

Report to: Darlaston Local Neighbourhood Partnership

Date: 19th July 2004

Local Neighbourhood Partnerships: Guidelines on Selection Processes for Locally Appointed Partners (LAPs)

Summary of Report

Enclosed is a report to Cabinet which sets out suggestions, work to date and a proposed way forward for establishing a set of principles and criteria for determining the selection of locally appointed partners (LAPs), in an equitable, open and transparent manner.

Recommendations

That the Partnership note the contents and recommendations of the enclosed report to Cabinet, and endorse the proposed approach to the selection of locally appointed partners (LAPs).



CABINET
14 JULY 2004

**AGENDA
ITEM:**

**LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIPS: GUIDELINES ON
SELECTION PROCESSES FOR LOCALLY APPOINTED PARTNERS
(LAPS)**

Ward(s): ALL

Forward Plan: NO

Portfolio: Community Involvement and Access to Services - Cllr Gary Clarke

Service Area: All

Summary of report: Each Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNP) will have an executive board which consists of all ward members for the LNP administration area, four council appointed partners and up to ten locally appointed partners.

This report details suggestions, work to date and a way forward for establishing a set of principles and criteria for selecting locally appointed partners (LAPs) in an equitable, open and transparent manner.

Background Papers:

Report to Cabinet – 14 September 2003, Consultation on Local Governance Arrangements in Walsall

Report to Council – 12 January 2004, Leader of the Council's Proposals for the Establishment of Nine Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

Report to council – 19 April 2004, Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

Report to Cabinet – 12 May 2004, Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs) – Progress Update

Recommendations

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To agree the draft set of principles, criteria and general approach towards the selection of locally appointed partners to Local Neighbourhood Partnerships' executive boards as the basis of the forthcoming selection process.
3. To delegate to the Executive Director, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Involvement & Access to Services, responsibility to finalise those principles and selection criteria.

Signed:

Signed:

Executive Director: Jamie Morris

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Gary Clarke

Date: 05.07.04

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Resource and Legal Considerations

Council on the 19 April 2004 approved the report setting out the constitutional framework and terms of reference within which LNPs will operate as drafted by the Head of Legal Services.

Budgetary provision has been made in the current year for set up costs of the new LNPs. In addition Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership (WBSP) has also agreed to contribute to the funding of LNPs.

Citizen Impact

LNPs will provide a key mechanism for the authority to consult with its citizens, establishing a vehicle both for the council and partners, to focus service delivery within localities and specific neighbourhoods. They will also provide an opportunity for local residents to become more involved in matters that affect their life and area through an action planning process designed to establish an action plan for the area and by attending LNP meetings. All local citizens and members of the public will be entitled to attend partnership meetings and raise issues and ask questions.

Environment Impact

One of the key objectives for each LNP will be to 'increase local residents' involvement in the area and to involve local people in improving the environment in which people live and work.' Actions within the individual plans of the nine LNPs will outline environmental improvements in line with the council's vision priority to "ensure a clean and green borough".

Performance Management and Risk Management Issues

Following consultation with local residents, partner organisations and businesses, each LNP will produce an action plan for their area. Each plan will be managed and monitored and progress published annually consistent with the council's performance management arrangements.

Equality Implications

An important underpinning value of LNPs is the commitment to engage all sections of the community and to ensure that all contributions are valued. Discussions are currently underway with the Community Empowerment Network and Walsall Voluntary Action, to ensure that local communities, voluntary and community groups can effectively engage with LNPs.

Consultation

There has been considerable and widespread consultation on all issues relating to LNPs with over 100 organisations involved in the initial proposals to establish LNPs. Since the council report of the 12 January 2004, officers have been meeting regularly to progress the matter and have sought guidance through the LNP Steering group and the LNP Member Reference Group. A Partner Reference Group has also been set up to facilitate input from the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership.

All above groups were consulted on the proposals within this document.

Vision 2008

The establishment of local neighbourhood partnerships is a specific pledge to support priority number 9 of the Vision; to “listen to what local people want”.

Furthermore, LNPs can be considered one of the vehicles for delivering the Vision for 2008, as action plans developed by each of the nine LNPs are based on the Visions identified themes.

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1. MEMBERSHIP OF LNP EXECUTIVE BOARDS

- 1.1 Each Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNP) will have an executive board, consisting of all ward members for the LNP administration area, four council appointed partners and up to ten locally appointed partners.
- 1.2 Council appointed partners (CAPs) are common to all LNPs and have a remit which is borough wide. In this instance CAPs have been identified as West Midlands Police, Walsall Primary Care Trust and Primary & Secondary School Head Teachers. Locally appointed partners (LAPs) are partners who will be relevant to a particular LNP area and who may only have a focussed remit within that one locality.
- 1.3 This approach has been designed to reflect the reality of different diverse communities, in that each LNP through the partnership will be able to consider themes and service delivery which may be common to all areas of the borough, but also issues pertinent to that particular area. To encourage this approach, there is therefore, a need to ensure the diversification of representation on each of the nine executive LNP groups. This will be achieved through the appointment of locally appointed partners who reflect local circumstances. There is a need however, to ensure that their appointment is conducted in an open and transparent manner which can be achieved through the adoption of a consistent borough wide selection process.

2. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES FOR APPOINTING LAPS

- 2.1 It is suggested that each LNP should seek to obtain as wide as possible a representation of views on the LNP, so that there is true accountability for the decision making process, making local government more relevant. As LNPs will form the key local mechanism for consultation and engagement with citizens, it is important that the core membership of the executive board includes groups and organisations that are active within the community. How this is done will help send out the message to the wider community that all sections of the community can be involved if they so wish and that their contribution will be valued.
- 2.2 Equally, it is important that each LNP appoints LAPs that reflect the different communities that each LNP serves, ensuring that issues of diversity and inclusiveness are addressed. Each area is different with different needs.
- 2.3 Once the executive is established, with ward members, CAPs and LAPs in place, it is likewise important that there is a commitment to sharing responsibility and accountability across the executive group, and that all action is conducted in an open and transparent manner.

3. PREPARING TO IDENTIFY AND APPOINT LAPS

- 3.1 It is suggested that membership should come from organisations and individuals in the community covered by the specific LNP, and whose interests, knowledge and experience is likely to be relevant to the process of developing, and then implementing the LNPs local neighbourhood action plans.

3.2 Furthermore, it is suggested that several issues should be considered, when evaluating potential LAPs. These should include:

- willingness to participate in the LNP development programme
- the ability to work with other organisations / agencies to develop projects and programmes via action plans that will deliver realistic solutions, develop trust and improve confidence to deliver to the partnerships mutual benefit.
- organisations or individuals active within the area that have a direct and significant contribution to make to improve the area.
- organisations or individuals which will be able to contribute to and develop, structures for determining added value or be lead organisations for different action priorities via possible sub-groups.
- organisations which are broadly representative of the area and will offer a framework for co-operation.
- the ability to respond to changing needs / issues, reflecting shifting priorities and changes
- relevance to the specific area

4. SUGGESTED APPROACH TO SELECTING LAPs

4.1 As it is a key responsibility of ward members to involve and engage with local people, it is suggested that the responsibility of co-ordinating the appointment of LAPs should rest in each case with the implementation teams for the specific LNP. This will aid coherence and consistency of approach

4.2 In each case, all suggestions for LAP membership should be gathered by the specific implementation team and discussion leading to appointment should be via a structured 'selection panel' approach (incorporating selection criteria, reflective of the purpose of the LNP and the underlying principles set out above) rather than via an election process. It is suggested that elections, whilst superficially attractive, may be inappropriate – making it very difficult to provide a truly representative, diverse set of LAPs (without very cumbersome 'electoral college' structures), suggesting by-elections in due course, producing 'winners' and losers' rather than seeking to involve as wide a range of interests and groups in the work of an LNP through its executive board and sub-groups.

4.3 Consideration is required on the precise make up of a 'selection panel' – particularly in this initial pre-selection phase where LNP executives clearly will not have LAPs. In each of the LNP areas, executive boards might wish to consider establishing a sub-group, consisting of a range of interested parties – including perhaps one of the ward members, plus one of the CAPs – which might (with the addition of other representatives from perhaps the Community Empowerment Network or other representative group) form a selection panel of 5.

4.4 Eligibility to be selected should be clear, and the process transparent. Publicity should be effective – clear and timely – so that those who may be interested in

being involved are aware of the process, and know how to access the process. This should stress, as above, that the selection process is not a case of all or nothing, so that a place on the executive is not the only goal.

- 4.5 The process should also provide an opportunity for interested parties to say what they have achieved for the LNP area in the past, and currently. This process should allow those interested, the opportunity to say why they want to be involved, and what their immediate priorities might be.

5 FINALISING THE SELECTION PROCESS

- 5.1 Following agreement at both the LNP Member Steering Group and LNP Partner Reference Group, it was recommended that the precise selection criteria, based on the above principles, should be developed in consultation with existing community groups and voluntary organisations. Thereby giving potential locally appointed partners an opportunity to contribute to the setting up of a fair and transparent process, and encouraging participation in the development of LNPs.
- 5.2 Subsequently, a series of facilitated workshops with ward members, community groups and voluntary organisations have taken place over a two day period (1 July and 2 July 2004) whereby comments were invited on this issue. Using the above principles and proposed criteria as the basis for the selection process, discussions were held and comments invited to determine the exact selection criteria and methodology for appointing local partners. Comments were recorded and will be reviewed along with the existing framework to determine an improved draft version and model selection process which will undergo further consultation with the existing LNP Member and Partner Reference groups to finalise selection criteria.