

Cabinet – 23 March 2005

Resources for Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

Portfolio:	Cllr Zahid Ali
Service Area:	Community Engagement and Organisational Development
Wards:	All
Forward Plan:	No

Summary of report

This report highlights the council's plans for allocating £250,000 to support projects that have been identified in local neighbourhood partnership plans. It also outlines arrangements that will assist LNP's to attract external funding and ensure that they can influence the use of mainstream resources.

Recommendations

- 1) Cabinet approve the arrangements for the allocation and use of £250,000 to support projects identified in local neighbourhood partnership plans, as outlined in Section 4 and **Appendix 1** of this report.
- 2) Cabinet welcome the arrangements for supporting LNP's and partners in seeking external funding.
- 3) Cabinet encourage the members of WBSP to ensure that there is a mechanism for links to be made between their mainstream service and financial planning processes and LNP's.

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. Budgetary provision has been made in the current year for set up costs of the new LNPs.

Financial resources are being set aside to assist the LNPs in implementing their local neighbourhood plans. It will be important to ensure that these resources are linked to the local priorities which will be set out in the plans and this report outlines how this will work.

Citizen Impact

LNPs 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 also provide an opportunity for local residents to become more involved in their neighbourhoods by attending the quarterly partnership meetings. All local citizens and members of the public are entitled to attend partnership meetings and

raise issues and ask questions. LNPs offer citizens the opportunity to affect local concerns, and identify local priorities and issues aimed at producing a local neighbourhood plan for the area.

Community Safety

The LNPs provide the Council with the opportunity to consult with local people on issues relating to crime and disorder. This local perspective can then be used to inform the content of the borough wide Crime and Disorder Strategy and reduce crime and fear of crime in Walsall.

Environment Impact

One of the key objectives for LNPs is to increase local residents' involvement in the area and to involve local people in improving the environment where they live and work. A direct example of this in action relates to the identified and planned clean-up days within each partnership area. Further action will also be determined through the continuing action planning process, which is likely to outline environmental improvements to be included within the local neighbourhood plan which will be in line with the council's vision priority to "ensure a clean and green borough".

Performance Management and Risk Management Issues

Following the completion of the consultation exercise with local residents, partner organisations and businesses, each LNP will produce a local neighbourhood plan for their area. Each plan will be managed and monitored, with a progress report published annually, and 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 continue to effectively engage with LNPs.

Consultation

There has been considerable and widespread consultation on all issues relating to LNPs and at all implementation stages, since their inception in January 2004. For example, over 100 organisations were involved in the initial proposals and regular meetings were held with council officers, members and partners all throughout the initial project implementation phase. Now that each LNP has become 'live', a partnership forum meeting is also now in existence, allowing good practice to be shared amongst support teams. All groups meet regularly to review progress and to comment on proposals and developments.

Consultation on a wider scale is also now underway within each individual LNP, as part of the development of the local neighbourhood plan. The specific proposals in this report for the allocation of resources were shared with the LNP chairs forum on 21 February 2005 and were broadly welcomed.

Vision 2008

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

Furthermore, LNPs will have a central role in delivering the Vision for 2008, as the local neighbourhood plans developed by each of the nine LNPs are based on the Visions identified themes.

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
- Report to Cabinet – 14 July 2004, Local Neighbourhood Partnerships: Guidelines on Selection Processes for Locally Appointed Partners (LAPs)
- Report to Cabinet – 19 January 2005, Implementing Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

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Signed

Signed

Executive Director: Jamie Morris

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Zahid Ali

Date: 4 March 2005

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1 Progress to date

At its meeting of 19 January 2005, Cabinet confirmed the 'one-off' allocation of £250,000 to support the implementation of LNP's and the delivery of local partnership plans.

It will be fundamentally important for the credibility of each of the nine LNP's, that any resources that they are able to access are demonstrably and explicitly linked to the local priorities that will be agreed as part of the local neighbourhood plans which are due to be finalised in January 2005, and that these address the council's vision and objectives for the future.

This report outlines the proposed arrangements for the allocation and use of this £250,000. It also highlights the need for LNP's to be able to influence the mainstream service and financial plans of the council and its partners and it also describes the support and assistance that the council plans offer to assist LNP's to attract external funding.

2 Influencing mainstream service and financial plans

There is more than one billion pounds spent annually on public services in Walsall and therefore the main 'financial prize' for LNP's is to seek to influence how these resources are used in support of locally determined priorities and plans for the communities in Walsall.

The local neighbourhood plans, currently being developed by each LNP, will feed into the council's own service plans for next year and will therefore be able to influence mainstream spend during 2005/6 and future years.

More work is needed to do the same for our partner organisations and the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership will be encouraged to ensure that there are explicit and transparent links between their service and financial planning processes and that of the council's to ensure that LNP priorities can be considered alongside other priorities.

Work is underway to seek to understand and synchronise the financial and service planning timetables of the council and our partner organisations and it would be helpful if Cabinet were to formally encourage WBSP partners to support such an approach.

3 Attracting external funding

The council will offer pro-active support in encouraging and assisting the council and locally appointed partners (CAP's and LAP's) to apply for additional funding from other sources that LNP's, as committees of the council, are precluded from (e.g. Big Lottery Fund, Young People's fund etc) in support of local partnership plan priorities.

It is anticipated that the council's newly enhanced external funding team will provide the following support for LNP's

- Weekly 'hot news' funding opportunity sheet to nominated contact(s) within each LNP (who may wish to appoint a local 'funding champion')
- Funding toolkit for LNP's in the form of a hard copy booklet and available on the internet

- Funding workshops to be held at the 'big event' for LNP's, planned for 23 June 2005
- Named contact person within external funding team focussed on support for LNP's
- A series of funding surgeries to be held locally within each LNP area over the next 18 months
- Knowledge and expertise from successful partnership

4 Initial allocation of £250,000 of 'one-off' resources

Cabinet on 19 January 2005 confirmed the allocation of £250,000 as a one-off sum to support the implementation of LNP's and delivery of local plans.

The details of how this allocation might best be used have been considered in detail by the LNP officer project steering group and were shared with the LNP Chairs Forum on 21 February, where they were broadly welcomed.

The overall aim of the approach is to seek a simple and transparent system with a minimum level of bureaucracy, that also demonstrates accountability and stewardship for public funds and a proper audit trail. The proposal is as follows:

In order to reflect the fact that not all LNP's are of the same size, it is proposed that the two Ward LNP's receive £22,000 each and that the three Ward LNP's receive £33,000 each. This leaves £30,000 for schemes and project that can demonstrate joint working across more than one LNP.

Proposed allocation of one-off resources

▪ Aldridge South and Streetly -	£22,000
▪ Blakenall and Bloxwich -	£33,000
▪ Brownhills and Aldridge North -	£22,000
▪ Darlaston -	£22,000
▪ Palfrey and Pleck -	£22,000
▪ Pelsall and Rushall Shelfield -	£22,000
▪ Pheasey and Paddock -	£22,000
▪ St. Matthew's and Birchilss Leamore -	£22,000
▪ Willenhall -	£33,000
▪ Cross and Joint LNP working -	£30,000
▪ Total -	£250,000

It will then be for each LNP to decide how this allocation should be used to best effect locally, in accordance with local needs and priorities.

To help to decide which projects and schemes should receive financial support from these allocations the checklist attached as **Appendix 1** has been produced. A positive answer to most questions should help each LNP to justify and prioritise the need to spend scarce

resources as well as demonstrate appropriate accountability. The key questions included in the checklist cover the following:

- Resources must be for 'one-off' items that will have visible local impact
- Must be a demonstrable link to priorities identified in LNP local plan
- Must be a demonstrable link to Council Vision 2008 priorities
- Must not be contrary to council policy
- What is the impact of the proposed spending – e.g. who will benefit, how will they benefit, numbers of people who will benefit?
- Does the spending provide Value for Money?
- Will the proposed spending lever in any 'match funding' from other partners or other agencies?
- Any resources allocated will need a named officer responsible for spending the money in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules/Contract Procedure Rules.

For most LNPs, the task groups that have been established in order to produce the local partnership plans are likely to be best placed to complete the checklist in the first instance. Options will then need to be prioritised and approved by the LNP before spending commences.

The LNP's officers project group will maintain an overview of these financial plans across the nine LNP's in order to ensure that there is consistency of practice where appropriate. Once approved, the responsibility for 'ordering' the work, spending the money and reporting back on it's impact will be that of the relevant service manager within the council. This should enable these LNP resources to be used most effectively alongside existing mainstream budgets.

March 2005