

COMMUNITIES OF CHESHIRE PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING HELD ON 6 APRIL 2006 AT THE BARN, TATTON PARK, KNUTSFORD

PRESENT: Helen Carey, Interim Independent Chair

LSP Representatives:

Chester:	Robin Wendt, Chair Paul Durham, Chief Executive, Chester City Council
Congleton:	Bill Owen, Chair Glyn Chambers, Chief Executive, Congleton Borough Council
Crewe & Nantwich:	John Bowler, Chair Alan Wenham, Chief Executive, Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council
Ellesmere Port & Neston:	Kate Thomas (representing Gordon McGuinness, Chair)
Macclesfield:	Dick Macaulay, Chair Vivienne Horton, Chief Executive, Macclesfield Borough Council
Vale Royal:	Anne Bingham-Holmes, Chief Executive, Vale Royal Borough Council

Other CCP Member Body Representatives:

Cheshire Safer Stronger Communities Partnership	Peter Fahy, Chair
Cheshire Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership	Joan Feenan, Vice Chair
Cheshire & Warrington Economic Alliance	Martin Lee, Chief Executive
Sustainable Cheshire Forum	Chris Mahon, Chair
Cheshire Healthier Communities Group	Cathy Reynolds (representing John Weeks, Chair)
Cheshire County Council	Jeremy Taylor, Chief Executive

Support Staff

Alison Armstrong, Lisa Green, Jim Tunley and Marion Kennerley, Gordon Hamilton (CCC); Chris Boulton and Cathy Boyd; (VRBC) Jenny Smith (MBC); Sean Daley and Mark Blunsum (EPNBC); Syd Jones (Chester); Linda Perry and Craig Nicholson (CBC); Su Turner and Bernadette Hurst (CNBC)

Observers

Jacquie Grinham, Macclesfield LSP
Clíodhna Mulhern and Ann Riley, Audit Commission

1.0 CHESHIRE PARTNERSHIPS FRAMEWORK – AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOLS

The Chair introduced this item declaring that the Agreement and new Partnership arrangements represented a seminal moment for Cheshire. Partnership members were invited to comment on the Agreement and Protocols and to suggest any amendments necessary.

AGREED:

That subject to the grammatical correction of paragraph 6.2, the Cheshire Partnerships Framework Agreement and Protocols, including the principal functions and terms of reference of the key constituent bodies, be formally approved and adopted. The documents were accordingly signed by the nominated representatives of the constituent bodies of the CCP.

2.0 CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNITIES OF CHESHIRE PARTNERSHIP (CCP)

The Partnership considered the text of the Constitution and commented on paragraphs 13.1 and 4.

AGREED:

- (1) That subject to the following amendments, the Constitution of the Communities of Cheshire be formally approved and adopted. The documents were accordingly signed by the nominated representatives of the constituent bodies:

Amendments:

Para 13.1: Insert three sectors and six Members (members being the nominated representatives of the constituent bodies of the CCP).

Para 4: Member body to mean constituent bodies of the CCP and if not a member body or a nominated member, then not an accredited representative.

- (2) That the local authority constituent bodies on the CCP take it in turn to host meetings of the CCP.

3.0 PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITIES OF CHESHIRE PARTNERSHIP

The LAA Group had been requested to suggest principles and criteria to be used in filling the remaining six places on the CCP and the procedure to be adopted to achieve this, which were considered by the CCP. The importance of representation by the Voluntary sector was stressed. Anne Bingham-Holmes reported a request received that day from the Fire Service requesting their inclusion in the CCP.

AGREED:

- (1) That the principles and criteria suggested be used to decide on the remaining six places on the CCP.
- (2) That a Membership Sub Group of the CCP be established to consider written applications for and make recommendations to the Partnership on the remaining six places on the CCP. It was suggested that the Sub Group should comprise one Chief Executive, one LSP Chair, one LAA Group representative and two others.
- (3) That all remaining member organisations of the former Cheshire Partnership networks be notified of the criteria and principles (and constitutional requirements) for membership and be invited to submit written applications for the final six places on the CCP.
- (4) That, in view of the importance of Community and Voluntary Sector representation, the LAA Group be asked to explore how this could best be achieved, at all levels of the Partnership Framework.

4.0 SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS AND OPTIONS – MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The Partnership considered a report outlining resourcing issues relating to the management, administration and operation of the constituent bodies of the Cheshire Partnerships Framework. These matters were considered to be key issues by many of the representatives present and particularly by the LSP Chairs who had raised them earlier. Comments included the following:

- The Cheshire Safer Stronger Communities Partnership had considered that it needed and had thus made its own data sharing support arrangements.
- Collective support for the whole framework made sense.
- Funding could be found by top-slicing LAA funding and/or by using second homes taxation funds.
- The Chief Executive of the Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance (CWEA) expressed significant and urgent concern about support issues if it were expected to lead on the Economic Development and Enterprise thematic block.
- Pilot LAA areas' experience of support units should be considered.
- Cheshire Constabulary was happy to contribute to a support unit.
- Audit Commission representatives confirmed that their experience indicates that the more mature LSPs are supported by appropriately skilled professional teams.
- When looking at resources and mapping current support it is necessary to consider support and contributions already being made in the round and whether these could be made/used differently.
- District LSPs were urged to accept the spirit of the Partnership Framework which underpins the whole philosophy by taking part in the county-wide as well as local administration.

- Capacity improvement funding from Congleton Borough Council might be available to assist with resources.
- Proper resourcing is essential and timing is critical. Funding may be easier to find from April 2007 (when LAA funding will commence) but an acceptable interim solution was needed until that time.

AGREED:

- (1) That the LAA Group's offer to provide interim administrative arrangements for the CCP and the Governance Board be accepted.
- (2) That the aim be to provide funding and resourcing for collective administrative and management arrangements for the whole Partnership Framework.
- (3) That the LAA Group prepare further reports for the CCP on the issues and make recommendations accordingly.
- (4) That the offer of Anne Bingham-Holmes, Chief Executive of Vale Royal Borough Council and Glyn Chambers, Chief Executive of Congleton Borough Council, and Martin Lee, Chief Executive of CWEA, to meet to discuss the proposed role for the CWEA in the Partnership Framework in the context of the LAA, with a view to resolving the issues involved, be accepted.

5.0 APPOINTMENT OF CCP CHAIR – RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND JOB DESCRIPTION

The CCP considered a proposed detailed job description and person specification for the recruitment of a Chair to the CCP, including indicative hours' work likely to be involved (24 days per annum) and possible remuneration levels (from £3000 to £8,500) in line with the varying Basic Allowances for elected members of local authorities.

The Partnership members present supported a wide and inclusive recruitment process but were less supportive of remuneration for the post (except for expenses which it was felt should be reimbursed).

AGREED:

- (1) That the job description, person specification and recruitment processes outlined be approved.
- (2) That a Recruitment Sub-Group be established, comprising:

Robin Wendt, Chair, Chester LSP
 Peter Fahy, Chair, Cheshire Safer Stronger Communities Group
 Jeremy Taylor, Chief Executive, Cheshire County Council
 Martin Lee, Chief Executive, Cheshire & Warrington Economic Alliance
 Lisa Green, LAA Group

- (3) That the Recruitment Sub-Group be granted full delegated authority to agree and take forward the recruitment and advertising process and all related issues as swiftly as possible and to make a recommendation as to appointment to the next meeting of the CCP.

6.0 CHESHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Partnership considered the draft Strategy, vision and outcomes which had been identified through consultation. The Strategy would represent an amalgamation of district based sustainable community plans and strategies and other key strategic plans. The Cheshire Sustainable Community Strategy would be a most powerful and important document and would form the basis of LAA priorities and key action plans for the Thematic Groups to progress. Comments on the draft document included the following:

- Vision – consider amending:
 - ACTIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SAFE – should “culture” be changed to “identity”?
 - FAIR FOR EVERYONE – to read: for all our communities, now and in the future.
- Local Development Frameworks need to play into the strategy.
- Flexibility is needed for districts’ priorities to change – this to happen via annual review and three yearly revision.
- The impact of immigration on communities to be considered.
- Sport, culture, history dimensions not strongly represented – correct balance needed.
- Consider the importance of shared outcomes which have impacts on several areas.

AGREED:

That the draft Cheshire Sustainable Community Strategy, subject to the amendments now referred to above, be:

- i) approved in principle for use as a working framework;
- ii) specifically considered by the district LSPs and Thematic Groups as a matter of some urgency (in view of the demanding emerging LAA timetable) in order to achieve total ownership of agreed priorities; and
- iii) finally submitted for approval at the next CCP meeting.

7.0 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

The Partnership received a presentation on Guidance for Round 3 Local Area Agreements and lessons learned from pilot LAAs.

The key messages from pilots included:

- Effective planning, consultation and communication are vital.
- Identify staffing requirements and double them!
- Project management and performance management are crucial.

- Regular meetings with community and voluntary sectors are essential.
- Stakeholder conferences are important

The timescale for Round 3 LAAs (including Cheshire) would be:

- By the end of June 2006 – need collectively agreed high level outcomes
- July – September 2006 – develop sub-outcomes and measures and performance measures
- End of September 2006 - submit first draft LAA to Government Office North West (GONW)
- End December 2006 – final draft LAA to GONW
- February 2007 – Ministerial sign- off of LAA
- 1 April 2007 – LAA goes live

It was particularly stressed that the demanding timetable allowed only two months from now to agree the high level outcomes which would need to be agreed at the next meeting of the CCP.

Government Office negotiators had been identified for all LAA themes with Nigel Burke as the Lead Adviser/Negotiator. A GONW negotiator for any environmental outcomes would be identified if these were to feature in the LAA.

8.0 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT / RESEARCH AND INFORMATION NEEDS

Mark Blunsum, Chair of the Cheshire Performance Practitioners Group, summarised his Group's report to the CCP which gave an overview of performance management frameworks for LAAs, updated on progress in this respect by two tier pilots and on related work being undertaken by the Group and proposed a timetable for the future development of performance management arrangements for a Cheshire LAA.

Gordon Hamilton, Chair of the Cheshire Information Liaison Group (CILG) summarised his Group's report which reviewed current Research and Intelligence activity across the Partnership Framework and promoted the case for developing a co-ordination group to support the wide-ranging needs of the LAA/ LSP work programmes.

Both Groups were liaising over these issues.

AGREED:

- (1) That the work undertaken by both Groups thus far to underpin the LAA and the Cheshire Partnerships Framework be noted and further progress reports be presented to future meetings.

- (2) That the timetable for delivering the performance management framework for the Cheshire LAA be revisited in view of the latest Round 3 Guidance and associated timescales.
- (3) That the proposed development of a Research and Intelligence Co-ordination Group be supported and progressed.

9.0 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME AND DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Partnership received a tabled draft outline of a future work programme for the CCP in 2006/07 (attached).

This prompted a question regarding the expectations and reporting requirements for the Cheshire Safer Stronger Communities Partnership and others and a reinforcing comment that the CCP needed to focus its collective efforts on the big strategic issues and, most importantly, the priorities for the LAA.

AGREED:

That the LAA Group produce a diagram depicting reporting arrangements and relationships across the Partnership Framework.

10.0 DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Meetings would be held on an eight weekly schedule to be circulated, the next meeting to be after the Whitsun holiday week.

Signed (Interim Chair).....

Draft Outline Work Programme – 2006/07

Version 1.0 as of 06/04/2006

	Partnership development	Local Area Agreement	Other issues
April to June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Chair • Recruitment of CCP vacancies • Operating agreement • Communications framework • Performance management framework • Support arrangements 	Engagement with stakeholders about priority outcomes for the LAA	Local government white paper
July to September 2006		First draft of LAA put together for submission to GONW	
October to December 2006		Draft LAA “refined” through discussions between partners and with GONW	
January to March 2007		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAA ‘offer’ prepared for approval • LAA approved 	
April to June 2007	First annual report	Implementation of LAA begins	
July to September 2007		Six-monthly performance review of LAA	Spending Review 2007