled and costed. The action should include practical measures to encourage a uniform charging policy and offer of subsidies or discounts to market traders paying rents by direct debit or in advance, or occupying more than one stall, etc. The plan should also take into account the current economic situation and not impose any undue financial burden that would discourage traders from the market.

The following measures are suggested actions and initiatives that might be explored for potential inclusion in the action plan:

- Repair and maintain existing stall frames – Flat Iron
- Sign the central aisle stall fronts with Market branding
- Review payment methods to be easier to understand

- (a) Weekly pricing/invoicing
 - (b) Incentives for paying by direct debit
 - (c) Payment in advance of standing
 - Review pricing structure
 - (a) Differential between permanent and casual
 - (b) Reduced charges for using own stall
 - (c) Stratified charges for primary locations
 - (d) Transparent charging based on stall area
 - (e) Concessions for multiple stall occupancy
 - Review efficiencies in stall erection/dismantling Flat Iron
 - (a) Saving in labour costs
 - (b) No stall storage required
 - (c) No use of vehicles/trailers required
 - Evaluate feasibility of traders bringing own stalls, boards and canopies of specific design for co-ordinated appearance
 - Install signage to indicate market location when used as car park for 6 days a week
 - Trail new stall designs (see long term) with rent free periods for any trialists
 - (a) Can also be used for Farmers Market
 - (b) Can also be used for Covered Market pitches
 - Promote markets as a group travel destination
 - Move Flea market onto Thursday to ensure full offer in Covered Market
2. That the long term seeking to action the following objectives be approved in principle:
- Replace existing stalls (5m x 5m) with
 - (a) Gazebos stalls (3m x 3m)
 - (b) Umbrella stalls (3.5m x 3m)
 - Examine the introduction of a standard pattern for market stall canopies, with a choice of colours being made available for individual stall holders;
 - Review the markets layout in conjunction with the Flat Iron urban regeneration scheme for integration into the Market Walk Phase II design scheme.
 - Install powerpoints for Flat Iron market stalls.
 - Pursue the provision of new transport (electric) equipment to move market equipment and waste.

Chorley Council



2008-2009
*Transforming Services:
Citizen Engagement
and Empowerment*



2009-2010
Cohesive and resilient communities



2009-2010
Better outcomes for people and places

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People and Places	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	22 March 2010

MONITORING OF INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS – STREETSCENE ENQUIRY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the actions taken following their recommendations on 1 December 2008. These were endorsed by the Executive Cabinet on the 25 June 2009.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To note the progress on the various actions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. To report the progress of the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4. 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	✓y
Involving people in their communities	✓	Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	✓

5. The Street Scene Task and Finish Group undertook an extensive inquiry into Street Scene Operations. Actions on each of the recommendations is tabled below and numbered as per the original document.

Schedules	
1	That the bin collection document be made available to all Parish Councils and borough Councillors to assist with service monitoring and made accessible on the internet. A master copy to be made available in the Members Room.
	The locations of all the dog and litterbins have been collated and an exercise is underway to input the locations onto the CRM database. A list of all the bins in the Borough can be produced and these will be made available to Members by the end of March.
2+3	That the relevant Officer looks at the cleaning schedules and considers further strategic sweeping of streets and litterbin routes. That a mapping exercise is undertaken to identify and target littering 'hotspots' and frequently full litterbins to target improvements in those areas of the borough. There should be more detailed mapping and targeting of those areas and we should target resources more effectively to maximise performance.
	At this stage there is no intelligence to suggest amending the existing cleaning routes would lead to real improvements, as the majority of hotspots are as a result of on street parking which can be addressed with spot cleans and engagement with residents. With regards to Litterbins, these are always kept under review and if necessary we can amend the frequencies as demand increases or decreases, as opposed to placing pressure on Capital Resources
4.	That the team leaders and operatives should be empowered to depart from scheduled activity to deal with other problems, as appropriate.
	The frontline staff are based in specific areas and have clear direction in terms of what they are expected to do. There is a certain amount of latitude with the teams which allows them to use their initiative to deal with unforeseen problems and this is encouraged to make the service more efficient
Monitoring	
5.	To investigate the current cost of collecting/emptying of litterbins, particularly around hot spot areas such as schools, and consider installation of either further bins or larger bins.
	The cost of bins is very high so at present there are no plans to install further or larger bins, we target these areas with enforcement and if necessary we increase the frequencies of collection.
6	To give consideration of a 'hit squad' to respond to problem areas.
	We currently have a team that is assigned to reactive complaints and does not work to cyclical rounds. Ad Hoc service requests are passed to this team, bigger issues other than spot cleans are dealt with collectively with the Neighbourhood Quality Teams.
7.	To continue to pursue the Capital programme on the mobile work system
	The Management team are currently investigating this; however there is a strong belief that the introduction of a mobile work system is not suitable for the type of cyclical works undertaken by the street scene teams and will bring no real value to the overall service

Bin sizes and related issues	
8.	Develop a bin provision policy in Chorley to identify the suitable design, size and material of bin for the location.
	The development of a bin provision policy is a little unnecessary as CBC only erects two types of bin. A higher-grade bin in the town centres and a standard bin throughout the Borough. To fragment this would lead to higher cost in purchasing and make holding a stock quite difficult
Reporting	
9	Promote the use of the Contact Centre telephone number to enable calls to be monitored and actioned.
	This is already embedded across the service and we continue to promote the call centre where possible to ensure officers are not tied up and can respond to service requests. We have started to extend our use of CRM data to ensure we tackle hotspots.
10	That a hotline number be issued on a notice on the litterbins and street furniture. The notice also to show the bin identification number and a dedicated e-mail address is created to the reporting of incidents.
	All callers are encouraged to use the call centre. A separate number would complicate issues and depart from Council policy. Consideration has been given to placing contact details on the street furniture, however it was decided it would look untidy. There is no need for bin identifiers as there is no intelligence to suggest that bin locations are being reported incorrectly. In addition to this it would need a comprehensive database to support this information
11	Improve Communication amongst the workforce regarding procedures and review the schedules to avoid operatives from passing full bins and failing to collect from them.
	This principal is already embedded and operatives empty bins regardless if it is their key function or not. Further reinforcement of this theory will take place with the operatives to ensure operations are as effective as possible.
12	Use of feedback from the operatives using the work schedule to shape how work is carried out.
	Local intelligence is always encouraged as the frontline operatives are the eyes and ears of Street Scene services and as such feedback is encouraged as it makes the service more effective.
13	To encourage the use of the Neighbourhood Officers and other Neighbourhood/Council employees to report problem areas.
	All of the frontline services are based in the same building and this is beneficial as it allows all teams ranging from operational response teams and Neighbour Officers to share intelligence and work together to resolve problems
14	To encourage Council staff and Members of the public to monitor and report on local environmental issues.
	We do actively encourage this, only recently we met with our Waste Contractor Veolia and provided them with guidance on what to report and how to report it. In the coming weeks we will be engaging with LSP partners and Parish Councils too.
15	That all Members to be given the opportunity to go out on a litter collection scheduled route providing sufficient notification is given.
	Closer working relationships with members are always encouraged. The ward tours are useful for this, but we can always explore more detailed walks with individual officers/members. Members are encouraged to engage with their neighbourhood officer.

Communication and Publicity	
16	That a campaign of awareness be undertaken with the fast food outlets as to their Community responsibilities and the powers of the Council with regard to setting up control zones.
	We are planning to increase our work with targeted partners, based on NI195 data, through the Neighbourhood Officer.
17	To request all fast food outlets to display a notice reminding people to take their rubbish home and as an example of good practice for takeaway premises in terms of prevention of nuisance.
	The larger fast food outlets do take an active role in encouraging cleaner streets; it is difficult to get the smaller outlets to engage. However in areas where there are historical problems which have the takeaways etc and they are a contributory factor we will engage with them in order to improve the area
18.	That a programme of education with the community and within schools is initiated to increase awareness and promote pride in the Community and knowledge of environmental issues.
	We currently undertake "Enviro Crime" days in primary schools these involve a variety of subjects all targeted around environmental awareness. Last year we visited 6 schools and are making plans for further visits this year
19	To seek to maximise publicity for the fact that the Council will not tolerate littering, fly tipping and associated anti-social behaviour and a system be introduced whereby any successful prosecution for such offences are automatically notified to the Communication Team and are subject of a Press Release.
	The Council seeks to publicise prosecutions etc secured for Fly Tipping as this re-enforces the tough stance it has, in addition to this the additional funding for 10/11 will be targeted around enforcement and public awareness.
20	Issue periodic reminders of collection days and other information, to assist residents, including the use of various newsletters.
	The waste team is very proactive when dealing with potential changes to rota's. An example is the printing of calendars every Xmas which comes in at around £5000
Joint Working	
21	That in the light of the review, all Parish Councils be requested to give consideration to how the council can assist them in the delivery of an efficient service.
	This is something that needs to be explored as there is a real opportunity to use all available services in order to improve the Chorley area. We will be seeking views on the best way to develop this with the Parish's
22.	To improve partnership working with the County Council and request more frequent sweeping and litter picking in any identified problem areas.
	County Council has no street cleaning responsibility, CBC has total responsibility for street cleaning. We are in discussions with LCC over our Public Realm work
23	The Council will liaise with the County Council with regard to keeping the verges on highways tidy and litter-free in order to improve the perception of the Council's Service with the Parishes.
	It is hoped that the development of the Public Realm strategy will deliver real improvements in this area. We will continue to encourage LCC to be proactive, in the absence of any powers to ensure they do this..
24	To support the development of Lengthsmen in the parishes in the provision of storage and the purchase and use of equipment.
	The Council will offer all the support it can to ensure a harmonious relationship with the Parish Lengthsmen. Also see Point 21

Enforcement	
25	That a policy be developed identifying the procedure for escalating issues from clearing up to enforcement in all areas of the service.
	This work will be looked at in the coming months.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

6. 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 PEOPLE AND PLACES

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Martin Walls	5250	1 st March 2010	Update on Streetscene

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