

West Cheshire Together

Working in partnership for local people

Report title	Reshaping the Partnerships Landscape: Revision of West Cheshire Together Partnerships Framework
Description	Following discussions with partners about the need to reshape the West Cheshire Together Framework to respond to the changing context, this document sets out the principles and outlines the suggested initial changes to our partnerships framework.
Document purpose	This report set out the changing context for consideration of how we should be shaping our partnerships landscape. Following consideration of the priorities of the Coalition Government around partnership working, suggestions as to how the partnership landscape for West Cheshire should adapt are made, including refocusing the purpose and working arrangements of key groups.
Circulation list	West Cheshire Together Joint Thematic Leads and Area Partnership Board Chairs Group
Decision/Action required	Partners are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Comment on the direction of travel set out in the accompanying paper. b. Consider whether or not these proposed changes should be recommended to West Cheshire Together Steering Group on 14 April 2011.
Author	Andrea Mageean
Contact details	01244 977561 andrea.mageean@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Publication date	28 February 2011

1.0 Background

At its meeting on 20 December 2010 the Thematic Leads group agreed that the West Cheshire Together Partnerships framework needed to evolve in response to the changing context. A subgroup met on 14 January 2011 to review discuss the principles for this review. These are set out below along with the proposed initial changes.

2.0 Principles underpinning the design of future arrangements

The following principles have underpinned the suggested revisions to the West Cheshire Together partnerships framework:

- a. Our revised structure should complement the structures emerging at sub-national and local levels, in particular we need to be sure we can support elements of the local working agenda for which it makes sense to have a West Cheshire focus eg establishing robust performance management arrangements.
- b. We should be looking to simplify and provide greater focus to our partnership structure
- c. The focus for partnership activity at the West Cheshire level should be on providing directive and focused leadership, and making more explicit the strategic commitment required from partners.
- d. Some themes are best addressed at sub-national level. We have re-shaped our Thematic Partnerships to reflect this.
- e. Specific issues requiring direct action at the West Cheshire level will be taken forward by task and finish groups.
- f. We need to have a robust programme of priorities, identify clear goals for the short, medium and long term and, at least initially, be satisfied with doing a small number of things well.
- g. We need to continue to commit to building strong relationships in partnership, investing time and energy in creating a climate where partners can be candid about their views and differences of opinion.
- h. Our structures should be lean and flexible to support effective decision-making and communications.
- i. We should endeavour to weave into our structure the new and emerging elements of public service working arrangements, such as GP Commissions, as appropriate.
- j. We must recognise and value collaborative activity right across the West Cheshire Together structure as represented by the biannual conference.
- k. We should seek to review our activity regularly, and to learn from both positive and negative experiences.

3.0 Initial changes to the West Cheshire Together Framework

Partners are asked to consider a number of initial changes which will require amendments to our existing agreement and protocols. These changes are summarised in the diagram attached at appendix 1. Further detail is given in the attached document (appendix 2).

- i. The existing West Cheshire Together Steering Group and Joint Thematic Leads/APB Chairs meeting would merge to form the West Cheshire Together Commissioning Board. Its primary aim will be to strengthening and focusing the totality of public service delivery in response to existing and emerging needs.
- ii. The West Cheshire Together bi-annual network event will be retained as the focal point for both disseminating decisions of the Board and for gathering intelligence on issues relevant to the Boards activities.
- iii. The LSP Performance and Risk Mangers Group would be retained initially as a Task and Finish Group aimed at establishing robust performance management arrangements in the vacuum left by the loss of the LAA and CAA.
- iv. The Business Enterprise and Culture and Environmental Sustainability Thematic Partnership will both end, though Task and Finish Groups may be established to address Borough wide issues.
- v. The Health and Wellbeing Thematic Partnership will end and be replaced by the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board from April 2011.
- vi. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership will be retained, though its' position in relation to the Sub-Regional Community Safety and Justice Commission will be reviewed regularly.
- vii. The Stronger Communities Group will be retained as the Big Society Group to coordinate equitable community engagement, support volunteering and promote diversity across West Cheshire.
- viii. The Childrens' Trust will be retained, though membership and focus is under review.
- ix. The terms of reference of the Area Partnership Boards will be reviewed to meet the new demands of enhanced community development, capacity building and engagement; neighbourhood planning; service review, re-design, commissioning and delivery; and scrutiny.

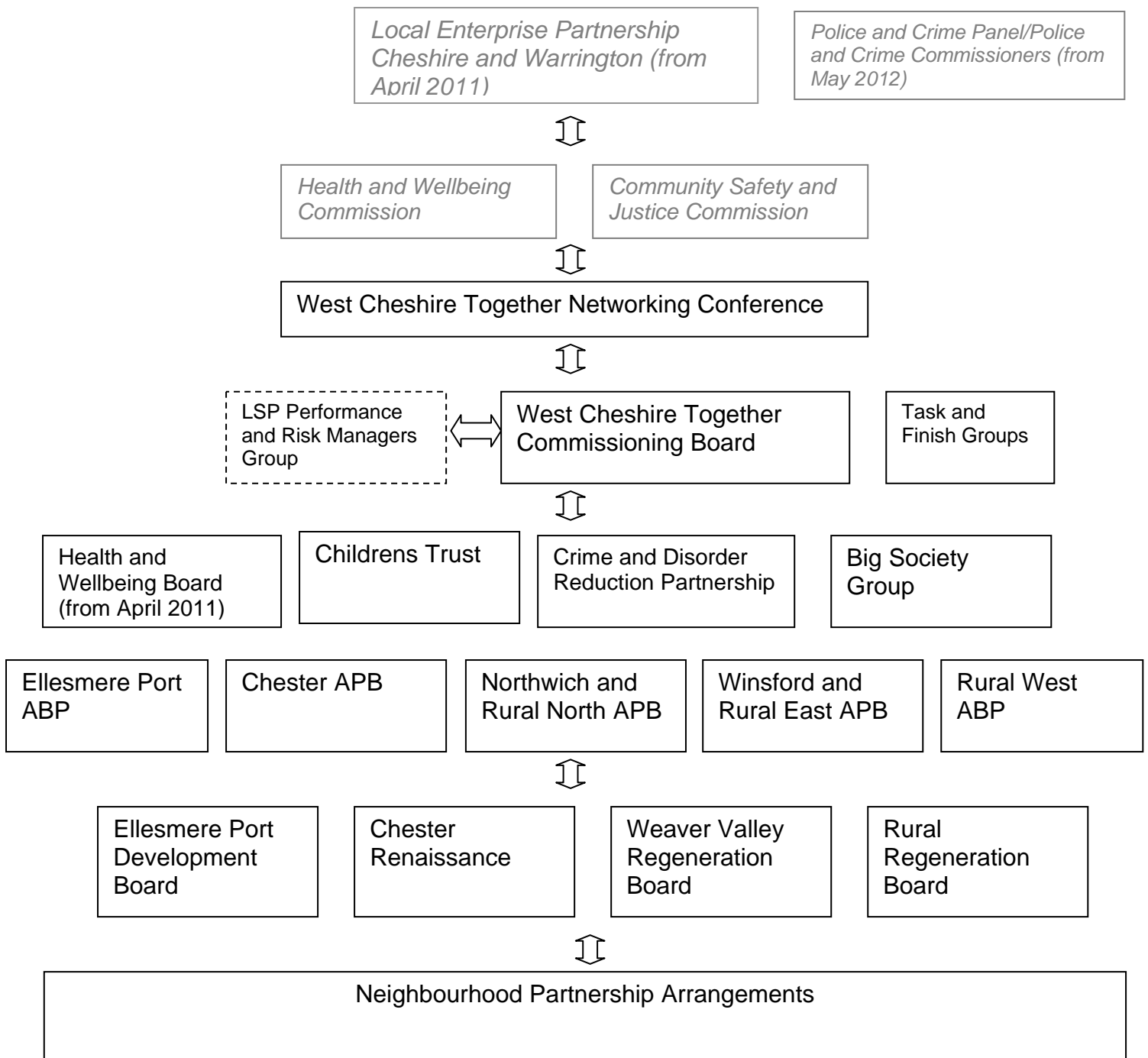
4.0 Next Steps

Partners are asked to:

- a. Comment on the direction of travel set out in this paper.

- b. Consider whether or not these proposed changes should be recommended to West Cheshire Together Steering Group on 14 April 2011.

WEST CHESHIRE TOGETHER PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK (amended February 2011)



NB *These partnerships formally operate outside our framework but should be closely aligned to it.*

CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER PARTNERSHIPS FRAMEWORK

AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOLS

(Revised February 2011)

1. CURRENT AND FUTURE PARTNERSHIP CONTEXT: THE NATIONAL PICTURE

a. Introduction

The wider context for partnership working has changed significantly over the last three years through legislation and subsequent statutory guidance. Alongside substantial **cuts in public spending**, councils and their partners are responding to the emerging **Localism and Devolution agenda**, the '**Big Society**', significant **Health and Policing reforms**, a changing regional and sub-regional landscape (including the replacement of Regional Development Agencies with **Local Enterprise Partnerships**), and the introduction of **Community (Place-Based) Budgets** (initially across 16 local areas) as announced in the Spending Review.

We have also seen, over the last nine months or so, the removal of much of the top down partnership 'wiring'. There has been a complete scaling back of the formerly centralist and prescriptive performance and inspection framework with the abolition of the **Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)**, the end to the system of **Public Service Agreements (PSAs)** and, as of the 12th October, the end of **Local Area Agreements (LAAs)**, along with the demise of the **National Indicator Set**.

b. A shift towards greater local autonomy...localism, localism, localism...

The Coalition Government aspires to 'end the era of top down government' and to devolve more power and control down to the local level.

The reduction in 'top-down' prescription coupled with a Coalition view on the 'localism' agenda, is fundamentally re-directing the focus for partnership working. We are seeing:

- much greater emphasis being placed on 'outward accountability' – being held to account by the citizen rather than by Whitehall (data and transparency agenda);
- renewed interest in localism and devolution – and ensuring issues are addressed at the lowest practicable spatial level (principle of subsidiarity);
- and,
- a shift towards adopting more of an 'enabling' role – helping people and communities do more for themselves and each other ('Big Society')

c. A shift towards increased productivity...

On the 20th October, the Chancellor set out the Government's four-year public spending plans. Whilst it will take some weeks to disaggregate the headline departmental figures and to know the detail of how this will play out locally through the distribution system, we know that on average central government funding to councils will decrease by around 26 per cent over the next four years.

In terms of implications for partnership working, it is worth noting that the Coalition Government has made it very clear all along that the Spending Review is about more than simply allocating resources. Government sees the Review as a platform to 'consider new and radical approaches to public service provision' and has laid down the gauntlet to local government and its partners to '**consider fundamental changes to the way in which they provide services**'.

Whereas once the focus for partnership working was almost solely on improving

Outcomes, achieving efficiencies and ensuring 'value for money' has increasingly been coming to the fore. This shift towards increasing productivity is fundamentally re-directing the focus in that we are seeing galvanized interest in:

- shared services, strategic integration (front of house and back-office) and joint strategic commissioning;
- a 'whole area' ('one public sector') approach to managing Community Budgets (Place-Based Budgets), including the imminent reductions; and,
- shaping markets and new models for service delivery

d. Implications for Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)

"LSPs will change – context radically different – but partnership more important than ever" John Tizard

The former focus for LSPs and their thematic sub-partnerships has changed dramatically in a short space of time (with the abolition of PSAs, LAAs and CAA). The reduction in reporting burdens has been welcome. The speed of change, and uncertainty over future frameworks, has been somewhat disorientating. As the 'dust begins to settle' many will see this as an opportunity to re-direct the future role of partnerships - *to move away from bureaucracy and instead have a clearer and more practical focus on what needs to be done to both improve outcomes and reduce costs.*

Some partnership challenges:

- Cuts drive silo protectionism
- Accountabilities
- Different Governance arrangements
- Difference performance management regimes
- Professional territorialism
- Varying priorities
- Requires focused leadership

e. Changing Governance and Accountability

Prior to the change of government in May 2010 the context was one of councils and partners working largely as agents of the centre, directed and performance managed from top down. Whilst much of the infrastructure of central targets and inspection has been swept away, local government has not been the only recipient of devolved responsibilities, this is taking several forms:

- To local authorities in some cases (such as public health responsibilities)
- To new bodies such as GP commissioning consortia
- To the wider community in the form of mutuals and social enterprises, neighbourhood bodies, and to individuals, through Big Society measures

Through this a new set of governance and accountability issues are now surfacing: power is being passed down to communities, neighbourhoods and citizens and at the same time government is encouraging closer integration of services in some specific areas. These proposals are taking shape through three Bills:

- The Policing and Social Responsibility Bill
- The Decentralisation and Localism Bill
- The Health and Social Care Bill

Within each of these Bills there are proposals which will impact on local partnership working. Some proposals are supportive of integration and collaborative working at the local level. Others will be more challenging in that they change accountabilities to different, and less coterminous, spatial levels.

New elements which need to be factored in include:

- **GP Commissioning consortia:** will have statutory form from April 2013. This is a new player with limited involvement to date in local partnership working. Consortia will have no electoral accountability, though scrutiny arrangements for health services will be enhanced. There will be two consortia in West Cheshire.
- **Health and Wellbeing Boards:** will also be statutory and have powers and duties from April 2013. Their primary role will be a joint duty (with GP Consortia) to include prepare and implement the JSNA and (in future) a joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the area. Areas are being encouraged to build on the existing health and local authority partnerships, established as part of the LSP 'family'.
- **Childrens Trusts:** will be relieved of statutory requirements. It is expected that in areas that have found the Childrens Trust arrangements useful and constructive in pushing forward the strategic development of childrens services they may well continue with this arrangement. However, oversight of joint commissioning with the NHS for childrens care, public health and health improvement, is due to become a responsibility of Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- **Police and Crime Commissioners:** will replace Police Authorities from May 2012. They will be directly elected and hence have a separate mandate from the local authorities in the area. Commissioners will be expected to play an active role in partnership working, but in practice this will be constrained by their extensive responsibilities and the number of LSPs and CSPs in the force area.
- **Police and Crime Panels:** will be at force level and will include a minimum of 12 elected members from local authorities in the area, along with a minimum of 2 co-opted members.
- **Local Enterprise Partnerships:** the LEP for Cheshire and Warrington is one of the first wave of these new partnerships, membership of which will be split 50/50 between business and local authority members.

The range and variety of different spatial levels and geographic boundaries within the partnership landscape will increase rather than decrease as a result of these changes, with practical consequences for joint working.

f. Performance Management

With the abolition of LAAs, a five year attempt across Whitehall to bring about a more coordinated and unified approach to place-based 'better outcomes' has fallen away. Different government departments are carving out their separate part of the local partnership and delivery landscape. Targets as such may have disappeared, but 'outcome frameworks, remain eg. Department of Health are publishing three sets covering the NHS, social care and public health.

A number of councils are continuing to develop their own ideas for much modified forms of LAA, developed locally without top-down interference. These ideas are

linked to propositions for place-based budgets and a successor framework to Total Place, and are being discussed as part of the Spending Review.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document sets out the agreed structure and principles within which all partners involved in the West Cheshire Together Partnerships Framework can demonstrate their commitment and work effectively and efficiently together. It has been refined and refreshed in early 2011 to take into account the changing national context (as outlined in Section 1), and local partner priorities

- (ii) The West Cheshire Together Partnerships Framework is intended to :
- bring together the different parts of the public sector, private voluntary and community sectors so that different initiatives and services are delivered efficiently and support each other, ultimately improving the quality of life of all who live and work in the area;
 - operate at different levels from strategic to operational so that decisions and actions can be taken at the most appropriate level to ensure the engagement of partners and neighbourhoods;
 - simplify and where possible reduce the number of separate partnerships in which partners are engaged, and ensure that where they do engage it is at the right level with the right level of decision makers involved;
 - improve the links between partnerships so that they know how they fit into the wide picture and enhance rather than cut across the achievement of one another's objectives;
 - ensure that robust communications mechanisms improve awareness of plans and actions within the partnership framework;
 - move to more straightforward structures and working arrangements where it makes sense to do so;
 - integrate new work which would benefit from a partnership approach

This document is not a binding contractual agreement but is intended to show commitment to the aims of the Cheshire West and Chester Partnership Framework and its constituent bodies by all partners.

3. AIMS OF THE WEST CHESHIRE TOGETHER PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

- To agree a vision, key priorities and actions to tackle economic, social and environmental concerns for West Cheshire and so improve outcomes for local communities by;
- working together to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy and plans which will define where we are now, where we want to be in the future and how we will get there
- throughout our work together to support the principles of sustainable development.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE WEST CHESHIRE TOGETHER PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

- To provide supportive environment to consider opportunities for innovation and changes in service delivery - aimed at achieving

efficiencies and value for money. This includes careful consideration of opportunities for shared services, strategic integration and joint strategic commissioning;

- To bring together local plans, partnerships and service providers so that we can work together, and with our communities, to determine how best meet to local needs and priorities;
- To assess the area's position against what matters to our communities and identify locally relevant measures to improve performance;
- To work together to achieve efficiencies by avoiding duplication, additional costs, conflicting strategies and consultation fatigue;
- To jointly develop review mechanisms to challenge underperformance and;
- To promote equality and diversity and improve the quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in or visits Cheshire;
- Ensure that new duties around empowerment, petitions, calls to action etc. are appropriately discharged by partners within the framework.
- To strengthen partnership working to ensure that everyone is working in the same strategic direction, sharing resources, information and expertise to address key issues and local problems;
- To maximise the use of existing resources across all sectors and access additional funding and resources from local, national and European sources for the benefit of the people of Cheshire;
- To contribute to sustainable development – locally; nationally and, where appropriate, globally; and
- To use partner data, research and information together resident intelligence and expertise across the area, to inform decision making.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 The partnership framework is inclusive, based on goodwill and a shared common purpose.
- 5.2 The Framework operates strategically, operationally and locally. Implementation will be through its constituent bodies including: the LSP Networking Conference, LSP Commissioning Body, the Area Partnership Boards, Parishes and Neighbourhood arrangements as well as Task focussed groups and Partnerships at strategic and operational levels.
- 5.3 The Terms of Reference for the constituent bodies of the Framework are attached as Appendix 1. It is not intended for there to be a hierarchical relationship between the constituent bodies but rather a cohesive framework of strategic, operational and local partnerships operating at the appropriate level to ensure delivery of improved outcomes for the area.
- 5.4 Organisations and partnerships have existing accountabilities and these remain the same. Individual partners will remain responsible and accountable for decisions about their own services and resources. The Partnership Framework seeks to bring partner and community aspirations and targets together to achieve outstanding value and delivery for the West Cheshire area.

- 5.5 Membership of the constituent bodies of the West Cheshire Partnership Framework will be regularly reviewed and includes the acceptance of the responsibility to work within the terms of this Agreement and Protocols.

6. SECTOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Community Sector

Community sector representatives will use their particular skills, network of contacts and knowledge of local conditions to assist with identified objectives, needs and priorities. We are working towards coproduction of public services, whereby service users and communities work together in order to make best use of their combined capacity, resources and expertise to deliver local services to best effect. Because of their knowledge of local need and the impact of service provision on local people, sector representatives will predominantly link in with the framework at the local level through the neighbourhood partnership arrangements and Area Partnership Boards. They will support local groups and communities to formulate and articulate their development needs, suggest changes to local service provision, and will assist them to contribute to local decision-making, and where possible facilitate active involvement in local service delivery, including the local management of assets. They will also monitor and evaluate how well improvements are actually delivered on the ground.

6.2 Voluntary Sector

In addition to fulfilling elements of the role of the community sector, the voluntary sector also has a role in providing services for their own members and for other local people. Much of this role will be discharged by the Third Sector Assembly, although not exclusively.

6.3 Private Sector

The private sector is important to the economic health of the area. Businesses are key consumers and contributors to local activities and services and they play a vital part in the health of local neighbourhoods. Business representatives from a variety of different sectors and sized enterprises will be engaged and contribute actively to meeting wider social and environmental improvement goals of the area. It is recognised that a sustainable economy is also in the interest of local firms and the wider economy in the long run.

6.4 Public Sector

Public sector partners will recognise their particular responsibility for ensuring that their core resources and services are directed to support the needs, improvement goals, priorities and targets determined by the constituent bodies. All public sector partners will ensure that their respective plans are complementary and are directed towards achieving the priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy..

The principle Local Authority for Cheshire West and Chester has a unique community leadership role among public sector partners. As a democratically elected and accountable organisation it will actively fulfil its statutory roles and duties to improve 'well being' in the area. Elected members have a variety of roles – as members of the authority's executive, policy development or overview / scrutiny functions and as ward representatives providing a voice for their local communities – and they need to be properly engaged with and committed to the process.

It is also important to engage Town and Parish Councils within the partnership framework as they are close to communities and neighbourhoods.

7 PRIMARY ROLES OF THE CONSTITUENT BODIES

7.1 West Cheshire Together Commissioning Board

ii. Role and Purpose

1. To act as the executive arm of the wider LSP aimed at strengthening and focusing the totality of public service delivery.
2. To bring together key players in the Borough in a more effective way to deliver outcomes that matter for West Cheshire into incentivise more joined up behaviour.
3. To make decisions about what actions the Board will take (or commission, promote, fund etc..)
4. To identify clear strategy and performance goals
5. To communicate its decisions and goals precisely and explicitly to wider partners
6. To champion culture change across partner organisations.
7. To oversee public expenditure in West Cheshire and manage relevant budget streams through joint planning and resource allocation for better achievement of joint priorities.
8. To act as agents for transformational change, championing new forms of public service delivery across the range of workforces.
9. To ensure that principles of equality, cohesion, sustainability and access are applied to all activities.

ii Working arrangements

1. The Board will meet quarterly.
2. It will set up Task and Finish groups as required for the partnership to effectively gather information and deliver action.
3. Members should commit to attend regularly so that strong relationships can be built up, and partners can be candid about their views.

iii. Membership

1. The Board will be led by Cheshire West and Chester Council with core membership to include all those with executive decision-making responsibilities for allocation/management of major public expenditure streams within the locality.

7.2 West Cheshire Together Network Event

i. Role and Purpose

1. To represent the views of the variety of people and organisations affected by the decisions of the Board.
2. To provide data and intelligence on issues relevant to the Board
3. To provide feedback on the decisions made or proposed by the Board, and on the impact of actions taken
4. They will seek to develop and nurture working relationships across the sectors and local, borough-wide and sub-national geographies.

ii. Working arrangements

1. The events will be held biannually.
2. They will be inclusive of all interests across the Borough.

7.3 Task and Finish Groups

i. Role and Purpose

1. To deliver specific tasks commissioned by the Board
2. To develop detailed plans for delivery, evaluation and monitoring of tasks for approval by the Board
3. To report to the Board on performance, including blockages that need action at a senior level to resolve.

ii. Working arrangements

1. Membership will be drawn from a 'pool' of individuals from the organisations which have a direct interest in or commitment to the project or task.

7.4 Big Society Group

i. Role and Purpose

1. Assist in development of a partnership and community owned big society action plan
2. Provide support and co-ordination role for the action plan and ensure its sustainability
3. Provide opportunities for partners to share knowledge, resources and support to enable achievement of the action plan
4. Performance monitor and management of the action plan
5. Communicate and celebrate the partnership successes to the wider community

(to be completed)

7.5 Area Partnership Boards (APB)