

# Lostock Area Forum

**Thursday, 6 July 2006**

**Present:** Councillor Doreen Dickinson (Chair), Councillor Miss Margaret Iddon

**Also present:** Greg Morgan (Executive Member for Resources) and John Walker (Executive Member for Customer, Democratic and Legal Services)

**Co-opted Members:** Tommy Wilson (Bretherton Parish Councillor), Beryl Thompson (Croston Parish Councillor), Derek Ormerod (Ulnes Walton Parish Councillor), Alan Whittaker (Lancashire County Councillor), Cindy Lowthian (District Partnership Officer, Lancashire County Council), Chris Anslow (Public Transport Policy Section (Lancashire County Council)), Inspector Johanne South (Lancashire Constabulary), PC Caroline Plummer (Lancashire Constabulary), Julie-Ann Bowden (Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust) and Peter Wilson (Lindsay Hoyle MP)

**Chorley Borough Officers:** Jamie Carson (Director of Leisure and Cultural Services), Simon Clark (Commercial Manager (Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment)), Julian Jackson (Planning Policy Manager (Development and Regeneration)), Steve Pearce (Assistant Head of Democratic Services), Andy Brown (Greenspace Co-ordinator), Lucie McFall (Communications Officer) and Tony Uren (Democratic Services Officer)

16 residents of Lostock Ward.

## **9. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair (Councillor Doreen Dickinson) welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Lostock Ward Area Forum and introduced in particular, Councillor Margaret Iddon (the other Borough Councillor representing the Lostock Ward) two Borough Council Executive Members, County Councillor Alan Whittaker, Jamie Carson (Lead Officer for the Forum) and Officers from the Borough, County and respective Parish Councils, the Police and the Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust.

The Chair also apologised for a printing error in the Neighbourhood newsletter that had been circulated to all households in the Lostock Ward. The reference in the text to the Lostock Parish Council should have read Bretherton Parish Council.

## **10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr L Hoyle MP, Croston Parish Councillor Mrs A Peet, Police Sergeant A Clayton, Ms L Richardson (Croston Women's Institute) and the Governor of HM Prison Wymott.

## **11. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **(a) Confirmation**

The minutes of the initial meeting of the Lostock Area Forum held at Croston Old School, Croston on 23 March 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

A schedule attached to the minutes contained details of each of the separate questions and concerns expressed either orally or in writing at the Forum meeting, together with a summary of the respective responses and actions instigated to address the issues.

(b) **Matters Arising**

(i) **Rural Public Transport Issues**

The Chair requested County Councillor A Whittaker and Mr C Anslow to update the Forum on the County Council's position in relation to the provision of public transport services to serve the rural parts of the County.

County Councillor Whittaker advised the Forum that, although the County Council's Rural Bus Development Grant had been increased by 2.9% to £1.3m in 2006/07, the negligible increase in real terms would result in the County Council being able to support fewer rural services.

Local residents at the meeting drew attention to the lack of bus services available in the Lostock Ward and, particularly, the removal of the daytime 107 service and the implications of deleting the evening 108 service.

In response, County Councillor Whittaker and Mr Anslow stated that the 107 service had been withdrawn because of the failure to meet the required guidelines of revenue to costs and the fact that the Red Rose Runner service provided an alternative service. The evening service had been maintained as there was no alternative service available. The County Council was, however, examining the possibility of replacing the 108 evening service by an alternative pre-bookable service. This would be less expensive than the currently heavily subsidised 108 bus service, which was currently being operated at a significant annual loss of several thousand pounds.

The Forum was also advised that a Lancashire County Council Working Group was currently examining the issues of public transport in the light of a recent Government report. The remit of the Working Group would include the level of future investment in public transport in rural areas and the Forum Members expressed the hope that the Working Group would consider carefully the benefits of rural transport in terms of its impact on local resident's travel to work, as well as the financial considerations.

**12. "YOU SAID, WE DID"**

Mr Carson presented a report which gave an overview of the following six common issues which had been raised at two or all three of the initial meetings of the Area Forum pilot scheme in February/March 2006:

- problems with recycling containers;
- litter left behind by refuse collectors;
- activities for Young People to combat juvenile nuisance and anti-social behaviour;
- Motorcyclists causing problems on community roads and open spaces;
- the need for more speed cameras and traffic calming measures; and
- means of discouraging indiscriminate tipping around the Borough.

The report, which had been circulated with the agenda documents, also outlined the actions and measures which had been instigated by the Council's Officers to address the issues and resolve some of the problems identified.

At the conclusion of Mr Carson's report, a local resident reiterated the complaint that, in some instances, bins were not being returned to their collection point after emptying. Mr Clark, in reply, assured the residents that this complaint would be raised with Cleanaway with a view to the bin crews being instructed to return bins to their point of collection.

### **13. KEY ISSUES FOR LOSTOCK WARD - OPEN DISCUSSION**

The Chair invited the local residents present at the meeting to raise questions and express views on any matters relating to the provision of local services in the Lostock Ward area. In addition, a supply of Question Cards were available at the meeting to enable residents to document their questions and views.

The Chairman of the Croston Rural Action Group referred to a new planning application that had been lodged with the Borough Council by the Diocese of Blackburn for permission to construct 10 dwellings on the Rectory Farm site at Croston, which was being opposed by the Action Group. The Chair and Councillor Iddon, however, reminded the Forum that, under the provisions of the Code of Conduct on Planning, the Borough Councillors would be precluded from expressing any opinion on the proposal prior to the Development Control Committee's determination of the application.

Six question cards were, in fact, completed and left at the meeting. The schedule attached to these minutes sets out the various queries and/or comments raised, together with the respective responses to the questions of appropriate Council Officers or Partner representatives.

### **14. CHORLEY COMMUNITY AGENDA**

#### **(a) Chorley Borough Council issues**

Mr Jackson updated the Forum on the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) documents.

Mr Jackson explained that the LDF would replace the current Local Plan for the Borough and would include policies to control and promote the development of land, as well as a number of other policies and guidelines on such issues as sustainable development, renewable energy and other planning related matters (eg House Extension Design guidance, Chorley Town Centre etc).

Chorley Council was currently collaborating with Preston and South Ribble Councils on the formulation of a Core Strategy for the Central Lancashire City area, the initial steps of which would entail the publication of the Issues and Options Paper. The document would identify the issues affecting the planning process and development of land, together with possible solutions. The consultation exercise on the Issues and Options Paper was likely to commence in September 2006 and Mr Jackson hoped that the consultation would generate a substantial response from interested parties and the public, given the importance of the ultimate strategy on future development plans for both the urban and rural parts of the sub-region.

In response to a resident's query as to the form of the consultation on the Core Strategy and Issues and Options Paper, Mr Jackson stated that, while the details of the process had not yet been finalised, there would be ample opportunities for persons and organisations to make their views known

through, for example, specific focus groups and public meetings, exhibitions in public buildings, web-site information, etc.

The Forum was assured that adequate advance publicity would be afforded to the various forms of consultation process.

**(b) Lancashire County Council issues**

As the rural bus services and school transport issues were on-going matters being addressed, the Lancashire County Council representatives did not wish to raise any other specific issues.

**(c) Parish Council issues**

The three constituent Parish Councils (Bretherton, Croston and Ulnes Walton) had each been invited in advance of the Forum meeting to submit questions on any matter affecting their Parishes. The following issues had consequently been raised by the Parish Councils.

i) Question from Bretherton Parish Council

**“What actions are being taken to reduce road traffic speed throughout the villages in the Lostock Ward, particularly in North Road, Bretherton?”**

The enquiry had been passed by the County Council's District Partnership Officer to her colleagues at the County Council, who had responded by indicating that, unfortunately, the criteria for changing the speed limit on North Road had not been met.

The question and response prompted a number of associated queries and comments from Parish Councillors and local residents, which can be summarised as follows:

- North Road, Bretherton appears to satisfy at least four of the relevant criteria for speed limit restrictions, and perhaps the criteria is being interpreted incorrectly.
- Speed limits apply to other similar stretches of roads in rural areas (eg Rufford).
- The speed of cars up to 70mph along North Road, Bretherton poses a substantial road safety threat to local residents and particularly, school children during early mornings. The speeding vehicles need to negotiate many dangerous curves along the road.
- The request for a speed restriction is supported by the Parish Council and occupants of properties on North Road, many of whom experience difficulties in accessing the road from their driveway.
- Three known accidents on North Road during the past month may not be reflective of the true number of accidents.
- The residents were not at this stage seeking speed cameras and consider that the cost of warning signs should not be excessive.

In response to the Parish Councillors' and residents' comments and concerns, PC Plummer confirmed that road accident records held by the Police were supplied to Lancashire County Council. Whilst there was a requirement for all accidents involving injuries to be reported to

the Police, there was no statutory requirement for non-injury accidents to be reported to and recorded by the Police. PC Plummer also indicated that, although North Road was not one of the three locations in the area currently targeted by the Police's Traffic Section for surveillance, it was likely that the Police would support calls for the imposition of a 40mph speed restriction on the road.

County Councillor Whittaker also responded to the residents' comments, assuring the Forum that regular liaison occurs between the County Council and the Police on road safety matters, including the prioritisation of locations where both authorities agreed that speed restrictions should apply. In the light of the strength of argument expressed, County Councillor Whittaker undertook to seek clarification of the guidelines and criteria for speed limits on rural roads and ensure that the situation on North Road was reviewed by the County Council's Highways Engineers. The Officers' comments would be reported back to the residents by County Councillor Whittaker.

ii) Question from Bretherton Parish Council

**'What initiatives are being introduced to occupy young people in the community?'**

The following response had been provided by Mr J Carson (Chorley Council's Director of Leisure and Cultural Services):

- “
- **Last year over 400,000 visits were made by young people to the Council's leisure facilities. These facilities include places like All Seasons Leisure Centre, Astley Hall and Yarrow Valley Country Park, for example.**
  - **We also organise a programme of activities for young people called Get Up and Go. This programme continues to grow, year on year. We are always looking to work in partnership with local groups to develop activities for young people in rural areas. If any local groups are interested in working with us, be they sports, arts, community groups, or Parish Councils, we would be delighted to help.**
  - **As a Council, we have supported various projects over the past few years in the Lostock Ward including, for example, pitch improvements at Bishop Rawstorne, a play area at Ulmes Walton, the Croston drama project, Croston Old School and football projects at Croston and Bretherton. We are currently considering a request for support with a community centre project in Croston.**
  - **We are also active in supporting partners. We work with Lancashire County Council's Youth and Community Service to avoid duplication and support each other. We also provide funding advice to local groups, including schools, as we support them with the Extended Schools initiative which aims to increase activities for young people out of traditional school hours”.**

In addition, Mr Carson explained that his Directorate was keen to provide facilities for young people's activities in rural areas. There was, however, a need to establish contacts with local groups and bodies if the Council's Officers were to be able to advise and assist the groups in seeking external funding and resources for youth related projects.

iii) Question from Ulnes Walton Parish Council

**“It is questioned what the benefits are in producing a Lostock Ward Newsletter when the Borough already circulates the Chorley Borough News? The most recent issue contained an article about the Area forum and there would seem to be substantial cost implications for the production of a separate newsletter”.**

The following response had been provided by Shelley Wright (Chorley Council’s Communications Manager):

**“The Area Forum pilot scheme was designed to test how Chorley Borough Council could better engage with residents and aims to bring everyone with an interest in an area together to make improvements that matter most.**

**The newsletters are being trialled alongside the pilot scheme to raise awareness of the Area Forum meetings, feedback actions that have happened since the previous meeting and provide information about specific services raised by local people.**

**The first issue included feedback on the first Area Forum in Lostock and highlighted the details of the next one. It also included details of activities for youngsters and an update on improvements to the recycling scheme. The ‘You said, we did’ feature gave direct feedback to issues raised at the previous meeting and the contacts list is designed to help local people contact the right people at the Council as well as in the community.**

**For the first meeting, the Council distributed leaflets giving details of the date and time to ensure as many people were aware of its existence as possible. The newsletter has replaced this leaflet. Therefore, there are no extra distribution costs. The production of the newspaper to all tenants in Bretherton, Croston and Ulnes Walton has cost approximately £270 for 3,000 copies. That’s less than 1p each.”**

The reply to the query was accepted by the Forum, but it was pointed out that the distribution of the Borough Views did not always coincide with the dates of the Area Forum meetings.

iv) Question from Ulnes Walton Parish Council:

**“Mechanisms for feedback from Forum Meetings. Concern is expressed about the time of producing the minutes of the last meeting on the Borough website. In order for there to be accountability and for partners to have a clear understanding of what has been discussed at the meetings it is felt a better more timely system for feedback needs to be introduced.”**

The following response had been provided by Steve Pearce (Chorley Council’s Assistant Head of Democratic Services):

**“The minutes of the first meeting were published on the Council’s website two weeks prior to this meeting with the**

**agenda. A summary of all the responses to the questions raised at the meeting are also attached to the minutes.**

**Each Parish Council was represented at the meeting and those representative would have been able to provide feedback to their respective Council. A letter was also sent to the Clerks of the three Parish Councils on 19 April 2006 providing a copy of the responses given at the Forum meeting to the questions raised by the Parish Councils.**

**We are continually striving to improve the delivery of our services and we will ensure that the minutes of the second Forum meeting are published on the Council website within one month of the meeting and an e-mail alert will be sent to each Parish Council Clerk upon the publication of the minutes.”**

v) Question from Bretherton, Croston and Ulnes Walton Parish Councils:

**“Please explain what the County Highway strategy is, regarding i) volume of traffic; ii) road speed management; and iii) road safety, especially in the Lostock Ward?”**

The following response had been provided by the County Council’s District Partnership Officer, following consultations with appropriate County Council Officers:

**“The LCC Highways and Transport Strategy for managing the volume of traffic (congestion) Road Safety (including speed management) is set out in the Local Transport Plan. These policies and strategies are quite comprehensive and it would be best to refer to them to ensure consistency. To implement the policies and strategies and achieve the target set out in the LTP, an annual programme of Local Safety Schemes is developed and reported to Lancashire Local Committees. There are no Local Safety Schemes proposed in Lostock Ward (Croston, Bretherton, Ulnes Walton Parishes). We recently implemented a signing and lining scheme on the A581 through Ulnes Walton”.**

The question and response prompted associated questions and comments from residents. The issues raised and the respective responses are summarised as follows:

- A meeting between local residents and County Council Officers would be arranged to discuss the request for the installation of ‘Cats Eyes’ on Ulnes Walton Lane in conjunction with accident statistics.
- A local resident highlighted the road safety hazards caused by the volume and speed of traffic along Out Lane, Croston, and particularly, the dangers caused to pedestrians and children attending Bishop Rawstorne High School. The resident requested consideration of traffic calming measures on Out Lane and revised arrangements for access into the school. County Councillor Whittaker accepted the resident’s concerns, which had already been discussed with the Head Teacher at Bishop Rawstorne School, and gave an assurance that the suggestions would be raised again with the appropriate County Council Officers and the Head Teacher.

vi) Question from Bretherton, Croston and Ulnes Walton Parish Councils:

**“We understand that the Lancashire Highways Partnership will be terminated with effect from 30 June 2006. Please clarify what will replace the Highways Partnership and who will have responsibility for highway issues in the future”.**

The following response had been provided by the County Council's District Partnership Officer, following consultations with appropriate County Council Officers:

**“Lancashire County Council will take on more highway responsibilities from the start of next month. From Saturday, 1 July 2006, the responsibility for Lancashire's highway services will revert to Lancashire County Council. District Councils across the County had previously been responsible for some of the highway services whilst the County Council looked after certain other functions.**

**Some concern was raised that people were confused over who was responsible for which service.**

**A decision was therefore taken to stop the agreements with the districts and bring the service back to the County Council. Similar changes in West Lancashire and Rossendale have already taken place and have seen improvements to the highway network.**

**There is now one number for highways enquiries and one service provider. The new system should provide for clearer distinctions between each Council's responsibilities. Residents should notice no difference to highway services and hopefully they will see an improvement. Centrally-based staff will determine policy, budgets, strategy etc and staff who formerly worked for the districts will now be employed by the County Council. Jobs will still be carried out in the same way with engineers still based in local offices across the County.**

**If anyone has a highway issue, they should contact Lancashire County Council on 0845 053 0011, e-mail [highways@lancscc.gov.uk](mailto:highways@lancscc.gov.uk), or write to: Environment Directorate, Lancashire County Council, P O Box 9, Guild House, Cross Street, Preston, PR1 8RD.**

#### **Further Background Information**

**Since 1974, the County Council has entered into agency agreements with its districts to deliver a range of highway services. The range of services varied depending on the district.**

**Under the new arrangements, services such as road and pavement repairs, street lighting, road markings, traffic calming and gritting will be looked after by County Hall.**

**The County Council is the highway authority for the administrative area of Lancashire and has a range of statutory duties and powers arising from the Highways Act 1980 and other legislation. The prime duty is to maintain the adopted highway network which includes:**



- Carriageways
- Footways
- Footpaths
- Cycle tracks
- Verges
- Street lighting
- Traffic signs (illuminated and non-illuminated)
- Road markings
- Safety barriers
- Bridges
- Drainage systems
- Retaining walls
- Traffic signals
- Other miscellaneous infrastructure

**This does not include trunk roads and most lengths of motorway, which are maintained by the Highways Agency.”**

vii) Question from Bretherton, Croston and Ulnes Walton Parish Councils:

**“Please explain why ambulance response times for the Lostock Ward are substantially poorer than the rest of the Borough.”**

The following response had been provided by the Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust:

**“Although in 2005/06 the Lancashire Ambulance Service did achieve the national target of 75% of Category A response times within 8 minutes, there are certainly inequities within this and Chorley and South Ribble have traditionally fared less well than the urbanised areas such as Preston and Blackpool due to their relative rurality. Chorley and South Ribble PCT have been aware of this for some time and have been working with the Ambulance Trust to address the issue. In response, the Ambulance Trust have extended the hours of a rapid response vehicle based in Leyland to provide 24/7 cover from May this year and this also carried drugs that enable paramedics to administer treatment for heart attacks at the scene for some patients. This had led to an improvement in response times which are up to 70.11% for May 2006. The PCT will continue to monitor the standard and work with the Ambulance Trust to improve the figures.”**

**(d) Lancashire Police Issues**

Inspector J South, the newly appointed Area Inspector, gave a short address on the ‘Operation Summer Nights’ campaign. The campaign involving both overt and covert operations would entail the Police and, particularly, Community Beat Officers targeting different locations around the Borough (including rural Parishes), especially the known ‘hot spots’ for anti-social behaviour.

The campaign aimed to reduce anti-social incidents (eg criminal damage, congregation of youths; under-age drinking) and the campaign had already impacted by evidence of a reduction in criminal damage incidents.

In response to a resident’s query, Inspector South advised use of the national telephone number, or the appropriate Community Beat Officer’s telephone number, whenever the public wished to contact the Police on a non-emergency matter. Inspector South reminded the Forum that the rural

Community Beat Officers were responsible for expansive areas, but would endeavour to ensure a response to telephone calls as early as practicable

**15. FEEDBACK / ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

The Chair drew attention to the feedback cards available at the meeting and invited the attendees to complete them to express their views on the format, arrangements and conduct of the Forum meeting.

The cards could also be used to suggest items for consideration at the next meeting

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The meeting noted that the third and final round of the current Lostock Area Forum pilot scheme was to be held on Thursday, 28 September 2006 at the Wymott and Garth Prison Officers Club, Pump House Lane, Ulnes Walton at 7.00pm.

**17. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS**

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair thanked all the members of the public; County, Borough and Parish Councillors; Partner representatives and Council Officers present for their attendance and contributions to the Area Forum meeting

Chair