

# Chorley Central Community Forum

Thursday, 8 March 2007

## Meeting held at Tatton Community Centre, Silverdale Road, Chorley

**Present:** Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillors Terry Brown, Dennis Edgerley, Anthony Gee, Hasina Khan, Adrian Lowe, Marion Lowe and Peter Malpas

**Also present:** Eric Bell (Executive Member for Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment) and Alan Cullens (Executive Member for Resources)

**Co-opted Members:** Peter Wilson (Lancashire County Council - Chorley South / Lindsay Hoyle MP), Ian Roberts (Lancashire Constabulary), Sergeant A Walton (Lancashire Constabulary) and Alison Johnson (Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust)

**Chorley Borough Officers:** Jamie Carson (Director of Leisure and Cultural Services), Simon Clark (Commercial Manager), Louise Nurser (Principal Planning Policy Officer), Cath Burns (Economic Development Manager), Steve Pearce (Assistant Head of Democratic Services) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic Services Officer)

14 residents of the Chorley central area.

### 07.01 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

### 07.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of County Councillor Don Yates and Borough Councillors Joyce Snape, Ralph Snape, Margaret Lees and Roy Lees.

### 07.03 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 Central 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 visions 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.

#### Questions/Issues raised at the meeting:

- (i) A Borough Councillor commented on the poor attendance at the meeting and asked how the meeting had been publicised.

Response: The Chair explained that agendas and leaflets had been circulated to all the local community groups, all the meetings for the first round of Community Forums had been advertised in the Borough News that is delivered to every household in the Borough and that posters had been displayed around the Chorley Central area in Post Offices, Library's, Schools and Shops. It was hoped, that as the Forums progressed the attendances would improve, but that the meetings will be reviewed after the first round and arrangements would be made accordingly.

## 07.04 CHORLEY COMMUNITY AGENDA

### (a) Lancashire Police Issues

The Chair welcomed Inspector Ian Roberts, who was accompanied by Sergeant Andy Walton.

The Inspector stated that the overall level of recorded crime in Chorley had reduced by 2% over the past year and was against the national trend. Their main concerns in the central area related to anti-social behaviour by youths relating to alcohol use and vandalism.

The Council has now bought in the Police Community Support Officers scheme (PCSO), 22 PCSO's will now work alongside 3 Sergeants and 9 Community Beat Managers on top of their normal response officers. Neighbourhood Policing Teams will look at ways to resolve problems by active collaboration with local authorities, agencies, voluntary/community groups, parents and the children themselves.

#### Questions/Issues raised at the meeting

- (i) A member of the public asked if the anti-social behaviour was also down to the use of drugs.

Response: Inspector Ian Roberts commented that drugs were not creating the same amount of petty crime that is happening at a community level.

- (ii) A Borough Councillor had some concerns relating to police response times in the east area of Chorley. A recent racial incident had resulted in himself and another Councillor waiting outside of a property for three hours before a police officer attended. He thought that this was unacceptable and questioned the actual amount of hours that the police actually spend in the east area.

Response: Inspector Ian Roberts was concerned to hear that this had happened, he would take the details of the incident after the meeting and report back directly to the Councillor.

He also commented that the officers spend 95% of their time in their designated areas but that on Friday and Saturday evenings they worked together in Time Teams on 3 main areas of concern, these being, the Chorley east area, the Chorley/Pall Mall corridor and Park Road, Chorley.

- (iii) Concerns were raised that members of the public were being mis-informed when contacting the police, that the actual victim themselves had to contact the police before anything could be actioned. The victims themselves often felt intimidated and scared to do so and felt that they had nowhere else to turn.

Response: Inspector Ian Roberts was concerned that this information was being given and he promised to investigate any particular incidents more fully.

- (iii) A number of Borough Councillors had various concerns about the new Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) scheme, following the disbandment of the Neighbourhood Wardens scheme by the Council. There concerns were as listed:

- (a) Clarification was sought as to the accuracy of the information that an extra 14 PCSO' were available to Chorley

Response: Councillor E Bell (Executive Member for Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment) confirmed that there would be a total of 36 PCSO's available across the whole of the Borough, 22 PCSO's to be partly funded by Chorley Borough Council and 14 PCSO's to be partly funded by the Police Authority.

- (b) The present Council funded PCSO's were being funded jointly, with the Home Office contributing 75% of the costs and the Borough Council 25%. There was concern as to what would happen to the scheme in future years if the Home Office decided to withdraw their funding and sought clarification that the Police would still continue to fund the scheme.

Response: Inspector Ian Roberts replied that he was too junior an officer to give the assurances that they sought. The scheme was in its infancy and only time would tell if the scheme was thought to be successful.

- (c) Did the police agree that the Neighbourhood Wardens made a valuable contribution to policing in the community?

Response: Inspector Ian Roberts and Sergeant Andy Walton were unanimous in commending the work that the Neighbourhood Wardens had contributed to, but stated that their work in this area would be addressed by the new PCSO scheme

- (d) There were concerns that there would be a gap in the provision of services from the Neighbourhood Wardens and the PCSO's. Assurance was sought as to who would carry out those duties.

Response: Sergeant Andy Walton commented that whilst there had been initial concerns about the loss of the Neighbourhood Wardens, they welcomed the new PCSO scheme and were confident that they would be able to meet the needs of the local community. The PCSO's have some powers that the Neighbourhood Wardens did not so they will now be in a position to do some activities that they could not do before. They would be able to put resources into the prevention of some issues actually occurring rather than having to deal with them on a reactionary basis. Sergeant Walton also extended an invitation to anyone who wished to come out on patrol with the PCSO's so that they could see for themselves the work they will be involved with.

Mr Simon Clark (Chorley Council's Commercial Manager) for Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment also added that there would be a team of 8 Neighbourhood Officers that would carry out some of the duties that the wardens had done previously. He also explained that the 19 Neighbourhood Wardens had been carrying out a mixture of PCSO duties and Environmental duties. There had now been a shift by Central Government as to who should provide which duties, with the work of the PCSO's being transferred to the police and the Environmental issues being retained by the local councils.

He also added that initiatives such as the Skip Weekends would continue and that money had been put into the budget to facilitate this.

## **(b) Chorley Borough Council Issues**

### Chorley Town Centre Strategy

Cath Burns (Chorley Council's Economic Development Manager) gave a short presentation on the recently adopted Chorley Town Centre Strategy.

Ms Burns 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 assisting 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.

Questions raised at meeting:

- (i) A member of the public sought clarification as to what the environmental improvements were and would the development cut down the number of parking spaces.

Response: Cath Burns explained that there would be new surfaces, new planting schemes, new pavements and street furniture such as benches and bins. Cath Burns also added that there will eventually be a further 300 car parking spaces.

- (ii) A member of the public was concerned that there had been no mention that Chorley was a Market Town.

Response: Cath Burns agreed that the market was an important asset to Chorley and explained that they were looking to improve on the existing market by attracting new traders to provide a wider range of diversification that in turn would attract new customers.

- (iii) A Borough Councillor sought clarification as to when the Town Centre Strategy was adopted and the funding arrangements for the second phase of the Market Walk development.

Response: Councillor Peter Malpas (Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration) clarified that the Strategy had been in working progress over a few years but that it had officially been adopted in October 2006.

Councillor Alan Cullens (Executive Member for Resources) added that there would be a cost involved through the initial reduction in Car Parking whilst the works were being carried out during the second phase of the Market Walk development. However a contingency plan would be put into place, to direct drivers to other car parks in the area and that a suitable provision for disabled parking would be made.

He also explained that the Deutsche Bank Developers had to put more money into the project in order to attract the right level of retailers to come to the town but that any extra monies incurred at this stage would be regained in the long term once the development was completed.

- (iv) A Borough Councillor asked when the Council were intending to speak to the market traders as to their views and ideas on the development.

Response: Councillor Pater Malpas (Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration) explained that a meeting had been set up and was due to take place in the next couple of weeks.

Leisure and Cultural Activities

Mr Jamie Carson (Chorley Council's Director of Leisure and Cultural Services) gave a short presentation on the provision of leisure and cultural activities in the central area of Chorley.

Mr Carson explained that one of their main aims for the forthcoming year was to get the people of Chorley more active. One million people in total had used the facilities that were available in the Chorley area, including those that were provided by private

companies and voluntary groups and the target for Leisure Services was to increase on this figure each year by 1%

Mr Carson talked about two flagship projects that were to be rolled out across the Borough:

- Activities for Young People

Examples of the types of activities that were provided were shown. To date most of the Get up and Go programmes had been limited to the Summer Holiday time but this year there was a provision to extend the activities to term time and in the evenings.

- Community Centre Management

The Council had transferred the ownership of Tatton Community Centre to the Community Users and Groups now know as the Tatton Community Association

He also reported that the Executive Cabinet had given approval to a new Community Centre being sited in the Buttermere Area of Chorley using Section 106 money from the Gillibrands housing development.

Capital improvements were also planned for Clayton Green Leisure Centre, Duxbury Golf Course, Brinscall Pool and All Seasons Leisure Centre, Chorley, where Phase 1 had just been completed with the installation of a new gym, changing rooms and crèche. Phases 2 and 3 would see similar improvements to facilities on the wet side of the centre, with a new Dance Studio and Meeting Room facilities also planned.

Chorley Play Partnership have applied for Lottery Funding that will see the introduction of Play Rangers across Chorley and an Officer that will be responsible for co-ordinating all play activities across the Borough. Lighting will also be provided on Coronation Recreational Ground, Devonshire Road, Chorley to promote safe play.

#### Questions/Issues that were raised at the meeting

- (i) A member of the public commented that the absence of a pets corner and no café in Astley Park meant no visitors and asked how the Council intended to improve on this.

Response: Mr Carson explained that a proposal on Pets Corner will be taken to Executive Cabinet later in the year and added that there are plans to have a café when the development is completed.

- (ii) An offer was made for the Latter Day Saints Church Group to continue to run the café at Astley Hall on a voluntary basis if the Council would agree.

Response: Mr Carson said that he would be willing to talk to the group about this offer.

- (iii) A County Councillor commended the work that the Leisure and Cultural Services were doing to encourage the people of Chorley to be more active but pointed out that this good work was hindered when in the latest Borough News the article on promoting a healthy lifestyle was backed by a page that advertised fast foods outlets.

Response: Mr Carson noted this observation.

- (iv) A Borough Councillor asked why money identified for extra play resources in the opposition budget at a recent Council meeting had been rejected by the present

administration. The Chair for PAICE and Tatton Community Association also added that they raise a lot of money every year but that there are never enough funds to do everything that they wish.

Response: Councillor Cullens (Executive Member for Resources) said that there was money available in existing schemes that could be utilised more effectively in other areas. The Council needed to look where resources were being targeted and allocate the funds more effectively.

- (v) A member of the Public suggested involving the children more when deciding how resources should be allocated.

Response: Mr Carson explained that this was already happening, although they could always, and did intend to do more. The present Junior Warden Scheme at Yarrow Valley Country Park was an example of what could be achieved by involving children at this level. They also use the Schools and the School Councils for consultation purposes.

### **(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 the meeting:

- (i) A member of the public complained that the motorway was too noisy and asked if it could be re-surfaced to make it quieter.

Response: County Councillor Peter Wilson was unable to answer the question but promised to make enquiries.

### **(d) Central Lancashire Primary Care NHS Trust Issues**

The Chair welcomed Alison Johnson (Associate Director Community Engagement) from Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust.

Mrs Johnson talked about how the Primary Care Trust was working to improve on the services that were available to everyone. Community consultation and engagement was very important in shaping the way forward.

The recent public consultation meetings that had been held on the proposals to establish a Clinical Assessment and Treatment Centre (CATS) at Preston to be operated by a private sector company were now drawing to a close and Mrs Johnson hoped that people felt that they had been able to have their say. It was also noted that Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust would also be bidding to provide a CATS service at Chorley Hospital.

#### Questions/Issues raised at the meeting

- (i) The Chair of PAICE enquired as to why the proposed Friday Street Health Centre development had been put on hold and why?

Response: Alison Johnson explained that since the three Primary Care Trust's had been merged; every single development was being reviewed to establish what the priorities were in each of the three areas. Mrs Johnson added that it was not intended for the delay to be too long. It was recognised that the Friday Street development was seen as a priority in the local area.

- (ii) A Borough Councillor added that any monies that had been borrowed for the Friday Street Clinic Development would start to gain interest, so it would be in the best interests of all concerned that the start of the development was not held up any longer than necessary.

Response: Alison Johnson understood his concerns and promised to find out when a decision would be made about the development.

- (iii) A member of the public commented on how the strong public opinion on the CAT scheme had impacted on the overall decision, and hoped that other services that were now to be provided centrally would allow for a similar consultation process. She referred specifically to the District Nursing Service that were just starting to undertake a job evaluation process; public consultation could help to shape this service too.

Response: Alison Johnson reiterated that the Primary Care Trust were in the process of reviewing their services and plans were being made to consult more widely within the community.

- (iv) A member of the public stated that she deplored the fact that the Primary Care Trust will be employing a South African company to run the Clinical Assessment and Treatment Centre at Sharoe Green, Preston.

Response: Alison Johnson explained that they had been identified as a suitable company following the outcome of the Strategic Health Authority's formal tendering process.

## **07.05 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ISSUES**

### **(a) Local Development Framework**

Ms Louise Nurser (Chorley Council's Principal Planning Officer) 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 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 ways of dealing with the problem issues.

A copy of the document was available at the meeting and on the Council's Website and Ms Nurser said she would welcome resident's views and comments on the paper.

Drop-in sessions for public consultation had been arranged to take place, at a location, in each of the Borough's and although the one in Chorley had already taken place, there was further opportunity to have a say at the ones in Leyland on 13 March 2007 and in Preston on 21 March 2007, further details were available on the Council's website or by contacting the Council's planning office.

### **(b) Sustainable Resources**

Ms Nurser 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' view on the Options Paper would also be welcomed.

#### Questions/Issues raised at the meeting

- (i) A Borough Councillor commented how important it was to develop renewable energy resources and that the Council should lead by example by encouraging developers to use materials now that would lend themselves to future environmental initiatives.
- (ii) A member of the public suggested that the Council should advertise to people where such environmental products can be bought cheaper.

Response: Louise Nurser thought that this was a good idea and promised to look into the best ways of providing this information.

- (iii) A local self-employed business man stated that it was not just the larger developers that could make environmental changes, small developers could start to make an impact in peoples homes with the right help and guidance. They know that there are grants and information out there but it is not easily accessible and puts many people off.

Response: Louise Nurser agreed that the smaller schemes are vital and took his comments on board regarding the difficulty of obtaining the information that was available. She promised to look into what could be done to address this problem and report back to the gentleman directly.

## **07.06 OPEN FORUM**

The Chair invited the local residents present at the meeting to raise questions and express view on any matters relating to the provision of local services or issues affecting the central area of Chorley. In addition, a supply of question cards were 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 member of the public asked why the Recycling Plant on Crosse Hall Street was operating without planning permission?

Response: County Councillor Peter Wilson did not know the exact details of the case but gave his assurance that the matter would be looked into by the appropriate officers.

- (ii) A member of the public enquired as to the procedures regarding changes to developments that had already been approved at Development Control Committee. She drew attention to a recent development on Crosse Hall, where a tree that had a Tree Preservation Order on it had been felled to allow a hedge to be removed.

Response: Ms Nurser explained that this was not her area of expertise but that she would take the details back to the office for one of her colleagues to respond to.

- (iii) A Borough Councillor sought clarification that the new Police Community Support Officers would attend the various community group meetings that were held around the central area as the Neighbourhood Wardens had done previously.

Response: Inspector Roberts and Sergeant Walton both promised that this involvement would still be maintained, adding that the extra capacity would mean more involvement and liaising with the communities in their areas.

- (iv) Mr Lindsay Hoyle (MP) asked why he had not been officially invited?

Response: The Chair indicated that he could expect to receive an official explanation from the Chief Executive in due course.

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

- (v) "Now that the Council has disposed of its housing stock, what is happening about Council owned garages?"
- (vi) "The No76, Crosse Hall Canal Bridge is a listed structure and in need of urgent repair. Can it be resurfaced?"
- (vii) "Crosse Hall Lane requires a Salt Bin and a passing place for cars."

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

#### **07.07 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.

#### **07.08 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the future meetings of the Forum were to take place on the following dates, commencing at 7.00pm at venues yet to be decided:

- Wednesday 27 June 2007
- Thursday 11 October 2007
- Wednesday 13 February 2007

#### **07.09 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 gratitude to the Council Officers and Partner Representatives for their contributions.

Chair