

Report of	Meeting	Date
Head of Development and Regeneration  (Councillor A Gee Executive Member for Chorley Town Centre and Risk Management).	Executive Cabinet	9 March 2006

## CHORLEY TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To seek Members endorsement for the attached consultation draft of the Town Centre Strategy.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2 The production and implementation of the Town Centre Strategy is relevant to the Council's Corporate Priorities by improving the quality of the town centre environment, encouraging investment and sustainable development and tackling social exclusion. It further reflects two of the priorities identified in the Community Strategy: to put Chorley at the heart of regional economic developments in the Central Lancashire Sub-region and to develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live and visit. The Strategy also draws upon the findings of the Economic Regeneration Strategy for the Borough, which identifies Chorley as a Contemporary market town with a distinctive town centre.

### RISK ISSUES

3. The issues raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	√	Information	√
Reputation	√	Regulatory/Legal	√
Financial	√	Operational	√
People		Other	

- 4 Local authorities must become more pro-active and strategic in planning and managing town centres and this will have resource, reputation, information and regulatory implications for the Council.

### BACKGROUND

- 5 The Council appointed consultants White Young Green in May 2005 to undertake a study of Chorley Town Centre and the wider retail and leisure needs of the Borough. The report provides a detailed evaluation on how the town centre can evolve through to 2015 and meet retail and leisure requirements of the Borough.

- 6 Following this study the Council approved on 24 January 2006 a draft of the Chorley Town Centre Action Area and Retail and Leisure Policies Preferred Options Development Plan Document, as part of the Local Development Framework. It sets out policies to guide decisions on planning applications in the Town Centre and will be placed on consultation for a six-week period from the 15 March 2006.
- 7 A number of the White Young Green study's findings were more to do with the maintenance and management of the town centre, and particularly the Business Promotion and Support priority. These issues are considered in more detail in this companion document, the **Chorley Town Centre Strategy**, which will be published for consultation and community involvement at the same time.
- 8 Following the six-week period of consultation and community involvement on the draft Chorley Town Centre Strategy, the Council will consider all the comments received and will produce a further version of this document for adoption.

## CONTENT OF THE DOCUMENT

This Strategy has been prepared to provide a co-ordinated framework for action and investment allowing the Council to work with existing partners and also forge new partnerships. The basic principle underlying this Strategy is to realise the potential of Chorley Town Centre and so improve its vitality and viability. This can be assisted through town centre management, environmental improvements and regeneration, promotion and marketing to provide for the needs of the local community, local businesses and those who visit. The Strategy seeks to build on the town's strengths to better serve the needs of local people and businesses and so develop a Unique Selling Point that can be used to attract both more quality outlets and visitors.

- 9 **Four Priority Elements** are identified in the Town Centre Strategy because there are a number of inter-related opportunities running through each strategic objective. The Priority Elements help to focus on the necessary key measures and actions required for the Town Centre.

**Town Centre Diversification** - Broaden Chorley Town Centre's economic base particularly in relation to stimulating the expansion of the evening economy, increasing the clothing and footwear offer and encouraging new small independent specialist retailers;

**Town Centre Environment** - The physical fabric of the town maximises its contribution to future competitiveness of the centre through significant enhancement and general maintenance;

**Accessibility and Movement** - Build upon the current high levels of accessibility and address specific issues such as the current car parking system and pedestrian linkages within the town centre.

**Business Promotion and Support** - Strengthen the town centre's role through stronger links with the business community and a greater level of support.

- 11 **The Town Centre Strategy** aims to pursue a wide range of coordinated actions under the above-mentioned Priority Elements as set out in the attached document. Priority Actions have been identified in the accompanying action plan and initial targets for 2006/07 have been set against each of these. The identified Priority Actions are:

- Bring forward major retail and leisure developments including a second phase of Market Walk
- Secure a better range and quality of shops and leisure attractions
- Encourage quality office development
- Identify and reinforce the local distinctiveness of the town centre
- Improve public spaces and shop fronts
- Review car parking and improve choice

- Implement transport improvements in the town centre
- Develop and pursue a marketing strategy
- Improve partnership working and communication with town centre stakeholders
- Development the commercial potential of the town centre and the markets

## **TIMETABLE**

12 The Strategy will be a 10-year plan until 2016 and reviewed every 3 years,

## **MEASURING AND MONITORING PERFORMANCE**

13 The actions will be monitored annually and measures and targets will be developed to quantify this.

## **BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS**

14 The form of action the Council will take will vary depending on circumstances. It may include:

- land purchases and sales and possibly joint venture agreements;
- commissioning of technical work, use of statutory powers and where necessary compulsory purchase.

15 This report does not have an immediate and direct financial impact. However there are actions and proposals, which will lead to financial commitment.

16 The principal needs for financial resources are likely to be in relation to:

- environmental improvement schemes
- acquisition and demolition costs
- grants for shop front improvements and the like
- provision of signs and other forms of information
- staff resources committed to town centre management
- investment in the markets
- promotion/business support
- maintenance of public spaces

17 The requirements are not specific at present since they are dependent on the level of contribution from other participants and the specific proposals that emerge. Following the finalisation of the Strategy in the summer of 2006 it will then feed into the budget preparation process for 2007/8 onwards.

## **COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

18 There are no apparent HR implications to this report

## **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

19 The report clearly sets out that to achieve the strategy will require resources over and above those currently being consumed on the town centre. Some of the issues raised in the report will be addressed through the resources allocated to the Council's economic regeneration priority in the 2006/07 Budget.

20 However a longer term delivery plan is required that sets out the potential costs and benefits of town centre strategy. The outcome of this work will allow members to determine what resources can be allocated to meet the strategic aims.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 21 That the Executive Cabinet endorse the draft Chorley Town Centre Strategy and approve it for consultation and community involvement purposes with any necessary minor textural amendments delegated to the Head of Development and Regeneration.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 22 Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6): Planning for Town Centres states that Council's should be pro-active in their approach to town centres, produce Town Centre Strategies and plan for future development in the town.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 23 None as the need for a planned strategic approach for Chorley town centre has been established.

JANE E MEEK  
HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

<b>Background Papers</b>			
<b>Document</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>File</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
Chorley Town Centre Retail and Leisure Study Final Report	October 2005		
Chorley Town Centre Retail and Leisure Report	November 2005	***	Members Room
Chorley Town Centre Action Area and Retail and Leisure Policies Preferred Options Development Plan Document	January 2006		

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Alison Marland	5281	17 February 2006	