



AGENDA ITEM: 13

CABINET: 16 March 2010

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 31 March 2010**

Report of: Assistant Chief Executive

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor I Grant

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SUBJECT: LOCALITY PLANS

Borough wide interest

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the current position regarding locality plans.
- 1.2 To suggest and agree the approach to be adopted in respect of producing a locality plan for the Borough.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

- 2.1 That a locality plan be developed in accordance with the arrangements set out at Section 7 of the report and in this respect the Assistant Chief Executive be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to commence the process after taking account of any comments agreed by the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following that Committee's consideration of this report.
- 2.2 That call in is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 March 2010.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 3.1 That the Committee consider the proposals outlined in this report and submit agreed comments for consideration by the Assistant Chief Executive prior to her exercising the delegated authority referred to at paragraph 2.1 above.
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4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The suggestion for two tier authorities to adopt locality plans was created by the DCLG as part of their white paper published in 2006 entitled *Strong and Prosperous communities*. This paper asserted that if local government was to deliver the best possible outcomes within two-tier areas in terms of place shaping, together with meeting the objectives contained within Community Strategies (for example centring around service delivery), then a closer and perhaps clearer, more co-ordinated approach between districts and counties would need to be adopted.
- 4.2 The initiative to form locality plans was spearheaded by Chorley BC (a copy of the Chorley model is appended for further information) as part of the Transforming Lancashire work, subsequently subsumed within the Team Lancashire approach. The fundamental aim of a locality plan was/is to promote further and/or more effective joint working by local government across the county in order to secure better outcomes for local people.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The development of Team Lancashire (which the Council has “signed up” to), and subsequent acceleration of the local government efficiencies and improvement agenda has highlighted the benefit of having a single reference point for what the county council and respective districts are committed to doing together, for the benefit of local residents.
- 5.2 The development of a locality plan is voluntary and, to date, seven of the districts in Lancashire have published one, with a further two in the development stage and the remainder deciding not to create one at present.
- 5.3 The Borough and County Council have a strong track record of joint working, including for example, work on the joint transfer station; work on Cohesion, including the migrant workers pack; highways arrangements; and the recent HR Management Services agreement.
- 5.4 Clearly, Parish Councils are also an important third tier stakeholder and this Council already has in effect a ‘locality plan’, in existence in respect of joint working arrangements with them via the Parish Council Charter. It therefore remains appropriate to build these groups into a wider consultation exercise, perhaps via the parish clerks’ liaison meetings, currently chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive.
- 5.5 Whilst the production of a locality plan is optional, the Council has not previously seen this as a priority task. However, given the changes at County level, including the proposed dissolution of Lancashire Locals and indications of a new, and perhaps more focused approach by LCC from April 2010 regarding partnership working at local level (for example involving greater devolution of resource and budgets), it is now perhaps more timely to undertake more detailed exploratory work as to how collaborative working can be further improved.

6.0 ISSUES

- 6.1 The content of a locality plan should confirm/summarise the major areas of work being undertaken and/or planned for the future within the Borough and, equally importantly, who is responsible for completing this work i.e. the Borough Council; the County Council; or whether the work is one of joint responsibility.
- 6.2 However, it is also important to note that the production of a locality plan should bring something new to the table and should not therefore be seen as merely a duplication of existing projects, responsibilities or initiatives, unless of course the new approach to the service/task brings added value, for example through securing greater efficiency and/or improving outcomes. In short it provides an opportunity for the development/delivery of new ideas and initiatives locally.
- 6.3 There does not appear to be any fundamental restrictions in terms of the nature of work that may be suggested/commissioned, provided the joint working achieves greater benefits for the local community as a direct result.

7.0 PROPOSALS

- 7.1 In terms of producing a locality plan for West Lancashire, it is suggested that the following approach be adopted:-
- An initial scoping exercise be undertaken to record areas of current partnership working between the Borough and County Councils, together with possible new initiatives/themes identified (these being defined as having the potential to improve efficiencies/outcomes in respect of service delivery).
 - A report be compiled for Cabinet comment/approval summarising the information gathered during the initial scoping/recording process.
 - The results/aspirations are communicated to the county council via the District Partnership Officer.
 - A brief consultation exercise be carried out with the LSP and parish councils in order to further assess their views so that any wider ideas/suggestions may be obtained.
 - A joint Senior Member/Chief Officer workshop between the Borough and County Councils should then be organised/facilitated in order to obtain consensus.
 - The draft locality plan is subsequently prepared for Member approval detailing the joint areas of work, together with any new projects agreed in respect of future two-tier working arrangements.
- 7.2 It is difficult at this stage to predict the likely timescales for the final production of the locality plan, as this will be driven fundamentally by the content and outcomes of the initial discussions, together with the subsequent research and consultation then required. However, it is suggested that a progress report be brought back to Members when appropriate outlining the firm proposals and likely date for production of the document.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 8.1 In terms of discussing potential areas of work between the Borough and County Councils, it is essential that those projects subsequently agreed are consistent with those related parts of the Sustainable Community Strategy (which incidentally is due to be updated later this year).
- 8.2 The adoption of a locality plan for West Lancashire has the potential to improve efficiency and create more effective working between the county council and the borough council and therefore has the ability to contribute directly to the quality of life for local residents.

9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no financial or resource implications at this stage, other than the process described involving Member and officer time. However, any future reports will detail any additional cost/resource implications identified.

10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 This item makes no firm recommendations at this stage and does not therefore require a formal risk assessment. Therefore no subsequent changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this report. However, the creation of a locality plan provides the opportunity to secure improved partnership working and greater efficiencies and effectiveness of service delivery and therefore there is potentially an adverse risk in not producing one.

11.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 Although the authority has not previously considered the production of a locality plan as high priority, it is now appropriate for further research and consultation to take place with a view to producing one for the Borough, in conjunction with the County Council.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices

1. Locality Plan – Chorley BC
2. Minute of Cabinet – 16 March 2010 (*Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee only*)