

Chorley South Community Forum

Wednesday, 21 February 2007

Meeting held at St. Paul's C.E. Primary School, Adlington

Present: Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillors Kenneth Ball, Catherine Hoyle, Miss June Molyneaux and Mrs Stella Walsh

Also present: Alan Cullens (Executive Member for Resources) and Peter Malpas (Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration)

Co-opted Members: Mr Robert Yates (Adlington Town Councillor), Mr Philip Pilling (Anderton Parish Councillor), Alan Styles (Heath Charnock Parish Councillor), Cindy Lowthian (District Partnership Officer, Lancashire County Council), Chris Anslow (Public Transport Policy Manager, Lancashire County Council) and Geoff Allan (Lancashire Constabulary)

Chorley Borough Officers: Gary Hall (Director of Finance and Lead Officer), Jane Meek (Director of Development and Regeneration), Keith Allen (Streetscene Manager), Julian Jackson (Planning Policy Manager), Steve Pearce (Assistant Head of Democratic Services), Louise Nurser (Principal Planning Officer), Tony Uren (Democratic Services Officer) and Dianne Scambler (Trainee Democratic Services Officer)

22 residents of Adlington, Anderton, Coppull, Heath Charnock and Rivington and 2 Police Community Support Officers.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair (Councillor J Walker) welcomed everyone present to the first meeting of the Chorley South Community Forum.

The Chair explained that, following the success of the three Area Forum pilot schemes in 2006, the Council had agreed to establish four Community Forums (Central, East, West and South) to cover the whole of the Chorley Borough area. The South Community Forum covered the electoral Wards and Parish areas of Adlington and Anderton; Coppull and Heath Charnock; and Rivington, excluding that part of Coppull Parish included in the Chiswall Ward, which falls within the boundaries of the West Community Forum.

Representatives from the following organisations would be invited to attend the Community Forum meetings, appreciating that their attendance at every meeting could not be guaranteed:

Chorley Borough Council;
Lancashire County Council;
The respective Parish Councils;
Lancashire Constabulary;
Central Lancashire Primary Care NHS Trust.

The Chair then asked the Council Officers and representatives of the partner bodies present to introduce themselves.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of County Councillors Mrs Pat Case and Edward Forshaw, Inspector Johanne South (Lancashire Constabulary) and Maggi Morris (Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust).

In the absence of the County Councillors, the Lancashire County Council was represented by Cindy Lowthian, the District Partnership Officer.

3. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FORUM

The Forum received, for information, details of the agreed membership and terms of reference of the Chorley South Community Forum.

Each attendee of the meeting had been provided with a copy of the membership details and terms of reference which were attached to the meeting's agenda.

The Chair gave a brief resume of the Council's Corporate Strategy, which outlined the Council's vision and strategic objectives for the period up to 2009. In particular, the Chair drew attention to two of the aims of the strategy; to involve people in their communities and to improve equality of opportunity and life chances for the Borough's residents.

In response to a question from a Borough Councillor querying why the Community Forums were not chaired by an appointed Ward Councillor, the Chair indicated that the Council had appointed himself (Councillor John Walker) as Chair of all four Forums in order to achieve a level of consistency and co-ordination across the Borough. This arrangement would be reviewed when the Council came to monitor the first year's operation of the Forums.

4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ISSUES

(a) Local Development Framework

Julian Jackson (Chorley Council's Planning Policy Manager) addressed the meeting on the planning issues in relation to the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF, which replaced the former Local Development Plans, would be made up of a series of different planning documents.

Chorley Council was currently working actively with Preston and South Ribble Councils to define and take forward major planning issues that affected all three authorities. The three Councils had produced an LDF Core Strategy Joint Issues and Options Paper which identified the principal planning matters common to the three Borough areas on such issues as housing, employment, land, transport, road infrastructure, etc, together with potential ways of dealing with the problem issues.

A copy of the document was available at the meeting and on the Council's website and Mr Jackson said that he would welcome resident's views and comments on the Paper.

Mr Jackson explained that the collaborative working arrangement was in no way a precursor to the planned merger of the three Authorities.

(b) Sustainable Resources

Mr Jackson also drew attention to the draft Preferred Options Document on Sustainable Resources, which had been published for consultation purposes and would eventually form part of the Local Development Framework.

The document set out alternative options for measures aimed at ensuring sustainable developments, the reduction of carbon emissions, recycling and renewable energy projects.

Local residents' views on the Options Paper would also be welcomed.

(c) Transport Accessibility Planning

Mr Jackson also referred to a Transport Accessibility Planning Study being undertaken across Lancashire under the lead of the County Council.

The study aimed to examine the issues surrounding people's ability to access key services and places of work at reasonable cost. The Authorities would be working directly with transport operators and service providers to identify current barriers and means of resolving current problems.

(d) Questions/Issues raised at meeting:

- (i) A Borough Councillor queried whether the Section 106 Agreement monies secured from Rowland Homes (the developers of The Poplars estate at Coppull) had been spent on transport improvements as intended.

Response: Julian Jackson promised to investigate the situation and report back to the Councillor.

- (ii) A Parish Councillor referred to accessibility problems for disabled people and queried, in particular, why buses in Adlington were of a high-loading type.

Response: Chris Anslow (Lancashire County Council's Public Transport Policy Manager) stated that Government Regulations were expected to require all single deck buses to be accessible by disabled people by 2015 and all double deck buses to be similarly accessible by 2017.

Mr Anslow also confirmed the County Council's intention to facilitate the introduction of a new hourly low-loading bus service from Adlington to Chorley that would travel an alternative circular route between 7.15am and 7.15pm on Mondays to Saturdays.

- (iii) A Borough Councillor complained about the lack of a satisfactory bus service from Coppull to Chorley.

Response: Chris Anslow promised to examine the current service between Chorley and Coppull and report his comments back to the Councillor.

- (iv) The issue of concessionary travel fares was raised.

Response: Chris Anslow intimated that, whilst it was expected that the current concessionary travel scheme operated across Lancashire would remain during 2007/08, Government legislation would require free travel to be available for people over the age of 60 anywhere in England from 1 April 2008.

- (v) A local Councillor drew attention to the traffic congestion problems caused by traffic management and calming initiatives (eg narrowing of roads, etc) on the route between Coppull and Chorley.

Response: Keith Allen (Chorley Council's Streetscene Manager) promised to examine the issue with the Lancashire County Council and report back his findings.

5. **CHORLEY COMMUNITY AGENDA**

(a) Lancashire Police Issues

The Chair welcomed Geoff Allen, the Community Beat Manager for Adlington, Anderton and Heath Charnock, who was accompanied by two Police Community Support Officers.

The Inspector for Coppull and Wheelton (Inspector J South) and the Community Beat Manager for Coppull were both unable to attend, but Inspector South had provided a note for the Forum giving details of community policing issues within the Adlington, Coppull and Wheelton areas. The report revealed that all crime had reduced across the area by 4.8% during the last quarter period of 2006, with substantial reductions in criminal damage, dwelling burglaries and other woundings.

PC Allen commended the setting up of the Neighbourhood Policing Teams which were proving highly successful in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour by looking at ways to resolve problems by active collaboration with local authorities, agencies and voluntary/community groups. The level of recorded crime in Adlington had reduced by 18% over the past year and the currently monthly figures showed a reduction of 40% on the figures for the same month in 2006.

Questions raised at the meeting:

- i) A resident questioned the effectiveness of reporting low level crime (eg vandalism, graffiti etc), alleging that there was little, if any, response from the Police.

Response: PC Allen apologised for any reported incidents that had not received a response from the Police. Borough and Parish Councillors and any member of the public should not be deterred from reporting any incidents of crime or unsociable behaviour, which should receive a response within the capabilities and resources of the Police.

- ii) A Parish Councillor drew attention to incidents of juvenile nuisance at Adlington Railway Station.

Response: PC Allen confirmed that Chorley Police frequently liaised with British Transport Police with the aim of resolving problems in the vicinity of the Station and railway line. If particular problem areas were brought to the attention of the Neighbourhood Team, they would examine possible remedies being incorporated into their policing strategies, such as the strategy recently agreed for the Rivington area.

(b) Chorley Borough Council Issues

(a) Chorley Town Centre Strategy

Jane Meek (Chorley Council's Director of Development and Regeneration) gave a short presentation on the recently adopted Chorley Town Centre Strategy.

Mrs Meek explained the background to the development of the Strategy, which had evolved over 18 months following publication of the Economic Development Strategy and the findings of a Consultant's retail study.

The Strategy's overall vision was 'to assist in improving the vitality and viability of Chorley Town Centre, so that by 2016 it provides a place to successfully do

business and visit through a unique offer of attractions'. This should help to curb the leakage of business from the Borough to neighbouring towns.

In order to deliver the vision, the following four key priorities for the strategy had been identified:

- Town Centre Environment

The strategy would need to safeguard the distinctive character of the town, as well as delivering environmental improvements. The Council's Officers would undertake an audit of the town and develop a design strategy to guide future development and prominent features, such as town centre gateways and shop fronts.

- Accessibility and Movement

The Consultant's survey had revealed that 71% of people surveyed had not found difficulty in accessing the town centre car parks. However, there would be a comprehensive review of car parking in the town centre and plans were being developed to improve pedestrian access at the junction of St Thomas's Road and Market Street and to create an attractive Town Hall Square.

- Business Promotion and Support

More effective marketing and promotion of Chorley as a 'Contemporary Market Town' was crucial to the Strategy and the Council would be meeting shortly with market traders to discuss ways of enhancing the vitality and viability of the Markets.

- Town Centre Diversification

The Council accepts the need to attract a new range of visitors and leisure uses to the town centre if it is to maintain its competitiveness and attract shoppers and visitors. The Council will be working in partnership with land owners and developers to promote and assist, where possible, the development of key sites (eg the former Grahams and McDonald's sites and the Pall Mall Triangle). The principal focus of attention in the near future would be assist the development of a second phase of Market Walk. Plans were being examined to construct four new large retail units and a multi-storey car park on the eastern part of the Flat Iron Car Park (resulting in a net increase of 303 spaces), with associated environmental improvements. The attraction of recognised retailers to the extension was paramount and the Council would be working with the developers to encourage suitable middle-range retailers, such as Debenhams and Next.

(b) Questions raised at meeting:

- i) A resident queried any regeneration plans for Adlington, citing, in particular, the poor condition of a number of roads.

Response: Mr Allen indicated that, given the unpopularity of the Private Street Works procedures with property owners, the Borough and County Councils were examining ways in which unmade and damaged roads could be repaired less expensively, possibly with the use of monies deposited by developers for area improvements.

- ii) A Parish Councillor referred to the use and increasing popularity of internet shopping and its subsequent impact on traditional retail centres.

Response: Mrs Meek commented on the Council's awareness of the internet threat to the vibrancy of the town centre, intimating that the Council must endeavour to continually improve the shopping experience in the town by providing as wide a range of retailers as possible and improving the town centre environment.

(c) Lancashire County Council Issues

The Chair reminded the Forum of the recent introduction of Lancashire Locals meetings where there was an opportunity for Chorley residents to question the County Councillors for the seven Chorley Divisions on relevant issues falling within the remit of Lancashire County Council.

Question raised at meeting:

A Parish Councillor complained that insufficient notice of the last Lancashire Local meeting had been given.

Response: Cindy Lowthian (Lancashire County Council's District Partnership Officer) promised to ensure that the comments were channelled to the appropriate Officers responsible for the publication of the agendas. The dates of the future Lancashire Locals were, in fact, publicised on the County Council's web-site.

(d) Parish Council Issues

Prior to the Forum meeting, each constituent Parish Council had been invited to submit any issues or questions which they wished to raise or promote at the meeting. In response the following questions had been submitted by the Parish Council indicated.

Issues/Questions raised by Adlington Town Council

1. "A major local issue within the Adlington area is the lack of 20mph zones which the Town Council would like to see installed."

Response: Mr Allen said that the Lancashire County Council were unable to send a member of the traffic management staff to attend the meeting.

However, the County Council had confirmed that it was developing a new ranking system for traffic management schemes. While a scheme for the Park Road area was currently being progressed, the County Council would welcome the views of the Adlington Town Council if they considered that any other specific estates or areas warranted urgent attention by the County Council.

2. "Can the parking of vehicles on the pavement be brought under the wing of the Parking Attendants at some time. The Town Council is advised by the Parkwise Manager, Mr Price, that this problem could be covered by the attendants but it has just not been brought within their remit. This is a major problem on roads such as Babylon Lane and causes difficulties for those with mobility aids and the blind who cannot negotiate the footpaths in safety."

Response: Mr Allen clarified that Iain Price was not the Parkwise Manager, but Chorley Borough Council's Parking Manager.

At present, pavement parking was a matter for the Police to take up as an obstruction of the highway, but enforcement action was extremely difficult and time consuming.

When applying for powers to operate the decriminalisation of parking enforcement, the County Council decided which contraventions they wanted to enforce against. Pavement parking was not covered by existing traffic regulation orders but, if the County Council saw fit, they could introduce a county wide order prohibiting the action, and the Parking Attendants would enforce the regulation.

However, the Forum was asked to be aware of areas where pavement parking was not discouraged. For example, in areas where, if cars parked on the carriageway, traffic flow would be hindered, as there was no alternative parking available.

Issues raised by Anderton Parish Council

3. "The unkempt state of our streets, particularly pavements. Whilst the streets do see a road sweeper, the pavements, and particularly grass verges where a lot of litter collects, do not appear to be cleaned on a regular basis. The recent storms have left a lot of debris both in the gutters and on the pavements. Bolton Road is particularly bad, the grass verges outside the Rivington Water Treatment Centre near the boundary with Horwich are in need of a litter pick."

Response: Mr Allen told the Forum that Chorley Council's street cleaning service was currently the best performing in the County. In last year's North West in Bloom competition the Council had won the Environmental Award – for the best presented public spaces. Also, the Association for Public Sector Excellence had put the service in the top six in the country.

The Borough Council was unable to clean every street every week. The Council attempts to sweep main roads at least every 4 weeks and side roads at least every 8 weeks. The Council would, however, be happy to investigate all requests to clear large accumulations of litter on roads and take action, if necessary,

Questions raised at meeting:

- i) A resident queried whether the Council owned a vehicle that cleaned pavements.

Response: Mr Allen confirmed that the Borough Council owned one large and three smaller road sweeping vehicles and that the smaller vehicles were capable of mounting and sweeping pavements.

- ii) A resident claimed that roads in the Grimeford Village area had not been cleaned for some considerable time and that there was evidence of rodents in the area.

Response: Mr Allen promised to investigate the claims immediately and ensure that appropriate action to clean the area was taken, if necessary.

- iii) A number of residents referred to the state of some of the grass verges and hedgerows in the districts.

Response: Mr Allen clarified that grass verges could only be litter-picked and that hedgerows were litter-picked when particular problems occurred. Mr Allen did undertake, however, to visit any problem areas at the request of Parish Councillors or residents to examine the best means of ensuring the cleanliness of streets and verges.

- iv) A Parish Council Clerk complained that daffodil bulbs planted by the Parish Council in Anderton on grass verges adjacent to Bolton Road were destroyed by the County Council's grass mowing equipment. The County Council had apparently refused to alter its mowing schedules to mow the verges after the daffodils had died.

Response: Cindy Lowthian undertook to bring the issue to the attention of the relevant County Council Officers and report back with their response.

4. "Is it possible to share a Speed Indicator Device (SPID) with other Parishes in our zone?"

Response: Mr Allen said that it was understood that the Police had confirmed their intention to erect a temporary SPID sign on Bolton Road near Shawes Drive, Anderton, facing traffic coming from Horwich.

In addition, a permanent vehicle activated sign had recently been erected on Westhoughton Road near to its junction with Rawlinson Lane.

The possibility of SPIDs being shared by Parishes could be reported to the Chorley Community Safety Partnership and its views reported back to the Forum.

(e) Central Lancashire Primary Care NHS Trust Issues

A representative from the Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust was unable to attend the meeting.

A copy of a press release from the PCT was, however, circulated at the meeting giving notice of three further public meetings to be held in late February or early March 2007 to seek the public's views on the controversial proposals to establish a Clinical Assessment and Treatment Centre at Sharoe Green, Preston to be operated by a private sector company.

6. OPEN FORUM

The Chair invited the local residents present at the meeting to raise questions and express views on any matters relating to the provision of local services or issues affecting the Adlington, Anderton, Coppull, Heath Charnock and Rivington Wards. In addition, a supply of Question Cards was made available at the meeting as an opportunity for residents to write their enquiries or views on the cards.

The Chair indicated that the appropriate Officer and/or Partner representative would endeavour if possible, to provide a direct response to questions and issues raised at the meeting. If this was not possible, a written reply would either be sent to the questioner as soon as possible after the matter had been fully investigated or a response reported to the next Forum meeting.

The following issues/questions were raised at the meeting:

- i) A Borough Councillor asked for an assurance that the Borough Council would be represented at the appropriate County Council Committee that would meet to determine the new planning application for sand extraction and landfill at Sandhams Quarry, Adlington.

Response: Mrs Meek gave the Forum an assurance that the Borough Council's Officers would request to be heard at the County Council Committee meeting.

- ii) A Borough Councillor drew attention to the planning application for permission for the composting of shredded green waste and the construction of a concrete pad at Jolly Tar Lane, Coppull.

Response: Mrs Meek stated that the planning application was presently being processed by her Officers.

- iii) A Parish Councillor urged the Borough Council to retain in the General Fund budget for 2007/08 its plans to pay the line rental costs of the provision of a CCTV camera in the vicinity of the Adlington Railway Station.

Response: The Executive Member for Resources (Councillor Alan Cullens) confirmed his support of the budget proposals making provision for the Borough Council to be responsible for the line rentals of CCTV cameras in the outer areas of Adlington, Astley Village, Clayton-le-Woods and Coppull.

- iv) A resident queried why the Borough Council had not invoked the provisions of the Police and Criminal Justice Act which allows the local authority to designate streets on which it would be an offence for a person to be found drinking alcohol on the street. The Order could then be enforced by the Police.

Response: The Chair confirmed that the Council were aware of the power and undertook to raise the query with the Chair of the Licensing and Safety Committee and report a response to the next Forum meeting.

- v) A Parish Councillor asked if the Borough Council intended to increase the number of Dog Wardens.

Response: Mr Allen reported that, following the planned restructure of the Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment Directorate, the services provided by the projected Neighbourhood Officers would be reviewed. Whilst this would not necessarily lead to an increase in the number of officers undertaking Dog Warden duties, all reported problems would be investigated.

- vi) A Borough Councillor queried whether the current service to tackle fly-tipping would deteriorate if the Neighbourhood Warden service was disbanded.

Response: Mr Allen understood that the same level of service would be maintained as a Best Value Performance Indicator for the Borough Council's services.

- vii) A resident complained that not all trains travelling through Adlington during the late evening stopped at Adlington Station.

Response: Mr Anslow undertook to raise the complaint with Northern Rail to ascertain the possibility of any improvement in the rail service being made. Mr Anslow reminded the Forum of the rail company's capacity issues, but promised to present their reply to the next meeting.

- viii) A resident asked if a planned maintenance programme for pavements existed.

Response: Mr Allen confirmed that the Lancashire County Council operated a programme for the improvement and maintenance of pavements, under which footpaths were assessed in advance of a priority repair programme being agreed. Mr Allen said that he would be prepared to notify the County Council of any specific areas that were causing particular problems or hazards to local residents.

The following additional issues/questions were raised on question cards presented after the close of the Forum meeting:

- ix) "Why is the choice of a rail pass for over 60s such poor value compared to the bus passes? Is this really a choice?"
- x) "Why is there no ban on drinking on the streets of the Borough?"

Replies to the question cards would be sent to the respective residents as soon as practicable and reported to the next Forum meeting.

7. FEEDBACK / ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The Chair drew attention to the feedback cards available at the meeting and invited the attendees to complete them to express their views on the format, arrangements and conduct of the Forum meeting. The cards could also be used to suggest items for consideration at the next meeting.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the next Chorley South Community Forum would be held at the Royal British Legion Club, Springfield Road, Coppull on Wednesday, 20 June 2007 at 7.00pm.

Future meetings of the Forum were to take place on the following dates, commencing at 7.00pm at venues yet to be decided:

- Wednesday, 7 November 2007.
- Wednesday, 23 January 2008.

9. CLOSING REMARKS

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair thanked all the members of the public present for their attendance and participation in the Community Forum meeting and expressed his gratitude to the Council Officers and Partner representatives for their contributions.

Chair