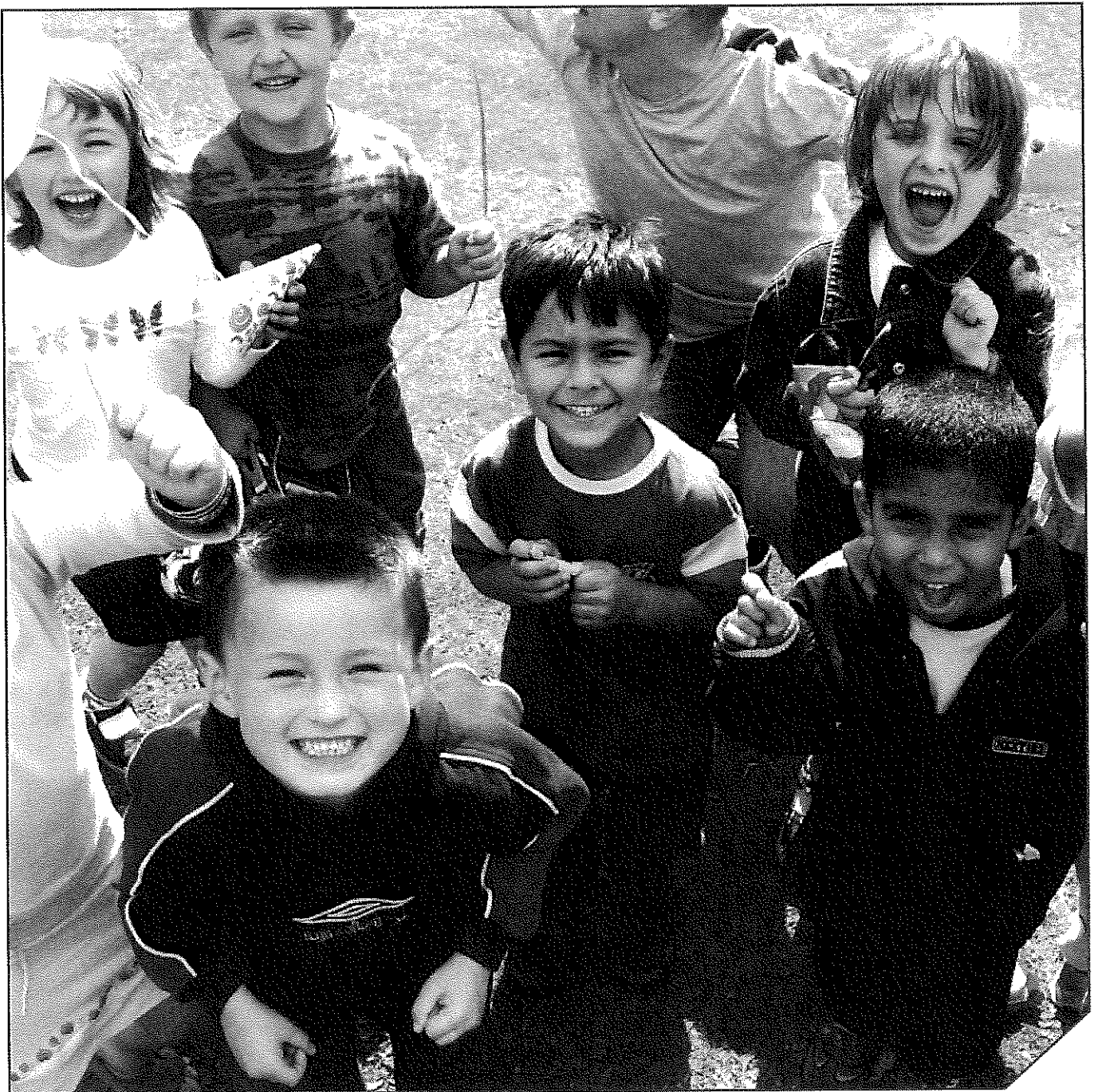
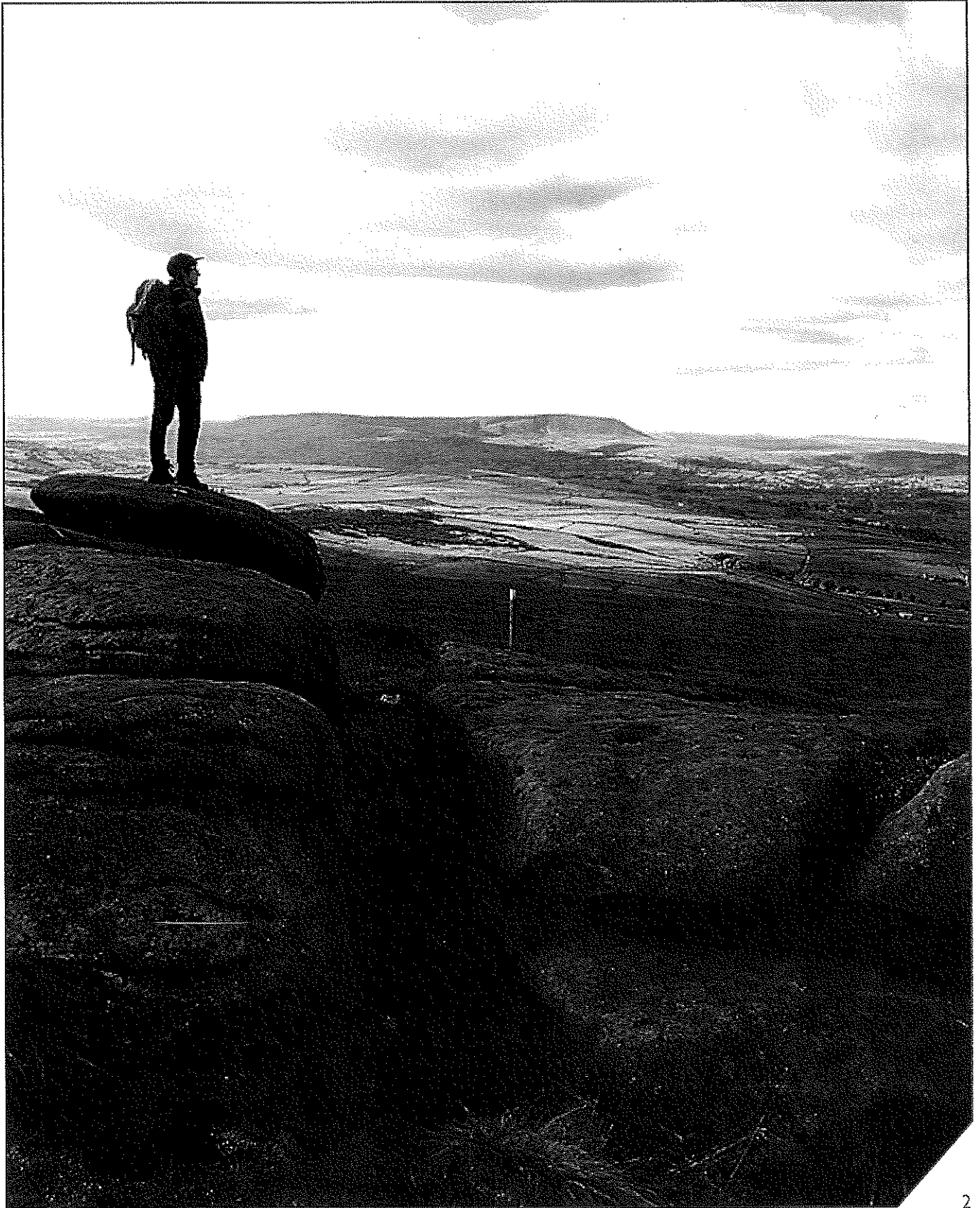


# Transforming Local Government in Lancashire

Work in progress towards improving two-tier working from District and County Council partners in Lancashire to the Department for Communities and Local Government



# I / Executive Summary





This document has been developed jointly by district and county partners across Lancashire. Although it has a broad cross section of support it does not yet have the support of all districts. However partners plan a process of involvement to develop this document and to further enhance engagement.

The October 2006 Local Government White Paper clearly states that "status quo is not an option in two-tier areas if councils are to achieve the outcomes for place shaping and service delivery that communities expect and deliver substantial efficiency improvements."

Districts and the County Council have been invited to take part in the process of working together to improve two-tier arrangements, despite four districts preparing unitary proposals within the same timeframe. All eleven districts plus Preston City Council as observers and the County Council have been engaged in the discussions which have led to the production of this document.

We believe that the ideas set out in the pages that follow are applicable to two-tier areas in Lancashire.

Our modernised two-tier model will transform the way local government in Lancashire works. Our key success criteria are:

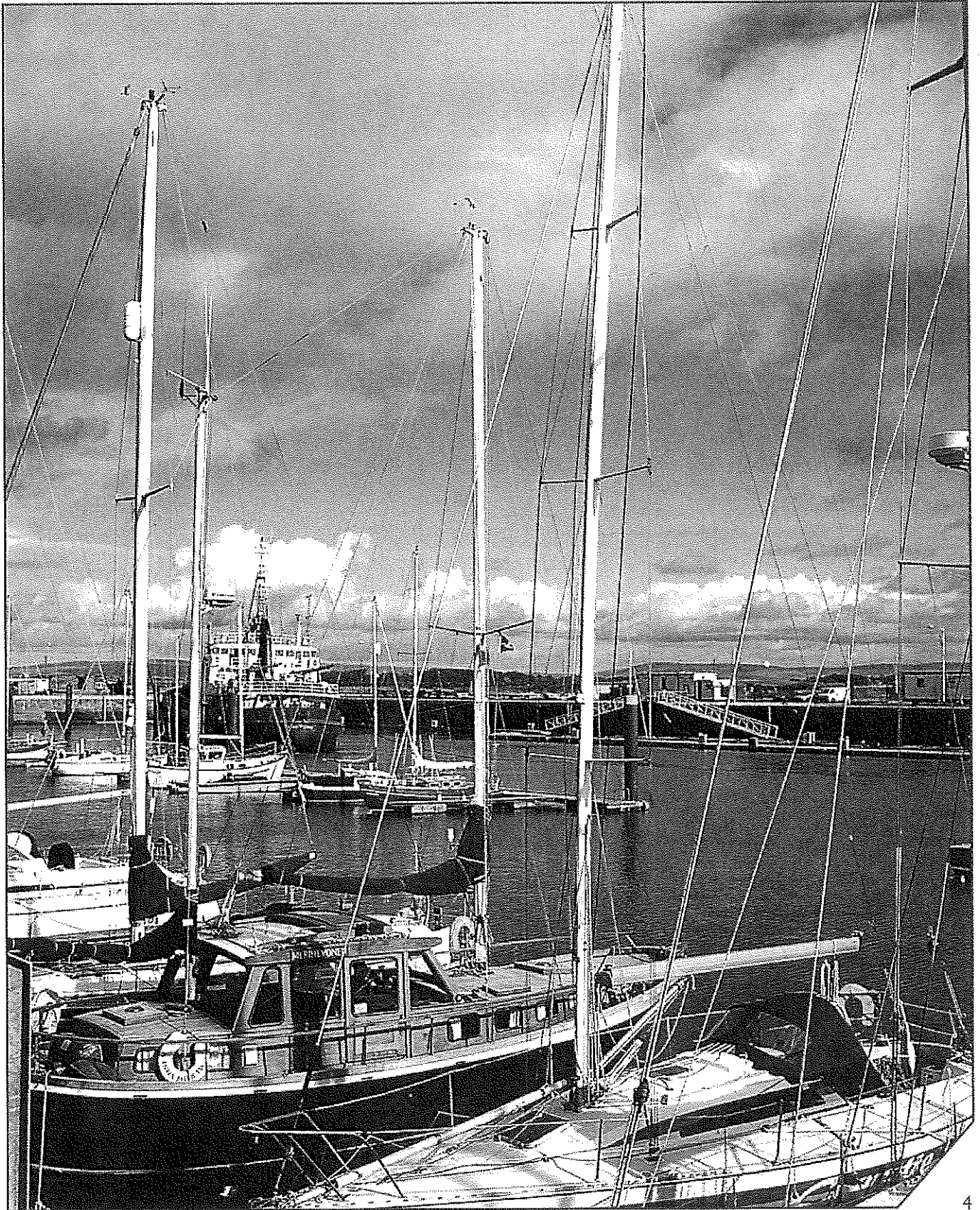
- / High quality, seamless and efficient services delivered to local residents.
- / Stronger leadership of place at both the county and district levels.
- / Effective accountability arrangements for both front line and executive councillors.
- / Clear and stronger roles for all county and district councillors.
- / Shared back office arrangements where appropriate and integrated service delivery mechanisms.

We will deliver this by:

- / Enhancing joint local governance structures. We will devolve more direct decision-making to district/ sub-district level on key issues of local relevance.
- / Strategic alignment of partnership and strategies across Lancashire including LSPs and LAA blocks.
- / Further improving working relationships at member and officer levels - this recognises that policies and procedures for joint working need to be accompanied by parallel cultural and leadership improvements.

- / Refreshing *Ambition Lancashire* – the Community Strategy for Lancashire as a sustainable community strategy and refining the Lancashire Partnership to reflect the place-shaping role of both districts and county.
- / Production of a unified Locality Plan tailored to the needs of each of the districts setting out the contribution of the two tiers of councils to both *Ambition Lancashire* and the local Community Strategy.
- / Devolution of a number of key services to district level.
- / Sharing of back office functions where appropriate such as Legal, ICT, Finance, Human Resources etc...
- / Promote more efficient and effective delivery through greater engagement with the private sector, public sector and third sector...
- / Engagement with unitary councils to ensure that 'sense of place' and opportunities for shared services and policy alignment are maximised.

## 2 / Context





### a) Lancashire - A Large and Diverse County

The county of Lancashire covers a diverse population of over a million. There are wide variations in levels of income and wealth, which are not always geographically concentrated. In the more rural parts of the county poverty and social exclusion exists cheek by jowl with affluence. Several districts have small pockets of deprivation in addition to larger concentrations recognised through Stronger Safer Communities and Neighbourhood Renewal Funding.

The topography ranges from the high moorland of the South Pennines to the flat expanses of the Fylde Coast via the rolling countryside of the Ribble Valley and Forest of Bowland. While Preston and Lancaster form the main urban centres (along with Blackburn and Blackpool which are unitary local authorities) there is a range of other significant urban settlements from the former textile towns of Pennine Lancashire such as Burnley to coastal resorts and market towns.

Local government services and functions are the responsibility of Lancashire County Council and twelve district councils, together with 192 Parish and Town Councils – a number which continues to grow steadily and is a great strength within Lancashire.

In 2002 the County Council and partners embarked on a programme of localisation designed to bring the County Council closer to local people and communities, improve relationships and strengthen the representational role of members.

The district councils vary substantially in terms of local issues, population size, capacity and political control. There is a wealth of experience and detailed local knowledge, which can be built on to improve further the governance of Lancashire.

Five Parish Councils have achieved Quality Status. There are many others which have not yet chosen to go down this route but which have strong experience of managing some local services and/or have developed Parish Plans.

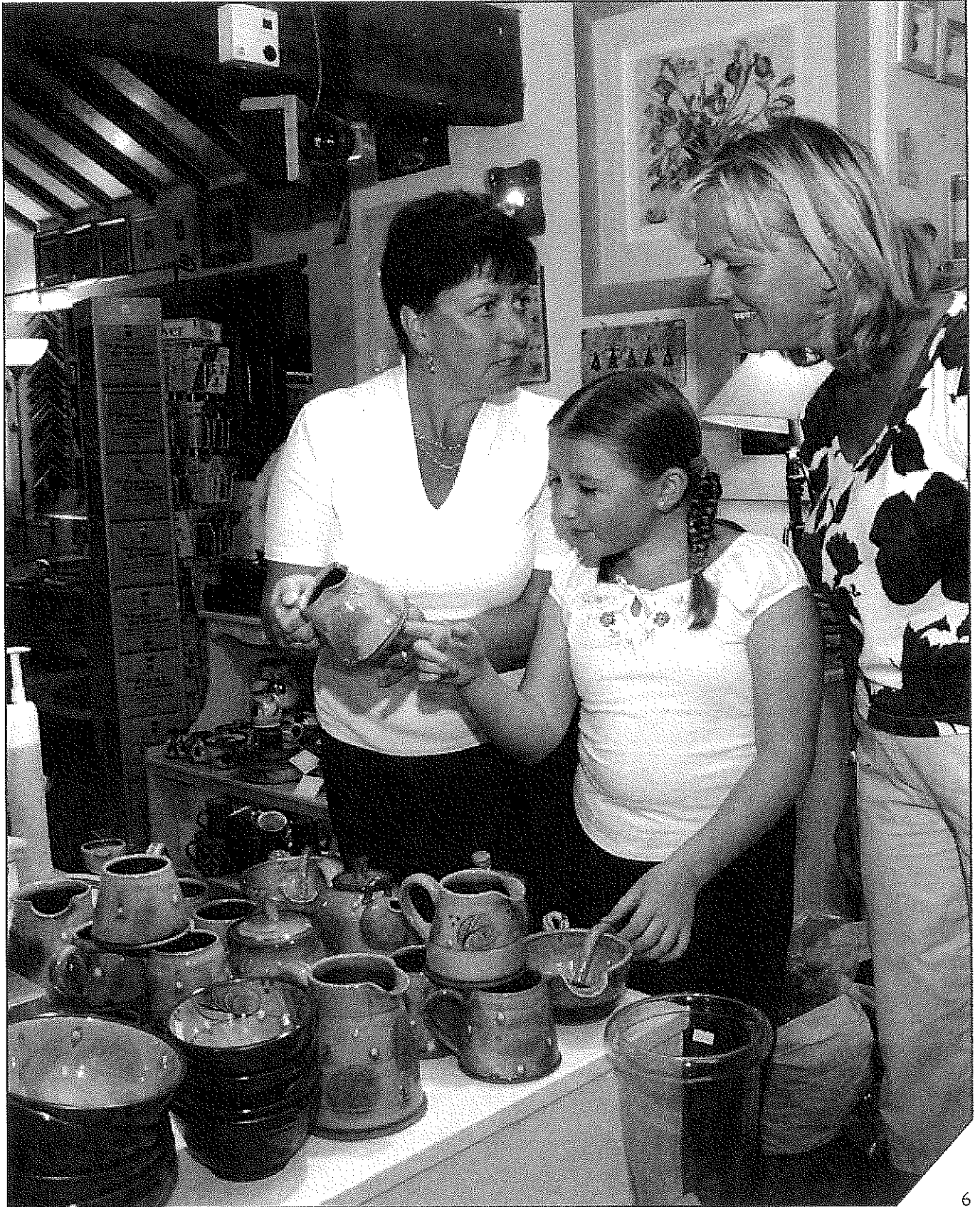
While the remainder of this paper refers for the sake of simplicity to 'modernised two-tier local government' this should be taken to include an enhanced role for parishes and other neighbourhood forms of governance, discussed in more detail below.

### b) Other Public Services

Other public services are provided on a county-wide or sub-county basis (with the term 'county-wide' sometimes referring to the sub-region, i.e. including the two Lancashire unitaries of Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen) alongside the area covered by the county council and the districts.

A complex system of public service roles operates across Lancashire with key roles also played by private, voluntary and third sector organisations.

### 3 / Lancashire Performing for Local People





There are a number of measures and a range of key examples which demonstrate that the Lancashire organisations are delivering for local people.

Partnership working was a key factor in the success of a number of LPSA targets contained within the Local Public Service Agreement between April 2003 to March 2006, examples include:

Council Tax across Lancashire is significantly lower than the average for North West authorities at £950.29 against an average of £971.66 for the North West

The authorities in Lancashire provide good value for money with all authorities performing at or above the minimum standard for use of resources (93% nationally)

Authorities across Lancashire have worked effectively in partnership with the Lancashire Police Authority to reduce crime across the county by 6.5% in 2005/06.

Partnership working across the county between the twelve districts, two unitary councils and the County Council has delivered recycling rates of over 30.89% for 2005/06. (3% in 1998)

No of children & young people (0-19) with significant disabilities who participate on a regular basis in community based leisure and recreational activities increased from 245 to 868 exceeding the target of 520 by 67%

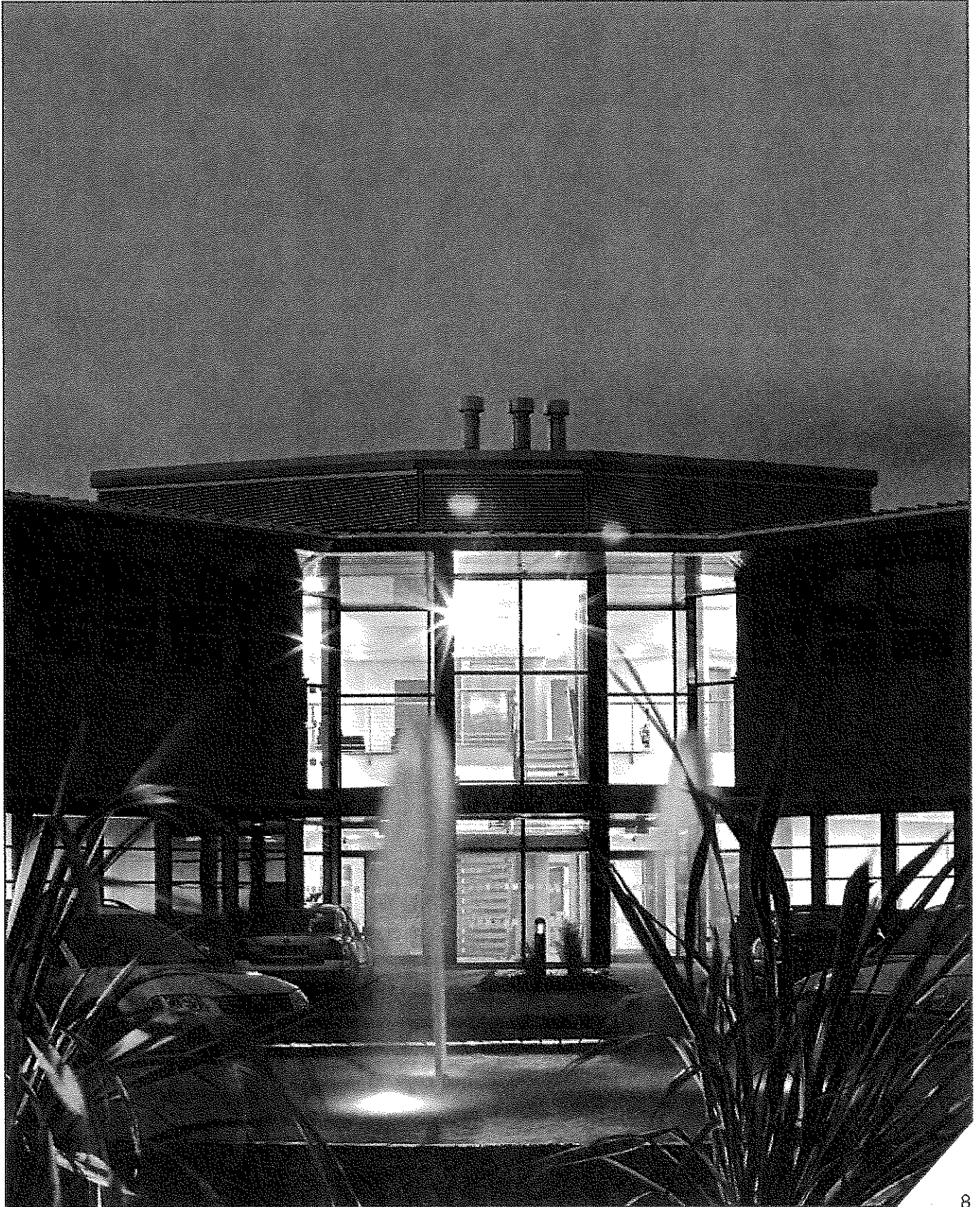
The rate of young re-offenders (10-17) fell from 35.1% to 28.9%

The under 18 conception rates per 1000 young women (15-17) have fallen from 46.2 to 41.9 (Av 2002-4)

The no of claims made by people aged 60 or over resulting in award of Income Support/Minimum Income Guarantee/Pension Credit increased from 500 to 2664 and from 0 to 1053 for Attendance Allowance

The number of supported admissions of older people to permanent residential and nursing care per 10,000 population aged 65 years and over was reduced from 118.9 to 86.7 exceeding the target of 97 by 47%

## 4 / Key Issues in Lancashire







A Lancashire level of local government is able to punch its weight alongside the other major regional players of Greater Manchester and Merseyside and act as a powerful and democratically accountable voice for the sub-region nationally, within Europe and beyond. This is particularly important when addressing strategic, policy and funding issues that have significant local impact. The County Council has, for example, the scale and expertise to enable it to maintain a Brussels office which gives it the ability to provide expertise of value to local areas across Lancashire. For example, through the Lancashire Waste Partnership it has helped to assess the implications of EU Environmental policy and Directives, which have a direct bearing on waste management, landfill and recycling.

There is a huge pool of member and officer expertise at district level and this proposal will facilitate better engagement with county expertise, for example, West Lancashire's recent £6million Investment Centre (including leveraging in NWDA and EU funding) - this centre underpinning high wage/high quality employment in that part of the county.

In addition Lancashire has the strategic capability to engage and influence various regional initiatives, i.e. Regional Spatial and Regional Economic Strategies, which will have a significant impact upon the lives of its residents.

The well-established Lancashire Partnership has adopted the 'value added' model of working, in advance of the national evaluation of LSPs that identified this as

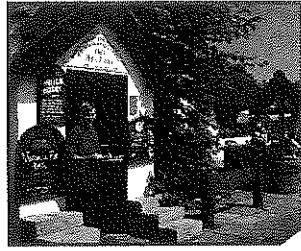
a desirable method of working. Indeed, the example of the work carried out by the Lancashire Partnership was attached as an appendix to the main report of the national evaluation of LSPs as a model of good practice.

The Lancashire Partnership has developed *Ambition Lancashire*, the community strategy for the county, which incorporates the priorities of the twelve district LSPs and seeks to add value to their community strategies. *Ambition Lancashire* augments the objectives of the 12 district LSPs by tackling issues that are best addressed Lancashire wide or sub-county wide. Additionally, work was undertaken, prior to the Lancashire Local Area Agreement, which sought to identify the 10 priority areas for the Lancashire Partnership through consultation with the district LSPs. This work informed *Ambition Lancashire* and has been addressed through LPSA 1 and subsequently the LAA. The government will recognise that the LAA in two-tier areas is significantly more difficult and our aspiration is to develop a model which works for Lancashire.

Although there is much good practice on which we can build, we are not arguing for a retention of the status quo. Key aspects of the current two-tier system could work better and require rethinking. The need for a 'transformation in public service delivery' referred to recently by Angela Smith MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary, Department for Communities and Local Government is something we fully recognise and endorse.

## 4 / Key Issues in Lancashire



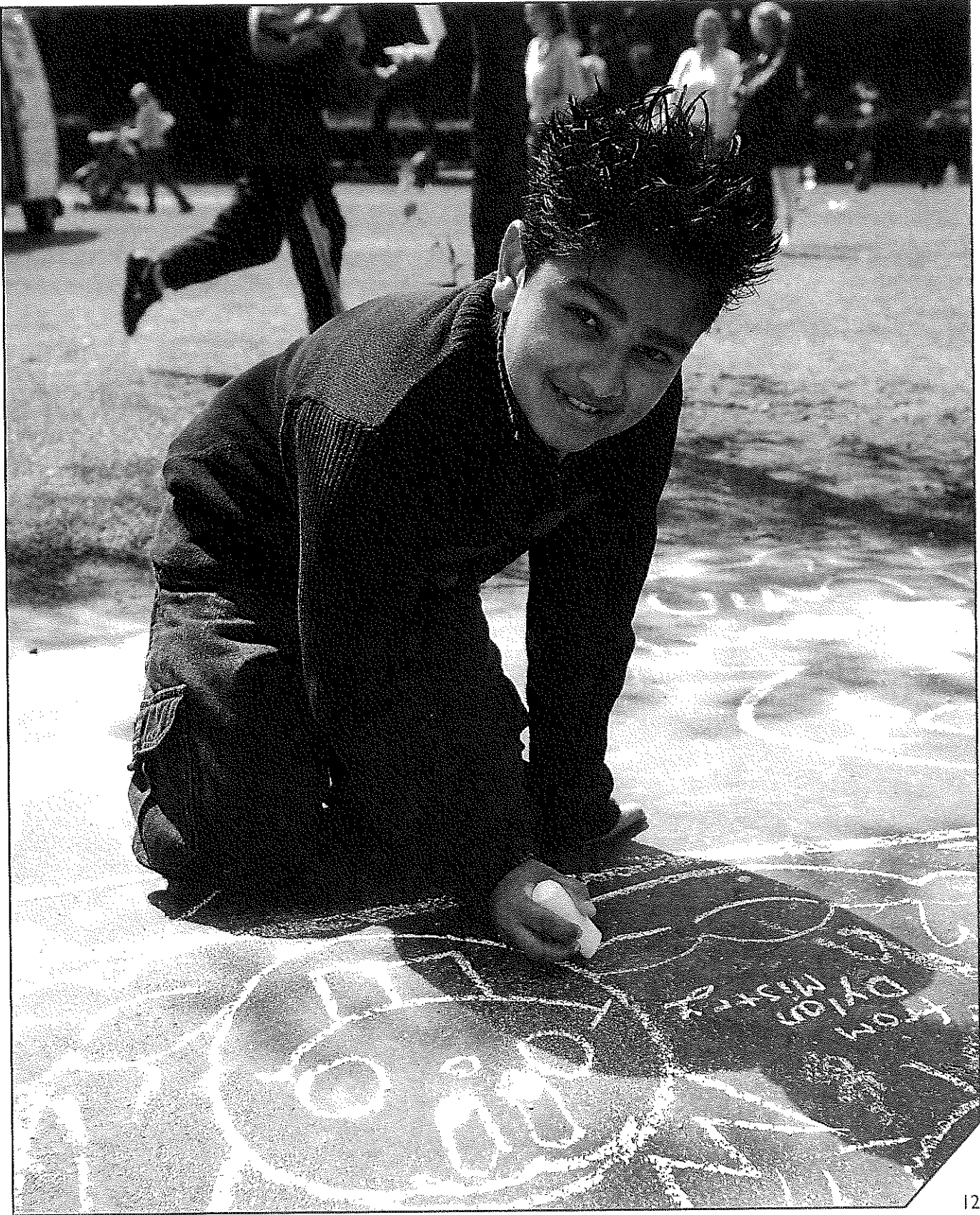


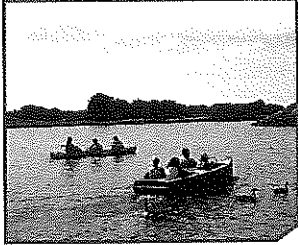
The pages that follow outline our initial thinking and proposals which builds on the best of the two-tier system – its ability to combine strategic leadership with local variation and devolution - while reforming those aspects where there is room for improvement. These areas include the need to:

- / Deliver improved strategic leadership and buy in from all partners on some key issues.
- / Ensure clearer connections between partnership structures with improved strategic alignment.
- / Engender greater clarity in engagement with the unitaries on key strategic issues.
- / Ensure a more consistent approach to place-shaping across the County.
- / Create a single local government plan in the two-tier areas.
- / Reduce duplication, close gaps and address diseconomies of scale in delivering some services.
- / Increase levels of accountability and engagement in some areas.
- / Create clarity in the minds of local people and some partners about who delivers which services.
- / Improve communication between county, district and parish tiers to prevent misunderstanding.
- / Address strains on capacity at both county and district levels.
- / Improve performance management and performance improvement planning across Lancashire.
- / Deliver a more joined up approach to key issues eg community cohesion and social inclusion.
- / Ensure a more consistent approach to learning and development at both officer and member levels.
- / Develop opportunities for joint learning and development.
- / Develop closer working between local authorities.

These concerns are starting to be addressed to some extent at the moment, for example through the Lancashire Local scheme of political devolution to district level, through various service level agreements with and between district councils and other partners, and through the increasingly joined-up nature of district LSPs. Further, via the North West Improvement Network learning and development issues at a strategic level are beginning to be addressed at member and officer level. But there could be significant opportunities to go further in all of these areas and to capitalise on further economies of scale and efficiency savings, to re-invest these in front-line services and to strengthen Lancashire's strategic 'clout'.

5 / The Vision





These proposals are intended to inform the development of a framework for implementing a modern and innovative approach to governance and service delivery to Lancashire and its communities. This includes a vision of a modernised two-tier system which:

- / Provides high quality, locally responsive seamless services, focussed on local communities, neighbourhoods and service users.
- / Provides a single pathway to services with common 'front offices' and optimum back office integration.
- / Combines the benefits of significant capacity to deliver value for money services that people want and deserve and maximises opportunities for economies of scale and on-going efficiency gains including working with the private and third sectors.
- / Provides transparent decision making responsive to the views of customers and the local community.
- / Demonstrates strong democratic accountability capable of ensuring collaboration and joined-up service delivery at the local level.
- / Responds strategically to the key varying needs of Lancashire and focuses resources accordingly.
- / Has a strong collaborative resource base that has the size and capacity to innovate, plan, allocate resources and broker partnerships to support the work of the county, districts and others to achieve continuous service improvement.
- / Provides the commanding voice for Lancashire and 'punches above its weight' in the North West, at Westminster, in Europe and globally.
- / Demonstrates strong and supportive relationships, enhanced through a track record of greater trust.

# 6 / Improved Quality, Seamless Front Line Services





Meeting the needs of Lancashire residents and improving the quality of services and their impact on the locality are at the forefront of the proposal for modernised two-tier working. There are undoubtedly ways in which the current arrangements can be improved and since late Autumn 2006, a number of meetings have taken place attended by all the districts, with

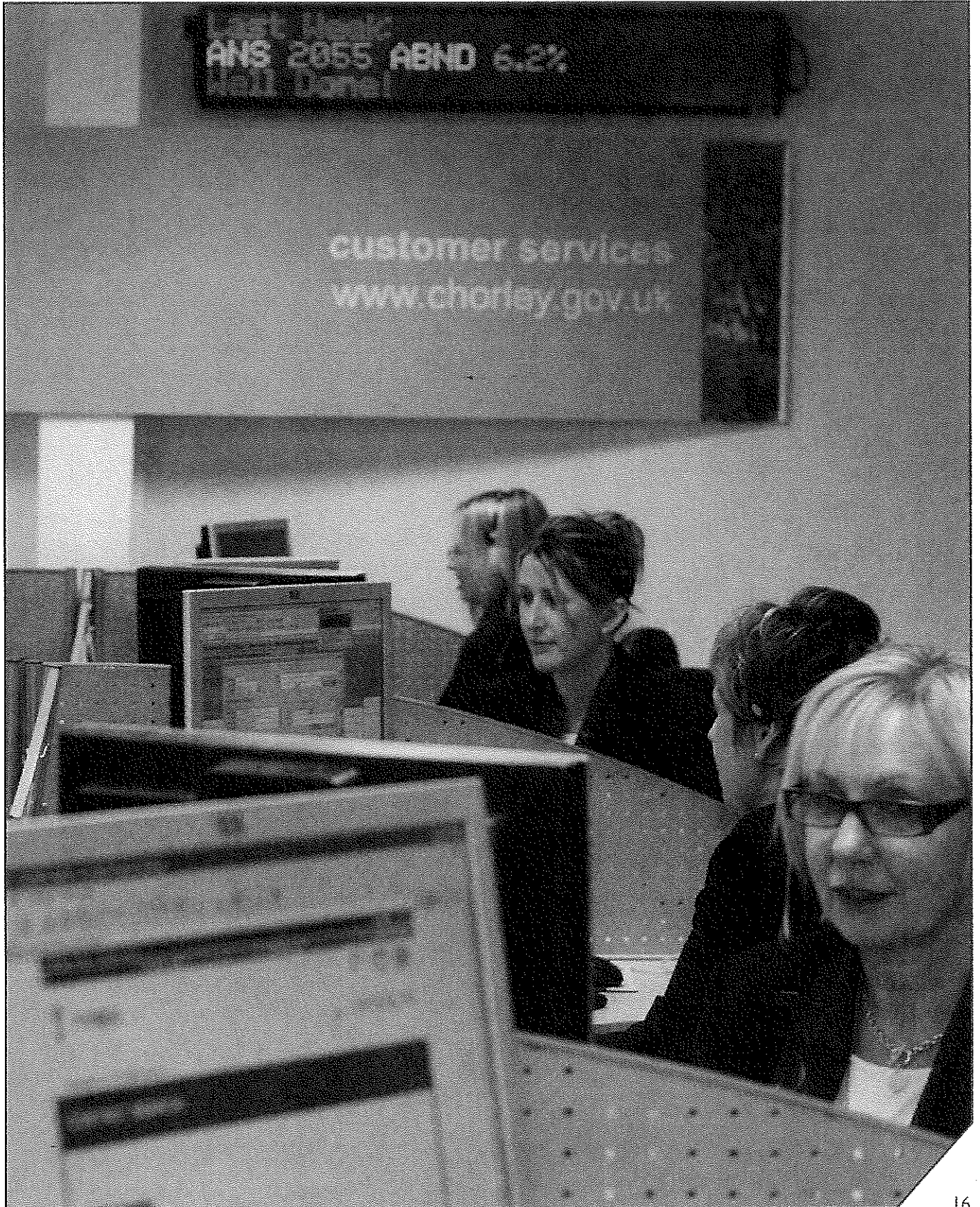
Preston observing and the County Council which have begun to identify potential service areas for greater collaboration and shared/enhanced delivery.

The table below outlines a proposal for the development of a Locality Plan setting out an intergrated local government strategy and annual action plan in a district.

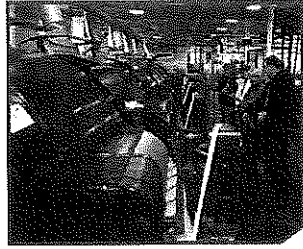
Appendix I also sets out a menu of front line service areas identified to date containing a range of development proposals which will be subject to further examination by leaders and chief executives and worked up to meet particular locality needs.

Service Area	Development Proposal	Benefits
<p><b>Locality Plan</b></p>	<p>Joint Local Government Locality Plan for a district setting out what the County and District Council will deliver in that area covering e.g streetscene, regeneration, town centre development, leisure, community safety, youth and older people services etc..</p> <p>The Plan will not replace existing County and District Community Strategies but will have strong links to Ambition Lancashire (Lancashire's Community Strategy), the LAA and the District's Community Strategy. Delivery of the Locality Plan will be integrated within existing councils' plans. However, we would communicate the contents of the plan to local people via a range of media eg in the form of a Charter.</p> <p>Oversight of the Locality Plan would sit with a joint local governing body but would also need to be linked to both Councils' formal overview and scrutiny arrangements</p>	<p>Strengthened relationship between county and district through improvements in joint planning and service delivery</p> <p>Improved service outcomes with more effective local responsiveness</p> <p>Greater clarity for local people on what is to be delivered</p>

## 7 / Efficient, Effective Shared Back-Office Services

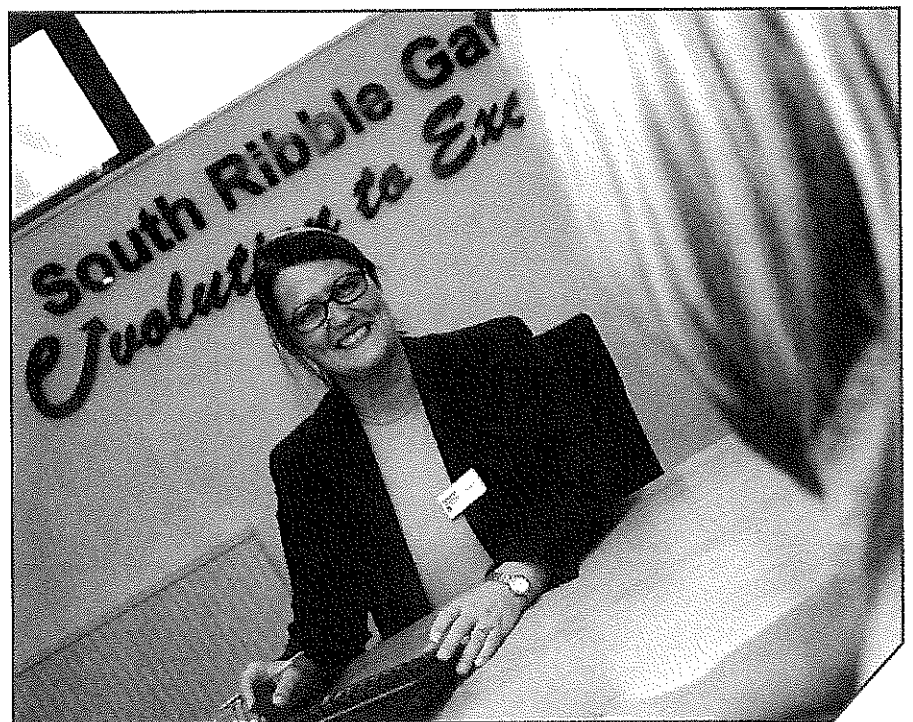






Whilst recognising that all councils are striving to achieve greater efficiency, it is becoming increasingly difficult for individual authorities to reduce costs without it potentially having a significant impact on their ability to improve service quality and in some cases maintaining existing levels. There is recognition that greater collaboration/co-operation between councils will create opportunities for economies of scale and for rationalisation; opportunities to reduce costs and eliminate duplication and will increase opportunities for improved customer focus.

With this in mind, Appendix 2 sets out a menu of back office services identified to date with outline development proposals that will be subject to further examination by leaders and chief executives.



# 8 / Better Governance – Clearer Accountability

## Strategic leadership

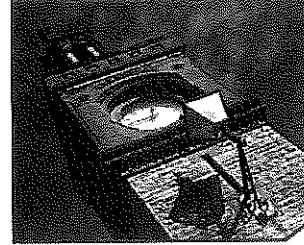
Clearly the Government's agenda is focused on devolving decision making to the appropriate level – this paper sets out proposals for doing this at a local level in Lancashire. However some decisions will always need to be made at sub regional, regional, national or even European level. For example, Regional Funding Allocations for major transport schemes, the development of the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Housing policy, the Regional Spatial and Climate Change

Strategies. In this context a modernised governance structure can make a major impact on the ability of Lancashire to lobby and influence policy in its favour.

A clearer focus and responsibility for strategic decision making, linked to distinct lines of accountability to localities and neighbourhoods, would improve the effectiveness of Lancashire's decision making and better position a modernised structure of local government, to lobby and influence for all its residents. This will need to be based upon a mutual understanding

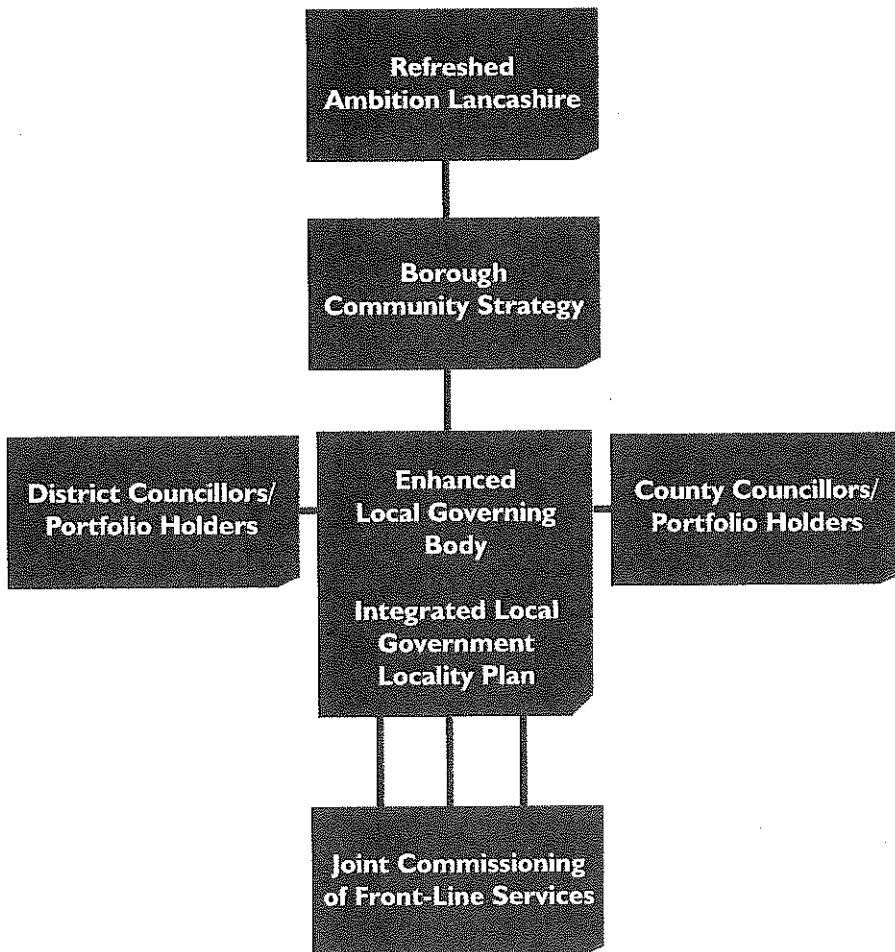
of who is best placed to undertake which activity, and the mechanisms for policy development. Current work would be built upon, through the developing Lancashire LAA and potentially a series of Multi Area Agreements, to co-ordinate and integrate as appropriate, the work of Lancashire local authorities on the basis of a strategic framework for decision making focusing on county, sub regional, regional, and cross authority issues.





**Strategic Alignment and Locality Focus**

The diagram below sets out a revised approach to governance. This structure would enable strategic fit between the county-wide plans and projects contained within *Ambition Lancashire* and local front line services and projects.



**The four streamlined components of this revised approach are:-**

- / A refreshed *Ambition Lancashire* which limits the priorities of the Lancashire-wide Community Strategy and elicits a new work-programme (linked to the LAA). This would take the form of a more contractual approach between partner organisations with specific, measurable milestones, targets and outcomes.
- / Refreshed borough community strategies which adopt the same contractual approach between partners and drill strategic priorities down to the local borough level, whilst simultaneously reflecting local priorities not highlighted at the county level.
- / A refreshed/enhanced Lancashire Partnership.
- / An enhanced local governing body for the new Locality Plan – setting out an integrated local government strategy and annual action plan in each borough and commissioning front-line services.

# 8 / Better Governance – Clearer Accountability

## The Community Role Of Front-Line Councillors

Draft proposals for development of a modernised two-tier system could include:-

- / Developing a pilot project giving local portfolios to local county councillors. Each of the portfolios held at the County Executive, could be mirrored by a portfolio holder in a district area. Decisions would still be made collectively at the local level, through

the joint local governing body, but they will be the local lead for their portfolio and be the main contact person on those issues for local people. A close working relationship between the Cabinet member at the centre and the local portfolio holder could be invaluable in feeding back to the centre, what matters in the district.

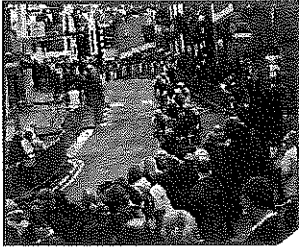
- / Links between the local governing body and the community – we could invite a representative of the

Neighbourhood Advisory Group Also we could appoint a neighbourhood engagement lead member from the local governing body.

- / Community Call for Action could be debated at the local governing body.

- / Provision of advice, support and training to Parish and Town councils on standards issues could be shared across the county area.





## Better Governance – Engaging with Communities

The people who know best about the issues and concerns of neighbourhoods are the people who live there. A modernised two-tier structure for Lancashire will be committed to listening and responding to the views and opinions of local people. A modernised two-tier structure of local government in Lancashire will help to identify and develop structures to engage local people in shaping and influencing decision making and service planning (referred to here as Neighbourhood arrangements).

Neighbourhood arrangements that demonstrate legitimate representation of their neighbourhoods, and can facilitate effective two-way engagement will be recognised and supported. These arrangements might include; Neighbourhood Management; VCFS; Market Town Partnerships; Neighbourhood Agreements; Area Forums and Committees and others.

Parish and Town councils are a good example of a neighbourhood arrangement. However, given their democratic accountability and their role and function as the third tier of local government they need to be considered differently. A modernised two-tier structure for Lancashire will support Parish and Town councils to exercise the wide powers they already have and to more effectively integrate on key issues such as streetscene, play etc...

Where neighbourhood structures or

arrangements do not exist, a modernised two-tier structure for Lancashire will work with local communities to create new ones.

Where communities express an interest in the Parish and Town council model, the County Council and the districts, under their new devolved powers could work together to create them.

Where a Parish and Town Council is not the preferred model we will be proactive, through local elected members, in supporting the development of other neighbourhood arrangements. A modernised two-tier structure for Lancashire will support districts in developing existing Area Committees/ Forums to better meet the requirements of a neighbourhood arrangement. Where Area Committees have not yet been established we will work together to establish models that meet the needs of communities and decision makers.

Partners will continue to support Parishes who choose the option of Quality Status, to build their capacity to meet the test. Some communities might also aspire to take over the management or ownership of services that involve the use of community buildings. Where this is the case a modernised two-tier structure for Lancashire could consider transfer of community assets to Quality Parishes or neighbourhood arrangements meeting the criteria.

Communities who want to register interest in taking over management and ownership of services and buildings, or those who want to trigger community action if service provision falls below an agreed standard, will need clear mechanisms through which

they can get their voices heard by leaders and decision makers.

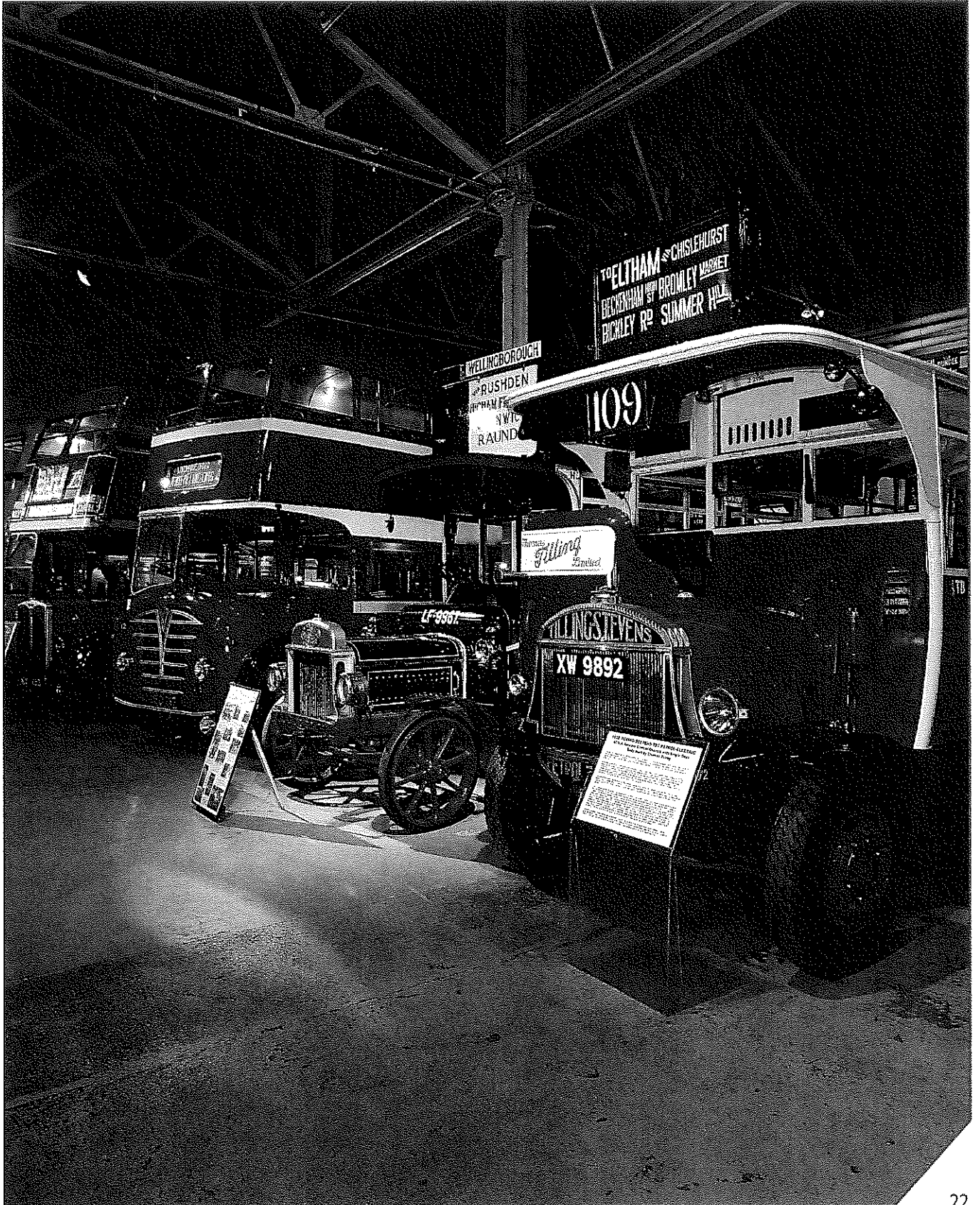
A modernised two-tier structure for Lancashire could establish a district wide Neighbourhood Advisory Group. The Neighbourhood Advisory Group could include representatives of all recognised and modernised neighbourhood arrangements across the district supported by an elected member lead acting as a link to the local governing body. The elected member lead could be responsible for advising on how local problems and issues can be resolved and identifying those issues that should be referred to the local governing body for decision or recommendation to cabinet.

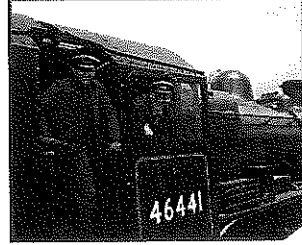
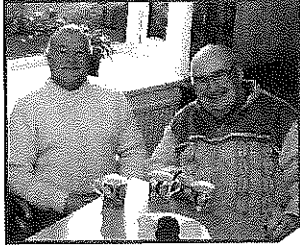
The local governing body could agree a protocol for engagement of the Neighbourhood Advisory Group in the local governing body meetings and could be answerable to the Neighbourhood Advisory Group for the issues and concerns referred to them.

Some neighbourhood issues and concerns will fall within the responsibility of other organisations and public service providers. In order for these issues to be considered at an appropriate level, the Neighbourhood Advisory Group might also form links with the LSP.

The role of existing councils will be strengthened as will the critical role of scrutiny from parent councils. Through this arrangement, councillors will be given stronger community leadership roles.

# 9 / Better Partnership Working





### Principles for Effective Partnership Working

The following principles would govern the approach to partnership working under a modernised two-tier system of local government in Lancashire:

- / To respect and value equally the differing roles played by all three tiers of local government.
- / To encourage councillors and council staff at district, parish and county levels to work with others to co-ordinate local services, to deliver the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and to promote harmonisation and greater synergy in the achievement of the objectives of the councils and the communities that councillors represent.
- / To ensure that councillors and staff are well briefed and that issues arising from partnerships are linked to mainstream decision-making.
- / To ensure that the level of representation in partnerships is appropriate to the topics covered by the partnership.
- / To link partnerships effectively with the enhanced local governing body.
- / To increase democratically elected councillor influence over all public services covering Lancashire.
- / To have high expectations of the partnerships we engage with in terms of:
  - Positive outcomes for the people and communities of Lancashire
  - Equality, social inclusion and community cohesion
  - Value for money; and
  - Openness, honesty, good governance, ethics and accountability
- / To be discriminating about the partnerships we enter into, in line with the above expectations.
- / To be committed to and enthusiastic about those partnerships where we are engaged and, where we are in a leadership role, exercise that role without arrogance.
- / To ensure that adequate resources are in place when we commit to partnerships and reflect this commitment in service business plans
- / To adopt a 'best fit' approach to other partnership plans and functions. Doing at district level what is best done at that level, and doing at multi-district or county level functions which more naturally relate to those geographical levels.
- / To take an iterative approach to developing closer joint working, with monitoring and review built in as standard. To be prepared to experiment and to learn from experience.

# 9 / Better Partnership Working

## Current Good Practice in Lancashire

Lancashire has a great many partnerships operating in a variety of fields and at different geographical levels. While there are issues of rationalisation and simplification which are considered below, there is no shortage of experience or of quality. Some of the more significant examples are:

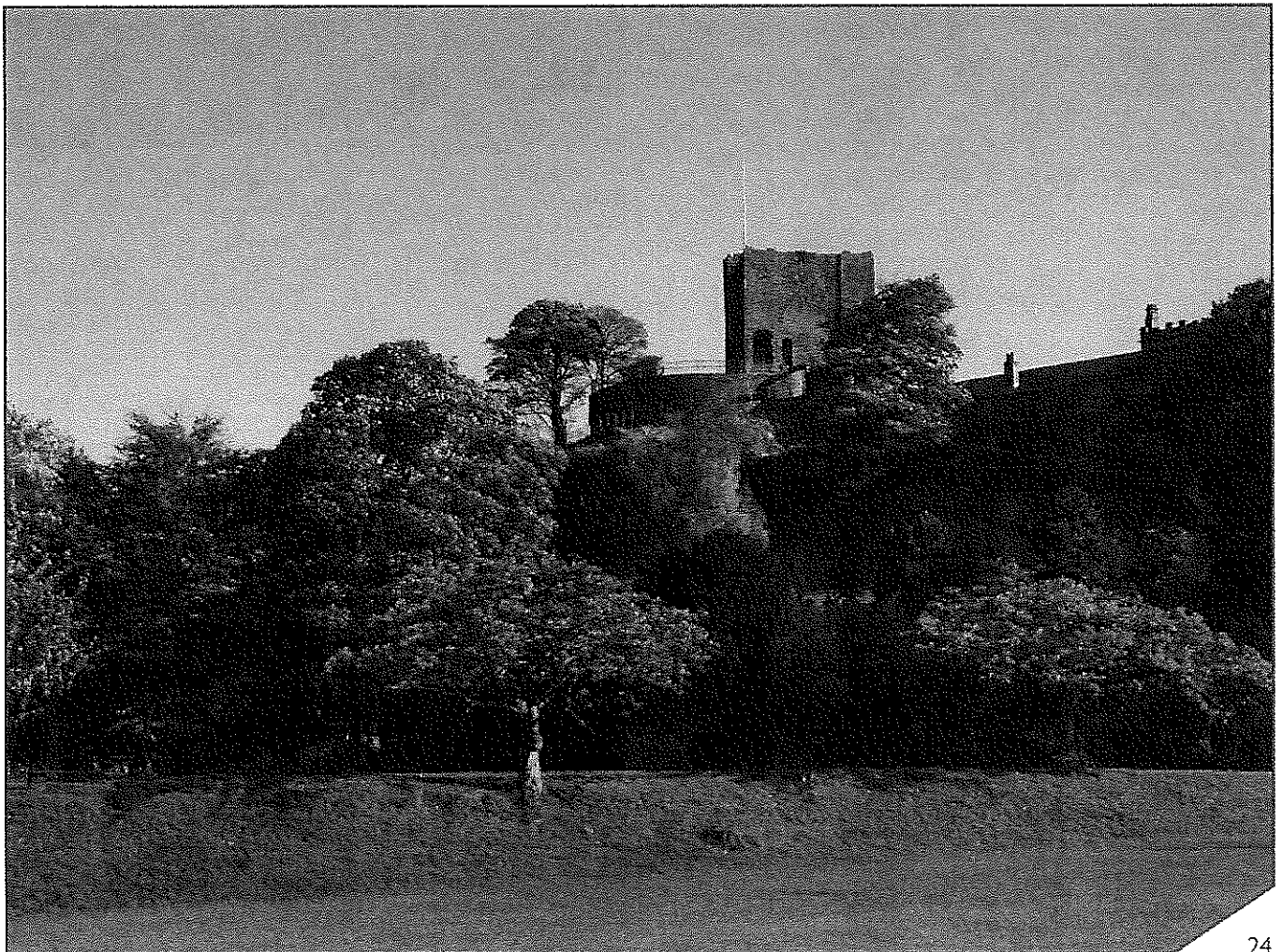
### Local Strategic Partnerships and the LAA

/ The Lancashire Partnership together with its subsidiary partnerships such as the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership. The Lancashire Partnership has a strong track record of delivery of the LAA and of integrating this with *Ambition*

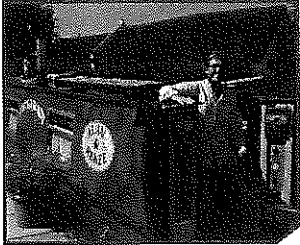
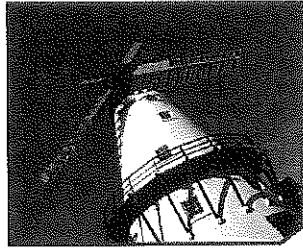
*Lancashire*, the community strategy for the county. The Lancashire Partnership were aware that the LAA presented an opportunity to deliver improved services to the people of Lancashire and undertook a county wide consultation on a new structure that addressed the need to monitor the performance of the LAA and the newly identified funding streams. In response to the consultation the Lancashire Partnership adopted an interim structure based on their dual role of strategic leadership and delivering the LAA. The LAA Performance Group was established with all key delivery partners including the twelve districts represented.

/ The Lancashire Economic Partnership has developed a Lancashire sub region Economic Strategy and a City Region Development Plan.

/ Twelve district LSPs, four of which are in NRF areas and have long experience of delivery of local and Government floor targets. The others are in various stages of development but two in particular stand out: Wyre, which has recently undergone a positive peer review through I&DeA and Rossendale, which voluntarily submitted itself for a GONW performance assessment of the kind normally only carried out with LSPs in NRF districts and was awarded a rare 'green' status – the highest level attainable.







/ Strategic Partnership Agreements with three PCTs, and a Mental Health Strategic Partnership Agreement for the county. A countywide multi agency Strategic Framework for adults with lower level needs has now been agreed. The framework sets out how agencies will work together across Lancashire, through the LSPs, to agree priorities and implement action plans to improve the quality of life and independence of adults with lower level needs.

/ Partnership-based innovation is being developed through the LAA. A Strategic Housing Group has been formed which involves all the districts and the unitaries and feeds into the Regional Housing Board.

/ A flourishing Compact with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) at county level. Through the County Compact the County has set its relationship with the VCFS on an equal footing. This relationship is being developed through VCFS engagement with the LAA (a Lancashire Partnership VCFS Consortium/LCC conference was held recently on just this issue) and through funding for the sector.

### **Regeneration and Inclusion**

/ Buckshaw Village Redevelopment project is a flagship example of a high profile public private partnership delivered by two district Councils working together to make the

concept a reality commended by the North West Development Agency as an excellent example of innovation and partnership.

/ Community Cohesion: East Lancashire Together is a pathfinder working in partnership to engage leaders from the different public, voluntary and community sectors across the boroughs.

/ Elevate East Lancashire is a national Housing Market Renewal pathfinder programme designed to deliver inclusive and sustainable housing and economic development.

### **Cleaner, Greener, Safer**

/ Effective County Council input into district Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. LCC is represented on and engages with each district CDRP through a designated officer and county councillor who advise each service on how they can support the aims and objectives of the CDRP. The councillors come together quarterly to identify issues and concerns at the district level which may require strategic change or improved local performance from the County Council. LCC also engages at the county-wide level with partners through the Strategic Crime Reduction Board which co-ordinates community safety across Lancashire including the two unitaries.

/ Since November 1997 the County Council and the Lancashire District Councils have worked together as the Lancashire Waste Partnership. It was this partnership, led by LCC, that produced Lancashire's Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2001-2020 and took this forward to the constituent authorities for formal adoption. There are, as a result, mutually agreed and adopted strategic objectives applying across Lancashire which divert waste away from landfill through more effective waste management including measures to promote waste reduction and reuse as well as maximising recycling and composting and the development of a network of waste treatment facilities for residual waste.

## 9 / Better Partnership Working





### Customer Focus

- / As part of its commitment to customer focused service the County Council's District Partnership Officers play an invaluable role in providing a bridge between both tiers, ensuring that any problematic customer issues are quickly unblocked.

### Collaborative Procurement

- / The East Lancashire Partnership (ELeP) established in 2001 comprising 5 districts, supports and improves service delivery in partner authorities by pooling resources, expertise and knowledge.
- / The joint procurement of waste management and street cleaning services across three Fylde coast authorities serving a population of over 300,020 was recognised as best practice through the LGC awards 2006.

### Integrating Partnerships and Place-Shaping at Three Levels

Partnerships with similar remits exist at different geographical levels. The creation of a partnership 'golden thread' running from neighbourhood partnerships through district LSPs to the Lancashire Partnership is an objective of a modernised governance structure for Lancashire.

Some valuable work has already been done on this. *Ambition Lancashire* is, as has been noted, largely constructed from common themes in the district community strategies.

Further progress needs to be made on vertical partnership integration through giving the enhanced local government body a key role in overseeing the local government responsibilities within district community strategies and, at county level, making better use of existing arrangements to bring together LSP chairs and officers.

There is also a need to strengthen the relationship between the Lancashire Partnership and other key strategic partnerships including the Lancashire Economic Partnership and the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership, to ensure that the Lancashire Partnership is fit for purpose in bringing together the key thematic partnerships that underpin the delivery of the LAA and *Ambition Lancashire*.

### Simplifying and Rationalising Partnerships

There are, undoubtedly, too many partnerships in Lancashire. Simplifying the landscape should be an important task for local government to lead on under a modernised two-tier system. Partnerships have developed from different historic roots and are reluctant to merge or otherwise lose independence. At district level LSPs have tended to take the view that each should lead on every aspect of life in the district and community strategies reflect this.

We will take a close look, together with our partners, at the structure, remit and 'fitness for purpose' of all partnerships in Lancashire at both county and district or multi-district levels with a view to minimising duplication and maximising efficiency. This wider review will also incorporate a review of the way in which a district council LSP operates with a view to increasing effectiveness.

# 10 / Looking to the Future - An Agenda for Continuous Improvement

Given that the only certainty in local government life is continuous change, even if all the above proposals were to be adopted by the county, district and other partners there would still need to be a powerful driver in all three tiers of government to continue to improve services and to meet new challenges and demands.

Performance across district councils and LSPs is patchy and the modernised two-tier approach would encourage an integrated improvement planning process taking advantage of the considerable experience and expertise across Lancashire.



# II / Summary and Conclusions

The initial thinking and proposals set out in this document will provide a renewed focus and energy for positive change and improvement in Lancashire. The last few years have been dominated by speculation on potential unitary status and this has inevitably affected relationships.

The time is now right to rebuild those relationships and aim towards a modern, customer-focussed two-tier arrangement in Lancashire.

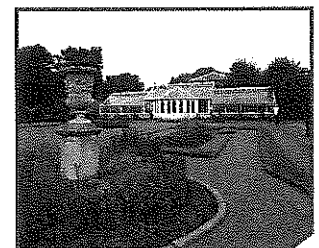
This will take time and energy to develop. The building blocks for improvement are:

- / Renewed energy for improvement through collaborative working across partners.
- / A revised set of partnership principles which will govern the way we work together.
- / Each district to have a Locality Plan in place. This will set out the key activities on an annual basis of both tiers of local government towards the district Community Strategy objectives. This will be negotiated through an enhanced local governing body and will lead to stronger leadership of place at the district level.
- / An enhanced local governing body in each district. More direct decision making powers over local services in each area.
- / Strategic alignment of partnerships, plans and strategies across Lancashire, recognising local differences yet linking together and reinforcing common strategic issues.
- / Devolution of some decisions and services to a district level, where this can be shown to improve service quality and accessibility and does not have significant negative consequences for either costs or service quality in other districts.

/ Re-engineering of services such as streetscene across county and district to ensure local residents enjoy seamless, efficient, high quality services.

/ Shared "back office" services where they can be delivered more efficiently.

We strongly believe that the ideas set out in this document can be the first step towards transformed local government in Lancashire.



Service Area	Development Proposal	Benefits
Waste Partnership	Potential for multi-district working e.g joint procurement and collection arrangements - possibly seek to align contract periods.	Economies of scale. Potential to share resources e.g. depots, spare vehicles.
Children and Young People	The County and District Councils' recognise the positive impact that joint working can have on the agenda for improving the quality of life and opportunities for people in socio-economically disadvantage areas particularly children and young people. We will ensure arrangements are put in place to create synergy in joint locality based planning and the delivery of services relating to sport and leisure, community safety, health and the use of community facilities in the context of the Every Child Matters and the Youth Matters agenda. Districts and the county council are already working closely on these agendas in the context of the development of Locality Children's Trusts and Children's Centres.	Integrated service delivery and opportunities for joint working Improved service outcomes with more effective local responsiveness Less risk of duplication/conflict
Strategic Housing and Supporting People	Explore joint working at a multi-district level building on existing work being undertaken as part of the LAA. Explore County-wide delivery of disabled adaptations including e.g. securing consistency on the definition of major adaptations provided by the District and minor adaptations provided by the County. Seek possible harmonisation of districts' policies and assessment processes relevant to vulnerable clients. Explore opportunities for improved working with the PCT.	Opportunity for streamlining and economies of scale Greater collaboration
Planning/ Development Control	Closer collaboration between districts (cluster level) and the county to ensure shared understanding on planning applications with major developmental implications.	Key developments are fast tracked and enjoy joint support
Revenues, Benefits, Council Tax Collection	Explore pooling expertise and undertaking joint work e.g. anti-fraud initiatives, take-up campaigns etc. Explore merging functions in some way e.g NNDR and Council Tax collection.	Greater collaboration leading to improved services Economies of scale Reduction in duplication
Economic Development	Currently delivered by both County & Districts Potential for joint working on a cluster/area basis Lancashire Economic Strategy as a context for joint working	Less duplication Realigning economic development/regeneration activity at strategic and local levels
Welfare Rights and Advice Services	County Council, District Councils and the Legal Services Commission to work together to identify advice needs on a Lancashire basis, then co-ordinate the funding and delivery of advice service accordingly, taking account of both locality and county considerations.	Greater collaboration leading to improved services Reduction in duplication
Highways/Street Scene	Greater local influence/control at a local level not necessarily local delivery Appropriate highways management and street scene services e.g.brought together at a District/local level with a single local manager. Some strategic/specialist highways functions may remain at the County level eg Road Safety but explore means for greater local responsiveness and involvement of Districts in decision making.	Improved service outcomes with more effective local responsiveness
Public Regulation (Building Control, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, licensing)	Joining up of all public regulatory/ enforcement functions with local/cluster delivery Some specialist functions retained at multi-district or county level e.g single point of contact for providing expertise on consumer regulation/legislation	Reduce duplication Potential for efficiency gains – contribution to 3% target Potential for cross boundary working
Libraries, Leisure Centres, Theatres, Museums and Arts Development	Libraries and leisure centres have predominantly a local catchment and are best managed locally. Other leisure/culture provision such as theatres and museums have a wider catchment and are best managed at a multi-district or county level	Potential economies of scale re leisure trusts

Service Area	Development Proposal	Benefits
Asset Management	<p>Asset Management Strategy and Integrated Asset Management Plan for all local authority buildings in the locality.</p> <p>Local/multi-district delivery</p>	<p>Opportunities for rationalisation and the realisation of efficiency savings.</p> <p>Improved management and utilisation of assets e.g. joint use</p>
Market Research, Consultation, Neighbourhood and Community Engagement and PR	<p>Establishment of wider partnership to pool expertise – e.g. Market Research Consultation.</p> <p>Explore application for joint procurement e.g. BVPI surveys</p> <p>SLA developed on a needs basis for the local area</p> <p>Possible joint publications on a County/District/multi-district basis</p> <p>Explore potential efficiencies while retaining local control.</p>	<p>Contribution to 3% efficiency target</p> <p>Reduction in public confusion/duplication e.g. newspapers/ newsletters</p>
Legal Services	<p>Development of a Legal Consortium where appropriate to overcome capacity and cost issues in districts.</p> <p>Detail specific service required and deliver through an SLA eg employment tribunals.</p> <p>Need to retain monitoring officer locally</p> <p>Delivery on a best fit basis – County/multi-district</p>	<p>Help with legal costs and increase capacity.</p> <p>Specialist resources identified in authorities that could be shared for a charge between authorities.</p>
Performance Improvement	<p>Production of a shared (joint) improvement plan with dedicated resources to districts.</p> <p>Pooling of resources between authorities to commission/deliver training e.g. continual improvement training, project management</p>	<p>Economies of scale</p> <p>Improve effectiveness by identifying specialism or best practice within individual authorities and sharing more widely</p>
ICT	<p>Explore the longer term harmonisation of ICT provision</p> <p>Potential for cluster working eg Server Farms.</p> <p>Opportunity to address wider issues e.g big computer companies licensing issues and disaster recovery</p>	<p>Economies of scale, pooling of expertise.</p> <p>Greater responsiveness.</p>
Human Resources	<p>Strategic HR retained locally</p> <p>Explore specialist areas and transactional/ administrative processes ideal for sharing e.g. recruitment, payroll</p> <p>Potential for a joint workforce and member development programme</p>	<p>Contribution to 3% efficiency target</p> <p>Effectiveness increased through identification of and improved access to specialist areas</p>
Procurement	<p>Negotiations on a county-wide basis delivering economies of scale e.g. procuring high volume, high value supplies and services</p> <p>Explore adoption of the AGMA model with each authority taking responsibility for specific contract areas and sharing the contracts</p>	<p>Create market stimulation</p> <p>Contribution to 3% efficiency target</p> <p>Enable specialist knowledge to be shared</p>
Some aspects of Finance e.g Ordering, Insurance, Creditors/Debtors and Internal Audit:	<p>Potential for County/multi-district working and integration of systems as a longer-term goal..</p>	<p>Increase capacity and address recruitment problems e.g Auditors</p> <p>Contribution to 3% efficiency target</p>
Customer Access ie One Stop Shops (OSS), Telephone and Website Access	<p>Single customer access points to all council services.</p>	<p>Reduction in public confusion</p> <p>Improved access to services</p> <p>Economies of scale</p>

