

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Town Centre Vitality

Agenda and Reports
for consideration on

**Thursday, 24th September
2009**

in Committee Room No. 1, Town Hall, Chorley

At 6.30 pm



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28 August 2009

Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - TOWN CENTRE VITALITY - THURSDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER 2009

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Town Centre Vitality to be held in Committee Room No. 1, Town Hall, Chorley on Thursday, 24th September 2009 commencing at 6.30 pm.

AGENDA

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

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda. If the interest arises **only** as result of your membership of another public body or one to which you have been appointed by the Council then you only need to declare it if you intend to speak.

If the personal interest is a prejudicial interest, you must withdraw from the meeting. Normally you should leave the room before the business starts to be discussed. You do, however, have the same right to speak as a member of the public and may remain in the room to enable you to exercise that right and then leave immediately. In either case you must not seek to improperly influence a decision on the matter.

3. **Minutes of last meeting (Pages 1 - 4)**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Town Centre Overview and Scrutiny Task Group held on 20 August 2009 (enclosed).

4. **Scoping of the Review (Pages 5 - 8)**

The overview and scrutiny inquiry project outline, which sets out the terms of reference and aims and objectives of the town centre review, as agreed at the first two meetings of the Task Group, is enclosed for Members' endorsement.

5. **Marketing and Promotion of the Town Centre (Pages 9 - 12)**

The principal purpose of the meeting will be to consider issues relating to the marketing and promotion of the Town Centre.

The Task Group may wish to consider, amongst other factors, the effectiveness of current marketing strategies; suggestions for alternative marketing policies; and plans for future events and initiatives.

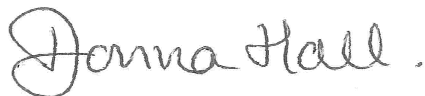
A copy of a note prepared by the Head of Communications, Marketing and Tourism which outlines the work and action that has been instigated by the Council's Communications and Marketing Team since the publication of the findings of the last scrutiny review of the Markets in 2004, is attached as a discussion document.

Louise Finch (Acting Communications Manager), Cath Burns (Head of Economic Development) and Conrad Heald (Town Centre Manager) will attend the meeting to advise the Group of present policies and practices and future proposals. There will be an opportunity to question the Officers and determine whether any specific recommendations should be made at this or a subsequent meeting.

6. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Town Centre Overview and Scrutiny Task Group is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 8 October 2009. The topic area for discussion will be agreed with the Chair.

Yours sincerely



Donna Hall
Chief Executive

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Democratic and Member Services Officer
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Distribution

1. Agenda and reports to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Town Centre Vitality (Councillor Peter Wilson (Chair) and Councillors Julia Berry, Alistair Bradley, Anthony Gee, Marie Gray, Pat Haughton, June Molyneaux, Iris Smith and Stella Walsh) for attendance.
2. Agenda and reports to Jane Meek (Corporate Director (Business)), Cath Burns (Head of Economic Development), Peter McAnespie (Planning Policy and Urban Design Team Leader), Conrad Heald (Town Centre Manager), Louise Finch (Acting Head of Communications), Carol Russell (Head of Democratic Services) and Tony Uren (Democratic and Member Services Officer) for attendance.

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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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Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Town Centre Vitality

Thursday, 20 August 2009

Present: Councillor Peter Wilson (Chair) and Councillors Alistair Bradley, Anthony Gee, Pat Haughton, Harold Heaton, June Molyneaux and Stella Walsh

Also in attendance: Councillor Julia Berry

Also in attendance: Jane Meek (Corporate Director (Business), Peter McAnespie (Planning Policy and Urban Design Team Leader) and Tony Uren (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

09.TCG.10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Marie Gray.

09.TCG.11 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest by any of the members of the Task Group in any of the meeting's agenda items.

09.TCG.12 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Town Centre Overview and Scrutiny Task Group held on 6 August 2009 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

09.TCG.13 SCOPING OF THE REVIEW

The Task Group's instructions were sought on the completion of the scoping document for the review.

The Members were reminded that the respective terms of reference, key aims and objectives and information requirements had been agreed at the last meeting when the Group had selected a number of specific topics and themes around which the inquiry would be structured.

It was, therefore, **AGREED** that the relevant identified issues and material considerations accepted at the initial meeting of the Task Group on 6 August 2009, as set out in the minutes of that meeting, form the basis of the inquiry project outline. The completed scoping document would be presented to the next meeting for endorsement.

09.TCG.14 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

In response to the Task Group's request at the last meeting, a copy of the final report of the Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry into Chorley's Markets published in September 2004 had been provided to Members of the Task Group. Further reports on the actions that had been taken subsequently would be presented to the future meetings of the Task Group that would be considering specifically Markets issues and the marketing/promotion of the town centre.

The other relevant reports, strategies and documents identified by Members at the last meeting would be provided to the Task Group in sufficient time before the relevant documents were due to be assed by the Group within the agreed timetable.

09.TCG.15 WAY FORWARD: PRIORITY AREAS

As requested at the initial meeting of the Task Group, a schedule of the categorised projects and initiatives contained within the Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy was enclosed. The implementation schedule included a note of the expected level of costings associated with the projects.

The Task Group was requested to identify the selected projects/initiatives on which the Group wished to focus and examine in more depth, with a view to consideration of the ways in which the Group could assess their relative effectiveness or help to influence their implementation.

The Members reiterated their suggestions that the inquiry be conducted around the specific themes agreed at the last meeting, accepting that it would be beneficial to concentrate attention on a few selected aspects of each topic if the Group was to achieve its objective of making recommendations that might ultimately influence the enhancement of the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Following a useful discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Task Group considers at separate meetings issues surrounding the following principal topic areas, taking account of all relevant factors, including those indicated below:

Environment Issues

(a) Gateways into town centre/signage

Factors including connections into the town centre (particularly from Chorley East Ward); underpasses, pedestrian crossings, etc; adequacy of directional signage within the town centre and on the periphery of the town centre; the attractiveness of the gateways into the town centre.

(b) Use of vacant properties

Factors including policies on the potential promotion or enhancement of the appearance of vacant properties; promotion of infill development and encouragement of refurbishment of empty flats over shops to assist increased residential usage within the town centre.

(c) Improvement of the Cultural offer

Factors including the development and implementation of a cultural strategy for the town centre; issues surrounding the evening culture of the town centre; increased frequency of events and activities (eg food/arts festivals; wide-ranging programme of events to attract all age groups).

Markets Issues

Review of recommendations contained in a previous overview and scrutiny inquiry into the Markets to assess the effectiveness of implemented actions and examine the reasons for current outstanding actions.

Examination of potential means of enhancing the Flat Iron Market to complement and feed into the recently commissioned Consultants' review.

Marketing/Promotional Issues

Review of effectiveness of current strategies and suggestions for additional means of promotion.

It was likely that parking issues and leverage of available funds for projects would be encompassed within almost all of the different strands of the review.

09.TCG.16 VISITS TO OTHER TOWN CENTRES

The Members' instructions were sought on any comparable towns that the Task Group wished to visit during the course of the inquiry in order to learn from their management policies and practices.

Peter McAnespie advised the Task Group that the Consultants engaged on the last Town Centre Audit had suggested visits to a number of well-established town centres, including Ludlow and Hexham. A Member also suggested a visit to Burnley, who were currently undertaking a widespread programme of refurbishment.

It was **AGREED**:

1. That arrangements be made for the Task Group and Officers to visit Burnley town centre to view and discuss Burnley Council's plans to transform the town centre with Council Officers.
2. That the Chorley Town Centre Audit Consultants be requested to suggest one other well-established town centre that the Task Group would benefit from visiting.
3. That West Lancashire Council be requested to provide Chorley Council with a report on the progress of its programme of Ormskirk town centre improvement works, highlighting any delivery problems.

09.TCG.17 CALENDAR OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was **AGREED**:

1. That the next two meetings of the Task Group be held at 6.30pm on Thursday, 24 September 2009 and Thursday, 8 October 2009.
2. That the topics to be considered at each of the meetings be determined by the Chair and Officers, depending on the availability of the respective witnesses.

Chair

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Scrutiny Inquiry Project Outline Template**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY PROJECT OUTLINE****Review Topic:****Chorley Town Centre Vitality****Objectives:**

To investigate, consider and evaluate:

1. Environmental and Parking Issues
Factors to be taken into consideration include issues around vacant retail and office space; pedestrian flows; highways and accessibility issues; street furniture; environmental improvement works; ways of encouraging greater use of town centre premises for residential purposes; management of pedestrianised areas to preclude unauthorised use by vehicles and bicycles; whether parking policies are an incentive or disincentive to visitors.
2. Markets Issues
Relevant factors to be addressed should include the impact of any outcomes of past scrutiny inquiries; the impact of the recent Covered Market refurbishments; ways of enhancing the vitality of the Flat Iron Market; the effectiveness of Themed Markets.
3. Marketing and Promotion of Town Centre
Factors to be considered would include the effectiveness of current marketing strategies, plans for future events and initiatives; and suggestions for alternative marketing policies.

Desired Outcomes:

To assist in the creation of an environment that will influence the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Terms of Reference:

1. To investigate, consider and evaluate issues and factors relevant to the review of the vitality and viability of Chorley town centre.
2. To make recommendations where appropriate.
3. To report findings and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Equality and diversity implications:

Dropped kerbs and excess street furniture in the town centre.

Risks:

That there will be an expectation beyond the capacity to deliver.

Venue(s):

Town Hall, Chorley

Timescale: Approx 4 – 5 months

Start: August 2009

Finish:

Information Requirements and Sources:**Documents/evidence:** (what/why?)

Chorley Town Centre Strategy
Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy

Witnesses: (who, why?)

Executive Member (Business)
Head of Communications, Marketing and Tourism;
Service Manager (Streetscene Services);
Selected representatives of town centre retailers, businesses and market traders
Disability Forum Co-ordinator
Equality Forum

Consultation/Research: (what, why, who?)

Town Centre Health Checks
Consultants' reports on town centre businesses
Pedestrian flow counts, etc
Final reports of recent scrutiny inquiries into the Chorley Markets.
A report on the progress of works to improve Ormskirk Town Centre.

Site Visits: (where, why, when?)

Visits to Burnley town centre (a town centre currently in the process of major change and refurbishment) and one other established and thriving town centre as recommended by the Consultants commissioned to undertake the town centre audit.

Officer Support:

Lead Officer:
Jane Meek (Corporate Director (Business))

Democratic & Member Services Officer: Tony Uren

Likely Budget Requirements:

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>£</u>
Total	_____

(A budget sum will be required to fund the costs of the visits to other town centres)

Target Body ¹ for Findings/Recommendations

(Eg Executive Cabinet, Council, partner)

Executive Cabinet

¹ All project outcomes require the approval of Overview and Scrutiny Committee before progressing

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RESPONSE TO O + S Town Centre Task Group**August 2009**

1. BACKGROUND

This response was prepared following an approach from the O + S Town Centre Task Group, enquiring as to what progress had been made on the recommendations in the 2004 Customer O +S Panel's report into Chorley Markets.

It's important to note that members of the Executive Cabinet did not endorse the recommendations and that any progress in this area has been driven by the Council's Communications and Marketing team, as part of a corporate approach to supporting improvements to the Town Centre and Chorley Markets.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS: ADVERTISING/MARKETING**R7 To e-enable stall holders to apply for stalls**

Information about Chorley Markets and the Town Centre as a whole was improved as part of a corporate project to overhaul the Council's website in 2006/07. Stall holders can now apply for a stall online and pay their rent through the friendly url www.chorley.gov.uk/markets This address is featured on literature for stall holders.

R10 To encourage Flat Iron traders to have similar colourful protective covers for visual enhancement

This would be something for the Town Centre Manager rather than comms.

R13 To concentrate advertisement on the Tuesday market as the busiest day on the markets

There has been a programme of advertising for Chorley Markets, including newspaper advertising in local and regional press, radio campaigns and 'trade' campaigns in bespoke publications such as Market Trader News, which stall holders read and is useful in encouraging new traders to visit the market.

In addition, much media relations and reputational management support has been provided to traders on a weekly basis by the communications team, resulting in lots

of local and regional coverage for the markets, as well as some articles in the national press.

This work publicises the weekly programme of market activity as a whole, in a bid to build trade through other days, but Tuesday is usually highlighted as the busiest day.

In addition, some work has been undertaken around search engine optimisation (SEO) to ensure that Chorley Markets features highly on Google when searching for markets or Tuesday markets.

R14 To increase advertising for traders for the markets, directly targeting under represented trades eg pottery, by utilising trade magazines and the Internet

Covered in answers above – there has been some work carried out by the Town Centre Manager to highlight underrepresented areas of trade and we have highlighted this in media work. New stallholders which bring a new dimension to the market have also been highlighted eg the barbers stall.

R15 To develop the website page regarding the markets, to include advertisements and information about market stalls

See answer to R7 – the website has been improved dramatically, with a good focus on the markets and friendly url. The web content is split into two areas - one has specific information for traders such as booking your pitch, regulations and fees, the other is visitor focused with details of parking, what there is to do, opening times and information for coach parties. There is also information provided on the farmers' market and specialist markets that visit the town. There isn't information about specific stalls as some traders moved around and the covered market in particular has been less static during the improvement works, but there are plans to produce a Town Centre guide in the future highlighting the offer of shops and traders together as a package for customers.

R16 To implement an advertising strategy for the markets, eg using Chorley cakes

The markets have been provided with a new logo and strap line which now runs throughout all advertising, marketing and promotional material – this is *Chorley Markets – real shopping, real value, real choice*. This was developed in conjunction with traders on the markets steering group. The logo features on the covered market

site and has featured on advertising, promotional items such as the Chorley Markets leaflet and merchandise such as the bags for life given out free to customers.

R17 To advertise via different methods, eg radio, local papers and the Internet

Covered in answers above.

R19 To offer sponsorship opportunities, eg planted flowerbeds under the district boundary signs

This idea is part of a wider project in the pipeline to bring income into the Council by offering advertising opportunities to businesses and organisations in the borough.

There are issues to consider around Lancashire County Council's role in highways assets and planning regulations around advertising, which make the recommendation more difficult to deliver.

R23 To provide information, for customers, regarding product ranges and stall location, e.g. flyers

See answers above – there has been a comprehensive communications and marketing campaign around the markets, including production of adverts, editorial in newspapers and 'trade' press, flyers to coach drivers in conjunction with Botany Bay and many posters and supporting materials such as flyers to promote individual events.

R24 To advertise Chorley market particularly for customers who live out of the area, e.g. the Internet, magazines, specific radio advertising, local paper and flyers etc

See answers above.

R25 To approach the management of Chorley Interchange regarding coaches parking at the Interchange as part of a future exercise to increase the number of coach operators running trips to Chorley

This is an issue for the Town Centre Manager rather than comms.

Shelley Wright

Head of Communications, Marketing and Tourism

Chorley Council

August 21, 2009