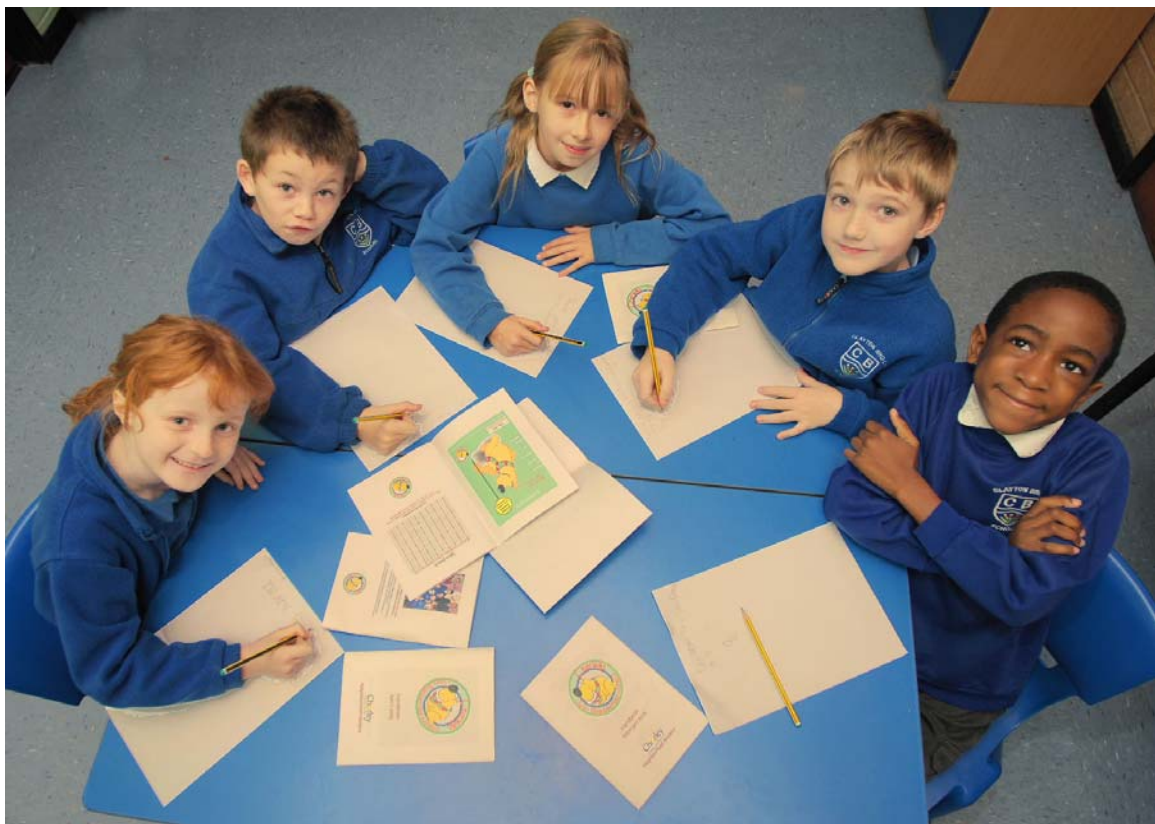


## The scope and prospects for neighbourhood working in Chorley

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Initial report to the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel Inquiry into Neighbourhood Working  
**November 2006**



[ Partners in **Change** ]

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# The scope and prospects for neighbourhood working in Chorley

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## Introduction

Chorley Borough Council's Environment and Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel has decided to undertake an inquiry into Neighbourhood Working.

Partners in Change has been commissioned to act as consultants to this Inquiry.

The Inquiry will finish in March 2007 with a final report and action plan to follow in April 2007.

The report that follows, by Partners in Change, aims to brief the Inquiry on the scope of 'Neighbourhood Working', the various models and some practical examples, the potential costs and benefits and the elements of neighbourhood working that currently exist in Chorley.

At the end of each section of the report, there is a box with a number of **key questions** which we suggest the Inquiry should consider before it starts. We hope the answers to these questions will help councillors to focus on those lines of inquiry most likely to produce practical results for Chorley.

This report has been made possible with the active support and co-operation of a number of council officers and partners including John Lechmere, Donna Hall, Lesley-Ann Fenton, Sue Davidson, Jamie Carson, Chief Inspector Andrew Murphy and Liz Morey, all of whom took part in interviews in person or by phone. Shelley Wright of the Communications Department provided photographs. The Council for Voluntary Service provided background information. A number of other colleagues assisted with information. We are most grateful to all who helped in various ways. Partners in Change takes full responsibility for any omissions, which can be addressed as the work proceeds.

## What is 'neighbourhood working?'

Neighbourhood working is an approach to public service management that seeks to bring together the services that bear upon the quality of life in a specific geographical area, and to meet locally defined priorities in response to expressed community concerns.

A neighbourhood working approach would normally include:

- Close partnership working between public services from a number of different agencies;
- Engagement and involvement of the local community in setting priorities, reviewing progress and perhaps in controlling and managing resources
- Clearly defined and accountable local leadership and management

Successful neighbourhood working should be expected to have two kinds of benefit:

- **First**, it is expected to produce **innovative solutions** to any given problem or set of problems, by crossing the boundaries set by the remits given to different agencies.
- **Second**, there is expected to be a benefit in terms of promoting **active citizenship** – as residents become engaged in practical challenges to improve their neighbourhood, they will build knowledge about the working of public services and confidence in participating in decisions, and this experience translates into greater readiness to become active in public life.

Typically, neighbourhood working means winning the co-operation of a range of service providers including police and related community safety teams, environmental and streetscene services, highways, social housing managers, youth and leisure services, education providers, health and possibly social services. The approach is intended to co-ordinate ('join-up') resources and service delivery to ensure that those problems often seen as most affecting quality of life in a neighbourhood – for example poorly managed and maintained open space, anti social behaviour, minor disorder and damage – are addressed by bringing the activities of a range of



*Junior wardens: Neighbourhood working in Chorley is already building tomorrow's active citizens*

agencies to bear on these issues.

Neighbourhood working is intended to produce a 'cross cutting' approach by mobilising the actions and programmes of agencies. This will include the different council departments, which in some cases may have been criticised in the past for working in 'silos' focused on their own professional disciplines and statutory responsibilities to the exclusion of the wider picture. It will also include at least some of the other main public agencies, such as police and health services. It might also mean providers in the voluntary and community sectors (including Registered Social landlords, leading charities and community groups) and possibly private sector bodies active or present in a neighbourhood.

Extending the presence and scope of neighbourhood working is identified as a priority for government. It is one of the targets of the new white paper on local government.

## **Where is it working – nationally?**

This section surveys some of the main examples of neighbourhood management operating nationally.

### **Neighbourhood management on the 'Pathfinder' model**

The term 'neighbourhood management' has come to prominence in current government thinking especially in the context of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS). One strand of the NRS was to develop a series of pilots for Neighbourhood Management (NM), known as 'neighbourhood management pathfinders'. This 'Pathfinder' model has the following elements:

- It is focused on a specific area identified as being in priority need.
- The area typically includes a population of about 10,000. However the approach has also been trialled in smaller, and in larger, neighbourhoods
- There is a locally located neighbourhood management team. It includes a neighbourhood manager, community development staff, neighbourhood wardens and administrative support
- The team controls a small local budget with discretion to use this to support locally defined objectives.
- The team is overseen by a partnership board including public agencies, councillors and local residents
- The district or unitary council is the accountable body for the partnership and as such employs the staff. However the management responsibility lies with the partnership

- The NM team does not have any executive power over public service delivery. It seeks to promote joined up working by persuasion.

35 NM Pathfinders were funded under the NRS. The approach is now being promoted through Neighbourhood Element funding aimed at smaller areas with very high levels of deprivation.

The Pathfinders were intensively monitored and their progress was documented in a series of reports. They were found typically to cost £20 per head of local population per year, though these figures rose to £40 in some cases. The researchers report that the approach works best with population levels in the range of 5,000 to 15,000 – below 5,000 the costs rise sharply and above 15,000 the costs per head do not reduce.

The approach has been found to be successful in improving the standard of some services, reducing crime and disorder and raising local levels of satisfaction with services such as street cleaning and policing, and with neighbourhoods as a place to live.

External funding under the NRS is coming to an end, so local authorities with NM Pathfinders are having to decide on their future. In some cases (for example, in **Hastings**) councils find the Pathfinder expensive and unsustainable and are abandoning the approach in favour of an 'area management' type of model (this model is described next in this section). In other cases (for example, **Bolton**) councils find the approach worthwhile and are rolling it out to a limited number of other priority neighbourhoods in their districts.

The 'pathfinder' model of NM has been implemented and tested independently by some councils, for example **Wolverhampton**. About a quarter of all households in Wolverhampton are included in seven local NM schemes, with populations from 4,000 to 12,000, focused mainly but not exclusively on priority areas. The model is similar to the 'Pathfinder' set out above, except that the accountable body employing the neighbourhood manager is not necessarily the city council. Housing associations, charities and churches also provide this function. After careful evaluation, including external research, Wolverhampton has decided to continue with its model of NM. The costs of each neighbourhood management team are put at about £150,000 per year.

### **Area management**

For many years councils have promoted area working. In the 1980s Tower Hamlets and Walsall implemented, and later abandoned, radical approaches where a wide range of services were devolved to local management. Coventry adopted an 'area management' model in the 1990s. Many councils now operate some form of area working.

The key elements usually comprising area working are:

- The approach covers a larger population than do the ‘neighbourhoods’ in the pathfinder approach – examples vary from 15,000 to 40,000
- A range of council service providers operate together as an area team
- Other services may also form part of this team
- The team has an identifiable leader or co-ordinator
- The approach usually covers the whole of the council’s area of geographical responsibility – in other words, the whole of a district is split into areas
- There is an area committee with some responsibility for overseeing the area team. This is a council committee which may have delegated powers and may hold a budget. The committee usually includes all elected members in the area. It also has some co-opted members including community representatives. It holds meetings in public, with time allowed for public participation. This type of meeting can be called different names such as a ‘Forum’, an ‘Assembly’ or a ‘Community Council’.

There are many examples of area working or area management among councils today, some with roots going back well before central government interest in neighbourhood management. In **Salford**, the council established 11 community committees in the mid-1990s, each serviced by a Neighbourhood Co-ordinator. There are now 8 community committees and the Neighbourhood Co-ordinators have been replaced with Neighbourhood Managers. They are locally located in areas that take in three or four wards each, with populations ranging from 14,000 to 39,000. Community committees hold devolved budgets. Community representatives sit on committees along with councillors, have voting rights and can chair the committee. Additionally councillors meet separately as neighbourhood Political Executives. Over recent years in Salford, Neighbourhood Teams have been established covering a wide range of service providers. The members are not co-located or dedicated area service providers. Rather they form ‘virtual’ teams where specific individuals take responsibility for contributing to ‘joining up’ services. These teams include police, environment, highways, health, education, early years, heritage, youth, sports, housing and regeneration. There is some involvement from the voluntary sector. Each community committee produces a community action plan which feeds into the council’s overall service delivery strategy. Area working in Salford is led from within the council’s social services department, but all departments are involved at a senior level: officers at director and assistant director level have an area where they act as ‘Area Co-ordinators’ championing local concerns and provide mentoring and



*A community committee meeting in Salford*



problem-solving support for the Neighbourhood Manager. A senior-level implementation group steers the council's overall delivery a strategy for area working. The total cost of neighbourhood management in Salford, including delegated discretionary budgets, is put at £1.5m p.a.

In **Blackburn**, each of five areas has a locally based Neighbourhood Co-ordinator. These posts were originally funded through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). Areas cover a population of about 30,000. Each one has a multi-agency team built around council services, the Primary Care Trust and the police service. Area working in Blackburn is underpinned by a resource mapping tool intended to track all public funding going into each area, compared with needs. In addition to the borough wide area working, Blackburn has a NM Pathfinder with a system of 'street champions'.

There is an ambitious area management model in **Doncaster** where 15 neighbourhood structures each serve between 10,000 and 28,000 people. Doncaster is seeking to deliver all council services through its neighbourhood structure. This is part of a radical reorganisation, virtually a reinvention, of council services in Doncaster.

**Oldham** introduced area committees and area management on a similar scale (three or four wards) in 2003. Area Managers are responsible for improving the co-ordination of service delivery. This team is not area-located but work together based in the chief executive's unit. A neighbourhood problem solving approach is used to tackle priority issues in identified 'hot spots'. The approach has worked alongside the introduction of reassurance policing and a number of environmental initiatives including promoting a network of 'litter watchers' with technical support and information. However area management in Oldham has proved less durable than in Salford or Blackburn. It was introduced by a Liberal Democrat administration without support from the Labour opposition. In office, Labour has sought to promote a ward-based approach, since it feels this smaller scale is more likely to promote community engagement and address significant issues at the neighbourhood level. However this has attracted opposition from community stakeholders who have 'bought in' to the area model. Political division has made it difficult to develop a sustainable programme which can adjust to changing requirements.

## Community anchors

In some cases neighbourhood management is being overseen and delivered by an organisation outside the mainstream public sector, such as a community or voluntary sector body working independently though with recognition and co-operation from public authorities. A strong example is **Poplar HARCA** in **Tower Hamlets**, London. HARCA stands for Housing And Regeneration Community Association. The core of the HARCA's business is ownership and management of former council housing. The HARCA additionally delivers a number of non-housing public services. It is a leading member of an interlocking set of partnerships which oversee more neighbourhood services. These are not delivered by the HARCA but often make use of its capacity including management and buildings. The HARCA



altogether serves 46,000 people (including residents in its own stock of 5,500 homes) in four council wards. It is a community-led organisation with strong resident representation on its board. As a major social business, it controls substantial resources.

The term 'community anchor' refers to the idea that a strong, independent community organisation may have both management capacity and democratic legitimacy. Its core activity may be (for example) housing, leisure or community centre management. However this capacity can be transferred beyond the core activity to support a range of neighbourhood services, either directly provided by the organisation itself or provided by partners associating themselves with this 'anchoring' capacity. Community anchors may start out as resident-led housing providers, development trusts, faith groups etc, but grow beyond this core mission to become more comprehensive neighbourhood service organisations, with extensive professional staffing, while retaining their community base and accountability.



*Poplar HARCA: A 'guide neighbourhood' anchoring the management of over 5000 homes and services to 46000 people*

Poplar HARCA is a member of Guide Neighbourhoods, a national network supported by the Home Office to demonstrate good practice in community led regeneration initiatives.

There are other Guide

Neighbourhoods which have taken on a neighbourhood management remit, among them Stubbins in **Sheffield** and INCLUDE in **Liverpool**.

## **Parish councils**

Parish councils are front line, elected local councils which can raise money through the council tax to carry out specific functions defined in law. They may also be known as town or, in a few cases, city councils. Parishes can carry out delegated functions on behalf of district and county councils by consent. Parish councils vary widely in the size of communities they serve, their willingness to raise taxes and take responsibility, and their degree of activism. Traditionally they are known for serving rural areas but in recent years there have been increasing signs of interest in promoting new councils in urban areas.

All active parish councils offer, by definition, some kind of 'neighbourhood management'. Parish councils have the capacity to become a vehicle for the management of public services by holding devolved powers or acting as a local partner. However they may be seen as difficult partners since they are autonomous, sometimes found prone to governance problems, cover areas that are often very small and fragmentary, and do not usually offer consistent

coverage across the scale of areas and neighbourhoods that major public authorities like to work with. In recent years the government has supported an accreditation scheme for Quality Parish Councils, which may help to address some of these perceptions.

In the new white paper, the government has announced various measures to encourage the development of more parish councils which will be able to be known alternatively as neighbourhood, village or community councils. Quality parish councils will gain the 'power of well-being' so they can take on a much wider range of functions if they wish.

## **Neighbourhood management – lessons and prospects**

The pathfinder experience has been extensively monitored and researched. This body of research goes beyond the Pathfinders themselves. It has looked at other models of neighbourhood management, including cases of area working and using 'community anchors'. The experience to date suggests that neighbourhood management is successful in increasing community reassurance and safety, environmental cleanliness, responsiveness of services to perceived community priorities, and satisfaction with services and location. The service that has most changed in reshaping itself to the neighbourhood agenda is the police. NM Pathfinders were concentrated on areas of acute deprivation but area working covers all residents. Some authorities – including **Bolton** – are reported to consider that neighbourhood management will work better in neighbourhoods with a more mixed pattern of need,

Experience also suggests a number of warnings. 'Buy-in' from middle managers in services may be difficult to secure and this can be a barrier to rolling out neighbourhood management beyond a limited area or set of issues. Elected members may be hard to engage (though can also be enthusiastic supporters). It is found by some authorities to be costly and while benefits are present they are not measured fully.

Although the research indicates the costs of many NM initiatives, these are only the direct costs of dedicated teams. This does not include the additional costs incurred by service delivery departments and agencies, nor does it take account of savings that may arise from joint working. Recent work draws attention to the need for neighbourhood management teams to analyse data to establish the costs and benefits of focusing resources on particular issues.

Information management is also important as a diagnostic tool. For example police routinely provide crime statistics but the more interesting material for neighbourhood working is often found in incident logs that will not be routinely analysed by police researchers (for instance: a car may be stolen in one place, driven dangerously for fun in another and finally burnt out in some third location. The theft would be recorded as a crime in the first place but specific interrogation of incident logs and fire service records would be needed to link the three items together to assemble a picture of what is causing the major street-level aggravation to residents).

The government has said in the new white paper that it wishes to see neighbourhood management extended, not necessarily only to deprived neighbourhoods. It suggests that boundaries for neighbourhood working should be aligned with the neighbourhood approach now being generally adopted by police services.

### Key questions for Chorley – models of neighbourhood working

What costs (if any) is the council prepared to accept and what benefits is it looking for? How will these be measured and findings fed back?

Is it possible or necessary to take steps to ensure that neighbourhood working commands a political consensus?

Is the council looking for a targeted, small-scale approach, or for an approach that can be rolled out across the borough?

How far does the council wish to concentrate neighbourhood working on pockets of deprivation?

Should an Information management function be included in any NM strategy?

### Where is it working – in Chorley?

There are already a number of interesting examples of neighbourhood working to be found in the District.

There is an established pattern of **Neighbourhood Policing**. Community Beat Managers (CBMs) serve defined neighbourhoods, and are informally regarded by police as 'neighbourhood managers.' CBMs are expected to build up a strong knowledge of local issues, identify partners, build links with partners, respond to local concerns and draw on skills and experience of range of practitioners whose work and expertise may address issues of crime reduction and community safety – for example, schools, parish councils, post offices, and elected members. They host Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings which typically attract around 12 participants, usually regular attendees who articulate community concerns. These meetings are not confined to policing matters and may raise a number of issues which the CBM is expected to share with partners. Neighbourhood policing is supported by the borough-wide Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), considered one of the more successful such partnerships regionally, where a strong relationship between partners is promoted, especially between the district council and the police. There are also borough-wide PACTs serving as a point of contact with district-wide interest groups such as vulnerable minorities. The police have access to a budget held at divisional level which can be used to support a range of initiatives outside the boundaries of

traditional policing but related broadly to increasing safety and preventing disorder.

There are currently 18 police neighbourhoods in Chorley district, half of them in the central area managed from the central police station and the other half in outer rural areas. Groups of around three neighbourhoods come under the supervision of a police sergeant. The overall management of neighbourhood policing is the responsibility of a chief Inspector at Divisional level.

The council's **Environment Streetscene and Neighbourhoods** directorate is committed to developing neighbourhood working, especially to align its work with community priorities in carrying out cleansing and the maintenance of public space, and to promote public satisfaction with services. The directorate has experience of managing neighbourhood wardens. If these are phased out, additional Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) will to some extent replace the warden service operating within the police

neighbourhood teams under the CBMs. The council will partially fund these posts, and will have a significant input into job specifications for the new PCSOs. Their tasking and deployment will be managed through Crime and Disorder Partnership type arrangements. The directorate expects to have an expanded team of six community environment wardens. These will have a neighbourhood management remit, looking at the interrelated issues of behaviour and nuisance, and quality and upkeep of the public realm across neighbourhoods. This directorate is also responsible for the crime and disorder reduction partnership and thus represents the key point of council contact with the police service. It sees potential in developing a research function using police data and other sources of information to develop a coherent intelligence and information capability to support neighbourhood management in Chorley.

The council's **Housing** service has experience of neighbourhood working through estate agreements and responsive working with tenant groups, some of which also take an active role in local partnerships (see below). Tenants have voted for transfer to Chorley Community Housing (CCH) on a prospectus with a strong emphasis on neighbourhood working. The restructured service will include a number (understood to be 4) of generic Neighbourhood Officers who will be expected to work with other agencies to solve front line neighbourhood problems and promote active community participation, backed by a central community development team. There will also be some diversion of repairs expenditure to neighbourhood warden/handyperson services. CCH sees its commitment to neighbourhood working as offering the opportunity to reduce duplication, and achieve a more co-ordinated response to local issues



*Environmental betterment: one foundation for neighbourhood working*

by bringing in the skills, knowledge and expertise of partners in the police service, district and county council departments. The housing service already has experience of bringing together police and county social services to develop a problem-solving approach to supporting vulnerable households. Following stock transfer, CCH will become one of the larger registered social landlords (RSLs) operating in the borough. The other major RSL is North British Housing Association within the Places for People group, with a concentration of homes in Clayton Brook. NBHA operates a neighbourhood office with a caretaker/warden service in Clayton Brook and works closely with the Clayton Brook Together partnership.

The council's **Leisure Services directorate** employs arts, sports, youth and community development staff whose work is increasingly considered to be 'generic' - based around a core skill set which is about enabling communities to define, stimulate and promote activities that improve the quality of life. Through its community development officer, the department has promoted and services three **Local Partnerships** – PAiCE, SWITCH and Clayton Brook Together. These are multi-agency partnerships led and controlled by community groups and the voluntary sector, promoting a 'joined-up' response to local priorities in three relatively disadvantaged neighbourhoods serving from 3000 to 5500 households (putting them in the recommended range for neighbourhood management). These partnerships deal with youth, leisure, play, transport, and environmental concerns and attract strong involvement from community groups. The leisure directorate is responsible for managing community centres which in several cases have active management and engagement through **Community organisations** which are willing to take an expanded role in managing assets and services by taking out a lease on community centres and taking over management, with a devolved budget. The service also supports local preventative initiatives (for example, currently in Liptrot) with small budgets to promote activity in partnership with housing and police services. The director suggests that the experience and capacity to date would enable the service to be restructured around 'geographical leads' – staff whose discipline may be arts, culture, sport or youth but who can offer a generic role within a neighbourhood management strategy.

The community and voluntary sector is represented and supported though the Chorley and South Ribble Council of Voluntary Service (CVS). This publishes a register of community and voluntary groups, and from this register it seems that there are around twenty **community groups** active in Chorley neighbourhoods and concerned with improving the quality of life at the neighbourhood level, either for all residents or for specific groups such as elderly people. The CVS point out that not all groups wish to appear in the register so a fuller study could identify more.

There are 23 **Parish Councils** (PCs) in the borough, covering most but not all parts of the district. Some of these deliver services which supplement those provided by the district council. These include maintenance and cleansing of public space, upkeep of paths, leisure, youth and community services. The PCs vary widely in their size and income. Only one PC (Ulmes Walton)



currently has Quality accreditation. PCs have a regular liaison meeting with the district council.

Three fairly small areas were recently selected to benefit from **Area Forums** run on a pilot basis. These consisted of public meetings of committees made up of councillors elected from within the area, plus co-opted members representing partner agencies. They provided an opportunity for the public to raise issues, hold public services accountable and receive a response to questions raised; and for service providers to report on plans, concerns and prospects. This experience is currently being evaluated. The experience is felt to have shown value in making service providers accountable to the public and promoting face to face dialogue on issues. The leisure directorate found great value in using the Area Forums to identify key problems and promote immediate follow up engaging parish councils and community activists in developing early solutions. The council may decide to continue the experiment or to roll out Area Forums on a sustained, district wide basis.



*Area Forum pilots attracted large numbers to meetings*

Some key partners have developed a strong working relationship through borough-wide partnership working, in particular the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Such district-wide partnership working builds relationship at senior levels, which is essential if middle and junior staff are to have confidence in their brief and their own flexibility in adjusting to the demands of neighbourhood working. It means that overall strategic objectives can be aligned with the objectives and results of neighbourhood working.

### **Key questions – existing experience in Chorley**

**In establishing neighbourhood working in Chorley, should the council seek to build organically on the experience to date? What is the best way to exploit this experience and the current ‘direction of travel’ of the council, community, agencies and partners?**

**Is there scope for district wide partnership working to be extended to incorporate more partners whose involvement is needed for neighbourhood working to meet key objectives?**

**Is the summary given here adequate to scope the current ‘baseline’ for neighbourhood working and engagement in the borough? Would the inquiry benefit from a fuller understanding of the current capacity and outlook of parish councils and community groups?**

## The Strategic context in Chorley

Chorley's Sustainable Community Strategy identifies certain major objectives:

- Equalising life chances, in particular by reducing relative disadvantage in the Chorley neighbourhoods currently identified as being among the most deprived 20% nationally
- Tackling health problems, in particular reducing death rates due to coronary heart disease, lung cancer and suicide among older people in the relatively disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- Promoting more affordable housing
- Improving the quality and attractiveness of the town centre and increasing tourism into the borough
- Increasing access to and satisfaction with public transport
- Raising satisfaction with the quality of life generally and with opportunities to participate in recreation and cultural activities

Action plans are to be developed for the neighbourhoods identified as being in the greatest need.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) overseen by the county-wide Local Strategic Partnership, sets out key targets for joint action between public agencies with which Chorley's community strategy is aligned. For example, the LAA identifies pockets of acute deprivation among older people in Lancashire, one of which is within Clayton Brook. Assessing the reasons for this and addressing issues that arise is a shared aim in Chorley's strategy and the LAA. This suggests a need for multi-agency joint working between housing, care and health services, which could be led by a neighbourhood management team. Following the proposals set out in the new white paper on local government, LAAs will become a statutory requirement with a duty on public agencies to co-operate in their implementation. While many LAAs so far have had a 'top-down' feel, they are likely to acquire more of a neighbourhood focus in future. The inspection and performance indicator regime for local authorities will be simplified and around 35 key targets will be included in LAAs. It seems clear that there will be important benefits, over time, in agreeing key targets for neighbourhood working that are reflected also in the LAA.

### Key questions – strategic context

**How far can and should the aims and objectives of neighbourhood working be aligned with the Chorley community strategy?**

**What mechanisms will be in place to ensure that the objectives of neighbourhood working are 'joined up' with the Local Area Agreement?**



## Models of neighbourhood working – choices for Chorley

This sets out some key questions for the enquiry to consider before deciding which models of neighbourhood working are worth examining.

### Targeted or big bang?

Neighbourhood management may, as we have seen, be 'targeted' on localities where there are thought to be particular benefits to be found. Sometimes these benefits are tackling deprivation, or responding to high levels of community capacity and demand for engagement. Alternatively neighbourhood working may be seen as part and parcel of the delivery of services across a district.

#### Key questions - does Chorley want

An approach that is to be *targeted* at particular neighbourhoods or opportunities? For example, on areas considered to have certain needs, or on the areas where localised partnership working is now getting established?; or

An approach that is to be rolled out across the borough eventually, but will initially be *piloted* in certain neighbourhoods prior to being rolled out?; or

A '*big bang*' with neighbourhood working rolled out across the district in a single process over a defined period of time?

The brief for the enquiry suggests that a piloted approach is the one initially favoured. However some stakeholders may wish the enquiry to consider the view that if they are to realign their resources toward more generic working, then a 'big bang' with a single restructure will work best.

### Which service providers should be involved?

There is an existing core of services that report they are already, to some extent, doing neighbourhood management as the 'day job'. These are

- Police
- Environment and streetscene
- Leisure
- Housing (RSLs)

There is a wider range of services whose involvement should be considered in the light of wider strategic aims. These include older persons' services (social services and



*Environment and streetscene: one 'day job' already promoting neighbourhood working*

health, co-ordinated through the LAA process), transport and economic development. Some of these services would involve Lancashire County Council joining as a partner organisation.

The main contribution from each service will be staff expected to participate in neighbourhood working. Services may also be able to identify budgets which can be aligned with neighbourhoods, managed and monitored locally and possibly pooled to create discretionary local funds. The provision of information, both collated in a routine reporting format and available in raw form for interrogation by neighbourhood staff, is also an important contribution. Information management may continue to develop as a central function linked to the crime and disorder reduction partnership.

### Key questions

Which services should be included in neighbourhood working?

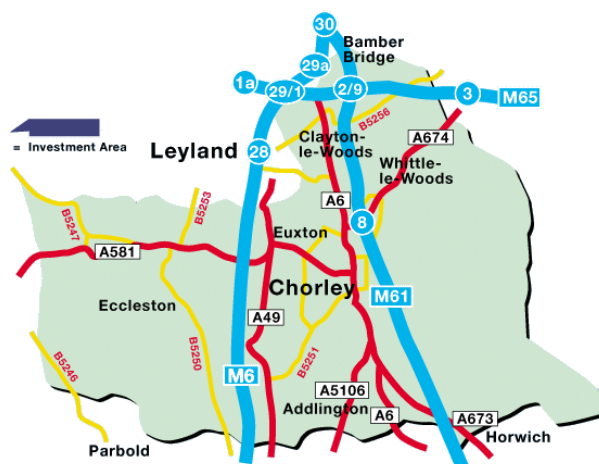
Which organisations would need to become partners?

Is there scope to devolve any budgets and other resources to the neighbourhood level?

### What size best fits?

In terms of the scale of neighbourhood working, the Inquiry could consider:

- A smaller scale option of around **5,000** population, which could be aligned with the existing 18 police neighbourhoods and/or electoral wards
- A medium scale option of around **15,000** population, which could align with existing police sergeant patches and community led partnerships as well as with possible capacity from community environment wardens, a restructured leisure team and neighbourhood housing officers from RSLs
- A large scale option of around **30,000** population on an 'area management' model with a dedicated management post promoting multi-agency working.



*What is the best scale for 'neighbourhood' working in Chorley (population about 100,000)?*

This decision clearly needs to be considered alongside the questions about the services to be involved and the alignment of neighbourhood working with strategic objectives. A larger scale of working may give opportunities for more integrated service management with a better strategic overview, but arguably

these benefits can be achieved by district-wide partnership working. A smaller scale of working may be more accessible to local people, and offer greater achievement in direct local problem solving, but arguably any model of neighbourhood working (even the smallest) will need flexibility, capacity and readiness to 'drill down' to the street level to establish listening posts and engage local energy.

### Key questions

**How big should the neighbourhood working 'patches' be?**

**How far should they align to existing boundaries such as wards, partnerships, parishes or neighbourhood policing?**

### Who will provide operational management?

Neighbourhood management is usually considered to need an identified officer to be the lead person providing the public 'face' of the local service and taking responsibility for securing co-ordination and meeting objectives. Where should this come from in Chorley? Would this be a dedicated post or an additional task for one for the core team, if such a team is established?

### Key question

**Should there be a dedicated 'Neighbourhood Manager' post or should it be an additional task for one of the core team?**

### Who will be in charge? Governance and the role of elected members

Neighbourhood management usually involves local governance in terms of a body that holds the staff team accountable, manages any devolved or dedicated budget, sets priorities and monitors performance.

In the case of NM pathfinders, this is always a partnership of agencies, councillors and local residents. In the case of area management, there would typically be an area committee of the council which may have some devolved executive powers. The area committee may co-opt residents and stakeholder representatives and may meet in public as an 'area forum' or 'assembly'.

The government in its recent white paper has suggested that greater use could be made of overview and scrutiny in area working. For example an overview and scrutiny committee could review area objectives, study particular issues as they bear on areas and neighbourhoods, call service providers to account and monitor the progress of local initiatives.

The question of the governance model should be considered alongside those of scale of working and management. The role of elected members needs to be clear and accepted with 'buy-in' from members and parties.

Parish councils are widely found in Chorley and should be expected to take a governance role both in participating in neighbourhood working in their area, and in directing some services themselves if they wish.

### Key questions

**What is the role of councillors – ward members and portfolio holders – in neighbourhood working?**

**What is the role of overview and scrutiny?**

### Community engagement

There are many layers on which communities can and should become engaged in neighbourhood working.

- Communities are likely to have a role in governance. Community representatives can be elected or nominated by stakeholder groups to join area committees or partnerships. Open forum sessions can be part of oversight meetings.
- Parish councils, where they exist, should be expected and asked to take an active role as community representatives and champions
- Local forum meetings and events (such as PACT meetings) provide an ability for communities to raise concerns and for activists to take a continuing interest in the work of services.
- Community champions, street ambassadors and litter watchers are all examples of networks of local people willing to play a 'good neighbour' role supported by information and technology to receive and disseminate information and feed back local observations.
- Local community groups can be supported, promoted and enabled to take on a wider range of responsibility, which may in time extend to a governance and delivery role in neighbourhood services.
- Surveys and focus groups are tools to research local opinion, priorities and satisfaction

If neighbourhood working is established around neighbourhood teams, then it probably makes sense for the team to be equipped with the skills to access the full 'tool kit' for community engagement. It is essential that this is not understood simply in terms of meetings which are never likely to be inclusive or accessible to all. The process of neighbourhood working needs local engagement at several levels by a variety of methods.

The agreed model of neighbourhood working needs to take account of the range of community engagement techniques expected to be used, and who by, in particular how there can be an exchange of information at 'street level'. The process of agreeing the model needs to ensure that no existing

stakeholder feels excluded. The Inquiry should therefore consider how to engage parish councils, established community groups and community representative bodies at a reasonably early stage.

The experience of Area Forums and local partnerships suggest that Chorley has strong skills in community engagement, a strength that can be built up in developing neighbourhood working.

### **Key questions**

**How can community engagement in neighbourhood working be maximised?**

**What will be the role of community representatives?**

### **Does one size fit all?**

It is finally worth noting that one size does not have to fit all. There could be differences between neighbourhoods in terms of scale, the mix of services directly participating, governance and leadership to reflect local needs and overall capacity, within a single overall strategy. Diversity in outcomes and priorities should be a result of healthy neighbourhood working, and there is nothing to prevent diversity being built in to the design of the 'Chorley model' of neighbourhood working. Alternatively it may be felt that a consistent and clearly understood 'single model' is preferable.

### **Key question**

**Does there have to be a single way of neighbourhood working in Chorley or can there be more than one?**