

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

ADVISORY PANEL – PERFORMANCE & CAPACITY

Date of meeting: 11 December 2008
Report of: Partnerships Workstream, Performance & Capacity Block
Title: Proposed Local Area Partnerships (including boundaries)

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Advisory Panel on the development of Local Area Partnerships as developed through a Multi Agency Officer Group and internal Member Working Group, and next steps.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 To receive the update report.

3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 3.1 To be determined.

4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 4.1 To be determined. It is assumed that there will be cost implications in implementing any approach to area and neighbourhood working though the scale of cost will be determined by the nature of the arrangements put in place and any associated contributions (either in cash or kind) from partner authorities.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None identified at this stage.

6.0 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 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.

7.0 Background and Options

- 7.1 As a reflection of Government thinking, the successful People and Places proposal and Business Case promoted effective area and neighbourhood working that reflected the democratic process, enabled interactivity with partners and was based on real communities of interest. In particular the bid promoted:
- A significant commitment to area and neighbourhood working that enabled 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 could 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 suggested 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 In an attempt to move the thinking forward, the Multi Agency Officer Group (comprising representatives from Police, Fire, PCT, CVSs, Cheshire Community Action and ChALC as well as local authority officers) and Cross Party Member Working Group (comprising Cabinet members and backbenchers) were formed to ensure early buy-in of both Members and partners to any new approaches to local working.
- 7.4 To date, these groups have:
- (i) formulated an outline model or framework for how partnership working at strategic, tactical and operational level will fit together (Appendix A);
 - (ii) developed a series of principles to underpin area and neighbourhood working (Appendix B);

- (iii) drafted outline terms of reference for Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) based on the original People and Places concept of Area Programme Boards (Appendix C); and
 - (iv) considered suitable boundaries for the Local Area Partnerships based upon three potential building blocks – ward boundaries, parish council boundaries and Super Output Areas.
- 7.5 The model, principles and outline terms of reference were endorsed by the Cabinet on 7 October and are now subject to wider discussion and debate with partners. Consultation is also underway on the number and geography of the Local Area Partnerships. After much debate, it was agreed that an initial suggestion of eight LAPs covering Cheshire East and based on middle layer super output areas should form the basis of this consultation.
- 7.6 The work completed to date was presented to a key stakeholder event on 27 November and delegates were asked to identify potential issues or problems with the proposals. In general feedback was positive though, inevitably, ‘tweaking’ of the proposed boundaries was suggested. Further discussion and development of the proposals will continue during December and January through a Member Stakeholder Event (16 December), Local (Town & Parish) Councils Events (20, 27 and 28 January) and a second partner event (targeting current LSP partners) also during January.
- 7.7 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. As a result, in addition to ongoing engagement and development of the Local Area Partnerships, project work to pilot specific approaches to neighbourhood working within the context of a LAP is planned. At this stage, four pilot areas have been suggested:
- Crewe – to further develop neighbourhood management approaches in areas of disadvantage;
 - Bromley Farm / Congleton / Goostrey – to explore neighbourhood approaches in an area of urban (with disadvantage) and rural mix;
 - Knutsford / Bucklow – to explore local area planning (i.e. amalgamation of parish plans into a local area plan) and parish clustering;
 - Poynton / Disley / Adlington – to explore options for devolution to neighbourhood level.

Detailed project briefs, including a clear methodology for evaluation, are under development and it is hoped to begin pilot work early in the new year.

8.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 8.1 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. It is therefore important for the Panel to understand the broader context for this area of work and current developments.

For further information:

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Background Documents:

Documents are available for inspection at:

Cheshire East Council Support Office
Congleton Borough Council
Westfields
Middlewich Road
Sandbach

PRINCIPLES TO UNDERPIN LOCAL WORKING APPROACHES

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

LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS – SUGGESTED TERMS OF REFERENCE

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).