

Proposed Terms of Reference for the 'Chorley Three Tier Liaison Forum'

Role and Purpose

The Chorley Three Tier Liaison Forum is a joint meeting of the County Council, Chorley Borough Council, and the Parish and Town Councils in the Chorley district area.

The Forum will be a consultative meeting held in public at which the three tiers of local government in the Chorley area consider issues of shared priority and concern, and through which all three tiers can seek the views of others on strategic issues which impact on the local community.

Functions

The key functions of the Chorley Three Tier Liaison Forum are:-

- To allow elected representatives to have an overview of Borough and County strategic priorities
- To enable Parish and Town Councils to engage with the County and Borough Council on issues of strategic importance which impact on the local community within the Chorley borough area.
- To provide a forum for significant issue facing all three tiers of government to be raised and debated in advance of decisions being made

Membership

The membership of the Chorley Three Tier Liaison Forum shall be

- All seven Chorley County Councillors.
- One Borough Councillor from each of the eight Neighbourhood Areas.
- One additional Borough Councillor to represent Chorley town area
- One Parish/Town Councillor from each of the 22 Parish/Town Councils in Chorley Borough

Any County Council or Borough Council Executive Member may attend and speak at any meeting of the Forum, at the invitation of the Chair.

The officer(s) supporting the meeting must be notified of any changes in membership, prior to a meeting. Political balance rules do not apply to the Forum

Meetings

The Chorley Three Tier Liaison Forum shall meet four times a year at Chorley Town Hall, unless otherwise agreed by the Chair of the Forum.

Agendas

- The Forum will discuss issues that are of joint interest across the three levels of local government in the area. Agenda items will focus on strategic matters that impact on the local community.
- Any member of the Forum can request that an item is considered at a future meeting of the Forum. The Chair and Deputy Chair are jointly responsible for agreeing the agenda and deciding whether an issue raised by a member will appear on an agenda. Where an issue raised does not fall within the remit of the Forum these will be dealt with via the appropriate mechanism and the member advised accordingly.
- Urgent business is allowed in exceptional circumstances and with the consent of the Chair and Deputy Chair. Any member wishing to raise a matter of urgent business should advise the Chair via the officer support for the Forum as soon as possible.

Officer Support

Secretarial support to the Chorley Three Tier Forum will be provided by an officer nominated by the Chief Executive of Chorley Borough Council.

Officers of the County Council and the Borough Council may attend the Forum if appropriate.

Public Speaking (or Public Questions – to be determined)

The Protocol for public speaking/public questions is below.

Debate

The Chair of the meeting is responsible for managing the debate at the Forum. The Chair's ruling on any aspect of a member of the committee's right to speak will be final. Members who persistently ignore the ruling of the Chair may be asked to leave the meeting.

Voting

As a Consultative Forum it is expected that decisions will be taken mainly by consensus, however where a vote is required, decisions are by simple 'show of hands' majority with the chair having a casting vote.

Access to Information

The Forum is not a formal committee of the County, District or Parish Councils, therefore Access to Information provisions do not apply. However, as it is a public meeting, agendas and minutes will be available on the website of the County Council and the Borough Council and by request can be obtained in person at County Hall, Preston and Chorley Town Hall.

Chair and Deputy Chair

The Chair and Deputy Chair will be elected at the first meeting in the Council year from amongst the membership of the Forum. Should a vacancy arise during the year, a new Chair or Deputy will be elected. A Chair or Deputy may be removed from their position by a vote of the Forum.

The Chair shall alternate each year between the County Council and the Borough Council. The Deputy Chair will always be from the County or Borough Council not represented by the Chair.

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Forum. In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair shall preside. In the absence of both the Chair and Deputy, the members present, as the first item of business, appoint one of their number to be Chair of the meeting.

Protocol for Public Speaking (please note that an alternative approach being considered is public questions on notice – the views of the existing forum will be sought in which case the detail below may change)

In order to allow members of the Forum and members of the public to raise issues of local concern, a period of 20 minutes has been set aside at the beginning of the meeting.

For the purpose of this protocol, "members of the public" includes members of the press and parish and district councillors who are not members of the Forum. It does not include officers of county or district authorities who are in attendance to support and advise the meeting.

A member of the public may speak for no more than 3 minutes. Members of the public are not required to give notice of the issue they intend to raise, although it is expected in the case of service issues that the appropriate mechanisms for resolving the issue have been explored. Where a question is raised which cannot be answered at the Forum, a record will be kept by officers supporting the Forum and it will be responded to via the appropriate mechanism.

Whilst a member of the public is speaking, no interruption shall be allowed from either a member of the Forum or another member of the public.

However, the Chair of the meeting may intervene in the speech of a member of the public. This includes the right of the Chair to terminate a speech if it is felt appropriate to do so. The Chair's judgement will be informed by the following provision:

Members of the public must not

- Speak at a point in the meeting other than those specified
- Interrupt another speaker
- Speak for longer than the allotted time
- Reveal personal information about another individual
- Make a personal complaint about a service provided by County, District or Town/ Parish Councils in the area
- Make individual or personal complaints against any member of the authority
- Reveal information which they know or believe to be confidential
- Use offensive, abusive or threatening language
- Ignore the ruling of the Chair of the meeting

Members of the public who breach these guidelines may, following a warning, be asked to leave the meeting.