

## **Report of the Cheshire Local Agreement Group**

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### **Cheshire Partnerships Framework - Support Arrangements**

#### **1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To scope the support requirements of the Cheshire Partnerships Framework, outline interim support arrangements for the Communities of Cheshire Partnership and highlight initial issues.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1 Over the last ten months, the Chief Executives of the seven Cheshire local authorities have been working with the seven Cheshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Chairs on a new model for partnership working across Cheshire. The outcome of this work is a new Cheshire Partnerships Framework which attempts to provide a more integrated and better co-ordinated structure through which partners can work more effectively.
- 2.2 Development of the new Framework has been driven in part, but not entirely, by the need for robust partnership arrangements that can accommodate the development, negotiation, agreement, delivery and monitoring of the new Cheshire-wide Local Area Agreement which needs to in place by April 2007.
- 2.3 It is also designed to better enable LSPs to fulfil their core responsibilities, particularly community planning, more effectively.
- 2.4 The Framework consists of a number of elements, most notably the:
- Communities of Cheshire Partnership
  - District Local Strategic Partnerships
  - Cheshire-wide Thematic Partnerships
  - District-based Thematic Partnerships
  - Governance Board

#### **3 Support Needs**

- 3.1 For the Framework to operate effectively, robust and sustainable support arrangements are needed across all elements. At this stage, three particular aspects of officer support have been identified though it is recognised that the support needs for partnership working, particularly in relation to professional matters (e.g. legal, financial, personnel, etc) will increase in line with the expectations being placed on partnerships.
- 3.2 The three initial areas of support relate to:

- Management and Administration – this includes:
  - development of the respective partnership;
  - facilitating working arrangements;
  - supporting the Chair of the respective partnership;
  - agenda management;
  - preparing reports and developing recommendations for action;
  - secretarial support – including convening meetings; booking venues / refreshments; preparing, printing and distributing agendas; attending meetings; recording and interpreting the debate; preparing and distributing notes of meetings; and planning, organising and administering activities and events, etc.
- Research, intelligence and consultation - to enable the framework to understand community needs, expectations and priorities and set these against a local, regional and national context.
- Performance management – to provide advice, guidance and information on appropriate outcomes, indicators and targets and to track and support the reporting of performance against these.

3.3 The Framework does incorporate a number of Cheshire-wide groups potentially able to provide support in relation to specific activities - such as research, intelligence, consultation activity and performance management. These areas of support are the subject of separate reports.

3.4 In addition to the various types of officer support required by the Framework, there is also a need for financial resourcing through the establishment of an operational budget for the Framework. The extent of the financial resource required is currently under investigation but is likely to include:

- expenses (and possible remuneration) for the Chair of the Communities of Cheshire Partnership;
- printing, stationery and postage;
- venue hire and refreshments;
- conference costs;
- equipment (e.g. IT);
- ad hoc initiatives deemed a priority for the partnership (e.g. small grant funds).

#### **4 Short Term Managerial and Administrative Support**

4.1 In the short term, the Local Area Agreement Group and the Cheshire Community Planning Network (which both comprise officers from all seven local authorities in Cheshire) will provide interim collective management and administrative support to the Communities of Cheshire Partnership and the Governance Board.

4.2 This will include access to professional advice until such time as more permanent arrangements are established.

- 4.3 It is suggested these arrangement be maintained until the first review of the partnership takes place.
- 4.5 The intention should be that permanent support arrangements should be identified to be in place by the time of the review.
- 4.6 Further work is needed to identify the core support needs of the other constituent bodies of the Cheshire Partnerships Framework.

## **5 Long Term Issues for Consideration**

### **5.1 Issue 1**

Should each of the elements of the new framework have its own support arrangements or should there be a collective that supports the whole framework as one unit?

### **5.2 Issue 2**

To what extent is “independent” support appropriate or necessary (i.e. support arrangements reporting directly to the partnership framework, not “hosted” by the local authorities as is currently the case?

### **5.3 Issue 3**

How should support arrangements be provided / funded?  
If it is independent of the local authotties how should it be provided / funded?  
By the authorities, by contributions from the partners or by “top slicing” funding from the local area agreement.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Communities of Cheshire Partnership:

- i) agree the interim support proposals for the Communities of Cheshire Partnership highlighted in paragraph 4; and
- ii) receive further reports on the issues raised under paragraph 5.