

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## Cabinet

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**Date of meeting:** 7 October 2008  
**Report of:** Partnerships Workstream, Performance & Capacity Block  
**Title:** DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR LOCAL WORKING

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### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To consider the development of a model for local working across the Cheshire East authority area within the context of the People and Places bid, the wider partnership agenda and recognising the need for community engagement and empowerment mechanisms.

### **2.0 Decision Required**

- 2.1 To agree the following:

- (a) a set of principles to inform the development of local working, both at area and neighbourhood level;
- (b) an outline model of local working detailed in Appendix A as the basis for further work and discussion with Members, officers and partners;
- (c) to establish a number of Local Area Partnerships (LAPs), the number and boundaries to be finalised following detailed debate with strategic partners (e.g. police, fire, health, etc.), local councils and third sector representatives;
- (d) draft terms of reference for the Local Area Partnerships so as to inform this detailed debate;
- (e) further work be undertaken on the potential cost of and options for supporting local working as identified through ongoing discussion; and
- (f) further work be undertaken on the possible functions which could be delegated to Local Area Partnerships, having regard to existing schemes of delegation across the four authorities and also the views of partners and any delegations they may wish to make.

### **3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs**

- 3.1 None identified

### **4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond**

- 4.1 It is likely that there will be cost implications should the Council agree to develop an approach to local working as outlined within the People and Places bid. However, the scale of such costs and time at which they would be incurred will be determined by the implementation arrangements.

## **5.0 Risk Assessment**

- 5.1 One of the key success factors of the People and Places bid was “a significant commitment to area and neighbourhood working that enables a balanced and effective approach to the delegation of service planning and delivery” through a framework which combines strategic leadership and neighbourhood flexibility. The Bid strongly promotes the establishment of Area Programme Boards to provide this interface. In assessing the success of the LGR transition and implementation of the principles underpinning the successful bid, it is likely that CLG will pay particular attention to this aspect of work.

## **6.0 The Case for Local Working – The National Context**

- 6.1 Statistical evidence shows that:

- 61% of people in England do not believe they can influence local decisions;
- Satisfaction with councils is lower than satisfaction with council services and has fallen in most places;
- Two thirds of people do not vote in local elections;
- 71% of people identify strongly with their neighbourhood; and
- 73% of people say they want neighbourhoods to have more influence over some services and budgets.

- 6.2 In response, the Local Government White Paper, “Strong and Prosperous Communities”, put forward a framework for double devolution, i.e. devolution from central to local government level and beyond this to the community level:-

*“power should be devolved through councils and local public services to the communities they service, by building the capacity of communities to solve problems for themselves and by fostering greater community involvement in local governance”*

- 6.3 The subsequent Local Government & Public Involvement in Health (LGPIH) Act placed a responsibility on local authorities to play a lead role in establishing mechanisms for this empowerment. The more recent White Paper - “Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power” - sets out a range of proposals which aim to support this. The Government’s intention is to generate vibrant local democracy and give real control over local decisions and services to a wider pool of active citizens. The White Paper addresses seven key issues which are treated from the perspective of individual citizens: being active in the community, access to information, having influence, challenge, redress, standing for office and ownership and control.

- 6.4 The LGPIH Act also promotes a reorientation of the local government performance management framework around the needs and priorities of citizens and communities through the replacement of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) with a more rigorous Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). This will require public sector services to be assessed together, irrespective of which partner is delivering them, to establish how community outcomes are being improved. Inherent in this is a far greater emphasis on targeting resources to community priorities based on robust intelligence and information. This approach reinforces the importance of the partnership dimension to area and neighbourhood working.
- 6.5 In meeting the expectations the Act and subsequent White Paper, there is no prescribed or recommended approach on offer from government though there is a potential menu of approaches being adopted across the country which address:
- more responsive local management of services;
  - community engagement; and
  - community governance.

## **7.0 The Case for Local Working – The Local Context**

- 7.1 In an attempt to interpret and reflect Government thinking, the People and Places bid promotes effective area and neighbourhood working that reflects the democratic process, enables interactivity with partners and is based on real communities of interest. In particular the bid promotes:
- A significant commitment to area and neighbourhood working that enables a balanced and effective approach to the delegation of service planning and delivery
  - Community influence over public sector activity
  - An effective role for Parish & Town councils, individually so they can undertake their important local roles even better and collectively within the local and strategic partnership frameworks
  - Community organisations and neighbourhood partnerships playing a key role in influencing authority wide decisions and in working to deliver local services responsive to the needs of people and communities
- 7.2 The People and Places business case also suggests an Area Programme Board model with devolved decision making and budgets, with the following functions:
- Bringing together and providing a collective voice for the multiplicity of groups and organisations who are active locally, to influence the shape of high level strategy and policy, including the Sustainable Communities Strategy and individual plans of key agencies such as the PCT, Police etc

- Developing area action plans (based upon the building blocks of Parish and Neighbourhood Plans) to provide the local dimension to LAAs
- Monitoring and scrutinising performance in the local delivery of mainstream (standard) services and the meeting of LAA targets
- Providing a collective local response to one off issues or proposals upon which the community has a view and articulating these at the local authority or LSP level
- Providing a 'port of call' for the resolution of community calls for action

7.3 There are already a number of local working mechanisms operating within the county ranging from community engagement to decision making and service delivery, examples from Cheshire East being:

**Area Forums (engagement)** – e.g. Congleton Borough Council Area Forums, Police Forums, Macclesfield Area Forums, Crewe & Nantwich Neighbourhood Action Programme, Valley Community Action Programme, Wistaston Green Partnership, etc.

**Area Committees (decision making)** – e.g. Local Joint Highways & Transportation Committees, etc.

**Area Partnerships (co-ordination)** – e.g. District LSPs, CDRPs, Market Town Partnerships, district thematic groups, etc.

**Service Delivery** – e.g. joint highways teams, police neighbourhood units, Multi Agency Development Teams (Children's Services), Tasking & Co-ordination (T&C) meetings, Multi Agency Problem Solving (MAPS), etc.

7.4 As a number of these mechanisms are partnership groupings or long standing, they will continue regardless of local government re-organisation and any future framework for local working, either in partnership with others or not, will need to have regard to them if their effectiveness is to be maximised.

## 8.0 Learning from Elsewhere

8.1 The majority of large unitary authorities have some form of local working in place and, to inform thinking, the officer working group has contacted/visited a number of authorities to gain an understanding of what is in place elsewhere. These areas have included recognised good practice (i.e. beacon authorities), comparators, neighbouring authorities and others. Again, examples across the range of community engagement to service delivery can be found. Also, hybrid models can be found, for example where decision making committees are informed by wider partnership forums, or where there are a large number of community boards linked to the community planning/LSP

structure. More detail on these examples can be provided to Members on request.

- 8.2 What is clear from looking across the country, is that local working takes time to develop and often needs to be reviewed and changed to suit local circumstances. It is also increasingly the case that local working arrangements need to be developed and jointly implemented with key partners if they are to be truly effective.

## **9.0 Developing an approach for Cheshire East**

- 9.1 In determining any approach to local working and identifying appropriate criteria against which success can be measured, it is important to be clear about the outcomes we want to achieve as a result of working at a more local level. These outcomes are likely to be wide ranging and include:

- A more effective, co-ordinated approach to tackling local needs and priorities, particularly in those communities where a more intensive approach is required
- More responsive local management of services
- Improved engagement with citizens
- Actual empowerment of citizens
- Greater citizen satisfaction
- Enhanced community governance
- Increased voter turnout
- Enhanced community leadership role for unitary councillors
- Value for money

It is intended that specific outcome measures will be developed in close collaboration with others over the coming months. These measures may include indicators drawn from the new National Indicator Set and Place Survey and will include those already identified in the current Cheshire Local Area Agreement.

- 9.2 The thinking behind this crucial area of work has to date been driven through a multi-agency officer group including representatives of the four current local authorities operating in the Cheshire East area, Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and Central and Eastern Cheshire Primary Care Trust. As such, a number of key statutory partners are already playing a pivotal role in shaping the future direction of partnership working at both area and neighbourhood level in Cheshire East.
- 9.3 Working alongside the officer group described above, a cross-party Member working group has also been considering the options for taking this issue forward over recent weeks and has agreed a set of principles to guide the process. These are set out below for the Cabinet's approval:

PRINCIPLE	INTERPRETATION
Evolutionary	We will change and adapt our approaches to local circumstances based on intelligence, learning and evaluation
Leadership	We will act as and with community champions and empower communities, groups and individuals, providing opportunities to work with others in tackling issues of local importance
Delegation/Devolution	We will encourage and build community capacity in order to delegate <u>or</u> devolve power, control and decision making to the lowest practical level, (i.e. as close as possible to the point of service delivery whilst securing value for money) so that action can be taken more efficiently and effectively
Added Value	We will ensure that any structures and mechanisms put in place have measurable outcomes and demonstrate additional improvement for the resources invested through effective performance management
Flexibility	We will recognise the diversity of localities through different working arrangements and within agreed frameworks and service standards
Inclusivity	We will seek to engage effectively and empower people and communities to participate
Accountability	We will ensure that our decision making processes are visible, transparent and accountable, in line with Compact principles
Responsibility	We will take collective ownership, with partners, of identified community issues and priorities
Understandable	We will promote structures and processes which are as simple to follow and engage with as possible
Evidence Based	We will share and promote available information and data to better inform our plans, actions and decisions and, in doing so, increase understanding and knowledge of our communities and the impact we are making
Affordable	We will ensure resources are available, within budgetary constraints, whilst balancing the need to demonstrate value for money in addressing the diverse needs of communities across the Cheshire East area

9.4 In an attempt to meet the aspirations for local working articulated nationally by the government and locally within the context of the

People and Places bid and reflect current local working arrangements across Cheshire East in line with the principles outlined above, a proposed draft model for local working has been developed (see Appendix A). Effective local working needs to take account of the priorities and characteristics of all neighbourhoods recognising that one size does not fit all. In recognition of this, the model promotes a multi-layered approach to provide tailored solutions according to local needs, issues and circumstances. This might, for example, result in a more intensive partnership approach in neighbourhoods facing complex problems or a 'lighter touch' approach in areas which face fewer challenges or where communities are empowered to take more control.

- 9.5 Any approach needs to be based on a strong foundation of partnership working and it is therefore recommended that further developmental work on the model be undertaken in partnership with others who have a stake in the Cheshire East area. It is suggested that a series of one-to-one discussions and broader developmental workshops be held over the course of the next three months (Oct – Dec) with a view to agreeing a detailed model and approach for partnership working at a strategic, tactical and operational level by the end of the year. The key stakeholders to be involved in this process are listed in Appendix B though existing networks will also be used to ensure as wide engagement as possible.
- 9.6 To enable this debate with partners to take place, the Member Working Group is proposing that an 'in principle' decision be taken to establish Local Area Partnerships with the following draft terms of reference as a starting point for development.

<b>Suggested Terms of Reference</b>	
1.	Build partnerships and inter-agency working with local public, private and voluntary organisations.
2.	Develop structures and approaches that ensure the involvement of residents and communities of interest in local issues and decision making.
3.	Oversee the development of mechanisms for community involvement, engagement and empowerment throughout the area.
4.	Lead in the process of identifying local issues and priorities.
5.	Assist local elected Members to represent the interests of their communities.
6.	Prepare an annual Area Delivery Plan which amalgamates Parish and Neighbourhood Plans produced more locally and articulates the local response to the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.
7.	Prepare and endorse funding applications and allocate community grants in response to locally identified issues and priorities.
8.	Undertake locality based commissioning to ensure the

- delivery of the right services, in the right place and at the right time to meet local needs.
9. Oversee the implementation and delivery of agreed local actions through an effective performance management system.
  10. Receive local representations, hear representations and act as the first port of call for the Councillors Call for Action.
  11. Influence the development and delivery of public services in the locality, both directly and in conjunction with partner organisations.
  12. Oversee the use of the public estate in the locality.
  13. Influence the development of strategies and plans through local discussion and consultation.
  14. Facilitate a better understanding of local needs, priorities, views and opinions through consultation, the consideration and interpretation of local information, evidence and research and the production of an Area Profile.
  15. Consider how the Council's strategic objectives are being met in local areas and advise the Cabinet and/or Scrutiny Committees on local matters.
  16. Examine local issues referred to the Local Area Partnership by the Council, Cabinet or Scrutiny Committee.
  17. Take decisions within existing policy, strategy and budget on matters delegated by the Council or Cabinet (to be the subject of further work).

9.7 As part of the debate, it will be important to gain an understanding of a number of key issues, such as:

- How will Cheshire East Council inform, consult with and engage communities / Members locally?
- How will Cheshire East Council make decisions locally?
- How will Cheshire East Council deliver services locally?
- How will Cheshire East Council work in partnership locally?
- How will the Cheshire East Council demonstrate responsiveness?
- How will success be measured?

9.8 There will obviously be a great deal of public interest on the boundaries and numbers of these 'areas'. There are essentially three building blocks which could be used to construct a model. They are:

- Ward boundaries
- Parish council boundaries
- Middle layer super output areas

It is suggested that the construction of the areas and the criteria used be discussed with partners in formulating a jointly agreed model.

## 10.0 Options



10.1 Not applicable

**11.0 Reasons for Recommendation**

11.1 The Cheshire East Council needs to put in place arrangements to demonstrate how it will meet the People and Places bid commitments and ensure there are mechanisms in place to enable Cheshire East Council to respond to the needs and priorities expressed by local communities.

***For further information:***

*Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Brown*

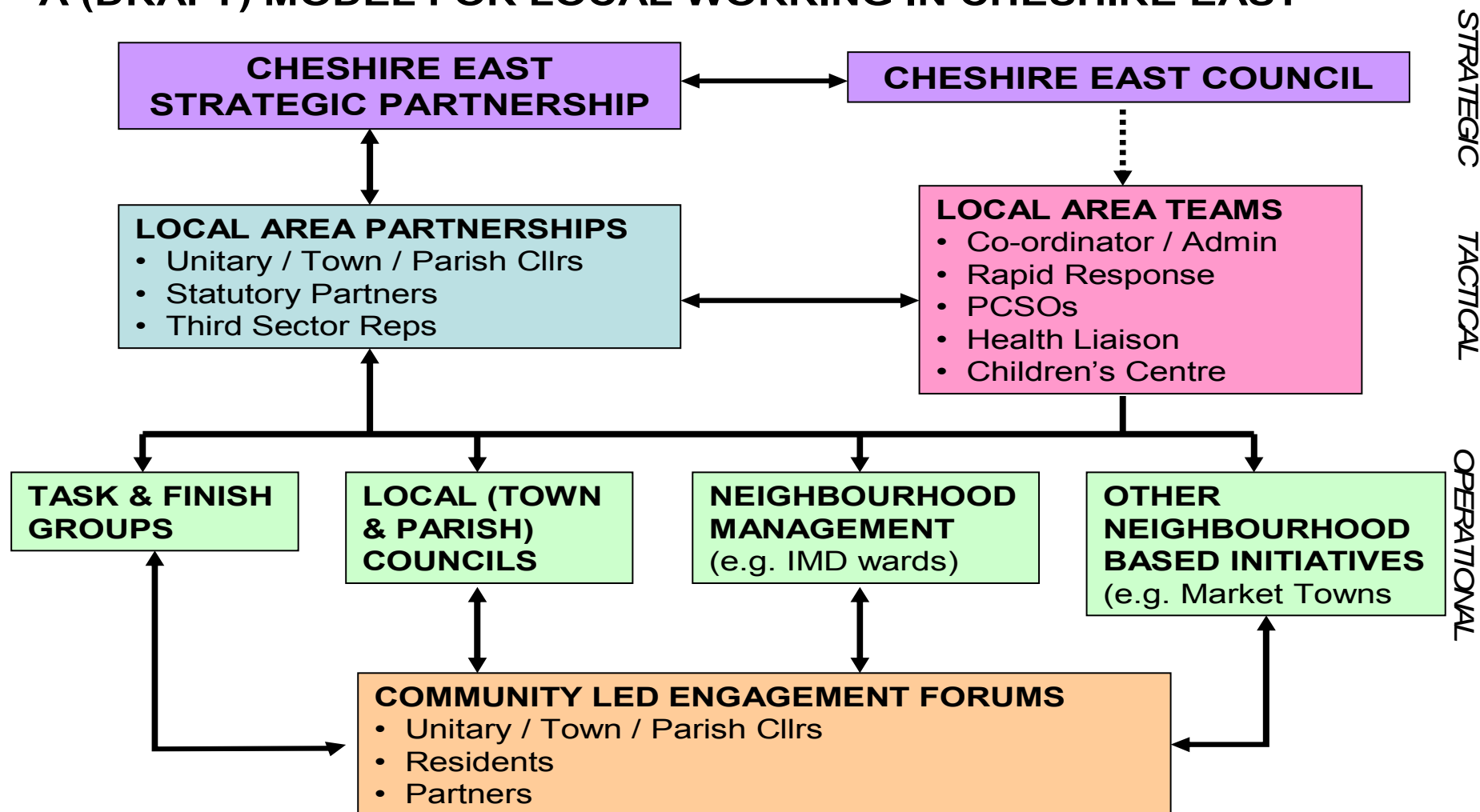
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***Background Documents:***

*Documents are available for inspection at:*

**A (DRAFT) MODEL FOR LOCAL WORKING IN CHESHIRE EAST**

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN CHESHIRE EAST

- **Named Partners** – i.e. those referred to under Part 5, Chapter 1 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act as a partner authority to which certain statutory duties apply:
  - Arts Council of England
  - Chief Constable
  - English Heritage
  - Environment Agency
  - Cheshire Fire & Rescue Authority
  - Health and Safety Executive
  - The Highways Agency
  - Job Centre Plus
  - Cheshire & Warrington Learning and Skills Council
  - Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
  - Peak District National Park Authority
  - Natural England
  - Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
  - East Cheshire NHS Trust
  - Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Trust
  - NW Ambulance Service NHS Trust
  - Cheshire Police Authority
  - Central & Eastern Cheshire Primary Care Trust
  - Cheshire Probation Board / Trust / Service
  - North West Development Agency
  - Sport England
  - Youth Offending Team
  
- **Other Partners** – from across the public, private, community, voluntary and faith sectors including:
  - Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service
  - Macclesfield College
  - South Cheshire College
  - Reaseheath College
  - Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)
  - Connexions
  - Macclesfield Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise
  - South Cheshire Chamber
  - Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Racial Equality Council (CHAWREC)
  - Network Rail
  - Arriva
  - PLUS Dane Housing Group
  - Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Trust Limited
  - Wulvern Housing Limited
  - Advantage
  - 108 Local (Town & Parish) Councils
  - Cheshire Association of Local Councils
  - Cheshire Community Action

- Congleton Voluntary Action
  - Crewe & Nantwich Voluntary Action
  - Macclesfield & District Council for Voluntary Service
  - Congleton Voluntary & Community Sector Network
  - Crewe & Nantwich Voluntary & Community Forum
  - Macclesfield Voluntary Sector Alliance
  - Middlewich Vision
  - Alsager Market Town Initiative
  - Congleton Market Town Initiative
  - Sandbach Market Town Initiative
  - Cheshire Older People's Network
  - Groundwork
  - Cheshire Association of Secondary Headteachers
  - Cheshire Association of Primary Headteachers
  - Cheshire Association of Special School Headteachers
  - Cheshire Association of Governing Bodies
  - Manchester Airport Group
- ***Current Cheshire Partnerships Framework*** – constituent thematic and/or geographic partnerships and groups including:
    - Communities of Cheshire Partnership
    - Governance Board
    - District LSPs (x 3)
    - Safer Stronger Cheshire Group
    - Children's Trust
    - Healthier Communities & Older People's Partnership (and respective commissioning groups)
    - Economic Development & Enterprise Group
    - Sustainable Cheshire Forum
    - District based Thematic Partnerships (x3) – including CDRPs
- ***Sub Regional Bodies / Partnerships***, including:
    - Cheshire Local Government Association
    - Cheshire Sub Regional Leaders
    - Cheshire & Warrington Economic Alliance
    - Cheshire & Warrington Improvement & Efficiency Partnership
    - Cheshire & Warrington Rural Partnership
    - Cheshire & Warrington Cultural Consortium
    - Visit Cheshire and Chester
    - Cheshire Drug & Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)
    - Cheshire Domestic Abuse Partnership
    - 4NW
    - Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership
    - Cheshire Learning Resource Network
- ***Elected Members***
  - ***Cheshire East Management Team***
  - ***People Programme Board***

- ***Places Programme Board***
- ***Wider Community / General Public***