

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Early Intervention & Support	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	27/02/2020

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING REVIEW

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To review and revise the delivery of neighbourhood working in Chorley and ensure the model continues to develop and meets the needs of members and the communities they serve.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To discuss the impact derived from the redrawn ward boundaries and propose recommendations for new neighbourhood areas to be submitted to Executive Cabinet for approval

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	√

### BACKGROUND

4. In November 2007 Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertook an inquiry into Neighbourhood Working. They commissioned a report from Partners in Change "*The Scope and Prospects for Neighbourhood Working in Chorley*".
5. This led to the creation, adoption and implementation of the neighbourhood working model for Chorley which provided
  - The establishment of neighbourhood teams.
  - Support for working with existing neighbourhood-based groups.
  - A funding mechanism to support local initiatives.
  - The reinforcement of the role of the ward Councillor in neighbourhoods
  - Support for relatively deprived and poorly organised neighbourhoods.

## Reasons

- People will feel and be involved in their communities.
  - Services will be improved by local influence and delivery.
  - Community confidence and cohesion will be built.
6. In its launch in 2008, there were seven neighbourhood areas and each area had a Ward Member meeting twice a year which discussed issues arising in the particular area and received retrospective reports on neighbourhood activities delivered by Council and partner services
  7. In 2012 a review of the neighbourhood working model was undertaken. The findings from the review resulted in the following recommendations that was approved and implemented into the delivery of neighbourhood working.
  8. Neighbourhood working' had never been clearly defined in the terms and manner in which it could be delivered and subsequently had evolved into a mixture of discrete projects and initiatives 'sponsored' by Members together with 'business as usual' delivery of neighbourhood, community development and street scene services.
  9. It was recognised that a clear definition of neighbourhood working was established in order that the scope and nature of existing, proposed and expected neighbourhood activity and service delivery can be checked. Therefore, a definition of neighbourhood working was adopted as follows:

**'Working with our partners to improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of all our citizens and improve the environment of the neighbourhoods in which they live'**

This definition emphasised the need to work on a partnership basis and to address wider issues within our communities such as health but recognises that work and activities that improve the environment and quality of life for our communities is also essential.

10. As part of the review, in general Members were satisfied with the size of the neighbourhood areas with the exception of the Eastern Parishes which encompassed a large rural area east of Chorley as well as Adlington, Anderton Rivington and Heath Charnock, therefore approval was granted to redraw boundaries of the neighbourhood areas, increasing the number of areas from seven to eight.
11. It was recognised that engagement with other local community organisations and structures was limited within model and therefore took the opportunity to engage more closely with Parish Councils and County Council Members to coordinate activity across the neighbourhood areas.
12. It was agreed that the Parish representative should not be the clerk, or someone who was not also a Borough Councillor. There was potential for areas, like the town centre and Buckshaw Village for a representative from the community to be involved.
13. It was established that neighbourhood working is divided into three areas of delivery:

- Business as usual and universal service delivery – these are the core council front line services such as refuse and recycling collection; statutory services and regulatory services.
  - Priority projects that are identified through an agreed and prioritised annual plan. For example, Parish Councils in consultation with Ward Members and the local community within a neighbourhood area may elect to provide services provided they do not fall into the category of universal, statutory or regulatory services.
  - Work packages that Ward Members will lead on, on behalf of the neighbourhood area and utilising a small budget
14. Since 2012, the original concept of providing and developing an action plan for each neighbourhood area has been superseded and evolved to a point where Members have a twice-yearly neighbourhood area meeting whereby neighbourhood area groups submit expressions of Interest to undertake environmental and community 'Neighbourhood Priority Projects' in their wards.
15. The neighbourhood meetings in January and February of each year provide the mechanism for the neighbourhood groups to identify and agree three preferred priority projects that are important to the residents of each area and will be delivered within that financial year
16. A fundamental aspect of neighbourhood working is to ensure that community needs are properly evaluated then prioritised and planned into business as usual' service delivery, community projects and priority projects.
17. Neighbourhood Priorities are drafted in the context of the following principles:
- Plans should fall within the neighbourhood working definition and address local needs.
  - Plans should be realistic.
  - Plans must be achievable and have no more than three actions/objectives to meet in a financial year.
18. Neighbourhood Priority Projects follow the below criteria but is not an exhaustive list
- Included
- Additional works and schemes to improve areas of open public space over and above business as usual work
  - Work and projects that support the formation of new community groups or sustain existing ones
  - Leading or supporting community events that meet the principles and definition of neighbourhood working
  - Activities and work that promote community cohesion such as initiatives that integrate demographic groups into the life of the community.
- Excluded
- Issues that are the sole responsibility of another agency and the Councils only input would be as a lobby.
  - Borough wide issues that are subject to existing partnership arrangements e.g. health, community safety

- Activities which are universally delivered across the borough
19. While the council continues to support the delivery of the preferred priorities through funding and officer time, each neighbourhood area is encouraged to consider what match-funding and support may be available through other partners. This has been a successful development in recent years in enhancing the projects that would otherwise be able to be delivered.
  20. Neighbourhood Priorities are reviewed at the 6 monthly neighbourhood meetings and revised and updated as appropriate with any significant changes being subject to Executive Member approval, i.e. where there is a budgetary impact.
  21. Currently each neighbourhood area holds a Member meeting supported by democratic Services, Service Lead for Communities and Neighbourhood Priorities Officer every six months. The purpose of the meeting is to provide feedback on projects, initiatives and service activity at a neighbourhood level to Members. In addition, recent rounds of meetings have provided opportunities for other Council service areas to explain developments in their areas such as Customer Services, Housing Benefit and Planning.
  22. Through Neighbourhood priorities members have significantly more control and say in what happens in their area and potentially direct access to resources to deliver. This in turn means a shift in the way service managers plan and resource their services and may take time to develop and embed as business as usual.
  23. It is recognised that business as usual activities undertaken as part of neighbourhood working come from several service teams baseline budgets but that work, or services provided over and above will need to be provided through a separate budget if seen appropriate

### **Meeting Points for Discussion - New Neighbourhood Area Footprints**

24. Whilst we carry out the neighbourhood working review, it is important that delivery of the programme is still maintained throughout 2020/21

In order to achieve this, it is crucial that the first task of the review is to redraw and create new Neighbourhood Areas as a result of the ward boundary changes to come into effect in May 2020. The proposed recommendation will be presented to Executive Cabinet for approval

25. To help with discussions there are several example options created that can be seen in the Appendix
  - Option 1 – Six neighbourhood area model
  - Option 2 – Four neighbourhood area model
  - Option 3 – Seven neighbourhood area model (2 wards per area)
  - Option 4 – O&S chair Five neighbourhood area model
26. It is important the allocated Neighbourhood Priority Budget needs to be considered depending on number of areas and subsequently number of priority projects that would be established. (currently £50K budget)

## Neighbourhood Working Review – Future Tasks

27. The full review will look at all aspects of Neighbourhood working and how it is currently implemented. It will provide an opportunity to look at is working well and identifying ways in which delivery can be improved or new aspects that could be introduced

The following discussion points are some ideas that could be considered at future meetings and throughout the review

28. Definition of neighbourhood  
Is the definition still suitable for what Neighbourhood working sets out to achieve?

29. Frequency of meetings  
Currently area groups come together twice per year with the January/February meeting used to determine the plan for the neighbourhood area in the following financial year subject to the budget set for that year. The June/July round of meetings used to review; determine progress and adjust projects accordingly.

30. Representation at Neighbourhood Meetings  
Can we engage more with wider community groups/organisations?  
In neighbourhood areas that are not parishes, it will be essential that the neighbourhood meetings through Ward and County Councillors consult with key groups and stakeholders within their neighbourhoods to identify the needs that can be addressed through the neighbourhood working process.

31. What should be discussed at the meeting  
The purpose of the meeting is to provide feedback on projects, initiatives and service activity at a neighbourhood level to Members. In addition, meetings can provide opportunities for other Council service areas to explain developments in their areas

It provides an opportunity to bring to officers' attention around Business as usual and universal service delivery

Current Agenda Items

- Neighbourhood Priorities
- Adoptions
- Empty Homes
- CIL spends
- Intelligence – Data and local insight
- Open Space development / improvements

32. Budget  
Current budget provision for neighbourhood priorities is made as part of the annual budget setting process. Draft neighbourhood plans with costs will be subject to Executive Cabinet approval prior to their implementation with budget provision confirmed and costs approved.

There is an annual budget of £50k to support neighbourhood priority project delivery. Where applicable there is community development support including further development of a sustainable model to promote volunteering and support community groups

### 33. Cllr Grants

Neighbourhood area meetings provide the avenue to identify issues of concern within ward areas across Chorley. There is the opportunity this can assist Cllrs in helping to identify meaningful smaller projects and addressing needs in their local area and allocating their grant

### 34. Community Clean Up

Previously through Neighbourhood Working Chorley Council have provided an annual programme of skip/clean up days across the Borough. These events were fully delivered by council staffing.

It is recognised that there is a need to be able to respond positively to assist residents/groups who wish to tidy up a local grot spot and work with them to deliver these events.

This support would be to help facilitate clean up events; such as the loaning of equipment, identifying how to dispose of waste and then community development support to build on the energy and enthusiasm of the group to undertake more activity utilising Time Credits

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

35. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area	√	Policy and Communications	

## COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

36. There is an annual budget of £50k to support neighbourhood priority project delivery, how this budget is allocated within neighbourhood areas will be subject to review following the changes to the ward boundaries.

## COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

37. Following the Chorley (Electoral Changes) Order 2019 and the redrawn ward boundaries, the neighbourhood working areas in turn will need to be reviewed due to the changes which will be implemented in May 2020.

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DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR (EARLY INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT)

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