

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of meeting: 19 May 2009

Report of: Head of Policy & Performance

Title: Further Developing the Local and Strategic Partnership Framework

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the continuing development of partnership arrangements within Cheshire East.
- 1.2 To advise of the development of proposed Local Strategic Partnership governance arrangements, prior to consideration by the Local Strategic Partnership Executive Board at its meeting on 11th May.
- 1.3 To update Members on the development of neighbourhood projects within the Local Area Partnership areas.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1.1 To approve the suggested governance structure and recommend it to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Executive Board for adoption and continuing development.
- 2.2 To task the following officers with responsibility for ensuring the establishment of the five themed partnerships referred to:
 - Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) Head of Safer & Stronger Communities
 - Children's Trust – Strategic Director People
 - Health & Well Being – Strategic Director People
 - Economic Development, Learning & Skills – Head of Regeneration
 - Environment/Sustainability – Jane Staley of Groundwork
- 2.3 To confirm the Member representation on the Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) as:
 - Congleton – 4
 - Crewe – 4
 - Knutsford - 2
 - Macclesfield – 4
 - Nantwich – 3
 - Poynton – 2
 - Wilmslow - 2

- 2.4 To note progress on the development of the previously identified neighbourhood projects and agree to work being undertaken on developing two further projects for the Macclesfield and Nantwich LAPs.

3.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 3.1 There will be cost implications for the development of local and strategic partnership working as outlined within the People and Places proposal. However, the scale of such costs and time at which they would be incurred will be determined by the implementation arrangements.

4.0 Risk Assessment

- 4.1 One of the key success factors of the People and Places proposal 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. In assessing the success of the LGR transition and implementation of the principles underpinning the successful bid, particular attention will be paid to this aspect of work.

5.0 Background

- 5.1 Members will recall that, in recent months, the Council and its strategic partners have agreed partnership working arrangements for Cheshire East, the primary components being the LSP Executive Board, a number of thematic partnerships and seven Local Area Partnerships. As these bodies will soon become operational, the Executive Board will be asked to formalise these arrangements and a draft framework is being developed based on the previous Cheshire Partnerships document as this has proved comprehensive and useful.

Inevitably, the partnership arrangements will evolve and develop over the coming months and years and there will be need for regular review and amendment.

The framework provides a basis against which opportunities can be taken to meet the government’s aspirations as expressed in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Communities in Control White Paper and the statutory guidance on Creating Strong, Safe & Prosperous Communities.

Of particular note is this way of working as our preferred method of implementing the Sustainable Communities Act, which has been the subject of recent debate by Council and is detailed in a further report on this agenda.

6.0 Current Position

- 6.1 Practical arrangements are now being put in place to make the framework operational. The LSP has formed its Executive Board, work is underway on establishing the thematic partnerships, initial meetings of the Area Partnerships are being planned and project briefs have been prepared for the neighbourhood projects – this is dealt with separately in paragraph 7.0.
- 6.2 In essence, the framework has the following components and, for information, shown against each is how Members will be involved:

(a) Cheshire East Assembly

The concept of an Assembly is introduced which will consist of all the partners and partnership groupings within the Cheshire East partnership environment. The Assembly will meet periodically and will focus on major 'state of the borough' issues. The Assembly will have a broader consultation and engagement role, bringing together wide ranging issues and people. It will have a key role in shaping the development and implementation of the new Sustainable Community Strategy and will have a large potential membership including key agencies, the community & voluntary sector and local councils.

All Members of Cheshire East Council will have the opportunity to be involved at this level.

(b) Local Strategic Partnership Executive Board

The Board will be the primary decision making body of the partnership. It will take guidance from the Assembly and have responsibility for developing and securing delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement

Membership will comprise of representatives of key partners namely; Cheshire East Council, Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service, Central & Eastern Cheshire PCT, Manchester Metropolitan University representing the education/training sector, South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce representing private industry, Chester East Third Sector Congress and Chester East Housing Delivery Partnership.

The Executive Board is chaired by the Leader of the Council and the Performance & Capacity portfolio holder is invited to attend meetings as an observer. To date, the Board has met twice and further six-weekly meetings are programmed for the rest of the year. Detailed terms of reference will be agreed as part of its development, which will be reported to Cabinet in due course.

(c) Thematic Partnerships

Thematic partnerships will be responsible for the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes and Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets that will guide operational delivery. In addition, there will be specific strategic development responsibilities.

It has been agreed that five partnerships will be developed as part of the partnerships framework. At present these partnerships are at different stages of development as follows:

- CDRP – has agreed its own terms of reference and membership arrangements
- Children's Trust – work well advanced and due to meet for the first time in May
- Environment & Sustainability – a steering group has been formed under the chairmanship of the director of Groundwork Cheshire
- Health & Well Being – initial discussions are taking place
- Economic Development, Learning & Skills – some early progress

Appropriate portfolio holders will have the opportunity to be involved in these partnerships and it is recommended that key officers be tasked with ensuring the partnerships are established in the very near future. Those key officers are: the Head of Safer & Stronger Communities for the CDRP, the Strategic Director People for the Children's Trust and Health & Well Being and Head of Regeneration for Economic Development, Learning & Skills. Since work is already underway in the Environment/Sustainability area, it is suggested that Jane Staley of Groundwork continue this with the support of the Partnerships Team

Thematic partnerships will be accountable for the delivery of the local area agreement targets, and associated delivery plans and strategies. Where these targets have an area based element, or need to be disaggregated to a LAP level, the partnership will need to involve the relevant LAP(s) and set clear targets and objectives.

(d) Local Area Agreement Steering Group

A group of co-ordinating officers is needed to undertake the performance management role of the LAA and Sustainable Community Strategy. Its role will be to manage the day to day delivery and performance management arrangements for the LAA and report, by exception, to the LSP Executive on the performance in delivering plans. There will be explicit links to the LAPs as they will have a key role in delivering locally.

Once established, the Group will comprise officer representatives from each of the thematic partnerships and LAPs and will report to the LSP Executive Board via the Head of Policy & Performance.

(e) Local Area Partnerships (LAPs)

Seven LAPs have been agreed for Cheshire East covering Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich, Poynton & Wilmslow with the core roles of:

- Improving service delivery primarily through the development of an area delivery plan
- Ensuring engagement with communities by developing structures and approaches that ensure the involvement of residents and communities of interest
- Providing empowerment opportunities by leading on the identification of local issues and solutions

In keeping with the concept of establishing neighbourhood partnerships, membership will echo that of the LSP Executive Board and will therefore comprise the Council, Neighbourhood Policing Unit, Fire & Rescue, PCT/GP cluster, business sector, third sector, registered social landlord and education providers. In addition, representatives of local town & parish councils will sit on each LAP as advisors and other members may be co-opted as appropriate to the area.

Elected Members will have seats on the partnerships, depending on the size of the area. Discussions have taken place on this issue and the following has been agreed:

- Congleton 4
- Crewe 4
- Macclesfield 4
- Nantwich 3
- Knutsford 2
- Poynton 2
- Wilmslow 2

LAPs will be accountable to the LSP Executive for their overall performance and will manage local issues identified in the area plans as well as the local delivery of borough wide initiatives for improvement, some of which will come from the thematic partnerships.

LAPs are intended to be problem solving forums and will take a lead in ensuring effective community engagement mechanisms are in place throughout the LAP area. Thus they should only refer issues to the LSP Executive or thematic partnerships that are not able to be resolved locally. To help them in their work they may establish multi agency sub-groups and may also consider the devolution of services to a neighbourhood level. It is also hoped that the LAPs will allow partners to align and integrate their own neighbourhood / area working arrangements over time.

Initial meetings of the LAPs have been scheduled during May to agree their working arrangements. Over the coming months it is intended that local managers will be appointed who will be able to drive forward the work of the partnerships. It is proposed that one of the elected members for each LAP be identified and tasked with acting as a lead co-ordinator for the LAP to help establish the working arrangements. More detailed operational governance arrangements will then emerge as the partnerships develop.

(f) Neighbourhoods

The overall aim of the partnership framework is to deliver services, create a higher quality of life and involve communities more closely in decision making. Neighbourhood working is key to the success of this. The working arrangements will vary across Cheshire East and the LAPs will need to interact with many community organisations. It is also at a neighbourhood level that the important role of town & parish councils can be realised.

By its nature neighbourhood arrangements will not always be formal or consistent.

Elected Members have a crucial role in all aspects of neighbourhood activity, both as ward councillors and community leaders.

7.0 Development of Neighbourhood Projects

- 7.1 Members will recall that agreement has been reached to 4 pilot projects in the LAP areas of Crewe, Congleton, Knutsford/Bucklow and Poynton, which are briefly summarised below:

Bromley Farm	To bring together community members and Partners to agree and deliver local priorities and improvements in the neighbourhood.
Crewe	2 phases. Phase 1 delivers 4 projects. Phase 2 looks at developing and sustaining Neighbourhood Action and Neighbourhood Management programmes in Crewe.
Knutsford & Bucklow	To develop and assess Parish Cluster arrangements. To investigate the best way of ensuring community issues are fed into and addressed by the Knutsford LAP.
Poynton	To explore options for devolution of services from Cheshire East to either Poynton Town Council or all councils within the proposed Local Area Partnership.

- 7.2 The projects will enable an assessment to be undertaken of the effectiveness of different ways of working, i.e. neighbourhood management initiatives, parish clustering and the devolution of services. Whilst progress

on these projects will be dependent on sufficient resources being available, it is hoped to get them underway at the same time as the LAPs are being established.

- 7.3 Further pilot projects have been suggested for the Weston Estate in the Macclesfield LAP and also for a project in Nantwich. These possibilities will be explored and, if appropriate, project briefs prepared and reported to the LSP Executive.

8.0 Next Steps

- 8.1 The LSP Executive Board will be considering these issues at its next meeting on 11th May. Immediate priorities will be the establishment of the LAPs, the development of the thematic partnerships and LAA/SCS delivery co-ordination arrangements. New or revised terms of reference will also be required for all of the groups outlined above. We will also continue to research other partnerships that have developed area working arrangements and explore what has worked and what has not.

In addition, work will soon begin on developing a new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Cheshire East, which will be a major opportunity to shape the direction of all public agencies over the coming years.

- 8.2 Key to the success of the local and strategic partnership framework will be the development of robust communication arrangements linking the different partnerships, key agencies and wider communities and this will also be a priority for the next few months.

9.0 Options

- 9.1 Not applicable

10.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 10.1 The Authority needs to demonstrate leadership in ensuring there are mechanisms in place to enable Cheshire East Council and its strategic partners to respond to the needs and priorities expressed by local communities.

For further information:

Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Brown

Officer: Zandra Neeld

Tel No: 01244 977559, Email: zandra.neeld@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Background Documents:

Documents are available for inspection at: Westfields, Sandbach