

# AREA FORUM WORKING GROUP

22 September 2005

Present:

Members: Councillor Edgerley (Chair) and Councillor R Snape

Officers: Mr J W Davies (Chief Executive), Mr M O'Loughlin (Head of Customer, Democratic and Office Support Services), Mr S Pearce (Assistant Head of Democratic Services), Ms L Morey (Community Development Officer) and Mr A Uren (Democratic Services Officer).

## 05.AF.07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ball, Birchall and Lennox.

## 05.AF.08 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interests by any Member in the business on the Working Group's agenda.

## 05.AF.09 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

### (a) Confirmation

The Members of the meeting of the Area Forum Working Group held on 4 July 2005 were confirmed as a correct record.

### (b) Matters Arising

#### (i) Rural Area Forum

The Chair confirmed that he had accepted the Officer's recommendation and had agreed proposals to establish a pilot rural Area Forum within the Lostock Ward (comprising Bretherton, Croston and Ulnes Walton).

#### (ii) Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Scrutiny Inquiry

The Assistant Head of Democratic Services reported that the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel had set up two Sub-Groups to examine in depth the two distinct elements of the scrutiny inquiry into public participation in the Council's decision-making process (ie (i) Area Forums/Committees and (ii) Public Speaking/Questions at Council/Committee meetings).

The Panel had raised no objection to members of this Working Group accompanying the Area Forum Sub-Group Members on their visits to selected surrounding Authorities to examine how their arrangements are operated. The Working Group Members would be notified and invited to attend as soon as the timetable of visits had been finalised.

## 05.AF.10 AREA FORUM PILOT SCHEME – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Working Group received for information, a copy of the document that had been presented to each of the preliminary consultation meetings that had been held in

Croston, Coppull and Clayton Brook on 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September respectively to explain the proposals for the three pilot schemes and seek the views of the communities before final arrangements were agreed. Representatives from each of the major Partners (ie Lancashire County Council, Police and Primary Care Trust) and a wide range of local community, voluntary and faith groups had been invited to attend the three meetings.

The consultation document set out the background and reasons for the selection of the three pilot areas, together with the objectives and likely benefits to be derived from the initiative.

The document also outlined the draft arrangements for the operation of the pilot schemes, which were generally accepted by the Panel. It was intended that the Forum meetings would be operated in two parts, with one part structured around a formal agenda and another part allowing an open discussion session. Whilst accepting the basis of the structure, the Members considered that each Area Forum shall be allowed to decide the order of the two parts for its own meetings.

#### **05.AF.11 AREA FORUM PILOTS – CONSULTATION MEETINGS**

The Panel received and considered a report which summarised the views expressed at the three Area Forum pilot scheme consultation meetings at Croston, Coppull and Clayton Brook and made recommendations to progress the initiative.

The report highlighted the general support that had been expressed at each of the consultation meetings of the Area Forum concept as a means of improving and encouraging dialogue and direct contact between the public and responsible decision-making bodies. The consensus views of attendees at the Clayton Brook meeting was that the pilot scheme should not be restricted to Clayton Brook, but should be extended to cover the whole of the Clayton-le-Woods North Ward.

The Panel was also advised of the contents of an e-mail from the Lancashire County Council's Senior District Partnership Officer confirming the relevant County Councillors' support of the Area Forum pilot schemes. The communication also referred to the County Council's plans to develop Lancashire Locals, which the County Council hoped would complement the Area Forums. The issue would be discussed at the forthcoming Lancashire Leaders' meeting, the outcome of which would be reported to the next Working Group meeting.

#### **It was AGREED:**

- 1. That the Executive Cabinet be recommended:**
  - (a) to agree the boundary of the Area Forum pilot for Clayton be defined as the Clayton-le-Woods North Ward, which comprises the area of Clayton Brook, in line with the consensus view expressed at the consultation meeting on 13 September; and**
  - (b) to approve the draft arrangements for the introduction of the three Area Forum pilot schemes within the areas of Clayton-le-Woods North, Coppull and Lostock as set out in the attached appendix to these minutes.**
- 2. That, subject to the Cabinet's endorsement of (1) above, the officers progress the initiative in liaison with the respective partners and report to the next meeting of the Area Forum Working Group proposals for the dates and venues for the initial Forum meetings; conduct procedure rules; and promotional arrangements.**

**05.AF.12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Working Group **AGREED** to meet next on Thursday, 17 November 2005 at 5.00pm.