

 Executive 15th October 2008		Agenda Item No.
Title	Neighbourhood Working	
For further information about this report please contact	Jenny Murray, Community Partnership Team Manager	
Service Area	Community Partnership Team	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Executive December 2007	
Background Papers	Report to Executive December 2007 Building on Excellence Corporate Strategy Warwickshire County Council report on Locality Working 13 May 2008 Police Authority report on Locality Working 21 st May 2008 Warwick Partnership Executive Group report on Locality Working 25 th July 2008 Warwick Area Committee report on Locality Working 23 rd September 2008	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports <u>must</u> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Relevant Director		
Chief Executive	25.09.08	Chris Elliott
CMT	25.09.08	Mary Hawkins, Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	25.09.08	Mary Hawkins
Legal		Simon Best
Finance	25.09.08	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	25.09.08	Felicity Bunker
Consultation Undertaken		

Please insert details of any consultation undertaken with regard to this report.

Consultation has been undertaken jointly by Warwick District and Warwickshire County Council with the following:

- Parish and Town Councils (via Warwickshire Association of Local Councils and through a series of meetings)
- Police Authority
- Warwickshire Police
- NHS Warwickshire
- Voluntary and Community Sector via WCAVA
- Warwick Partnership Executive Group
- A variety of community groups and organisations
- Safer Neighbourhoods Panels

Final Decision?

Yes

Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members will recall that a report on neighbourhood working arrangements was considered by the Executive in December 2007. At this meeting, Members agreed that the District Council should formally consult partners on proposals to implement neighbourhood working within this District, in partnership with Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Police. A consultation document was distributed to partners in February 2008, and feedback has been received and considered. This report is to give an update on progress to date, and to seek the Executive's formal endorsement of the implementation of neighbourhood working arrangements in the Warwick District.
- 1.2 On 23rd September, the Warwick Area Committee considered a progress report on locality working, and agreed the following:

That the Committee notes and endorses the progress made in the implementation of locality working and the roll out of Community Forums in the Warwick District

That Cabinet and subsequently Full Council be recommended to reconsider the model terms of reference for Community Forums in order to enable nominated representatives of Parish and Town Councils to chair Community Forums subject to District and County Councillors voting in favour.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Members formally endorse the implementation of neighbourhood working arrangements in the Warwick District as detailed in the report, subject to a review of these arrangements after 12 months of full implementation
- 2.2 That Members formally request Warwickshire County Council to reconsider its decision made at the County Council meeting on 13th May 2008 that only District or County Councillors can chair Community Forums, to enable Town or Parish Councillors in the Warwick District to Chair these Forums if appropriate
- 2.3 That Members agree that the Warwick Partnership Executive Group (WPEG) is the appropriate overarching body responsible for overseeing and supporting the development of locality working in the District (in its role as the Warwick-focused body where partner agencies from the statutory and voluntary sectors converge as partners), with the District Council's representatives on the WPEG ensuring that the necessary information on neighbourhood working is communicated to the District Council.
- 2.4 That a review of the basis for awarding any monies via the Community Forums is undertaken in conjunction with the County Council and other partners and is reported back to the Executive before April 2009

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The implementation of neighbourhood working is an element of 'Building on Excellence' and is highlighted in the Council's Corporate Strategy as a key objective for 08/09. The intention is that neighbourhood working will help the District Council and other key partners to ensure that public services are continuously improved to best meet the needs of local residents.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Executive could decide not to proceed but that would place the District at odds with the arrangements agreed by other key partners in the District and across the County. The terms of reference could be subject to further alteration but other than the issue about the involvement of Town and Parish Councils they seem reasonable to start off with. They will in any case be subject to a review in 12 months time.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 There are no significant budgetary implications for the implementation of neighbourhood working at this stage – all arrangements detailed in this report can be met from within existing resources.

6. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 The implementation of neighbourhood working is featured in the Council's Corporate Strategy. Locality working is also a key element of the successful delivery of the Warwickshire Local Area Agreement.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Members will recall that a report on Neighbourhood working in Warwick District was considered by the Executive in December 2007 and was agreed to be subject to consultation with key partners.
- 7.2 The County Council's Warwick Area Committee and Cabinet considered the matter during 2007, and that after a lengthy period of consultation with partners, including Town and Parish Councils, the Police, NHS Warwickshire and the Voluntary and Community Sector, on 13th May 2008 the County Council approved the full implementation of locality working arrangements across the County. Warwickshire Police Authority formally committed to supporting these arrangements on 21st May 2008, and agreed that existing Safer Neighbourhoods Panels should be merged into new Community Forums. The Executive is now asked to consider the information contained within this report, and to formally endorse the implementation of neighbourhood working within the District, in partnership with those organizations highlighted above, tailored to suit the specific needs of partners.
- 7.3 On 13th May 2008 the County Council resolved as follows:

That Council agrees to the following arrangements for Locality Working as recommended by the Cabinet:-

7.3.1. The establishment of 23 Localities and 23 Community Forums as follows:

- *4 Localities and 4 Community Forums in North Warwickshire based on map 1. Appendix 1*
- *7 Localities in Nuneaton and Bedworth based on map 2 in Appendix 1 (map should be amended to read Bedworth North and Bedworth South). Community Forums will be established as required at a later date, with due regard being given to the number of Forums, and the practicalities of how Forums can be facilitated by Officers.*

- *4 Localities and 6 Community Forums in Rugby based on map 3, Appendix 1*
- *3 Localities with Joint Committees in the Stratford on Avon area to be integrated with 6 Community Forums based on map 4, Appendix 1*
- *5 Localities with 7 Community Forums in Warwick based on map 5, Appendix 1*

7.3.2. *The endorsement of the model terms of reference for Community Forums based on Appendix 3*

7.3.3. *That the Stratford on Avon Area Committee is replaced by three Joint Committees to be established jointly with Stratford on Avon District Council in accordance with this report and the Standing Orders in Appendix 4 be approved accordingly*

7.3.4. *That the Council's Constitution be amended as necessary in light of the establishment of the Joint Committees in Stratford and that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director of Performance and Development to make such changes*

7.3.5. *The immediate implementation of these proposals*

7.3.6. *That locality arrangements should be reviewed following twelve months of operation*

7.4 The Model Terms of Reference for the Community Forums are attached as Appendix One to this report. These are only model terms of reference. They are intended to be applied flexibly and not as a straitjacket. Unfortunately, they have not always been seen as such and the flexibility needs to be re-emphasised. In particular the terms of reference are designed to cover both parished and unparished areas. It was always the intention that where they exist, town and parish councils should play a full role in the forums.

7.5 At its meeting on 25th July 2008 the Warwick Partnership Executive Group (LSP) agreed that it should be the appropriate overarching body responsible for overseeing and supporting the development of locality working in the District, in its role as the Warwick District-focused body where relevant agencies from the statutory and voluntary sectors converge as partners. Membership of the WPEG includes the Leader and Chief Executive of the District Council, the Chair of the County Council's Warwick Area Committee and the Strategic Director of Performance and Development, a representative from the Primary Care Trust and from Warwickshire Police.

8. Progress to Date on Implementation of Locality Working/Community Forums in the Warwick District

8.1 The District and County Council's intention is to establish 7 Community Forums which will meet quarterly as follows:

Warwick
Kenilworth
North Leamington
South Leamington
Whitnash

Rural East
Rural West

- 8.2 The Leamington Town Centre Safer Neighbourhoods Panel is not part of the locality proposals but plans are underway to keep this forum operating as a separate entity, with continuing support from the police, Town Council, traders, licensees and other key partners involved. Residents of the Town Centre will feed into the North Leamington Community Forum.
- 8.3 It is anticipated that community engagement in the forums will happen through identifying existing community groups/organisations and encouraging inclusive representation. In areas where community groups do not exist, it will be the responsibility of the Community Partnership Team, working alongside local Councillors and VCS organisations, to support and develop the emergence of such groups.
- 8.4 The Community Forums will exist to encourage community and voluntary sector input to identifying local needs and issues – providing an opportunity (in addition to existing mechanisms) for Councillors and other partners to listen to the local community, and for public sector agencies to respond accordingly, wherever possible, making better use of existing resources by working in a more joined up way.
- 8.5 The work of the forums will be influenced by locality profiles and will result in the publication of simple action plans, accountability for which will rest with public sector partners. Action plans will build upon existing Parish or Neighbourhood Plans.
- 8.6 Funding to support priorities emerging from the Community Forums will initially come from various sources of existing grants available from the District and County Councils.
- 8.7 In order to deliver service improvements in response to the Community Forums, it is proposed to create 5 ‘virtual teams’ of officers from the County and District Councils to ensure a consistent and tailored ‘service offer’ is designed and delivered for each area, depending on specific needs. The County Council has allocated Heads of Service to lead on locality work within each of these 5 areas, and the joint Community Partnership Team has similarly allocated an officer to support this activity as follows:
- Warwick (Greta Needham/Bernadette Allen/Andy Jones)
 - Kenilworth (Elizabeth Featherstone/Carolyn Chambers/Pete Cutts)
 - North Leamington (Kushal Birla/Liz Young/Alison Simmons)
 - South Leamington and Whitnash (Kate Nash/Martin Stott/Jenny Murray/Richard Hall (whitnash) and Paul Pinkney (South Leamington)
 - Rural (Phil Evans/Tim Healey/Mike Snow (Rural West) and Robert Inman (Rural East tbc)

The District Council proposes the following members of staff listed above to support this work.

- 8.8 It has been agreed that the first Community Forums will build on existing SNPs, ensuring that a distinct part of each meeting is still focused on community safety issues, in order to encourage existing community representatives to continue to attend. The following Community Forums have taken place in the Warwick District:

- Whitnash Community Forum took place on 24th September at 4pm at Whitnash Community Hall attended by at least 30 members of the public – local Councillors requested that the focus of this first meeting should be on the needs of older people in the Town, and that the second meeting (likely to be in December/January) should focus on the needs of young people
- Rural East Community Forum met on 24th September at 7.30pm at Cubbington Village Hall, attended by several members of the public
- Rural West Safer Neighbourhoods Panel met on 2nd October at 7.30pm at Shire Hall with a view to the first Community Forum taking place before the end of the year

8.9 It has been agreed with partners that whilst detailed negotiations are underway in the remaining SNP areas to identify how best the remaining Community Forums can be tailored to meet local needs and existing circumstances, the existing support arrangements will continue to be provided by the Community Partnership Team and other partners to ensure continuity of the SNPs until the Community Forum arrangements are finalised. This commitment is until at least the end of December 2008.

9. Feedback from Discussions

9.1 Officers from the County and District Councils have been engaged over the last few months in an intensive period of positive discussions about the impact of locality working, in particular with the local Police, Town and Parish Councillors. Overall there is strong support for the principles of locality working being about ensuring the voice of local communities is heard through structured arrangements. However the most common concerns about the proposed model of locality working raised by partners have been as follows:

9.2 Chairing of Community Forums

9.2.1 Members may be aware that at the County Council meeting on 13th May 2008, an amendment was proposed to the County Council's 'model' terms of reference for Community Forums which would have enabled the Forums to be chaired by an individual other than a District or County Councillor, subject to a majority vote of all relevant County and District Councillors in favour. This amendment was not successful. Officers have taken the view that The Terms of Reference are a framework and not a set of rules and that, as stated in the report to Council, can be amended according to local circumstances and in particular making it clear that Parish and Town Councils have a full and vital role to play. The only issue which cannot be amended in discussions is the question of chairing as this was subject to the specific vote at the Council meeting.

9.2.2 The chairing issue has resulted in some strong expressions of concern, particularly from Kenilworth, Leamington and Warwick Town Councils. In these areas, the existing Safer Neighbourhoods Panels (which are proposed to be extended into Community Forums) are currently chaired by Town Councillors. Whilst extensive discussions have taken place, particularly with the Town Councils to take forward the roll out of the Community Forums, officers are of the view that the issue remains a considerable barrier to bringing these discussions to a successful conclusion. At its meeting on 23rd September 2008, the Warwick Area Committee

was therefore asked to consider recommending to Cabinet that the Council's decision on 13th May 2008 (on this issue alone) should be reconsidered as outlined in paragraph 1.2 above.

9.3. Dilution of Impact of Safer Neighbourhood Panels

- 9.3.1 Some partners have expressed concern that the impact of SNPs and the focus on community safety issues could be diluted by broadening the agenda into wider issues, either making meetings too long, or not focused enough.
- 9.3.2 Many Partners are now reaching an understanding that the SNPs have the potential to work far wider than crime and police-related issues which are as equally important to the local community.

9.4. Decision Making vs Advisory Bodies

- 9.4.1 The intention is that the Community Forums will be advisory bodies, but with strong accountability for ensuring action. On the one hand, Warwick Town Council is strongly lobbying for Community Forums to be decision-making bodies, and on the other, Leamington Town Council for example, is keen to ensure that they are advisory bodies.
- 9.4.2 Partners are reaching an understanding that whilst there will be no formal decision making powers given to Community Forums, that there is a strong focus on accountability and action. As with the current SNPs, each Forum will produce an action plan based on its own priorities, and against each action, an agency will be held responsible for taking that action, and reporting it back to the Forum.

9.5. Division of Leamington Town

- 9.5.1 Leamington Town Council expressed some concern that the division of the town into two Community Forums might perpetuate a 'north/south divide', which is a perception that some feel continues to exist
- 9.5.2 However, there is an acknowledgement that the binding of the town is a unique role of the Town Council, and Town Councillors have now formally agreed to support the implementation of locality working arrangements, subject to the outcome of the 12 month review.

9.6. South Leamington/Whitnash Locality

- 9.6.1 Whitnash and Leamington Town Councils have expressed concerns at the merging of Whitnash and South Leamington into one locality area. Both feel that resources may not be fairly allocated to their area as a result.
- 9.6.2 Both Town Councils have been reassured that there is a review period built into the localities proposals, and this particular issue will be monitored during the first 12 months, and addressed if necessary.

10. **Next Steps**

- 10.1 Whilst negotiation and discussion is ongoing with partners on reaching an agreed approach to taking locality working forward in Warwick District, the following activity will continue in preparation:

- In areas where Community Forums have not yet been agreed, existing Safer Neighbourhoods Panels will continue to be supported (with the exception of Leamington Town Centre) until at least the end of December 2008.
- Arrangements are in hand to launch the first Community Forums in Whitnash and Rural East and West
- Arrangements will be put into place within the County and District Councils to establish joint 'virtual teams' of officers, linked to the 5 localities
- Community development and engagement activity will continue, emphasising the role of Community Forums and the importance of engagement
- Databases of VCS groups are being extended in readiness for promotion of locality working
- Arrangements are being made at a countywide and local level for a joint approach to marketing and publicising locality working
- Locality profiles are being developed to inform the work of the virtual teams and Community Forums
- Locality working will be built into the new Warwick Sustainable Community Strategy, and strong links between locality working, WPEG and the Public Service Board will be made to ensure a continuous 'thread'

10.2 One issue that has arisen is regarding the allocation of the funds that the District Council has held for community safety issues to be allocated by the SNP's. On a number of occasions the Panels have wanted to allocate funds to address issues that they have regarded as important locally but which did not fall within a true definition of community safety. Given the prospect of a wider role for the Panels as community Forum's it is suggested that a review of the basis for allocating any funds is undertaken by the spring of next year.

..... **COMMUNITY FORUM**
Model Terms of Reference

This is a draft for discussion at the first meeting of each Community Forum.

The [insert name] Community Forum is an advisory body which acts as a key vehicle for community engagement within the locality. Members of the public can raise issues of concern and wherever possible, together with relevant agencies, solutions to those concerns can be worked out. The Forum serves the area shown on the attached map

1. PURPOSES

The purposes of the Forum are to:

- a) Help shape the public services in the locality and ensure that these services respond to local needs. This includes the production of a plan identifying agreed key priorities and sharing information about the public services offered in the locality including key service contacts
- b) Agree proposed actions affecting the locality and identify local priorities, including Safer Neighbourhood priorities.
- c) Provide the opportunity for the community to question and challenge public sector service providers about the services that are delivered locally;
- d) Link local people and organisations to the [insert name] Local Strategic Partnership and the Warwickshire Local Area Agreement
- e) Support local councillors in dealing with issues in the locality and in shaping local services
- f) Ensure that relevant information is shared and two-way communication takes place between public sector agencies and local people and organisations
- g) Fulfil the functions of the PACT (Partners and Communities Together) for the locality

2. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

- a) The membership of the Forum is as follows:

The County Councillor(s) for the relevant County electoral division(s)
District/Borough Councillors for the relevant wards
Warwickshire Police and Warwickshire Police Authority
Warwickshire Primary Care Trust

The following will also be invited:

- Town and Parish Council representatives
- Local groups and organisations as agreed by the Forum
- People living and/or working in the locality

b) Forum Members will ensure adequate representation to ensure that the business of the Forum can be progressed

c) The Forum expects its members:-

- To attend all appropriate meetings and work together constructively;
- To action matters allocated to them through the Forum meetings promptly and properly and to be able to report back at subsequent meetings;
- To support and manage the expectations of the local community as regards what can and what cannot be achieved;
- To encourage community engagement in identifying and tackling local issues.

d) The Forum will be chaired by a local Councillor from either Warwickshire County Council or [insert] District/ Borough Council. The Chair will agree the agenda, lead the meeting, facilitate appropriate debate, ensure that priorities are agreed and that progress is reported back. In particular the Chair will ensure that all present have a fair and equal opportunity to participate.

e) The Forum will meet at least four times each year and may hold other meetings as may be necessary.

f) Meetings will be open to the public and will be held in accessible community venues

g) The agenda for meetings and all accompanying papers will be circulated at least 5 working days before the meeting. Late agenda items and/or papers may be accepted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Chair.

Agendas will be set in response to local issues and concerns and may for example include: environmental cleanliness; traffic and road safety; facilities and activities for young people and children; road and pavement maintenance; crime and community safety; public transport; health and social care services; sports, leisure and cultural facilities.

h) Conclusions and Recommendations will be reached by general consensus

i) Notes of all meetings will be circulated within 10 working days and submitted for approval to the next appropriate meeting.

j) [insert organisation name] will provide secretarial and administrative support to the Forum.

k) The principal means of notifying members and others entitled to attend of the time and place of meetings, the agenda and the notes of meetings will be electronically

including publication on the websites of the County Council and the relevant District/Borough Council

3. REVIEW

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually