

## Summary Sheet

### **Council Meeting:**

Cabinet and Commissioners Decision Making Meeting – 10 April 2017

### **Title**

Review of Neighbourhood Working

### **Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

Yes

### **Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Anne-Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care & Housing

### **Report Author(s)**

Tom Bell, Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Service.  
Zafar Saleem, Neighbourhood Partnerships Manager.

### **Summary**

Rotherham Council's Corporate Improvement Plan, "A Fresh Start", has a specific improvement theme of "strong, high impact partnerships". This includes "active ward Councillors working within neighbourhoods to build community and citizens' capacity".

The aim was to undertake a review which would herald the introduction of "a new model of citizen engagement and neighbourhood working linked to a review of Area Assemblies" to provide a focus on communities and introduce a new way of working.

The scope of the review comprised 3 elements:

1. creating a Council wide policy and approach to neighbourhood working
2. developing a multi-agency approach to neighbourhood working and
3. following the adoption of the new locality model, a review of the role and funding of the Neighbourhood Partnerships and Engagement Service.

A fourth connected element is agreeing a new "policy statement" on cohesion which is now also linked, in part, to the work of the Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP) and the new "Rotherham Plan" which will be launched in March 2017. This piece of policy work is being led by the Council's Head of Performance, Intelligence and Improvement. However, it is recognised that neighbourhood working plays a crucial role in contributing to this agenda whilst it is being developed.

An Elected Member Working Group was established, chaired by Councillor Yasseen, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services, comprising:

- Area Assembly Chairs/Vice Chairs
- A member of the Opposition Group and
- Supported by the Chief Executive and senior internal/external partners

There have been six meetings of the Elected Member Working Group. The first 4 were as follows:

- 11th July 2016 - scene setting and internal partner footprints.
- 26th July 2016 - external partner footprints.
- 24th August 2016- externally facilitated - pre-circulated desktop research and feedback from visits to other local authorities, and results of Member Survey – considered Vision/Working Principles.
- 5th September 2016 - approved a Vision/Working Principles.

The Elected Member Working Group then submitted a report to Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Cabinet approved the Vision/Working Principles put forward by the Working Group:

***“Putting communities at the heart of everything we do by***

- ***Councillors working with their communities on what matters to them,***
- ***Listening and working together to make a difference and***
- ***Supporting people from different backgrounds to get on well together . . . to help make people healthier, happier, safer and proud”***

Following Cabinet, there have been 2 further meetings of the Working Group:

- 18th October 2016 - considered three options for delivering the Vision
- 16th November 2016 - received officer presentation on a potential working model

At the meeting of the Working Group on 16th November 2016, there was support for a new neighbourhood working model which would result in the 21 electoral wards becoming the key building blocks for supporting Councillors in their community leadership role. A complimentary project has been initiated by the Council and Rotherham Together Partnership to examine locality working across the wider partnership. This presents an opportunity to bring together other stakeholders e.g. South Yorkshire Police (SYP), Health, voluntary and community sector, and other Council services to develop a holistic locality model.

The objective of this paper is to present a revised model of neighbourhood working, with more detail around ward level working, accountability and governance.

## **Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the recommendations for a new model of Neighbourhood Working be approved.

- 1.2 That the removal of the current Area Assembly governance framework be agreed.
- 1.3 That the dissolution of the Area Assembly coordinating Groups be agreed.
- 1.4 That approval be given to the approach for each ward to be able to locally agree how to conduct citizen engagement in a flexible and innovative manner. Wards can still choose to hold meetings e.g. in response to specific issues and can tailor the approach to best engage their citizens.
- 1.5 That flexible clustering to allow wards to work together based on geography and common interest, where needed, be approved.
- 1.6 That a quarterly update from each ward be submitted to the portfolio Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services to provide oversight across the Borough.
- 1.7 That a requirement be introduced for ward plans to be produced and to publish outlining ward priorities and activities aligned to the Corporate Plan.
- 1.8 That a requirement be introduced for place profiles to be developed for each of the 21 wards detailing the demographics and community assets of the area; to be piloted in 4 wards.
- 1.9 That the Community Leadership Fund of £1,000 per elected member be continued, but be spent in line with ward plan priorities.
- 1.10 That the £30,000 currently allocated for Area Assembly Chairs from the Community Engagement budget in 2017/18 be distributed evenly to all 21 wards, which will equate to £1,428 per ward and that this budget be reviewed as part of the overall corporate budget setting process for 2018/19.
- 1.11 That Council be recommended to add £210k to the Capital Programme in 2017/18, to be funded from capital receipts, and that this budget be reviewed as part of the overall corporate budget setting process for 2018/19.
- 1.12 That £10,000 capital investment funding be allocated to each ward from the £210k total allocation and that utilisation of this be determined by ward priorities.
- 1.13 That decision making be delegated to wards with spend approved by the Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services.
- 1.14 That officers be required to explore the potential to provide support to members to secure additional funding both internally and externally.
- 1.15 That an Annual Report on Neighbourhood Working be submitted to both the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) and Council.
- 1.16 That approval be given to a 12 month transitional plan to phase-in the new neighbourhood approach.

1.17 That the review of staffing structure supporting neighbourhood working be noted and decisions arising from the review be taken under existing delegated powers.

1.18 That the Council be recommended to amend the Constitution to:

- Remove the reference to area assemblies in the heading of Part III of the Constitution and delete Article 12 of the Constitution [Area assemblies and area assembly co-ordinating groups]
- Remove references to Area Assemblies and Area Assembly Co-ordinating Groups from the Executive Procedure Rules
- Delete Rule 16(6),(7) and (8) [Conflicts of interest – membership of area assembly co-ordinating groups and overview and scrutiny committee] and references to “Chairs of Area Assemblies” and all other references to “area assemblies” in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules
- Delete references to area committees in the Access to Information Procedure Rules
- Delete references to area committees and area assembly coordinating groups in the Standing Orders.
- Delete references to area committees in the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members
- Delete the reference to Chair of Area Assembly in the Members’ Allowances Scheme
- Remove references to area assemblies from the Scheme of Delegation for Members and Officers

### **List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 – Article 12

Appendix 2 and 2a - An example of a Manchester Council Ward Plan and Action Plan

Appendix 3 - the relevant section of Article 12 is produced in full

### **Background Papers**

RMBC Corporate ‘Fresh Start’ Improvement Plan, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015

(RMBC Cabinet Report), 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016

Cabinet Report, 10th October, 2016 Review of Neighbourhood Working

### **Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 31 March 2017

Council – 19 May 2017

### **Council Approval Required**

Yes

### **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Review of Neighbourhood Working**

### **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the recommendations for a new model of Neighbourhood Working be approved.
- 1.2 That the removal of the current Area Assembly governance framework be agreed.
- 1.3 That the dissolution of the Area Assembly coordinating Groups be agreed.
- 1.4 That approval be given to the approach for each ward to be able to locally agree how to conduct citizen engagement in a flexible and innovative manner. Wards can still choose to hold meetings e.g. in response to specific issues and can tailor the approach to best engage their citizens.
- 1.5 That flexible clustering to allow wards to work together based on geography and common interest, where needed, be approved.
- 1.6 That a quarterly update from each ward be submitted to the portfolio Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services to provide oversight across the Borough.
- 1.7 That a requirement be introduced for ward plans to be produced and to publish outlining ward priorities and activities aligned to the Corporate Plan.
- 1.8 That a requirement be introduced for place profiles to be developed for each of the 21 wards detailing the demographics and community assets of the area; to be piloted in 4 wards.
- 1.9 That the Community Leadership Fund of £1,000 per elected member be continued, but be spent in line with ward plan priorities.
- 1.10 That the £30,000 currently allocated for Area Assembly Chairs from the Community Engagement budget in 2017/18 be distributed evenly to all 21 wards, which will equate to £1,428 per ward and that this budget be reviewed as part of the overall corporate budget setting process for 2018/19.
- 1.11 That Council be recommended to add £210k to the Capital Programme in 2017/18, to be funded from capital receipts, and that this budget be reviewed as part of the overall corporate budget setting process for 2018/19.
- 1.12 That £10,000 capital investment funding be allocated to each ward from the £210k total allocation and that utilisation of this be determined by ward priorities.
- 1.13 That decision making be delegated to wards with spend approved by the Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services.
- 1.14 That officers be required to explore the potential to provide support to members to secure additional funding both internally and externally.

- 1.15 That an Annual Report on Neighbourhood Working be submitted to both the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) and Council.
- 1.16 That approval be given to a 12 month transitional plan to phase-in the new neighbourhood approach.
- 1.17 That the review of staffing structure supporting neighbourhood working be noted and decisions arising from the review be taken under existing delegated powers.
- 1.18 That the Council be recommended to amend the Constitution to:
- Remove the reference to area assemblies in the heading of Part III of the Constitution and delete Article 12 of the Constitution [Area assemblies and area assembly co-ordinating groups]
  - Remove references to Area Assemblies and Area Assembly Co-ordinating Groups from the Executive Procedure Rules
  - Delete Rule 16(6),(7) and (8) [Conflicts of interest – membership of area assembly co-ordinating groups and overview and scrutiny committee] and references to “Chairs of Area Assemblies” and all other references to “area assemblies” in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules
  - Delete references to area committees in the Access to Information Procedure Rules
  - Delete references to area committees and area assembly coordinating groups in the Standing Orders.
  - Delete references to area committees in the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members
  - Delete the reference to Chair of Area Assembly in the Members’ Allowances Scheme
  - Remove references to area assemblies from the Scheme of Delegation for Members and Officers

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Rotherham Council’s Corporate Improvement Plan, “A Fresh Start”, includes a key theme, “strong, high impact partnerships”. The theme’s objective is to deliver “enhanced neighbourhood working to engage with communities on:
- Policy development and service change.
  - Community Safety.
  - Community Cohesion”
- 2.2 The action to address this objective is the “*Introduction of a new model of citizen engagement and neighbourhood working linked to a review of Area Assemblies*”.
- 2.3 To deliver this action, an Elected Member Working Group was established, chaired by Councillor Yasseen, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services, comprising:-

- Area Assembly Chairs/Vice Chairs.
- A member of the Opposition Group.
- Support by the Chief Executive and Senior Officers.

2.4 The Cabinet Member and officers attended a national conference which examined the “State of neighbourhood and locality working”, and undertook desktop research and visited 4 other local authorities operating different neighbourhood models.

2.5 The local authority visits were to:-

- Trafford MBC (Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016).
- Barnsley MBC (Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016).
- Derby CC (Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016).
- Doncaster MBC (Friday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

2.6 There have been 7 meetings of the Elected Member Working Group:

- Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016
- Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016
- Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016
- Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2016
- Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016
- Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016
- Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017

### **3. Key Issues**

3.1 The review sought to address a number of key issues originally raised by former Commissioner Manzie in the RMBC Corporate “Fresh Start” Improvement Plan (26<sup>th</sup> May 2015). These were to:

- Determine why working at a neighbourhood level is important
- Describe the outcomes of improved neighbourhood working
- Highlight the added value of a neighbourhood approach to locality Working

3.2 The expected outcomes of the review of neighbourhood working are to:

- Improve local democratic engagement and community leadership by describing the way in which Councillors, officers and partners will interact with the local community.
- Identify the support that could be expected by Elected Members from the Council and its key partners.
- Clarify the role of the Council and partners in addressing neighbourhood based issues.
- Determine how other services run by the Council and its partners can be tailored to and benefit from neighbourhood approaches.
- Highlight the role of the community, voluntary and faith sectors in supporting local based organisations to deliver services in neighbourhoods.

#### **4. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 4.1 Outlined below is a new model of Citizen Engagement and Neighbourhood Working, the current operational model and further details on a potential new model of neighbourhood working which it is intended will start in Summer 2017.
- 4.2 Currently the Council operates a model of citizen engagement through 7 Area Assemblies which were introduced in 2000. The Council implemented a structure where no executive or non-executive functions would be delegated to the area level. The role was simply to create a consultative process through open public meetings. The Area Assembly meetings are part of the Council Constitution. Article 12 prescribes that each Area Assembly shall hold at least 4 public meetings a year. The relevant section of Article 12 is produced in full at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.3 In 2006, the 7 Area Assembly meetings were complemented by 7 coordinating Groups comprising all ward members in the area plus partners and community representatives. The coordinating groups represented a shift from consultation to more action planning. The coordinating Groups, like the Area Assemblies, are part of the Council Constitution (the relevant section of Article 12 is produced in full at **Appendix 3**).
- 4.4 The results of the Area Assembly Chairs/Vice Chairs' survey in August 2016 and the Working Group in December 2016 revealed support for neighbourhood working but little support for the current Area Assembly meetings. Members suggested a more flexible, innovative approach with wards determining their own approach. Members were positive about what they had seen as good practice on visits to other local authorities. There was support for a focus on building on the strengths of the community as opposed to problem raising, shifting from a "You Said, We Did" approach to another based on "Local People, Local Solutions", with an emphasis on "co-production", exploring joint solutions to deliver a community assets based approach.
- 4.5 The working group revealed support for ward based working. However, the issue of ward clustering created a lot of discussion in November 2016. The new approach will continue to enable wards to work together where there is the opportunity for more natural clustering by geography or common interest.

For example:

- In 2017, members from different wards and Area Assemblies will be working together to work on other important issues e.g. HS2 and Bassingthorpe Farm, which covers Rotherham North and Wentworth South.
- All Members from the Keppel and Rotherham West wards are currently working with senior officers and the local community on an environmental issue, Watson's Tip. A public meeting was recently arranged by Councillors and officers which was attended by 180 people.



- Wickersley, Maltby and Hellaby Wards undertook a Suicide Prevention project. Various awareness raising and training sessions have taken place.
- 4.6 Removing the prescribed framework of Co-ordinating Groups and Area Assembly meetings will free up time and resource to support Members in their community leadership role to build community and citizen's capacity, an aspiration of the Corporate Improvement Plan.
- 4.7 The new way of working, whilst delivering the universal offer, will also take into account local priorities, which may include specific issues, for example, areas of deprivation, which will then influence a wider Council and partnership response.
- 4.8 Each ward would benefit from a named dedicated Neighbourhood Support Officer (*title of post may change*) who will link into the wider Council and partners as a connector to other front line services in the locality, to provide the right response at the right time with the right people.

This way of working is flexible and will evolve over time as knowledge, understanding and confidence of the approaches that will work best in each ward grows.

- 4.9 Recent examples of good practice will continue and be built upon in the new model include:
- Helping the Friends of Greasbrough Park to secure £41k funding which enabled them to renew the children's play area.
  - Supporting Clifton Learning Partnership to obtain Eastwood Village Community Centre on a long-term lease from the Council. They are now developing activities for children, families and the broader community (including CSE awareness) through Community Development and Family Support Workers recruited and trained from the local (Roma) community.
  - Supporting Thurcroft "Big Local" to make the most of the opportunities of their £1m Lottery Funding.
  - Working in partnership with the Asset Management Team to support the Wath Town Hall Group in their bid to obtain an asset transfer for the now disused Wath Town Hall.
  - Partnership work with local communities, businesses and the Council to deliver the "Wellgate Together Plan" which supports activities to develop a safer, cleaner and greener Wellgate.

**The Working Group Recommends that:**

- Area Assemblies will cease in their current governance framework.
- Area Assembly coordinating Groups are disbanded.
- Wards will determine how to conduct citizen engagement and can be flexible and innovative in their approach. Wards can still choose to hold meetings e.g. in response to specific issues and can tailor the approach to best engage their citizens.

- Wards are encouraged to work together based on geography and common interest without any prescribed ward clustering, for example, the 3 wards within the current area assembly framework could still choose to meet.

### **Ward Based Place Plans**

- 4.10 The desktop research and visits to other local authorities showed that the Electoral Ward is an important building block with regards to neighbourhood working and relationships with communities.
- 4.11 The findings from areas such as Barnsley, Sheffield, Kirklees and Manchester showed how ward based working can sit within a broader organisational and planning framework. In Manchester, annual Ward Plans support wider delivery by documenting the issues affecting the ward and the detailed actions required to address them. The Plans are developed by Ward Co-ordinators in partnership with members and partners. Progress is reviewed at quarterly meetings. The Plans feed into three larger Place Plans covering the North, South and Central areas of the city (an example of a Manchester Council Ward Plan and Action Plan is attached at **Appendix 2 & 2a**).
- 4.12 At the Elected Member Working Group on 16th November 2016, officers presented a proposal to introduce ward based plans in Rotherham with links to the Council's Corporate Plan and the Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP) priorities, in particular
- The Corporate Plan priority relating to strong communities in a clean, safe environment and
  - The RTP's priorities relating to Bringing People Together (Let's get Rotherham Talking) and Welcoming Places (Let's get Rotherham Cleaning) plus
  - A further priority is being considered around Building Stronger Communities as part of the forthcoming Rotherham Plan
  - The current focus on locality working will also support and identify Members as key community leaders which will strengthen the delivery of the local offer to communities

### **The Working Group Recommends that:**

- A quarterly update be submitted to the portfolio Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services to provide oversight across the borough.
- Each of the 21 wards will be required to produce and publish a Ward Plan with agreed ward priorities and activities aligned to the Corporate Plan.
- Place profiles will be developed for each of the 21 wards providing demographics and the community assets of the area. However, initially, this new way of working will be piloted in 4 wards.

### **The Ward Plans will:**

- Be informed by the place profile (local consultation and data)

- Influence the way other geographical funding streams are deployed e.g. Area Housing Panel funds
- Be informed via engagement with the local community e.g. Street surgeries, litter picks
- Be overseen by the Ward Councillors and Council Officers

An aggregated summary of the Ward Plans with narrative will be submitted to Improving Places Select Commission and Full Council as an Annual Report.

### **Devolved Budgets**

- 4.13 There have been a number of questions in relation to devolved budgets. As well as whether to have a devolved budget, there were questions in relation to the source, the amount and allocation.
- 4.14 The desktop research and visits to other local authorities showed that most have retained a devolved budget to enable a shift to “Local People, Local Solutions”. Budgets are used to build capacity, change delivery and create more sustainable solutions.
- 4.15 The results of the Area Assembly Chairs / Vice Chairs survey in August 2016 revealed significant support for a flexible devolved budget, enabling Councillors to focus on issues in their ward, but without being tied into Council services.
- 4.16 In the current 2016/17 financial year a one off Area Assembly budget of £280k had been allocated. This comprised of £140k General Fund (Revenue) and £140k General Fund (Capital). Each Area Assembly received £40k, equivalent to every ward receiving around £13k.
- 4.17 The figures in other areas vary greatly from £2.1m in Barnsley (equivalent to every ward receiving £100k) to £80k in Trafford (equivalent to every ward receiving £4k). Manchester have recently introduced a “Neighbourhood Investment” Fund (NIF) to support their revised neighbourhood working model. Each ward receives £20k. The NIF is available to communities.
- 4.18 The desktop research and visits to other areas showed that Derby, Oxford and Great Yarmouth focus on their most deprived neighbourhoods only. Sheffield’s devolved budget is entirely based on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).
- 4.19 We will continue to explore opportunities around a range of different resources including external funding streams as well as maximising existing community and council services. This will be developed over the transitional period.
- 4.20 At present the Area Assembly coordinating Groups determine the priorities for spending the budgets allocated to their Areas. Disbanding them would require an alternative approach.
- 4.21 In Haringey, each ward receives a £10k devolved budget and run the budget as they see fit. For example, some wards run an annual application round, some commission projects in response to local need, some run “dragons den” type events to build up community involvement and many will run a combination of these. Budgetary decisions are delegated to an Assistant Director. In Barnsley,

and other areas, all three or 2 out of the 3 Ward Councillors must agree any proposal which is then signed off by an officer.

4.22 Neighbourhood Working through Ward Plans will also influence the way mainstream funding and resources are deployed to maximise the response for local ward based issues, for example, deprivation. This will be from other Council services as well as partnerships within the ward.

**The Working Group recommends that:**

- The Community Leadership Fund will continue to be allocated to Ward Members in line with their Ward Plans of £1k per member, which equates to £3k per ward and £63k in total.
- The £30K currently allocated for Area Assembly Chairs from the Community Engagement budget will be apportioned to Wards, this will equate to £1,428 per ward. This budget is set for 2017/18, but will be reviewed as part of the overall corporate budget setting process for 2018/19 with consideration of the South Yorkshire Average allowance.
- There will be a £10k capital investment in each ward, totaling £210k which would give total funding of £1,428 for each ward.
- Decision making is delegated to wards and will be validated by an Assistant Director to ensure due diligence to support Members in their role.
- Subject to approval of a Neighbourhood Working Devolved Budget 2017/18, a process will be established for Members to allocate funding, in line with agreed policies and procedures, accounting regulations and the principles of transparency and good governance.
- Officers will continue to identify any other sources of funding to assist implementing Ward Plans and this would be subject to a further proposal outlining options available.
- The overall budget for Neighbourhood Working is not anticipated to be reduced, but the revenue/capital split will be considered as part of the budget setting process for future years.
- Officers will explore the potential to provide support to members to secure additional funds, both internally and externally.

**Dedicated Ward Based Neighbourhood Support Officer**

- The current staffing structure within Neighbourhood Partnerships and Engagement Service (22 FTE posts, of which 4 are vacant) has been built around the Area Assembly model of working. Arrangements will be put in place to ensure staff are allocated to specific Wards, allowing 2.5 days per week of dedicated officer time to be given to each Ward. This will be to support Ward Members in their community leadership role and act as connector and enabler, under the new operating model.
- However, the model will be sufficiently flexible to allow movement of staff between wards to meet changing ward needs/demand e.g. where a ward has not used their full officer time allocation. This will be a transitional arrangement until a comprehensive review of the staffing

structure can be carried out. The terms of reference for the review will be to ensure 'form follows function' i.e. under the new neighbourhood working arrangements we have the right people in the right place to deliver the new operating model.

- The Council's work alongside Parish Councils will be strengthened under a Ward based approach to ensure citizens are confident we are working together putting people and places first. There are significant opportunities to be realised by working together on shared priorities and in not duplicating effort e.g. community buildings and land assets for new development.

4.23 The recommendations in this report create a number of expectations linked to accountability and governance:

- Every ward to produce and publish a Place Plan based on local consultation and data tracking. The Place Plan will be delivered through a minimum of at least 2 officer and member meetings per year and by making the Place Plan available on the Council website.
- A quarterly update will be submitted to the portfolio Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services to provide oversight across the Borough.
- Every ward will have a devolved budget to support their Ward Plan delivery.
- The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods will lead and have oversight and accountability for the governance of this model.

4.24 In addition, the governance review recommended that an Annual Report in respect of Neighbourhood Working be submitted to full Council outlining what is working effectively and what is not, so that successes and lessons can be learned. The first Annual Report will be a review of the new operating model. The Annual Review will also look at the annual resource allocation and aid the case for future investment.

**The Working Group recommends that:**

- An annual report on neighbourhood working be submitted to both the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) and full Council.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 Detailed consultation has taken place with Area Assembly Chairs and Vice Chairs. Community consultation will be incorporated into the ward plans during the transitional period.

## 6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 The proposed implementation timetable is as follows:

27 February 2017	Recommendations signed off by Elected Member Working Group
31 March 2017	OSMB Pre-Decision Scrutiny
10 April 2017	Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting
19 May 2017	Council

6.2 Subject to approval by Cabinet it is proposed that **transitional arrangements** be agreed for the new Neighbourhood Working model to allow a flexible and organic move towards ward based working over a 12 month period.

Areas of focus for the transitional period will be:

- Detailed statutory consultation will take place with staff on the proposed new way of working in Neighbourhoods resulting in a staffing restructure and implementation of the new model of working in September 2017.
- Agree and deliver community consultation to inform and develop the new neighbourhood approach.
- The governance arrangements for managing Neighbourhood Working budgets be clarified with Legal and Democratic Services and any associated model paperwork agreed with Legal, Finance and Audit.
- Wards plans be produced for each of the 21 wards.
- 4 Pilot Place Profiles will be produced for Wingfield, Boston Castle, Brinsworth and Catcliffe, and Rother Vale wards so that learning and evaluation can be built into the final model template for Place Plans.
- Provide links to partners e.g. police and other bodies e.g. Area Housing Panel, Case Identification Meetings.
- Parish and Town Councils to consider Place Plans where appropriate.

## 7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 In 2016/17, the Council decided to allocate the Area Assemblies a one-off Devolved Budget of £280k. This was made up of £140k revenue and £140k capital, therefore, an allocation of £20k revenue and £20k capital to each Area Assembly.

7.2 In 2017/18, the revenue budget available is £30k Special Responsibility Allowance for Area Assembly Chairs from the Community Engagement Budget and £63k Community Leadership Fund. In addition, it is proposed that £10k capital investment be made in each ward for 2017/18, to be determined by ward priorities, totaling £210k, and that this be added to the approved Capital Programme. This funding is to be utilised from available capital receipts not already allocated. The apportionment is outlined in recommendations 1.1.10 and 1.1.12 of this report.

7.3 Future years' budgets will be considered as part of the 2018/19 budget setting process.

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 The recommendations in this report would require amendments to the Council's Constitution in order to remove references to Areas Assemblies, Area Assembly Co-ordinating Groups and Chairs of Area Assemblies from the Constitution. Amendments to the Constitution are a matter for the Council and the necessary recommendation to Council forms part of the recommendations of this report.

## **9. Human Resources Implications**

9.1 In terms of the original scope of this work, the third element referred to a fundamental review of the structure, role, skills mix and funding of the Neighbourhood Partnerships and Engagement Service. Currently each of the 7 Area Assemblies has a small team aligned to support the function. This breaks down to approximately 1 Neighbourhood Development Officer and one Neighbourhood Support officer per Area Assembly. The review will be undertaken in line with appropriate HR processes.

9.2 Members have requested that a named "Lead Officer" be appointed to support every ward 2.5 days per week. It is proposed that as part of the review outlined above all Elected Members will have a named single point of contact drawn from the Neighbourhood Partnerships service to support them in their community leadership role, and act as a connector, enabler and a link to other Council services.

9.3 It is recognised that the transition to a new model of working and structure will take time and therefore, an interim offer will be delivered through the current staffing structure until a full review of services can be undertaken.

## **10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

10.1 The Elected Member Working Group received presentations on the locality plans and geographical service footprint from both Adult Care and Children and Young Peoples' directorates. The proposed Vision Statement and Principles support the Council's Corporate Plan priorities "Every child making the best start in life" and "Every adult secure, responsible and empowered".

## **11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

11.1 The proposals to enhance and support neighbourhood working should improve the Council's ability to respond to the specific needs of Rotherham's increasingly diverse communities. The needs and requirements of the citizens, businesses and communities in each ward are different and the new approach allows the flexibility to respond to these needs by making the ward the building block for community engagement. Additionally the production of Place Plans will enable a targeted response to community concerns and priorities. An Equality Assessment will be completed in line with the Council's Equality & Diversity Strategy.

## **12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

12.1 This review is part of a much wider strategic review of how the whole Council engages with its citizens and customers in localities, including a review of the Council's Estate.

12.2 In terms of the original scope of this work, the second element referred to developing a multi-agency approach to neighbourhood working.

12.3 Following a recent meeting of the RTP's Chief Executive Officers' Group (CEOG), work has begun to develop a locality working model based on a number of principles to be agreed by partner agencies. Workshops were held in February and March to explore, amongst other things, approaches to integrated place-based working with the objective of approving a model way of working by the end of March 2017.

12.4 Manchester is an example where ward based working supports wider delivery. Ward Plans feed into 3 larger multi-agency Place Plans covering the North, South and Central areas of the city.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 At present the Neighbourhood Partnerships and Engagement Service sits in the Adult Care and Housing Directorate. The service is funded 60%/40% Housing Revenue Account / General Fund respectively which is reflected in the Service Plan.

13.2 The Service Plan focusses on 4 areas:

1. improving tenant and resident engagement as part of the "Local Offer" to those living in Council accommodation
2. leading on community development
3. supporting the "crime and grime"/public realm agenda and
4. leading on neighbourhood working arrangements.



13.3 Resourcing multi-agency locality working – in particular (2), (3) and (4) above - would be at risk if the Housing Revenue Account contribution to area based services was reduced but not replaced by other funding.

**14. Accountable Officer(s)**

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care & Housing

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services: Judith Badger

Assistant Director of Legal Services: Dermot Pearson

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):- not relevant

Head of HR: Odette Stringwell

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-  
<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>