

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People and Places (Introduced by the Executive Member for Places)	Executive Cabinet	22 November 2012

## **REVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise Members of the outcome of a review into neighbourhood working and seek approval to develop and improve service delivery and community engagement at a neighbourhood level.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. Neighbourhood Working – Members are asked to agree the definition of neighbourhood working as described at paragraph 9 in this report
3. Neighbourhood Footprints – Members are asked to approve the redrawn boundaries of the neighbourhood areas, increasing the number of areas from seven to eight as described in paragraph 29 and Appendix 1 of this report
4. Representation at Neighbourhood Meetings – Members are asked to agree the level of representation at the twice yearly round of neighbourhood area meetings to include County Council Member representation and Parish Council Member representation in accordance with the Table 1 within this report.
5. Neighbourhood Plans – Members are asked to agree the process described in paragraph 35 outlining the establishment of annual neighbourhood work plans.
6. Budget – Members are asked to note that business as usual activities undertaken as part of neighbourhood working come from a number of service teams baseline budgets but that work or services provided over and above will need to be provided through a separate budget yet to be agreed with a means for Members to access it.
7. Resource – Members are asked to note the resource implications arising out of this review.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**

8. The current neighbourhood working model has evolved since its launch in 2008. There are seven neighbourhood areas and each area has a Ward Member meeting twice a year to discuss issues arising in the particular area and receive retrospective reports on neighbourhood activities delivered by Council and partner services.
9. However 'neighbourhood working' has never been clearly defined in the terms and manner in which it can be delivered in the Chorley Council area and subsequently has 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. It is important to have a clear definition of neighbourhood working 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 has been proposed as follows:

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

10. The original concept of providing a neighbourhood profile and developing a project/action plan for each neighbourhood area has now been superseded and operates, whereby Members can submit 'Expressions of Interest' to undertake small environmental and community project work in their wards. This is supported by an annual budget provision and by integrating actions, where possible, into officers 'business as usual' work streams.
11. This review provides an opportunity to revise the delivery of neighbourhood working in Chorley and the model proposed is outlined below.
12. A review of the neighbourhood working model has been undertaken and Members views were sought at the recent round of neighbourhood meetings in June/July 2012. The following main issues were highlighted by Members.

- Engagement with other local community organisations and structures is limited within the current model and an opportunity exists to engage more closely with Parish Councils and County Council Members to coordinate activity across the neighbourhood areas.
- Apart from the 'Expression of Interest' as a means to access resources for environmental and community development within their Wards, Members have limited access to resources. There is an opportunity to revise the direct funding arrangements for neighbourhood areas and devolve some budgetary control to neighbourhood level, enabling Members to prioritise work and activity that effects environmental improvement and greater community engagement. This will require an increased level of support to ensure adequate governance arrangements are in place.
- In general Members were satisfied with the size of the neighbourhood areas with the exception of the Eastern Parishes which encompasses a large rural area east of Chorley as well as the Adlington, Anderton and Heath Charnock settlements. There is an opportunity to redraw the boundaries of the neighbourhood area and this is detailed in the body of the report.

13. In order to accommodate these changes and to ensure a wider stakeholder involvement in decision making and delivery at a local level, a hierarchical model is proposed which can be illustrated as follows:

14. The back office and frontline resources required to support neighbourhood working currently include:

- Democratic Services
- Neighbourhood Officer Team
- Environment and Neighbourhoods Team
- Streetscene Team
- Parks and Open Spaces Team

It will be necessary to review resource provision to ensure any revised model of neighbourhood working can be effectively delivered. A brief outline of the additional resource provision that might be required is discussed below.

15. Members will be aware that there are other initiatives which should have a direct link into neighbourhood working. In particular two emerging programmes are the Civic Pride campaign and a Member accreditation scheme.
16. Civic Pride will provide a mechanism for local groups to undertake initiatives themselves with the support of Council resources but with minimal administrative or bureaucratic interference. For example if a small group of residents wish to tidy up a local grot spot then the Council must be in a position to respond positively and provide support to facilitate it; such as the loaning of equipment, collecting and disposing of waste and then community development support to build on the energy and enthusiasm of the group to undertake more activity.
17. Member engagement and accreditation and the Chorley iteration of such a scheme would ensure that Members have the necessary knowledge and skills to lead on local projects and initiatives in a programmed and co-ordinated way.
18. In the context of these proposals there will be a step change in the way neighbourhood working is delivered in Chorley. Members will have significantly more control and say in what happens in their area and potentially direct access to resources to deliver. This in turn will mean a shift in the way service managers plan and resource their services and may take time to develop and embed as business as usual.
19. Increasing the number of neighbourhood areas, the number of neighbourhood meetings and the devolution of budgets to a neighbourhood level will impact on the support required. It may be necessary to create additional capacity to support neighbourhood working and to augment the structural changes already made across the organisation. A review of resources to support neighbourhood working will be the subject of a further report to Members.

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	<b>No</b>
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<b>Key Decision?</b> Please bold as appropriate	<b>Yes</b>	No
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<b>Reason</b> Please bold as appropriate	<b>1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more</b>	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

### **(If the recommendations are accepted)**

20. To ensure the neighbourhood working model continues to develop and meets the needs of Members and the communities they serve.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

21. The option to retain the current neighbourhood working model and framework was considered but it is appropriate to develop and adapt neighbourhood working as described in this report.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

22. 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 communities	√	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	√

## BACKGROUND

23. In 2007 the Council commissioned a report from Partners in Change “***The Scope and Prospects for Neighbourhood Working in Chorley***”. This led to the creation of the current neighbourhood working model with 7 neighbourhood areas initially supported by a neighbourhood profile and action plan.

24. Over the last 4 years the neighbourhood working model has evolved to a point where Members have a twice yearly neighbourhood area meeting with officers; undertake regular Ward walks with Neighbourhood Officers as required and can submit ‘Expressions of Interest’ to deliver discrete work packages and projects in their Wards.

## DEFINITION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING

25. It is now an opportune time to review neighbourhood working and provide a clear definition of what neighbourhood working entails in Chorley.

26. Neighbourhood working has been defined in a number terms and the following are extracts from a variety of other District Council websites:

- “*the process of improving and joining up local services*”
- “*work with residents to shape their own areas and neighbourhoods by developing local solutions for the things that matter*”
- “*neighbourhood Working is all about improving the quality of life for people living and working in the area*”
- “*neighbourhoods and communities have different needs and priorities and so while many of our services are delivered on a council wide level, several of our key services are delivered at a neighbourhood level*”

27. For the purposes of neighbourhood working in Chorley Council area the following definition is proposed:

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

28. This definition emphasises 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.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD FOOTPRINT REVIEW**

29. Whilst overall Members were content with the size and makeup of the current 7 neighbourhood areas; Members in the Eastern Parishes expressed concern that there are covered a large area of both rural and urban settlements. In order to address this it is proposed to create a new Eastern Rural Parishes area which would include Brindle and Hoghton; Wheelton and Withnell and Pennine wards. This in turn would then create a Southeastern Parishes neighbourhood area of Adlington and Anderton and Heath Charnock and Rivington wards.
30. The creation of the Eastern Rural Parishes area would have a knock on effect to the current Northeastern Parishes with the loss of Brindle and Hoghton from this area. By moving Clayton le Woods and Whittle le Woods into Northeastern Parishes area this would provide some balance. The maps at Appendix 1 demonstrate the impact of the changes.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD MEETING REVIEW**

31. Currently each neighbourhood area holds a Member meeting supported by democratic services and the Head of Health Environment and Neighbourhoods 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.
32. Overall Members expressed satisfaction with the frequency and content of meetings. However some Members have expressed a desire to increase the representation at such meetings to include County Council Members for the neighbourhood area and one Parish Councillor representative for the respective Parish Councils within the Neighbourhood area.
33. In order to ensure appropriate representation but retain a workable group to agree neighbourhood priorities and develop a neighbourhood plan the table below details the level of representation for each neighbourhood area that is proposed.
34. It is anticipated that the inclusion of County Councillors will ensure issues at a very local neighbourhood level can be fed into the Countywide 'Three Tier Forum' structure and similarly County Councillor representation will ensure that discussions and decisions are made in the context of a wider perspective.
35. It is proposed to retain the meeting frequency at twice per year with the January 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 round of meetings would then be used to review the plan; determine progress and adjust the plan accordingly.

36. It is envisaged that meetings will be chaired by a Ward Councillor from within the neighbourhood area and elected by the neighbourhood meeting.

Table 1 – Proposed Neighbourhood Area, Parish Council and County Council Representation

<u>Neighbourhood</u>	<u>Borough Wards</u>	<u>Ward Cllrs</u>	<u>Parish Council</u>	<u>LCC Division</u>	<u>LCC Cllrs</u>
Clayton and Whittle	Clayton le Woods and Whittle le Woods	3	Clayton le Woods	Chorley North	1
	Clayton le Woods North	3	Whittle le Woods	Chorley Rural North	1
	Clayton le woods West and Cuerden	2	Cuerden		
Western Parishes	Lostock	2	Bretherton	Chorley Rural West	1
	Eccleston and Mawdesley	3	Croston		
			Mawdesley		
			Eccleston		
			Ulnes Walton		
Euxton Astley and Buckshaw	Euxton North	2	Astley	Chorley Rural West	1
	Euxton South	2	Euxton	Chorley North	1
	Astley and Buckshaw	2			
Southeast Parishes	Adlington and Anderton	3	Adlington Town Council	Chorley Rural East	1
	Heath Charnock and Rivington	1	Anderton		
			Rivington		
			Heath Charnock		
Eastern Parishes	Wheelton and Withnel	2	Angelzarke	Chorley Rural East	1
	Brindle and Hogton	1	Wheelton	Chorley Rural North	1
	Pennine	1	Withnel		
			Brindle		
			Heapey		

<u>Neighbourhood</u>	<u>Borough Wards</u>	<u>Ward Cllrs</u>	<u>Parish Council</u>	<u>LCC Division</u>	<u>LCC Cllrs</u>
			Hoghton		
Chorley Town East	Chorley Northeast	3	**	Chorley East	1
	Chorley East	3	**	Chorley South	1
	Chorley Southeast	3	**		
Chorley Town West	Chorley Northwest	3	**	Chorley West	1
	Chorely Southwest	3	**	Chorley South	1
			**		
Southern Parishes	Coppull	3	Charnock Richard	Chorley West	1
	Chisnall	2	Coppull		
			Heskin		

\*\*Areas with no parish representation should ensure that consultation with key groups and stakeholders is undertaken as part of drafting neighbourhood plans.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

37. 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 discrete work packages.

38. It is proposed that neighbourhood working is divided into three discrete areas or levels:

- 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.
- Services and work packages 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 themselves 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 (to be determined) which is devolved to each neighbourhood area.

39. Several neighbourhood areas may already have plans in the form of Parish Plans. It is proposed that where these exist the neighbourhood area meeting, in agreement with the Parish Councils, review the plan and identify common themes and objectives. These would then form the basis of a neighbourhood plan with a limited number of priorities to be delivered in a given time frame. The delivery of the plan would need to be costed.

40. Neighbourhood plans will need to be 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.

41. In neighbourhood areas that are not parished 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.

42. Draft neighbourhood plans with costs will be subject to Executive Cabinet approval prior to their implementation.

43. Such a model will enable Ward Members, Parish Councils, County Councillors and appropriate local community groups to agree the priorities for their area and provide them with the freedom to:

- Negotiate a service delivery mechanism for non-universal, non-statutory and non-regulatory services
- Fund discrete work packages subject to budget and other resource limitations
- Organise, promote and fund community events.

In order to assist Members the table below identifies what a ‘typical’ draft plan would include and those areas that should not be included in a neighbourhood plan:

<b><u>INCLUDED</u></b>	<b><u>EXCLUDED</u></b>
Additional works and schemes to improve areas of open public space over and above business as usual work	Issues that are the sole responsibility of another agency and the Councils only input would be as a lobby.
Work and projects that support the formation of new community groups or sustain existing ones	Borough wide issues that are subject to existing partnership arrangements e.g. health, community safety
Leading or supporting community events that meet the principles and definition of neighbourhood working	Activities which are universally delivered across the borough
Activities and work that promote community cohesion such as initiatives that integrate demographic groups into the life of the community. E.g. a junior citizens scheme.	

*Note this table is for illustration and is not exhaustive.*



44. Neighbourhood plans would be reviewed at the 6 monthly neighbourhood meetings and revised and updated as appropriate with any significant changes being subject to Executive Cabinet approval, i.e. where there is a budgetary impact.

### **MEMBERS AS COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS**

45. Work is underway on developing a programme of Member engagement and training that links directly to the revised arrangements for neighbourhood working. At this stage there is a proposal for Members to achieve access to funding for their neighbourhood by completing a range of training and other activities that:
- demonstrate understanding and knowledge of their ward and involvement in local projects or volunteering;
  - commitment to a range of training which increases their knowledge and also enables personal skills development; and
  - demonstrates local engagement with and accessibility to, ward residents.
46. Further details on how this might work and Members commitment to the process will be brought to a future meeting.

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD BUDGET REVIEW**

47. Budget provision for neighbourhood plans will have to be made and will form part of the current annual budget setting process. This will link into the neighbourhood plan approval through Executive Cabinet whereby budget provision will be confirmed and costs approved. It is anticipated that in order to support neighbourhood working there will be a need to resource the following broad areas:
- Community development and support including further development of a sustainable model to promote volunteering and support community groups
  - Support neighbourhood plan delivery
  - Mainstream an annual programme of skip/clean up days across the Borough

### **SUPPORTING NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING**

48. Members will be aware that transformational change has already taken place across a number of service areas that are either integral to, or support neighbourhood working.
49. If the revisions to neighbourhood working as outlined in this report are approved there will be additional resource impact on service areas as follows.
50. Policy and Communications – with a greater emphasis on community engagement and consultation to determine local needs, the Policy and Communications Team can expect an increase in workload. This will need to be either prioritised against other existing work streams or additional resource (to be determined) will need to be found.
51. Democratic Services – increasing the neighbourhood areas from seven to eight as well as widening the representation at neighbourhood meetings will increase the workload of the Democratic Services Team on a scale yet to be determined.
52. Neighbourhood and Environment Team – the impact of neighbourhood working changes will be dependent on the development and content of neighbourhood plans. As a minimum additional resource in the form of officer support will need to be factored into existing workstreams to assist neighbourhoods in developing plans, prioritising actions and exploring funding opportunities as well as supporting existing community groups and nurturing new ones.

53. Resource implications and requirements will be the subject of future reports to Members.

### IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

54. 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

55. The additional budget requirement is to be detailed in a separate report to be submitted to Members as part of the budget setting process.

### COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

56. The outcome of the review of neighbourhood working has no legal implications at this time.

JAMIE CARSON  
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

There are no background papers to this report.

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Simon Clark	5732	October 2012	Nhoodreview2012