

PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACTION IN CHESHIRE EAST PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

1. Purpose of the Agreement

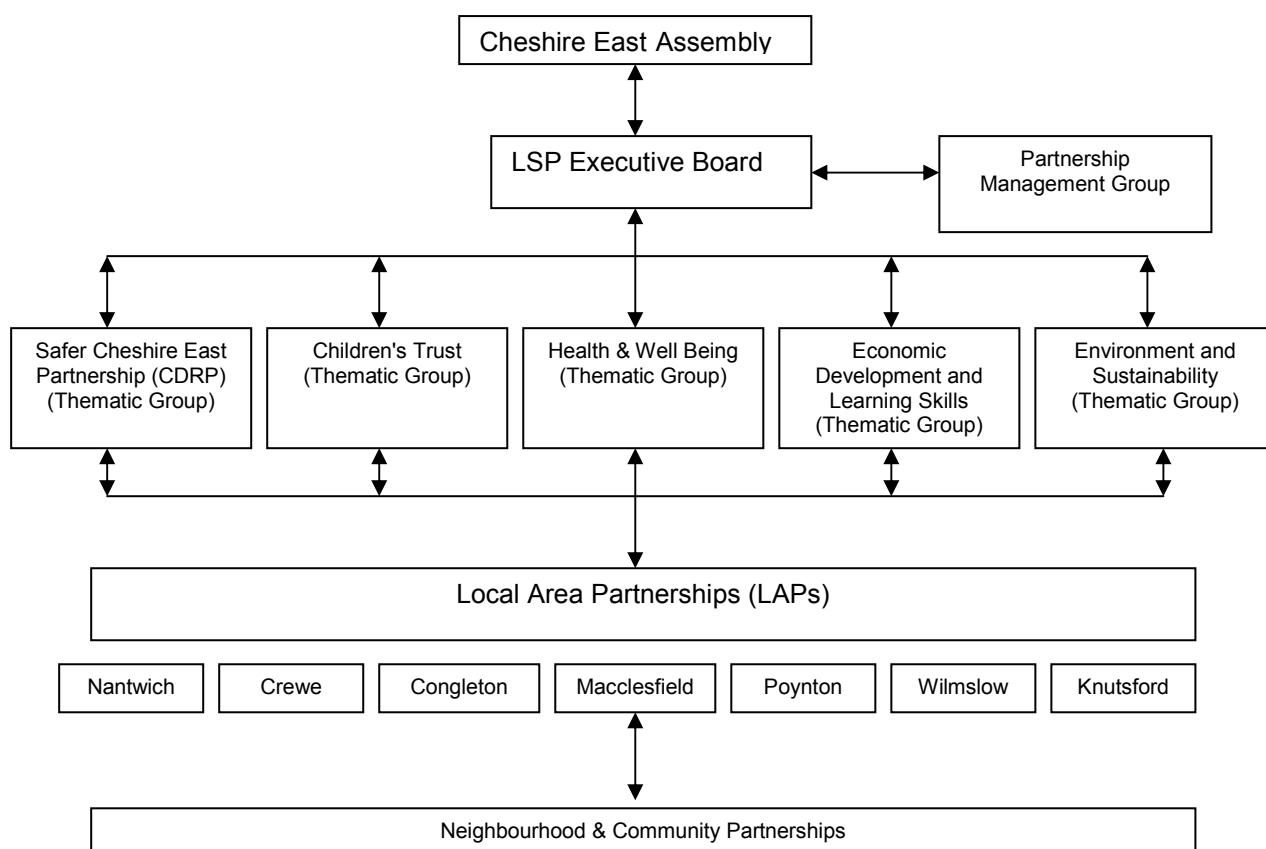
The purpose of this Agreement is to establish a framework within which the members of the Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East (PACE) can demonstrate their commitment to support and participate in the Partnership.

The Agreement is not a binding contractual agreement and is intended to show commitment to the aims of the Partnership and to the other members of the Partnership.

2. What is Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East

PACE is the Local Strategic Partnership for Cheshire East and it brings together, at a local level, all of the different parts of the public, private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together across Cheshire East.

Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East Structure



Within the terms of this Agreement, the constituent bodies will be known collectively as Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East (PACE) and will meet periodically together as the Cheshire East Assembly.

3. Partnership Principles

We will have regard to the following principles in how we work:

3.1 Achieve intended outcomes

Our priorities are evidence-based and our decision-making is transparent. We will:

- a) Share resources to achieve joint outcomes
- b) Ensure that decision-making is transparent
- c) Be committed to continuous improvement
- d) Ensure that claims of improved performance are based on clear evidence
- e) Establish accountability both across the partnership (horizontally) and within each organisation (vertically)

3.2 Public interest

We act in the interest of the public and demonstrate value. We will:

- a) Focus on long-term as well as short-term issues
- b) Act in the interests of the public good over individual interests
Consider visibility, input from the public and informing the public of the Council's activities and the rationale behind decisions.
- c) Demonstrate to the community how we are achieving publicly valued outcomes
- d) Agree a protocol for the handling of complaints that relates to our joint work
- e) Promote and ensure public engagement
- f) Consider public access to partnerships (and documentation) when appropriate
- g) Use appropriate, unambiguous and simple language

3.3 Building partners' capacity

We act to build capacity in our partnership. We will:

- a) Be committed to developing individual partners' skills to achieve our aims
- b) Encourage partners to be confident working outside of their organisational culture
- c) Be open to partners' suggestions and help
- d) Actively encourage ideas and innovation
- e) Ensure that decision-making is transparent
- f) Establish accountability both across the partnership (horizontally) and within each organisation (vertically)

3.4 Value and respect each other

We respect and value everyone's contribution. We will:

- a) Actively promote a "no-blame" culture

- b) Ensure that partners contribute appropriately and openly
- c) Acknowledge the capabilities of all members
- d) Recognise and embrace the role of voluntary and community sector partners
- e) Avoid dominance by individuals
- f) Respect each other's roles and needs
- g) Actively encourage the participation of all partnership members
- h) Build effective working relationships with each other
- i) Recognise the value of all partners' contributions

3.5 Act ethically

We act ethically. We are open and objective and encourage constructive challenge. We will:

- a) Be honest and objective
- b) Support partners both to understand and constructively challenge any poor behaviour
- c) Agree how we will achieve democratic accountability
- d) Ensure that our dialogue is open and transparent
- e) Declare conflicts of interest and address them
- f) Make sure that the purpose of all meetings is made clear
- g) Agree a mechanism for "whistle-blowing" and dealing with complaints
- h) Ensure that "whistle-blowers" are supported

3.6 Aligning strategies and networks

We harness our collective efforts through joint planning, delivery and governance arrangements. This must be clear evidence-based. We will:

- a) Encourage all partners to actively shape the strategy and share information
- b) Ensure that partners can influence the decision-making of partner organisations
- c) Allow sufficient time and capacity to be given to understand an issue and to reflect on its impact
- d) Make sure that actions taken by the partnership are clear, time-limited and task-orientated
- e) Ensure that agreed actions are carried out
- f) By working through local Area Partnerships, focus collective effort on what really matters, delivering improved outcomes for local people and places.

4. Vision, Aims, Objectives and Priorities for Action of PACE

The Partnership's vision for Cheshire East in 2025, as expressed in the Sustainable Community Strategy, "Ambition for All", is:

"Cheshire East is a prosperous place where all people thrive, regardless of where they live. We have beautiful productive countryside, unique towns with individual character and a wealth of history and culture. The people of

Cheshire East live active, fulfilling lives and get involved in making their communities safe, healthy and sustainable places to live”

The aims of PACE are:

- a) To agree a vision, key priorities and actions to tackle economic, social and environmental concerns for Cheshire East
- b) To work together as equal partners and with the community to prepare a sustainable community strategy and plans which will define where we are now, where we want to be in the future and how we will get there and to prepare it in accordance with the principles of sustainable development
- c) To bring together local partnerships, plans and initiatives for service providers to work together with the community to meet local needs and priorities
- d) To devise a Local Area Agreement to improve performance locally
- e) To work together in partnership to avoid duplication, additional costs, conflicting strategies and consultation fatigue
- f) To jointly develop review mechanisms
- g) To liaise, where appropriate, with neighbouring Local Strategic Partnerships, where there is a mutual benefits and sharing of good practice

The objectives of PACE are:

- a) To promote equality and diversity and improve the quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in or visits Cheshire East
- b) To strengthen partnership working to ensure that everyone is working in the same strategic direction, sharing resources, information and expertise to address key issues and local problems
- c) To maximise the use of existing resources across all sectors and access additional funding from local, national and international sources for the benefit of the people of Cheshire East
- d) To contribute to sustainable development locally, regionally, nationally and global.
- e) To improve engagement and consultation across the Cheshire East area

The seven priorities for action agreed in “Ambition for All” are:

- a) Nurture strong communities
- b) Create conditions for business growth
- c) Unlock the potential of our towns
- d) Support our young people
- e) Plan for the needs of future generations
- f) Prepare for an increasingly older population
- g) Drive out the sources of poor health

5. Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Wherever possible, we will look to develop common frameworks for collecting and sharing information by committing to develop aligned strategies and protocols, which includes sharing information, data, intelligence, performance information, data quality, core teams and alignment and pooling of resources.

5.1 Resources

All of the members of the constituent bodies will need to identify how they will support the work of PACE, both in terms of general allocation of resources and in terms of the specific allocation of resources designed to support a project for which they are responsible, or involved in, but which is to be undertaken within the framework of the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy.

It is envisaged this may be through:

- Members of the Partnership giving general support to the partnership both through the commitment of staff time and where appropriate through the commitment of both revenue and capital resources. Where necessary it is intended that whenever such resources are made available, they are committed to be spent within the remit established by the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy.
- The Members of the Partnership may also, when appropriate, commit themselves to making available resources that would normally be spent by them in their own right in support of individual members' programmes, but where those programmes form part of the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy it has been agreed that the partners will commit those resources through the Partnership.
- Commissioning services to meet local priorities through shared resources and budgets.

At all times any funding or resource will still be the responsibility of the member organisation. It is not proposed that the Partnership will have a budget or specific funding solely for the use of the Partnership. Existing resources or grants through normal working practice of the members will be the main source of funding. This will be reviewed as appropriate to meet the aims of the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy.

Over time Members will need to consider the best way to support the work of the Partnership with dedicated staff and will help identify possible funding available from the Members and other sources.

The Agreement records the need for flexibility, recognising that each of the Members will have different audit and public probity demands to satisfy. However, within those constraints, the Members agree to commit themselves to operating through the Cheshire East Local Strategic Partnership in accordance with the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2025.

5.2 Communications

The Communications Strategy will take account of the following:

- The promotion, branding and image of the Cheshire East Local Strategic Partnership;

- The issue of press releases and public relations material in relation to the activities of the partnership.

5.3 Community Engagement

A comprehensive engagement strategy will be developed setting out the Partnership's approach to engaging and empowering communities of Cheshire East. The strategy will also set out how the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will be informed through quantitative and qualitative information derived from engagement with communities.

5.4 Performance Management

The Partnership Performance Management Framework will be crucial to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets and other key partnership improvement priorities.

The Framework is a way of ensuring that each tier of the partnership is clear on their roles and responsibilities and progress against the objectives are being monitored. This needs to be a structured approach that follows the same format through the tiers and horizontally across the partnership groups at each tier and has the following principles:

- The Framework process should be kept as simple as possible (Plan, Do, Review)
- Clearly links all parts of the partnership framework (thematic with local, strategic with delivery)
- Ensure roles, responsibilities and levels of accountability are clearly understood
- Provide an understanding of the cycle and routes through which performance needs to be reported
- Enable the Partnership to be able to monitor both the outcomes of their work as measured against targets and their progress with the implementation of Delivery Plans
- Share performance information and performance reporting to give an upwards account and help partners recognise and assess their own contributions to joint working and the value of all contributions.

5.5 Reporting Mechanisms

The Partnerships in Action Cheshire East Executive Board shall report progress on an annual basis to the wider LSP Assembly. Additionally partners will regularly report progress under their own governance arrangements.

The Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy will be the key document for the Partnership. Its broad principles, and identified issues and actions, will provide the basis for establishment of Thematic Groups or to commission existing Thematic Groups to deliver policies, action and meet agreed targets.

5.6 Declaration of Interest

Members of the PACE Executive Board and Thematic Groups shall declare any financial, personal, business or organisational interest verbally and/or in

writing. The Executive Board and Thematic Groups shall note any such declarations in the minutes and notes of their meetings.

The minutes and notes of meetings including any such declarations shall be available for public scrutiny at all times. The original documentation shall be available on request and the information shall be published or distributed electronically or in paper form.

The judgement of whether a declaration is required, should be on the basis that non declaration would be prejudicial to the aims, objectives and spirit of the Partnership, or, that such an interest can reasonably be judged to be mostly to the benefit of the individual or organisation making the declaration rather than mostly to the benefit of the Partnership.

5.7 Confidentiality & Data Sharing

Partnership meetings may occasionally receive information, which is not in the public domain, often relating to individuals or commercially sensitive matters. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that this information remains confidential to the meeting, unless prior authorisation has been given by the Chair for this to be discussed elsewhere.

It is further agreed that where such information is confidential for example for reasons of commercial, customer or client confidentiality, that members shall at all times abide by the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

It is agreed that, wherever possible, Partnership members shall share information about their organisations, services and customers where that information is relevant to the aims and objectives of the wider Partnership and the Sustainable Community Strategy and it's constituent plans and strategies.

6. Sector Roles and Responsibilities

Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector

- Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector representatives will use their particular skills, network of contacts and knowledge of local needs and environment to assist with identified objectives and priorities at Executive Board and Thematic level. Because of this local knowledge of local need and the impact of service provision on local people, these representatives will also link in with the framework at the local level through the Local Area Partnerships
- Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector will help facilitate a community development approach to identifying assets within our communities (people, organisations and environment) to enable strategic bodies and communities to jointly design services based in our neighbourhoods and communities
- Organisations within the Sector directly provide services to our communities, and this support of local groups, communities and individuals at a local level helps formulate and local community cohesion
- The Local Area Partnerships structure will assist in formulating and articulating the development needs, aspirations and priorities of the Sector. It will enable the sector to contribute actively to decision-making, as well

as monitor and evaluate how well improvements are being delivered on the ground.

Private Sector

- The role of the business sector representative on the Executive Board is to provide a private sector perspective on the work of the partnership
- Businesses are key consumers and contributors to many local services, activities and amenities and play a vital part in the health and wealth of our local neighbourhoods.
- Business representatives seek to contribute actively to meeting the wider social and environmental improvement goals of our area
- The health and well being of local employees and the impact of the local economy has a direct impact on the well being of local businesses and communities alike

Public Sector

- Public Sector partners recognise their responsibility for ensuring that their core resources and services are directed to support the improvement goals, priorities and targets determined by the constituent bodies
- All public sector partners will ensure that their respective business plans are complimentary to the wider sustainable community strategy and it's aims and objectives
- The democratically accountable role of Cheshire East Councillors as a voice of local communities, and the variety of roles elected members have such as cabinet, committee, policy development, scrutiny overview, ward and LAP representation.
- The local authority and public sector partners have a legal duty to consult and co-operate with the local private, voluntary and community sector in developing the local area agreement

7. Dispute Resolution

The PACE Executive Board in consultation with the Chairs of the Thematic Groups shall resolve any disputes. The handling and escalation of complaints that relate to our joint work will follow an agreed protocol.

Partners are entering into this Agreement so that they have a framework to oversee the development of the partnerships, the production of the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy and it's subsequent implementation.

Cheshire East LSP recognise the need to keep the operation of the partnership within this Agreement under constant review. It recognises that changes in legislation may amend the way partners deliver services in the future.

Appendix: Roles and Responsibilities

Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East - Assembly

The Assembly will focus on major 'state of the borough' issues. The Assembly will have a broader consultation and engagement role, bringing together wide range of issues and people. It will have a key role in shaping the development and implementation of the new Sustainable Community Strategy and will have.

PACE will hold an annual stakeholder conference, called the Assembly. The Assembly's role is to provide the overall direction for the work of the Partnership and to oversee progress towards the targets in the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Assembly brings together representatives from across the community and promotes better understanding of each other and local issues. It also ensures that the views of a wide audience are considered in developing the Strategy.

The Assembly has the following responsibilities:

- To provide information to delegates on the partnership work that is currently happening in Cheshire East
- To engage with the wider community of those living and working in the Borough and give them the opportunity to input into the work of the Local Strategic Partnership through identifying priorities for action and developing solutions
- To provide the opportunity for networking and improved communication between people working in the local area
- To inform the long-term vision for Cheshire East, promoting the social, economic and environmental well being of residents and businesses and promoting sustainable development.
- To support partnership working to improve service outcomes and deliver the Community Strategy.
- To encourage innovation and the efficient and effective use of local resources and assets.
- To promote and foster the values of community engagement, equalities, neighbourhood renewal, cohesion and sustainability.

Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East - Executive Board

The PACE Executive Board has the responsibility for further developing partnership working arrangements, both at a strategic and local level. The membership currently consists of the following partners:

- Leader of the Council, Cheshire East Council
- Chief Executive, Cheshire East Council
- Chief Superintendant, Cheshire Constabulary
- Cheshire East Unitary Performance Manager, Cheshire Fire & Rescue
- Chief Executive, Central & East Cheshire Primary Care Trust
- Chief Executive, South Cheshire Chamber representing the Business Sector
- Cheshire East Housing Delivery Partnership
- Dean, MMU Cheshire Education Sector Representative
- Cheshire East Voluntary & Community Sector Congress

The PACE Executive Board is 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

This will include the following roles:

- (1) Audit local needs, issues and priorities to inform an overall vision for Cheshire East, which reflects diversity and local variation. Use community asset mapping to recognise and build on the knowledge, skills and capacity within our neighbourhoods and communities
- (2) Build consensus within and across the Partnerships Framework on priorities, desired outcomes and key measures of success to improve quality of life in the communities of Cheshire East and inform negotiating frameworks such as the Local Area Agreement, taking account of local, sub-regional, regional and national imperatives, and from this develop and deliver the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy reflecting community needs and aspirations.
- (3) Support the relationships needed for effective partner participation and partnership working within and across the Partnerships Framework by sharing information and knowledge, co-ordinating people and groups and making appropriate links to avoid duplication whilst ensuring that all matters are dealt with appropriately.
- (4) Co-ordinate local and borough wide action in relation to cross - cutting issues across the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.
- (5) Receive annual progress reports and more frequent 'exception reports' from the Thematic Partnerships and Local Area Partnerships in relation to the delivery of their respective plans and strategies and consider, agree and take any action necessary to assist with the delivery of the vision, the achievement of outcomes and the realisation of benefits to the communities of Cheshire East.
- (6) Ensure that the outcomes and achievements of the constituent bodies of the Cheshire East Partnerships Framework are communicated to the communities of Cheshire East.

Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East - Thematic Groups

The Thematic Groups are responsible for the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes and LAA targets that will guide operational delivery.

In addition, there will be specific strategic development responsibilities.

- Develop and deliver appropriate strategies and actions for the achievement of objectives relevant to their particular thematic area.
- Specifically, to be responsible for the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes and LAA targets within that theme.

It is acknowledged that the Thematic Partnerships will have their own detailed terms of reference according to needs and wider circumstances. However, it is suggested that each Partnership incorporate the following 'core' terms of reference to support their role within the broader Cheshire East Partnerships Framework. Any existing terms of reference should not conflict with the Core Terms of Reference. Where such conflict is considered to exist, the matter should be referred to the Executive Board for further consideration.

Thematic Groups will have the following role:

- (1) Develop and deliver appropriate thematic action plans to support and contribute to the overall vision for the communities of the Cheshire East area, which reflects diversity and local variations across the borough
- (2) Monitor and manage the overall performance of the Thematic Partnership and its associated projects, through the application of programme/ project management principles.
- (3) Provide annual progress reports and, when necessary, "exception reports" to the Partnership for Action in Cheshire East Executive Board and Assembly.
- (4) Identify to the LSP Executive Board, as necessary, cross cutting issues in relation to the core theme for further consideration and co-ordination by the Board
- (5) Commission, as necessary, jointly designed service delivery and actions to address local needs and priorities, which reflects community empowerment principles.
- (6) Deliver the appropriate 'block' of the Local Area Agreement as agreed by and in consultation with the LSP Executive Board
- (7) Commission thematic research and consultation to seek community views on priorities, encourage involvement in identifying solutions and underpin the development and delivery of the thematic action plans.

Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East - Local Area Partnerships

Local Area Partnerships bring together a wide range of people from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. By working together, they focus collective effort on what really matters, delivering improved outcomes for local people and places.

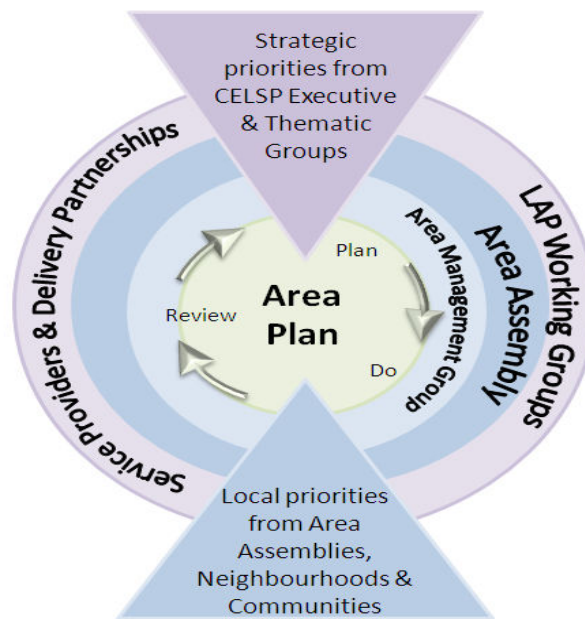
Their role is to improve services, ensure people influence decision making and to actively engage and empower communities.

In order to achieve this, they will

- Support and facilitate local consultation and engagement to gain a shared understanding of local issues, needs and preferences important to the area.
- Focus collective effort and work on issues that cannot be tackled by one organisation on its own and deliver joint activities (e.g. Not in my Neighbourhood).
- Make a difference by delivering local priorities set out in an Area Plan, which underpins Cheshire East's Sustainable Community Strategy.
- Balance strategic and local issues, by providing opportunities for communities to bring local insight to influence decision-making.
- Work with the Partnerships in Action Cheshire East Executive Board and Thematic Partnerships to agree and deliver local activities and projects linked to the Local Area Agreements targets most relevant to their area.
- Share knowledge and resources, to effectively target the delivery of local services.
- Unblock situations and enable joint problem solving between residents and partners and turbo-charge solutions.
- Gather local information on the performance of local services, to enable continuous improvement.
- Actively empower communities through a wide range of approaches, (e.g. community planning, participatory budgeting, neighbourhood agreements) resulting in positive community led action.

Local Area Partnership Structure

The Local Area Partnerships operating model is shown diagrammatically as follows:



LAP Area Assemblies

Each Local Area Partnership will hold 4 Assemblies a year (quarterly) to engage the wider community and local partners in the work of the LAP. Area Assemblies are open to and involve anyone who has an interest in making the area better.

The Assemblies will listen to community issues to inform future work, developing local priorities and setting the course of action of the Area Management Group. They will capture both long-term issues and local concerns requiring an immediate response. They will provide a forum, which can act as a local body for consultation about local issues and developments.

Each Area Assembly will receive up-dates from their Area Management Group, LAP working groups and partners on progress against actions in the Area Plan.

- Summer Assembly (June/July) will focus on reviewing and evaluating progress during the last year and plan ahead to develop the following year's plan.
- September Assembly will develop the following year's Area Plan, in time to realistically inform and influence partners' business planning and budget making processes.
- November Assembly will focus on Public Spend, providing an opportunity for joint consultation on draft budgets.
- Other Assemblies will be themed with open discussion and workshops on a relevant local issue.

Cheshire East Councillors (LAP Chairmen) will chair the Assembly meetings in their community leadership role. Community Engagement and Empowerment is a key role of the Local Area Partnerships. The Area Assemblies will be public and aim to

engage local communities. In addition, the Local Area Partnerships are using a wide range of approaches to engage the full range of community and neighbourhood groups who are active in an area.

Area Management Group

The Area Management Group membership reflects local need, and includes key local partners who are responsible for actions in the Area Plan. Area Management Group will develop the Area Plan, based on the guidance of the Area Assemblies, delivering appropriate responses to priorities identified by local people. They will deliver specific localised projects and initiatives, which contribute to the Local Area Agreement and national indicators as identified by the LSP Executive and Thematic Partnerships.

Membership

- The Area Management Group will have a maximum membership of 10 people, and will include; local Police Inspector, Fire Station Manager, Assembly Chairman, Local Area Partnership Manager, Health representative (Primary Care Trust organising), Registered Social Landlord(s), Town or Parish Council (elected by ChALC Area Meeting) and other local partners who are responsible for actions in the Area Plan.
- The group will invite other people to attend individual meetings when required (e.g. Cheshire East Council Service Managers, Working Group Leads) in order to address specific issues or actions in the Area
- The chair of the Area Management Groups will be a representatives from a partner organisations, to demonstrate shared ownership of the Local Area Partnership.

Commissioning

The Area Management Group will commission services to deliver local priorities through shared resources & budgets and ensure actions are evidence based and performance managed. They will need to develop opportunities to improve local services through different ways of working, enabling joint problem solving, joining up local activities and delivering joint events.

- Each Local Area Partnership will establish time limited task and finish working groups to address issues or deliver projects. In cases where there is an identified gap in commissioning, the LAP will set up a working group to deliver the agreed action.
- Each Local Area Partnership will have a number of core documents, which will help inform the development and delivery of its work. These include; the Area Plan, Area profiles and local intelligence and a Local Communication Plan.

Neighbourhood Engagement

In addition to the LAP structures and our joint work in neighbourhoods, there are a large number of other mechanisms, which the LSP and partners use to engage with

local people, providing opportunities for them to get involved in local decision making. Below are some examples:

- Town and Parish Conferences
- Voluntary sector networks
- Faith networks
- Town Partnerships
- Community/neighbourhood groups
- Police Pledge meetings
- Ward & neighbourhood meetings
- Community Centres and Drop-ins
- Consultation events/mechanisms.

Secretariat

Cheshire East Council will provide administrative support for the LSP Executive Board, including the preparation and despatch of agendas, reports, minutes and general correspondence in connection with the work of Partnerships in Action Cheshire East

Secretariat arrangements for the constituent bodies of Partnerships in Action Cheshire East (PACE) Framework will be provided by the most appropriate organisation, with a strong commitment from all Partnerships in Action Cheshire East partners to ensure that the resources, effectiveness and efficiency of each partnership is maintained and the work programmes identified are clearly supported.