



14th July 2008

**Corporate Communications
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Dear Stakeholder,

Re. Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

Please accept my apologies for not getting this letter out to you sooner. We have encountered a number of administrative and legal issues, which we have had to resolve, before sending out this consultation. Because of these issues, we have re-named our proposed approach to neighbourhood management, to local neighbourhood partnerships (LNPs), from neighbourhood area committees (NACs).

Over the last 18 months the District Council and its partners have been piloting two LNPs, one in Alvechurch and one in Rubery. Whilst the two pilots have actually operated in quite different ways, the independent evaluation concluded that there was “strong support for operating at an area or neighbourhood level” from those involved.

Although the evaluation indicated strong support, it also identified that the existing two pilots and any future pilots need to be put on a firmer footing, with clarity about their aims and objectives, relationship to other organisations and their governance.

The background to the establishment of these pilots is the Council’s priority: Sense of Community. As a Council we are increasingly concerned that residents are becoming less involved in their communities and civic life. Another of the Council’s corporate priorities is: Customer Service. Through our work with the Police at Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings, we know that solving very local concerns is key to improving our residents’ satisfaction, alongside some of the more “big picture” issues like the town centre and regeneration of Longbridge.

As a result the District Council wants to take a number of steps:-

1. Consult with you over the proposal for a third pilot in the “Hagley and Rural” area.

We would like to set up this third NAC this year. “Hagley and Rural” is the West Mercia Police boundary used for community policing and PACT meetings. As you can see from the first map attached, this area includes six parish councils and one, Belbroughton that straddles the boundaries. We would like your views on how we might create a LNP in this area of the District.



Ideally, the District Council, would like a LNP for each community; however, we would not be able to resource this, so when considering this issue, please think about the capacity of both councillors and officers to support the number of LNPs you propose.

2. Consult you about the potential expansion of LNPs across the whole District

In the longer term, the District Council would like to see LNPs operating across the whole District. Although our primary focus at this stage is the development of a third pilot, in “Hagley and Rural”, we would be interested in your views on the possible number of LNPs and their boundaries for the whole District. Please have a look at the maps attached which show the Parish boundaries against the police boundaries (Appendix 1), County Council ward boundaries (Appendix 2) and District Council boundaries (Appendix 3).

3. Consult you on the outline terms of reference for LNPs.

Over the coming months we will need to firm up the governance arrangements for the existing two pilots and the proposed third one. This work will need to be undertaken by the District Council’s Equalities, Legal and Democratic Department, however, we think it is important to give you an outline terms of reference for the LNPs at this stage, to inform your thinking on sections 1 and 2 above and to consult you on the terms of reference, in advance of the planned legal work. An outline terms of reference is attached at Appendix 4.

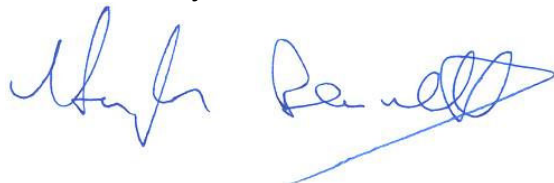
4. Run two stakeholder events later in the year.

The consultation will run for 12 weeks and close on Friday 03 October. At the end of that period, we will collate the results and set up two consultation events, one for the councillors and interested local residents of the “Hagley and Rural” area, so that we can look at this issue in more detail; and a second stakeholder event to look at the longer-term expansion of NACs across the whole District. I will be writing to you again, during the 12-week consultation period with dates for these two meetings.

I always find it useful when responding to consultations, if I have a series of questions to prompt my thinking, so I have set out 10 questions in Appendix 5, to help shape your response.

Finally, if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Hugh Bennett
Assistant Chief Executive

Encs.