

CABINET**Partnerships****8 November 2011****Report of the Head of Community Engagement**

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To provide Cabinet with background and recommendations for the council's future approach to working in partnership in the district, including the use of uncommitted Performance Reward Grant funds.				
Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	October 2011			
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

- (1) That Cabinet approves the new partnership arrangements being proposed in this report.
- (2) That Cabinet considers the request from the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership as to the allocation of the uncommitted Performance Reward Grant funding of £27,535 revenue and £89,910 capital.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Partnership working is a mainstream activity for all local authorities and forms one of the Council's current Corporate Plan priorities. There are good examples of success, although the measures of success are shifting within an ever changing context –

- Cuts in public spending
- Localism and devolution agenda
- Health and policing reforms
- A changing regional and sub-regional landscape
- Shared Services.

1.2 The 'de-regulation' of many areas of responsibility means that arrangements are less prescribed by government although accountability to local

communities is intended to be strengthened. In terms of partnerships, some examples of early changes are the abolition of LAA's (Local Area Agreements) and the performance management arrangements supporting these and the removal of the statutory requirement for a Sustainable Community Strategy and the related statutory requirement to consult with local organisations in the production of such a strategy.

- 1.3 Underpinning national and local policies and strategic planning across the whole of the public sector are unprecedented financial pressures and the ongoing threat to the global economy. The impact of this is certain to be profound and puts many current public sector services at risk.
- 1.4 It is now necessary to review and re-direct the focus for partnership working. There is now a much stronger emphasis on shared services and integrating front of house and back office functions. Markets and new models of service delivery are emerging. A one sector approach to managing budgets is emerging.
- 1.5 These trends have implications in terms of the district wide approach to partnerships and the approach the council takes in line with its community leadership role. Any future ways of working may well have a stronger emphasis on decentralisation and subsidiarity but will also need to be about reducing costs and creating efficiencies whilst protecting services that are most important either directly or by moving toward an enabling role.
- 1.6 The role of Councils is different to many other public sector bodies as it includes local democratic accountability and a community leadership role. As part of this, the council engages with partners and communities to agree priorities for the district and to support and develop the district wide arrangements that are needed to provide services that matter. However as budgets reduce even further local authorities have the conflicting demands of achieving the efficiencies that are needed whilst still providing assurance, accountability, public participation and democratic oversight. This places councils at the heart of the current changes.

2 Proposal Details

- 2.1 In reviewing the future focus for partnership working the emphasis needs to be on the value we obtain from our current ways of working / processes which we would want to retain and build upon for the future.
- 2.2 For some years, the council has been engaged in a range of formal and informal partnership arrangements at many levels, to achieve various objectives, often taking a leading, enabling role. Within the district, these arrangements include the Lancaster District LSP (Local Strategic Partnership), a number of local community partnerships and informal arrangements working closely with town and parish councils, community leaders and others. More recently the leaders of the key public sector organisations are now meeting regularly to jointly consider how public sector partners can work together to address the key issues facing the district.
- 2.3 For some years, Lancaster District has had a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which includes partners from a wide range of organisations across the district. The LSP structures are well developed, reflecting previous government guidance and the formal responsibilities that LSP's had in the past.

2.4 The LSP structures include a Board and Management Group as well as seven Thematic Groups, as follows:

- Children's Trust
- Community Safety Partnership
- Environment
- Economy
- Education, Skills and Opportunities
- Health and Well Being
- Valuing People

2.5 The LSP Board has not met for some time although the Management Group meets regularly and is handling most LDLDP business at this level.

2.6 The Thematic Groups were set up to reflect a very broad set of possible outcomes for the district. The roles, purpose, membership and level of activity of these groups is variable. Some of the Thematic Groups, such as the Children's Trust and the Community Safety Partnership are statutory partnerships in their own right. Others are not but with the introduction of Health reforms across the sector including the transfer of public health responsibilities back to local government new Statutory Health and Wellbeing Boards will emerge in the not too distant future.

2.7 The LSP has responsibility for £443K Second Homes funding (SHF) and £647.5K Performance Reward Grant (PRG), as well as oversight of the projects funded by these funding streams. The council acts as accountable body for both funds and is ultimately responsible for both the funds and the delivery of outcomes, in line with the protocols agreed with Lancashire County Council.

2.8 However a recent (18 August 2011) report to Lancashire County Council's Cabinet regarding PRG approved that the Lancashire County Council element of PRG be retained by the County Council to support the delivery of financial savings through shared services, thus supporting public sector partners across Lancashire and helping to deliver their financial strategy.

2.9 County's cabinet also approved a change to the County / District protocol in respect of PRG allocations to district LSP's.

2.9 Under the PRG Protocol the element of PRG distributed to districts was to be invested with the over-riding aim of "narrowing the gap" linked to outcomes set out in Ambition Lancashire, the LAA and district level Sustainable Community Strategies. In the light of the current economic climate County's Cabinet agreed that the criteria for use of this grant was widened to include enabling authorities to meet the challenge of delivering the required budget reductions while continuing to deliver outcomes important to the people in their areas.

2.11 The LDLSP's current proposals regarding PRG are set out in Appendix 1

2.12 There have been no announcements to date by the County Council in respect of future funding through the 'Second Homes fund. The City Council may wish to review the existing protocol.

Future partnership arrangements

- 2.13 Current budgetary pressures dictate that future partnership activities will need to be cost effective, purposeful, offer clear added value and have a sharp focus on outcomes to be achieved. Governance will be proportionate to levels of responsibility.
- 2.14 The council's role in respect of many partnership arrangements will continue to be vital and to reflect its community leadership role and its democratic responsibilities. However, investment of time and support for partnership arrangements will need to be rewarded by clear and visible benefits.
- 2.15 As outlined throughout this report some of the current formal partnership structures in place in the district may not meet requirements for the future. The current level of governance and administration around the current structures is high and demanding in terms of time taking away the resources that are available to develop partnership activities that have the potential to deliver some of the vital outcomes the district needs for the future.
- 2.16 In line with this, it is recommended that Cabinet now considers the formally constituted Local Strategic Partnership and recommends to its partners that the time for the formal LSP has now passed. but takes the opportunity to propose new arrangements that refocus efforts for a number of key partnerships that are likely to add significant value in the district in the future and will allow the council and its partners to fulfil their responsibilities and deliver their priorities efficiently and effectively.
- 2.17 It is suggested that the Council's efforts be dedicated to the following partnerships whilst recognising that as priorities, shift other opportunities for partnership working may be required. :

District Children's Trust

Lancashire County Council has a range of statutory responsibilities for children, young people and families and has retained Children's Trust Boards and partnerships and the city council has agreed a Statement of Commitment to support these arrangements with a view to achieving positive outcomes for children, young people and families. This is an area where joint working is critical to activities in which the council is involved.

Community Safety Partnership

The council works with a range of partners in connection with community safety, including Lancashire County Council, the police, NHS, probation and fire services and is currently investigating joint working opportunities across district boundaries. There are statutory responsibilities relating to Community Safety Partnerships but the council has also identified clean and safe streets as a top priority for the district establishing this as a key partnership for the district. The Government Policing reforms may see the establishment of elected Police Commissioners with wide ranging powers to direct community safety activity and funding across Lancashire. If this reform goes ahead it will have a significant impact on the current CSP landscape.

A Voluntary, community and faith sector partnership

The voluntary, community and faith sector (often referred to as the 'Third Sector' or as 'Civil Society'), includes community groups, volunteers, a range of service

delivery organisations plus a small number of infrastructure organisations that provide development support. This demand upon these organisations is likely to become increasingly important in the future as the public sector finds itself unable to continue to provide some services. However the sector itself is seriously threatened by funding cuts as a consequence of reduced public expenditure driven by Central Government putting important services at further risk. The council has identified the development of VCFS capacity to deliver services in the future, as a planned outcome in its corporate plan. As such, it is important to ensure that arrangements are in place that will allow the council to engage with and support appropriate development of this sector as part of its community leadership role for the district.

It is suggested that initially, the existing Valuing People Thematic Group could become a platform for future with key partners as to the most effective way of meeting future requirements.

A Health and Well Being Partnership

The Health and Well Being agenda is set to change dramatically over the next few years with transformation in the way that services are commissioned and delivered, the public health agenda shift back to local government, GP Consortia and structural re-organisation in the health sector. At sub-regional level a Health and Well Being Board will create a framework for the way that the public sector will work together and it is anticipated that this will be reflected at a district level. Again the LDLSP's Health and Well Being Group of the LSP offers a potential platform to take this agenda forward for the district.

Public Sector Leaders Group

The establishment of this group offers the opportunity for public sector leaders (both managerial and political) to come together informally to discuss and lead on shared strategic issues facing the district

Arts and Culture Partnership

This sector has been identified as having significant potential for the district's economy and quality of life offer. An opportunity exists for more collaborative joint working between arts partners in the future to achieve efficiency and to maximise impact. The council makes a significant investment in the arts, culture and heritage sector in various ways and has already committed to working together with Lancashire County council and Arts Council England to support this sector.

Economic Partnership

Ongoing regular meetings with the Chambers in Lancaster Morecambe and Carnforth are suggested as the most productive way of engaging with the business sector. It is also understood that the Vision Board is likely to continue to meet two to three times a year but with a focus on Visioning.

Community Leaders Group

This group made of up of representative of minority communities living and working in the district. Also in attendance are the City Council, University and the Police representatives. The group is informal and meets to discuss issues and share knowledge whilst celebrating the vibrancy and valuing the differing cultures of each member. There is great value to be had in continuing to support this grouping and keeping this particular channel of communication open.

Parish Councils

Every two months there is a meeting of representatives from the parish councils in the district. The City Council and County council are also in attendance at all of these meetings. As such this arrangement provides a valuable channel of communication with the parishes and should continue.

Consultation

Consultation on the options presented in this report has not been undertaken at this time as the views of Cabinet are sought prior to dialogue with partners.

Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Continue support for key partnerships within a streamlined and more informal structure	Option 2: Do Nothing - Retain the council's existing LSP structures
Advantages	<p>Ability to be more focused on areas of partnership working that are a priority.</p> <p>Clearer added value from working in partnership where this brings additional benefits.</p> <p>More flexible model with the ability to adapt to new requirements in the new future.</p> <p>Reduced administrative burden.</p> <p>Opportunity to free officer and partner time to deal with outcome focused work.</p>	<p>Current structures are inclusive and offer the opportunity to engage with a broad range of partners regularly.</p>
Disadvantages	<p>Council will need to take on a stronger central co-ordinating and enabling role, which is currently undertaken by the LSP.</p>	<p>A number of meetings are considered to be overly bureaucratic.</p> <p>Future funding to LSP's is uncertain and means that longer term planning is not possible.</p> <p>The requirement for governance at the strategic partnership level is no longer necessary.</p>
Risks	<p>Managing the recommended changes whilst maintaining positive relationships with partners.</p> <p>Possible impact on level of communications between partners if requirement for regular scheduled meetings is reduced.</p>	<p>Partners are affected by resource pressures and it is possible that attendance and participation in routine LSP meetings and events may drop considerably, undermining possible achievements.</p>

Conclusion

The time for the formal LSP has now passed. but the need for strong partnership working is more important than ever. Focusing on a number of key partnerships will allow the council and its partners to fulfil their responsibilities and deliver their priorities efficiently and effectively.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Partnership working forms one of the Council's current Corporate Plan priorities

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Partnership working continues to provide positive impacts in respect of all of the above.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising as a result of this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The protocols for the use of Performance Reward Grant (PRG) have been widened. The LDLSP are seeking Cabinet's views as the use of uncommitted PRG funding. £27,535 revenue and £89,910 capital.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None

Information Services:

None

Property:

None

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 officer has been consulted. Should Cabinet choose to streamline the structure for providing support to key partnerships, this would provide a better opportunity to consider any savings options in view of the reduced administrative burden.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has nothing further to add

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Lancashire County Council report to Lancashire Leaders on Performance Reward Grant 18/08/2011

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Appendix A

PRG Funding allocated to date

Item	Revenue allocation	Capital allocation
Total Grant from County Council	£357,535.40	£289,910.60
Warm Homes	£5000	£100,000
Hydroelectricity	£30,000	£0
Social Enterprise	£120,000	£0
Cooperative Fund Finder	£100,000	£0
Domestic Violence	£50,000	£0
Community Capital Fund	£0	£100,000
Administration Fee to City Council	£25,000	£0
Total allocation so far	£330,000	£200,000
Remaining PRG	£27,535.40	£89,910.60

- Warm Homes Scheme:** At least 2000 homes insulated, preventing excess winter deaths and local people (including many who are in financial hardship) saving over £200,000 a year from reduced energy bills. This supports the City Council's climate change and protecting vulnerable people priorities.
- Hydroelectricity:** ensures the future of the turbine at Halton Weir, meaning £300,000 of government grant is secure and up to £2,000,000 will be made by the scheme and invested in the local community over the next twenty years. This supports the City Council's climate change priority and will enhance the local community's ability to deliver services for itself.
- Social Enterprise:** secures the future existence of dozens of local civil society organisations, and will be matched by at least £15,000 of pro-bono support by the providers. It supports the City Council's economic development priority and the public leader's symposium ambition for local people to be more engaged and involved in delivering local services and building a sustainable future for their communities.
- Cooperative Fund Finder:** at least £1,000,000 inward investment into priority projects in the district over the next two years. This has the potential to support the delivery of all of the City Council and other public sector priorities, depending on the projects that are funded.
- Domestic Violence:** will provide a vital frontline service to support victims of domestic abuse, and will enhance the understanding and cooperation of frontline workers in dealing with this issue, reducing duplication and enhancing service delivery. It will support the City Council's and other public sector statutory partners' fulfilment of its community safety obligations, and its intention to protect vulnerable people.
- Community Capital:** The LDLSM has agreed to allocate £100,000 of capital to a fund for improvements to neighbourhood/parish/community buildings that would support positive activities and involvement in the local community and attract at least £100,000 matched funding for these projects into the district. It will also enhance the communities' ability to deliver services for themselves.

The LDLSM Management Group also wishes to ensure that the remaining unallocated funds (£27,535 revenue and £89,910 capital) are directed to the most appropriate future projects and welcomes the Council's input on how it should be allocated.