

## Chief Executive's Office

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Doc ID:  
Date: 30 August 2005

**Chorley**  
Borough Council

Town Hall  
Market Street  
Chorley  
Lancashire  
PR7 1DP

### Chief Executive:

Jeffrey W Davies MA LLM

Dear Councillor

A meeting of the Executive Cabinet is due to be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chorley on Thursday, 8th September, 2005 at 5.00 pm.

### AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Any Interests**

Members of the Executive Cabinet are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. If the personal interest is a prejudicial interest, then the individual Member should not participate in a discussion on the matter and must withdraw from the room and not seek to influence a decision on the matter.

- a) **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 10)

To confirm as a correct record the public minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 30 June 2005 (enclosed)

### **MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, COUNCILLOR J WALKER)**

3. **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2004/05** (Pages 11 - 30)

To receive and note the enclosed Annual Report.

### **STRATEGIC / POLICY ITEMS**

### **CAPACITY AND RESOURCES ITEMS (INTRODUCED BY THE EXECUTIVE LEADER, COUNCILLOR J WILSON)**

4. **Revenue Budget 2005/06 - Monitoring** (Pages 31 - 52)

Report of Director of Finance (enclosed).

Continued....

5. **Capital Budget 2005/06 - Monitoring**

Report of Director of Finance (to follow).

6. **Internal Audit Annual Report 2004/05 (Pages 53 - 66)**

Report of Director of Finance (enclosed)

**CUSTOMERS, POLICY AND PERFORMANCE ITEM INTRODUCED BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER, COUNCILLOR EDGERLEY**

7. **Draft Corporate Strategy, 2006/07 - 2008/09 (Pages 67 - 78)**

Report of Head of Corporate and Policy Services (enclosed)

8. **Customer Access Inspection Report (Pages 79 - 106)**

Report of Group Director (enclosed)

a) **Best Value Performance Indicators - Update (Pages 107 - 120)**

Report of Head of Corporate and Policy Services (enclosed)

b) **Key Performance Indicators - Update (Pages 121 - 134)**

Report of Head of Corporate and Policy Services (enclosed)

**HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL ITEM (INTRODUCED BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER, COUNCILLOR LENNOX)**

9. **Amendment to Constitution - Delegated Authority to the Head of Housing Services (Pages 135 - 138)**

Report of Head of Housing Services (enclosed)

**LIFE AND LEISURE ITEMS (INTRODUCED BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER, COUNCILLOR HOYLE)**

10. **Astley Park - Appointment of Consultants (Pages 139 - 142)**

Report of Head of Economic Regeneration (enclosed)

**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ITEMS (INTRODUCED BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER, COUNCILLOR BROWN)**

11. **Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 - Authorisations and Delegations (Pages 143 - 146)**

Report of the Head of Environmental Services (enclosed)

12. **Delivering the Drugs Strategy within Lancashire (Pages 147 - 150)**

Report of Head of Corporate and Policy Services (enclosed).

13. **Any other item(s) which the Executive Leader decides is/are urgent**

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

ENCS

**Distribution**

1. Agenda and reports to all Members of the Executive Cabinet and Chief Officers for attendance.
2. Agenda and reports to Councillor Walker for attendance.
3. Agenda and reports to all remaining Members of the Council for information.

**This information can be made available to you in larger print or on audio tape, or translated into your own language. Please telephone 01257 515118 to access this service.**

આ માહિતીનો અનુવાદ આપની પોતાની ભાષામાં કરી શકાય છે. આ સેવા સરળતાથી મેળવવા 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

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**CHORLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL****Executive Cabinet****Public Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 30 June 2005**

**Present:** Councillor J Wilson (Executive Leader in the Chair), Councillor Edgerley (Deputy Leader of the Council), Councillors Edgerley, Ball, Brown, A Gee, D Gee, Hoyle, Lennox, A Lowe and R Snape.

**Also in attendance:** Councillors Walker and Mrs Walsh.

**05.EC.79 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS**

Councillors Edgerley and Lennox declared a prejudicial interest in the item considered under Minute 05. EC. 89 below.

**05.EC.80 MINUTES**

The public minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 26 May 2005 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

**05.EC.81 REVIEW OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN CHORLEY**

The Executive Cabinet considered the final report of the inquiry conducted by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel into the provision of Youth Activities in Chorley.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Councillor Walker) reported on the main findings and recommendations set out in the report.

The Cabinet noted that one of the recommendations in the report supported the Council's commitment to youth activities (evidenced by the growth item in the 2005/06 budget) and requested the Council to sustain its commitment to the provision of facilities for young person's activities by continuing a budget provision in future years for a continued rolling programme of improvement, to enhance but not replace the activities and services provided by the Lancashire County Council and local voluntary groups throughout the community.

The Executive Member for Life and Leisure (Councillor Hoyle) supported the inquiry report's recommendations and thanked the Members of the Panel and the officers, individuals and organisations who had provided evidence to the Panel.

**Decision made:**

**1. That the recommendations 1 to 10 and 12 set out in the inquiry report be approved.**

**2. That recommendation 11 in the report which requested the Council to sustain its commitment to the provision of facilities for young person's activities by continuing a budget provision in future years for a continued rolling programme of improvement be considered during the Budget Cycle for 2006/07.**

**Reasons for Decision:**

The agreed recommendations of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel are aimed at enhancing the existing provision for youth within the Borough.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

None

**05.EC.82 ONE STOP SHOP**

The Executive Cabinet considered the final report of the inquiry conducted by the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel into the effectiveness of the newly implemented One Stop Shop and to identify improvements which would benefit both the customer and the workforce.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Councillor Walker) and the Chairman of the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Councillor Mrs Walsh) reported on the main findings and recommendations set out in the report.

The Executive Member for Customers, Policy and Performance (Councillor Edgerley) supported the inquiry report's recommendations and thanked the Members of the Panel and the officers, individuals and organisations who had provided evidence to the Panel.

**Decision made:**

**That the recommendations set out in the inquiry report be approved.**

**Reasons for Decision:**

The agreed recommendations of the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel are aimed at improving the customer services in the One Stop Shop.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

None

**05.EC.83 REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME**

The Chief Executive submitted a report, which incorporated the report from the Independent Remuneration Panel on the review of the Members Allowance Scheme, for preliminary consideration prior to Council meeting on 12 July 2005.

**Decision made:**

**That the recommendations be not accepted in their present form.**

**Reasons for Decision:**

To enable further consideration to be given to the Members Allowances Scheme.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected:**

None

**05.EC.84 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2004/05**

The Director of Finance submitted a report on the provisional outturn figures for the Capital and General Funds (including the direct service functions) and the Housing Revenue Account (including the building maintenance direct service) for 2004/05. He also reported on the need identified for improvements to be undertaken to the welfare facilities at the Bengal Street Depot

**Decisions made:**

**That the Council be recommended to give approval to:**

- (a) The creation of the specific reserves as outlined in paragraph 13 of the report;**
- (b) The financing of the Council's Capital Programme as set out in Paragraph 28 of the report and the updated capital programme for 2005/006 including slippage;**
- (c) The financing of the additional Capital Programme expenditure from either additional resources or from approved commitments;**
- (d) The addition of £22,000 to the Capital Programme to cover the cost of the Bengal Street Depot Welfare Facilities from existing resources.**

**Reasons for Decisions:**

To approve the use of the Revenue budget and confirm the amended Capital Programme for 2005/2006.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected:**

None

**05.EC.85 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report on the draft Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy which takes into account all the issues surrounding equality and diversity with regard to the employment of all officers, members of the council, job applicants, contractors, customers and all other parties who have direct and indirect relationships with the authority and its employees.

**Decisions made:**

- 1.The Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy be approved and implemented with immediate effect.**
- 2. That the Member Development Steering Group be advised that the Executive Cabinet recommends that all Members of the Council should be given awareness training on the Policy.**

**Reasons for Decisions:**

To ensure that the Council is operating best practice, working within legislation and promoting equality and diversity within the Authority.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected:**

None

**05.EC.86 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY OFFICER**

The Director of Legal Services submitted a report seeking approval to establish in principal a post of Equality and Diversity Officer (PO1) to take the lead on all diversity matters relating to Chorley residents, issues for member/officer work practices and the recognition of diversity issues council-wide.

**Decision made:**

**That the Leader of the Council to be given delegated authority to establish the post of Equality and Diversity Officer, if this can be done on a cost of neutral basis to the Council's base budget.**

**Reasons for Decision:**

To meet the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

To satisfy the requirements of the "CPA 2005 – The new approach".

To implement an objective in the Corporate Improvement Plan.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected:**

None

**05.EC.87 ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY / CORE CENTRAL LANCASHIRE CITY REGION**

The Head of Economic Regeneration submitted a report which provided an update on the Northern Way, its implications and the proposed Economic Regeneration Strategy

**Decisions made:**

**That GVA Grimley be appointed to carry out the Economic Regeneration Strategy and that the sum of £65,000 be allocated, to the Core Central Lancashire Sub-Regional Study and the Economic Regeneration Strategy**

**Reasons for Decision:**

To ensure that Chorley Borough Council is in a position to make the most of any opportunities presented by the Northern Way and other similar initiatives.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected:**

None

**05.EC.88 ASTLEY PARK HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND CONTRACT**

The Director of Finance and Head of Economic Regeneration submitted a report seeking approval to enter into a contract with the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out the Astley Hall restoration works.

**Decisions made:**

**That approval be given to the appointment of a Project Officer to manage the Astley Hall Renovation Scheme and to a contract being entered into with the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out the Astley Hall restoration works.**



**Reasons for Decisions:**

To enter into a contract with the Heritage Lottery Fund in order to carry out the Astley Hall restoration proposals.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected:**

None

(Councillors Edgerley and Lennox as members of the Housing Shadow Management Group declared a prejudicial interest in the following item and left the meeting during the consideration of the item).

**05.EC.89 PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS IN RESPECT OF PROPOSED HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER**

The Director of Legal Services submitted a report on the introduction of a protocol for Members and Officers, to avoid conflicts of interest in respect of the proposed Housing Stock Transfer.

**Decision made:**

**That approval be given to the protocol for Members and Officers in respect of the proposed Housing Stock Transfer and that the Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to agree any amendments to the protocol, subject to the reporting of any such amendments to the Standards Committee.**

**Reasons for Decisions:**

A protocol needs to be put in place to avoid conflicts of interest arising during the proposed Housing Stock Transfer particularly after the ballot.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected:**

None

**05.EC.90 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

The Head of Planning Services submitted a report, advising members on the consultation responses received to the draft Statement of Community Involvement.

**Decisions made:**

**1. That the revised Statement of Community Involvement be approved for consultation for a further six-week period and for submission to the Secretary of State.**

**2. That the Head of Planning Services be given delegated authority to make any minor text amendments to the Statement in consultation with the Executive Member for Development and Planning.**

**Reasons for Decisions:**

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has replaced the existing system of local, structure and unitary development plans. The Act requires that the local planning authority produce a Statement of Community Involvement, as part of the local development framework.

The Statement sets out the various ways and means of ensuring the engagement and involvement of organisations and the local community in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected:**

None as subject to statutory regulations as now prepared.

**05.EC.91 PLANNING SERVICES - AMENDMENT TO SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Head of Planning Services and the Director of Legal Services submitted a report seeking amendments to the scheme of delegation to allow the Head of Planning Services to deal with complaints relating to high hedges, to make minor amendments to Section 106 agreements and to refuse planning permission in relation to major applications in specified circumstances.

The Director of Legal Services also submitted an addendum to the report seeking an extension to the powers of the Development Control Committee to deal with high hedges.

**Decisions made:**

**That the Council be recommended to approve the following amendments to the Council Constitution: -**

**(a) The insertion of the words “47A - Powers relating to complaints about high hedges under Part 8 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003” in Appendix 2 Part 1 Miscellaneous Functions.**

**(b) The insertion of the words “(d) powers relating to complaints about high hedges” in paragraph 2 of Appendix 2, Part B below the Development Control Committee heading.**

**(c) The insertion of an addendum to Paragraph 9.5 of Appendix 2, Part C under the heading Head of Planning Services to read: “Where a planning application as defined in (c) (i) above is unable to be determined within the statutory period because all material is not available then, exceptionally, the Head of Planning Services following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair may refuse planning permission”.**

**(d) The amendment of the wording in paragraph 9.12 of Appendix 2, Part C to read: “Authority to exercise all powers (except for setting fee levels) under Part 8 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 in relation to complaints relating to high hedges”.**

**(e) The insertion of a new paragraph 9.13 in Appendix 2, Part C to read as follows: “That where a Section 106 Agreement has been adopted by the Development Control Committee, the Head of Planning Services be given delegated powers following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to make minor amendments to the Section 106 Agreement”.**

**Reasons for Decisions:**

To ensure the maintenance of the current level of the Planning Delivery Grant target and to meet the requirements of Part 8, of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected:**

Not to extend the terms of delegation

**05.EC.92 PERCY STREET, CHORLEY - PROPOSED STOPPING UP**

The Director of Legal Services submitted a report on proposals for the stopping up of Percy Street as a highway under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980. She also reported on the need to include an additional area of highway land within the proposals.

**Decision made:**

**That subject to the consent of Lancashire County Council, the making of a Court Order be pursued for the stopping up of Percy Street, Chorley, running from its junction with King Street, Chorley, in a westerly direction for its entire length to the termination of the street, and for the stopping up of an unadopted length of former back street, which ran from Percy Street through to the former Latham Street.**

**Reasons for Decision:**

Percy Street is in the form of a cul de sac. It is flanked on both sides by offices and has little residual use as a highway. It is not a vehicular through route and serves mainly as parking facility during the day for vehicles associated with the use of the "King Street" offices. At other times there is little if any other vehicular use. The street serves as a pedestrian route; however, there is a nearby alternative route, i.e. out of King Street onto the town centre by-pass and thus the stopping up of Percy Street would not unduly prejudices pedestrian movements in the area. Thus the retention of Percy Street for highway purposes is considered unnecessary. The former length of unnamed back street, which ran from Percy Street through to the former Latham Street, though still having the status of a publicly adopted highway is now simply in the form of a landscaped verge following completion of a town centre by-pass. Its retention as highway is totally unnecessary.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

For no action to be taken leaving Percy Street to remain as a public highway.

**05.EC.93 TEMPLE WAY, CHORLEY - PROPOSED STOPPING UP**

The Director of Legal Services submitted a report on proposals for the stopping up of Temple Way as a highway under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980.

**Decision made:**

**That subject to the consent of Lancashire County Council, and the agreement of the applicant to meet all costs involved, the Council pursue the making of a Court Order for the stopping up of Temple Way, Chorley, running from the back edge of the highway boundary on the north side of the Millennium Way in a northerly direction for its entire length to the entrance leading into the Temple grounds.**

**Reasons for Decision:**

Temple Way serves exclusively as an access road to the Mormon Temple. Its use as a parking facility by members of the public at large was never envisaged and such practice is detrimental to the safe and effective functioning of the road as the sole means of access to the Temple complex. The stopping up of the highway concerned would have no impact on highway usage generally.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

To impose some form of vehicular waiting prohibition on the road with the attendant requirement to lay down and maintain carriageway markings and erect accompanying poles and plates on which the nature of the prohibition would be specified, and thereafter devote resources to the monitoring and enforcement of the prohibition.

To refuse to pursue the making of the requisite Court Order, thereby leaving the situation as it is.

**05.EC.94 CROSSE HALL LANE, CHORLEY - PROPOSED OF PRIVATE STREET WORKS**

The Director of Legal Services submitted a report on proposals for the implementation of a private street works scheme along the length of Cross Hall Lane, and clarified that the costs of the scheme are to be borne by Morris Homes Limited.

**Decision made:**

**That whereas the length of Crosse Hall Lane, Chorley, situate between its junction with Eaves Lane and the point at which the proposed new access road is to join the north side of Crosse Hall Lane (a distance of approximately 135 metres) is not to the satisfaction of the Council (in its capacity as street works authority for the area) sewered, levelled, paved, metalled, flagged, channelled, made good and lighted, Officers be requested to prepare plans and specification of works together with an estimate of cost and a provisional apportionment of those costs in respect of a scheme for the making up of the above length of highway and be presented to a future meeting of the Executive Cabinet for formal consideration.**

**Reasons for Decision:**

Crosse Hall Lane, Chorley is an unadopted road, in a poorly surfaced condition and lacking any proper system of highway drainage or street lighting. The prospect of new housing development on a site in close vicinity to the road, means Crosse Hall is set to serve as the sole means of highway access to and from that new development. Clearly Crosse Hall Lane in its current material condition could not in any way satisfactorily serve in such a role and the only way of upgrading the length of road concerned to a satisfactory highway standard is by way of commissioning a scheme of private street works pursuant to the provisions of the Highways Act 1980.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

The other alternatives available for facilitating the making up of Crosse Hall Lane, e.g. an agreement pursuant to the provisions of Section 31, Section 38 or Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980, are contingent upon landownership and therefore cannot be applied in this instance

**05.EC.95 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC****Decision made:**

**That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph.1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.**

**05.EC.96 MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 26 May 2005 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

Executive Leader

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# Chorley

Borough Council

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2004/2005**



Councillor Walker - Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Mrs S Walsh - Chair Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel  
Councillor Brownlee - Chair Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel  
Councillor Perks - Chair Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel



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## 1. Introduction



By Councillor John Walker – Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

“I was delighted to be asked to Chair the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the year 2004/05 and continue the effective work that the committee had produced in previous years. I feel we have continued to make Overview and Scrutiny a key issue in the working of Chorley Borough Council and now Officers and Members feel they are involved in a process which benefits all aspects of Council business.

Our successes include the re-drafting of the Call-In Procedure and the Forward Plan. We had our first Call-In of an Executive Cabinet decision which did not result in any change to the decision but, it did give an insight into the procedures involved and lessons were learnt from it. We completed five investigations by all three panels into matters of public interest.

We are continuing to look at ways of engaging with the public.

Again we were not successful in scrutinising the Budget to our satisfaction but will endeavour to improve our procedures for the next round of budget proposals.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow Chairs, Members and Officers for their dedication and hard work during this last year and hopefully we can continue scrutinising in a constructive, robust and purposeful way during this coming year.”

July 2005

## 2. What is Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny is still a comparatively new function for local authorities. It has been introduced as part of the modernisation agenda for local government and the Local Government Act 2000 requires Councils to have at least one overview and scrutiny committee.

The main role of Overview and Scrutiny is to help improve the Council's performance through monitoring and review, to look at decisions taken by the Executive Cabinet, to help develop and monitor the Council's policies and strategies. The Overview and Scrutiny is based upon the model of Select Committees at Westminster. It is an effective method by which Councillors who are not on the Executive Cabinet can challenge and influence those making decisions.

There is no single definition of overview and scrutiny. It therefore should be viewed as an umbrella term covering a wide range of possible roles.<sup>1</sup> However, the four key legislative roles are:

- holding the Executive to account
- policy development and review
- best value reviews
- external scrutiny

This suggests an emphasis toward:

- acting as a watchdog for Executive decision making
- checking on whether existing policies are effective and helping to share new ones
- contributing towards the continuous improvement of Council services
- reviewing or investigating matters of particular concern either within the Council or within the community

The scrutiny role also provides new opportunities for public involvement and debate. This can support elected members in taking a community-orientated approach and bring new ideas and experience to scrutiny.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See for example, Chapter 2. The Development of overview and scrutiny in Local Government, ODPM, Sept 2002

<sup>2</sup> Developing the scrutiny role, LGIU April 2003

### 3. **Overview and Scrutiny in Chorley - A Background**

The Council first established and appointed Overview and Scrutiny Committees in September 1999 as part of the proposals for the introduction of a new system of Executive Leader and Cabinet style of local governance. Chorley was one of the first authorities to introduce its new political management arrangements.

The Council initially appointed two Overview and Scrutiny Committees to discharge the functions covering the whole of the Council's services (one Committee overseeing the Service Group A and the other overseeing Service Group B) comprising 17 members, excluding those members who have Executive responsibilities and serve on the Executive Cabinet.

The Council has recognised the key role Overview and Scrutiny has to play within its new modernised structure. This role is emphasised in the overarching objectives for the Council's overview and scrutiny functions.

In May 2003, the Council established and appointed an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three standing Overview and Scrutiny Panels. The three standing panels are the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The purpose of the Committee is to discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and any Regulations made by the Secretary of State under Section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Committee and the Panels are intended to play an important role in ensuring that all the services of the Council are efficient and effective and meet the needs of the local community.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will normally refer a matter which falls within the cross-cutting theme of any of the Panels to the appropriate Panel for investigation and reference back to the Committee with recommendations. As well as the Standing Panels, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may appoint additional ad hoc Overview and Scrutiny Panels to assist it in carrying out its functions should the need arise.

4. Overview and Scrutiny Structure, Functions and Responsibilities

**Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee has an overall responsibility for all scrutiny work including that undertaken by the three standing scrutiny panels.

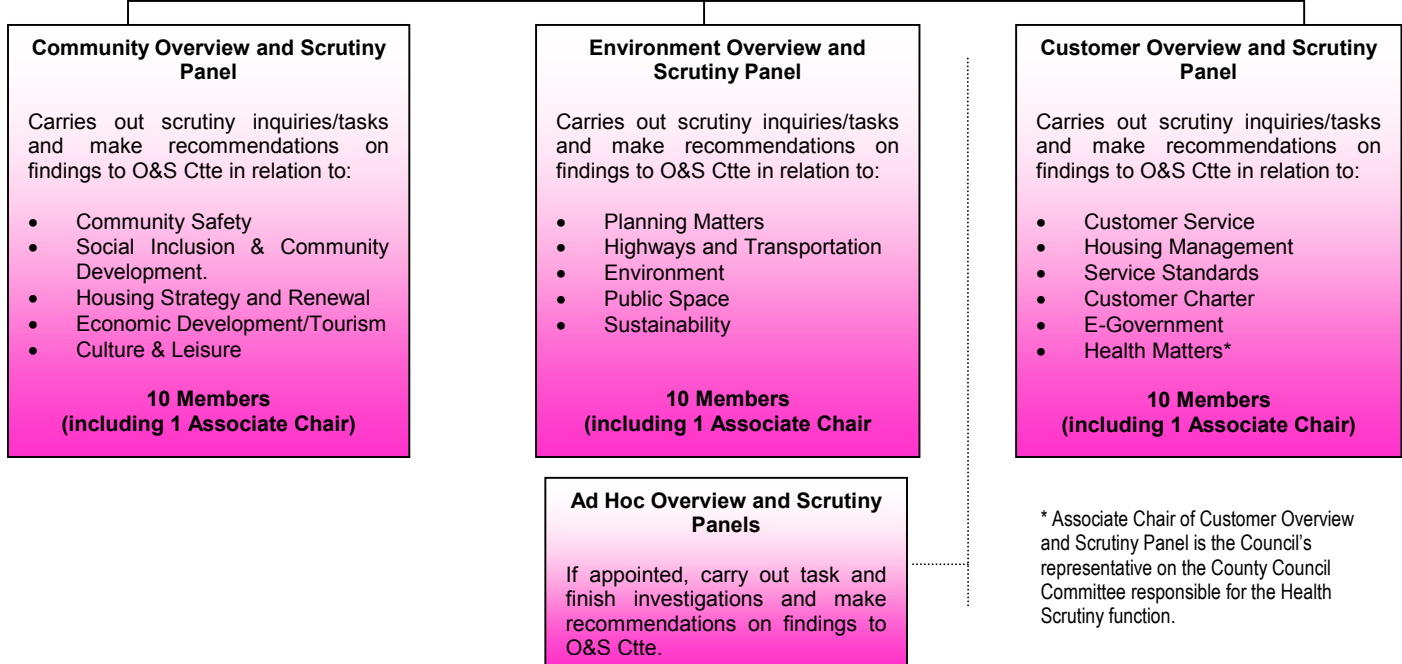
The Committee may exercise the full range of overview and scrutiny powers and functions including the 'call-in' of executive decisions. It may consider any topic appropriate for scrutiny but will normally focus on:

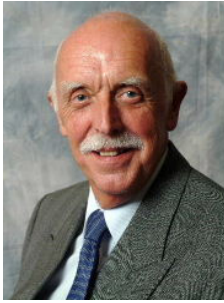
- Holding the Executive to account
- Performance, resources and corporate governance matters
- Consideration of recommendations from the standing scrutiny panels
- Making recommendations to the Executive and/or the Council flowing from its own work and that of the scrutiny panels
- Setting and monitoring the annual scrutiny work programmes.
- Selection of inquiry topics and approval of project outlines and plans.

Matters falling within the crosscutting themes of the standing scrutiny panels will normally be referred to the relevant panel for full investigation and consideration.

The Committee may appoint ad hoc scrutiny panels to assist it in carrying out its functions should the need arise.

**10 Members  
(including Chair + 3 Associate Chairs)**



5. **The Achievements and Activities**(a) **Overview and Scrutiny Committee****Chair**

John Walker

**Members**

Eric Bell  
 Lesley Brownlee (Associate Chair)  
 Mrs Patricia Case  
 Michael Davies  
 Peter Goldsworthy  
 Mark Perks (Associate Chair)  
 Thomas McGowan  
 June Molyneaux  
 Mrs Stella Walsh (Associate Chair)

Training and Development

The Committee continues to receive update reports on the training and development for Members. It highlights the need for Members to have training in order to develop their existing skills and equip them to carry out their scrutiny roles in a robust and effective manner.

Over the past year Members have received two comprehensive questionnaires to identify their training needs and of the responses received priority for training would be on the following subjects:

Overview and Scrutiny - Scoping of inquiries, gathering evidence for inquiries, toolkit and interview techniques.  
 Local Government Finance - Budget and Financial Awareness  
 One to One on Information Technology  
 Public Speaking

Best Value Performance Plan

The start of the Municipal Year saw the approval of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2004/05 which sets out the Authority's performance and achievements over the past years and outlines the measures the Council proposes to adopt in order to achieve its strategic effectiveness and in particular the targets for the three year period.

The Plan incorporates the Corporate Improvement Plan which had been compiled in response to the issues raised by the CPA inspection.

Best Value Performance Plan - Satisfaction Surveys

The Committee received the findings of the 2003/04 Best Value Performance Plan Satisfaction Surveys which had been carried out by Beacon Research, under the Best Value Performance Indicator regime. The Council was required to undertake satisfaction surveys in the following areas:

- General Satisfaction
- Housing Services
- Planning
- Benefits

The information contained in the surveys would be used in future Overview and Scrutiny inquiries.

Chorley Markets – Occupancy of Stalls and Associated Matters – Inquiry conducted by the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The first meeting of the Committee saw the draft final report on the inquiry into Chorley Markets their occupancy of stall and associated matters that the Customer Panel had conducted during the previous Municipal Year.

The Committee approved the recommendations and the Executive Cabinet deferred a decision on a number of recommendations in order not to fetter the scope that could be offered in the investigation of partnering or outsourcing opportunities.

Grass Cutting Service

In July 2004 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a request from the Executive Cabinet for an inquiry to be conducted into the Council's grass cutting services.

Members attention had been drawn to the performance of this service following the high volume of complaints that had been made against the Authority's grass cutting service throughout the Borough.

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel was requested to carry out the inquiry and more details can be found later on in the report under the activities of the Panel.  
(See page 14)

Balance of Funding Review

The Executive Cabinet also requested the Committee to analyse the problems with advice from the Director of Finance, inherent in the current system of Local Government finance and make recommendations on possible solutions.

The Government had established an independent inquiry chaired by Sir Michael Lyons to identify and recommend for pursuance the most feasible option and Members views were sought as to the means by which the Council could contribute to the initial debate.

A small Working Group was established and their findings were reported to the Executive Cabinet.

Monitoring of Sickness Absence

The Committee continued to receive reports from the Head of Human Resources on the sickness absence levels across the authority and there continues to be a reduced trend in sickness absence levels and improving the health and well-being of employees, including targeting of short-term persistent absence.

Executive Decision 'Call in' Request Procedure

The Committee considered the process and sought clarification of the 'call in' request procedure for Executive decisions. Anomalies existed between the Council's Constitution and the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit, and the Council approved amendments to the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution at its meeting on 19 April 2005.

The Minutes of the Executive Cabinet are now made available in advance of the publication of the next Executive Cabinet agenda and a mechanism adopted allowing notices of decisions taken by Executive Members to go on the Internet as soon as they are made.

### Forward Plans

The Committee raised the issue of the content and publication of Forward Plans following a comparison made with other local authorities. The Committee took account of the Local Government Information Unit guidance note and considered that the format of the Council's Forward Plan should be revised to incorporate:

- a specific definition of a key decision, including the identification of an agreed financial threshold;
- the names and portfolio of Executive Members;
- the identification of prospective decision makers (Members or Officers) and likely decision dates.

In April 2005 the Executive Cabinet and Council approved the financial threshold of £100,000 and a revised format for the Forward Plan document.

### Executive Decision 'Call-in' Request - Extension of CCTV System to Outlying Areas

In December 2004 the Committee received its first request from a Member to 'call-in' a decision that had been taken by the Executive Cabinet. The decision taken by the Executive Cabinet was the refusal to meet the annual line rental associated with CCTV schemes in outlying areas of Chorley.

The reasons for objecting to the decision as well as proving an alternate decision/proposal was submitted to the Committee.

A small panel of Members selected from the Committee was established to review and scrutinise the decision to enable views to be formulated and then considered by the Executive Cabinet.

Written and verbal representations from Parish Council representatives and appropriate officers were made to the Panel and the recommendations from the Panel were accepted by the Overview and Scrutiny, however these were not accepted by the Executive Cabinet and the original decision stood as the Executive Cabinet considered that acceptance of the line rental costs of CCTV equipment in outlying parts of the Borough would place an additional burden on the Council's revenue budget when the costs could be funded by other sources.

### Draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2005/06, and Business Plans for 2005/06

Throughout January 2005 the Committee and Panels met to seek Members views on the Council's spending priorities for 2005/06 and to assist the Executive Cabinet when it considered the budget.

The Council had adopted a more rigorous corporate planning process than previous years to focus on the priorities to support the development of its budget.

The basic approach was the draft Business Plans for each service unit would be used as a means of scrutinising the budget. The draft plans had been initially constructed on the basis of continuing current service levels, and growth options which might be recommended by the Cabinet would be incorporated prior to the Council's final approval.

The Business Plan for each service unit was submitted to the Committee/Panel which have the remit for that service.

Chorley Borough Community Strategy (2005 – 2016) and Action Plan (2005 – 2008)

At the beginning of the year the Committees' views and comments were sought on the draft Community Strategy for 2005 – 2008.

The Strategy had been produced in accordance with legislative requirement after intensive consultation sessions with the Chorley Partnership member organisations and partners including the Borough Council, Parish Councils, the Primary Care Trust, Police, local businesses and organisations and several voluntary and ethnic groups.



(b) **Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**Chairman**  
Mark Perks

**Members**

Nigel Baxter  
Thomas Bedford  
Peter Buckley  
Frank Culshaw  
Mrs Marie Gray  
Mrs Margaret Lees  
Mrs Iris Smith  
Christopher Snow  
Alan Whittaker

The areas of responsibility of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel relate to:

- Community Safety
- Social Inclusion and Community Development
- Housing Strategy and Renewal
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Culture and Leisure

The Community and Overview Scrutiny Panel has met seven times.

Town Centre Autumn Fair

At the beginning of the Municipal Year the Panel submitted its findings into the review of the location of the Town Centre Autumn Fair.

A sub group of the Panel had been established and concluded that the Friday Street Car Park remained the most practicable and appropriate place for the adult fair, provided a number of conditions, stipulations and requirements aimed at safeguarding local residents amenities were imposed.

The Panel's reports and recommendations were submitted to the Executive Cabinet on 13 July 2004. The Cabinet did not consider that the Inquiry report's arguments overrode the level of noise and disturbance caused to residents around the Friday Street site and rejected the report's recommendations. The Cabinet considered that the Fair should, in future, be confined to Market Street and Fazakerley Street and, if practicable, St Georges Street.

A copy of the Inquiry Report can be viewed either on the Council's website or at the offices of the Democratic Services Section at the Town Hall, Chorley.

Review of Juvenile Nuisance

The Panel continued the inquiry into juvenile nuisance. This inquiry has been looking at the activities perceived as threatening and contribute to the community's feelings of insecurity. The Panel has attempted to define the extent of the problem and obtain the public's perception of 'juvenile nuisance'.

The Panel's final report suggested a number of measures and initiatives to address juvenile nuisance to be focussed initially on the three wards of Chorley South East, Chorley South West and Coppull and implemented either by the Council or external agency. The Panel's report and recommendations were approved by the Executive Cabinet on 4 November 2004.

A copy of the Inquiry Report can be viewed either on the Council's website or at the offices of the Democratic Services Section at the Town Hall, Chorley.

#### Provision of Youth Activities in Chorley

During October 2004, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested the Panel to conduct an inquiry into the provision of youth activities throughout the Borough.

The objectives of the inquiry was to identify and explore the current provision of youth provision and facilities (including statutory and voluntary bodies), to identify relevant future issues highlighted by the Youth Services and other key partnerships, to compare with best practice elsewhere and to identify relevant issues relating to funding, budgets and capacity.

To establish baseline information on currently available activities and facilities for young people and to obtain suggestions for future activities, a questionnaire was produced and distributed to selected persons and organisations.

A number of representatives from key organisations were interviewed and the Panel visited innovative schemes operated by the Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.

The inquiry's findings and recommendations have been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and were presented to the Executive Cabinet on 30 June 2005. The recommendations were approved subject to the proviso, in relation to the recommendation which recommended the Council to sustain its commitment to the proviso of facilities for young people's activities by continuing a budget provision in future years for a continued rolling programme of improvement, that this recommendation be considered during the budget cycle for 2006/07.

A copy of the Inquiry Report can be viewed either on the Council's website or at the offices of the Democratic Services Section at the Town Hall, Chorley.

#### Public Participation in the Council's Decision-Making Process

As a means by which the Council could engage more effectively with its local community, it had been advocated that the Council should consider the establishment of Area Forums for defined localities. The proposal had regard to the objectives contained in both the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan and the draft Community Strategy Action Plan for 2005/08.

The Chief Executive submitted a report to the Panel on 7 October 2004 on issues relating to Community Engagement and Members of the Panel, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Deputy Leader of the Council undertook a visit to the Preston City Council Rural Area Forum meeting held on 9 December 2004. The Chair of the Panel and the Deputy Leader of the Council undertook a further visit to the Preston Central Area Forum meeting held on 27 January 2005 to gain an understanding of how the Area Fora in Preston operate differently within rural and urban areas of the City.

The consensus of the Panel members views following the site visit to the Preston Rural Area Forum meeting was that a draft scoping document on an Inquiry into Public Participation in the Council's Decision - Making Process should be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel for consideration and approval.

The Panel considered at its meeting on 9 February 2005 a further report by the Chief Executive on proposals for the implementation of Area Fora in three pilot areas and the Panel agreed a scrutiny inquiry into Public Participation in the Council's decision-making process.

The Inquiry which will commence in September 2005 will investigate the means by which the Council may more effectively engage with the local community on the provision of services provided by the Council and other key partner organisations in the Borough of Chorley. This will include the provision of (1) Area Fora or Committees and (2) the introduction of public speaking at meetings of the Council on a trial basis and the administrative arrangements involved.

During the course of the Inquiry the Panel will also examine/review the operation of the Area Forum Pilot scheme in the Borough to be introduced later this year following consideration by the Area Forum Working Party and the Executive Cabinet.

Other issues the Panel dealt with were:

- Draft Budget proposals and Business Plans, as well as Business Plan updates relating to services within the Panel's remit.
- Audit of Crime & Disorder 2004/05. The Panel acted as the Authority's consultative body during the preparation of the Council's Community Safety Strategy for Chorley.

(c) **Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel****Members**

Andrew Birchall  
 Alan Cullens  
 Mrs Doreen Dickinson  
 Thomas Gray  
 Marion Lowe  
 Peter Malpas  
 Geoffrey Russell  
 Edward Smith  
 Mrs Joyce Snape

**Chair**

Mrs Stella Walsh

The areas of responsibilities of the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel relate to:

- Customer Service
- Housing Management
- Service Standards
- Customer Charter
- e-Government
- Health Matters

The Panel has met 12 times during the 2004/05 Municipal Year.

Enhanced Recycling Scheme - Marketing and Promotion

The Panel was requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the marketing and promotion of the enhanced recycling scheme and to consider the most appropriate method of introducing the new scheme.

The Panel made recommendations in December 2004 as to how the positive elements and rationale behind the scheme could be highlighted in the promotional campaign with suggestions on other measures (eg Mini Bank sites, recycling roadshows and leaflet promotion) which might be taken to enhance the service.

The report was submitted to the Executive Cabinet in January 2005 and it adopted the recommendations.

A copy of the Inquiry Report can be viewed either on the Council's website or at the offices of the Democratic Services Section at the Town Hall, Chorley.

One Stop Shop Inquiry

Throughout the year the Panel has been carrying out an inquiry into the Council's 'One Stop Shop' service at the Union Street offices. The service objective was 'to provide customers with a single point of access to Council and partner services using their preferred method of contact and to provide a quality service that fully meets customer requirements'.

The Panel received evidence in connection with the inquiry and had discussions with representatives from the Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee, Disability Liaison Group officers on how the facility operates.

The final report of the Panel's findings and recommendations were endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approved by the Executive Cabinet on 30 June 2005.

A copy of the Inquiry Report can be viewed either on the Council's website or at the offices of the Democratic Services Section at the Town Hall, Chorley.

Other issues the Panel dealt with were:

- Reviewing the Panel's recommendations following the Inquiry into the performance of Chorley's markets that had taken place the previous year.
- Reviewing the progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Housing Maintenance Appointment System Inquiry.
- Review and monitoring of the Council's comments, compliments and complaints procedure and proposals to change the procedure.
- Receipt of Draft Budget proposals and Business Plan as well as Business Plan updates relating to the Panel's remit.
- An item referred from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the Panel to examine the information pack issued to new residents when first registering for Council Tax.
- Lancashire County Council's arrangements for the scrutiny of health functions.

(d) **Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel**



**Members**

Henry Counce  
David Dickinson  
Daniel Gee  
Harold Heaton  
Margaret Iddon  
Roy Lees  
Roger Livesey  
Ray Parr  
Shaun Smith

**Chair**

Lesley Brownlee

The areas of responsibility of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel relate to:

- Planning
- Highways and Transportation
- Environment
- Public space and sustainability

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel has met eight times during the 2004/05 Municipal Year.

Grass Cutting Service Inquiry

Several meetings of the Panel were taken up following a request made by the Executive Cabinet for a scrutiny inquiry to be undertaken into the Council's grass cutting service.

The inquiry had been requested following the receipt of a high volume of complaints about the service in the Spring of 2004.

The Panel received background information and comments on the service from Councillors, Officers and Parish Councils as well as from the Executive Member for Effective Service Delivery. The Panel received financial costings for the service, funding from Section 106 agreements and the specification of works for the urban core and rural areas.

A small group of Councillors were charged with considering financial issues, the specification of works and inventory of works with the Head of Public Space Services.

Follow receipt of the initial complaints, a range of initiatives had already been put in place to avoid the difficulties experienced, but the Panel had identified a number of other initiatives.

The recommendations contained in the report were aimed at improving the service and minimise the potential for further complaints. The majority of the recommendations were of an organisational nature and did not entail any major budget implications.

The Executive Cabinet in January 2005 accepted the recommendations.

A copy of the Inquiry Report can be viewed either on the Council's website or at the offices of the Democratic Services Section at the Town Hall, Chorley.

Leisure Side of Cycling and Dual Use of Areas

The Panel's main inquiry this year has been the gathering of evidence for the leisure side of cycling and dual use of areas. The objectives of the enquiry are:

- to assess the dual use areas (ie recreation grounds, car parks, parkland);
- to highlight the areas for development and improvement;
- to identify the current areas and can they be extended;
- to reduce confrontation between the various activities.

Several witnesses have been called to give evidence on the various activities associated with the inquiry, and the inquiry is still on-going.

Other issues the Panel dealt with were:

- receipt of Draft Budget proposal and Business Plan, as well as Business Plan updates relating to services within the Panel's remit.
- renewal energy study that the Council was progressing in partnership with Renewablesnorthwest, Sustainability Natwest and the Government Office for the North West.

## 6. The Way Forward

As can be seen from this second Annual Overview and Scrutiny report, like the previous year has been a busy one for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panels. A number of inquiries have been undertaken and completed as well as smaller reviews. If Overview and Scrutiny is to be seen as workable it must be seen to be making a difference to the organisation. The ultimate test of effectiveness of overview and scrutiny is not how much work is done but 'whether the decision (or policies or services) which result from its intervention are better than those which would have resulted had that intervention not taken place' (S Leach, De Montfort University). This can be demonstrated by the inquiries that have taken place.

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment identified a number of weaknesses in the Overview and Scrutiny process and these are being addressed.

The following subjects will assist in the development of Overview and Scrutiny:

- Continuing the monitoring and progress of the recommendations from inquiries.
- Ensure that there is appropriate induction and training for Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members especially to any new members on the Council following the elections.
- Ensure that there is awareness training to all members and relevant officers to promote an understanding of the role and importance of Overview and Scrutiny.
- To continue to consider the issues raised from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and continue to monitor the CPA Corporate Improvement Plan.
- To continue to improve the holding of the Executive to account.

Following consultations with the Chair and Associate Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Executive submitted proposals to the Executive Cabinet in April 2005 for a workshop session to be held to which all Members of the Council, Management Team and the Senior Management Group will be invited to attend, to complete the Centre for Public Scrutiny self evaluation framework for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function and enable the production of an Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan. The workshop will be held on 20 October 2005 to identify areas and means for improvements.

The Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit will be reviewed to reflect the amendments to the 'call in' provision in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and other changes that may come from the self evaluation workshop session.

The Council continues to meet officers/Councillors from neighbouring authorities by way of the North West Scrutiny Support Officers Network and the Lancashire Scrutiny Partners Forum.

The subject of adequate support for Overview and Scrutiny identified in last year's Annual Report has been addressed with the recruitment of the Assistant Head of Democratic Services and the Trainee Democratic Services Officer. The principal source of support is from the Democratic Services Section where all Overview and Scrutiny members can seek advice and guidance. In addition to the traditional 'Committee' functions the officers also provide the research and analysis to Overview and Scrutiny. The Corporate and Policy Services Section will also continue to provide support for each scrutiny inquiry.



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME – 2005/06

Function/topic	Assigned to	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
<b>1. Holding the Executive to Account</b>	OSC												
Annual Budget/Council House Rents								3					
Annual Budget Consultation						3		3					
Provisional full year Performance Indicator										3			
Business Plan and Performance Indicator Updates	ESP				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Com SP				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Cust SP				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	OSC				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
BVPP (Corporate Plan overall performance)		✓											
Monitoring of Sickness Absence (6 monthly update)							✓						✓
Housing Maintenance Budget							3						
Corporate Building Maintenance & Repair Service (6 monthly update)					3						3		
<b>2. Policy Development and Review</b>													
Other to be identified													
<b>3. External Scrutiny/Community Concern Full Scrutiny Inquiry</b>													
Public Participation/Communication	ComSP												
LCC's arrangement for the Scrutiny of health function - Periodic Review	CustSP												
Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit	ESP												
Parkwise Scheme	CustSP												
<b>4. Monitoring of Inquiries</b>													
Housing Maintenance Appointments System	CustSP			✓						✓			
Flooding, Flood Prevention and Contingency Plan/Proposals	ESP						✓						✓
Chorley Markets - Occupancy of Stalls & Associated Matters	CustSP			✓						✓			
Friday Street for the Chorley Town Centre Fair	ComSP									✓			
Juvenile Nuisance	ComSP			✓									
Grass Cutting	ESP						✓						✓
Provision of Youth Activities in Chorley	ComSP							✓					
One-Stop Shop	CustSP							✓					
<b>5. Other</b>													
O & S Training Programme	OSC			3						✓			

OSC - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Panel  
 ComSP - Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

ESP - Environment Overview and Scrutiny  
 CustSP - Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel

## Overview and Scrutiny Topics/Issues to be Programmed

Ref	Topic/Issue Title	Date Included	Priority Score	Source	Brief Description
	<p><b><u>Full Scrutiny Inquiries</u></b></p> <p>Priority List</p> <p>IEG Measurement of Council's progress (Cust SP)</p> <p>Reserve List</p> <p><b><u>Policy Development/Review</u></b></p> <p>Priority List</p> <p>Reserve List</p>	<p>26/06/03</p>	<p>4 and 4</p>	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee A</p>	<p>Referred to Customer O &amp; S Panel</p>

# Report

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Finance (Introduced by the Executive Leader and Executive Member for Capacity and Resources, Cllr J Wilson)	Executive Cabinet	08/09/05

## REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2005/06 – REPORT 1 (END OF JULY)

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- This paper sets out the current financial position of the Council as compared against the budgets and efficiency savings targets it set itself for 2005/06 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report does not directly relate to the corporate priorities

### RISK ISSUES

- The issues raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	✓	Information	
Reputation	✓	Regulatory/Legal	
Financial	✓	Operational	✓
People		Other	

- Actions to manage the budget have the potential to impact on all the above risk categories.

### BACKGROUND

- The Council's budget for 2005/06 included real cash savings targets of £228,000 from the management of the establishment and a further £100,000 of savings to come from efficiency and Gershon related activities.

### CURRENT FORECAST POSITION

- The appendix 1 shows the summary forecast position for the Council based upon actual spending in the first four months of the financial year, adjusted for future spending based

Continued....



upon assumptions regarding vacancies and service delivery. Also attached are the individual service unit figures and analysis.

7. The unit cash budgets have been amended for slippage from 2004/05 and for the allocation of 'Earmarked Reserves' for specific initiatives that have already received approval from the appropriate committee. The significant additions to the budget include:
  - £50,000 for slippage relating to recruitment of Chief Executive
  - £45,000 slippage for Contact Centre
  - £54,000 for revenue costs of Job Evaluation in 2005/06
  - £25,000 for Community Centre Management development
8. In addition the £100,000 contingency included within the budget has been partly used to fund ongoing rental for the King Street and Duxbury Park offices. The total cost set against contingency is £59,000.
9. In the period to the end of July we have identified £93,000 of contributions to the corporate savings target of £228,000 for managing the establishment. The savings that have been identified are as a result of savings arising from staff vacancies within the CuDOSS, Economic Regeneration, Finance and property Services Departments. This is an encouraging start to the year, and this position will remain under constant review.
10. Identified savings against the procurement target of £100,000 have not been as positive. To date no definite savings have been identified that can contribute towards the target although a number of initiatives are underway in order to make progress.
11. The Procurement Working Group (PWG) has started an exercise to identify savings that can be achieved through improving the procurement processes and this will generate a series of actions that will result in a contribution to the target. Running concurrently with this project, a Base Budget Review is taking place as part of the estimate setting process, the result of which will also contribute to the Procurement savings target. At present there are no indications as to how much of the £100,000 will be achievable this year.
12. Within the Legal Services department the income received for performing land charge searches is forecast to be £95,000 lower than originally budgeted. This is partially offset by a reduction in search fees of £16,000 leaving a current forecast deficit of £79,000.
13. Although the revenue contribution to the general fund from the land charges income is lower than budgeted it should be noted that it still provides a significant contribution to the fund and as such should continue in it's current form.
14. We believe that the main reasons for the reduced number of searches being processed is a combination of a depressed housing market and the introduction of internet based search facilities that do not require the intervention of the council. Both of these factors are outside our span of control so will continue to impact heavily on financial performance.
15. Due to a higher than anticipated demand for the new refuse containers additional collection service costs are being incurred. The demand is expected to ease by the end of August, after which an assessment of the impact on the budget will be made.
16. It is also likely that some of the additional costs associated with refuse collection may be capital in nature, and that the total costs may be offset in part by savings on performance elements of the contract. These factors will be considered when completeing our assessment.

17. At present the effect of the transitional rules surrounding rent allowances and rebates are unclear. The situation is being monitored closely as it has the potential to impact significantly on the financial outturn.
18. Taking into account the points raised above, the current forecast position is that General Fund balances will be £239,000 lower than anticipated at the end of the year.
19. The service units that have identified the need for a modern apprentice or apprentices from the Young Persons Development Programme have identified funding for the two year programme from existing budgets.

## **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

### **BACKGROUND**

20. The forecast for the HRA at the end of 2004/05 was for balances to be at £175k, however the actual outturn position resulted in a higher than expected contribution to balances taking them to £618k.

### **CURRENT POSITION**

21. Some additional cost pressures have arisen on maintenance costs, mainly around gas servicing, and staffing due to additional work requirements associated with stock transfer issues.
22. However, current rental projections based on year to date receipts show a higher than budgeted collection rate as a result of a significant slowdown in the number of council house sales. The effect of this is that the value of bad debt provision has also reduced providing a total additional contribution of £91k.
23. The trading account is running at a small deficit but it is expected that this position will be brought back into line during this financial year.

### **SUMMARY**

24. Reasonable progress has been made towards the Corporate Savings Target of £228,000 for the year. Further savings will be made as the year progresses and more vacancies occur.
25. No progress has been made towards the Efficiency Savings Target of £100,000, but work is in hand to remedy this situation.
26. There are a number of areas that will be monitored closely as the year progresses, these are:
  - Contribution to Corporate Savings and Efficiency Targets
  - Reduced income relating to Land Charges
  - Increased refuse collection costs
  - Transitional rules for rent allowances
27. No remedial action is proposed at this stage in the year even though significant future savings are still required. At the half year stage should the situation not improve then further steps may be necessary.
28. For the HRA, whilst there are some cost pressures causing an increase in expenditure, the reduction in the right to buy sales means additional rental income is being generated for the account, and overall the budget remains on target.

29. Given the issues referred to above, it is recommended that no further expenditure is allocated against the remaining contingency fund until we can be sure that Corporate Savings targets have been met.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

30. Executive Cabinet are asked to:
- a) Note the report.
  - b) Agree to the freezing of additional expenditure financed from the contingency fund.

GARY HALL  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Phil Eskdale-Lord	5483		

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1B	Customer, Democratic & Office Support Services
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2A	Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring Statement
2B	Housing Building Maintenance Trading Account

## General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring 2005/06

Forecast Outturn as at July 2005

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Original Budget	Agreed Changes	Original Cash Budget	Contribution to Corporate Savings	Current Cash Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance %
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	%
Corporate and Policy Services	517,770	-	517,770	-	517,770	517,770	-	0.00%
Customer, Democratic & Office Support Services	2,930,540	160,000	3,090,540	(48,000)	3,042,540	3,042,540	-	0.00%
Economic Regeneration	246,140	-	246,140	(8,000)	238,140	238,140	-	0.00%
Environmental Services	3,090,290	-	3,090,290	-	3,090,290	3,089,290	(1,000)	-0.03%
Finance	1,430,010	50,000	1,480,010	(22,000)	1,458,010	1,447,620	(10,390)	-0.71%
Housing Services (GF)	270,090	7,500	277,590	-	277,590	280,590	3,000	1.08%
Human Resources	621,720	59,688	681,408	-	681,408	681,408	-	0.00%
Information & Communication Technology Svs	905,440	4,000	909,440	-	909,440	909,440	-	0.00%
Legal Services	100,580	-	100,580	-	100,580	179,580	79,000	78.54%
Leisure & Cultural Services	1,042,810	41,550	1,084,360	-	1,084,360	1,076,360	(8,000)	-0.74%
Planning Services	467,950	-	467,950	-	467,950	444,950	(23,000)	-4.92%
Property Services	80,550	-	80,550	(15,000)	65,550	65,550	-	0.00%
Public Space Services	1,331,330	-	1,331,330	-	1,331,330	1,333,330	2,000	0.15%
Budgets Excluded from Finance Unit Monitoring:								
Benefit Payments	(514,440)		(514,440)		(514,440)	(514,440)	-	0.00%
Concessionary Fares	228,980		228,980		228,980	228,980	-	0.00%
Less								
Corporate Savings Targets		(328,050)	(328,050)	93,000	(235,050)	-	235,050	-100.00%
<b>Total Service Expenditure</b>	<b>12,749,760</b>	<b>(5,312)</b>	<b>12,744,448</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,744,448</b>	<b>13,021,108</b>	<b>276,660</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
<b>Non Service Expenditure</b>								
Contingency Fund	100,000	(63,000)	37,000		37,000	-	(37,000)	0.0%
Contingency - Corporate Savings	(328,050)	328,050	-		-	-	-	0.0%
Notional Capital Charges	1,168,630		1,168,630		1,168,630	1,168,630	-	0.0%
Revenue Contribution to Capital	-		-		-	-	-	0.0%
Net Financing Transactions	70,350		70,350		70,350	70,350	-	0.0%
Parish Precepts	412,562		412,562		412,562	412,562	-	0.0%
<b>Total Non Service Expenditure</b>	<b>1,423,492</b>	<b>265,050</b>	<b>1,688,542</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,688,542</b>	<b>1,651,542</b>	<b>(37,000)</b>	<b>-2.2%</b>
<b>Financed By</b>								
Council Tax	(6,057,272)		(6,057,272)		(6,057,272)	(6,057,272)	-	0.0%
National Non-Domestic Rates	(2,945,840)		(2,945,840)		(2,945,840)	(2,945,840)	-	0.0%
Revenue Support Grant	(3,704,920)		(3,704,920)		(3,704,920)	(3,704,920)	-	0.0%
Collection Fund Surplus	(47,550)		(47,550)		(47,550)	(47,550)	-	0.0%
Use of Earmarked Reserves	(1,167,670)	(259,738)	(1,427,408)		(1,427,408)	(1,427,408)	-	0.0%
Use of General Balances	(250,000)		(250,000)		(250,000)	(250,000)	-	0.0%
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>(14,173,252)</b>	<b>(259,738)</b>	<b>(14,432,990)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(14,432,990)</b>	<b>(14,432,990)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>239,660</b>	<b>239,660</b>	<b>1.88%</b>

<b>General Balances Summary Position</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
General Fund Balance at 1.4.05	1,000,000	1,000,000
Variations agreed utilising General Fund Balance	(250,000)	(250,000)
Forecast (Over)/Under Spend	-	(239,660)
<b>Forecast General Fund Balance at 31.3.06</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>510,340</b>





**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****CORPORATE & POLICY SERVICES**

JULY 2005

£'000

ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET

518

**Add Adjustments for In year cash movements**

Slippage from 2004/2005

- Use of Earmarked Reserves

Cabinet approved decisions

Delegated Authority decisions

**ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET****518****Less Corporate Savings**

Contribution to Corporate savings targets

**CURRENT CASH BUDGET****518****FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

No Budget variances identified to date.

**INCOME****FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006****518****Key Assumptions****Key Issues/Variables****Key Actions**

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****CUSTOMER, DEMOCRATIC & OFFICE SUPPORT SERVICES****JULY 2005** **£'000****ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET** 2,931**Add Adjustments for In year cash movements**

Slippage from 2004/2005

- Use of Earmarked Reserves 151

Virements (to)/from other Services

- Transfer of Allpay to Finance (50)

Transfer from contingency - additional office costs 59

Other

Cabinet approved decisions

Delegated Authority decisions

- Accomodation Project Costs \*

**ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET** **3,091****Less Corporate Savings**

Contribution to Corporate savings targets

- Salaries savings

**CURRENT CASH BUDGET** **3,091****FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

Staffing costs - Office Support Services (48)

Software/equipment - Office Support Services 8

Staffing costs - Corporate Procurement (6)

Roses Marketplace Licence 5

Staffing costs - Democratic Services (7)

**INCOME****FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006** **3,043****Key Assumptions**

- use of King St Offices to end of September

- use of Duxbury Offices to end of December

**Key Issues/Variables****Key Actions**

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****ECONOMIC REGENERATION**

JULY 2005

£'000

**ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET****246****Add Adjustments for In year cash movements**

Slippage from 2004/2005

- Use of Earmarked Reserves

Cabinet approved decisions

Delegated Authority decisions

**ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET****246****Less Corporate Savings**

Contribution to Corporate savings targets

0

**CURRENT CASH BUDGET****246****FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

Savings on vacant posts

(15)

Agency staff

2

Car allowances

1

Computer software/hardware

5

Grants to Groundwork Trust

(1)

Expenditure under(-) or over (+) current cash budget

(8)

**INCOME**

Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved

0

**FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006****238****Key Assumptions**

All vacant posts filled by end of July 2005

Astley Park Project Officer post wholly covered by external funding

**Key Issues/Variables**

Maintaining matched funding for Project officer posts

**Key Actions**

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

JULY 2005

£'000

**ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET****3,090****Add Adjustments for In year cash movements**

DEFRA Grant income transferred to Capital

18

Matched reduction in supplies and services budget

(18)

**ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET****3,090****Less Corporate Savings**

Contribution to Corporate savings targets

0

**CURRENT CASH BUDGET****3,090****FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

Graffiti removal volume increase

20

Savings on vacant posts: Neighbourhood Wardens

(16)

Young Persons Development Programme (1 post)

10

Agency staff

4

Abandoned vehicles

(9)

Recycling banks service

6

Expenditure under(-) or over (+) current cash budget

15

**INCOME**

Air Pollution Authorisations volume reduction

5

Abandoned vehicles

1

Recycling banks service

(15)

Litter fixed penalty notices

(2)

Civic Amenity collection

(5)

Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved

(16)

**FORECAST CASH OUTFURN 2005/2006****3,089****Key Assumptions**

Young Persons Development Programme to be funded in full from salary savings in Neighbourhood Warden Service in 2005.

Activity levels in refuse collection service to return to budgeted levels from September.

Potential savings in contract, arising from default notices and performance bonus.

**Key Issues/Variables**

Higher than anticipated demand for refuse containers has generated additional costs in the refuse collection service. This demand is expected to ease by the end of August enabling the effect on the budget to be quantified and reported in the September monitoring statement.

**Key Actions**

Closely monitor activity levels on new refuse collection service and report significant changes

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****FINANCE**

<b>JULY 2005</b>		<b>£'000</b>
<b>ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET</b>		<b>1,145</b>
<b>Add Adjustments for In year cash movements</b>		
Slippage from 2004/2005		
- Use of Earmarked Reserves		
Virements (to)/from other Services		
- Transfer of Allpay to Finance		50
<b>ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET</b>		<b>1,195</b>
<b>Less Corporate Savings</b>		
Contribution to Corporate savings targets		
<b>CURRENT CASH BUDGET</b>		<b>1,195</b>
<b>FORECAST</b>		
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Pay in lieu of notice		8
Agency staff:		
Accountancy	£ 2	
Exchequer	<u>5</u>	7
Saving on maternity / vacant posts:		
External Funding Officer	£ (15)	
Corporate Finance	(62)	
Exchequer	<u>(13)</u>	(90)
Project Accountant Post (Jan to March)		10
Consultants fees		13
Audit and Inspection Fee reduction		(13)
IT Software Annual Licences		4
Microfilming		4
Bailiffs Fees		8
Documents Online Service		<u>(3)</u>
Expenditure under(-) or over (+) current cash budget		(52)
<b>INCOME</b>		
Miscellaneous contributions (External Funding Officer)		<u>20</u>
Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved		20
<b>FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006</b>		<b>1,163</b>

**Key Assumptions**

Young Persons Apprenticeships to be funded from internally generated savings.  
 Audit and Inspection Fee reduction based on Audit Commission inspection plan  
 Bailiffs fees based on current activity level. No existing budget

**Key Issues/Variables****Key Actions**

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****HOUSING SERVICES UNIT (GEN FUND)**

<b>JULY 2005</b>	<b>£'000</b>
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<b>ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET</b>	<b>270</b>
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**Add Adjustments for In year cash movements**

Slippage	8
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Cabinet approved decisions	
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<b>ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET</b>	<b>278</b>
-----------------------------	------------

**Less Corporate Savings**

Contribution to Corporate savings targets	
-------------------------------------------	--

<b>CURRENT CASH BUDGET</b>	<b>278</b>
----------------------------	------------

**FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

Salaries - Housing Renewal	9	
Agency Cover	27	
Salaries - Housing Needs	(40)	
Help the Homeless Contribution	5	
CAB Additional Contribution	2	
	<u>2</u>	3

**INCOME**

<b>FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006</b>	<b>281</b>
----------------------------------------	------------

**Key Assumptions**

Based on Original budget

**Key Issues/Variables****Key Actions**

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****HUMAN RESOURCES UNIT**

JULY 2005

£'000

**ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET****622****Add Adjustments for In year cash movements**

Virements for other Services

Transfer from contingency    Reward &amp; Retention

5

Cabinet approved decisions    Job evaluation costs 05/06

54

Delegated Authority decisions

**ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET****681****Less Corporate Savings**

Contribution to Corporate savings targets

0

**CURRENT CASH BUDGET****681****FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

Expenditure under(-) or over (+) current cash budget

**INCOME**

Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved

**FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006****681****Key Assumptions**

- temporary staff covering vacant posts & secondment of staff

**Key Issues/Variables****Key Actions**



**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

<b>JULY 2005</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET</b>	<b>905</b>
<b>Add Adjustment for In Year Cash Movements</b>	
Slippage from 2004/2005	
- Use of Earmarked Reserves	-
Transfer from Contingency	-
Cabinet approved decisions	-
Delegated Authority decisions	-
Correction of Accounting Error	4
<b>ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET</b>	<b>909</b>
<b>Less Corporate Savings</b>	<b>-</b>
Contribution to Corporate savings targets	-
<b>CURRENT CASH BUDGET</b>	<b><u>909</u></b>
<b>FORECAST</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Salaries (Technician/E-Gov Prog Man/Cust Serv Assist.)	(55)
Young Person's Development Programme	5
Temporary Staff	48
Telephones calls forecast	8
Expenditure under (-) or over (+) current cash budget	<u>6</u>
<b>INCOME</b>	
Telephones (private calls)	(6)
Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved	<u>(6)</u>
<b>FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006</b>	<b><u>909</u></b>

**Key Assumptions**

Young Person's Development Programme to be funded from salary saving.  
 Cust Servs Assist post to be kept vacant.  
 E-Gov Programme Manager post vacant until Jan 2006  
 E-Gov Programme Manager cover until September  
 Technician cover continues at current levels

**Key Issues/Variables****Key Actions**

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****LEGAL SERVICES**

<b>JULY 2005</b>	<b>£'000</b>
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<b>ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET</b>	101
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**Add Adjustments for In year cash movements**

Slippage from 2004/2005  
Virements for other Services  
Transfer from contingency

Cabinet approved decisions  
Delegated Authority decisions

<b>ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET</b>	<b>101</b>
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**Less Corporate Savings**

Contribution to Corporate savings targets

<b>CURRENT CASH BUDGET</b>	<b>101</b>
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**FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

Land Charges Search Fees	(5)
Land Charges Network Fees	(11)

**INCOME**

Land Charge Searches	95
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<b>FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/06</b>	<b>180</b>
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**Key Assumptions****Key Issues/Variables**

- reduced volume of Land Charges

**Key Actions**

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****LEISURE & CULTURAL SERVICES****JULY 2005****£'000****ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET****1,043****Add Adjustments for In year cash movements**

Slippage from 2004/2005

Golf course consultancy

16

Midsummer Festival

1

Virements for other Services

Cabinet approved decisions

Trf from Change management Reserve for Community mgmt

25

Delegated Authority decisions

**ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET****1,085**

Less Corporate Savings

Contribution to Corporate savings targets

**CURRENT CASH BUDGET****1,085****FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

Expenditure under(-) or over (+) current cash budget

Professional and consultancy fees for golf bid and indoor leisu

32

Young Persons Development Programme (2 posts)

20

**INCOME**

Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved

Arts officer funding

(17)

Savings on indoor Leisure contract

(43)

**FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006****1,077****Key Assumptions**

Expenditure &amp; income will be in line with budgets

**Key Issues/Variables**

2 posts for Young Persons Development Programme will be funded from this years savings on Indoor Leisure contract.

**Key Actions**

Negotiations are currently ongoing to review the Indoor Leisure Contract

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****PLANNING SERVICES****JULY 2005****£'000****ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET**

468

**Add Adjustments for In year cash movements**

Slippage from 2004/2005

- Use of Earmarked Reserves

Cabinet approved decisions

Delegated Authority decisions

**ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET****468****Less Corporate Savings**

Contribution to Corporate savings targets

**CURRENT CASH BUDGET****468****FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

PDG Funded Expenditure

123

**INCOME**

Planning Application Fees

(19)

Building Control Fees

(4)

Additional Planning Delivery Grant

(123)

**FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006****445****Key Assumptions**

- current income levels are maintained

**Key Issues/Variables**

- level of grant received higher than budgetted

**Key Actions**

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006**

**PROPERTY SERVICES UNIT**

**JULY 2005** **£'000**

**ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET** **81**

Add Adjustments for In year cash movements

Slippage from 2004/2005

- Use of AMF Reserve

Virements for other Services

Transfer from contingency

Cabinet approved decisions

- Transfers to Corporate & Policy

\_\_\_\_\_ 0

Delegated Authority decisions

**ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET** **81**

Less Corporate Savings

Contribution to Corporate savings targets

**CURRENT CASH BUDGET** 81

**FORECAST**

**EXPENDITURE**

Expenditure under(-) or over (+) current cash budget

Additional agency staff costs not in budget 15

Savings from staff vacancies -30 -15

**INCOME**

- no change to budget

**FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006** 66

**Key Assumptions**

**Key Issues/Variables**

**Key Actions**

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****PUBLIC SPACE SERVICES**

JULY 2005

£'000

ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET

1,331

**Add Adjustments for In year cash movements****Slippage from 2004/2005**

- Use of Earmarked Reserves

Other

**ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET****1,331****Less Corporate Savings**

Contribution to Corporate savings targets

**CURRENT CASH BUDGET****1,331****FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

Expenditure under(-) or over (+) current cash budget

DSO Chemical Disposal

2

Purchase of Furniture

5

Street Cleansing client budget

(17)

(10)

**INCOME**

Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved

Car Parking Fees under profile

12

12

**FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006****1,333****Key Assumptions**

Young Persons Development Programme to be funded from savings on Street Cleansing client budget.

**Key Issues/Variables**

Salary costs are within budget due to savings on all vacant posts.

Servicegroup vacant posts will be filled ASAP. This will lead to an overspend if the Engineering agency staff costs are not reduced.

**Key Actions**

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

**JULY 2005** **£'000**

**ORIGINAL SURPLUS (-) / DEFICIT (+) FOR YEAR** **(175)**  
**BALANCE AS AT 1.4.05** **(443)**

**Add Adjustments for In year cash movements**

Slippage from 2004/2005  
 Virements for other Services  
 Transfer from contingency

Cabinet approved decisions  
 Delegated Authority decisions

**ADJUSTED HRA BALANCES EXPECTED at 31.3.06** **(618)**

**FORECAST****EXPENDITURE**

Salaries - Housing Services Restructure		32	
Repairs and Maint - Trading account deficit	14		
- additional Gas Servicing	13	27	
Tenant Profiling - Beacon Research		10	
Bad Debt Provision		<b>(11)</b>	

Expenditure under(-) or over (+) current cash budget 58

**INCOME**

Rents/Charges **(80)**

Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved **(80)**

**FORECAST BALANCES AS AT 31.3.06** **(640)**

**Key Assumptions**

Rent forecast assumes 1 sale per week to end of year  
 Assumes full staffing for the year

**Key Issues/Variables**

Repairs and Maint expenditure  
 Management and Maint Expenditure

**Key Actions**

Control of above

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006**

**HOUSING TRADING ACCOUNT**

<b>July 2005</b>		<b>£'000</b>
<b>ORIGINAL SURPLUS / DEFICIT</b>		0
<b>Add Adjustments for In year cash movements</b>		
Previously Reported		
Virements for other Services		
Cabinet approved decisions		
<b>ADJUSTED SURPLUS / DEFICIT</b>		<u>0</u>
<b>Less Corporate Savings</b>		
Contribution to Corporate savings targets		
<b>CURRENT SURPLUS / DEFICIT</b>		<u><u>0</u></u>
<b>FORECAST</b>		
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Hired Staff	27	
Other Supplies and Services	<u>          </u>	
Expenditure under(-) or over (+) current cash budget		27
<b>INCOME</b>		
Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved		(13)
<b>FORECAST SURPLUS(-) / DEFICIT(+) 2005/2006</b>		<u><u>14</u></u>

**Key Assumptions**

Above trading position based on monitoring of the following key risk areas:

- Agency expenditure
- Sub-contractor expenditure
- Materials
- Internal labour

Assumes all other expenditure items are within budget

**Key Issues/Variables**

- Control of sub-contractor budget
- Control of agency budget
- Control of material usage/cost
- Achieving all income targets

**Key Actions**

- to manage above
- to reduce deficit to break-even



# Report

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Finance (Introduced by the Executive Member for Capacity & Resources)	Executive Cabinet	08/09/05

## INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2004/5

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To summarise the **work undertaken** by the Internal Audit Service during the 2004/5 financial year;
2. To give an **opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the control environment** in the Council as a whole and in individual service areas;
3. To give an appraisal of the Internal Audit Service's **performance**.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4. The Internal Audit Service has an impact on the following corporate priorities:
  - Investing in our **Capacity** to deliver;
  - Serving our **Customers** better.
5. In particular, with regard to capacity, one of the key objectives of Internal Audit is to evaluate the extent to which the Council is making an **economic, efficient and effective use of resources**.

### RISK ISSUES

6. The report contains no specific risk issues for consideration by Members. All Internal Audit activity is geared towards the identification and management of business risks.

### BACKGROUND / THE ROLE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

7. The **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003** require every local authority to "maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper internal audit practices". Such practices are laid down as standards in the **CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom**.

Continued....



8. The CIPFA Code of Practice now defines Internal Audit as “**an assurance function that primarily provides an independent and objective opinion to the organisation on the control environment comprising risk management, control and governance by evaluating its effectiveness in achieving the organisation’s objectives. It objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources**”.

#### INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION

9. Under Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2003) every Council is now required to conduct an annual, internal review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and publish a **Statement on Internal Control (SIC)** each year alongside the authority’s financial statements.
10. The most senior officer (chief executive or equivalent) and the most senior member (leader or equivalent) are required to sign the SIC. They must therefore be satisfied that the document is supported by reliable evidence and accurately reflects the internal control environment. The SIC is about **corporate controls** and is not confined to financial issues (hence the signatories required). The internal review should cover the Council’s arrangements for:
- Establishing / monitoring the **achievement of its objectives**;
  - **Policy and decision making**;
  - Ensuring **compliance** with established policies, procedures, laws & regulations;
  - Ensuring the **economic, efficient & effective use of resources**;
  - **Financial, performance & risk management**.
11. The prime responsibility for maintaining and reviewing the system of internal control rests with the Council’s senior management. Therefore a management group comprising of the Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer), Director of Finance (S151 Officer), Head of Corporate & Policy Services and Audit & Risk Manager have carried out a detailed, evidenced-based review of the Council’s system of internal control. In arriving at a view on the areas listed in 10 (above) the management group sought to take account of any agreed findings made by **independent assurance sources** such as Internal and External Audit.
12. With regard to **Internal Audit**, a schedule of audit work undertaken during 2004/5 is shown at Appendix 1, which gives individual opinions on the adequacy of control for each of the systems examined during the year. The majority of these reviews have already been reported in some detail by way of interim / progress reports to the Audit Committee during the course of 2004/5. To arrive at an annual judgement on the overall level of control a view needs to be taken on the relative significance of each system reviewed and the nature and significance of the weaknesses identified. Taking this into account, **in our overall opinion the Council, in general, continues to operate within a sound control environment**. Although we have given a limited assurance rating for a number of the areas examined during 2004/5, this is largely due to non-compliance with established protocols rather than underlying control weaknesses.
13. Our overall audit opinion should also be seen in the context that Internal Audit’s assurance role is in a transitional stage between one of reviewing largely financial-based systems to that of evaluating the wider business risk / internal control environment (the latter now being recognised as best auditing practice). Future Internal Audit work will be constructed more around reviewing the key business risk, governance and control issues facing the authority and as such will be of significantly greater value as a source of assurance supporting the SIC. This wider role for Internal Audit will in turn lead to a wider remit for the Audit Committee itself, therefore proposals to review the Committee’s terms of reference will be presented at the next meeting.

**PERFORMANCE**

14. Appendix 2 sets out the **key performance data** for the Internal Audit Service during 2004/5. This shows the key **inputs** and **outputs** for the Service, including:

- An analysis of chargeable and non-chargeable **time**;
- An analysis of overall **costs** and cost per chargeable day;
- An analysis of the percentage of the annual **Audit Plan** completed, **reports issued** and **recommendations** accepted by management;
- An analysis of the average **customer satisfaction** score per audit assignment.

15. 2004/5 was a challenging year due to the continuing maternity leave of two team members in April / May 2004 and their subsequent return to work on a part-time basis. The shortfall in resources was met by extending our partnering arrangement with Lancashire County Council's Internal Audit Service.
16. During 2004/5 the authority received **617 days** of Internal Audit coverage. The Internal Audit Service produced **20 reports** containing **187 agreed recommendations** relating to controls assurance, improvements in procedure and advice on best practice.
17. The following **achievements and developments** within the Service are worthy of specific mention:

- Establishing a corporate framework & process to evaluate the Council's system of internal control to support the **Statement on Internal Control (SIC)**;
- Facilitating **workshops in business risk assessment** as part of the new integrated business planning process;
- Reviewing key financial systems to meet the **Audit Commission's Code of Practice and managed audit** requirements;
- Providing controls advice & assurance in respect of the new **Radius financial systems**.

18. Service quality has remained high as we have sought to maintain the standards achieved under **CPA, an Audit Commission scored judgement of 4 (out of a possible 4)**. Indeed our partnering arrangement with LCC has led to an enhanced service in areas like ICT audit.
19. In their recent **Annual Audit & Inspection Letter** to the Council, the **Audit Commission** commented:

**“Our assessment is that Internal Audit continues to provide an effective service. We are pleased to report that once again we are able to rely on the work undertaken by the section, and that the work undertaken provides an effective component of the Council's control environment and governance arrangements”.**

**COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

20. Not applicable to this report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

21. That the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2004/5 be noted.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

22. To acknowledge:

- the **work undertaken** by the Internal Audit Service during the 2004/5 financial year, to provide assurance on the adequacy of the Council’s system of internal control;
- Internal Audit’s opinion that **the Council, in general, continues to operate within a sound control environment;**
- the Internal Audit Service’s overall **achievements and performance** during 2004/5.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

23. None.

GARY HALL  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

<b>Background Papers</b>			
<b>Document</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>File</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
Accounts & Audit Regulations	2003	FINANCE UNIT	KING ST. OFFICES

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Garry Barclay	5468	10th August 2005	Annual Report 04-05(EC)

AUDIT AREA	CONTROLS RATING	CONTROL ISSUES
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<b>1. Main Financial Systems</b>		
Review of Key Systems	Adequate	
Treasury Management	Adequate	
HR / Payroll Systems Interface	Adequate	
Non Domestic Rates System	Adequate	
Benefits (Landlords / Customer Services)	Adequate	

<b>2. Other Significant Systems</b>		
Housing Rents	Limited / Adequate	Although no major control issues emerged from the review, a number of non-compliance matters were reported and recommendations were made to improve the procedural guidance issued to staff.
Homelessness Monitoring System (HMS)	Limited	We identified a number of anomalies and errors in the information held on the HMS. The data held on the system is used to complete government returns and calculate a variety of national and local performance indicators. The documented procedures in relation to the system were found to be out-of-date.
Section 106 Agreements	Limited	Such agreements are made with developers to undertake certain works (or make payments) that are in addition to their formal planning requirements (e.g. to provide children's play facilities on a new housing development).  Recommendations were made to introduce a corporate control and oversight mechanism, including a statutory register of S106 activity and corporate standards / administrative procedures.

<b>CONTROL EVALUATION 2004/5</b>	<b>APPENDIX 1</b>
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<b>AUDIT AREA</b>	<b>CONTROLS RATING</b>	<b>CONTROL ISSUES</b>
-------------------	------------------------	-----------------------

Election Fees	Inadequate	<p>At the Chief Executive's request we undertook a review of the fees paid to officers during the 2004 postal voting pilot scheme.</p> <p>Although all the payments made had been formally approved, we identified the need to review the existing tariff of fees and charges (that had been established to cover traditional forms of election).</p> <p>The Head of HR has therefore agreed to undertake a review in order to clarify and formalise the arrangements prior to the next local elections.</p>
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<b>3. Corporate Governance</b>		
Statement on Internal Control	Not Applicable	
Review of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) Procedures	Limited	<p>Under RIPA any covert surveillance activity conducted by councils (e.g. by Environmental Services) must be formally authorised and appropriate internal procedures established (including the maintenance of a central record of authorisations).</p> <p>Recommendations were made to improve staff training and awareness of RIPA requirements and introduce formal, centralised monitoring of authorisations and compliance generally.</p>
National Fraud Initiative 2004	Not Applicable	
Audit Commission Reports Follow-Up	Not Applicable	

AUDIT AREA	CONTROLS RATING	CONTROL ISSUES
------------	-----------------	----------------

<b>4. Information Technology Audit</b>		
System Access Controls	Limited	<p>A number of control weaknesses were identified in the systems access arrangements throughout the authority, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A lack of corporate standards and controls for authorising new users and changing user permissions.</li> <li>▪ The excessive use of systems administration access levels.</li> <li>▪ Weaknesses in access monitoring and password management.</li> </ul>
Orchard Modules	Limited	<p>Several weaknesses were established in the overall control of the Orchard System, including password management and the control of user accounts, access rights and permissions.</p>
Database Administration	Limited	<p>The lack of enforced standards and documentation has resulted in a number of diverse database systems across the Council. This creates a number of problems for system integration and adds to the problem of providing adequate technical support to the users.</p>

<b>5. Contracts Audit</b>		
Town Hall Improvements	Not Applicable	

AUDIT AREA	CONTROLS RATING	CONTROL ISSUES
------------	-----------------	----------------

**6. Effectiveness / Best Value Audit**

Systems For Best Value PI Generation	Adequate	
Review of the Corporate Training Budget	Limited	<p>We made several recommendations to improve the economic, efficient and effective use of resources in this area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The need to evaluate central corporate training activity and initiatives to ensure they fully meet the needs of the organisation.</li> <li>▪ Introducing thorough post-training evaluation of both service specific and corporately managed training.</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that all avenues of external funding are fully explored.</li> </ul>

**7. Unplanned Reviews**

Housing Repairs On-Call Procedures	Limited	<p>This review was commissioned by the Head of HR (following concerns raised by members) after allegations had been made that there were serious weaknesses in the housing repairs on-call system.</p> <p>Although our review found the overall system to be robust, a number of operational and viability issues were identified, largely due to the small pool of duty officers available (caused by dissatisfaction over rates of pay). Following adjustments to the payment regime by Housing Services, the duty officer pool is now back to full compliment.</p>
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**KEY TO CONTROL RATINGS**

<b>Inadequate</b>	Cannot place sufficient reliance on the controls in place. Substantive control weaknesses exist.
<b>Limited</b>	Can only place limited reliance on the controls in place. Significant control or compliance issues need to be resolved.
<b>Adequate</b>	Can place sufficient reliance on the controls in place. Only minor control weaknesses exist.

**NOTE**

**The above control ratings relate only to the point in time when the final audit report was issued. They represent a historic rather than a current judgement as managers are charged with implementing corrective action plans to address the control issues raised. This is in turn supported by a programme of follow-up reviews by the Internal Audit Service.**

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INPUT ANALYSIS USE OF AUDITORS TIME (DAYS)	LANCS AVERAGE 2003/4		CHORLEY PLAN 2004/5		CHORLEY ACTUAL 2004/5	
	Days	%	Days	%	Days	%
<b>NON-CHARGEABLE TIME (In-house)</b>						
Unavailable Days (Leave / Training)	301	26	220	23	225	24
Non-Chargeable Management	69	6	71	7	87	9
Administration	99	9	20	2	21	2
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>CHARGEABLE TIME (In-house &amp; bought-in)</b>						
Audit of Main Financial Systems	207	18	115	12	114	12
Audit of Other Significant Systems	198	17	170	18	174	18
Corporate Governance / Risk Management	65	6	140	15	152	16
Effectiveness / Best Value Audit	6	1	50	5	54	6
Information Technology Audit	34	3	50	5	68	7
Contracts Audit	25	2	30	3	26	3
Contingency (inc. consultancy / advice)	138	12	85	9	30	3
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>65</b>



<b>Cost Per Chargeable Audit Day</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>(* 2003/4 figures plus 2004/5 pay award (2.75%)</b>			
<b>OUPUT ANALYSIS</b>	<b>LANCS AVERAGE 2003/4</b>	<b>CHORLEY TARGET 2004/5</b>	<b>CHORLEY ACTUAL 2004/5</b>
<b>% Audit Plan Achieved</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>% Planned Audit Reports Issued Within Target Time</b>	<b>Not Measured</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Number of Recommendations Made</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>No Target</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>% Recommendations Made Agreed For Implementation</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>94%</b>
<b>Average Customer Satisfaction Score Per Audit (on a scale 1-5 where 5 is high)</b>	<b>Not Measured</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.6</b>
<b>Retention of Full Managed Audit Status</b>	<b>Not Measured</b>	<b>Retained</b>	<b>Retained</b>

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Head of Corporate and Policy Services (Introduced by Cllr D Edgerley, Executive Member for Customers, Policy and Performance)	Executive Cabinet	8/9/05

**DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGY 2006/07 – 2008/09**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- To seek Executive Cabinet’s approval of the current draft Corporate Strategy for consultation purposes.

**CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- The New Corporate Strategy 2006/07 – 2008/09 will redefine the Council’s corporate priorities for the three-year period. It, therefore, has no direct link to the current 3C’s but is clearly a very significant document.

**RISK ISSUES**

- The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	✓	Information	
Reputation		Regulatory/Legal	
Financial	✓	Operational	✓
People		Other	

- The new Corporate Strategy will define the Council’s ambition for the three-year period 2006/07 – 2008/09. In turn this will influence the Council’s financial plans and the projects and activities that are to be pursued by Service Units.
- It is also important that the new Strategy links to and supports the Boroughs new Community Strategy to ensure that we address community aspirations.

**BACKGROUND**

- The Corporate Strategy is intended to be the Council’s main medium term plan that sets out purpose and priorities for the next three years (2006/07 – 2008/09). This will be a replacement for the current Corporate Plan which runs to March 2006.



7. Our Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) highlighted a number of issues in respect of the current Corporate Plan and we are trying to address these as the new strategy is developed. The issues included:
- our aims are largely undefined,
  - no clear ambition in some areas,
  - the Plan does not include specific, measurable and sustainable outcomes making it difficult to judge what is being achieved,
  - communication of what we are seeking to achieve has been weak,
  - existing mechanisms do not allow councillors and managers to ensure that they are delivering corporate or community priorities; and
  - the links between Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan are not clear.
8. A new Community Strategy has been developed for the Borough under the umbrella of the Chorley Partnership. This strategy has emerged from extensive consultation and has been a key part of our work so far on the new Corporate Strategy.

#### **DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGY 2006/07 – 2008/09**

9. A copy of the current draft of the Corporate Strategy is attached to this report. The draft has been developed following a series of consultation and development sessions involving Councillors and Management Team.
10. The sessions have focussed on establishing the current reality for the Council (ie what are the key issues we are facing) and in light of this what we want to achieve over the next three years. All events have been well attended and the response has been enthusiastic and constructive.
11. Using the output from these sessions the draft as appended has been prepared. Clearly there is still some way to go in finalising the document and if it is planned to run further consultation sessions for councillors as well as seeking feedback from the local community, staff and partners.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

12. There are no HR implications at this stage.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

13. There are areno financial implications at this stage.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

14. Executive Cabinet is requested to approve the draft Corporate Strategy as attached for consultation purposes.

#### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

15. To obtain Executive Cabinet's approval to a draft Corporate Strategy which can be used to inform consultation with Councillors, staff and other stakeholders.

#### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**



16. None.

TIM RIGNALL  
 HEAD OF CORPORATE AND POLICY SERVICES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Tim Rignall	5140	25.8.05	CPSREP/90015JM2

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# Initial proposals for the Chorley Corporate Strategy and Action Plan 2005 to 2008

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises initial proposals for the Council's Corporate Strategy for 2005 – 2008 and sets out an action plan for the Strategy's completion. It is drawn from the outputs from the meeting of the Cabinet and Management Team on 14 April 2005 and the discussions of the Management Team on 9 May 2005.

## 2. PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

It is proposed that final Corporate Strategy and Action Plan will be presented in two main sections:

- a. A concise strategy; establishing priority outcomes for the Council and interim goals and milestones for the period 2005 – 2008.
- b. A detailed action plan; identifying priority actions for achieving the stated outcomes and assigning specific responsibilities for each.

Once the Strategy is completed, a detailed action plan will be prepared to secure its implementation.

## 3. DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGY

The draft strategy is presented in four sections:

- 3.1 The purpose of the Corporate Strategy and Action Plan;
- 3.2 Key issues facing the Council at present (the current reality);
- 3.3 *What* the Council is aiming to achieve: Our vision – long term and for the next three years; and
- 3.4 *How* the Council will achieve its outcomes.

### 3.1 PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Corporate Strategy is the Council's main medium-term plan that sets out the way forward for the next three years. It is an essential framework document in which the Council:

- articulates its vision - its **Purpose**
- establishes its priority outcomes and focus - its **Priorities**
- sets out its approach for achieving these - its **Principles**

The action plan identifies specific priority actions to be undertaken in order to achieve the priority outcomes, interim goals and milestones. It also sets out the key success factors and targets against which progress and achievement can be assessed.

### 3.2 KEY ISSUES FACING THE COUNCIL

This section summarises key issues facing the Borough Council at present, which the Corporate Strategy and Action Plan need to address. The issues identified below are drawn from a detailed analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the organisation. This analysis has been informed by information from external audit and inspection and consultation with Members and Officers.

#### **COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

The Borough's new Community Strategy 2005 – 2025 is a key driver for the Council. It has been developed following extensive consultation and stakeholder involvement and sets out very clearly a shared vision for the Borough. This is:

**“By 2025 Chorley will be recognised as the most sought after place to live and work in the North West, offering an excellent quality of life to all its residents, and will be at the heart of regional developments whilst retaining its character”.**

#### **WORKING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

- The Local Strategic Partnership has been strengthened considerably in past years (with the development of the new Community Strategy and the establishment of the LSP Executive). The partnership now requires input from the Council that provides both support *and* direction. Member commitment to the LSP is mixed. There is not yet common agreement on the value of the LSP, and Members are unaware of what it is doing and how they can become involved.
- There remains some confusion amongst Members and officers about the role of the various key partnerships in Chorley and how the various strategies, emerging from these partnerships, link together.
- There is concern that many Partnerships add little value and represent little more than 'talking shops'.
- Relationships with Parish Councils need to improve to realise real potential and opportunity.

#### **POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS**

- Some Members are unable to find a fulfilling place in the new Member level political arrangements. 75% of Members express some dissatisfaction with these arrangements. 'Executive arrangements' are viewed by some Members as a barrier to their involvement in decision-making in the Council.

#### **THE STRATEGIC FOCUS OF THE COUNCIL**

- The Council is faced with an increasing number of national, regional and local agendas and initiatives. To succeed in this environment, the Council must become highly responsive, able to work effectively with other organisations whilst being focussed and effective in its own delivery of services.
- The Council is experiencing increasing pressure nationally for 'enabling and commissioning' rather than 'service delivery'. The Council has developed a procurement methodology, as presented in the Procurement Strategy, but has yet to apply this in a systematic manner to the services of the authority. To date, our approach has been opportunistic and reactive. The Council's precise position on enabling and

commissioning requires early clarification.

- In some instances, we cannot demonstrate that services represent 'Value for Money'.
- Our approach to engagement and consultation is inconsistent and has gaps.
- The inspection regime and other governance arrangements have encouraged a 'tick box' mentality, shifting focus from strategic issues. The organisation requires clearer strategic targets to ensure that resources are focused on priorities.
- Possible local government reorganisation and the impending departure of the Chief Executive represent both opportunities and threats for the Council.

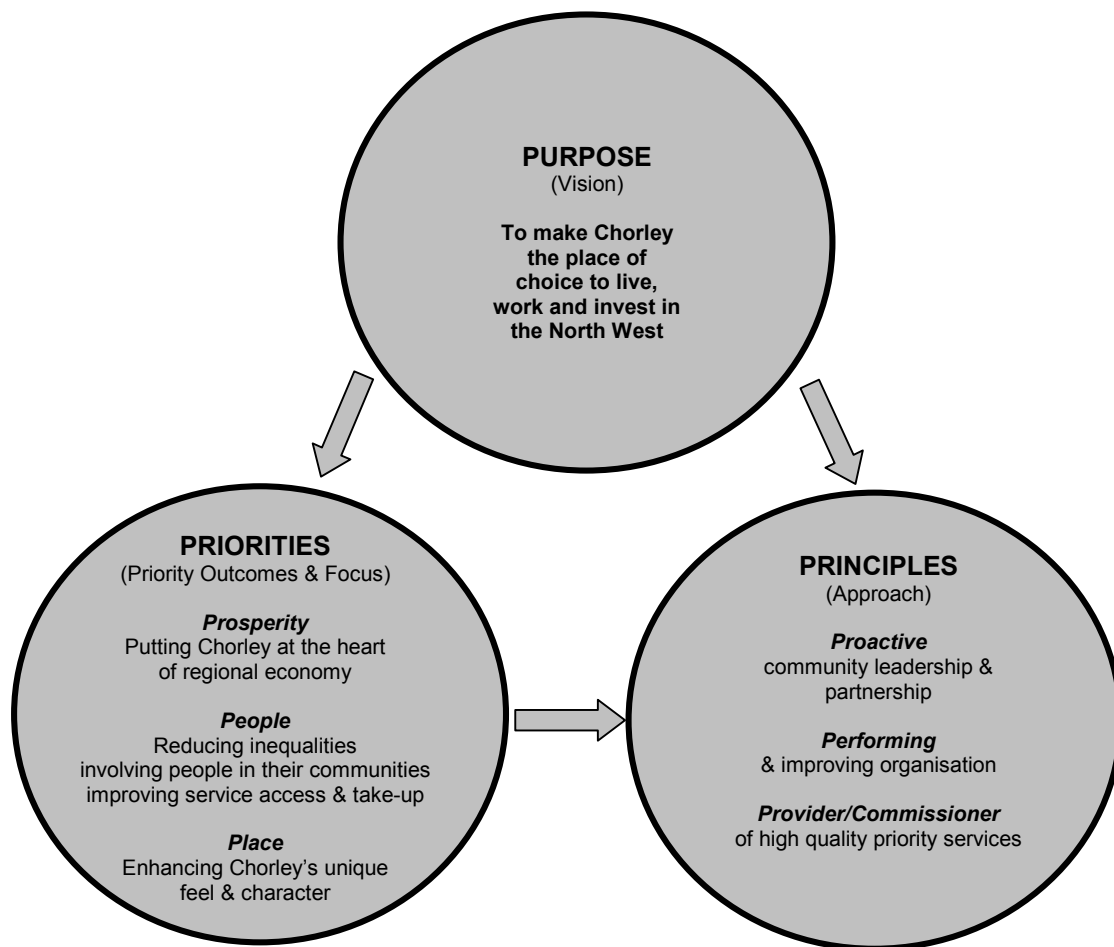
#### ***OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY OF THE COUNCIL***

- Operationally, we are strong and service quality is good - and in many instances improving. We are, however, delivering some services where impact on corporate priorities, and the stated outcomes of the Council, is unclear. Consequently, the Council is often under intense pressure and has a tendency to 'do too much'. Some issues about acceptable service standards remain unresolved.
- Good practice in target setting and performance management is evident in some parts of the Council. In some areas, performance management needs significant improvement.
- Financially, we work in an uncertain world with uncertainty year on year about our financial settlement. We must also achieve the Gershon efficiency savings target. Our capital programme is not focussed entirely on priority outcomes.
- We are not making best use of our staffing resources and an opportunity exists to engage and re-invigorate middle managers in particular. There is an over-reliance on agency staff.
- Stock transfer has significant and immediate implications for the Council.
- The distribution of office accommodation is a barrier to effective culture and performance of the Council. Significant investment in accommodation offers the opportunity to significantly improve the efficiency of the organisation.
- New technology provides opportunities for improved ways of working which remain unexploited.
- There is confusion in the local community about who is responsible for various services and activities. This confusion is caused by the three tiers of local government in the Borough and the fact that Chorley Borough Council collects Council Tax on behalf of other agencies.

**3.3 WHAT THE COUNCIL IS AIMING TO ACHIEVE**

The Council is aiming to achieve the vision, priority outcomes, focus and approach set out in this Strategy. This is a challenging and complex agenda. For simplicity and to ease understanding, we have summarised this under the headings **Purpose, Priorities** and **Principles**. These are the Council’s strategic 3P’s – the **3P’s** for short – which Figure 1 below summarises:

**Fig 1 – The 3 Ps**



The **3 P’s** are firmly rooted in the Community Strategy and the key issues that face us as an organisation. The **3 P’s** theme is also carried through into the summaries of our corporate **Priorities** and **Principles**.

The following table sets out the Council’s corporate **Priorities** in more detail – the priority outcomes for **Prosperity, People** and **Place** and the interim goals and milestones to 2008 that the Council has set itself as its contribution to the achievement of the Community Strategy’s ‘Priorities for the Future’.

## OUR CORPORATE PRIORITIES

<b>PRIORITIES</b> <i>Our Priority Outcomes for 2025</i>			<b>Interim goals and milestones 2005 - 2008</b>
<b>PROSPERITY</b>	<b>Local Economy</b>	A vibrant, diversified and sustainable local economy, providing quality jobs with above average wages for local people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan (ERS) prepared by March 2006.</li> <li>Review interim goals and milestones in line with ERS by July 2006.</li> <li>Implement ERS Action Plan 2006 onwards.</li> </ul>
	<b>Transport</b>	An effective transport infrastructure to enable the Borough to meet its potential within the Central Lancashire City Region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify with partners priority transportation improvements by December 2005.</li> <li>Join Chorley Partnership's campaign for transportation improvements by Jan 2006.</li> <li>Develop Local Transport Plan and LDF policies accordingly by December 2008.</li> </ul>
<b>PEOPLE</b>	<b>Community Safety</b>	A feeling of well-being in cohesive communities across the borough, with low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet the 2005/08 Community Strategy targets.</li> </ul>
	<b>Equality</b>	Reduced social, health, education and economic inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease the number of neighbourhoods (Super Output Areas) in the most deprived 20% nationally.</li> <li>Work to increase the average life expectancy of the Borough's residents.</li> <li>Increase the % of people who feel safe living in the Borough.</li> </ul>
	<b>Housing</b>	A balanced housing market with good quality housing and more attractive neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the number of people in housing need.</li> <li>Take steps to increase the affordability of housing in the Borough.</li> </ul>
	<b>Decision Making</b>	Decision making involves people in their local areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce an Area Forum initiative across the Borough.</li> <li>Increase public participation in the democratic process.</li> </ul>
	<b>Local Action</b>	Increased participation in community and voluntary activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of people working in a voluntary capacity.</li> </ul>
	<b>Tailored Services</b>	Increased access, choice and take-up in service provision through recognition of local needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide clear information on the services available to the Borough's residents</li> <li>Promote a variety of channels to access Council Services at times convenient to the users.</li> <li>Identify the needs of communities to ensure we provide relevant services.</li> </ul>
	<b>Efficiency</b>	More efficient high quality public services delivered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve a 2% efficiency saving year on year.</li> </ul>
	<b>Public Transport</b>	Better and more affordable public transport, and an improved public transport infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the percentage of people with access to key services.</li> <li>Take steps to increase the % of people satisfied with the provision of different types of public transport.</li> </ul>
<b>PLACE</b>	<b>Environment</b>	Urban and rural surroundings that provide an attractive environment for residents, visitors and investors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect the quality and quantity of locally important natural/semi-natural habitats.</li> <li>Improve the standard and appearance of the main routes into Chorley.</li> </ul>
	<b>Leisure and Entertainment</b>	Increased participation in leisure activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the % of people satisfied with leisure and recreation facilities.</li> <li>Increase participation in leisure activities.</li> </ul>
	<b>Heritage and Arts</b>	An arts and heritage infrastructure that attracts people in and benefits the resident population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take steps to increase tourism spend in Chorley.</li> </ul>

### Author's Note

The interim goals and milestones 2005 – 2008 indicated above are illustrative only at this stage.

This is currently work in progress. The content here needs to reflect the Community Strategy Action Plan actions and milestones which are appropriate for the Council to embrace as its contribution towards meeting the Strategy's 'Priorities for the Future'. It also needs to reflect the ongoing consultation with Members and Officers.

### 3.4 **PRINCIPLES – How the Council will achieve its outcomes**

To achieve the corporate **Priorities** set out in section 3.3 of the Corporate Strategy and Action Plan, Chorley will adopt an approach based on the following three **Principles**:

#### **Proactive community leadership and partnership**

The proactive development of its community leadership role and the organisation's capacity to work with and through the community and partner organisations. The Council will strengthen the skills and mechanisms required to work effectively in partnership with others and will ensure that all such 'collaborative' arrangements are focussed, effective and accountable.

#### **Performing and improving organisation**

The pursuit of continuous improvement in the culture and performance of the organisation.

#### **Provider/Commissioner of high quality priority services**

The provision or commissioning of increasingly higher quality, more efficient and responsive priority services. The Council will routinely review all its services and determine the most effective and efficient ways to deliver them. This may include shifting away from direct service provision where this is no longer appropriate or most effective. This may also mean reduced levels of service in non-priority areas. The Council will also look for opportunities to provide services on behalf of the other agencies and partners.

The key internal targets linked to the Council's three **Principles** are set out in Table 3 overleaf.



**Table 3 – Key internal targets in the period 2005 – 2008**

<b>1. Proactive community leadership and partnership</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 % community strategy milestones achieved to target.</li> <li>• Citizen's panel re-launched and revitalised.</li> <li>• Help community help themselves.</li> <li>• Community leadership role acknowledged by external audit of partners.</li> <li>• Fully operational Area Forums for the whole Borough, including all key partners.</li> <li>• LSP valued and understood by council and community.</li> <li>• Key Members and staff trained in the skills of effective partnership working.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Performing and improving organisation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the external perception of the authority.</li> <li>• Achieve 75% Members satisfaction with their role and purpose.</li> <li>• HR and Communication strategies fully and effectively implemented.</li> <li>• All Members completing leadership and/or development training.</li> <li>• Review of 'middle managers' training and development needs completed and middle managers training programme developed and implemented.</li> <li>• Implement a phased office/civic facilities development programme.</li> <li>• Ensure performance management and budget systems are fully aligned with corporate priorities.</li> <li>• Achieving investor in People (IIP) accreditation.</li> <li>• Revenue budget outturn within <math>\pm 1\%</math> of approved budget.</li> <li>• Capital programme outturn within <math>\pm \%</math> of approved committed programme.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Provider/Commissioner of high quality services</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of all services to appraise their contribution to corporate priorities.</li> <li>• Services will routinely be reviewed under the procurement strategy and, where more appropriate or effective, commissioning arrangements put in place which ensure value for money.</li> <li>• Upper quartile satisfaction rating for all major service areas.</li> <li>• Meet all the milestones in the National Local Government Procurement Strategy.</li> <li>• Target resources released to the new corporate priorities.</li> <li>• Develop and implement strategy designed to meet customer needs and accessibility, in a co-ordinated and focused way.</li> <li>• Ensure that all contracts with external suppliers provide value for money and a quality service for our customers.</li> </ul>

**4. ACTION PLAN**

The following action plan is proposed for the completion of the Corporate Strategy and Action Plan,

Report of	Meeting	Date
Group Director (Introduced by the Executive Member for Customers, Policy and Performance, Councillor D Edgerley)	Executive Cabinet	8/9/2005

## BEST VALUE INSPECTION - CUSTOMER ACCESS AND FOCUS

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To inform members of the outcome of a recent Best Value Inspection on the Council's approach to Customer Access and Focus.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- The Best Value Inspection relates directly to the Council's Customer priority area.

### RISK ISSUES

- The report contains no risk issues for consideration by Members.

### BACKGROUND

- The Council's agreed audit and inspection programme 2004/05 included inspection of our approach to customer access and focus. This is designed to test how the Council is:
  - improving access to key services and information
  - using increasing accessibility to improve quality of services
- For a number of reasons this was delayed and the on site inspection took place during week commencing 6 June 2005 involving a significant number of members, staff and partner organisations.
- The results of the inspection are issued in report form and two judgements are made.
  - (a) How good is the approach? (Rating of Poor, \*Fair, \*\*Good or \*\*\*Excellent).
  - (b) What are the prospects for improvement? (Rating of Poor, Uncertain, Promising or Excellent).

### BEST VALUE INSPECTION REPORT

- Chorley's Inspection Report was published in August 2005 (copy appended).
- In scoring the service the report states:

*"The Council is assessed as having a **three-star** approach to customer access and user focus that has **excellent prospects** for improvement".*



- 9. This is the highest possible score on both judgements and recognises the significant progress that the Council has made over recent years. Such a high score is comparatively rare and puts us at the top nationally in the whole of local government in terms of customer access and focus.
- 10. In presenting the draft report to officers of the Council the lead inspector commented:  
  
*“.....It is an unusual score for the Audit Commission and it will attract a lot of attention locally and nationally..... One of the things we were most impressed with here was the way the customer focus was embedded in the culture of the Council..... That culture was present in terms of external customers, internal customers and partnerships with other bodies..... The other real strength is the quality of your plans and documents. Staff, members and customers can clearly see what the Council is trying to do.....”.*
- 11. Despite these comments Best Value is about continuous improvement and there is still an improvement agenda for us to pursue. This includes such things as developing plans to engage with the rural population, implementing our customer focussed access and service design strategy, further raising the profile of customer services within the organisation and embedding our corporate performance management system.

**COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

- 12. The outcome of this inspection is an excellent and significant achievement for the authority, and the recognition we have received in terms of our customer focus culture is significant to our future success. Human Resources will continue to help embed this culture further through training and development linked to the competency framework, of which customer focus is a key element, and through Member Development activity. Our Performance Management Process and the newly created Member Development Steering Group will be the mechanisms to drive this forward.

**COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

- 13. There are no direct financial implications contained within this report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 14. That members note the excellent result from the Best Value Inspection on the Council’s approach to Customer Access and Focus.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 15. Members are asked to note that the Council has been formally awarded top marks in the Audit Commission Best Value Inspection on Customer Access and Focus. This is the highest award that the Inspectors can give in an inspection and puts us at the top nationally in the whole of local government for this key priority area.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 16. None.

PAUL MORRIS  
GROUP DIRECTOR

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Paul Morris	5101	31/8/05	BV INSPECTION - CUSTOMER ACCESS AND FOCUS

Inspection report

August 2005

# **Customer Access and Focus**

**Chorley Borough Council**

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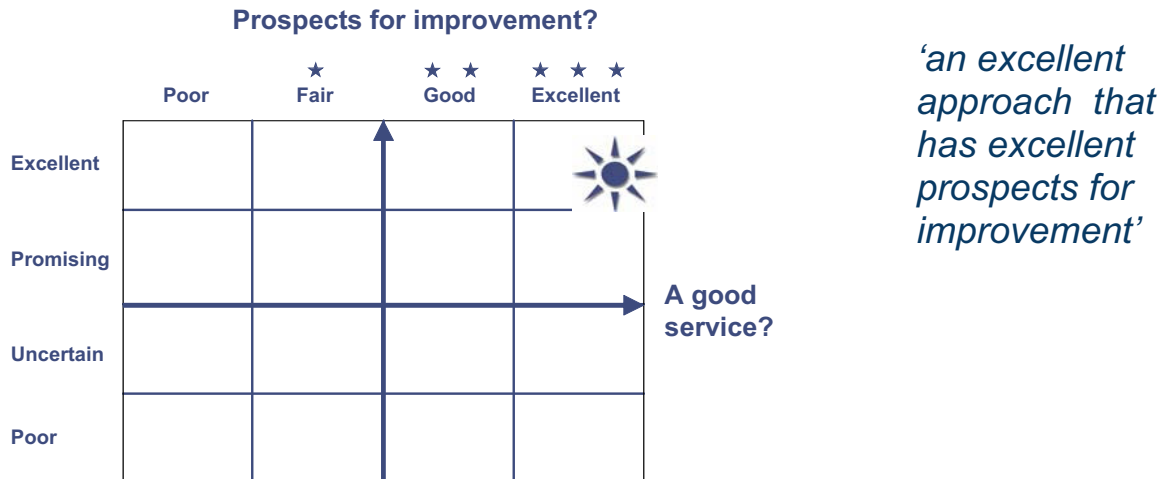
## Summary

- 1      This inspection focuses on the Council's approach to improving services through customer access and focus. The objective of strengthening accessibility and user focus is to refocus services around the needs of citizens and other customers, rather than the problems of those who provide services.
- 2      Situated in the centre of Lancashire the borough of Chorley has excellent transport links to the major cities of the North West. It is an attractive borough with large areas of green space and rural communities to the east. The population is growing. Unemployment in the borough is low and although there are some pockets of deprivation there is also a degree of affluence especially amongst the new residents. New residents typically work outside of the borough and creating cohesive local communities as new developments arise next to more traditional established areas is a real challenge.
- 3      Strong, visionary leadership in customer services is ensuring that the needs of customers and service users are at the heart of planning and service delivery. The Council has a good understanding of the make up of the borough and the diversity of its communities. As a result, it provides a good range of access channels that fit well with local needs. These include well-developed electronic access and a modern, one-stop shop with excellent facilities. Standards are high and there is a strong customer-focused culture across the Council with staff and councillors clearly committed to continuously improving the experience of service users.
- 4      The availability of easily accessed, good quality services is resulting in high levels of customer satisfaction. The Council is building on its success through ambitious plans that shape service provision around the needs and requirements of its customers. Its ambitions are underpinned by reliable corporate systems and reflected in realistic, achievable strategies that target efficiency savings as well as local needs. It is influential in the development of e-government across Lancashire and in the North West region and has a lead role in the delivery of the Lancashire-wide Shared Contact Centre project which aims to deliver wide ranging customer benefits through partnership working.

## Scoring the service

- 5 The Council is assessed as having a **three-star** approach to customer access and user focus that has **excellent prospects** for improvement. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

### Scoring chart:<sup>1</sup> Council – Customer Access and Focus



- 6 The Council's approach is **excellent** because:
- ◆ it is easy to contact the Council via a range of channels that meet the expressed needs of local people;
  - ◆ a well-designed and efficient one-stop shop resolves most issues at first point of contact to the satisfaction of customers;
  - ◆ good access to services is complemented by a high quality of experience for service users;
  - ◆ good quality information is provided in a range of languages and formats;
  - ◆ the Council has a good understanding of the diversity of its communities and consultation and feedback are used to shape and improve access and service delivery;
  - ◆ partnership working is delivering a range of added benefits; and
  - ◆ sophisticated technology and e-government initiatives provide high quality access and speedy response and deliver efficiency savings which are passed onto the customer in the form of improvements.
- 7 However, some matters need attention, including:
- ◆ plans for area forums do not clearly build on the good things provided currently by local groups;
  - ◆ plans for fully engaging with the more rural population are not well-developed; and
  - ◆ although the Council provides good support for minority ethnic communities, there is no designated member of staff to provide a consistent contact point.

<sup>1</sup> The scoring chart displays performance in two dimensions. The horizontal axis shows how good the service or function is now, on a scale ranging from no stars for a service that is poor (at the left-hand end) to three stars for an excellent service (right-hand end). The vertical axis shows the improvement prospects of the service, also on a four-point scale.



- 8    The Council's approach has **excellent prospects** for improvement because:
- ◆ it is built on a clear vision and strong leadership;
  - ◆ there is a strong culture across the organisation in which care for the customer and quality service delivery is paramount;
  - ◆ the Council has invested heavily in improved systems to better support its priorities for customer access and customer care;
  - ◆ learning from experience and from others has led to substantial improvements that are recognised and valued by customers, partners and staff;
  - ◆ internal and external challenge, especially from the customer scrutiny panel, is strong and driving improvements;
  - ◆ the Council knows what matters to local people and has sophisticated customer access strategies based on realistic ambitions for the borough;
  - ◆ there is good analysis of take up of services with goals to improve;
  - ◆ sound building blocks for achievement are in place including the Council's leading role in the Lancashire Shared Contact Centre; and
  - ◆ there is a good track record of delivering sustained and important improvements in customer access channels and the quality of service delivery resulting in high levels of customer satisfaction.
- 9    Areas for further development include:
- ◆ the corporate performance management system is not fully embedded although performance management around customer access and customer care is strong;
  - ◆ plans are not all well-integrated and the corporate plan is currently being redrafted to better align with the 2005/25 community strategy; and
  - ◆ strategies to keep up with demographic changes and address longer-term community cohesion issues are not in place.

## Recommendations

- 10 To rise to the challenge of continuous improvement, councils need inspection reports that offer practical pointers for improvement. In this context it is important that the Council, with its partners, recognises that the rapid demographic and social changes expected over the next decade will challenge the interaction and sense of belonging among the borough's communities. By December 2005, the Council should:
- ◆ identify a 'diversity champion' within the Council to act as an advocate and consistent contact point for minority ethnic groups in the borough;
  - ◆ produce an outline of long-term plans to ensure a common vision for communities and equal life opportunities for all residents; and
  - ◆ in order to make sure that its approach to area forums is successful in terms of meeting filling current gaps in community engagement, the Council should:
    - ◆ by December 2005, analyse what approach to area forums would be best for the borough, based on a clear assessment of the effectiveness of current local groups and the best way to integrate them. The analysis should define patterns of need, particularly for the rural population, and set out how they will be met via a strategy for local participation that furthers the aims of the community plan; and
    - ◆ by December 2006, complete pilot projects in the areas of greatest need to test the initial analysis, identify the most effective approach and set a clear borough-wide plan for the future.
- 11 The inspection team thank all the people we met, both inside and the Council, for the enthusiasm and thoughtfulness with which they answered our questions. We are grateful to staff involved in the inspection for the time and effort they put into providing information and setting up meetings.

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**Dates of inspection: 6 to 10 June 2005**

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# Report

## Context

- 12 This report has been prepared by the Audit Commission (the Commission) following an inspection under Section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999, and is issued in accordance with its duty under Section 13 of the 1999 Act.
- 13 The Local Government White Paper, *Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services*, set out a new framework which commits national government to work in partnership with local government to secure a progressive improvement in authorities' performance. The new framework is underpinned by the statutory provisions in the Local Government Acts 1999 and 2000, and seeks to integrate these with the approach to public expenditure described in the Government's Spending Review and reflected in local and national Public Service Agreements. In particular, the provisions in Part I of the 1999 Act require that services are:
- ◆ responsive to the needs of citizens;
  - ◆ of a high quality and cost-effective; and
  - ◆ fair and accessible to all who need them.<sup>2</sup>

## The locality

- 14 The borough of Chorley is situated in central Lancashire and covers around 80 square miles. Its eastern border lies on sparsely populated upland rising towards the West Pennine Moors; the central spine is more urban, containing the market town of Chorley and settlements close to the M6 and A6 that run north-south through the borough. In the west, the land merges into the Lancashire plain and is dotted with villages and hamlets. The borough is attractive with a large amount of green space. It is well-placed for access to the major cities of the north west of England with good connections to the major motorway and good railway links to Manchester and Preston. Manchester International Airport is easily accessed by motorway and rail. These good links make it an attractive area to live in for people working across the North West, and this is reflected in its population which is steadily expanding. Between 1991 and 2006 it is expected to increase by 5.4 per cent compared to the average increase across Lancashire of 4.6 per cent. House building is keeping pace with the growth in population with a rapid expansion of new developments around the traditional market town of Chorley.
- 15 There are 100,449 people living in 42,250 households. Of these, 20 per cent are aged under 16 years, 61 per cent are aged 16 to 59 years and 19 per cent are aged 60 years or over. The percentage of the population belonging to a black or minority ethnic community increased from 1.1 per cent in 1991 to 2.1 per cent in 2001 and is anticipated to continue to increase. The largest minority ethnic group in the borough is Indian (0.39 per cent, mainly Muslims from Gujarat) closely followed by Pakistani (0.33 per cent) and Chinese (0.31 per cent).

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<sup>2</sup> Circular 03/2003 - Local Government Act 1999: Part 1 Best Value And Performance Improvement.

- 16 The borough overall is relatively prosperous and ranked 172 out of 354 in the index of multiple deprivation. No lower level super output areas (SOAs) within the borough are identified as being in the 10 per cent most deprived nationally although 8 SOAs are in the 20 per cent most deprived nationally. These are in the Clayton-le-Woods North, Chorley North East, Chorley East, Chorley South East and Chorley South West Wards.
- 17 On some individual measures of deprivation the borough does show greater deprivation – in health, for example, there are five SOAs that are among the most deprived 10 per cent nationally. In addition, 18.5 per cent of people describe themselves as having a limiting long-term illness compared to 17.95 per cent nationally and 10.9 per cent provide unpaid healthcare.<sup>3</sup>
- 18 Around half of the adult population works outside of the borough. Within the borough the service sector accounts for 75 per cent of all employment. There are a high proportion of qualified adults and unemployment is comparatively low at 1.1 per cent compared to the Lancashire average of 2.2 per cent.
- 19 Council research shows that 65 per cent of the population have direct access to the internet at home and 40 per cent use the internet at work. There is 100 per cent broadband availability across the borough. This means that electronic access to Council services is popular especially with new residents. However, in the more established communities that were historically-based around manufacturing industry and mining, there is still a preference for more traditional forms of access such as face to face and telephone contact.

## The Council

- 20 There are 47 councillors representing 20 wards – 21 Labour, 20 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrat, and 3 Independent. The Council is controlled by the Labour party with cabinet support from the Liberal Democrats and the Independents.
- 21 The net revenue budget for 2004/05 was £11.77 million. The Council employs around 500 staff. The customer services champions within the Council are the deputy leader and one of two group directors. Electronic access is a major priority and the leader of the Council is the e-champion. Governance is based on an executive and scrutiny model. An overarching scrutiny committee manages the work programme of three scrutiny panels which focus on the three corporate priorities of customer, community, and environment.
- 22 The Council has a long-term vision of *making Chorley a better place to live, work and visit*. This translates into three corporate objectives: serving our customers better, investing in our capacity to deliver, and investing in a greener, cleaner, safer Chorley. Delivery is underpinned by a set of core principles of social inclusion and equality of opportunity. The Council specifically aims to *'treat our customers fairly and as individuals in accordance with our customer services charter, actively engage with and listen to our communities in designing and improving our services, and continually improve the quality of the priority services we deliver'*<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> 2001 census data.

<sup>4</sup> Chorley Borough Council Corporate Plan 2003/06.

## The inspection

- 23 This inspection assesses the Council's approach and performance in improving customer access and focus for service planning and delivery, based on community involvement, partnership working and the targeting of mainstream resources to local needs. This inspection is part of a programme of reviews of customer access and focus in a number of district councils across Lancashire.
- 24 Customer access and focus is about refocusing public services around the needs of citizens and other users, rather than those who provide services. Focusing more directly on customer needs should drive major changes in the way in which public sector organisations organise their activities, deploy their staff and co-operate in the delivery of services, and the ways in which the general public perceive, access and benefit from the delivery of public services.
- 25 To inform and guide this inspection, Chorley Borough Council completed a self-assessment of its arrangements for customer access and focus in March 2005.

## How good is the approach to improving services through customer access and focus?

- 26 The inspection assesses the Council's approach for improving services through customer access and focus, based on four key lines of enquiry.
- ◆ How easy is it to access services?
  - ◆ Is the Council using e-government to support access to services?
  - ◆ How is the Council using customers' feedback and complaints to improve service quality?
  - ◆ How is the Council improving customer access through partnership working?

## How easy is it to access services?

- 27 Providing a good experience for customers and service users is a high priority for the Council. There is a well-embedded, customer-focused culture across the organisation. Ensuring good accessibility to high quality services is at the core of all service planning and delivery. The Council's 'channels strategy' for customer access is based on extensive consultation to identify preferred methods of contact. It is complemented by a reliable, up-to-date profile of residents, visitors and businesses in the borough and a highly developed understanding of customers and service users. As a result, available access channels closely match the needs of local people. For example, there is high quality internet access via the Council's website, excellent facilities at the Council's one-stop shop and good telephone access via a range of help-lines and service hot lines.
- 28 Customer-focused strategies and plans are supported by a strong commitment from staff and councillors to deliver a high quality response, reinforced by specific training and development. As part of routine performance management, all staff, including senior managers are assessed against a core competence in customer care. Customer service staff are trained to NVQ2 standard in customer care, and have the opportunity to progress beyond this basic level. As a result, there is a strong culture of good customer care across the Council. This culture is evident not only in external interactions but also in working relations between Council departments such as human resources and the legal section, where the 'customer first' ethos is also strongly applied.
- 29 The Council has significantly improved the experience for customers visiting its buildings. The one-stop shop provides a welcoming, good quality environment where customers are dealt with promptly and professionally. It has all the features of a modern, user-friendly reception including good queue management. Facilities are provided for children and good access for people with disabilities. The Council has added clocks and a drinking water dispenser in response to customer feedback. In addition to the open counter, there are three adjacent interview rooms for confidential business.

- 30 The majority of frontline council services are integrated into the one-stop shop so that staff can deal with a wide range of queries. In addition, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Department of Work and Pensions and Patients Advice Liaison Service (PALS) operate a regular service at advertised intervals. Customer service officers guide enquirers through a structured conversation presented as a series of dialogue screens. Almost all (97 per cent) queries and service requests are dealt with at the first point of contact and customer satisfaction as measured by regular surveys is consistently high, with 99 per cent of customers describing the service as *good* or *very good*. This has not only substantially improved the service to the public but has also resulted in efficiency savings and improved effectiveness of back office systems. For example, the impact in the benefits section has been a significant improvement in performance with no backlogs in processing. This is allowing the section to focus attention on issues such as driving up take-up of benefits and providing a good level of outreach work. The impact in environmental services has also been to release staff time to focus on areas such as promotion of recycling and enforcement.
- 31 A programme of refurbishments carried out in conjunction with a reference group from the Chorley Disability Forum is resulting in easier access to Council buildings. Currently, 76 per cent of Council buildings are suitable for and accessible to people with disabilities in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Refurbishment of the Victorian town hall is nearing completion and this combined with management plans for Astley Hall and the leisure pool at Brinscall means that the Council is on track to meet the provisions of the act in full by December 2005. The Council does not only focus on achieving compliance with regulations but is committed to a broader role in improving access across the borough. For example, it funded the refurbishment of a car park shared by a pub and community centre, and installed dropped kerbs to ease access to a supermarket site even though it does not own the land or buildings, because of identified need. It acts as an advocate, lobbying on behalf of and with local representatives. For example, encouraging train operators to improve access to local stations and working with Barnados to make community premises more child-friendly.
- 32 The Council publishes clear service standards and customer charters so that the public know what to expect. The comprehensive *Customer Care Policy and Standards* has suitably challenging targets for all channels of access including post. Standards are published in a range of formats including audio tape. Customers and tenants are involved in setting customer care standards for departments (for example, the benefits service), for facilities (such as the one-stop shop, paragraph 29) and for service provision (for example, the tenants' handbook). Standards are high, reflecting best practice in the public and private sectors. Performance against the standards is monitored rigorously with regular reports to managers and councillors who promptly address areas of underperformance.

- 33 Information about the Council and its services is available in a variety of formats including an attractively presented, well-written Council newsletter. The Council consults regularly to make sure that it is using the best means of delivering information to residents and keeping pace with community requirements. For example, working with the ethnic minority consultative committee it determines those publications that need to be provided directly in other languages and those which can be offered to be translated. Where there is a need to inform residents about specific service issues, the Council consults appropriately to ensure that it reaches the maximum number of people and that its messages are clear. For example, the publicity and information campaign for the introduction of a new waste collection and recycling service included a regular newsletter 'Bin Thinking' which is delivered to all households. The 'Bin Thinking' marketing campaign was a 'Green Apple' award winner<sup>5</sup> in 2003. The Council's information and promotion of the new service was highly successful resulting in a much higher than predicted take-up of recycling.
- 34 As well as offering a good range of channels for local people to contact and access services, the Council also goes out into the community to better reach all of its customers. Outreach work is a feature of housing, environment, leisure and benefits services. For example, the benefits team provide a home visiting service which is extended outside of normal hours and it holds a benefits surgery every fortnight at Clayton Brook, in the area where the most benefit claimants live. Local people also raise issues through neighbourhood wardens who provide a good level of local support and information as well as direct environmental services.

### **Is the Council using e-government to support access to services?**

- 35 The Council's sophisticated approach to e-government is delivering significant benefits for local people. It is meeting e-government targets, with 92 per cent of relevant services already e-enabled and the rest on track for December 2005. A clear, accessible website offers good quality, up-to-date information and transactional facilities such as the ability to make payments and submit applications. There are links to other key sites such as the County Council website and the site hosts parish council pages designed and populated by parish clerks. In this year's annual survey of local authority websites, published by the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM)<sup>6</sup>, Chorley achieved a 'score' of 34 on a number of tests of accessibility and usability, placing it in equal 11<sup>th</sup> place among English districts. Although SOCITM classes the site as 'content plus' rather than 'transactional', the Council is moving rapidly towards this status.

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<sup>5</sup> Green Apple awards are given annually by the Green Organisation, an environmental charity, to recognise, reward and promote environmental best practice.

<sup>6</sup> Society of IT Management: Better Connected, 2005 – a survey of all local authority websites (February 2005).



- 36 Over the past three years the Council has worked hard to tackle a legacy of poor, incompatible IT systems and low prospects for improving access through e-government. It has invested substantial resources in equipment and systems to bring about rapid improvement in the quality of customer experience. For example, it had no website in 2002 and was amongst the last 12 local authorities to produce one and its initial Implementing e-government strategy was assessed as weak. It now has a highly rated website and is achieving a level of e-enabled services that makes it a top performer nationally.
- 37 The Council takes an innovative approach to using technology. It was selected as an e-voting pilot in 2004 demonstrating the confidence that national government has in its systems. It has implemented mobile working systems in the environment service which increase speed of response to service requests and it uses text messaging to communicate with young service users. Technology is used as an effectively tool to gain information and feedback from customers and users are consulted about new plans. For example, using a web focus group to redesign and upgrade the Council's website.
- 38 Internal ICT systems are robust and support strategic developments. All staff have direct access to the Council's intranet which has recently been redesigned and improved by staff themselves via a range of focus groups and surveys. All councillors have laptops and increasingly good electronic access to many of the documents that they need, reducing the need for paper-based systems. Committee papers will shortly be automatically indexed and uploaded to the website. Councillors' email addresses are well-publicised and linked to the website, and they are accustomed to receiving and responding to complaints and service requests via email. Document Image Processing is being rolled out across the Council following successful trials. Internally, therefore, technology is helping to reduce costs and maximise efficiency and speed of response.
- 39 The Council is also using technology effectively to drive efficiencies externally by encouraging use of the most cost effective channels. For example, it offers a reduction in the cost of land searches if they are conducted through it's online facility. As a result, it has shifted 90 per cent of applications to electronic access.
- 40 Although there is relatively high internet access within the borough,<sup>7</sup> the Council is mindful that a strong focus on delivering services electronically can exclude local people who are not comfortable with technology or who do not have good access to systems. It works with partners to provide free internet access at a range of venues such as libraries and community centres. For example, the Tatton Community Classroom was developed with local people and funded from contributions by partners and local businesses to provide access to technology and e-learning in one of the most deprived areas of the borough. The Council also offers alternative channels. For example, alongside good provision to make card payments 24 hours a day via the website and the telephone it has also significantly extended the facility to make cash payments by creating around 200 pay points in post offices, garages and late shops.

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<sup>7</sup> See paragraph 19.

## How is the Council using customers' feedback and complaints to improve service quality?

- 41 The Council places strong emphasis on consultation and feedback with customers, partners and residents. A wide range of methods is providing a reliable picture of local needs and the diversity of communities and is giving the Council a good understanding of the factors that influence take-up of services. This knowledge is reflected in key strategies such as the draft *Customer Focussed Access and Service Design Strategy*. The Council feeds back to the public and its partners how they have influenced its plans and the ways in which their views have been acted upon. In this way, service users and customers are actively involved in shaping service design and delivery. For example, the disability forum was involved in the design of the one-stop shop and the major refurbishment programme for the town hall. Recognising that there is scope for community groups to get involved even earlier in the design process, the Council is creating opportunities to do so through the work of the scrutiny panels and through specific liaison groups.
- 42 At a corporate level, the Council uses annual surveys, road shows, its citizens panel, and joint consultation with partners to measure customer experience and customer satisfaction across a range of customer groups. At the service level, staff proactively and routinely seek feedback on ease of access and the quality of their response to customers. For example, the benefits section carries out monthly telephone surveys and satisfaction is currently running at 97 per cent (target 88 per cent). A drawback is that this results in a somewhat ad hoc approach that runs the risk of duplication. The Council has recognised this in a revised consultation strategy that better co-ordinates activity across the organisation.
- 43 The Council has a good knowledge of the diversity of its communities and of how they are changing. It has a well-developed understanding of the cultural issues that can create barriers to access. The minority ethnic population although comparatively small, is growing and the Council is building a good level of engagement with minority ethnic groups and their representatives. It supports and acts on the advice of the Asian women's forum which is growing in effectiveness. For example, feedback that the one-stop shop is not a comfortable environment for Asian women is leading to exploration with the forum of acceptable alternatives. It is building links with the growing Chinese population. Representatives of minority ethnic groups greatly appreciate the Council's approach but would welcome the more consistent access provided by a designated liaison officer within the Council with specific responsibilities to build deeper working relationships and deal with issues routinely.
- 44 Consultation and engagement are also targeted to specific groups. For example, the Council is improving its engagement with young people and giving them opportunities to become more actively involved in designing services for themselves. As well as using conventional youth forums and the youth parliament it uses innovative, relevant approaches such as burger bar focus groups, vox pop videos and text messaging.

- 45 When customers are not happy with the response they get, they are encouraged to use the Council's robust complaints and comments system. Clear leaflets and instructions are displayed at all access points and complaints are dealt with promptly and effectively with an overall emphasis on lessons to be learned to avoid similar complaints in the future. Such learning is spread across Council departments. Customers are also encouraged to comment on their experiences. For example, all customers in the one-stop shop are given a short feedback form to complete and leisure centres record and act on all verbal comments made to staff. This provides good quality ongoing information about how well the Council is doing and also early notice when things go wrong.
- 46 Internally, staff and councillors are fully engaged in shaping and improving service design and delivery. There are specific forums which give staff opportunities to put forward ideas and suggest improvements, for example, the *Improve 4 U* group. One-stop shop staff feed back service improvement tips through regular meetings with back office business units. The staff newsletter is popular and attractive and offers a further means of sharing ideas and experiences as well as building team spirit.
- 47 Councillors regularly consult local people informally in their wards and formally through, for example, the *Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel*. This all-party panel of committed and enthusiastic councillors takes its role seriously and has been instrumental in driving real improvements in customer access and user experience. Its programme of work involves in-depth investigations from a user perspective and it consults and engages with local people in analysing service delivery and identifying improvements. For example, in-depth scrutiny of the housing repairs service led to the instigation of a much improved service available across extended hours and a comprehensive tenants handbook prepared by and with tenants representatives. This has increased tenants' satisfaction with Council services which is high at 81 per cent compared to the national average of 77 per cent.<sup>8</sup> Recent scrutiny of the one-stop shop resulted in clear, costed recommendations including improvements in access for customers with mobility problems and greater availability of planning officers.

## **How is the Council improving customer access through partnership working?**

- 48 The Council is achieving major benefits for customers through partnership working. A significant example of this is its role in the Lancashire Shared Service Contact Centre. The project involves Lancashire County Council and six district councils in developing a shared telephone contact centre to pool information and provide extended services. From the customer's perspective, the collaboration will give access to a wider range of services than those of the local district council, including County Council and other districts' services, via a single telephone call. Chorley Borough Council is the first partner to go live with the project, a testament to its thorough preparation work including a sound technological infrastructure, investment in re-engineering back office systems and well-trained, knowledgeable and confident call handlers. The new contact centre opened in June 2005 offering information on a wide range of services, and a customer relationship management (CRM) system for environmental services. The same CRM system is available in the one-stop shop and will gradually be extended to all services.

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<sup>8</sup> 2004 BVPI score.

- 49 The Council has become a champion of the partnership because:
- ◆ it values the security of knowing that the resources of a larger organisation are available in case of problems; and
  - ◆ it sees the potential for wider benefits for its local communities, visitors and local business, for example, access to the *Lancashire Community Portal*.

Councillors and officers are committed to its success and resources have been shifted to ensure that the Council meets its obligations and the partnership succeeds.

- 50 The Council is leading and influencing others to improve accessibility and bring a strong user focus to services. The Chorley Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has developed its second community strategy 2005 to 2025 on the back of thorough consultation and feedback from partners, residents and local businesses. This has informed the comprehensive *Chorley Profile* which provides an analysis of the current state of the borough and the challenges and opportunities that can be anticipated over the next 20 years. The Council has played a key role in driving a customer-focused approach and one of five community strategy priorities is *improving access and take-up of public services*. Partners share information and the results of consultation, and there are examples of joint consultation, for example, on health issues, using the Council's citizen's panel. As a result, the Chorley LSP has a strong emphasis on customer engagement and improving customer services across the public sector.

- 51 At a service level there is a strong commitment to working with others to deliver better access and better services. The Council works with local business such as developers to build community facilities. For example, young people had a large say in the design of a new youth and community centre at Adlington built with the assistance of the developer of a neighbouring site. Environmental and community development services work with others such as parish councils to increase a local presence in communities especially in the more deprived areas. For example, neighbourhood wardens not only deliver the Council's aims for improving the environment but also work with the police on joint enforcement operations and joint patrols help to deliver Chorley community safety partnership aims for increasing reassurance and decreasing crime and fear of crime. Wardens have strong customer focus and good local networks. They work to clearly defined procedures but also have a significant degree of discretion enabling them to tailor responses to local needs.

- 52 The Council takes its community leadership role seriously. It has good working relationships with parish councils, supporting their work in tackling local issues, empowering them to deliver local services on its behalf and attending local project groups. It is also an active participant in local police and community together (PACT) meetings. There are a number of established neighbourhood and community groups which it uses to meet the public and seek their views. These include local community groups, tenants' forums and regeneration partnerships such as PAiCE (Positive Action in Chorley East).

- 53 The Council rightly focuses its main efforts in community engagement on the five most deprived and disadvantaged areas of the borough, but there are significant rural areas and a risk of rural exclusion. Overall, its strategic plans for rural areas are not well-developed with a range of un-coordinated projects and activities. The Council is planning the introduction of area forums across the borough, partly because it recognises a need to improve participation and engagement in rural areas. A network of forums at neighbourhood level could combine local knowledge with a broader agenda based on community plan priorities in a more systematic way than the present Parish Council and community groups do. However, it is not yet clear how Chorley's area forums will operate or what the added benefits would be. Without a clear strategy based on reliable analysis of need, there is the risk of creating overlapping and potentially conflicting visions for local neighbourhoods. It would also fail to build on the experience and capacity of the kind of groups already in place, some of which have significant experience of raising and managing their own funds as well as enjoying the loyalty and commitment of their communities.

## Summary

- 54 Overall, it is easy to contact the Council via a range of channels that fit well to the profile of the community and meet the expressed needs of local people. This has been achieved through a good understanding of the nature of Chorley residents, visitors to the borough and local business. Good access is complemented by a high quality user experience. Consultation and feedback are used effectively to shape and improve services and partnership working is delivering a range of added benefits.
- 55 Within the Council, there is a strong emphasis on customer care embedded across all departments. Staff routinely demonstrate their commitment to improving the experience of service users and councillors drive a strong customer focus. Technology and e-government initiatives are used effectively to provide high quality access and speedy response and to achieve efficiency savings which are then passed onto the customer in the form of improvements.
- 56 There are areas that require further development, for example, the Council needs to be clear about its plans for area forums and engaging with the more rural population. However, it is evident that the needs of customers and service users are at the heart of Council planning and service delivery. Its approach to improving services through customer access and user focus is therefore judged to be **excellent**.

## What are the prospects for service improvement?

- 57 We have assessed the prospects for service improvement using four key lines of enquiry.
- ◆ **Ownership of problems and willingness to change** – in high performing councils, senior managers and councillors are committed to continuous improvement. They are willing to tackle difficult problems, make difficult decisions and stick to them. They are open about their performance and problems and welcome internal and external challenge.
  - ◆ **Proven capacity** – it is important that senior managers and councillors know what matters to local people and use this information to set clear and consistent priorities. High performing councils focus on achieving impact in priority areas and concentrate effort and resources in proportion to priorities.
  - ◆ **Capacity and systems to deliver performance and improvement** – successful councils need sound performance management, including the flexibility to move money and people and tackle the most important problems. There should be clear lines of accountability for action and the skills to build effective partnerships to help bring about improvements.
  - ◆ **Integration of best value principles into day-to-day management** – continuous improvement should be seen as part of the day job with best value integrated with other Council performance processes.

## Ownership of problems and willingness to change

- 58 The Council's openness to change is impressive. Strong, visionary leadership in customer service drives an ambitious change programme centred on improving access and service delivery. Councillors' staff, partners and customers understand and support the Council's approach. The group director leading the change process has the confidence of staff and has set clear achievable goals that attract the commitment of councillors. Aims are expressed in key strategies including the corporate plan and the pivotal *Customer Focussed Access and Service Design* strategy which is based on the government's nine principles of public service delivery and best practice in the public and private sector. This strategy builds on the current reshaping of services around customer needs and takes forward the re-engineering of back office systems to improve service quality and release efficiency savings. In combination with the eWorkforce programme of 20 core projects and the Council procurement strategy, a total of £1 million of efficiency savings over three years are identified.
- 59 A comprehensive set of strategies support the improvements that the Council is seeking. For example, the *communications strategy* sets out clear benchmarks and targets based on good practice and research; the *corporate equalities plan* incorporates the race equality scheme and is structured around the Council's vision for accessible services for all; and a recently revised *consultation strategy* outlines a better co-ordinated approach to feeding in the views of local people. Strategies are subjected to equalities impact assessment in line with good practice requirements of the Local Authority Equality Standard. They are underpinned by clear action plans to ensure that delivery can be monitored and impact measured. They are not yet fully integrated with the Council's corporate plan which is currently being redrafted to reflect the new community strategy.
- 60 Service plans also reflect a strong customer focus, for example, including local performance targets for user satisfaction and the quality of customer contact. As a result, staff are clear about the corporate approach to customer access and user focus and how they can contribute directly to improvements.

- 61 The Council's approach is informed by learning from others. For example, it has worked with recognised leading councils to significantly improve its performance in relation to e-government. It is also committed to learning from its own experiences, for example, using scrutiny panels to continually review provision, identify gaps and find solutions. Its cross-departmental customer focus group enables staff to exchange ideas and good practice. It is open to external challenge, for example, in response to inspection and consultancy reports it has worked hard to create a more inclusive management style and give staff more opportunities to influence and drive change.
- 62 The Council is investing heavily in its ambitions for customer access. It is self-aware and realistic about the barriers that it needs to overcome. It is prepared to take tough decisions to bring about the changes that it seeks. For example, it has moved resources from back offices to the frontline in order to develop its one-stop shop and contact centre; it has maintained staff motivation by empowering frontline staff to take local decisions. The Council also decided to invest substantial resources in a major refurbishment of the town hall to transform access and facilities in this historic but awkwardly laid out building.

### **Proven capacity**

- 63 Senior managers and councillors have a well-developed understanding about what matters to local people. This has driven a redefinition of priorities and restructuring of political and managerial leadership around priority areas. Resources and efforts are targeted towards these areas and away from low priority areas such as leisure. Analysis of performance indicators shows that this targeted approach is paying off in terms of better quality services for customers in the priority areas. For example, top level performance in processing benefits.
- 64 The Council's priorities make sense to its partners who support and emulate its customer-focused approach to services. Close working arrangements mean that the Council and its partners contribute to achievement of shared aims, for example, voluntary groups help to deliver community development and leisure activities and parish councils deliver local environmental services.
- 65 The Council has good information about the take up levels of its services and is developing strategies to improve take up and attract non-service users. For example, it has a well-researched take up profile for leisure services and strategies in place to increase take up in low use groups. These include charging mechanisms such as concessions and free activities for young people. The leisure trust contract specifically identifies those groups that Council research shows to be low users and contains targets to increase usage which are conditional on finances. In this way, the Council holds the trust to account for providing services to all sectors of the community.
- 66 The Council also has a detailed profile of take up of benefits and although this indicates that overall the extent is as can be predicted, it is still keen to improve. There has been a lack of systematic approach characterised by only periodic campaigns. This is being addressed through the assignment of a designated member of staff to develop a specific project aimed at increasing overall take-up. Staff in the one-stop shop are encouraged to be proactive and advise customers about the range of services that may be available to them that they are not currently accessing. A similar approach has not been taken with telephone customers although it is part of the plans for the new call centre. In this way, the Council is ensuring that services are readily available to all especially those at risk of exclusion.

- 67 The Council's focus on good quality access to good quality services is paying off as shown by high customer satisfaction. In the 2003/04 Mori survey, satisfaction was high at 74 per cent, exceeding the national average in all but two areas – satisfaction with complaint handling was at the national average and satisfaction with planning services was well below the national average. Feedback from council annual surveys and joint consultation undertaken with partners confirms that it is prioritising areas that matter most to local people and improving the quality of life for residents. For example, feedback from the Chorley East community confirms that a combined approach by the Council and its partners to tackle fear of crime through community engagement and information sharing has resulted in greater feelings of reassurance and confidence.

## **Capacity and systems to deliver performance and improvement**

- 68 The Council is improving corporate systems such as performance management and human resources (HR) that were identified as weak in previous inspections including the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) 2004. Its new performance management framework is becoming established across the organisation, although it is not yet routinely used at every level. Over the past five years the Council has also improved the quality of several of its corporate strategies, from asset management to e-government. Clearer links are emerging between strategies, action plans and what is delivered on the ground. Similarly, it has significantly strengthened HR capacity so that it is based on modern practices which better support delivery of corporate priorities. For example, staff welcome the competency-based personal review system which has an emphasis on customer care because they have a clearer understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve and how their work contributes to priorities. As a result, morale is relatively high; staff have more confidence in the HR team; local managers are more empowered to deal with local issues; and staff have a stronger voice in developing service plans and addressing work force problems.
- 69 Performance monitoring and management of access systems such as the one-stop shop is strong. The one-stop shop monitors customer satisfaction levels by contacting approximately 1 per cent of its customers monthly via a telephone survey. Services are held to account for delivery against their published standards and customer charters. Underperformance is promptly addressed. For example, improving telephone access during peak periods and changing customer approaches to cope with the temporary closure of the town hall for refurbishment. Scrutiny panels are an effective means of evaluating performance, identifying improvements and then monitoring their implementation. A feature of their work is clear, costed action plans with defined targets and assigned accountabilities which are monitored quarterly.
- 70 Money and staff resources are managed efficiently with a willingness to shift efforts to areas needing development. As a result, investments in technology infrastructure, staff and Councillor training and partnership working are delivering much improved access and quality of services. The transition to the one-stop shop was well-managed with minimum impact on customers and service users whilst services migrated across to the new systems and this has also been achieved for the new call centre. For example, the Council managed the selection and training of staff with minimum impact on service delivery ensuring a smooth transition from back office systems to frontline delivery.



- 71 The Council demonstrates good project management, for example, in delivery of major initiatives such as the one-stop shop; shared contact centre; and refurbishment of the town hall. It is building on this by training more staff to use a structured corporate approach to manage simultaneous delivery of integrated projects especially those that support transition of services to the contact centre. It is regarded as reliable, professional and highly competent by its partners.

## **Integration of best value into day-to-day management**

- 72 A major strength of Chorley's approach is the way in which the drive and passion for better customer service evident at a senior level is replicated throughout the organisation. There is a clear commitment throughout departments to continually review and re-assess access channels and service delivery in order to identify gaps and weak areas and address them. Staff are enthusiastic about improving customer experience and the Council has succeeded in building a culture in which care for the customer and focus on quality service delivery is paramount.
- 73 An important aspect of the Council's attitude is its encouragement of innovation. Staff, especially frontline staff, are able to try out new ways of working especially where they have, alongside the customer, identified gaps and areas for improvement. For example, consultation identified that a big source of dissatisfaction for housing tenants was repairers making several visits to finish repair jobs. Housing staff and tenants together redesigned the repairs process so as to eliminate the need for most repeat visits, and the housing service continues to monitor the situation through a local performance indicator measuring the number of repeat visits.
- 74 The nature of society in Chorley is changing rapidly as the borough's population increases. Close-knit communities built round local employment sites such as the former mining village of Coppull are experiencing significant changes in patterns of work. Large areas of new development, such as Gillibrand and Buckshaw Village on the outskirts of the town mean that young parents or single people are isolated, often in a new area where they have few support networks. The Council is actively building good levels of information that enable it to predict changes in demography and adapt services to respond to them. It is continually evaluating its community engagement, identifying new issues and targeting emerging groups that are potentially excluded. It is also using a range of initiatives to help meld adjacent traditional and new communities and to offer new residents opportunities to become engaged in their communities as well as with the Council. However, the changes will begin to strain community cohesion as the contrast between old and young and affluent and less well off become more marked. The Council could do more with its partners to anticipate – for example, using the state of the borough report (paragraph 50) to coordinate information about the issues - and plan for the long-term community integration challenges that it is likely to face.

## **Summary**

- 75 The Council has invested heavily in improved systems to better support its priorities for customer access and customer care. It learns from external challenge, from best practice and from its own experience. This has brought substantial improvements that are recognised and valued by customers.

- 76 There is strong leadership around the approach to customers and a clear strategic direction which has the support and commitment of councillors and staff. The corporate performance management system is not fully embedded but performance management around customer access and customer care is strong. The Council is confidently shaping its services and interfaces around the needs of its customers. Its plans are not fully integrated but it has sophisticated customer access strategies based on realistic ambitions for the borough. It is early days in terms of the potential benefits of the Lancashire Shared Contact Centre but the Council has the necessary building blocks for the future in place and a good track record of delivering sustained and significant improvements. Its approach to improving services through customer access and focus is therefore judged to have **excellent** prospects for improvement.

## Appendices

The purpose of an inspection is to make two judgements. The first is how good is the approach for improving services through customer access and focus. The second is what are the prospects for improvement. We carried out a range of activities to enable us to reach our judgements.

### Documents reviewed

Before going on site and during our visit, we reviewed various documents that the Council provided for us. These included the following.

- ◆ Council self-assessment.
- ◆ Customer Focussed Access and Service Design Strategy 2005.
- ◆ Consultation Strategy.
- ◆ Chorley Community Safety Partnership Audit and Strategy 2005/08.
- ◆ Community Plan 2002 to 2005.
- ◆ Chorley Borough Community Strategy 2005 to 2025 (draft).
- ◆ Chorley Profile – a State of the Borough Report (June 2004).
- ◆ Corporate Plan 2003/04 to 2005/06.
- ◆ Corporate Improvement Plan 2004/07.
- ◆ E-government Strategy.
- ◆ IEG 1 to 4.
- ◆ Strategy for an Accessible Public Service One-Stop Shop Contact Centre.
- ◆ ICT Strategy 2005/08.
- ◆ Lancashire Partnership: Shared Service Contact Centre – The Way Forward (July 2004).
- ◆ Web Strategy.
- ◆ Consultation Strategy.
- ◆ Customer Charter; Customer Care Policy and Standards.
- ◆ Equality impact assessment guidance.
- ◆ Corporate Communications Strategy 2004 to 2007.
- ◆ Human Resources Strategy 2004 to 2007.
- ◆ Competency Framework.
- ◆ Performance Management Framework.
- ◆ Overview and Scrutiny Committee Reports.
- ◆ Executive and Scrutiny panel minutes.
- ◆ Minutes of *Improve 4U* group.
- ◆ Internal Audit Report – Review of Benefits.
- ◆ Sample Business Plans.
- ◆ *News and Views, Bin Thinking, Borough News and Have Your Say* .

- ◆ Tatton Community Group – Annual Report 2004/05.
- ◆ Tenants Handbook.
- ◆ Working Together – Chorley and South Ribble Compact (undated).
- ◆ Contact Centre Project Plans.

## List of people interviewed

The inspection team observed the operation of the Council's one-stop shop and the work of the customer scrutiny panel. The team visited the All Seasons leisure centre, Tatton community centre, and Buckshaw Village. The team also spoke to a range of people involved with the Council.

Paul Morris	Group Director
Judy Daniels	Chorley Disability Forum
Hasina Khan	Asian Women's Forum
Steve Lomas	Head of Housing Service
Dave Price	Revenues and Benefits Manager
Darren Cranshaw	Parish Council representative on Chorley LSP
John Lechmere	Head of Environmental Services
Susan Edwards	Coppull Parish Clerk
Roger Handscombe	Head of Property Services/DDA Lead Officer
Max Allam	Chorley Muslim Welfare Society
Tim Rignall	Head of Corporate and Policy Services
Keith Allen	Head of Public Space Services
Eileen Bee	Co-ordinator – Disability Forum
Asim Khan	Assistant Head Customer Services
Helen Sutton	Customer Services Manager
Jamie Carson	Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
Mark Snaylam	Contracts Manager, Contract Manager, Leisure
Tim Murphy	Head of IT
Jim Douglas	Assistant Head of Office Support Services
Steve Pearce	Assistant Head of Democratic Services

Andy Roden	Consultant, Northgate – one-stop shop technology
Shelley Riston	Communications Officer
Stella Walsh	Borough and Parish Councillor; Chair of Scrutiny Panel
Cllr Edgerley	Executive Member, Customers Policy and Performance
Paul Hepburn	Lancashire County SCC project
Susan Edwards	Parish Council clerk
Tom Watson and Liz Morey	Tatton Community Centre
Jane Meek	Head of Regeneration
Derek Leech	Chair Tenants Forum
Jane Stafford and Sam Winckley	Customer Services
Barbara Charnock	ICT Services – Business Analyst
Andy Brown	Greenspace Co-ordinator
Dave Bradley and Carol Rosco	Environmental Services
Sarah Dobson and Lindsay Parr	Corporate and policy services
Denise Fletcher	HR
Cindy Lowthian	Lancashire CC Senior District Partnership Officer
Leah Pearce	Benefits officer
Charlie Vosen	Housing services
Lincoln Shields	Chorley LSP
Claire Forum	Chorley LSP
Jan Stanley	Chorley LSP
Steve Ashley	Chorley LSP
John Cree	Chorley LSP

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**QUARTERLY  
BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  
2005/06  
MONITORING REPORT TO EXECUTIVE  
CABINET  
As at End June 2005**



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**INTRODUCTION**

This monitoring report sets out performance against the ODPM Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) for the year ending 31 March 06. This report shows performance for the first quarter, 1 April to 30 June 05.




This is one of two quarterly monitoring reports to be received by Executive Cabinet. This report monitors BVPI's, the other monitors Corporate KPI's.

Bi-monthly Business Plan monitoring statements will also be produced by Units separately. The first will be available shortly.



**INTERPRETATION**

**Performance Symbols**

Symbols are used in the monitoring tables to provide a quick guide to how the Council is performing against a particular indicator:

-  = Performance is hitting or better than the target set for 2005/06.
-  = Performance is within tolerance. It is better than last year but below target.
-  = Performance is significantly worse than planned; it is worse than last year.

The performance symbols denote year to date performance against the target. The targets have been profiled across the year to give a reasonable comparison to use in assessing performance.

Some indicators are new so have no targets. To avoid the  the target has been estimated from the actual performance. They will always display the  symbol. This position will regularly be reviewed to establish better targets as soon as is practical.

**Notes of Clarification**

Section	Indicator	Comments
Corporate Health	BV009 Council Tax Collected	The figure reported is the % of the total debit that has been collected at the end of each month. The targets will change monthly.
	BV010 NNDR Collected	The figure reported is the % of the total debit that has been collected at the end of each month. The targets will change monthly.
	BV011 – BV017 HR Indicators	These figures are a year to date figure.

## PERFORMANCE DATA TABLES

**Corporate Health** – See page 5

**Community Safety**– See page 6



**Leisure and Culture** – See page 7

**Planning and Land Charges** – See page 8







**Environment** – See page 9





**Housing and Council Tax Benefits** – See page 10






**Housing** – See page 11



Some indicators are new so have no targets. To avoid the  the target has been estimated from the actual performance for the period. They will always display the  symbol. This position will regularly be reviewed to establish better targets as soon as is practical.

Corporate Health			
	Perf to Date	Perf vs Target	Year End Target
BV008 % Invoices paid within 30 days	81.35		96.00
BV009 % Council Tax collected	30.15		98.60
BV010 % NNDR collected	30.78		98.60
BV011a.02 Women in top 5% earners	20.83		23.00
BV011b.02 Black/ethnic in top 5%	0.00		0.50
BV011c.05 Top 5%: with a disability	8.33		8.71
BV012 Days / shifts lost to sickness	2.40		8.90
BV014 % Early retirements	0.21		0.17
BV015 % Ill health retirements	0.00		0.17
BV016a % Disabled employees	3.44		3.55
BV017a % Ethnic minorities employees	1.53		1.45
BV156 % LA public buildings - disabled	78.00		88.00
BV157 % e-government	92.40		100.00

Housing & Council Tax Benefits			
	Perf to Date	Perf vs Target	Year End Target
BV078a Ave time new claims (Cal days)	28.90		28.50
BV078b Ave time for changes (Cal days)	9.90		8.50
BV079a % Benefit calculations correct	99.20		98.00
BV076a Number of claimants visited	205.00		200.00
BV076c Number of fraud investigations	56.00		40.00
BV076d Number prosecutions & sanctions	14.24		9.00

Housing			
	Perf to Date	Perf vs Target	Year End Target
BV066a.05 % Rent Collected / Rent Owed	96.96		98.90
BV212.05 Average Time to Re-let	58.96		30.00
Homelessness			
	Perf to Date	Perf vs Target	Year End Target
BV183a Length of stay in B&B accom'n	0.00		0.00
BV183b Length of stay in hostel accom'n	3.82		12.00

Planning			
	Perf to Date	Perf vs Target	Year End Target
PL BV106 % New homes on brownfield sites	39.60		50.00
BV109a.02 % Planning apps - major	80.00		60.00
BV109b.02 % Planning apps - minor	78.00		65.00
BV109c.02 % Planning apps - other	90.00		80.00
Land Charges			
	Perf to Date	Perf vs Target	Year End Target
BV179 % standard searches in 10 days	93.09		100.00

Waste & Cleanliness			
	Perf to Date	Perf vs Target	Year End Target
BV082ai.05 % H'hold Waste Recycled	13.53		15.00
BV082bi.05 % H'hold Waste Compost	26.61		20.00

Culture - Visits to Astley Hall			
	Perf to Date	Perf vs Target	Year End Target
BV170a Visits to / usage of museums	77.50	★	169.10
BV170b Visits to museums in person	53.43	★	149.00
BV170c Pupils visiting museums and galleries	435.00	●	2100.00



Community Safety			
	Perf to Date	Perf vs Target	End of Year Target
BV126a Domestic Burglaries/1000 h'holds	1.75	★	8.45
BV128a Vehicle Crimes per 1000 pop	1.99	★	9.45
BV174 Racial incidents per 1000 pop	3.00	★	18.00
BV175 Racial incidents - further action	100.00	★	100.00

New Community Safety Indicators		
	Perf to Date	Perf vs Target
BV127a.05 Violent Crime / 1,000 pop.	4.29	●
BV127b.05 Robberies / 1,000 pop.	0.05	●

## **COMMENTS ON POOR PERFORMANCE**

### **Corporate Health**

#### **BV008 % invoices processed within 30 days**

The introduction of the new finance system had resulted in a temporary downturn in performance, particularly in April 05, as individuals become used to the new working arrangements. Performance is improving month on month with July's figures showing a further improvement. The Director of Finance expects this trend to continue over the coming months.

#### **BV11a Women in top 5%**

There will be turnover in Senior Management Group, and it is anticipated that there is the potential to achieve the target by year end.

#### **BV16a % Disabled employees**

There will be turnover of staff, and it is anticipated that there is the potential to achieve the target by year end.

### **Housing**

#### **BV066a % rent collected/rent owed**

The year to date figure is 1.94% below target. This is due to people paying at outlying sites e.g. the post office. Payments are only credited to their rent accounts 3 or 4 days later, which shows as a temporary arrears at month end. Also, May was a five week month, which affects the monthly figures adversely.

#### **BV212 Average time to relet homes**

The time taken to bring homes up to the Lettable Standard is greater due to more stringent standards of presentation than has been the case in the past. Initiatives are being introduced to improve the position and in-month figures show that the average time is reducing.

### **Planning and Land Charges**

#### **BV179 % standard searches in 10 days**

Delays in Planning in completing their part of the searches have contributed to this figure. This is currently being rectified.

## **COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC INDICATORS**

### **New Indicators**

It is very difficult to set a target for an indicator which has never been monitored before. As a temporary arrangement, the actual performance is also entered as the target, to show performance as on track. As a result, there is no year end target.

#### **BV127a Violent Crime per 1,000 population and 127b Robberies per 1,000 population**

This indicator is new for 2005/06. The first year will be used to establish a baseline figure against which future performance will be measured. The target is to reduce the 2005/06 level of violent crime by 10% over the following three years.

#### **BV211a,b Repairs and maintenance expenditure.**

This indicator is new for 2005. Systems will be in place to collect the information for the next and remaining quarters of the year.

#### **BV218a,b Abandoned vehicles**

This is a new indicator for 2005/6, and ODPM has only recently decided that Districts should collect this indicator. At present, current systems make this indicator time consuming to collect. Systems are being investigated to try to find a less time consuming collation method. Due to the work pressures of introducing the alternate weekly collections, calculation of this indicator has been deferred. A figure will be produced next quarter.

### **Further Information**

For further information, please contact:  
Lindsay Parr Ext 5341, Jenny Rowlands Ext 5248, Sarah Dobson Ext 5325.

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**QUARTERLY  
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  
2005/06  
MONITORING REPORT TO EXECUTIVE  
CABINET**

**As at End June 2005**



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## INTRODUCTION

This monitoring report sets out performance against the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the year ending 31 March 06. This report shows performance for the first quarter, 1 April to 30 June 05.

This is one of two quarterly monitoring reports to be received by Executive Cabinet. This report monitors Corporate KPI's, the other monitors BVPI's.

Bi-monthly Business Plan monitoring statements will also be produced by Units separately. The first will be available shortly.

KPI's fall into three main types:

1. CORPORATE KPI's – Performance indicators which are used to monitor the Corporate Plan. These may be BVPI's or locally defined indicators.
2. BEST VALUE KPI's – National indicators collected in accordance with definitions issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. These are prefixed by BV in the monitoring tables that follow.
3. LOCAL KPI's – Locally defined performance indicators which are used to monitor performance within a Unit. These have a two character prefix denoting the service unit to which they relate. Indicators prefixed with CBC monitor corporate performance and are not attributable to one particular Unit.

CD CuDOSS  
 CP Corporate and Policy Services  
 LC Leisure and Cultural Services  
 ER Economic Regeneration  
 EN Environmental Services  
 FN Finance  
 HS Housing Services  
 HR Human Resources  
 IT Information Technology  
 LG Legal Services  
 PL Planning Services  
 PR Property Services  
 PS Public Space Services  
 CBC Corporate

## INTERPRETATION

### Performance Symbols

Symbols are used in the monitoring tables to provide a quick guide to how the Council is performing against a particular indicator:



=

Performance is hitting or better than the target set for 2005/06.



=



Performance is within tolerance. It is better than last year but below target.



=

Performance is significantly worse than planned and is worse than last year.

The performance symbols denote year to date performance against the target. The targets have been profiled across the year to give a reasonable comparison to use in assessing performance.

Some indicators are new so have no targets. To avoid the  symbol, the target has been estimated from the actual performance. They will always display the  symbol. This position will regularly be reviewed to establish better targets as soon as is practical.

**Comparative Data**

Where available, the quartile data is shown for BVPI's. All England Best and Worst quartiles for March 2004 are the latest available.

PI's prefixed CBC or with Unit initials do not have any quartile information, as quartile information is only available for national indicators. Within the data tables, the indicators without quartile data have been separated. If none of the indicators on a page have quartile data, the quartile columns have been removed.

**Notes of Clarification**

Section	Indicator	Comments
Corporate Health	BV009 Council Tax Collected	The figure reported is the % of the total debit that has been collected at the end of each month. The targets will change monthly.
	BV011 – BV017 HR Indicators	These figures are a year to date figure.

**Preferred Direction of Travel**

The preferred direction of travel for some measures is unclear.

Section	Indicator	Preferred Direction of Travel
Capacity	CBC005 % Budget spent at year end (forecast)	Target is best
Greener	BV106 % New homes built on brownfield sites	Bigger is better
	BV 63 Average SAP rating of LA dwellings	Bigger is better
Corporate Health	BV014 Early retirements	Smaller is better
	BV015 Ill Health retirements	Smaller is better



## PERFORMANCE DATA TABLES

**Customer** – See page 6

**Capacity** – See page 7



**Greener** – See page 8



**Cleaner** – See page 9

**Safer** – See page 10





**Corporate Health** – See page 11

The KPI's which follow were agreed at SMG for the year April 05 – March 06. Any annual KPI's have not been included.

Some indicators are new so have no targets. To avoid the  the target has been estimated from the actual performance for the period. They will always display the  symbol. This position will regularly be reviewed to establish better targets as soon as is practical.

CBC Customer - Cumulative							
Quarterly Perf		April	May	June	Target 05/06	Best Q 03/04	Worst Q 03/04
	BV008 % Invoices paid within 30 days	69.69	76.06	81.35	96.00	95.90	88.00
	BV156 % LA public buildings - disabled	78.00	78.00	78.00	88.00	64.83	21.01

CBC Capacity - Cumulative							
Quarterly Perf		April	May	June	Year End Target	Best Q 03/04	Worst Q 03/04
★	BV009 % Council Tax collected	11.14	20.60	30.15	99.00	98.29	97.90
●	BV012 Days / shifts lost to sickness	0.83	1.62	2.40	8.00	8.90	13.45
CBC Capacity - Twice Yearly							
1st Period Perf		June	Year End Target				
★	HR001 % Staff with Completed Performance Reviews	80.00	80.00				

CBC Greener - Cumulative					
Quarterly Perf		April	May	June	Year End Target
	PL BV106 % New homes on brownfield sites	43.30	45.60	39.60	50.00
	CBC008.05 % waste recycled/composted	36.83	38.21	40.14	35.00
CBC Greener - Quarterly					
Quarterly Perf		1st Qtr	Year End Target		
	PR008a: Energy Consumption: Gas	52.00	50.00		
	PR008b: Energy Consumption- Electricity	91.40	91.00		

CBC Cleaner - 'in month'					
Quarterly Perf		April	May	June	Year End Target
●	CBC011 CALC % graffiti removed 28WD	83.00	100.00	100.00	90.00
●	CBC012.05 Racist/offensive graffiti 2WD	100.00	100.00	86.00	100.00
CBC Cleaner - Cumulative					
Quarterly Perf		April	May	June	Year End Target
★	EN001.05 % Fly tipping removed 2 WD	83.00	82.00	86.00	75.00

CBC Safer - 'in month'					
Quarterly Perf		April	May	June	Year End Target
★	BV126a Domestic Burglaries/1000 h'holds	0.52	0.52	0.71	8.45
★	BV128a Vehicle Crimes per 1000 pop	0.63	0.58	0.78	9.45
New Community Safety Indicator					
Quarterly Perf		April	May	June	
●	BV127a.05 Violent Crime / 1,000 pop.	1.40	1.45	1.44	

CBC Corporate Health - 'in-month'							
Quarterly Perf		Apr	May	June	Year End Target	Best Q 03/04	Worst Q 03/04
	BV008 % Invoices paid within 30 days	69.69	76.06	81.35	96.00	95.90	88.00
	BV011a.02 Women in top 5% earners	21.74	20.83	20.83	23.00	39.05	17.45
	BV011b.02 Black/ethnic in top 5%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	3.70	0.00
	BV014 % Early retirements	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.17	0.17	0.83
	BV015 % Ill health retirements	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.17	0.54
	BV156 % LA public buildings - disabled	78.00	78.00	78.00	88.00	64.83	21.01
	BV157 % e-government	92.37	92.37	92.40	100.00	74.00	52.30
CBC Corporate Health - 'in-month' (no quartile data)							
Quarterly Perf		Apr	May	June	Year End Target		
	BV011c.05 Top 5%: with a disability	8.70	8.33	8.33	8.71		
	BV016a % Disabled employees	3.50	3.47	3.44	3.55		
	BV017a % Ethnic minorities employees	1.55	1.54	1.53	1.45		
CBC Corporate Health - Cumulative							
Quarterly Perf		Apr	May	June	Year End Target	Best Q 03/04	Worst Q 03/04
	BV009 % Council Tax collected	11.14	20.60	30.15	98.60	98.29	96.00
	BV010 % NNDR collected	13.78	21.72	30.78	98.60	99.10	97.82
	BV012 Days / shifts lost to sickness	0.83	1.62	2.40	8.90	8.90	11.67

## **COMMENTS ON POOR PERFORMANCE**

### **Customer**

#### **BV008 % invoices processed within 30 days**

The introduction of the new finance system had resulted in a temporary downturn in performance, particularly in April 05, as individuals become used to the new working arrangements. Performance is improving month on month with July's figures showing a further improvement. The Director of Finance expects this trend to continue over the coming months.

### **Corporate Health**

#### **BV11a Women in top 5%**

There will be turnover in Senior Management Group, and it is anticipated that there is the potential to achieve the target by year end.

#### **BV16a % Disabled employees**

There will be turnover of staff, and it is anticipated that there is the potential to achieve the target by year end.

## **COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC INDICATORS**

### **Customer**

#### **CD001 Satisfaction with the Contact Centre**

As the Contact Centre only went live in June, there is no information for the first quarter. There will be a figure for the second quarter.

### **Capacity**

#### **CBC 005 % Budget spent – year end forecast**

Figures will not be available until July as the first three months of the year are spent closing the previous year's accounts.

### **Safer**

#### **BV127a Violent Crime per 1,000 population**

This indicator is new for 2005/06. The first year will be used to establish a baseline figure against which future performance will be measured. The target is to reduce the 2005/06 level of violent crime by 10% over the following three years.

As a temporary arrangement, the actual performance is also entered as the target, to show performance as on track. As a result, there is no year end target.



**Further Information**

For further information, please contact:

Lindsay Parr Ext 5341, Jenny Rowlands Ext 5248, Sarah Dobson Ext 5325.

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Executive Member for Housing & Neighbourhood Renewal	Executive Cabinet	8 September 2005

## AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION – DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- Following the transfer of the Right to Buy function from CUDOS to the Housing Services Unit on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2004 and the introduction of the Housing Act 2004 it is now necessary to make amendments to appendix 2, item 13 of the Constitution – delegated authority to the Head of Housing Services to include the following:
  - Decisions under the Right of First Refusal
  - Consent to family members/spouses being added to right to buy applications.
  - Consent to family members without relevant qualifying time being added to applications.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the corporate priority of serving our customers better.

### RISK ISSUES

- The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy		Information	
Reputation	✓	Regulatory/Legal	✓
Financial	✓	Operational	✓
People	✓	Other	

- There are legal requirements to be met the Council under the Right to Buy Legislation, which may have financial implications. Ultimately decisions made will reflect on the Councils reputation.

**BACKGROUND**

5. Following the transfer of the Right to Buy function to the Housing Services Department on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2004 and changes resulting from the Housing Act 2004 it is necessary for the Head of Housing Services to make decisions on various matters relating to the Right to Buy Scheme within a Government designated time scale.

- **Right of first Refusal** became law on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2005. As a result of these regulations all Council owned properties sold since 17<sup>th</sup> January 2005 have to be offered back to the Council should the owners wish to dispose of them within the first 10 years. The Council then has eight weeks to either purchase the property or nominate another Social Landlord who has shown an interest in purchasing the property. Should the council not adhere to the government timescale the property will be lost as Social Housing and can be sold on the open market.
- **Consent to add family members** - Under section 123 of the Housing Act 1985 the Council may consent to any family member/spouse being added to the application in order to share in the right to buy, when they were not initially included on the Right to Buy application. In addition the landlord may also consent to family members who have not lived at the property for the pre-requisite 12-month qualifying period to share the right to buy.

Currently as a result of Minute 305 of the Housing Committee 1989 the delegated powers to add persons onto Right to Buy Applications lies with the Head of Legal Services. Taking into consideration the number of applications received and the operational problems caused by this delegation it is more appropriate that this authority is passed to the Head of Housing Services as the Right To Buy function now lies fully within that unit.

**COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

8. HR are in support of the proposals contained in this report.

**COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

9. There are no financial implications resulting from the contents of this report

**COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OR LEGAL SERVICES**

10 It would be more effective and an efficient use of resources for both the proposed delegations to be given to the Head of Housing Services.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

11. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing Services:

- To consent on behalf of the Council to the addition of family members onto Right to Buy applications were they were either not included originally or they do not fulfil the 12 month residency requirement.
- To act on the behalf of the Council in respect of offers/requests received under the Right of First Refusal.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**  
**(If the recommendations are accepted)**

- 12. The Right to Buy function now resides fully within the Housing Services Unit and therefore all decisions made with regard to it should be made within the Housing Services Unit.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 13. Individual applications would have to be referred to Executive Cabinet for consideration.

STEVE LOMAS  
 HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

<b>Background Papers</b>			
<b>Document</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>File</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
Housing Act 1985 Housing Act 2004 The Housing (Right of First Refusal) (England) Regulations 2005	1985 2004 10 <sup>th</sup> August 2005	RTB1 RTB1 RTB1A	Union Street

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Susan Good	5565	19 <sup>th</sup> August 2005	

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Head of Economic Regeneration (Introduced by the Executive Member for Life and Leisure)	Executive Cabinet	08/09/05

## ASTLEY PARK – APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL TEAM

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To seek approval to re-appoint Chris Burnett Associates and Allen Todd Architects as lead consultants on the Astley Park Restoration Project.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the corporate priorities of cleaner, greener, safer.

### RISK ISSUES

- The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy		Information	
Reputation	✓	Regulatory/Legal	
Financial	✓	Operational	✓
People		Other	

- The issue for Members is whether the Council will achieve best value if the consultants who have been working on the project for the last five years are re-appointed or whether this can now only be achieved by going through the tender process.

### BACKGROUND

- Over the last few years the Council have used Chris Burnett Associates – Landscape Consultants as the lead consultants and Allen Todd Architects as the Architectural advisors at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the bid process. They were appointed in 2000 following interviews and tender selection process to put together the Stage 1 bid. This included Surveys, Master plan and Outline Business Plan. They were re-appointed in May 2004 to put together the Stage 2 application which was approved in March this year.
- Following the Stage 2 approval your officers have been in discussion with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and their project management consultants on the best way to implement the project. The main concern is that we achieve best value.
- The options are to go out to tender, interview and appoint new consultants or re-appoint Chris Burnett Associates and his team to lead the project.
- The first option would enable the Council to test the market and see if the costs of the project could be reduced. However, the project would be delayed for approximately 4 to 6 months in order to carry out the tender, interview and appointment of the consultants. If



new consultants were appointed the project would be further delayed as they come up to speed on the project.

- 9. The HLF scrutinised the figures at Stage 2 of the bid which were also capped at Stage 1. Consequently I doubt whether significant savings would be found.
- 10. The appointment of Chris Burnett Associates and his team would reduce the time needed before development commenced on site as they have detailed knowledge of the park and the buildings and the issues which relate to them.
- 11. The HLF and their consultants have no objection to the re-appointment of the consultants but have asked that in order to help ensure best value that we compare the fee scales for similar commissions. Although it is difficult to compare different projects we have compared the percentage fees being charged by our consultants and other consultants on other projects.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Consultants Fees</b>
Astley Park	9.95%
Georgian Theatre	10.0%
 <u>Landscape</u>	
Astley Park	15%
Cuerden Valley Park	16%

- 12. Although this is a snapshot, the fees being charged are generally in line if not slightly cheaper.

**COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 13. I do not consider it would be an efficient use of the procurement process to have to re-tender for consultants at this stage of the project. Rule 17 of the current Contract Procedure Rules already provides in respect of the appointment of consultants, that in circumstances requiring flexibility or where there are specialised needs, the relevant service head may agree alternative arrangements with the Director of Finance.

**COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

- 14. There are no apparent HR implications to this report.

**COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

- 15. The level of fees for the consultants is consistent with those included in the HLF grant application. By delaying the project for between 4 and 6 months for the appointment of new consultants we would not be operating in the most efficient manner, and would run the risk of over-running on the project as a whole. Any costs associated with an over-run would be the responsibility of the Council.

**CONCLUSION**



16. In view of the knowledge and expertise which Chris Burnett Associates and his team bring to the project, combined with the fact that the cost of the project is capped and the fact that the fees are in line with those charged elsewhere, I feel that it would be appropriate to appoint Chris Burnett Associates and Allen Todd Architects as lead consultants on the restoration of the park.

### RECOMMENDATION

17. That Chris Burnett Associates and Allen Todd Architects should be appointed as lead consultants on the restoration of Astley Park.
18. That the Council enter into a contract with the professional team to deliver the project as set out in the Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

JANE MEEK  
HEAD OF ECONOMIC REGENERATION

<b>Background Papers</b>			
<b>Document</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>File</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
Astley Park Stage II Implementation	March 2005	Astley Park Stage II	Gillibrand St Offices

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Jane Meek	5285		REGENREP/90074JM2

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Head of Environmental Services (Introduced by the Executive Member for Environment and Community Safety)	Executive Cabinet	08/09/05

## CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS & ENVIRONMENT ACT 2005

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To approve the delegations and authorisations to the Head of Environmental Services necessary for the enforcement of various sections of the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report is relevant to the “cleaner” corporate priority of the Council.

### RISK ISSUES

- The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy		Information	
Reputation		Regulatory/Legal	✓
Financial		Operational	✓
People		Other	

- The risk / consequences of not adopting the provisions of The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 ('The Act') would be that Environmental Services officers would be unable to perform its statutory functions of investigating matters dealt with by the act.

There are potential resource implications with adopting the provisions, however it is envisaged that in the short term this work can be absorbed within Environmental Services existing staffing structure and budget. In the medium term the resource requirements will be considered in late 2005 alongside the waste management structure review following the introduction of the Enhanced Recycling Service.

### BACKGROUND

- The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill was published on 8 December 2004 and received Royal Assent on 7 April 2005. The act is a result of DEFRA's review of the legislative framework for providing and maintaining a clean and safe local environment to accompany the Cross-Government report *Living Places- Cleaner, Safer, Greener*.
- This is a report on the sections of the act that are relevant to the Environmental Services Unit, some sections provide new powers and others extend existing powers to new areas.

Most of the measures will be commenced by an order of the Secretary of State in spring 2006. However the following provisions came into effect on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2005 : -

7. **PART 2: VEHICLES** - Nuisance Parking Offences

7.1 Section 3- Selling Vehicles on a Road

The offence of selling vehicles on the road is intended to target those people who run a business selling motor vehicles and use the road as a mock showroom. This behaviour is unfair to local residents who are thereby deprived of using the road themselves to park vehicles and go about their daily lives. It is not intended to target individual private sellers of single vehicles, but the nuisance that is caused by the presence of numbers of vehicles being offered for sale by the same person or business.

This is why the offence may only be committed where there are two or more vehicles being offered for sale. It is recognised that a private individual may at one time or another have more than one car to sell and decide to offer them by parking them close together on a road, but it is anticipated that this will only happen on rare occasions.

7.2 Section 4- Repairing Vehicles on a Road

The offence of repairing a vehicle is also aimed primarily at those that act irresponsibly as part of a business and which are attempting to use the road as a mock workshop. It is not intended to target private individuals who are carrying out minor work to their vehicles (unless the repairs cause annoyance to persons in the vicinity), or those who carry out necessary work to vehicles by the side of the road in order to get them moving again after a breakdown or accident (such as breakdown organisations and mobile mechanics), provided the work is completed within 72 hours.

7.3 Section 5- Liability of Directors

This section aims to ensure that directors and officers of companies (corporate bodies) and others who are in similar positions do not shirk the responsibilities of their business. It introduces personal liability for the offences for directors and officers and others acting or purporting to act in such a capacity. This is in addition to the company being liable. It applies to both new offences set out in section 3 and 4.

The fixed penalty offence regime for these vehicle-related offences will not be enacted until spring of 2006 and therefore prosecution will be the only remedy up to this date. It is proposed, in accordance with DEFRA advice, to use the period up to the fixed penalty notice introduction to make residents and traders aware of the new provision and only prosecute in serious and repeat cases.

8. **PART 3: LITTER & REFUSE**

8.1 Section 18- Extension of litter offences to all open places

Under the previous version of section 87 of the 1990 Act it was an offence to drop litter on land to which the public have access, but not to drop it onto other land or into water. The revised section 87 makes it an offence to drop litter onto or into all types of land and water, including the sea down to the low-water mark.

This will resolve the anomalies within the previous legislation, under which it was illegal to fly-tip on private land, but not to drop litter, and it was an offence to drop litter on a public footpath, but not to throw it into a neighbouring garden.

8.2 Section 27- Definition of Litter

Section 27 clarifies that discarded smoking materials and chewing gum are litter. The Government believes that these materials are already litter, as defined in the 1990 Act, but section 27 confirm to practitioners and the courts that this is the case.

9. The sections of the following provisions that came into force on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2005 are administration amendments only: -

- **Part 4: Graffiti and Other Defacement** – Section 33
- **Part 5: Waste**- Sections 35, 36, 40, 41 & 54
- **Part 7: Noise**- Section 83
- **Part 9: Miscellaneous**- Section 105

10. **The remaining substantial provisions of the Act are due to be enacted by Ministerial Order in 2006 when a further report will be submitted about the use of the additional range of powers and duties, which could have resource implications for the Council. These include:**

Nuisance vehicle fixed penalty offence regime.

Abandoned vehicle fixed penalty notice regime.

Local discretion to fix the amount of certain fixed penalties and the introduction of powers to require names and addresses of offenders.

Repeal of the litter control provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and their replacement by a streamlined system of litter clearing notices and a fixed penalty offence system to support this.

Designation of areas where the free distribution of printed materials will be prohibited.

The extension of graffiti removal notices to fly posting.

Introduction of a fixed penalty offence for failing to follow directions as to the use of waste and recycling containers.

Repealing the provisions of the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 and its replacement by a more comprehensive system of Dog Control Orders.

Termination of the Police responsibility for stray dogs.

Powers to designate areas as alarm notification areas requiring the registration with the Local Authority of nominated keyholders for buildings fitted with audible intruder alarms.

Improving powers of entry for the silencing of audible intruder alarms.

Including insects and artificial lighting within the Statutory Notice regime of s79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

10. Having consulted with the Head of Environmental Services regarding this interim report, I am satisfied that the immediate Human Resources issues will be addressed in this financial year. However, members should be aware that when the remaining provisions listed at point 10 above are enacted, there will be substantial capacity and training issues that will need to be resolved.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

11. Will be reported at the meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

12. It is recommended that:

The the Council be recommended to give approval to the following Executive Functions being allocated to the Head of Environmental Services under Executive Arrangements made pursuant to Section 15 of the Local Government Act 2000 and been discharged by them under that Section:

The functions of:

- i) authorising the service of notices and the taking of consequential action, including carrying out work in default and the recovery of costs;
- ii) issuing formal cautions;
- iii) recommending to the Director of Legal Services the institution of legal proceedings; and
- iv) authorising officers to exercise statutory powers of entry (including obtaining warrants),

Pursuant to Sections 3 and 4 of The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

13. To permit the Head of Environmental Services to use the discretionary powers of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 in force from 7 June 2005.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

14. No alternatives were considered since these would not meet the Councils corporate priorities.

CHIEF OFFICER NAME – MR JOHN LECHMERE

CHIEF OFFICER DESIGNATION – HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Paul Carter	5738	***	ADMINREP/REPORT

Report of	Meeting	Date
Report of Head of Corporate and Policy Services, introduced by Cllr T. Brown Executive Member for Community Safety.	Executive Cabinet	8/9/05

## DELIVERING THE DRUGS STRATEGY WITHIN LANCASHIRE

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To seek a decision from Executive Cabinet on a request for funding from Lancashire Drug Action Team (DLAT) in respect of the countywide Enhanced Arrest Referral Scheme.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to reducing drug misuse and offending behaviour which has obvious links to the Council's "Greener, Cleaner, Safer" priority.

### RISK ISSUES

- The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy – See point 4	✓	Information	
Reputation		Regulatory/Legal	
Financial – See point 6	✓	Operational – See point 5	✓
People		Other	

- The current Community Safety Strategy contains the aim of minimising the impact of substance misuse on feelings of safety within the Borough. In pursuing this aim the strategy seeks to support the achievement of the performance targets within the National Drugs Strategy. The decision required will therefore, impact on the achievement of this strategic aim.
- All Districts within the County have been asked to contribute to the Arrest Referral Scheme. Indications from Lancashire Constabulary are that the scheme will be withdrawn from areas that are not able to financially support it. Clearly, therefore, there is a potential operational risk attached to the required decision.
- The financial risk relates to the fact that a contribution is sought for the three year period 2005/06 to 2007/08. Currently there is no identified budgetary provision to support the scheme.

### BACKGROUND

- The Arrest Referral programme is a scheme that was introduced across Lancashire some years ago. It is separate to the 'Tower' scheme, but does link in to it. It also links to the prisons, probation and targets individuals who drop out of treatment projects. Its aim is to

target substance misusing individuals who have been arrested and encourage and arrange treatment for them. This enables them to access treatment and other support that is available, the aim being to break their chaotic lifestyle and bring about a long-term change. This then has a positive impact on Crime and Disorder in an area.

8. This service has been recently modified to become the Enhanced Arrest Referral Scheme, to enable the wider issues of drug and alcohol misuse to be included. It is seen as a major contributor to the attainment of the National Drugs Strategy Performance Targets in Lancashire.
9. The scheme is currently funded by agencies across Lancashire who support the scheme.
10. In 2002/03 Executive Cabinet agreed to support the scheme by way of a virement from the Corporate and Policy Services Revenue Budget. Subsequently a growth item was included in the Council's budget considerations for 2003/04 which requested funding for the scheme for the three year period 2003/04 – 2005/06. In setting its budget the Council decided not to accept the growth item and no contribution was made to arrest referral. In order to secure a continuation of the service in Chorley the Chorley Community Safety Partnership agreed to support the scheme with external funding. This option no longer exists.

#### **ENHANCED ARREST REFERRAL REQUEST FOR FUNDING**

11. Over the previous six months nearly 300 people were offered access to the scheme, 60 of which accepted interventions. Those not accepting treatment were given advice on the harmful effects of recreational drug and alcohol use. The funding requested will be directed to the first and most important access point, arrest/enhanced referral. The contribution will help to provide an enhanced arrest referral worker (EARW) who will adopt a proactive outreach approach to the work. The benefits of this would include greater levels of engagement by encouraging drug using offenders to attend treatment interventions. Other aspects of the role would include linking closely with the Courts Drug Support Worker to ensure consistency of service delivery at every stage from arrest to sentence. The role would also be extended to involve liaison with prison colleagues in relevant sentences and remands into custody. Working closely with the Drugs Intervention Programme Case Management Co-ordinator, the worker would track individuals to ensure they were engaging in services. If an individual has re-offended or dropped out of treatment the worker would facilitate re-engagement.
12. The funding will also contribute to the delivery of a number of specialist interventions, such as, fast tracking drug using offenders into a specialist crack cocaine project, structured day care, housing, and other appropriate schemes. All the above has been detailed in the enhanced arrest referral plan and placed before the locality joint commissioning group – the plan was approved. In essence, the funding will help to provide a robust arrest/enhanced referral scheme that aims to reduce the potential harm caused by drug misusing offenders
13. LDAT is requesting that Chorley Borough Council contributes £5,000.00 for the financial year 2005/06 towards the scheme. Members should note that this is an ongoing programme and could consider agreeing to contribute for a three-year period.
14. Failure to invest will result in a removal of service within Chorley, which will have an impact on our own and our partner agency priorities.
15. As part of the budget process for 2005/06 the Council created a Community Safety budget of £18,000 to support projects and initiatives. members may wish to consider whether they would wish to support the Enhanced Arrest Referral Scheme from the budget.



**COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

16. This report has no apparent HR implications.

**COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

17. There is no provision in the base budget to finance this. If Members are minded to support the request the necessary monies will need to be identified from within current cash budgets.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

18. Executive Cabinet is requested to determine whether or not to support the request for funding for the Enhanced Arrest Referral Scheme during the period 2005/06-2007/08.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

19. None.

TIM RIGNALL  
HEAD OF CORPORATE AND POLICY SERVICES

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Audrey Harrison	515335	***	CPSREP/89589JM2

<b>Background Papers</b>			
<b>Document</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>File</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
Letter from LDAT to Chorley Borough Council	22/3/05	Arrest Referral	Gillibrand St Chorley PR7 2EL

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