

TITLE:	LANCASHIRE LOCALS: CONSULTATION
TO/ON:	THE CABINET / 7TH DECEMBER 2005
BY:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICES
STATUS:	FOR PUBLICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Elected Members of the proposal by Lancashire County Council to introduce local committees (Lancashire Locals) in each of Lancashire's 12 Districts. Pilot arrangements for Lancashire Locals have been in place from July 2004 to July 2005. Rossendale was one of the four pilot areas, together with Hyndburn, West Lancashire and South Ribble.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Recommendation 1:** That the proposal to extend the Lancashire Local Initiative be supported and the continuation of the Lancashire Local for Rossendale be welcomed.

3. REPORT AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Introduction

Lancashire Locals have been developed as part of Lancashire County Council's Locality Focus Programme. Other elements of this Programme include the introduction of a County Council Partnership Officer and Assistant in each of the twelve Lancashire Districts; Locality Focus meetings and regular one-to-one meetings between the Leader of the County Council and of each District Council.

Following the pilot arrangements in the four Districts, Lancashire County Council is consulting on proposals to extend the Lancashire Local initiative to all twelve Districts from April 2006. A consultation document has been issued and comments requested to Lancashire County Council by 20 December 2005.

3.0 The Lancashire Local Initiative

3.1 The Lancashire Local is a local committee comprising county councillors for the district area. District Councils will be invited to become members of the Lancashire Locals and nominate an equal number of district councillors to sit on the Lancashire Local. Both county and district councillors will have equal voting rights.

3.2 The role of the Lancashire Locals is to empower locally elected councillors to influence, monitor and take decisions about local government services in their area. They are not seen, particularly in their formal meetings, as being the focus for community engagement although Lancashire Locals may on occasions wish to engage the community on particular issues coming before them. The full proposed remit and functions of Lancashire Locals is set out in Appendix A to this report.

3.3 The consultation document states that, whilst not every service decision or budget can, or should, be devolved to the Lancashire Locals, their remit is designed to enable local members to exercise a much broader influence over County Council activity in their patch.

3.4 Each Lancashire Local will have available an innovation fund budget of £50,000 in their first year of operation and £10,000 in subsequent years. This is to support the development of new and improved ways of working, both within the County Council and between the County and District Councils. Examples cited in the consultation paper include one-off investments that make a visible impact on the ground and/or improve the quality of life. The innovation fund will only be used to fund schemes/ideas that would not be ordinarily funded from elsewhere.

3.5 Constitutional arrangements

- 3.5.1 Under local government legislation Lancashire Locals can operate either as 'area committees' (Local Government Act 2000) or 'joint committees' (Local Government Act 1972). The joint committee model enables County Council functions (as well as District Council functions) to be discharged jointly by the County Council and the District Council within the area of the committee. An area committee model would mean locally elected county councillors for the area of the committee would be empowered to discharge county council functions only.
- 3.5.2 Under existing models both executive and non-executive functions (i.e. Cabinet and full Council functions) would be delegated to Lancashire Locals.
- 3.5.3 Each Lancashire Local will be required to produce a local protocol in consultation with Parish and Town Councils on the best means by which local councils can contribute to the work of the Lancashire Local.
- 3.6 The consultation period ends on 20 December 2005. A Locality Focus Member Steering Group will consider the consultation responses in January 2006, with a report considered by Lancashire County Council's Cabinet on 26 January 2006 and Council approving amendments to the constitution on 23 February 2006. Lancashire Locals will then be implemented across all twelve Districts from April 2006.

4. CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

4.1 FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications to the Council.

Service Delivery/ Performance Management Issues:

There are no service delivery implications for the Council.

4.2 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Member briefing sessions on Lancashire Locals are being arranged

4.3 HUMAN RESOURCES

There are no HR implications for the Council.

5 ANY OTHER RELEVANT CORPORATE PRIORITIES

No other corporate priorities are affected by this report.

6 RISK

Lancashire Locals provide an opportunity for joint working in relation to delivery of local government services. A potential risk to not engaging would be failure to maximise the impact of joint working between Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Borough Council.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE REPORT

There are no legal implications to the Council.

8 EQUALITIES ISSUES ARISING FROM THE REPORT

There are no equalities issues arising from the report

9 WARDS AFFECTED

All wards will be covered by the Lancashire Local for Rossendale.

10 CONSULTATIONS

All District Councils have been involved in the consultation process. Locally the Rossendale Partnership (LSP) Executive have been consulted.

11 Background documents:

For further information on the details of this report, please contact: Carolyn Wilkins
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