

Cabinet – 8 October 2009

Report of the Executive Director of Environment

Part I - Item No. 6 (a)

Electoral Division affected:
All

Public Realm Integration Project

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

The detailed report attached of Appendix A sets out proposals to roll-out countywide, the good practice developed from pilot work with South Ribble and Burnley Borough Councils. Covering highway and streetscene issues that are delivered by both Lancashire County Council and the District Councils, this project focuses on better, joined up working across the two-tiers of local government to ensure that the people of Lancashire receive high quality, value for money services.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Cabinet,

- i. notes the content of this report,
- ii. approves that the Public Realm Integration Project commences from October 2009 to develop the arrangements with each District and authorises the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Executive Director for the Environment to undertake the work required, and
- iii. requests a report back in 12 months time on the progress of this project.

Background and Advice

The "public realm" is best described as "a fence to fence" service, covering e.g. highways, grass verges, trees and shrubs, street lights, signs, street furniture and litter. These are issues that matter to local people and that are important in defining a positive sense of place.

In the current two-tier structure these services are delivered by both Lancashire County Council and the District Councils. Whilst this has the potential for disjointed delivery and a lack of accountability the reality is that the public don't care who delivers the services, only that they are to a good standard and provide value for money.

In recognition of this challenge, Team Lancashire sponsored a pilot project to improve integration between Lancashire County Council and Burnley and South Ribble Borough Councils. Whilst the pilot work with Burnley Borough Council focussed on strategic planning issues, the South Ribble Borough Council pilot focussed on streetscene/public realm services. This pilot has been evaluated and is widely seen as being a success and the attached report details proposals to develop this work further and roll this out to all 12 District Councils in the next 12 months as the Public Realm Integration Project.

The pilot work at South Ribble Borough Council focussed on the 'clean and green agenda' and this is seen as phase one of the public realm project. Learning from the pilot made it clear though that this does not capture all the areas of interest/concerns from the District Councils and therefore the project is defined into the following phases:

- Phase 1 clean and green (as above).
- Phase 2 public realm management, including signage, street furniture, street clutter and removal of obstructions.
- Phase 3 safe and sustainable communities with a focus on better integration of enforcement and inspection regimes.
- Phase 4 strategic planning.

The report, attached at Appendix 'A', focuses on the delivery of phase one over the course of the next year. Clearly, as detailed in a later report on this agenda, the County Council's Environment Directorate will also be undergoing considerable change over the next 12 months. Whilst phase one work can be readily incorporated into any new arrangements it is recommended that a progress report be prepared at the end of phase one which would also give Cabinet an opportunity to consider phase two to follow.

The report at Appendix 'A' sets out a recommended timeline for roll out with the District Councils as follows: first work stream = Wyre, Chorley, Ribble Valley and Rossendale. This workstream will begin work in October 2009 and will include a continuation of the pilot work with South Ribble Borough Council. Second work stream: Lancaster, Preston, Pendle and Hyndburn. This work stream will begin work in June 2010 and will include continuation of the pilot work with Burnley Borough Council.

It is suggested that the Lancashire Local Committees are, in the first instance, the best vehicle for governance of this project in terms of developing the agenda and determining the possible content of the Public Realm Agreements with each of the District Councils. A further option could be to use the Multi Area Agreement governance structures as they develop. A review of the governance arrangements will be included in the progress report due in October 2010.

Consultations

All 12 District Councils.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

No significant risks have been identified in relation to the proposals contained within this report.

Financial

The intention of this project is to utilise available resources in a more cost effective way. To that extent any proposals arising should be contained within existing budget provision.

Legal

Legal issues which will need to be addressed during the project may include delegation of powers and the enabling of statutory functions to be carried out by the appropriate Council under agreements under S101 Local Government Act 1972 and other agreed arrangements

Any representations made to the Cabinet prior to the issue being considered in accordance with the Public Notice of Forward Plans

Name:	Organisation:	Comments:
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N/A.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
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N/A.

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A.