

Subject: Neighbourhood Forums – Putting
Communities First

Status: For Publication

Report to:

Policy Overview & Scrutiny

Cabinet

Council

Date:

5th November 2008

15th April 2009

June 2009

Report of:

Deputy Chief Executive

Portfolio

Holder:

Neighbourhoods and Communities

Key Decision: Recommendation to Full Council

Forward Plan

General Exception

Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides a framework for the delivery of Neighbourhood Management and delivery of Neighbourhood Plans throughout Rossendale and seeks the views and comments of members of the Cabinet.
- 1.2 Any changes to the present Neighbourhood Forum arrangements should be seen in the context of enabling the development of Neighbourhood Plans. Any change to the present arrangements will be reviewed after 12 months to allow flexibility to be developed or even revert back to the present process.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.
- Delivering Quality Services to Customers
 - Delivering Regeneration across the Borough
 - Keeping Our Borough Clean and Green
 - Promoting Rossendale as a cracking place to live and visit
 - Improving health and well being across the Borough
 - Well Managed Council

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- 3.1 Not to implement changes to the present Neighbourhood Forum arrangements could severely affect the Council's ability to deliver better outcomes for local people within a focus on strengthening the role of elected members as community champions.
- 3.2 The risk of not implementing the proposal could impact on the Council's ability to attract new and emerging funding as the focus is on allocating resources to authorities that demonstrate strong leadership in developing partnership working with communities and service providers.
- 3.3 Not to implement could affect the Council's ability to improve its overall performance; achieve key internal and external efficiency targets; sustain improved performance standards in localities.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The organisational restructure focused on the principle that Rossendale's approach to Neighbourhood Management needed to be broadened across the Council and its partners.
- 4.2 The Council's key priorities moving into 'Phase Three of the improvement Journey' is to champion the borough and its people through strong community leadership, engagement and partnership working at a local level.
- 4.3 The Rossendale Partnership has developed a Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2018 and the Council has adopted their Corporate Plan 2008 - 2011. These are two key strategic documents for Rossendale. They contain a vision; outcomes and a view of what Rossendale will look and feel like when we get to 2018.
- 4.4 Both strategies will not achieve their vision until the challenging outcomes are translated into service delivery at a local level. Development of 'Place Shaping' Neighbourhood Plans are therefore key to their success.
- 4.5 Rossendale's heritage is unique and its people have a distinctively strong sense of connection to the area in which they live. This strong sense of belonging to place and the different social, economic, health and wellbeing challenges each community faces will be for the newly shaped Neighbourhood Forums to articulate in their Neighbourhood Plan. As significantly it will be for the Neighbourhood Forum to ensure the challenges and aspirations of the community are delivered through the Plan. A standard agenda item on the Neighbourhood Forum would be to discuss how collectively the members can tackle the priorities identified in the Plan.

- 4.6 This approach clearly requires a change in the way the Council and its partners work to enable residents and communities to play a full and active part in shaping their communities.
- 4.7 It is important that Neighbourhood Management is not seen as just a forum meeting that takes place four times a year. It is about the ongoing excellent partnership work carried out to improve service delivery in our communities. There has been a lot achieved which we need to capture and carry forward.
- 4.8 A view widely expressed is that Neighbourhood Forums are presently seen as a Council function where partners and the community are *invited* to attend. Public attendance is varied across the forums. The issues raised are often the same eg highways, dog fouling, blocked drains and crime and disorder. A key principle of the review is to explore the development of a Neighbourhood Forum that is inclusive, where all members are seen as playing an equal and active part.
- 4.9 Some underlying principles of the review are to increase inclusiveness through:
- Sharing power with the community
 - Reinforcing the place shaping and community leadership role of elected members
 - Community engagement and reducing inequalities where they exist (Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA overarching themes)
 - Neighbourhood Forums being integrated in to the Rossendale Partnership, Rossendale's Local Strategic Partnership.
 - Having clear reporting links to Council/Rossendale Partnership through elected members
 - Introducing Neighbourhood Management i.e. more locally focused partnership delivery, as a strategic response to local conditions and issues
 - Utilising Neighbourhood Plans as ongoing strategic and operational documents
 - Responding to key partnership documents: Police, Health, Greenvale Homes and the Borough and County Councils
 - Developing the principle of targeted partnership working around local issues and concerns and aligning these arrangements to the Neighbourhood Forum
 - Achieve a broad consensus of views on new ways of working whilst retaining the diverse characteristics of each township.

5. Council's Constitution and Neighbourhood Forum Operational Framework

To enable the Neighbourhood Forums to function as a partner under the framework of the Rossendale Partnership amendments to the Council's Constitution and the development of a 'Neighbourhood Forum Operational Framework' would be required. In considering any proposals to amend the Council's Constitution consideration should be had to the following key principles:

- 5.1 The adoption by the Rossendale Partnership Executive of the new partnership structure (see appendix 1) and new terms of reference have facilitated the opportunity for the Neighbourhood Forums to function as a true partner under the framework of the Rossendale Partnership.
- 5.2 A Local Strategic Partnership, in our case the Rossendale Partnership is a non-statutory voluntary partnership made up of bodies / organisations such as the Police, Councils, PCT, Greenvale Homes, business and community and voluntary groups retaining strategic and operational autonomy.
- 5.3 The LSP has no legal decision-making powers. Any decisions it makes must be adopted by the local authorities and/or other LSP partners before they have any legal force.
- 5.4 These service providers will continue to make decisions that relate to their own areas of activity unless they explicitly delegate this to the Rossendale Partnership which incorporates the Executive, Theme Groups and Neighbourhood Forums.
- 5.5 No judgement of the Neighbourhood Forum can be expected to override the business planning process of an individual organisation. Rather, decisions made by the Forum are intended to influence partners, who will use their best endeavours to promote the development and delivery of a Neighbourhood Plan thereby engendering synergy between the various organisational strategies and plans.
- 5.6 The Neighbourhood Forum will have a clear role in influencing the way in which partners plan and allocate short medium and long term resources to meet local priorities identified in the Neighbourhood Plan and through debate at Neighbourhood Forum meetings.
- 5.7 Responsibility for procedural issues of the Neighbourhood Forum will remain vested in the Borough Council with an agreed 'Constitutional Article' entitled 'Neighbourhood Forum Operational Framework' that will sit within the Council's Constitution, formally laying out the procedural issues.

- 5.8 It is proposed to have a three way membership of the refreshed Neighbourhood Forum:
1. **Elected Members** for each ward within the defined Neighbourhood Forum areas. Along with Rossendale Council this would include the County and Town Councils.
 2. **Representative from organisations based in an area.** Such as tenants/residents/community/youth/faith/ business/ schools & children centres. These will be determined locally through an open and transparent process with clear guidance and criteria.
 3. **Appropriate local service providers.** These would be determined by an assessment of local conditions and could include the councils, police, health, Greenvale homes, leisure trust, community network etc.
- 5.9 To ensure the Neighbourhood Forums have an holistic picture of the services and functions that operate within their area a number of 'Support Functions' will be utilised either through a form of virtual networking or invite to attend meetings when appropriate. Some of these will include:
- Adult Social Care/Help Direct
 - Regeneration
 - Highways and transport
 - Environment
 - Schools & Children's Centres
 - Young People's Services
- There will be **up to** equal membership defined by the number of Councillors in a given Neighbourhood Forum ie
 - 9 Councillors – 9 Service Providers – 9 individuals representing Community Groups
 - 11 Councillors – 11 Service Providers – 11 individuals representing Community Groups
 - There will be a process (clear and transparent) by which organisations and groups can join the forum.
- 5.10 The membership of the Neighbourhood Forums will meet as a discreet business group four times per annum. The group's initial focus will be on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for their area informed by and contributing to the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy. Thereafter they will monitor progress and challenge underperformance against agreed outcomes and targets set out within the Action / Delivery Plan of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.11 Special themed 'Open Meetings' will take place in each Neighbourhood Forum area or borough wide. The meetings will allow any member of the public to raise any issue.

- 5.12 Consultation with partners (see appendix 2) has identified a genuine enthusiasm, commitment and support for the proposed refresh of Neighbourhood Forums, but it would assist with their workforce planning if they had to commit resources across three forums not four. A second consideration is to even out the number of Councillors on each forum.

To proactively react to these challenges would require a review of the Neighbourhood Forum boundaries. To meet with the above criteria options for consideration are detailed below:

OPTION 1 (No Change)

1. **Haslingden with Edenfield Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards: Eden – Greenfield – Helmshore and Worsley, 11 Rossendale Elected Members & 1 County Councillor
2. **Rawtenstall Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards: Cribden – Goodshaw – Hareholme – Longholme – Whitewell, 13 Rossendale Elected Members + 1 County Councillor
3. **Bacup Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards: Greensclough – Irwell- Stacksteads, 8 Rossendale Elected Members + 1 County Councillor
4. **Whitworth Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards: Facit & Shawforth – Healey & Whitworth, 4 Rossendale Elected Members + 1 County Councillor + 1 Town Councillor

OPTION 2

1. **Haslingden with Edenfield Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards: Eden – Greenfield – Helmshore and Worsley, 11 Rossendale Elected Members + 1 County Councillor
 - **No Change from option 1**
2. **Rawtenstall Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards: Cribden – Goodshaw – Hareholme – Longholme, 10 Rossendale Elected Members + 1 County Councillor.
 - **Whitewell removed**
3. **Bacup with Whitewell Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards Whitewell - Greensclough – Stacksteads. 8 Rossendale Elected Members.
 - **Whitewell included and Irwell removed**
4. **Irwell with Whitworth Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards Irwell - Facit & Shawforth – Healey & Whitworth, 7 Rossendale Elected Members + 1 County Councillor + 1 Town Councillor
 - **Irwell included**

OPTION 3

1. **Rossendale West Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards Eden – Greenfield – Helmshore and Worsley, 11 Rossendale Elected Members + 1 County Councillor
 - **No change from option 1**

2. **Rossendale Central Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards Cribden – Goodshaw – Hareholme – Longholme – Whitewell, 13 Rossendale Elected Members + 1 County Councillor
 - **No Change from option 1**

3. **Rossendale East Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards Greensclough – Irwell - Stacksteads - Facit & Shawforth – Healey & Whitworth, 12 Rossendale Elected Members + 1 County Councillor + 1 Town Councillor
 - **An amalgamation of Whitworth and Bacup Neighbourhood Forums**

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 Any financial implications will be met from existing Council budgets.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 Any recommendations supported by Cabinet will be required to go to Council to agree any constitutional changes.

8. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 8.1 No HR impact

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 These proposals will support elected members in their role as place shapers and civic leaders by placing them at the heart of a Neighbourhood Forum, focussed on collectively developing the community they represent.
- 9.2 A robust review of the present arrangements will re-affirm Rossendale Partnership's commitment to empowering residents to work with Elected Members and partners to ensure that local services are effectively focussed on local need.

- 9.3 Arriving at locally agreed solutions through the development of local Neighbourhood Plans will contribute to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy, Council's Corporate Plan and the strategies and plans of our partners.
- 9.4 Integration of neighbourhood planning within the overarching Local Strategic Partnership framework will influence and shape the Council's and other partner's strategic plans and the allocation of resources to identified priorities.
- 9.5 The proposals set out here represent a clear determination by Elected Members and the Rossendale Partnership to work more effectively with local people to shape service delivery. Most importantly it will allow Elected Members and partners to benefit from local people's experience of what they do and their aspirations for their community.

10. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 10.1 That Cabinet identifies a preferred Neighbourhood Forum boundary from the options identified in section 5.12.
- 10.2 That membership of the refreshed Neighbourhood Forums is extended as outlined at 5.8 and that it meets four times a year as a business group to develop and oversee the delivery of Neighbourhood Plans.
- 10.3 That two community meetings are held per year allowing all members of the public to attend to discuss any emerging policies and what their priorities are for the area.
- 10.4 That Cabinet support a recommendation to Council to amend the Council's Constitution to reflect the new arrangements that will be developed in consultation with the Governance Working Group and Standards Committee before being presented to Council.
- 10.5 That any amendments to the Neighbourhood Forum arrangements be reviewed after 12 months to allow them to be developed or even revert back to their present arrangements.

11. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

11.1 This process of reviewing the Neighbourhood Forum arrangements is led by the portfolio holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities and overseen by a Neighbourhood Management Working Group comprising of cross party elected members and senior managers.

11.2 Consultation has been carried out with the following groups/organisations:

- Rossendale Partnership Executive
- Neighbourhoods Working Group
- Maden Family and Children Centre
- Greenvale Homes
- Lancashire Constabulary – Pennine Division

- Rossendale Council's Executive Team
- Policy Overview and Scrutiny
- LCC (Lancashire Locals)
- Primary Care Trust
- Shadow portfolio holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities
- Leader of the Labour Group
- All four Neighbourhood Forums
- Whitworth Town Council
- Burnley, Pendle Rossendale CVS
- Community Groups and Organisations including:
 - Positive Start
 - Irwell vale and Lumb
 - Bacup Consortium
 - Civic Trust
 - REAL
 - Haslingden Community Link
 - Edgeside District Partnership
 - Family Centre
 - Credit Unions
 - Horse and Bamboo
 - PEER
 - Alf's Black belt Academy

11.3 A community event on a neighbourhood forum footprint will be scheduled as part of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

11.4 These events will focus on increasing awareness of local service provision, provide an opportunity to any resident/s wanting to be more involved in their local community, but most importantly the event will be used to consult regarding the priorities for their neighborhood.

12. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required Yes

Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached Yes

13. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

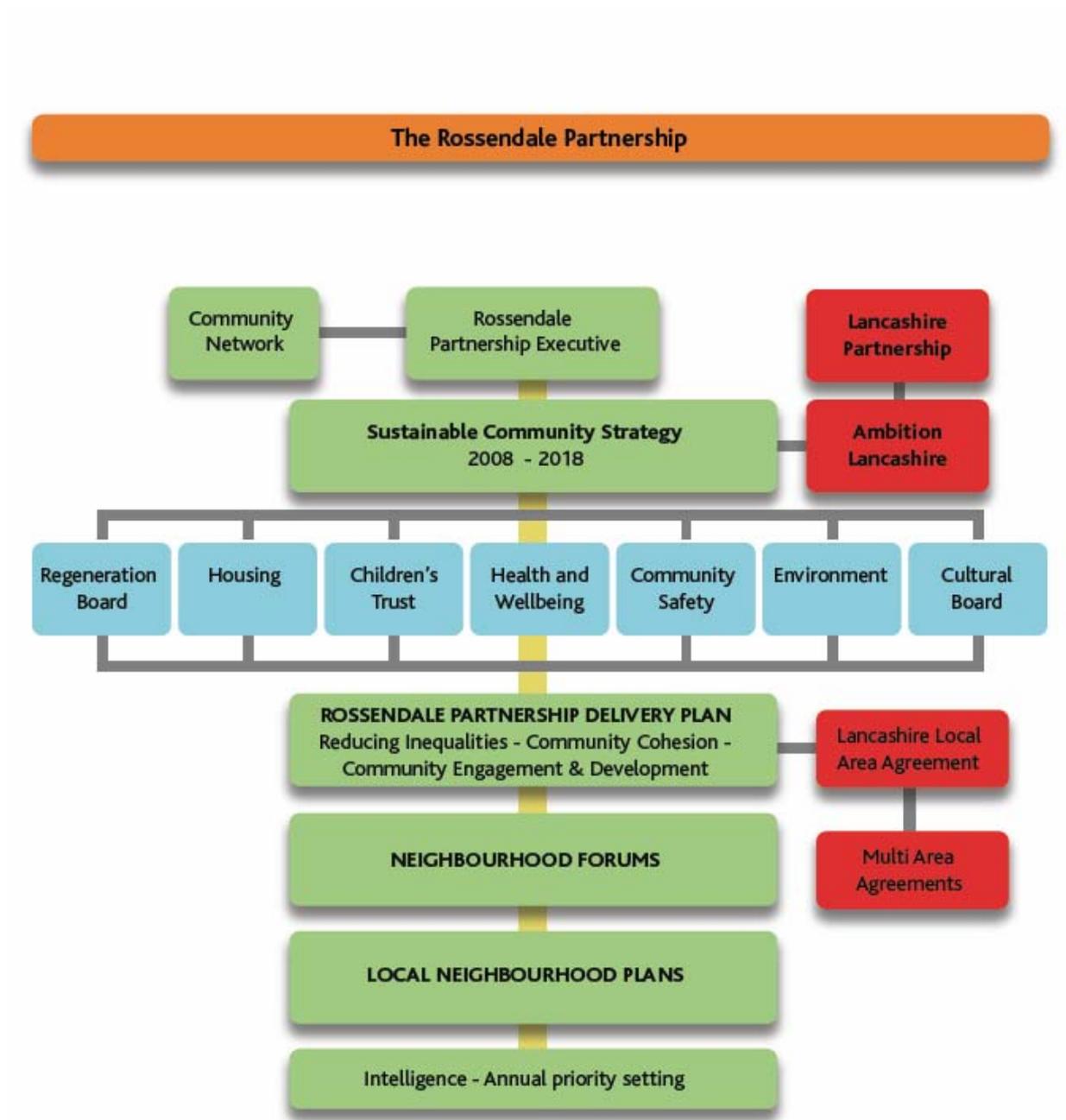
Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required No

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached No

Contact Officer	
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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Rosendale Partnership Structure	Appendix 1
Views expressed by partner organisations	Appendix 2

APPENDIX 1





APPENDIX 2

Rossendale Police Station,
Bacup Road,
Waterfoot
BB4 7JA

15th January 2009

RE: Neighbourhood Management in Rossendale

Dear Mike

One of the key areas for the borough over the next 10 years will be the delivery of its Sustainable Communities Strategy. More importantly when I talk about delivery I mean the challenge we as partners have in order to translate strategy into local service delivery with clear and robust channels of accountability.

Local Police are now are working from 4 operating centres in the Rossendale Valley. These are, Haslingden, Rawtenstall Bacup and Whitworth which are served by locally based and led community teams, whilst our response officers have a borough wide remit and are based at Waterfoot. This month will see Rossendale MAPS(Multi Agency Problem Solving) Team sited at out new building in Waterfoot and the opportunity to address through intelligence led problem solving across the borough is both exciting and needed.

Effective Neighbourhood Management in Rossendale is the key to success and will provide a strong and accountable framework for the delivery of the Sustainable Communities Strategy and other relevant targets. In order to achieve this it would be helpful if Rossendale Council review the working of its Neighbourhood Forums both in terms of number, function and membership.

Capacity for the police and other partners is an issue. A move to 3 forums based around our existing community based team locations would be excellent and it would undoubtedly ensure a more responsive, effective and focused contribution.

One size does not fit all. Areas have their own local needs and partners need to be able to identify them and respond to them quickly and effectively. The production of neighbourhood plans and the necessity for partners to work to those plans is an effective delivery method. The roll of elected members as drivers and contributors will be essential within the framework.

In conclusion having read the Rossendale Council's proposals around Neighbourhood Management I am fully support of it and believe that it will enhance service delivery across this borough. It fits snugly with local policing and local accountability. The time for change is right.

Jeff Brown Chief Inspector. Tel: 01706-237301 Mob. 07974442946

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Date: 22 January 2009

Mr Michael Riley
Communities Manager
Rossendale Borough Council
Stubbylee Hall
Stubbylee
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OL13 0DE

Dear Mike

Neighbourhood Management

Thanks for letting us have sight of the Neighbourhood Management proposals for Rossendale. NHS East Lancashire is committed to working with the Borough Council, the LSP and other key stakeholders in improving health and wellbeing of the local population.

We are all too aware that there are pockets of deprivation that need focused attention – as these tend to be the areas whose population experiences worst health outcomes and lower levels of life expectancy. This is, of course, while continuing to meet the needs of our whole population.

We have a range of staff working at a neighbourhood/area level in addition to those employed in front line delivery as well as those providing advice and liaison services. These include: Neighbourhood Health workers and Health Trainers. We are therefore supportive of work that looks geographically as well as thematically. In addition the proposal seems to allow for increased work with local communities, the voluntary/community and faith sector as well as other local stakeholders. This will be important in fulfilling community empowerment objectives.

Your proposals have prompted us to consider the demands that are arising from developing neighbourhood management and other area arrangements across East Lancashire.

We are not yet fully sighted of other LSP/Borough Council plans and therefore can't with certainty say how practically we will link in with the forums. However, we are considering this and will support the proposal to the extent of our capacity.



Yours sincerely

Janet Tonge
Community Network Director

cc: David Peat
Dr Ellis Friedman
Tim Mansfield
Sue Harvey
Bob Huntbach



People • Homes • Communities
Part of the Trans-Pennine Housing Group

11th February 2009

Mike Riley
Rossendale Borough Council
Stubbylee Hall
Stubbylee
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OL13 0DE

Green Vale Court, New Hall Hey, Rawtenstall,
Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 6HR

This matter is being dealt with by Lynn Hurrell

E Mail: lynn.hurrell@greenvalehomes.co.uk
Telephone: (01706) 836321

Hi Mike

I would on behalf of Green Vale like to offer our support to the direction Rossendale Borough is taking in respect of the Neighbourhood Management agenda.

As you know we have recently introduced Green Vale Area Panels which meet quarterly to look at issues of our residents and their neighbourhoods. These are held in the East and West of Rossendale on a quarterly basis. However I feel there are many areas in which we can work together to tackle the wider neighbourhood agenda within the valley. I feel this review offers a framework of how we can work together on delivering services to customers. It should be an effective way to coordinating responses to wider communities' issues.

The production of neighbourhood plans with multi agency 'buy in' will serve as a 'driver' for change and commitment and will be essential in order for the framework to be effective.

I feel positive that we can work together on a joint framework that focuses on target driven activity for the delivery of services to meet the needs of its communities.

To conclude, I am fully supportive of Rossendale Borough Council's proposals around Neighbourhood Management and believe that it should enhance delivery of services across this borough.

Yours sincerely

Lynn Hurrell
Executive Director – Asset Management



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business for neighbourhoods



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