

Report of	Meeting	Date
The Chief Executive (Introduced by the Leader of the Council)	Executive Cabinet Council	7 th December 2006 19 th December 2006

MAXIMISING THE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER

PURPOSE OF REPORT`

1. To set out an overview of the Local Government White Paper and recommend an opportunity to improve two tier working.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2. The new Corporate Strategy contains a project to “maximise the opportunities of the Local Government White paper.”

RISK ISSUES

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

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

4. Risks will be considered in full as any potential bid emerges and regular reports will be provided to Executive Cabinet.

BACKGROUND

5. The new Local Government White Paper was published at the end of October. It sets out a number of key issues for Chorley. It is important that the Council carefully considers the opportunities for Chorley in full, ensuring we are positioned to improve services and ensure value for money services. The Chief Executive will be attending all the political groups to outline the opportunities in more detail which will be debated at Council on 19th December.

THE KEY ISSUES

6. The headlines of the Local Government White paper are as follows:

- The White Paper heralds a new relationship between central and local government and citizens.
- There will be a reduction in national targets overall
- There will be more freedoms and powers given to local government.
- There will be opportunities for a limited number of unitary bids by 25th January 2007.
- There will be an opportunity for a limited number of two tier pathfinder bids
- All councils in a two-tier context need to explore ways of improving two-tier local government regardless of whether they are selected as a pathfinder.
- Services need to become more locally accountable.
- There are stronger roles for local neighbourhoods.
- Potentially there will be new political leadership models.

7. The indications are that the following councils will be preparing unitary bids:

- Preston – potentially with South Ribble subject to public consultation (decision on 7th December).
- Lancaster
- Burnley and Pendle
- Hyndburn

It is unclear whether any of these bids will be approved as the criteria for unitary bids includes the premise that the new unitaries have to be self-financing within five years and that there has to be no disruption to the surrounding areas. In Lancashire this will be very difficult to achieve.

An Improved Two-Tier bid could:

- Improve the quality of services to local people
- Reduce public confusion
- Ensure there is less duplication of effort
- Mean fewer organisational disputes
- Bring about more efficiency and value for public money
- Give greater local control, accountability and governance to Chorley on services, eg highways, youth and community services, public regulation, etc...

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

8. No direct implications at this stage.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

9. No direct implications at this stage

RECOMMENDATION(S)

10. It is recommended that Executive Cabinet support the following recommendations to Council on 19th December 2006:
- The Council enters into a discussion with Lancashire County Council and others with a view to preparing an Improving Two -Tier Pathfinder bid for submission by 25th January 2007.
 - The Council's Director of Policy and Performance chairs a meeting of officers across Lancashire to prepare the bid.
 - The Council submits a bid to the North West Improvement Network's Communities of Interest programme for resources to support the development of the bid.
 - That the Leader of the Council regularly updates the Executive Cabinet and member of the Council on the progress of the bid and the potential implications for Chorley Borough Council.

DONNA HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Donna Hall	5104	21 st Nov 06	ADMINREP/REPORT