

## **Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) – Scrutiny Panel Outline - October 2015**

### **Background**

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 a range of organisations with a shared purpose through co-operative and co-ordinated joint working that will improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing in the Borough.

Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) represent the Newcastle Partnership's established infrastructure for the delivery of locality working and offer communities access to a range of partners to address and deliver against local needs and priorities. In addition, LAPs assist in community engagement and empowerment and play a part in the achievement of improved community cohesion. There are nine LAPs in the Borough, which are made up of a range of partners from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors with an interest in their local area.

Following a report to Cabinet in October 2014, LAPs were challenged to produce progress reports to highlight their activity over the last 12 months contributing to the strategic priorities for the Borough Council and its partners, which are;

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

It was agreed that the progress reports would be reviewed by the Borough Council towards the end of the 2014/15 and a report would be brought back to Cabinet for consideration in February 2015 (see Appendix A). It was also agreed that these reports would form the basis for the contribution to the further development of LAPs on the part of the Borough Council and its' partners in the Newcastle Partnership, including the LAPs future role in the administration of grants such as Community Chest.

The overview report and appendices outlined the considerable progress made by Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) over the twelve month period, in terms of formalising their constitutional arrangements and partners support, prioritising local needs through action planning, reporting on funding bid for and achieved and demonstrating a wealth of best practice and learning established in the period.

### **What are the challenges for the Borough Council and Locality Working?**

At a presentation to LAP Chairs in September 2014, it was recognised that some of the challenges to the Borough Council around locality working is that;

- funding is increasingly limited but there are a number of external funding opportunities for community/voluntary sector groups
- resident involvement is key to local decision making;
- representation needs to be reflective of the local area;
- communications could be better;
- prioritising local needs needs to improve;
- engaging Town and Parish Councils would benefit from improvements.

### **What are the expectations for LAPs?**

The expectations and opportunities for LAPs were identified to be;

- community leadership role;

- influencing local service provision;
- commissioning local services;
- increased decision making;
- becoming self-sufficient;
- drive innovation and problem solving locally;
- continue to deliver for the benefit of the community;
- encouraging wider participation;
- enhancing skills and knowledge of community members;
- creating action plans that represent local needs to deliver shared outcomes for partners.

### **Purpose of the Scrutiny Panel**

At a meeting of the Council dated 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015 minutes state;

*“An amendment was moved by Cllr Miss Reddish and seconded by Cllr Sweeney as follows:  
To add at the end of the existing recommendation in Appendix A the words:*

*3. That the current expenditure (estimated at £35,000+) on servicing the Local Action Partnerships be reviewed in order to:*

*a) investigate if it is giving value for money,*

*and*

*b) explore alternative ways of operating local community partnerships”.*

The Scrutiny Panel are therefore tasked with further considering delivering locality working in the Borough and more specifically the role of Locality Action Partnerships and whether;

- the support offered by the Borough Council assists the Council to meet its’ objectives of becoming a Co-operative Council;
- the level of support contributed by the Borough Council in terms of Officer and Member time is appropriate;
- the support contributed by the Borough Council in terms of Officer and Member time is cost effective;
- the support could be delivered in an alternative way to achieve the same results.