

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 23rd MARCH 2010

REFOCUSING THE ROLE OF LOCALITY WORKING – SUPPORTING DELIVERY OF OUR PRIORITIES

REPORT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To set out proposals to revise the focus of the former Locality Management Service, and to seek approval for the proposed role of the team on supporting delivery of the Council's priorities and outcomes against key targets and objectives.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That approval is given to changing the focus of the former Locality Management Service from responding directly to issues that are identified at a local level, to delivering on issues that are a priority for the Council, and for the service to no longer be organised on a geographic Cluster basis, apart from within the identified rural areas.**
- 2.2 **That the revised role of the team in providing a 'rapid response' to tackling priority issues, delivering key actions within the Priority Plans, improving outcomes against the Council's performance priorities and delivering consultation and community engagement activities to support the delivery of these priorities, is endorsed.**

3. SUMMARY

- 3.1 Proposals to roll out Locality Management were presented to CAPS on 14th September 2009. Feedback at this meeting identified that the role of the team in responding directly to local issues was seen to duplicate the role of the Elected Ward Member as the lead in dealing with issues of local concern. Concern was also raised about the delivery of the service on a geographic Cluster basis, which was seen to be confusing to Members and residents and as potentially adding another layer between local areas and services. It was requested that a further report be brought back to CAPS that addressed these concerns.
- 3.2 It is proposed that Locality Management is not rolled out as was originally suggested and that the focus of the team is changed. The revised role of the service would be to deliver a 'rapid response' to dealing with issues that don't fall clearly within one service area, and that present a potential threat to the delivery of the Council's priorities or its reputation. The team would also provide additional support in

delivering against the Council's strategic priorities, by supporting the delivery of some elements of the Priority Plans, and facilitating delivery against priorities identified through our planning and performance framework. The team would also provide additional capacity to deliver more in depth consultation and community engagement activity in line with the Council's priorities. Cabinet and CMT would take a lead role in identifying the key areas of work for the team, the processes and criteria for establishing this work programme are summarised in Appendix 1.

- 3.3 A Scrutiny Review of the Locality Management pilots was scheduled for 2009. A meeting of the Review Group was held on 16th September 2009 at which the Members of the group were advised that a revised approach to Locality Working was being developed. It was therefore agreed that a full Scrutiny Review would not take place, but the group would be given the opportunity to comment on any proposals prior to them being submitted Cabinet. A number of Scrutiny Special Interest meetings have been held and Members have had the opportunity to comment upon a draft CAPS report. The points of further clarification sought by Scrutiny have been incorporated into this revised report wherever possible.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Reports on Strategic Locality Management were presented at the Corporate Directors meetings on the following dates; 9.7.06, 31.7.07, 5.12.07, and 27.1.08. A report on implementing Locality Management was presented at CAPS on 14th September 2009.

5. INFORMATION

5.1 BACKGROUND

- 5.1.2 Proposals to roll out a model for Locality Management based upon the learning from the South Telford and Newport and Rural pilots were presented at the 14th September CAPS meeting. Concerns were raised about the focus of Locality Management on responding to and addressing local issues. It was felt that the proposed approach would lead to duplication of the role of the Elected Ward Member whose role it is to take the lead in dealing with issues on behalf of the residents in their Ward. It was also felt that the focus on geographic Cluster areas for delivering Locality Management were confusing to both Elected Members and residents and potentially added an unnecessary additional layer between services and the local area. There was seen to be benefit from having a geographic focus in the rural area in relation to supporting the Rural Forum and taking forward the Rural Plan, and support was given to the continued geographic focus on the rural area, in line with Council priorities.
- 5.1.3 Locality Management was identified as the subject of a Scrutiny Review and a meeting of the Review Group was held on 16th September 2009. At this meeting Members also raised concerns about the duplication of the role of Ward Members when dealing with local

issues, and also found the Cluster arrangements to be confusing. Members were advised of the need to find a more sustainable model for Locality Working and that further proposals were being developed. It was therefore agreed not to hold a full Scrutiny Review and the Lead Cabinet Member agreed for Scrutiny to comment on the proposals prior to submission to Cabinet. A number of Special Interest Meetings were held which provided Scrutiny Members the opportunity to comment on the proposed model.

5.1.4 Scrutiny Members agreed that the pilot arrangements for Locality Management needed to be reviewed and sought further clarification on the following points; the role of Elected Members, links to the Council's regeneration programme, working relationships with partners and the LSP, processes for prioritising the workload of the team, the transition arrangements within the 2 pilot areas, and how the new way of working would be evaluated. This report has been amended to provide further clarification on these points. Members also asked for details of consultation on the revised model. Consultation with key stakeholders has been ongoing throughout the pilot projects and the outcomes of this have contributed to the new model. However, as the pilot was only being delivered within 2 areas of the Borough an extensive consultation on the revised arrangements is not proposed. Council Members, through CAPS and Scrutiny have been involved as part of the review process and meetings will be held with key partners to discuss these proposals. Members also wanted details of the proposed structure of the team; these proposals are being developed as part of the wider review of Council structures so aren't currently available.

5.2 Re-focusing the Role of Locality Management

5.2.1 In order to address the issues raised at the CAPS meeting and by Scrutiny Members, it is proposed that the pilot for Locality Management is not rolled out. It is proposed to redefine the role of the service whilst building upon some of the strengths of the pilot Locality Management approach. The CAPS meeting identified that the work of the team was seen to add greatest value when it had supported the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives. Successes had been seen in developing the Council's rural agenda, and playing a key role in the delivery of the Council's programme of regeneration. Scrutiny also identified the need for the team to continue to support the Council's programme of regeneration. It is therefore proposed that the work of the team focuses upon supporting the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives, rather than responding directly to local issues. The focus on geographic Clusters was not seen by CAPS, to add value, therefore the team will no longer be organised in this way and will work on specific priorities that may be focused within a particular location, or across the whole Borough. It is proposed that there is a period of transition from the Locality Management Model in South Telford and Newport to ensure that priority areas of work can be sustained. As part of this transition, discussions will be held with partners, Ward Members and the community to ensure the impact of the transition is minimised. The working arrangements for the rural area will remain unchanged, as it was felt that a geographic focus on the rural area provided added

value, and supported the Council's priority for addressing the needs of the rural community.

5.2.2 It is suggested that Locality Management is not rolled out in line with the previous model and the role of the former Locality Management Team is revised. This will also involve changing the name of the team to more closely represent its revised remit in delivering against priority actions and focusing on the rural area. It is suggested that there would be three aspects to the approach of the team.

- **Providing a 'rapid response' to unforeseen issues that arise and create a threat to the delivery the Council's priorities or reputation**
- **Carrying out a planned programme of work that supports improved outcomes against our strategic priorities**
- **Providing additional capacity to deliver more in depth consultation and community engagement in the delivery of our strategic priorities.**

The processes and criteria for identifying these key areas of work are outlined in Appendix 1. The team would deliver against these priorities by working, where appropriate, in partnership with other Council services, partner organisations, Town and Parish Councils and residents. When working in a specific location the team would work closely with Elected Members, arrangements for working with Elected Members are outlined later within the report. The work of the team would be targeted at delivering actions that lead to improved outcomes against the Council's strategic priorities.

5.3 Identification of Key Areas of Work

5.3.1 Providing a 'Rapid Response' Service

The need for the Council to develop and deliver against its strategic priorities can mean that there can be little capacity as an organisation to respond to unexpected issues. These unforeseen issues can be identified either at a strategic or local level, such as significant resident dissatisfaction with a local area as occurred within Sutton Hill. These issues often do not fall easily within the remit of one service area or agency, and require the involvement of a range of services. The team would be in a position to provide a 'rapid response' in order to gain a greater understanding of the issue and to develop a range of actions to address them. This would allow the Council to have a faster response to dealing with issues that may have a detrimental affect upon either performance against key indicators or to the reputation of the Council, further information on the criteria for a 'rapid response' is detailed in Appendix 1. These issues could be identified by Cabinet or CMT or at a local level by Ward Members or residents. The issues may be complex and although they require a fast response, the measures required to address them may require a longer term approach.

5.3.2 Supporting the Delivery of the Council's Priorities

Those issues within the Priority Plans that require a partnership approach and significant community consultation and engagement could be delivered through the team. As part of the Priority Planning process a number of issues requiring additional actions to ensure delivery would be identified and allocated to the team, this may include areas of work such as supporting the delivery of the Borough Towns Initiative or other regeneration programmes across the Borough. A prioritised work programme for the team would be developed and agreed on an annual basis. The team's role would be to bring together partners and key stakeholders to identify and deliver a range of actions and interventions. A key element of the delivery against these priorities would be the engagement of Elected Members and local residents. This work may be focused within a particular Ward, or across several Wards in the Borough. The team could also provide additional capacity and support in delivering against the Council's planning and performance framework. Those issues that have been identified as requiring improvements in achieving performance and outcomes could be identified within the team's work programme. The role of the team would be to bring together the appropriate services and stakeholders to gain a greater understanding of the issue and to identify and deliver a range of actions to improve outcomes. Dependent upon the issue this may involve working closely with Ward Members, Town and Parish Councils, residents and a wide range of partners. These issues would be identified and agreed through the appropriate Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors.

5.3.3 Often issues that are identified at a local level, but are a priority for the Council, are dealt with on an ad-hoc or individual basis. One of the ways that the Council and partners currently respond to those issues is through 'Operation Clean Sweep', which involves a week of co-ordinated partnership activity within a specific area to address community safety and environmental issues that have been identified as a priority by residents. It is proposed that a strategic intelligence-driven approach is taken to the delivery of this activity, providing the opportunity to address a wider range of issues, focusing on issues that are both a strategic and local priority, resulting in a greater impact upon the satisfaction of residents. It is proposed that this partnership activity be planned as part of the programme of consultation and engagement activity delivered through the 'Your Community Matters' events. This would involve the 'Operation Clean Sweep' being re-branded to represent a wider focus than community safety and environmental issues. The team would lead on the organising these events as part of their role in delivering the 'Your Community Matters' engagement programme.

5.3.4 Consultation and Community Engagement

The Council delivers a wide range of consultation activity, much of which is delivered through surveys or questionnaires. This approach is certainly appropriate for some consultation activities; however, there

can also be a need for more in depth consultation that can involve face to face discussions, focus groups and more intensive community engagement. The team has a proven track record of engaging and empowering communities to become more involved in decisions that are made about their area, and would be in a position to provide this support across a range of issues. This consultation and engagement activity would be focused upon those issues that are of strategic importance to the Council and would be directed as part of a corporate programme of activity.

5.4 Working with Elected Members and Town and Parish Councils

5.4.1 Relationship with Cabinet

As identified above much of the work of the team would be driven by the Council's strategic priorities through the Priority Plans and therefore there would be a close link with the relevant Cabinet Member. Progress against priorities would be reported through the new Priority Boards, or through the Council's planning and performance framework. Also regular briefings and progress reports would be made to the relevant Cabinet Member on priorities relating to their area of responsibility, and to CAPS as required, updates would also be given to Ward Members on specific pieces of work in their area. The work of the team would be within the remit of the Cabinet Lead for the 'Efficient, Community Focused Council' Priority Plan.

5.4.2 Relationship with Ward Members

Having changed the focus of the team away from directly responding to local issues it is envisaged that there would not be a duplication of the role of Ward Members. However, it would still be crucial that Ward Members are closely involved with any pieces of work that are carried out within their Ward. The team would involve Ward Members in developing and delivering actions that impact upon their area. Ward Members would also be involved in community engagement or consultation activity that takes place within their Ward, ensuring that their role as the lead for that area is not duplicated or undermined. Regular briefings would also be held with Ward Members.

5.4.3 Working with Town and Parish Councils and other Partners

The team would continue to support Town and Parish Councils through the Parishes Forum and through the Parish Charter. The Officer responsible for the rural area would continue to lead on the monitoring and further development of the Parish Charter, and would be the lead within the team on issues relating to Town and Parish Councils. The team would work closely with Town and Parish Councils on activities or projects that are carried out within their Parish, which would provide the opportunity to work more closely with Parishes on issues of importance to both Telford and Wrekin Council and the Town and Parish Councils.

As the lead in organising the programme of 'Operation Clean Sweeps' (to be renamed/badged), the team would pull together the appropriate

partner organisations to ensure a joined-up approach to planning the events and delivering actions to address particular issues. The team would also continue to work with partners to support delivery of our priorities, as outlined earlier.

The responsibility for determining the mechanism for co-ordinating partner activity on a geographic (Cluster) basis would, in future, fall within the remit of each Priority (Thematic) Partnership, and would no longer be led by this team, however the team would be working with partners on specific priority pieces of work. The outcomes of these pieces of work would be reported through the appropriate LSP structures. It is envisaged that issues that need to be dealt with on a geographic Cluster basis would be determined through the performance and planning arrangements within each Priority Partnership.

5.5 Performance Management

5.5.1 The performance arrangements for the team would include identifying improved outcomes against key performance indicators, and progress against key actions within the Priority Plans. However some of the issues that the team will be dealing with will be complex and some improvements may be longer term, and the outcomes more difficult to measure. Therefore, other measures would also be used to assess the impact of the team, such as increased levels of community engagement and capacity, or satisfaction with resolution of a particular issue. The performance management framework for the team will link to and support corporate performance management arrangements.

5.7 Equality and Diversity

5.7.1 The work of the team would be directed at those areas and issues that have been identified as a priority to the Council through its assessment of needs. Equality is a priority for the organisation and the work of the team would assist in gaining a greater understanding of some of the equality issues in delivering services within the Borough. The proposed community consultation and engagement activity will provide an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the needs of all of our communities within Telford and Wrekin. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on Locality Management, much of which would also apply to the revised remit of the team. The EIA identified the need for community engagement activity to be monitored against the 6 equality strands wherever possible, to ensure that all communities are being engaged. The work of the team would provide an opportunity to target those communities whose views may be seen to be under represented. The former EIA will be revised to take account of any changes to the way in which the team works.

5.8 Environmental Impact

5.8.1 One of the roles of the team would be to help to develop sustainable solutions to ongoing issues that are experienced across the Borough, and to support the delivery of key actions within the Priority Plans. It is

envisaged that this work would have a positive impact upon the environment, and through community engagement activity also lead to more sustainable solutions to local environmental issues.

5.9 Legal Comment

- 5.9.1 A number of Government strategies and papers seek to foster greater locality working to improve the quality of lives within neighbourhoods and communities. How the Council implements locality working is a matter for the Council.
- 5.9.2 Under section 183 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 a new “duty to involve” was introduced in respect of best value authorities on 1 April 2009; this seeks to embed an engagement and empowerment culture and requires authorities to inform, consult and involve local residents and other stakeholders.
- 5.9.3 If it is proposed to devolve any powers to officers then appropriate delegations will need to be sought to ensure powers can be exercised in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 and 2000 provisions.

5.10 Links with Corporate Priorities

The role of the team would be to support the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Priorities by supporting the delivery of actions within the Priority Plans. Some of the team’s work would be identified through the priority planning process, also the community consultation and engagement activities will be delivered in support of achieving the Council’s Corporate Priorities.

5.11 Opportunities and Risks

In proposing this action, the Corporate Risk Management Methodology has been complied with. This approach is not intended to eliminate risks but to identify the risks and manage them. However not all risks can be managed all of the time and some risks may not have been identified.

The following key risks and opportunities associated with this action have been identified and assessed and arrangements will be put in place to manage them.

- Increased expectations in delivering positive outcomes against complex or longstanding issues
- Securing funding to maintain the service beyond 2011
- Lack of engagement of key partners including other Council services

5.12. Financial Implications

- 5.12.1 The 2009/10 budget for the Team is £720.4k. This covers the costs of the Business Manager, 3 Locality Managers, 4 Neighbourhood Co-ordinators, admin support and general overheads. In 2009/10 funding

is available through mainstream budget totalling £429.6k, LPSA reward grant of £200.2k and the Cohesion grant totalling £90.6k.

5.12.2 A total of £900k was allocated to Locality Management through the LPSA reward grant. This is one off funding and will fund the current structure until 31st March 2011. The Cohesion grant is available through the Area Based Grant allocated through the government's current 3 year settlement. This grant increases to £140k in 2010/11 however it is unclear as to whether this funding will continue in the next 3 year government settlement cycle. For planning purposes it has been assumed that this funding will not be available. As a result in 2011/12 there will be a budget shortfall of £268.5k based on the current structure of the team. This budget gap has not been built into the current budget strategy for the Council.

5.12.3 In addition to the revenue funding outlined above a capital allocation of £10k per year for 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11 was allocated to Locality Management.

6. Ward Implications

The role of the team in supporting the delivery of Council's corporate priorities has implications across all Wards within the Borough. The report outlines arrangements for ensuring that there are close working relationships with Ward Members when the team are working within their Ward.

Report prepared by

***Rachael Jones
Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager
Community Engagement Equalities and Action Team
Telford and Wrekin Council
Tel: 01952 382135***