

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT TO CABINET

15TH OCTOBER 2014

Title: Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) – further development

Submitted by: Head of Business Partnerships, Central Services & Partnerships

Portfolios: Communications, Policy and Partnerships
Leisure, Culture and Localism

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To advise Cabinet of the development of LAPs and links to the Borough Council's Co-operative Strategy.

To seek Cabinet approval for the further development of LAPs via establishing LAPs with the challenge of developing proactive and reactive projects/areas of work in relation to the three key strategic areas of the Borough Council and its partners, namely:

- Health and Well-Being
- Economic Development
- Stronger and Safer Communities

Recommendations

The report recommends that Cabinet:

- Notes the content of the report;
- Approves the approach outlined in the report of challenging LAPs to focus on the key strategic issues facing the Borough Council and its partners, namely health and well-being; economic development; and stronger and safer communities and to further challenge LAPs to develop projects/areas of work in each of these areas;
- Requests that each of the Borough's nine LAPs produce a progress report setting out performance in each of these areas of work for consideration by the Borough Council and its partners towards the end of the 2014/15 municipal year

Reasons

One of the Council's key corporate priorities is becoming a co-operative council. A key element of co-operative working is focused on locality working – recognising diversity of the Borough's different areas and working with these different communities in understanding their needs and issues and developing solutions to meet these needs and deal with these issues. In order to progress this, it is necessary to work closely with the Borough's nine Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) to ensure they are working effectively and addressing the needs of the areas they cover in key strategic areas. This report sets out an approach to doing this.

1. Background

- 1.1 Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council has committed to, as one of its four corporate priorities, becoming a co-operative council and wants to work with partners towards making Newcastle-under-Lyme a co-operative Borough.
- 1.2 Becoming a co-operative council refers to many different areas of activity and policy. The NULBC approach to being a co-operative council is set out in Newcastle-under-Lyme Co-operative Strategy 2013-2015, which was approved by Cabinet in February 2013.
- 1.3 The Co-operative Strategy outlines the community leadership role for the Borough Council, to use the Council's position to work with other agencies and communities in the Borough to deliver change and to ensure that people have a say about what happens in their own localities.
- 1.4 This commitment to work with others and to empower communities is driven by a desire to enhance existing partnership arrangements to deal effectively with expectations from residents and stakeholders through the delivery of services and projects and for communities to create solutions to the issues they face.
- 1.5 The Council has placed locality working at the heart of its priority to work co-operatively, as locality working empowers communities to develop their own approaches to dealing with issues affecting their own localities.
- 1.6 Locality working in the Borough has been in place for some time in various forms, but the thinking behind it has largely remained the same - that communities at the sub-borough level are better placed to develop local solutions which are sensitive to the needs of their own locality than a 'one size fits all' approach delivered top down by public sector agencies would be. The Borough is not a homogeneous area, differences exist between its constituent parts due to a range of factors and any approach to service delivery by the public sector should recognise this, thereby sitting comfortably with the co-operative ethos, which emphasises the importance of engaging with communities to better understand their needs; establishing change where it is necessary through empowerment; and collaborating with others to deliver effective solutions.
- 1.7 In the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme, the Newcastle Partnership is the local strategic partnership. The Partnership represents the different sectors in Borough and plays a vital role in bringing together different organisations from different sectors with a shared purpose through co-operative and co-ordinated joint working designed to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing in the Borough.
- 1.8 Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) represent the Newcastle Partnership's established infrastructure for the delivery of locality working and offer communities enhanced and focused access to a range of partners in order to address and deliver against local priorities. In addition, LAPs assist in community engagement and empowerment and play a part in the achievement of improved community cohesion.
- 1.9 There are nine LAPs in total across the Borough, covering sub-divisions of the Borough and offering potential opportunities for residents and communities to work together and get involved in activities, engagement and decision-making in their locality.
- 1.10 Attendees at LAPs include councillors, relevant officers from both the Borough and County Council, community and voluntary organisations, Aspire Housing, Staffordshire

Police, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and members of the public with an interest in their local area.

- 1.11 A comprehensive review of LAPs was undertaken in 2010-11 entitled *The Story of 'Our Place* and focused on the progress made by the LAPs. As a result, the review provided a number of recommendations for future development. The review established overwhelming support for the LAPs to continue and to develop further.
- 1.12 Further consideration was given to the ongoing development of the LAPs in a report entitled 'Locality Working in Newcastle-under-Lyme – aiming to be a Co-operative Borough' undertaken in July 2013 at the request of the then Leader of the Council.
- 1.13 This report recommended the streamlining of the existing LAPs structure from eleven to nine LAPs and strengthening the resources dedicated to LAPs.
- 1.14 At that time it was highlighted that much of the development plan created from the 2010-11 review was outstanding and that the LAPs needed more assistance via additional Borough Council officer support as well as more Member involvement to deliver the genuine co-operative outcomes.
- 1.15 As a result of this further review, the original 2010/11 LAP Development Action Plan was reviewed and refreshed and officers have been working with partners to deliver the revised version over the last 12 months. Progress has included reducing the number of LAPs to nine through a series of mergers; encouraging greater elected Member involvement; developing additional partnership support; assisting LAPs to adopt formal constitutions and open bank accounts; running roadshows to increase awareness and encourage additional participation; encouraging delivery of projects in communities; and seeking funding where appropriate.
- 1.16 Officers are continuing to progress the creation of toolkits for each individual LAP which will include area profiles; funding toolkit; project management toolkit; refreshing action plans for delivery; accompanied by training and one to one support for Chairs and Vice Chairs to ensure that they are equipped to deliver their respective action plans and continue to develop.

2. Issues

- 2.1 Building on the work outlined in the previous section, the focus is now on what LAPs can deliver as they continue to develop.
- 2.2 In order to better understand the potential of LAPs, it is important to be clear about their purpose and what they are there for.
- 2.3 First, in those areas where there are already parish/town councils, LAPs are not there as a replacement for these councils. As already outlined, a LAP is a partnership body, created from agencies, organisations and individuals in all sectors, as well as residents. They can enhance the delivery of services and/or projects and can deal with needs and issues by bringing together different agencies. It is hoped that parish/town councils can be a part of this, but it is their decision. This position has been agreed with the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association and is set out in the concordat at Appendix A.
- 2.4 Second, it is important to be clear as to what LAPs are there for. LAPs, as their name suggests, are action-centred bodies and so are not there to merely analyse issues or to be a 'talking shop' – their focus is on action and what can be done by partners working together in each locality to deal with the issues and needs of that locality as

identified via area profiles and supporting by the work going on around supporting funding bids; enhancing project management skills and working with LAP Chairs.

- 2.5 Third, it is vital to identify what kind of issues LAPs are there to deal with. Historically, LAPs have tended to consider day to day issues such as dog fouling, littering and issues created by traffic. These are important issues for localities and for communities, but they should not be the focus of the work of a LAP. The vast majority of issues such as these can be dealt with in other ways, whether via the intervention of a Councillor; or direct contact with an individual agency or organisation. LAPs are there to deal with those issues where such individual interventions are not sufficient – in other words, where a partnership focus in a locality is needed. This process is represented in Appendix B, which shows that when issues arise in a particular area, most of these issues are ‘allocated’ via various other mechanisms (e.g. at councillor surgeries). Once issues have been dealt with in this way, what is left should be the focus of each LAP and should include wider issues such as well-being; economic issues such as job creation/helping people to develop their skills in order to find work; issues around the assets in each area and their future use; and how to deal with issues of strengthening communities to address issues such as ASB.
- 2.6 Finally, each LAP should be encouraged to examine how it deals with these ‘LAP issues’ and what approach is best. LAPs could decide to use the statistics, data and evidence available to them as part of their area profiles or in documents such as the enhanced Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (eJSNA) to proactively address issues relevant to their own localities such as child poverty, health screening/promotion or job creation. On the other hand, LAPs could seek to address specific issues affecting a particular locality in a responsive way – e.g. how to respond to the County Council’s plans for youth services; libraries and support for various services delivered in parts of the Borough to vulnerable people.
- 2.7 In its role as a community leader, as set out in the Co-operative Strategy referred to in the previous section of this report, the Borough Council will set LAPs the challenge of working in a different way, of accepting and reflecting the way in which issues should be dealt with as set out in Appendix B, and re-focusing their activities on the ‘bigger’ issues outlined in this section. These include the following areas of work (reflecting the strategic focus of the Borough Council and its partners):
- Health and well-being
 - Economic development
 - Stronger and safer communities

As already outlined, support will be provided by the Borough Council and other bodies such as VAST to do this.

- 2.8 The progress of this further development of LAPs will be reviewed by the Borough Council towards the end of the 2014/15 municipal year and a report will be brought back to Cabinet with a summary of progress under each of the corporate priorities of the Borough Council for each of the nine LAPs currently in place.
- 2.9 These reports will include both quantitative and qualitative performance data and information and will be used as the basis for further LAP development on the part of the Borough Council and its partners in the Newcastle Partnership, including the future administration of grants such as Community Chest.

3. Options Considered

- 3.1 Option A – that Cabinet approve the approach outlined in this report, to challenge LAPs to focus on the key strategic areas of the Borough Council and its partners and

to provide reports on progress towards the end of the 2014/15 municipal year (recommended)

- 3.2 Option B – that Cabinet does not approve the approach set out in this report and therefore miss the opportunity for LAPs to develop strategically and utilise their previous development (not recommended)

4. Proposal and Reason for Preferred Solution

- 4.1 This report proposes that the Borough Council, on behalf of the Newcastle Partnership, challenges LAPs to further develop by focusing on the key strategic issues of the Borough Council and its partners – health and well-being; economic development; and developing stronger and safer communities.

- 4.2 The report also proposes that LAPs present progress reports in each of these areas to the Borough Council and partners towards the end of the 2014/15 municipal year, when consideration will be made on further development of LAPs and locality working in the Borough.

5. Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 The recommendations above contribute to meeting all of the Council's Corporate Priorities namely; Healthy and Active Communities, a Cleaner, Safer and Sustainable Borough, a Borough of Opportunity and Delivering a Co-operative Council.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific legal or statutory implications for consideration within this report.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 There are no adverse equality issues identified as arising from this report.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 There are no additional specific financial implications or commitments required for the implementation of these recommendations.

- 8.2 There are resource implications for Borough Council officers and Members as part of their substantive duties who are already involved in and will continue to provide support to contribute to the development of the Locality Action Partnerships in relation to these recommendations. These implications include officer time in both the Partnership team and also in other departments across the Borough Council.

9. Major Risks

- 9.1 The Council may be unable to deliver the Corporate Priorities effectively without a mechanism to support the further development of locality working in the Borough.

10. Key Decision Information

- 10.1 This report can be considered key in the following ways: -

- It results in the Borough Council committing existing resources for the function to which the decision relates and;
- To be significant in terms of its affects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards in the Borough

11. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

11.1 None

12. List of Appendices

12.1 Appendix A – LAPs Concordat with Town/Parish Council/Staffordshire Parish Councils Association

12.2 Appendix B – LAP Process Map

13. Background Papers

13.1 None

Implications included	Head of Service agreed report, signed & dated	Financial Implications signed & dated	Legal & risk implications signed & dated
Financial			
Legal			
Risk			
Director Sign Off			