



# Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Tourism and Promoting Chorley

Agenda and Reports

For consideration on

**Wednesday, 12th October  
2011**

In Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Chorley

At 6.00 pm

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07 October 2011

Dear Colleague

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - TOURISM AND PROMOTING CHORLEY - WEDNESDAY, 12TH OCTOBER 2011**

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Tourism and Promoting Chorley to be held in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Chorley on Wednesday, 12th October 2011 commencing at 6.00 pm.

**AGENDA**

1. **Apologies for absence**  
2.

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 (Pages 1 - 2)**

To confirm the enclosed minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Tourism and Promoting Chorley meeting held on 14 September 2011.

4. **Scoping of the Review (Pages 3 - 4)**

To agreed the attached project outline for the scrutiny review of the Tourism and Promoting Chorley.

5. **Key tourism assets and events in Chorley (Pages 5 - 8)**

To consider the enclosed list of the key tourism assets and events in Chorley.

6. **Town Centre Vitality Review Reports (Pages 9 - 38)**

To consider the enclosed documents:

- a) The Final Report of the Town Centre Vitality Review.
- b) The Executive Cabinet's response to the suggested recommendations.
- c) The latest monitoring report providing an update on the implementation of agreed actions by the Executive Cabinet.

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

Yours sincerely



Gary Hall  
Chief Executive

Dianne Scambler  
Democratic and Member Services Officer  
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**Distribution**

1. Agenda and reports to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Tourism and Promoting Chorley (Peter Wilson (Chair) and Julia Berry, Matthew Crow, Marie Gray, Steve Holgate, Paul Leadbetter, Marion Lowe, June Molyneaux, Mark Perks and Geoffrey Russell for attendance.
2. Agenda and reports to Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy and Communications), Teri Jones (Communications Manager) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer) for attendance.

**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 آپکی 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 - Tourism and Promoting Chorley

**Wednesday, 14 September 2011**

**Present:** Councillor Peter Wilson (Chair) and Julia Berry, Marie Gray, Paul Leadbetter, Marion Lowe, June Molyneaux, Mark Perks and Geoffrey Russell

**Also in attendance:** Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy and Communications) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

### **07.CCS.01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Crow and Steve Holgate.

### **07.CCS.02 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS**

Councillor Marion Lowe reported that she was the Chair of the Friends of Astley Hall.

### **07.CCS.03 TOURISM AND PROMOTING CHORLEY REVIEW**

In scoping the Review, the Members had an open discussion and agreed that its main objective should be to further develop Chorley as a tourist destination by promoting the Boroughs key assets and events and to identify other opportunities for making the Borough more attractive to outside visitors.

To promote the Borough as a tourist destination the following course of action was AGREED

1. That Chorley's key assets be identified around the Borough, for example Astley Hall and Park, Rivington, Yarrow Valley Park and Cuerden, etc
2. The key events in the calendar be identified that might attract visitors to Chorley, for example, Picnic in the Park, Big Drum Day, the Christmas Lights Switch On, etc
3. To look at any other opportunities that may exist to maximise the promotion of Chorley, including through partnership working.
4. That the Council looks to promote Chorley in the best possible way to encourage more visitors to the town centre and its surrounding villages.

It was AGREED that the scoping document would be drawn up and brought back to the next meeting for approval by the Group.

### **07.CCS.04 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The following two dates were AGREED for subsequent meetings of the Group:

Wednesday 12 October 2011 at 6.00pm

Wednesday 9 November at 6.00pm

Chair

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY PROJECT OUTLINE**

**Review Topic:** TOURISM AND PROMOTING CHORLEY

**Objectives:**

To further develop Chorley as a tourist destination by promoting the Borough's key assets and events and identifying other opportunities for making the Borough more attractive to outside visitors

**Desired Outcomes:**

A Corporate Directive for promoting Tourism in Chorley

**Terms of Reference:**

To promote the Borough as a tourist destination by:

1. Identifying Chorley's key assets for tourism around the Borough, for example Astley Hall and Park, Rivington, Yarrow Valley Park and Cuerden, etc
2. Identifying the key events in the Calendar that might attract visitors to Chorley for example, Picnic in the Park, Big Drum Day, the Christmas Lights Switch On, etc
3. Look at other opportunities that may exist to maximise the promotion of Chorley, including through Partnership working
4. That the Council look to promote Chorley in the best possible way to encourage more visitors to the town centre and its surrounding villages.

**Equality and diversity implications:**

None

**Risks:**

That the review extends beyond its remit.

**Venue(s):** Committee Room 1, Town Hall

**Timescale:** 6 months

**Start:** September 2011

**Finish:** March 2012

**Information Requirements and Sources:**

**Documents/evidence:** (what/why?)

Final Report of the Town Centre Vitality Review and subsequent Monitoring Reports  
 Statistical information about numbers of tourist to events and attractions in Chorley  
 List of Chorley’s key assets and events with brief description

**Witnesses:** (who, why?)

Internal Officers

Chris Bryan – Astley Hall and Arts Officer  
 Andy Brown – Parks and Open Spaces Officer  
 Conrad Heald – Town Centre and Markets Manager

External Representative’s

Chamber of Trade  
 Camelot  
 Cuerden Valley Trust  
 Cados – Chorley Little Theatre  
 United Utilities (activities in Rivington)  
 Booths Supermarket (sponsorship)  
 Lancashire County Council – Tourism Lead Officer

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

Views from the Town Centre Forum  
 Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council – Haigh Hall

**Site Visits:** (where, why, when?)

**Officer Support:**

**Lead Officer:** Chris Sinnott – Head of Policy and Communications  
 Teri Jones – Communications Manager

**Democratic & Member Services Officer:** Dianne Scambler

**Likely Budget Requirements:**

<u>Purpose</u>	£
<b>Total</b>	_____

**Target Body<sup>1</sup> for Findings/Recommendations**

(Eg Executive Cabinet, Council, partner)

<sup>1</sup> All project outcomes require the approval of Overview and Scrutiny Committee before progressing



## Key Tourism Assets and Events

### Assets

- **Astley Hall and Coach House**

The Grade I listed historic house also includes art galleries and a range of activities and events. It welcomes 16,000 visitors a year. Includes outdoor events, ten exhibitions a year and family arts activities.

- **Hoghton Tower**

16<sup>th</sup> Century historic house with seasonal opening. Events and activities run by Hoghton Tower Trust. Includes Farmers Market, Classical music concerts and classic car shows.

- **Camelot Theme Park**

Theme Park with rides, live shows and stalls for families. Seasonal opening.

- **Park Hall**

Hotel, conference and event venue. Includes medieval banquets and cabarets.

### **Shaw Hill Golf Course and Country Club**

A 18 hole par 72 championship golf course set in 192 acres of mature parkland. Also boasting a fine dining restaurant and a fully equipped Leisure Club offering Spa Days and Breaks.

### **Duxbury Park**

A 18 hole Championship Golf Course that has been laid out around the historic grounds of the Duxbury estate. The 180 acres of rolling Lancashire countryside provides a challenge for both Amateur and Professional golfers alike.

- **Preston Mormon Temple**

Has regular visits from overseas visitors and runs annual open days and family history events.

- **Chorley FC**

Welcomes between 30 – 1000 away supporters to the ground each week during the football season.

### **Heritage Trail**

A step by step guide around the Town Centre, highlighting significant historic monuments that can still be seen in the town today. It is just under one and a quarter miles and takes approximately one hour to complete.

- **Rivington, Anglezarke & Pike**

The West Pennine Moors are a large draw for walkers and day trippers.

- **Cedar Farm**  
A converted farm that includes a cafe, restaurant, retail stores, artist studios and pet corner in Mawdesley.
  
- **Chorley Little Theatre**  
This 235 seater theatre presents weekly shows featuring theatre, comedy and live music. Entirely voluntarily run and have undergone extensive refurbishment and development over the last two years.
  
- **Chorley Markets**  
Market days provide affordable food, clothing and household items and draw in visitors from the surrounding towns and villages to shop.
  
- **Botany Bay**  
A shopping attraction featuring craft, antique and gift stalls alongside a cafe and children's play area.
  
- **Delta Force Paint Ball**  
Paintballing activity centre based in Coppull.
  
- **Anderton Centre**  
Outdoor activities centre in Anderton.
  
- **Go Ape**  
Outdoor activity centre based in Rivington.

#### **Nine Conservation Areas**

Places of special architectural or historic interest that deserve to receive careful protection

#### **Canal Walks**

The Leeds Liverpool Canal runs right through the Borough and has provides an attractive route for narrow boats, walkers and cyclists that is rich in wildlife.

#### **Yarrow Valley Country Park**

A 700-acre facility, run by Chorley Council and including a visitor centre and newly installed play area.

#### **Cuerden Valley Park**

The park has approximately 650 acres of parkland, woodland, meadows, a lake, ponds and gardens maintained to a high standard. They boast an excellent education programme and undertake conservation work.

**Events**

- **Big Drum Day**  
August  
An outdoor drumming and dance festival featuring a programme of local and regional performing groups. It takes place in the walled garden and attracts in the region of 2,000 people.
  
- **Nutcrack Night**  
October  
A new annual family arts event featuring live music, promenade theatre, workshops, food and drink utilising the Astley Park site. It is expected to attract 2,000 people, largely from outside the borough.
  
- **Picnic In The Park**  
May/June  
An outdoor family event attracting around 3,000 people. Largely these people are Chorley based but it does welcome a small percentage of tourists too.
  
- **Day of Dance**  
June  
A morris dancing festival held in the town centre streets.
  
- **Derian House's Winter Sparkle**  
November  
A Christmas themed event including ice skating, reindeers, Father Christmas and food stalls in the walled garden. Attracts in the region of 2,500 people.
  
- **Outdoor Theatre**  
August  
A small scale outdoor theatre event within the walled garden that attracts visitors from the surrounding towns and villages.

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# Town Centre Vitality

Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group



## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

In March 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a “review of the year” event, from which emerged a number of suggestions for topics for scrutiny during the current municipal year. The topic of the town centre was selected and one of the top two issues to be scrutinised during the year and a Task and Finish Group was, accordingly, set up to examine issues around the vitality and viability of the town centre.

The Task Group has met on nine occasions since August 2009 to consider carefully the various issues and material considerations related to the following five project areas identified for scrutiny:

- Marketing/Promotional Issues;
- Markets Issues;
- Gateways into Town Centre/Signage/Car Parking;
- Use of Vacant Properties;
- Improvement of the Cultural Officer.

### Terms of Reference

1. To investigate, consider and evaluate issues and factors relevant to the review of the vitality and viability of the town centre.
2. To make recommendations where appropriate.

### Key Aims and Objectives

While the discussions at the Task Group meetings were focused within the overall framework agreed at the outset of the inquiry, the remit and objectives of the Task Group were widened over the course of the inquiry.

Ultimately, the Task Group’s deliberations and suggestions encompassed and extended range of matters related to the main topic areas, concluding in proposals being formulated in respect of the following areas:

- Formulation of a comprehensive marketing action plan;
- Preparation of a strategy for an evening economy;
- Signage strategy;
- Car Parking strategy;
- Town Centre living;
- Vacant property policy;
- Development and delivery of short and long term plans for the Markets;
- Development and delivery of a Pavement Café policy.

The Task Group’s findings and proposals are detailed and explained in the later sections of this report, with the Group’s recommendations being summarised on the following pages of the report.



Group Membership

Councillor Peter Wilson (Chair)  
Councillor Julia Berry  
Councillor Anthony Gee  
Councillor Pat Haughton  
Councillor June Molyneaux  
Councillor Geoffrey Russell

Councillor Alistair Bradley  
Councillor Marie Gray  
Councillor Harold Heaton  
Councillor Mick Muncaster  
Councillor Stella Walsh

Officer Support

Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy)  
Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places)  
Cath Burns (Head of Economic Development)  
Simon Clark (Head of Environment)  
Martin Walls (Head of Streetscene)  
Zoe Whiteside (Head of Housing)  
Louise Finch (Acting Head of Communications)  
Peter McAnespie (Planning Policy and Design Team Leader)  
Conrad Heald (Town Centre and Markets Manager)  
Lee Boyer (Sports, Play and Physical Activity Manager)  
Christopher Bryan (Arts Development Officer)  
Tony Uren (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

Meetings

The agenda papers and minutes for each of the meetings of the Town Centre Overview and Scrutiny Task Group can be found on the Council's website ([www.chorley.gov.uk](http://www.chorley.gov.uk)) by following the respective links from the Council and Democracy page.

Contribution of Evidence

The Chair and Task Group would like to thank all the Members, Officers and invited witnesses who have contributed evidence and contributed to the Inquiry.

Recommendations	Financial Implications
<b>Objective 1: Formulation of a Comprehensive Marketing Action Plan</b>	
<p>1. That the following concepts and ideas put forward by the Task Group be assessed by a Task Group of the Town Centre Forum, with a view to the formulation of a comprehensive Marketing Plan for the Town Centre with the ultimate aim of attracting more shoppers and visitors to the town centre (eg through quality and attractive environmental improvements; reasonable car parking fees structure; provision of sufficient restaurants and cafes (operating to accommodate evening shoppers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• selected coach operators (eg Shearings) be reminded of the Markets and other attractions within the town centre and requested to contact the Town Centre and Markets Manager for information on available coach parks;</li> <li>• examination of the means of enhancing the localised nature of the Farmers' and other themed markets to improve their distinctiveness by, for example, naming the "Chorley Farmers Market" or linking them to relevant themes (eg Cake Fairs, etc) with more effective advance promotion and advertising;</li> <li>• the expansion of the present marketing and promotional campaigns and strategy to encompass the whole of the town centre, with the wider distribution of promotional leaflets throughout the town centre;</li> <li>• address the currently insufficient co-ordination of town centre promotion and marketing between the Council and High Street and independent traders;</li> <li>• accept that the degree of business experienced by town centre traders is to a large extent, dependent on the commodity sold (eg shoppers are attracted to Markets on Tuesdays and Fridays; certain shops' business is brisker on Wednesdays, etc), and target future promotions accordingly;</li> <li>• promote the wide variety of shops available in the town centre, particularly the number of quality independent retailers, in an attempt to attract both residents who do not normally visit the town centre and other visitors from the surrounding catchment area through the production of a user friendly A4 promotional leaflet and Parish Council newsletter inserts;</li> <li>• promotion of the late night opening of shops on Thursday evenings will be reliant on more town centre retailers being persuaded to extend their opening hours;</li> <li>• Council's Officers be requested to consider the production of a small single sheet to promote the town centre, which could be used by retailers to accompany goods despatched to customers;</li> <li>• Council's Officers be requested to consider the viability and cost implications of advertising the wide diversity of shops and goods available in the town centre on local commercial radio stations, particularly during the period leading up to Christmas;</li> <li>• the costs and manpower implications, and likely effectiveness, of producing an occasional Directory of forthcoming cultural and sports events and activities across the Borough as a means of improving the co-ordination, promotion and take-up of the events, be examined.</li> </ul>	<p>* (see note at foot of schedule)</p> <p>1,000 A5 double sided copies = £170 Local Radio Campaign = £3,000</p>

<b><u>Objective 2: Prepare a Strategy for an Evening Economy</u></b>	
2. That a review of the pricing structure and bureaucracy relating to the Lancastrian Room and the publicity/promotions strategy be undertaken, with the aim of making the facilities on offer more affordable and making local and regional groups more aware of the facilities.	* (see note at foot of schedule)
<b><u>Objective 3: Signage Strategy</u></b>	
3. That a recommendation be made to the Lancashire County Council for the erection of brown motorway advertising signs to promote the Markets and other visitor attractions in Chorley.	* (see note at foot of schedule)
4. That a review of the directional signage to and within the town centre for motorists and pedestrians be undertaken.	
5. That the Task Group supports and commends the need for an adequate and effective number of signs directing visitors to each of the town centre car parks to be placed at strategic locations within and around the town centre.	
6. That the Officers undertake a review of the current location of existing gateway signs, with a view to suggesting the location and estimated cost of any required additional signs.	
7. That the Officers be requested to liaise with the County Council to examine issues around the current state and security of pedestrian access routes to the town centre, particularly through underpasses and across car parks, and report recommendations to a future meeting of the Task Group.	
<b><u>Objective 4: Car Parking Strategy</u></b>	
8. That the Council's Officers be requested to examine the possible extension of the scheme currently operated with Booths, under which £1 vouchers were awarded by the Supermarket retailer to shoppers at the store as a discount off parking fees, with appropriate retailers being approached to ascertain if they would be willing to participate in a similar scheme.	* (see note at foot of schedule)
9. That the feasibility of the introduction of a herring-bone parking system on Market Street and St George's Street be considered.	
10. That needs of disabled drivers be taken into account when any revision of the car parking strategies are considered.	



<b><u>Objective 5: Town Centre Living</u></b>	
<p>11. That residential usage of town centre properties be encouraged by the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Neighbourhoods Directorate be requested to offer an advice service to owners of properties in the town centre that are capable in whole or in part of conversion to flats, in order to clarify the relevant regulations, directives and standards which require to be complied with;</li> <li>the Strategic Housing Services Section be requested to offer assistance in the marketing of new affordable housing units provided by Registered Social Landlords in the town centre, and provide details of applicants on the housing working list to the owners of the housing units;</li> <li>developers of new schemes in the town centre be encouraged to consider mixed use developments (comprising retail, storage, residential units, etc) whenever practicable.</li> </ul>	* (see note at foot of schedule)
<b><u>Objective 6: Vacant Property Policy</u></b>	
<p>12. That an Officer be identified to undertake the role of Lead Co-ordinator responsible for the implementation of an Empty Property Policy setting out the practices and procedures to be adopted and implemented in relation to vacant town centre properties, including a package of advice and guidance to prospective developers on relevant planning application procedures, licensing regulations, funding sources and business support services, etc.</p>	* (see note at foot of schedule)
<b><u>Objective 7: Develop and Deliver Short and Long Term Plans for the Markets</u></b>	
<p>13. That a short term action plan containing realistic and viable measures aimed at enhancing the appearance and vitality of the Flat Iron Market; achieving maximum occupancy of stalls; and reducing arrears of stall rents be compiled and costed. The action should include practical measures to encourage a uniform charging policy and offer of subsidies or discounts to market traders paying rents by direct debit or in advance, or occupying more than one stall, etc. The plan should also take into account the current economic situation and not impose any undue financial burden that would discourage traders from the market.</p> <p>Several suggested measures that could be explored for possible inclusion in the action plan are itemised in the Task Group's findings report.</p>	* (see note at foot of schedule)

<p>14. That the long term seeking to action the following objectives be approved in principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace existing stalls (5m x 5m) with             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Gazebos stalls (3m x 3m)</li> <li>(b) Umbrella stalls (3.5m x 3m)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Examine the introduction of a standard pattern for market stall canopies, with a choice of colours being made available for individual stall holders;</li> <li>• Review the markets layout in conjunction with the Flat Iron urban regeneration scheme for integration into the Market Walk Phase II design scheme.</li> <li>• Install powerpoints for Flat Iron market stalls.</li> <li>• Pursue the provision of new transport (electric) equipment to move market equipment and waste.</li> </ul>	
<b><u>Objective 8: Develop and Deliver a Pavement Café Policy</u></b>	
<p>15. That the Task Group supports and wishes to participate in the production of the projected Pavement Café Policy, which the Members hope will take into account the need to balance the aim of preventing clutter and obstructions in the town centre with the need to protect commercial interests and the vibrancy of the town.</p>	<p>* (see note at foot of schedule)</p>

\* The development of plans can be undertaken within existing resources. Whilst some costs are specified, it will not be until the full plans are in place that a detailed costing exercise can be carried out. Any detailed cost proposals will require further Executive Cabinet approval.

## 2. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

### Documentary Evidence

The Task Group were presented with and considered a number of documents and reports during the course of the inquiry. This documentary evidence included:

- Town Centre Audit and Urban Design Strategy;
- Findings reports of recent scrutiny inquiries into the Chorley Markets and Parkwise;
- A summary note of the range of cultural and sport/leisure activities organised or assisted by the Council in, or within the general vicinity of, the town centre;
- The People and Places Directorate's Business Improvement Plan for 2009/10;
- The Executive Summaries of the Market Plans for Chesterfield and Ludlow.

### Witnesses

The following Executive Member and external witnesses participated in discussions with the Task Group and contributed to the inquiry:

Councillor Peter Malpas (Executive Member (Business))  
Eileen Bee (Disability Forum Co-ordinator)  
Malcolm Allen (Chorley Town Centre Retailer)  
Nigel Clare (Chorley Town Centre Retailer)  
Peter Morgensoth (Chorley Town Centre Retailer)

### 3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### A: Formulation of a Comprehensive Marketing Action Plan

A note prepared by the Head of Communications, Marketing and Tourism gave details of the work and action that had 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, which highlighted all the measures and initiatives which had been implemented subsequently.

The Task Group accepted the benefits that had accrued from the enhancement of the marketing of the Markets and considered that future strategies should aim to encompass the whole of the town centre.

During the debate with the Acting Head of Communications, the Task Group focused on ways in which future initiatives and actions could complement and improve the current advertising and marketing strategies. Several suggestions were put forward and those are reflected in the following recommendations.

The recommendations have also taken account of the open discussions with a few selected Chorley town centre retailers, during which a number of worthwhile, innovative suggestions on ways in which the Council could collaborate with local retailers in the promotion of the town were put forward as a means of attracting more visitors and shoppers to the town centre.

#### Recommendations

That the following concepts and ideas put forward by the Task Group be assessed by a Task Group of the Town Centre Forum, with a view to the formulation of a comprehensive Marketing Plan for the Town Centre with the ultimate aim of attracting more shoppers and visitors to the town centre (eg through quality and attractive environmental improvements; reasonable car parking fees structure; provision of sufficient restaurants and cafes (operating to accommodate evening shoppers):

- selected coach operators (eg Shearings) be reminded of the Markets and other attractions within the town centre and requested to contact the Town Centre and Markets Manager for information on available coach parks;
- examination of the means of enhancing the localised nature of the Farmers' and other themed markets to improve their distinctiveness by, for example, naming the "Chorley Farmers Market" or linking them to relevant themes (eg Cake Fairs, etc) with more effective advance promotion and advertising;
- the expansion of the present marketing and promotional campaigns and strategy to encompass the whole of the town centre, with the wider distribution of promotional leaflets throughout the town centre;
- address the currently insufficient co-ordination of town centre promotion and marketing between the Council and High Street and independent traders;
- accept that the degree of business experienced by town centre traders is to a large extent, dependent on the commodity sold (eg shoppers are attracted to Markets on Tuesdays and Fridays; certain shops' business is brisker on Wednesdays, etc), and target future promotions accordingly;
- promote the wide variety of shops available in the town centre, particularly the number of quality independent retailers, in an attempt to attract both residents who do not normally visit the town

centre and other visitors from the surrounding catchment area through the production of a user friendly A4 promotional leaflet and Parish Council newsletter inserts;

- promotion of the late night opening of shops on Thursday evenings will be reliant on more town centre retailers being persuaded to extend their opening hours;
- Council's Officers be requested to consider the production of a small single sheet to promote the town centre, which could be used by retailers to accompany goods despatched to customers;
- Council's Officers be requested to consider the viability and cost implications of advertising the wide diversity of shops and goods available in the town centre on local commercial radio stations, particularly during the period leading up to Christmas;
- the costs and manpower implications, and likely effectiveness, of producing an occasional Directory of forthcoming cultural and sports events and activities across the Borough as a means of improving the co-ordination, promotion and take-up of the events, be examined.

#### B: Improvement of the Evening Economy

As part of the Group's assessment of the cultural \*\*\* within the town centre, the Council's Sports, Play and Physical Activity Manager and Arts Development Officer were invited to participate in a Group discussion.

The Members accepted that, within the limited resources and facilities available, the Council was pursuing a satisfactory arts and cultural programme in conjunction with the Chorley Arts Partnership and Chorley Little Theatre; particularly through its organisation of the Mid-Summer and other Arts Festivals. The festivals provide a range of free performances and street entertainment and the Arts Partnership provide numerous arts activities and music workshops for young people in particular.

A number of Members of the Task Group considered that the Lancastrian Room was not currently being used by the community as effectively as it might and was not realising its full potential. The Members did, however, appreciate the constraints on the use of the facility (eg limited seating and changing facilities; the inflexibility of the space available; lack of disabled persons' access to the stage; lack of catering facilities; heating costs, etc). The Task Group concluded after the debate to support a recommendation aimed at enhancing opportunities for the future use of the Lancastrian Room.

The Task Group also acknowledged the consequential benefits to the cultural life and the general economy of the town of the strengthening of the town centre's night-time economy. In this regard, the Planning Policy and Design Team Leader confirmed that the Town Centre Strategy recognised this aspiration and that the Strategy included appropriate targets and action plans to achieve the goal.

While minimal sports activities are organised within the town centre itself, the Council's investment in, and promotion of, grass roots community sports activities, including the annual "Get Up and Go" programme and the Play Day event on the Coronation Recreation Ground, were highlighted.

#### Recommendations:

That a review of the pricing structure and bureaucracy relating to the Lancastrian Room and the publicity/promotions strategy be undertaken, with the aim of making the facilities on offer more affordable and making local and regional groups more aware of the facilities.



### C: Development and Delivery of a Pavement Café Policy

The Task Group was reminded of the role of the Neighbourhood Officers in helping to maintain a clean and tidy town centre. The Head of Streetscene advised the Members of the current negotiations with the Lancashire County Council to produce a practical enforcement policy to apply to the town centre in relation to Café and street furniture, "A" boards and potential distractions in the town centre.

The Task Group was also informed of a concurrent review of the Pavement Café Policy introduced in December 2007 in the light of past concerns at the encroachment of market stalls and café tables on to pavements in some instances.

#### Recommendations

That the Task Group supports the current review of the Pavement Café Policy, which the Members hope will take into account the need to balance the aim of preventing clutter and obstructions in the town centre with the need to protect commercial interests and the vibrancy of the town.

### D: Signage Strategy

The Task Group's discussions on access and signage issues highlighted the lack of signs both to direct visitors to nearby car parks and to assist motorists and pedestrians seeking specific landmarks and locations around the town centre.

The Task Group supported representations for the installation of brown motorway signs to advertise Chorley's markets and other attractions, together with a prioritised programme of improvements to gateway signs, bearing in mind the wide variation in the appearance and attractiveness of gateway notices.

The external witnesses also drew attention to the unsatisfactory condition of the Chorley East Ward underpass and the pedestrian accesses to the town centre from the Chorley Interchange and the railway station.

#### Recommendations

1. That a recommendation be made to the Lancashire County Council for the erection of brown motorway advertising signs to promote the Markets and other visitor attractions in Chorley.
2. That a review of the directional signage to and within the town centre for motorists and pedestrians be undertaken.
3. That the Task Group supports and commends the need for an adequate and effective number of signs directing visitors to each of the town centre car parks to be placed at strategic locations within and around the town centre.
4. That the Officers undertake a review of the current location of existing gateway signs, with a view to suggesting the location and estimated cost of any required additional signs.
5. That the Officers be requested to liaise with the County Council to examine issues around the current state and security of pedestrian access routes to the town centre, particularly through underpasses and across car parks, and report recommendations to a future meeting of the Task Group.

### E: Car Parking Strategy

The Task Group accepts that the vitality and viability of the town centre is largely dependent on the availability of sufficient easily accessible car parking areas.

A number of worthwhile proposals for ways of assisting a improving car parking facilities for shoppers and visitors to the town centre emerged from the discussions with the Disability Forum Co-ordinator and selected town centre retailers. The majority of the suggestions are reflected in the following recommendations.

#### Recommendations

1. That the Council's Officers be requested to examine the possible extension of the scheme currently operated with Booths, under which £1 vouchers were awarded by the Supermarket retailer to shoppers at the store as a discount off parking fees, with appropriate retailers being approached to ascertain if they would be willing to participate in a similar scheme.
2. That the feasibility of the introduction of a herring-bone parking system on Market Street and St George's Street be considered.
3. That needs of disabled drivers be taken into account when any revision of the car parking strategies are considered.

### F: Town Centre Living

The Head of Housing informed the Task Group of Adactus' plans to make 8 flats at Halliwell Street in the town centre available for social rented housing. The Members were also reminded of the provisions of the Purchase and Repair scheme and Empty Property Management Orders which authorised the instigation of measures aimed at converting vacant properties into residential use.

Whilst accepting the limited funding and resources available, the Task Group considered that concerted efforts should be made to convert as many available premises as possible to residential use, particularly as a means of providing affordable accommodation for young people.

#### Recommendations

That residential usage of town centre properties be encouraged by the following means:

- the Neighbourhoods Directorate be requested to offer an advice service to owners of properties in the town centre that are capable in whole or in part of conversion to flats, in order to clarify the relevant regulations, directives and standards which require to be complied with;
- the Strategic Housing Services Section be requested to offer assistance in the marketing of new affordable housing units provided by Registered Social Landlords in the town centre, and provide details of applicants on the housing working list to the owners of the housing units;
- developers of new schemes in the town centre be encouraged to consider mixed use developments (comprising retail, storage, residential units, etc) whenever practicable.

### G: Vacant Property Policy

A note circulated by the Town Centre and Market Manager revealed that the number of vacant retail square metres in the town centre had reduced over the past quarter period. Out of a total of 315 units, 31 were vacant at the time of the Task Group meeting in December 2009.

The Task Group proposed the formulation of a specific policy to define and guide future practices and actions in relation to empty town centre premises, under the leadership of an identified officer.

### Recommendation

That an Officer be identified to undertake the role of Lead Co-ordinator responsible for the implementation of an Empty Property Policy setting out the practices and procedures to be adopted and implemented in relation to vacant town centre properties, including a package of advice and guidance to prospective developers on relevant planning application procedures, licensing regulations, funding sources and business support services, etc.

### H: Development and Delivery of Short and Long Term Plans for the Markets

The Task Group were reminded of the recommendations from the previous Markets Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry that had so far been implemented.

A number of the Task Group members consider that action is required, in particular, to enhance the appearance and character of the Flat Iron Market. In this context, the Members were advised to take account of the Flat Iron Improvements Scheme Design Strategy being undertaken by Landscape Projects. The objective of the study is to complement the Chorley Town Centre Audit and Design Study and enhance the Flat Iron Market by allowing it to evolve into a multi-functional market/car park/civic space linked to the Market Walk Phase 2 plans.

At the conclusion of a comprehensive debate, the Task Group proposed the preparation of both a short-term and a long-term plan for Chorley's Markets, with particular emphasis on the Flat Iron Market. The long term plan should seek to express the Council's aspirations for the future of the markets, including a review of the fees structure to reflect any future improvement works undertaken in the event of an economic upturn. The Task Group expects that any long-term proposals will be linked with and incorporated within the objectives and schemes within the Consultants' study report.

### Recommendations

1. That a short term action plan containing realistic and viable measures aimed at enhancing the appearance and vitality of the Flat Iron Market; achieving maximum occupancy of stalls; and reducing arrears of stall rents be compiled and costed. The action should include practical measures to encourage a uniform charging policy and offer of subsidies or discounts to market traders paying rents by direct debit or in advance, or occupying more than one stall, etc. The plan should also take into account the current economic situation and not impose any undue financial burden that would discourage traders from the market.

The following measures are suggested actions and initiatives that might be explored for potential inclusion in the action plan:

- Repair and maintain existing stall frames – Flat Iron
- Sign the central aisle stall fronts with Market branding
- Review payment methods to be easier to understand

- (a) Weekly pricing/invoicing
  - (b) Incentives for paying by direct debit
  - (c) Payment in advance of standing
  - Review pricing structure
    - (a) Differential between permanent and casual
    - (b) Reduced charges for using own stall
    - (c) Stratified charges for primary locations
    - (d) Transparent charging based on stall area
    - (e) Concessions for multiple stall occupancy
  - Review efficiencies in stall erection/dismantling Flat Iron
    - (a) Saving in labour costs
    - (b) No stall storage required
    - (c) No use of vehicles/trailers required
  - Evaluate feasibility of traders bringing own stalls, boards and canopies of specific design for co-ordinated appearance
  - Install signage to indicate market location when used as car park for 6 days a week
  - Trail new stall designs (see long term) with rent free periods for any trialists
    - (a) Can also be used for Farmers Market
    - (b) Can also be used for Covered Market pitches
  - Promote markets as a group travel destination
  - Move Flea market onto Thursday to ensure full offer in Covered Market
2. That the long term seeking to action the following objectives be approved in principle:
- Replace existing stalls (5m x 5m) with
    - (a) Gazebos stalls (3m x 3m)
    - (b) Umbrella stalls (3.5m x 3m)
  - Examine the introduction of a standard pattern for market stall canopies, with a choice of colours being made available for individual stall holders;
  - Review the markets layout in conjunction with the Flat Iron urban regeneration scheme for integration into the Market Walk Phase II design scheme.
  - Install powerpoints for Flat Iron market stalls.
  - Pursue the provision of new transport (electric) equipment to move market equipment and waste.

# Chorley Council



**2008-2009**  
*Transforming Services:  
Citizen Engagement  
and Empowerment*



**2009-2010**  
*Cohesive and resilient communities*



**2009-2010**  
*Better outcomes for people and places*

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy (Introduced by the Executive Leader)	Executive Cabinet	3 June 2010

**RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – TOWN CENTRE VITALITY**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To respond to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny inquiry report on Town Centre Vitality.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. That the Executive Cabinet endorses the response attached to be received by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**(If the recommendations are accepted)**

3. To inform Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Executive’s response to the recommendations made by the O&S Inquiry on Town Centre Vitality.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

4. None.

**CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

5. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region	✓	Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	✓
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	✓

**BACKGROUND**

6. In March 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a “review of the year” event, from which emerged a number of suggestions for topics for scrutiny during the current municipal year. The topic of the town centre was selected as one of the top two issues to be scrutinised during the year and a Task and Finish Group was, accordingly, set up to examine issues around the vitality and viability of the town centre.





7. The Task Group has met on nine occasions since August 2009 to consider carefully the various issues and material considerations related to the following five project areas identified for scrutiny:
- Marketing/Promotional Issues;
  - Markets Issues;
  - Gateways into Town Centre/Signage/Car Parking;
  - Use of Vacant Properties;
  - Improvement of the Cultural Officer.
8. The report containing a number of recommendations was presented to Executive Cabinet in March 2010. Outlined below are the responses to each of the recommendations falling within 8 objectives.

### **Objective 1: Formulation of a Comprehensive Marketing Action Plan**

9. That the following concepts and ideas put forward by the Task Group be assessed by a Task Group of the Town Centre Forum, with a view to the formulation of a comprehensive Marketing Plan for the Town Centre with the ultimate aim of attracting more shoppers and visitors to the town centre (eg through quality and attractive environmental improvements; reasonable car parking fees structure; provision of sufficient restaurants and cafes (operating to accommodate evening shoppers):
- selected coach operators (eg Shearings) be reminded of the Markets and other attractions within the town centre and requested to contact the Town Centre and Markets Manager for information on available coach parks;
  - examination of the means of enhancing the localised nature of the Farmers' and other themed markets to improve their distinctiveness by, for example, naming the "Chorley Farmers Market" or linking them to relevant themes (eg Cake Fairs, etc) with more effective advance promotion and advertising;
  - the expansion of the present marketing and promotional campaigns and strategy to encompass the whole of the town centre, with the wider distribution of promotional leaflets throughout the town centre;
  - address the currently insufficient co-ordination of town centre promotion and marketing between the Council and High Street and independent traders;
  - accept that the degree of business experienced by town centre traders is to a large extent, dependent on the commodity sold (eg shoppers are attracted to Markets on Tuesdays and Fridays; certain shops' business is brisker on Wednesdays, etc), and target future promotions accordingly;
  - promote the wide variety of shops available in the town centre, particularly the number of quality independent retailers, in an attempt to attract both residents who do not normally visit the town centre and other visitors from the surrounding catchment area through the production of a user friendly A4 promotional leaflet and Parish Council newsletter inserts;
  - promotion of the late night opening of shops on Thursday evenings will be reliant on more town centre retailers being persuaded to extend their opening hours;
  - Council's Officers be requested to consider the production of a small single sheet to promote the town centre, which could be used by retailers to accompany goods despatched to customers;
  - Council's Officers be requested to consider the viability and cost implications of advertising the wide diversity of shops and goods available in the town centre on local commercial radio stations, particularly during the period leading up to Christmas;
  - the costs and manpower implications, and likely effectiveness, of producing an occasional Directory of forthcoming cultural and sports events and activities across the Borough as a means of improving the co-ordination, promotion and take-up of the events, be examined.



10. **This set of comprehensive and timely recommendations will feed into developing the 2010/11 Corporate Strategy Project to “Produce a marketing package for the town centre, markets and Chorley as a whole”.**

#### **Objective 2: Prepare a Strategy for an Evening Economy**

11. That a review of the pricing structure and bureaucracy relating to the Lancastrian Room and the publicity/promotions strategy be undertaken, with the aim of making the facilities on offer more affordable and making local and regional groups more aware of the facilities.
12. **A review of the future role and function of the Lancastrian Suite is needed. Reviewing its use as a social facility needs to be undertaken whilst having regard to comparable facilities in comparable locations.**

#### **Objective 3: Signage Strategy**

13. That a recommendation be made to the Lancashire County Council for the erection of brown motorway advertising signs to promote the Markets and other visitor attractions in Chorley.
14. That a review of the directional signage to and within the town centre for motorists and pedestrians be undertaken.
15. That the Task Group supports and commends the need for an adequate and effective number of signs directing visitors to each of the town centre car parks to be placed at strategic locations within and around the town centre.
16. That the Officers undertake a review of the current location of existing gateway signs, with a view to suggesting the location and estimated cost of any required additional signs.
17. That the Officers be requested to liaise with the County Council to examine issues around the current state and security of pedestrian access routes to the town centre, particularly through underpasses and across car parks, and report recommendations to a future meeting of the Task Group.
18. **These recommendations are endorsed. Lancashire County Council will be approached about brown motorway advertising.**
19. **A key action of delivering the Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy on ‘Revealing the Town Centre Signage/Links/Gateways’, is preparing a signage strategy which will involve developing a hierarchy of information and signage, introducing a comprehensive and co-ordinated signage palette, and identifying and defining district ‘gateways’. This strategy also encompasses issues of pedestrian access including underpasses and car parks.**

#### **Objective 4: Car Parking Strategy**

20. That the Council’s Officers be requested to examine the possible extension of the scheme currently operated with Booths, under which £1 vouchers were awarded by the Supermarket retailer to shoppers at the store as a discount off parking fees, with appropriate retailers being approached to ascertain if they would be willing to participate in a similar scheme.
21. That the feasibility of the introduction of a herring-bone parking system on Market Street and St George’s Street be considered.
22. That needs of disabled drivers be taken into account when any revision of the car parking strategies are considered.

23. **The Town Centre and Markets Manager and Head of Streetscene Services are currently working with representatives from the Chamber of Trade and Town centre traders to look at car parking and extending the car parking voucher scheme off the flat iron car park will be one of the possibilities to be explored. Chorley Council and Lancashire County Council will look into the feasibility of introducing herringbone parking on Market Street and St George Street.**
24. **The Head of Streetscene Services will ensure that car parking strategies address the needs of the disabled.**

#### **Objective 5: Town Centre Living**

25. That residential usage of town centre properties be encouraged by the following means:
  - the Neighbourhoods Directorate be requested to offer an advice service to owners of properties in the town centre that are capable in whole or in part of conversion to flats, in order to clarify the relevant regulations, directives and standards which require to be complied with;
  - the Strategic Housing Services Section be requested to offer assistance in the marketing of new affordable housing units provided by Registered Social Landlords in the town centre, and provide details of applicants on the housing waiting list to the owners of the housing units;
  - developers of new schemes in the town centre be encouraged to consider mixed use developments (comprising retail, storage, residential units, etc) whenever practicable.
26. **Encouraging town centre living is integral to our Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy; and these recommendations are accepted in the main. However, Strategic Housing are only able to market new affordable housing units to prospective tenants, details of housing waiting list applicants cannot be passed on due to data protections issues.**

#### **Objective 6: Vacant Property Policy**

27. That an Officer be identified to undertake the role of Lead Co-ordinator responsible for the implementation of an Empty Property Policy setting out the practices and procedures to be adopted and implemented in relation to vacant town centre properties, including a package of advice and guidance to prospective developers on relevant planning application procedures, licensing regulations, funding sources and business support services, etc.
28. **Town centre vacant property is marketed on our sites and premises database, and initiatives have been piloted, such as the window dressing, to reduce the impact of vacancies. Whilst our town centre vacancy rates are low, we are mindful of the current difficult economic climate and the impact this may have on the town centre. Working with commercial letting agents, we endorse this recommendation.**

#### **Objective 7: Develop and Deliver Short and Long Term Plans for the Markets**

29. That a short term action plan containing realistic and viable measures aimed at enhancing the appearance and vitality of the Flat Iron Market; achieving maximum occupancy of stalls; and reducing arrears of stall rents be compiled and costed. The action should include practical measures to encourage a uniform charging policy and offer of subsidies or discounts to market traders paying rents by direct debit or in advance, or occupying more than one stall, etc. The plan should also take into account the current economic situation and not impose any undue financial burden that would discourage traders from the market.

30. Several suggested measures that could be explored for possible inclusion in the action plan are itemised in the Task Group’s findings report.
31. That the long term seeking to action the following objectives be approved in principle:
  - Replace existing stalls (5m x 5m) with
    - (a) Gazebos stalls (3m x 3m)
    - (b) Umbrella stalls (3.5m x 3m)
  - Examine the introduction of a standard pattern for market stall canopies, with a choice of colours being made available for individual stall holders;
  - Review the markets layout in conjunction with the Flat Iron urban regeneration scheme for integration into the Market Walk Phase II design scheme.
  - Install powerpoints for Flat Iron market stalls.
  - Pursue the provision of new transport (electric) equipment to move market equipment and waste.
32. **Having invested in the new covered market, our attention now turns to the flat iron. These recommendations feed into our 2010/11 Corporate Strategy Project to “Develop a proposal for Improvements to the Flat Iron”. The recommendation for short term actions is accepted and should take into account possible revenue generation to fund a long term scheme.**

**Objective 8: Develop and Deliver a Pavement Café Policy**

33. That the Task Group supports and wishes to participate in the production of the projected Pavement Café Policy, which the Members hope will take into account the need to balance the aim of preventing clutter and obstructions in the town centre with the need to protect commercial interests and the vibrancy of the town.
34. **We are currently working with LCC to simplify the application process and also provide Chorley with enforcement powers to ensure that non compliance with the policy can be addressed.**
35. The Executive would like to thank the Task Group for their report and recommendations which will help guide the Council in their scrutiny of the Town Centre and ensure that Chorley maintains its position in the retail hierarchy, grows the quality of its offer and provides a distinctive and attractive town centre offer.

**IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT**

36. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors’ comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

**COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION**

37. The immediate financial implication of this report relate to the marketing of the Town Centre. A sum of £5k has been identified from underspends in 2009/10 and will be recommended for slippage into 2010/11. In respect of many of the other proposals these

are likely to require significant capital investment once the feasibility work is complete. It will then be for members to decide if resources are to be allocated to any programme of work.

LESLEY-ANN FENTON  
DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIPS, PLANNING AND POLICY

There are no background papers to this report.

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Cath Burns	5305	11 May 2010	Town Centre Vitality



Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy	Overview and Scrutiny	3 October 2011

## 2<sup>ND</sup> MONITORING OF INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS – TOWN CENTRE VITALITY

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the actions taken following the general endorsement of their recommendations by Executive Cabinet dated 3 June 2010.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- To note the progress on the various actions.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The report provides a progress note as at September 2011 against each of the recommendations. On the whole, delivery is very positive.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To keep Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- None.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Strong Family Support		Education and Jobs	✓
Being Healthy		Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods	✓
Safe Respectful Communities		Quality Community Services and Spaces	
Vibrant Local Economy	✓	Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages	✓
A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money			✓

### BACKGROUND

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook an extensive examination of the issues around the vitality and viability of the town centre.



The report containing a number of recommendations was presented to Executive Cabinet in March 2010. Outlined in bold below are the responses by Executive Cabinet to each of the recommendations falling within 8 objectives, along with a progress update for the March 2011 position.

## **PROGRESS AGAINST RECOMMENDATIONS**

8. A further note on progress, as at September 2011, against each of the recommendations within the 8 objectives is contained below.

### **Objective 1: Formulation of a Comprehensive Marketing Action Plan**

9. That the following concepts and ideas put forward by the Task Group be assessed by a Task Group of the Town Centre Forum, with a view to the formulation of a comprehensive Marketing Plan for the Town Centre with the ultimate aim of attracting more shoppers and visitors to the town centre (e.g. through quality and attractive environmental improvements; reasonable car parking fees structure; provision of sufficient restaurants and cafes (operating to accommodate evening shoppers):
- selected coach operators (e.g. Shearings) be reminded of the Markets and other attractions within the town centre and requested to contact the Town Centre and Markets Manager for information on available coach parks;
  - examination of the means of enhancing the localised nature of the Farmers' and other themed markets to improve their distinctiveness by, for example, naming the "Chorley Farmers Market" or linking them to relevant themes (e.g. Cake Fairs, etc) with more effective advance promotion and advertising;
  - the expansion of the present marketing and promotional campaigns and strategy to encompass the whole of the town centre, with the wider distribution of promotional leaflets throughout the town centre;
  - address the currently insufficient co-ordination of town centre promotion and marketing between the Council and High Street and independent traders;
  - accept that the degree of business experienced by town centre traders is to a large extent, dependent on the commodity sold (e.g. shoppers are attracted to Markets on Tuesdays and Fridays; certain shops' business is brisker on Wednesdays, etc), and target future promotions accordingly;
  - promote the wide variety of shops available in the town centre, particularly the number of quality independent retailers, in an attempt to attract both residents who do not normally visit the town centre and other visitors from the surrounding catchment area through the production of a user friendly A4 promotional leaflet and Parish Council newsletter inserts;
  - promotion of the late night opening of shops on Thursday evenings will be reliant on more town centre retailers being persuaded to extend their opening hours;
  - Council's Officers be requested to consider the production of a small single sheet to promote the town centre, which could be used by retailers to accompany goods despatched to customers;
  - Council's Officers be requested to consider the viability and cost implications of advertising the wide diversity of shops and goods available in the town centre on local commercial radio stations, particularly during the period leading up to Christmas;
  - the costs and manpower implications, and likely effectiveness, of producing an occasional Directory of forthcoming cultural and sports events and activities across the Borough as a means of improving the co-ordination, promotion and take-up of the events, be examined.

10. **This set of comprehensive and timely recommendations will feed into developing the 2010/11 Corporate Strategy Project to “Produce a marketing package for the town centre, markets and Chorley as a whole”.**

11. Progress Note

Working with representatives of the Town Centre Forum, a marketing package for the Town Centre, Markets and Chorley as a whole was prepared. The project has delivered:

- Chorley’s Hidden Gems leaflet, distributed via the bus station network, within Northern Life magazine, Buckshaw Village, Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board, and Booths Store
- Stop and Shop in Chorley posters located at Chorley railway station and bus interchange, and 5 bus stops on primary routes
- Christmas radio campaign
- Facebook advertising
- Continuous positive press

12. Progress Note (September 2011)

An opportunity was taken to extend the marketing package using Revitalising Town Centres finance. Further work has included:

- Group travel adverts (5 occasions)
- Stop and shop in Chorley Update (in process)
- Market PA System
- Bunting and power supply for town centre events

**Objective 2: Prepare a Strategy for an Evening Economy**

13. That a review of the pricing structure and bureaucracy relating to the Lancastrian Room and the publicity/promotions strategy be undertaken, with the aim of making the facilities on offer more affordable and making local and regional groups more aware of the facilities.
14. **A review of the future role and function of the Lancastrian Suite is needed. Reviewing its use as a social facility needs to be undertaken whilst having regard to comparable facilities in comparable locations.**

15. Progress Note

Overview and Scrutiny is currently undertaking a separate review into the future role and function of the Lancastrian Suite.

16. Progress Note (September 2011)

The Overview and Scrutiny review into the Lancastrian is currently on-going, with completion of the review anticipated in December 2011.

**Objective 3: Signage Strategy**

17. That a recommendation be made to the Lancashire County Council for the erection of brown motorway advertising signs to promote the Markets and other visitor attractions in Chorley.
18. That a review of the directional signage to and within the town centre for motorists and pedestrians be undertaken.

19. That the Task Group supports and commends the need for an adequate and effective number of signs directing visitors to each of the town centre car parks to be placed at strategic locations within and around the town centre.
20. That the Officers undertake a review of the current location of existing gateway signs, with a view to suggesting the location and estimated cost of any required additional signs.
21. That the Officers be requested to liaise with the County Council to examine issues around the current state and security of pedestrian access routes to the town centre, particularly through underpasses and across car parks, and report recommendations to a future meeting of the Task Group.
22. **These recommendations are endorsed. Lancashire County Council will be approached about brown motorway advertising.**
23. Progress Note  
Chorley Council has worked closely with officers at Lancashire County Council to design a new brown sign to replace the 'Botany Bay' sign situated at the north side of the M61. All main tourism attractions in Chorley were researched and proposed to the County to be included in the sign. Following discussion around the most appropriate routes from the M61 to these attractions, a final list of these attractions are being recommended on giving us the best chance of getting authorisation from the Highways Agency: Botany Bay, Astley Hall and Historic Markets. An application form is being completed to submit to the Highways Agency.
24. Progress Note (September 2011)  
Further to submitting an application form to the Highways Agency for a brown sign at the north side to Junction 8 of the M61, the application has, unfortunately, not been approved for the following reasons:
  - "Chorley" is currently signed on the existing motorway direction signs so attractions in Chorley can be found by initially following these signs.
  - The visitor numbers for Astley Hall and the Markets are not sufficient to justify signs on the motorway.
  - Botany Bay is a retail destination and therefore no longer appropriate to sign as a tourist attraction. (There is no proposal to insist on the removal of the existing signs). In considering the criteria and guidelines for tourist signing on the motorway, there was little cause in appealing this decision. Alternative options are now being considered in terms of providing our tourism attractions.
25. **A key action of delivering the Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy on 'Revealing the Town Centre Signage/Links/Gateways', is preparing a signage strategy which will involve developing a hierarchy of information and signage, introducing a comprehensive and co-ordinated signage palette, and identifying and defining district 'gateways'. This strategy also encompasses issues of pedestrian access including underpasses and car parks.**
26. Progress Note  
The signage strategy has been kick-started by focussing on the signage for Astley Hall. New contemporary pedestrian signs have been designed bespoke for Chorley. It is intended that this work will be rolled out across the Town Centre.
27. Progress Note (September 2011)  
The new contemporary pedestrian signs have now been installed in Astley Park. These signs have been complemented by a new Town Centre maps located outside Booths on the Flat Iron car park, West Street car park, Fazakerly Street, Covered Market, Fleet Street car park, Portland Street car park, St Mary's car park and opposite WHSmith.



New signage has been provided in the Market Walk Shopping Centre in consultation with Chorley Council. This has included a rationalisation of signage with the removal of the large Market Walk sign opposite the covered market.

#### **Objective 4: Car Parking Strategy**

28. That the Council's Officers be requested to examine the possible extension of the scheme currently operated with Booths, under which £1 vouchers were awarded by the Supermarket retailer to shoppers at the store as a discount off parking fees, with appropriate retailers being approached to ascertain if they would be willing to participate in a similar scheme.
29. That the feasibility of the introduction of a herring-bone parking system on Market Street and St George's Street be considered.
30. That needs of disabled drivers be taken into account when any revision of the car parking strategies are considered.
31. **The Town Centre and Markets Manager and Head of Streetscene Services are currently working with representatives from the Chamber of Trade and Town centre traders to look at car parking and extending the car parking voucher scheme off the flat iron car park will be one of the possibilities to be explored. Chorley Council and Lancashire County Council will look into the feasibility of introducing herringbone parking on Market Street and St George Street.**
32. Progress Note  
As part of the budget setting process, Members approved a town centre project to develop the night time economy including consideration of free car parking after 4.00pm on the third Thursday night of each month; which was a recommendation from the task and finish group discussions. The pay and display machines on the flat iron car park are now being upgraded and car parking charges have been maintained, absorbing both VAT and inflationary increases.
- A detailed layout for herringbone parking on Market Street/St George Street was produced, but as this only generated six additional parking spaces it was not considered cost effective.
33. Progress Note (September 2011)  
The new pay and display machines have now been installed on the Flat Iron car park.
34. **The Head of Streetscene Services will ensure that car parking strategies address the needs of the disabled.**
35. Progress Note  
The responsible officers will ensure that car parking strategies address the needs of the disabled. Executive Cabinet still maintain free car parking for people with a disability for a maximum of 3 hours in any bay on town centre car parks, provided a valid blue badge is displayed.
36. Progress Note (September 2011)  
Position remains the same.

#### **Objective 5: Town Centre Living**

37. That residential usage of town centre properties be encouraged by the following means:
- the Neighbourhoods Directorate be requested to offer an advice service to owners of properties in the town centre that are capable in whole or in part of conversion to flats,

in order to clarify the relevant regulations, directives and standards which require to be complied with;

- the Strategic Housing Services Section be requested to offer assistance in the marketing of new affordable housing units provided by Registered Social Landlords in the town centre, and provide details of applicants on the housing waiting list to the owners of the housing units;
- developers of new schemes in the town centre be encouraged to consider mixed use developments (comprising retail, storage, residential units, etc) whenever practicable.

38. **Encouraging town centre living is integral to our Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy; and these recommendations are accepted in the main. However, Strategic Housing are only able to market new affordable housing units to prospective tenants, details of housing waiting list applicants cannot be passed on due to data protections issues.**

39. Progress Note

Working in partnership with Chorley Community Housing, seven empty flats have been purchased, repaired and fully re-let at Halliwell Street. Furthermore, 'Select Move' on-line Choice Based Letting System has recently commenced which will allow clients to 'bid' for rental properties with housing associations. Support to 'bid' and promotion of properties is available in the One Stop Shop. There is also a facility, via People and Places Directorate, to offer an advice service on regulations for conversion of town centre properties to residential.

40. Progress Note (September 2011)

Position remains the same.

#### **Objective 6: Vacant Property Policy**

41. That an Officer be identified to undertake the role of Lead Co-ordinator responsible for the implementation of an Empty Property Policy setting out the practices and procedures to be adopted and implemented in relation to vacant town centre properties, including a package of advice and guidance to prospective developers on relevant planning application procedures, licensing regulations, funding sources and business support services, etc.

42. **Town centre vacant property is marketed on our sites and premises database, and initiatives have been piloted, such as the window dressing, to reduce the impact of vacancies. Whilst our town centre vacancy rates are low, we are mindful of the current difficult economic climate and the impact this may have on the town centre. Working with commercial letting agents, we endorse this recommendation.**

43. Progress Note

The Economic Development Officer now acts as the lead co-ordinator for empty property. A vacant property pack, containing advice and guidance, has been prepared and distributed to commercial letting agents. At January 2011, our town centre vacancy rate was 7.9%, which is well below the North West rate at 18% to 19%.

44. Progress Note (September 2011)

Our Town Centre Grant Packages were launched on 31 May 2011. 'Supporting High Quality Independents into Vacant Shop Premises' provides 100%, shop floor refurbishment grant, up to a maximum of £3,000, as well as a six month 100% business rate subsidy, up to a maximum of £5,925. The 'Shop Front Improvement' Grant is also available to vacant properties on Market Street and Chapel Street. Four vacant units have been brought back

into use to date. Our town centre vacancy rate as at July 2011 was 7.26% and is showing a downward trend.

### **Objective 7: Develop and Deliver Short and Long Term Plans for the Markets**

45. That a short term action plan containing realistic and viable measures aimed at enhancing the appearance and vitality of the Flat Iron Market; achieving maximum occupancy of stalls; and reducing arrears of stall rents be compiled and costed. The action should include practical measures to encourage a uniform charging policy and offer of subsidies or discounts to market traders paying rents by direct debit or in advance, or occupying more than one stall, etc. The plan should also take into account the current economic situation and not impose any undue financial burden that would discourage traders from the market.
46. Several suggested measures that could be explored for possible inclusion in the action plan are itemised in the Task Group's findings report.
47. That the long term seeking to action the following objectives be approved in principle:
- Replace existing stalls (5m x 5m) with
    - (a) Gazebos stalls (3m x 3m)
    - (b) Umbrella stalls (3.5m x 3m)
  - Examine the introduction of a standard pattern for market stall canopies, with a choice of colours being made available for individual stall holders;
  - Review the markets layout in conjunction with the Flat Iron urban regeneration scheme for integration into the Market Walk Phase II design scheme.
  - Install power points for Flat Iron market stalls.
  - Pursue the provision of new transport (electric) equipment to move market equipment and waste.
48. **Having invested in the new covered market, our attention now turns to the flat iron. These recommendations feed into our 2010/11 Corporate Strategy Project to "Develop a proposal for Improvements to the Flat Iron". The recommendation for short term actions is accepted and should take into account possible revenue generation to fund a long term scheme.**
49. Progress Note  
Delivery of the Flat Iron Improvement project is underway for completion in July this year. The introduction of the gazebo type stalls will significantly enhance the look of the market to attract traders, improve the offer and range of goods, as well as attract more customers to the town centre.
50. Progress Note (September 2011)  
The new Flat Iron Improvement Scheme was launched in July 2011. After overwhelming demand from traders for the gazebos, the first phase was expanded from 35 stalls to 46 stalls. There has been positive feedback from traders, shoppers and local businesses. With their high visual impact, the look and feel of the flat iron market has been transformed. New traders have already been attracted to the town, and it is hoped that the new scheme will attract more shoppers to Chorley. The delivery of the final phase of gazebos is currently being investigated.

### **Objective 8: Develop and Deliver a Pavement Café Policy**

- 51. That the Task Group supports and wishes to participate in the production of the projected Pavement Café Policy, which the Members hope will take into account the need to balance the aim of preventing clutter and obstructions in the town centre with the need to protect commercial interests and the vibrancy of the town.
- 52. **We are currently working with LCC to simplify the application process and also provide Chorley with enforcement powers to ensure that non compliance with the policy can be addressed.**
- 53. Progress Note  
As part of the Public Realm discussions, Chorley Council and Lancashire County Council will be discussing the potential for the delegation of initial enforcement action from Lancashire County Council to Chorley Council. This will not only cover pavement café policy but other obstructions on the highway, when agreed.
- 54. Progress Note (September 2011)  
Discussions are on-going.

**IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT**

- 55. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	✓

**COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIPS, PLANNING AND POLICY / HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- 56. Delivery against each of the recommendations is, on the whole, very positive.

LESLEY-ANN FENTON  
DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIPS, PLANNING AND POLICY

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
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