

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director Communities (Introduced by the Executive Member Early Intervention)	Executive Cabinet	Thursday 17 th June 2021

Neighbourhood Working

Purpose of Report

1. The information in this report provides details of the Neighbourhood Working Review and the proposed way forward to revise the delivery of neighbourhood working in Chorley which will ensure the model continues to develop and meets the needs of members and the communities they serve
2. It presents the preferred option for new Neighbourhood Area footprint due to the impact of ward boundary changes which came into effect in May 2021 to be approved by Executive Cabinet.

Recommendation(s)

3. That the actions and timescales detailed are approved to progress Neighbourhood Working over the next 18 months and then review accordingly to measure the success and make appropriate changes where applicable
4. To agree the preferred option for New Neighbourhood Area Footprint Model
5. That Neighbourhood Priority projects proposed by each area group and budget spend will be approved by Executive Member (Early Intervention) via Executive Member decision

Executive summary of report

6. The council is committed to supporting projects and partnership delivery that focuses on the wider determinants of health as these issues impact on the daily lives of our residents, how happy and healthy they feel living in in their community and in turn their individual life choices and outcomes.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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**Reasons for recommendation(s)
(If the recommendations are accepted)**

7. Neighbourhood working and its associated projects are a key priority within the council's corporate strategy and encourages the improvement of environmental, health, and social features within the identified neighbourhoods of Chorley.

Alternative options considered and rejected

8. To not support the continuation and development of neighbourhood working across the borough

Corporate priorities

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

9. In November 2007 Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertook an inquiry into Neighbourhood Working. 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.

10. In its launch in 2008, each area had a Ward Member meeting twice a year which discussed issues arising in that area and received retrospective reports on neighbourhood activities delivered by Council and partner services

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. It was recognised that a clear definition of neighbourhood working needed to be established which gave a clear framework to which all proposed, expected neighbourhood activity and

service delivery could work from. 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.

14. It was recognised that engagement with other local community organisations and structures was limited within the model and therefore the council took the opportunity to engage more closely with Parish Councils and County Council Members to coordinate activity across the neighbourhood areas.
15. Since 2012, neighbourhood working has been delivered 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.
16. Neighbourhood working was established as a key project within the council’s corporate strategy and an annual £50,000 budget investment has continued to support priorities each year
17. 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
18. Within each neighbourhood area meeting, background context about the local area and community has been utilised to support the group in discussing and selecting preferred priorities. This background context report covered a range of issues including, population, life expectancy, health, crime, economy and poverty. Generally, these data sets were more concerned with people, than the physical, more easily visible aspects of our neighbourhoods.
19. 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.
20. Neighbourhood Priorities are drafted in the context that they meet the key principles and should fall within the neighbourhood working definition and address local needs. They should be realistic and achievable within the financial year.
21. 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
22. 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 have not been able to be delivered.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. 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

Neighbourhood Working – New proposes following review

27. The below table details the proposed milestones with regards new Neighbourhood Working implementation following the review. It sets out actions that need to be carried out and achieved which will enable the delivery of Neighbourhood Priorities 2021/22 and gives a platform for which Neighbourhood Working will be subsequently delivered which best supports residents across all communities and neighbourhoods

Table: Proposed Milestones/Timescales for Neighbourhood Working delivery

Milestone	Target Date
Investigate impact of new Boundary review on Neighbourhood areas	Complete

Provide Exec Member with options and recommendations for new Neighbourhood Areas	Complete
Produce 2019/20 Update with actions for completion to be agreed with Exec. Member	Complete
Recommendation Report produced to detail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new Neighborhood areas • Neighborhood area meeting content • Project delivery for 2021/22 • 2022/23 delivery 	Complete
Exec. Member to discuss where appropriate and agree recommendations	Complete
Produce 2019/20 Priorities update to be sent electronically to each neighborhood area	Complete
Executive Cabinet Report for final approval	June
Produce selection reports ready to be communicated to members post-election. This will contain a selection of possible focused projects which are achievable within current reduced timeframe <i>Selection reports includes.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Guidance to help create priority proposal</i> • <i>Priority proposal form</i> • <i>Timescales</i> 	July
Deliver optional area group-based meetings to help formulate projects if required	July/August
Deadline for submission of Neighbourhood Priority project proposals	September
Neighborhood Area meetings Discuss and agree project projects to be delivered Meeting agenda content covered as agreed	September/ October
Produce EMD and get final Exec Member sign off for 2021/22 Neighbourhood priorities to be delivered	October/November
Assign Officer to projects for scoping and delivery	November
Delivery of 2021/22 priorities	November to March
2022/23 delivery Produce selection reports for each neighborhood area <i>Selection reports includes.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Neighbourhood / Ward Details - a combination of statistical data across a range of factors such as IMD, health inequalities and local area intelligence such as Open Space development, CIL</i> 	November

<i>funding, Community Engagement insight)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Guidance to help create priority proposal</i> • <i>Priority proposal form</i> • <i>Timescales</i> 	
Reports sent to Neighborhood group with project proposal criteria	November
Deadline for Neighbourhood Priority project proposals to be submitted	January 2022
Proposals collated and circulated for Neighbourhood Area meetings	January 2022
Neighborhood area meetings Discuss and agree projects to be delivered for 2022/23 delivery Meeting agenda content covered as agreed	January / February
Produce EMD to get final Exec Member sign off for 2022/23 Neighbourhood priorities delivery	March
Assign Lead Officer to projects for scoping and delivery Lead officer works with lead member from neighbourhood group to scope the priority – including timescales, costs and funding etc.	April
Delivery of agreed priority projects	April 22 to March 23
Neighbourhood Area meetings Update on the progress regards selected neighbourhood priorities	June July
Update provided by email (in addition to ongoing progress updates on individual projects) on all selected neighbourhood priorities to neighbourhood management groups	October

New Neighbourhood Area Footprints

28. It is crucial to create new Neighbourhood Areas as a result of the ward boundary changes that have come into effect in May 2021.

29. A range of new area model options was created. The preferred option proposed is to adopt the six Neighbourhood Area model

30. The proposed model would split the new 14 wards across six neighbourhood areas as detailed below

Neighbourhood Area	Wards (new wards as of May 2021 due to boundary changes)
Northern Parishes	Clayton West and Cuerden Clayton East, Brindle and Hoghton

Western Parishes	Croston, Mawdesley and Euxton South Eccleston, Heskin and Charnock
Eastern Parishes	Chorley North East Adlington and Anderton
Chorley Town East	Chorley East Chorley South East and Heath Charnock
Chorley Town North	Euxton Buckshaw and Whittle Chorley North and Astley
Chorley Town West	Coppull Chorley South West Chorley North West



Neighbourhood Working Budget

31. Budget provision for neighbourhood priorities is made as part of the annual budget setting process. There is an annual budget of £50k to support neighbourhood priority project delivery.

32. 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.
33. Previously, across the eight neighbourhood areas, three neighbourhood priority projects have been delivered each with approx. £2000 budget per project. (24 projects each year)
34. It is proposed that for 2021/22 delivery, the Neighbourhood Priority budget is allocated to each neighbourhood area group as previous, but each area group can allocate the funds accordingly to projects which they agree to deliver. This will give the group opportunity to fund either one large project or allocate to several different projects. It is proposed that no more than a maximum of four projects are chosen to be delivered
35. Resulting from the creation of six areas, each Neighbourhood Area group will have a budget of £8,000 to allocate to their chosen priority projects
36. This approach will be piloted and then reviewed

2021/22 - Neighbourhood Priority Projects Delivery

37. Due to the impact of new ward boundary changes and approvals regards new areas, the priority projects to be delivered will only be agreed following meeting which can only be scheduled in September/October, therefore, the timeframe for delivery will be reduced significantly. (Usually projects are agreed at the Jan/Feb meetings with delivery to begin in April)
38. To ensure it is possible to deliver the agreed projects in the reduced time it is proposed that a range of example projects and ideas will be produced where possible or Area group members propose projects that are realistically achievable by March 2022.
39. All information on proposing 2021/22 Neighbourhood Priority projects will be circulated to Neighbourhood area groups following the approval of new neighbourhood areas
40. The process for 2022/23 Neighbourhood Working will begin in October/November to ensure delivery is back on track with project proposals and agreement taking place in Jan/Feb 2022

2022/23 onwards - Proposing Neighbourhood Priority Projects

41. Neighbourhood Area members will be invited to put forward priority proposals for projects to be delivered in their area. It is encouraged that these projects are to focus on the wider determinants of health & Wellbeing, as these issues impact on the daily lives of our residents.
42. Following the impact of Covid on our communities it may be that area groups consider neighbourhood priority proposals that focus on the following community recovery themes:
 - Support and enable residents to feel proud of where they live
 - Support residents to take an active part in their community
 - Provide opportunities to make communities healthier
 - Provide employment or education opportunities
 - Provide opportunities that address food poverty
 - Provide opportunities that help encourage residents to be more active
 - Provide support to make residents more digitally connected
 - Provide peer support opportunities for those experiencing difficulties
 - Provide opportunities to addresses social isolation
 - Provide support for those experiencing financial hardship

43. To help aid proposals, a structured application form will be used to aid discussions in the meeting and selection of priorities. The proposal form will include consideration of points below:

- Detail of Project - what is to be delivered and anticipated actions?
- What are expected outcomes/how will it enhance life of people in the community?
- Is there a rationale or any evidence that supports why the project is needed?
- Which other partners may need to be consulted in order to deliver the project?
- What are the anticipated costs of the project?
- What other resources may be needed to deliver the project?
- Do you feel the project can be completed within financial year?

44. Proposal forms will be made available and need to be submitted prior to the Jan/Feb meetings for them to be fully discussed at the meeting and final priority projects agreed (An example form can be seen in Appendix)

Neighbourhood Working – General

45. Through the Neighbourhood working review it was recognised that overall, the model was working well and therefore proposed that the following continue in the same format.

46. Definition of neighbourhood remains and is still suitable for what Neighbourhood working sets out to achieve

47. Frequency of meetings will remain - 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 is used to review, determine progress and adjust projects accordingly (excluding 2021/22 due to ward changes and impact of Covid.)

48. Representation at Neighbourhood Meetings will remain - in neighbourhood areas that are not parishes, it will be essential that 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.

49. Meeting Agenda - 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. There will be the opportunity to bring to officers' attention queries around business as usual and universal service delivery.

Recommended Agenda Items

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

Future Recommendations for consideration

The following discussion points are some ideas that could be considered at future meetings

50. 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

51. Community Clean Up / Environmental projects - Previously through Neighbourhood Working Chorley Council have provided an annual programme of skip/clean up days across the Borough. These events were fully delivered using council resource.

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.

Therefore, the preferred option to achieve suitable environmental projects identified would suggest linking with funding from FCC Environment who are contracted to deliver our waste collection service and allocate an annual fund of £4000 to support local community projects making environmental improvements

Those projects / areas of concern identified within neighbourhood meetings can be aligned to the FCC Environment funding aims and assist in implementing the grant process

Criteria for successful applicants/projects would include

- Help to keep neighbourhoods clean and safe
- Equipment support for local clean-up projects.
- Support local environmental communication and education campaigns
- Support recycling and waste reduction initiatives
- involves improvements to waste reduction, recycling, or re-use within their local community

In addition support would continue to remain in helping facilitate clean up events; such as the loaning of equipment, identifying how to dispose of waste and community development support to build on the energy and enthusiasm of the group to undertake more activity utilising Time Credits

Implications of report

Risk

52. Risks are addressed in the body of the report

53. 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

54. As detailed within the budget section above there is 50k relating to these works within the Council revenue budget.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

55. There are no issues of concern with this report from a Monitoring Officer perspective.

JENNIFER MULLIN
DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Report Author	Ext	Date
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