

## Chief Executive's Office

Please ask for: Mr A Uren  
Direct Dial: (01257) 515122  
E-mail address: tony.uren@chorley.gov.uk  
Your Ref:  
Our Ref: AU/AJS  
Doc ID:  
Date: 1 November 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 Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel is to be held in the Committee Room, Town Hall, Chorley on Tuesday, 8th November, 2005 commencing at 6.30 pm.

### AGENDA

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

Members of the Panel 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 Committee Room and not seek to influence a decision on the matter.

3. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 4 October, 2005 (enclosed).

4. **Business Plans, 2005/06 - Second Quarter Updates (Pages 5 - 16)**

The 2005/06 Business Plan updates for the period ending 30 September 2005 in respect of the Development and Regeneration Unit and the Leisure and Cultural Services Unit are enclosed for consideration.

The reports contain information on the two Units' performance against their respective Key Performance Indicators.

Continued....

5. **Public Participation in the Council's Decision Making Process - Scrutiny Inquiry**

a) **Revision of Project Outline (Scoping document)**

The Executive Cabinet, at its meeting on 8 September 2005, following its consideration of the Audit Commission's report of its Best Value Inspection on the Council's approach to Customer Access and Focus, agreed to request the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel to "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" during the present scrutiny inquiry.

The Panel is requested to consider the revision of the Project Outline document by incorporating the Executive Cabinet's request into the Inquiry's terms of reference and to determine the best means of addressing the issue.

b) **Reports on Sub-Group' Visits** (Pages 17 - 20)

The Panel, at its meeting on 4 October, agreed arrangements for identified members of the two Sub-Groups to attend the following meetings as part of the Panel's collation of evidence for the inquiry:

**Area Forums/Committees Sub-Group**

- Hyndburn Borough Council's Great Harwood Area Council meeting on 11 October;
- Pendle Borough Council's Colne Area Committee meeting on 13 October (It was subsequently not possible for Members to attend this meeting);
- South Ribble Borough Council's Bamber Bridge Area Committee meeting on 31 October (It was subsequently not possible for Members to attend this meeting).

**Public Speaking/Questions Sub-Group**

- South Ribble Borough Council's Cabinet meeting on 12 October;
- Ribble Valley Borough Council's Planning Committee meeting on 27 October;
- Hyndburn Borough Council's Planning Committee meeting on 2 November.

The Chair will invite the Members who were able to attend the meetings to report their findings on the visits and comment on the perceived effectiveness of the respective Authorities' adopted arrangements. Notes on the Sub-Groups' visits to the Great Harwood Area Council and South Ribble Council's Cabinet meetings are enclosed for information.

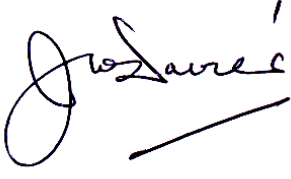
The Panel will also be requested to identify any additional visits required. Details of forthcoming meetings of neighbouring Area Forums/Committees, particularly those bodies that operate in Parish areas, will be available at the meeting.

6. **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2005/06** (Pages 21 - 22)

A copy of the 2005/06 Work Programme is enclosed for consideration.

7. **Any other item(s) that the Chair decides is/are urgent**

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive

### **Distribution**

1. Agenda and reports to all Members of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Councillor Perks (Chair), Councillors Bedford, Birchall, Buckley, Brownlee, Culshaw, Mrs Gray, Morgan, Mrs Smith and Whittaker) for attendance.
2. Agenda and reports to Head of Development and Regeneration, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and Assistant Head of Democratic Services for attendance.
3. Agenda and reports to Executive Leader (Councillor J Wilson), Deputy Leader (Councillor Edgerley), Leader of Conservative Group (Councillor P Goldsworthy), Leader of Liberal Democrat Group (Councillor K Ball) and Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Councillor J Walker) for information.
4. Agenda and reports to all remaining Chief Officers for information.
5. Agenda 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

01257 515823

کیجئے:

This page is intentionally left blank

## COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

### 4 October 2005

Present: Councillor Perks (Chairman) and Councillors Bedford, Birchall, Brownlee, Culshaw, Mrs M Gray, Morgan and Mrs I Smith.

#### 05.CoP.28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interests by Members in any of the agenda items.

#### 05.CoP.29 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 13 September 2005 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

#### 05.CoP.30 BUSINESS PLANS 2005/06 - FIRST QUARTER MONITORING STATEMENTS

The Panel were reminded that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting in November 2004, had recommended each Overview and Scrutiny body to consider the quarterly updates of the Business Plans for the services and functions following within its respective area of responsibility.

(a) Former Economic Regeneration Unit

The Head of Development and Regeneration gave an overview of the rationale behind the recent merger of the former Planning Services Unit and the Economic Regeneration Unit, highlighting the fact that the new Development and Regeneration Unit was now responsible for development control, planning policy, building control, regeneration and economic development services.

The key performance indicators (KPIs) for the functions which were formerly the remit of the Planning Services Unit would be reported to the next meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel. It was hoped, however, that the KPIs for the functions of the new Unit as a whole would be reported to one Panel at some stage in the future.

The submitted Business Plan Monitoring Statement for the Economic Regeneration function for the first quarter period of 2005/06 highlighted the major service developments and proposals being pursued by the Section. A number of questions were raised by the Members on the topics of particular concern to them (eg the derelict land reclamation programme; the Retail Strategy and Lever Park). The report also emphasised that, as all of the new Unit's KPIs were now subject to only annual measurement, no performance statistics were yet available.

The Chairman requested that details of the Unit's key performance indicators be shown on future monitoring reports in order to allow more meaningful analysis. A Member also requested information, either within or outside the Panel arena, and the progress of action taken to achieve the targets identified in the Unit's Business Plan.

(b) Leisure and Cultural Services Unit

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services presented the Business Plan Monitoring Statement for his Unit for the first quarter period for 2005/06, which highlighted the major proposals and initiatives currently being progressed by the Unit.

The Officer accepted that the new format for performance review, which required only the annual measurement of identified key performance indicators (KPIs) did not allow a full assessment of the full range of services provided by the Unit. It was conceded that the report might have included the target statistics for customer satisfaction for 2005/06 and the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services indicated that future monitoring reports could incorporate residual information on a number of KPIs in order to provide an overall view of the Unit's general performance on a quarterly basis.

In response to a Member's query, the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services reported that the annual customer satisfaction statistics for 2004/05 were still awaited, and would be reported to a future meeting of the Panel.

A Member also referred to the recent communication to members of the Panel in response to its request to be supplied with the estimated overall subsidised costs of operating the Authority's three Leisure Centres and Brinscall Pool. The Member expressed concern at the information and figures provided, which, it was claimed, were misleading. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services explained the basis of the calculations, clarifying that, while the calculations had included day-to-day maintenance costs, they had not taken account of capitalised repair costs. Because of the weakness of this performance indicator, it had been withdrawn from the list of Best Value Performance Indicators several years ago and had not since been shown in the Unit's current Business Plan.

The Chairman also queried the progress being made to implement the recommendations contained in the Panel's report on its recent scrutiny inquiry into juvenile nuisance and youth activities. In reply, the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services confirmed that his Unit was actively progressing closer collaboration with the relevant agencies and partners on whose co-operation the implementation of the recommendations would be dependent. A progress monitoring report would be presented to a future Panel meeting.

#### **05.CoP.31 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE COUNCIL'S DECISION MAKING PROCESS - SCRUTINY INQUIRY**

The Panel, at its last meeting, had set up two Sub-Groups to consider separately the following two distinct elements of the scrutiny inquiry into public participation in the Council's decision making process:

- (a) Proposals for the establishment of Area Forums/Committees;
- (b) Means of allowing members of the public to speak and/or ask questions at Council and Committee meetings.

Each of the two Sub-Groups had agreed to visit a number of neighbouring Lancashire Authorities to examine how their respective arrangements in relation to both Area Forums/Committees and public speaking were managed and operated.

A timetable of suggested visits for members of both Sub-Groups had been compiled and circulated at the meeting.

Following consultation with the Panel members present at the meeting, it was **AGREED:**

- (1) That arrangements be made with the respective Authorities for the following identified members of the two Sub-Groups to attend meetings of the following bodies as part of the Panel's collation of evidence for the inquiry:

Area Forums/Committees Sub-Group

- Visit to Hyndburn Borough Council's Great Harwood Area Council meeting on 11 October 2005 - Councillors Perks, Bedford, Brownlee and Morgan.
- Visit to Pendle Borough Council's Colne Area Committee on 13 October 2005 - Councillors Bedford and Birchall.
- Visit to South Ribble Borough Council's Bamber Bridge Area Committee on 31 October 2005 - Councillors Perks, Bedford, Birchall, Brownlee and Morgan.

Public Speaking/Questions Sub-Group

- Visit to South Ribble Borough Council's Cabinet meeting on 12 October 2005 - Councillors Perks, Mrs M Gray and Mrs I Smith.
- Visit to Ribble Valley Borough Council's Planning Committee meeting on 27 October 2005 - Councillors Perks and Culshaw.
- Visit to Hyndburn Borough Council's Planning Committee meeting on 2 November 2005 - Councillor Culshaw, Mrs M Gray and Mrs I Smith.

- (2) That the detailed arrangements for the visits agreed with the respective Authorities, together with agenda papers and venue location plans, be e-mailed to the appropriate Councillors.
- (3) That the findings of the two Sub-Groups' members on their visits to the selected Authorities be reported to the next meeting of the Panel on 8 November, when consideration can be given to the possible need for additional visits.

**05.CoP.32 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME, 2005/06**

The Panel received, for information, the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2005/06, which had been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its last meeting.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank



## **BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENTS JULY - SEPTEMBER 2005**



## BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENTS JULY – SEPTEMBER 2005




### Contents

	Page
Development and Regeneration	3 - 5
Leisure and Cultural Services	6 – 9
Development and Regeneration KPI Information	10
Leisure and Cultural Services KPI Information	11

### Note of Clarification

#### Key Performance Indicators:

Symbols and Colours are used to provide a quick guide to how Service Units are performing against Key Performance Indicators:

	=	Green KPI	Performance is better than target and the tolerances set for this indicator.
	=	Blue KPI	Performance is on track and within the tolerances set for this indicator.
	=	Red KPI	Performance is worse than target and the tolerances set for this indicator.

For further information on the way in which Performance Symbols are calculated please contact Jenny Rowlands (01257 515248) or Lindsay Parr (01257 515341) or Sarah Dobson (01257 515325) in Corporate and Policy Services.

## BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION UNIT

FOR THE PERIOD JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2005

### 1. KEY MESSAGES

The former Planning and Regeneration units have now merged and this is therefore, the first monitoring statement for the new Development and Regeneration Unit. I am currently assessing the key tasks in the two Business Plans to establish where priority needs to be focussed in the remainder of the year.

The development of a large number of external strategies e.g. RSS, RES are taking up a large amount of officer time. However we do need to respond to these if Chorley is going to benefit.

Headline performance on the Development Control targets is good with all exceeded.

The sickness absence of the Development Control Manager may affect our future performance on major planning applications and on the speed of implementation of service developments.

Progress on the new Local Development Frameworks is excellent with current milestones all met.

Building Control is very busy because of a long-term sickness absence and progress on the potential partnership with Preston and South Ribble Councils is slow

	CURRENT POSITION	FORECAST OUTTURN
Number of green KPI's	3	3
Number of blue KPI's	0	4
Number of red KPI's	0	0
Number of KPI's not yet measured	4	0

### 2. BUDGET UPDATE

The original cash budget for Regeneration for the year was £246' 000 and the forecast cash outturn is £238' 000. For Planning the original cash budget was £468, 000 and the forecast outturn is £455, 000.

### 3. SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

**Derelict Land Reclamation** - The implementations of the Big Wood Scheme have been delayed by the NWDA reducing resources to REMADE which led to the programme slipping. We are currently investigating other sources of funding which may help bring the project forward.

**Regional Strategies** - A number of regional and sub-regional strategies are currently being drawn up which the Council needs to respond to. These include the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Regional Economic Strategy, the Northern Way and the Local Transport Plan. Officers from both Economic Regeneration and Planning are working closely together to ensure that the Council's views are communicated.

**Astley Park** - Following the approval of the grant in March this year preliminary work has commenced on the Project including appointing the consultants, drawing up the contracts, the planning applications and advertising for the Project Officer.

**Economic Regeneration Strategy** - Consultants have been appointed and will report in the Autumn.

**Retail Strategy** - Consultants have been appointed and will be reporting in the Autumn.

**Countryside Recreation Strategy** - This has been put on hold pending the Economic Regeneration Strategy.

**Heritage** - Following the appointment of the Urban Designer, work has commenced on the Conservation Area Appraisal.

**Strategic Regional Site** - Work continues to bring this site forward for development. The remediation of Plot 1 is now complete and the first stage of the infrastructure is due to commence later this year.

**The two vacant GIS posts have been filled.**

4. **PERFORMANCE AGAINST UNIT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Indicator Description</b>	<b>Performance 2004/05</b>	<b>Target 2005/06</b>	<b>Performance at Sept 2005</b>	<b>Comments</b>
109a (% of major planning applications decided in less than 13 weeks)	60	60	77	109a performance will reduce as old decisions come through the system
109b (% of minor planning applications decided in less than 8 weeks)	65	65	66	
109c (% of other applications decided in less than 8 weeks)	80	80	84	
200a/b (An up to date development plan or new LDS milestones met)	YES	YES	YES	
BC4 (Building Plans determined by statutory targets)	100	100	Not currently monitored	There are currently problems with the reporting of this indicator caused by the difficulties experienced with the CAPS system. It is hoped that the implementation of a new system, which it is anticipated will be in place by November 2005, will address this issue and that from this point forward the indicator can be reported against.

5. **CONCLUSION**

Following a period of significant change the Unit is now settling down and is progressing well in its key areas.

Jane Meek  
Head of Development and Regeneration

**BUSINESS PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE  
LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES UNIT**

**FOR THE PERIOD 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL TO 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005**

**1. KEY MESSAGES**

The summer period has seen an extensive programme of activities for young people. Both the Midsummer Festival and our Get Up and Go programme attracted more visitors than in previous years.

Usage rates across all facilities are on schedule to meet targets. Usage rates at Astley Hall Museum and Art Gallery and Yarrow Valley Country Park have exceeded seasonal targets. However, we need to take corrective action to increase organised school groups visiting Astley Hall.

We have delayed the completion of the Forward Plan for Astley Hall so that we can take on board issues that emerge from the new museum accreditation process and the Heritage Lottery project in Astley Hall.

We are in discussions with the administrators of the Green Flag award scheme over Yarrow Valley Country Park's Green Flag status. The assessment score put us 1% point below the pass rate. However, we are of the opinion that some of the assessors comments in the final report are incorrect and we have asked them to look into the matter.

The following table gives you a summary of KPI performance at 30 September 2005. Note 'A', on page 2 of this statement, provides more detail about the four KPI's. As a Unit, we use 25 performance indicators – only 4 of which are our KPI's. Of the remaining 21, only school group visits at Astley Hall is falling short of target, as mentioned above.

	<b>CURRENT POSITION</b>	<b>FORECAST OUTTURN</b>
Number of green KPI's	0	4 (See note 'A')
Number of blue KPI's	0	0
Number of red KPI's	0	0
Number of KPI's not yet measured	4 (See note 'A')	0

**2. BUDGET UPDATE**

The budget monitoring report for the period is shown on the last page of this statement.

**3. SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS**

A significant amount of officer time has gone into the development of the young peoples programme. Likewise, the negotiation of the new Indoor Leisure Contract and the market testing of Duxbury Park Golf Course have taken up a significant amount of officer time. Progress is starting to be made with the wider community management programme and this will continue over the next couple of years.


4. PERFORMANCE AGAINST UNIT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Indicator Description	Performance 2004/05	Target 2005/06	Performance at 30/09/05	Comments
Young people participating in Unit activities	New indicator	To be set in 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	-	See Note 'A'
% of above young people from priority areas	New indicator	To be set in 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	-	See Note 'A'
Visits to leisure and cultural amenities	New indicator	To be set in 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	-	See Note 'A'
Satisfaction:				
Sport/leisure	65%	66%	-	See Note 'A'
Astley Hall	63%	64%	-	
Theatres/halls	58%	59%	-	
Parks/open space	76%	77%	-	

**Note 'A':** 3 of our 4 Unit KPI's are new composite indicators. In our Business Plan we said that a baseline would be established and targets set for these new indicators by 30 September 2005. We have collected the data up to the end of September but the task of setting targets has slipped into the third quarter. We need to do further work to ensure that we are counting young peoples visits consistently to ensure that the indicator is robust for future usage. The fourth indicator is an annual survey of satisfaction and will be reported at the end of the third quarter.

5. CONCLUSION

The first 6 months of 2005/06 has seen significant progress made against the Unit's Business Plan.



Signature:

JAMIE CARSON  
 HEAD OF LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

**SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006****LEISURE & CULTURAL SERVICES****SEPTEMBER 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

Transfer from contingency

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 leisure 32

## INCOME

Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved

Arts officer funding (17)

Savings on indoor Leisure contract (65)

FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2005/2006 1,035**Key Assumptions**

Expenditure &amp; income will be in line with budgets

**Key Issues/Variables**



**Key Actions**

Line by line review was conducted with the Head of Service on 24/10/2005.

Arising from the meeting were a number of issues that budget holders will be reviewing and feeding in to the monitoring report for October.

The new Indoor Leisure Contract is expected to come into force on 01/11/2005.

DR Unit Key Performance Indicators - Monthly								
Unit Key Performance Indicators	July 05	Aug 05	Sept 05	YTD Perf	YTD Target	YTD Perf v/s Target	Change in Perf	Year End Target
DR BV12 sickness absence	4.76	6.44	5.85	5.85	4.45			8.90
PLBC004: % Building Plan Det by Stat Tar	?	?	?	?	?			?
BV109a.02 % Planning apps - major	87.00	76.00	77.00	77.00	60.00			60.00
BV109b.02 % Planning apps - minor	70.00	65.00	66.00	66.00	65.00			65.00
BV109c.02 % Planning apps - other	89.00	87.00	84.00	84.00	80.00			80.00

DR Unit Key Performance Indicators - Annual			
	Year End Perf	Year End Target	Year End Perf v/s Target
ER002: No Jobs Created/Preserved	?	?	
ER003: Area Floorspace Created/Improved	?	?	
BV219a.05 Conservation areas - number	?	?	
BV219b.05 Cons. Areas - Char. Appr.	?	40.00	
BV219c.05 Cons. Areas - Mngmt Plans	?	20.00	
PL005 Av density new hsg on devpts	30.00	?	?
BV200a.05 Plan making - development plan	?	?	?!
BV200b.05 Plan making - milestones	?	?	?!

LC Unit Key Performance Indicators - Monthly								
Unit Key Performance Indicators	Jul-05	Aug-05	Sep-05	YTD Perf	YTD Target	YTD Perf v/s Target	Change in Perf	Year End Target
LC BV12 sickness absence	3.88	4.90	4.90	4.90	4.45			8.90
LC009: No of Young People Engaged in Act	1380.00	2976.00	1693.00	6049.00	?			?
LC010: % Partic'n Target Young People	?	?	?	?	?			?
LC014: Num of Visits to LCS amenities	?	?	?	?	?			?

LC Unit Key Performance Indicators - Annual			
	Yr End Perf	Yr End Target	Yr End Perf vs Target
BV119a.02 Satisfaction Sport users	65.00	66.00	
BV119c.02 Satisfaction Museum users	63.00	64.00	
BV119d.02 Satisfaction Theatre users	58.00	59.00	
BV119e.02 Satisfaction Park/Open Spc	?	77.00	

This page is intentionally left blank

**COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL****SCRUTINY INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE COUNCIL'S  
DECISION MAKING PROCESS**Area Forums/Committees Sub-GroupNote of visit to Hyndburn Borough Council's Great Harwood Area Council on 11 October 2005

Councillor Perks (Chairman of Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel), Councillors Bedford, Brownlee and Morgan and Mr S Pearce (Assistant Head of Democratic Services) attended the meeting at Bank Mill House, Great Harwood, Blackburn.

The following comments on the meeting have been supplied by Councillor Brownlee:

"When I walked into a large hall full of chairs, I realised whatever they were doing it must be working.

Attendance was around 70 which those present reckoned was disappointing.... it's usually over 80.

In Hyndburn they are Area COUNCILS with a delegated budget of approx £1k revenue, £20k capital ie they can't afford to employ people (such as lengthsmen) but they can fund capital projects.

Hyndburn originally wanted five Councils, but ended up with eight after responses to the referendum. This is causing budgetary pressure (admin servicing the Councils). Out of the eight, six cover two wards, 1 x 1 ward, 1 x 3 wards.

The Chair represents the majority part of local Councillors eg would be Lib Dem in Coppull.

The Area Council meets three times per year plus subgroup meetings for specific areas/projects.

There was a presentation from officers but it was only 15 mins, followed by questions.

Members of the public can send written questions to be answered at meeting or, during the "open forum" can ask anything. They also had opportunity to comment or ask questions on every agenda item. Many but not all questioners were known to the Chair.

The issues were familiar, like a Parish Council agenda in Chorley, but with members of the public joining in. We were unable to judge the relationship between Area Councils and Parishes because they only have one parish in Hyndburn. SUGGESTIONS: Can we find a Council who has implemented this AND has parishes?

This page is intentionally left blank

**COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**SCRUTINY INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE COUNCIL'S  
DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

**Public Speaking/Questions Sub-Group**

**Note of visit to South Ribble Council's Cabinet meeting on 12 October 2005**

Councillor Perks (Chairman of Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel), Councillor Mrs M Gray, Councillor Mrs I Smith and Mr A Uren (Democratic Services Officer) attended the meeting at the Civic Centre, Leyland.

**Procedures and Protocols for organisation and conduct of Cabinet meetings**

- A database of members of the public who have requested copies of agendas is kept - Agendas are either e-mailed or posted to them.
- Hard copies of agendas are available at the meeting.
- Laminated copies of the protocol for the public's participation in the meeting are circulated around the room.
- Sufficient seating is provided for non-Executive Councillors and members of the public to sit facing the Cabinet.
- A microphone system is used, with a microphone installed on each desk.
- Agenda item reports are introduced by Cabinet members. The Chair invites questions and comments from other Cabinet Members, other Councillors present and members of the public.
- The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members answer and respond to questions from other Councillors and the public. There is no restriction on the debates between the Cabinet and other Councillors, but there is a limitation on the contribution a member of the public can make at the meeting. Non-members of the Committee may speak at any meeting for a total of five minutes (which is rigidly enforced).

**Issues raised at later discussions with five Cabinet Members and Officers**

- South Ribble Council currently comprises 19 Conservative Councillors, 17 Labour Councillors, 15 Liberal Democratic Councillors and 4 Idle Toad Councillors. The Cabinet consists of 4 Labour and 4 Liberal Democrat Councillors.
- Councillor Perks asked how the Cabinet felt about the involvement of members of the public in Cabinet and Committee meetings in terms of its effect on (i) decision-making; (ii) the business of the Council' and (iii) individual Portfolio holders.

In response, the Cabinet Members said that they welcomed and appreciated the involvement and contribution of members of the public in each of the Authority's meetings that were held in public. Whilst the public's contribution at meetings may not be perceived to have a direct influence on the decisions of the Cabinet, the views expressed were duly taken into account. In any event, the policies and proposals put before the Cabinet for consideration had, in the majority of cases, been influenced by prior consultation with the public in such arenas as the local Area Committees.

- Councillor Perks asked whether the involvement of the public had resulted in any 'call-in' of executive decisions and/or scrutiny inquiries.

The Cabinet Members confirmed that no executive decision had so far been 'called-in' by Scrutiny Committee members. The Cabinet attributed this to the Council's culture in ensuring that draft policies, strategies and proposals were subjected to a wide-ranging consultation exercise by Scrutiny Committee members and Area Committees, etc before plans were finalised.

- Councillor Perks queried the general issues that had generated the most response by members of the public at Cabinet meetings.

The Cabinet Members indicated that issues affecting car parking facilities always seemed to generate widespread concern. It was important for the Cabinet to be honest and frank in their responses to public questions. In most instances, the Council had discovered that the opportunity to speak to the decision-makers directly appeared to appease complainants.

### Issues related to Area Committees

The Chorley Councillors referred to the Borough's plans to introduce three pilot Area Forum schemes in Chorley and sought South Ribble Cabinet's perception of how the South Ribble Area Committees had influenced the Cabinet's deliberations.

In response, the South Ribble Members intimated that their Authority operated 8 Area Committees. All the appropriate Ward Councillors were members of the respective Area Committees, which also co-opted a number of members (eg Town/Parish Councillors). The co-opted members did not have voting powers, but could participate in the discussions after the close of the public debate.

The Area Committees were a valuable source of public consultation in South Ribble. For example, the Area Committees views were sought on most projected capital projects on a stage by stage basis, commencing with the initial plans and proceeding through to the identification of issues; drafting of proposals and schemes, and views on the prioritisation of schemes.

The Cabinet Members accepted that a limited number of members of the public would use the Area Committees as an opportunity to pursue their own particular complaints and agendas and as a means of 'fast tracking' their own requests and demands.

In general, however, Area Committees had proved to be hugely popular in South Ribble and were accepted as an efficient and effective means of consultation and a forum for public debate and eliciting the public's views on a variety of topics and proposals. In some instances, the public had brought a new perspective to issues that had hitherto been disregarded by the Council. The views and opinions expressed at Area Committee meetings were always granted due consideration by the Cabinet and/or the Council and had, in many instances, proven to be informative and beneficial to the decision-making process.



**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				3								
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			✓						✓			
Juvenile Nuisance	ComSP												
Grass Cutting	ESP						✓						✓
Provision of Youth Activities in Chorley	ComSP							3					
One-Stop Shop	CustSP							3					
<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>