

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Corporate Governance	Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel	24 th January 2008

SCRUTINY INQUIRY: CHORLEY TOWN CENTRE AUDIT AND DESIGN STRATEGY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

A town centre scrutiny inquiry is included in the work programme for the Panel for 2007/2008. At the last meeting of the Panel it was decided that one aspect of the town centre which would provide a valuable topic for scrutiny, was the forthcoming Chorley Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That the attached project outline for the scrutiny inquiry of the Chorley Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy be approved.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

3. The review meets with the criteria for scrutiny in that it will add value to a project which the Council is undertaking and contribute to worthwhile outcomes for local people. Town centre development is a key issue for local people and is at the heart of the economy and prosperity of the Borough, linking directly with our strategic objectives.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

4. N/A

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region	/	Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	/
Involving people in their communities	/	Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	

BACKGROUND

6. The Council's Economic Regeneration Strategy and Town Centre Strategy have both highlighted the need to maximise the contribution that the town centre environment, accessibility and ease of movement make to the vitality and viability of the centre. The Town Centre Action Plan identifies a series of actions to achieve this and one of the first steps was to commission an audit of Chorley's town centre and the production of a design strategy. Following a formal bid process, the company Landscape Projects of Manchester has been appointed to undertake the audit and produce a design strategy. **It is the process and outcomes of the audit and design strategy that the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be scrutinising.**

REMIT OF THE TOWN CENTRE AUDIT AND DESIGN STRATEGY

7. The audit will involve information gathering, collation and analysis, public and stakeholder consultation and report preparation, looking at the distinctive character of the town centre and its sub areas. The company concerned will undertake the appraisal using the following urban design objectives:

Character:

- The topography of the town centre;
- The origins and development of the town centre, including street and plot patterns;
- The identity of the town centre, including the architectural character and historic quality of buildings, listed and unlisted, and their contribution to the distinctive character of the place;
- Urban structure and grain
- Scale (height and massing)
- The character, hierarchy and quality of spaces;
- The prevalent palette/s of materials and details;
- Prevailing land uses and building types;
- The relationship of the town centre to the wider landscape, including landmarks, vistas and panoramas;
- Features that have been lost, detract or are intrusive.

Continuity and enclosure:

- Continuity of building frontages and gap sites or other anomalies;
- Active and dead frontages, on both ground and upper floors;
- Boundary treatments and planting;
- The relationship between the heights of buildings and the scale of the spaces they define.

The quality of the public realm:

- Condition and fitness for purpose;
- Contribution to local and civic identity;
- Planting and street hardware (from seats to bus shelters, lighting to traffic signals);
- Shop fronts and advertisements;
- Use and management of public space;
- Traffic impact

Ease of movement:

- Public transport services, use and accessibility;
- Car and cycle use and parking;
- Accessibility for the disabled;
- Pedestrian flows.

Legibility – (level of identity and ease of use):

- Gateways and points of transition between different areas and uses;
- Nodes
- Landmarks and features;
- Views and vistas;
- Edges and barriers
- Information (directional signage)
- Visual and physical permeability

Adaptability:

Ownership, occupancy and tenure of buildings and spaces;
 Building types;
 Plan forms;
 Condition of buildings (all elevations) and spaces

Diversity (measure of variety and choice):

Patterns of land use;
 Block patterns.
 Level of interest/visual value

The company will also undertake public and stakeholder consultation as part of the audit and design strategy process.

SCRUTINY INQUIRY AND TIMESCALES

8. The initial presentation by the company to the Members of the Environment and Community Overview and scrutiny Panel on 24th January 2008 will explain the process and key objectives of the audit and also present some initial findings. A further presentation will be provided at the end of the audit, likely to be in March.

This is a key project for the Council in determining future town centre redevelopment in Chorley and is likely to be of interest to all Councillors. Therefore an invitation to attend the presentation has been extended to all Members of the Council. At the conclusion of the presentation and a question and answer session, the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel will meet formally to consider the inquiry and how it should progress, including agreeing this scoping report.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

9. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Corporate Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	/

ANDREW DOCHERTY
 DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Carol Russell	5196	14 December 2007	***

Background Papers			
Brief for an Audit of Chorley Town Centre and Production of a Design Strategy	August 2007	File	Democratic Services

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY PROJECT OUTLINE

<p>Review Topic:</p> <p>Chorley Town Centre Audit and Design Strategy</p>	<p>Investigation by:</p> <p>Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel</p>
	<p>Type:</p> <p>Consultative Scrutiny Inquiry</p>

<p>Objectives:</p> <p>To scrutinise the audit of Chorley town centre and the production of a design strategy and to help ensure that the outcomes take account of the views of Councillors, stakeholders and the public.</p>	<p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>That the scrutiny inquiry process contributes to the audit and design strategy for Chorley town centre at an early stage to maximise consultation and influence by Councillors, stakeholders and the public.</p>
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<p>Terms of Reference:</p> <p>The scrutiny inquiry on the Chorley town centre audit and design strategy will consider the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of the audit, including understanding the key urban design objectives; • The initial findings of the Company commissioned to undertake the work; • The final findings of the Company and the outcome of their stakeholder and public consultation undertaken by the Company; and to • Make recommendations on the value of the audit and the quality of the design strategy put forward.

<p>Key Issues:</p>	<p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the views of those consulted may not be able to be accommodated in any final design strategy, raising expectations beyond what can be achieved. • That the Panel may find the technical aspects of urban design quite complex and difficult to apply in the audit process.
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Venue(s): Chorley Town Hall plus any site visits	Timescale: Approx. 3 months
	Start: January 2008
	Finish: April 2008

<p>Information Requirements and Sources:</p> <p>Documents/evidence:</p> <p>Landscape Projects – fee proposal document Brief for an audit of Chorley town centre and production of a design strategy Presentation and findings of Landscape Projects</p> <p>Witnesses:</p> <p>Landscape Projects company representatives</p> <p>Council representatives: Corporate Director of Business Economic Development Manager Landscape Architect</p> <p>Consultation/Research:</p> <p>Comparisons with other town centre audits may be useful Consultation through the Town Centre Partnership Consultation with the Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration</p> <p>Site Visits:</p> <p>Chorley town centre walkabout Visits to other comparable town centres where redevelopment work has taken place</p>

Officer Support:	Likely Budget Requirements:
Lead Officer: Cath Burns, Economic Development Manager	Purpose £
Committee Administrator: Gordon Banks	Minimal costs for any site visits
Corporate Policy Officer:	Total _____

Target Body¹ for Findings/Recommendations	
(Eg Executive Cabinet, Council, PCT)	Executive Cabinet
