

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Development and Regeneration (Introduced by Councillor Peter Malpas Economic Development and Regeneration).	Executive Cabinet	5 October 2006

CHORLEY TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To advise Members of the generally positive and encouraging representations received about the Town Centre Strategy and to approve the finalised document.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2 The production and implementation of the Town Centre Strategy is a key project within the Council's Corporate Strategy and is essential to the attainment of the Council's Strategic Objectives: 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 approved Economic Regeneration Strategy and will assist the implementation of that Strategy, 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 Becoming more pro-active and strategic in planning, promoting and managing the town centre will necessarily 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 health check of the town centre and identifies how the town centre can successfully adapt through to 2015 to provide for the retail and leisure requirements of the Borough's community.

- 6 This process has been taken forward in production of the draft Town Centre Strategy, which will be a 10-year policy and action plan until 2016 and will be reviewed every 3 years.
- 7 The Strategy has been prepared to provide a co-ordinated framework for policy, action and investment requiring the Council to work positively 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 centre. 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 a greater range of quality outlets and more visitors.
- 8 **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 to secure and enhance the Town Centre's vitality and viability.
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 – Ensure that 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.
- 9 **The Town Centre Strategy** aims to pursue a wide range of coordinated actions under the above-mentioned Priority Elements. 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
- 10 The draft version of the Strategy was published for consultation and community involvement for a six-week period from the 15 March 2006.
- 11 At the same time the Council also consulted on preferred options for the Chorley Town Centre Action Area and Retail and Leisure Policies Development Plan Document, as part of the Local Development Framework. It sets out policies to guide decisions on planning applications in the Town Centre as well as in local centres across the Borough.

COMMENTS RECEIVED AND PROPOSED CHANGES

- 12 The Council held a presentation and workshop on the draft Town Centre Strategy on 26 April 2006 for invited organisations to consider and comment on the Strategy and its associated Action Plan. This was a very useful and informative meeting with many constructive and positive suggestions for taking the Strategy forward. The comments received at the workshop and the Council's response is attached at Appendix A.
- 13 Over the consultation period the Council also received 22 separate representations to the draft Strategy. A summary of the comments and the Council's response is attached at Appendix B.
- 14 Wm Morrison Supermarket Ltd suggested that there is no quantitative need for a new foodstore of 5,000 sq m gross in Chorley and have objected to its inclusion in the Town Centre Strategy A1 because:
- The catchment area is too extensive and Leyland should not be included within Chorley's catchment area.
 - Chorley and Leyland are identified as equal in the settlement hierarchy. Leyland is the weaker of the two towns and therefore any new retail development should be encouraged first in Leyland;
 - The estimated market share of Chorley's existing provision and how accurate the household survey has been is questionable as is the volume of expenditure that would be genuinely available to support new convenience retail floorspace.

They conclude that even using the extensive catchment area, there is insufficient surplus expenditure to support a large new foodstore in Chorley and this could lead to the closure of more vulnerable and weaker stores within the town.

- 15 White Young Green have been retained to respond to this representation (the full response is in Appendix B (pages 9-13) and conclude:
- "It is evident that Wm Morrison currently operate a foodstore within Chorley and are concerned about further convenience goods provision which may compete with their existing store. However, in considering the objection submitted, it must be noted that one of the key objectives of Planning Policy Statement 6 is to support efficient, competitive and innovative retail, leisure and tourism sectors.

Another key objective of PPS6 is to promote and enhance existing centres by focusing development there whilst providing a wide range of services. As there is currently a significant shortfall of convenience goods retailing within Chorley, it is White Young Green's view that the aspirations of the Town Centre Strategy to address this shortfall are fully justified. The town centre strategy seeks to provide a pro-active approach to attract further convenience goods expenditure to the established town centre to help strengthen its role and offer. If such an approach impacts on existing stores in out-of-centre locations then the strategy would have fulfilled its objective and created a more competitive town centre convenience goods sector.

Wm Morrison's criticisms of the White Young Green study are unsubstantiated. The evidence for the study has been gathered by independent market researchers using well-established techniques which are adopted throughout the UK. Therefore, although Wm Morrison suggest that trading conditions at their local store are different to that recorded in the WYG study, without clear evidence of this it is impossible to evaluate their objection.

In summary, the aim/objective of the town centre strategy to introduce more convenience goods shopping within the town centre is totally in accordance with national and regional planning guidance. The White Young Green study confirms that such a development would not result in the closure of stores elsewhere and would in no way undermine the

future growth and development of Leyland. On this basis, the objection submitted by Wm Morrison is both erroneous and unsubstantiated”.

- 16 In view of this advice your officers propose that no change should be made to A1 of the Draft Key Action Plan. However it is proposed to remove the reference to a large supermarket in A1 of the Draft Priority Actions (page 8) as the facilitation of negotiations and site assembly for this proposal would be more realistically actioned from 2007-2008. It is also proposed to make clear that the Priority Actions and Targets will be monitored and reviewed each year. This process will allow actions and targets to be rolled forward or drawn into the programme as appropriate.
- 17 Few other changes are proposed to the Strategy itself. This is because many of the comments made refer to detailed suggestions that are more relevant to the implementation of the actions identified in the Strategy, the proposed final version of which is attached at Appendix C with additions shown in bold and underlined, and deletions shown as strike-throughs. The limited changes are outlined below:
- Insert reference that Priority Actions and Targets will be monitored and reviewed each year. This process will allow actions and targets to be rolled forward or drawn into the programme as appropriate (Page 5/6);
 - Amend Draft Priority Action A1 to remove reference to “A large supermarket or an equivalent extension (2,000-5,000 sq m (gross))” (Page 9);
 - Insert “ The Police” at Action/Project A6 Prospective Partners column (Page 12);
 - Action Project B1 add “including the railway” after Main Approach Routes to the Town Centre. (Page 12);
 - Delete site B1.5 (1) the former Bentwoods, Water Street from Action/Project B1.5 (page 14) and from the Key Action Plan Map. This site is now under construction;
 - Editorial changes where the text has become redundant

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

- 18 The type of intervention required of the Council 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.
- 19 There are Actions and Projects, which will require financial commitments on the part of the Council.
- 20 The principal needs for such 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
- 21 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 adoption of the Strategy in October 2006 resource needs will then be fed into the budget preparation process for 2007/8 onwards.

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

22 There are no apparent HR implications to this report

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

23 There are no financial implications associated with this report other than those associated with the comments made on budgeting implications above, which will feed into the next budget cycle for 2007/08.

RECOMMENDATION

24 That the Executive Cabinet approves the adoption of the Chorley Town Centre Strategy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

25 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

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

JANE E MEEK

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Chorley Town Centre Retail and Leisure Study Final Report	October 2005		Members Room
Chorley Town Centre Retail and Leisure Report	November 2005		
Chorley Town Centre Action Area and Retail and Leisure Policies Preferred Options Development Plan Document	January 2006	***	
Chorley Town Centre Strategy	9 March 2006		
Response from White Young Green on Wm Morrison Supermarket Ltd representations	July 2006		
Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Alison Marland	5281	21 September 2006	