

## **Local Joint Committees – Briefing Note – May 2009**

### **What is a Local Joint Committee (LJC)?**

A Local Joint Committee (LJC) is a body set up by two or more local authorities for purposes in respect of which they are jointly interested, or have a common objective.

In Shropshire the new Local Joint Committees are legally constituted, decision making committees of Shropshire Council.

Membership of the Local Joint Committee is made up of representatives from each of the local Town and Parish Councils within a specified geographical area, together with local Unitary Councillors.

Each Local Joint Committee will meet 4 times in public each year.

### **What are the functions of the Local Joint Committees in Shropshire?**

The Local Joint Committees will have the following remit:

- to encourage public participation and engagement in the decision making of Shropshire Council
- to scrutinise local service delivery, with the power to call members of the Executive or senior managers to attend and explain decisions affecting the locality
- to act as a decision maker with regard to the local delivery of a range of services and to prioritise resource allocation in their area
- to determine expenditure of a delegated budget
- to hold other public service providers to account by requesting them to attend and scrutinise service delivery in the locality
- to refer matters of concern regarding service delivery to the Council's scrutiny panels, or policy to Cabinet
- to act as a formal consultation mechanism for the Council, over and above that taken with individual town and parish councils

## **Geographies of the Local Joint Committees**

There will be 28 Local Joint Committees in Shropshire; 8 in the Northern Area, 10 in the Central Area and 10 in the Southern Area.

Geographical details of each of the LJs can be found on the Council's website.

The LJC geographies will be reviewed regularly.

## **Officer support to the Local Joint Committees**

Each LJC has a nominated Lead Officer, drawn from the Councils Senior Management Team. The Lead Officer is responsible for the correct working of the Committee and will support and advise the Chair and members to ensure the smooth running of the meetings.

In addition to the Lead Officer, each Local Joint Committee will be supported by a Community Regeneration Officer from the new authority's Community Working Team.

The Community Regeneration Officers will be responsible for maximising local engagement in the work of the LJs and supporting the members of the Committee to bring forward items of interest or issues in their particular locality.

The Community Regeneration Officers will help to promote the Committee within the local area and ensure links are made to community based groups, organisations and activities, including Parish and Neighbourhood Planning.

Each LJC will be serviced by a Committee Officer from the Democratic Services team at Shropshire Council.

## **Local Joint Committee Pilots**

Over the last 2 years 11 Local Joint Committee pilots have operated across the county. In addition 2 Neighbourhood Forums in non-parished areas of Shrewsbury were also set up.

In each case parish and town councils nominated representatives to join the Committee, together with the local County and District Councillors.

The pilots ended in March 2009. An evaluation of the pilots has helped to identify best practice and lessons learned and will inform the new LJs moving forward.

## **Delegated budgets**

Each LJC has a delegated budget. The amount is dependent on population and has been rural proofed. In 2009/10 the smallest LJC will receive £17,000 and the largest £71,000.

Full details of the budget allocations can be found on the Shropshire Council website.

The delegated budget can be used to support local community and voluntary activity, the implementation of Parish and Neighbourhood Plans and local service delivery enhancements.

## **Town and Parish Council engagement**

All town and parish councils within the identified geography are invited to become members of their Local Joint Committee. Parish councils nominate their representative, who then becomes a voting member of the Committee.

The LJC does not replace the remit, responsibility or function of any individual town and parish council. The LJC gives the opportunity for local councils within a local geography to work together to determine priorities, take action to address issues and to implement service improvements as appropriate.

The LJC seeks to add value to the individual work of each authority and to increase public engagement and involvement in the democratic decision making of councils across the county.

## **Partner engagement**

It is possible for a Local Joint Committee to co-opt partners that are not from town and parish councils, such as the local police, local voluntary groups, local businesses.

Co-opted members can take an active role within the meetings and contribute significantly to the decision making. However, due to the legality of an LJC, co-opted partners will not be able to vote on budget decisions.

## **Partners and Communities Together (PACT)**

Working closely with police colleagues the Local Joint Committees will take on the remit of the PACT where appropriate to do so.

This will further encourage public engagement in seeking solutions to local issues and reduce the potential for duplication of public meetings.

## **Further information**

Further information on the Shropshire Local Joint Committees can be found at

[www.shropshire.gov.uk/localcommittees](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/localcommittees)

or by following the short cut link from Local Committees on the Council's home page [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

Alternatively please contact the **Community Working team**, at Shropshire Council, 01743 253077, or email [communityworking@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:communityworking@shropshire.gov.uk).