

Report to:	Cabinet		
Date of meeting:	9th September 2019		
Report of:	Director of Place	Report number:	CAB/650
Contact officer:	John Morrissy, Assistant Director - Place	Telephone number	331010
Report title:	Arrangements for Area Working and Neighbourhood Management		
Not confidential			
This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public.			
Purpose:	To outline options for developing a review of Area Working and Neighbourhood Management		
Recommendations:	<p>The Cabinet is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Confirm that they wish to implement option 2 (as set out in para 3.3) b) Confirm that a full review process should be initiated to determine the basis for area management and the allocation of associated funding across the Borough, and to issue clear rules and guidance governing the subsequent distribution of this funding. c) Confirm that the nature of the review process is to be agreed with the relevant Executive Cabinet Member and outcome of the review is to to be used as the basis for seeking Cabinet approval for future Area Management arrangements. d) Authorise the Director of Corporate Resources to carry out all necessary financial formalities. e) Authorise the Borough Solicitor to carry out all necessary legal formalities. 		
Decision:			
Background documents:	Appendix A: Table summarising funding alloctions based on the options provided		
Signed:			

Date:		
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Consultation with other officers			
Finance	Yes	Sue Johnson	
Legal	No		
HR	No		
Equality Impact Assessment required?	No		
(a) Pre-consultation reports			No
Is there a need to consult on the proposals?			
Vision outcomes Please identify the appropriate Vision outcome(s) that this report relates or contributes to by putting a cross in the relevant box.	1. Start Well		
	2.Live Well		
	3.Age Well		
	4.Prosporous		
	5. Clean and Green		
	6.Strong and Distinctive		✓
6.Strong and Distinctive	Stronger, cohesive, more confident communities in which people feel safe, welcome and connected.		

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report seeks to update the Cabinet Member (Stronger Communities) and Cabinet on the current position in relation to Area Working and Neighbourhood Management funding for 2019/20, and to:
- agree a way forward in the short term so that elected members have clarity about the funding available in 2019/20 for their respective forums.
 - establish an agreed process to:
 - review the current model of service;
 - examine the best future mechanism(s) for engaging with local communities;
 - consider the best way to allocate funding across the Borough, as part of any future engagement process;
 - produce a revised set of rules and guidelines governing the future distribution of area / neighbourhood-based funding

2. ISSUES

- 2.1 Area working and neighbourhood management arrangements are well-established in Bolton. They have undergone significant change over the past 8 years, largely in response to the need for efficiency savings across the Council. This change has largely focused on reducing the staffing and resources available, in order to generate savings in staffing costs.
- 2.2 The ways in which local authorities and communities engage with each other have changed significantly in that time, and it is appropriate at this point to review our existing arrangements and consider alternative future mechanisms for engaging with local communities - not least in order to ensure that the service can support key Council priorities and the aspirations set out in the Bolton2030 Vision.
- 2.3 It has also become clear, following several debates in scrutiny and full council during 2018/19, that there is a significant difference of views in relation to how existing funding for area forums and neighbourhood management areas should be allocated. The statement of intent agreed between the Leader of the Council and the leaders of the minority opposition parties sets out 25 priority areas and includes the following commitments:
- *The Council will seek fair funding for all areas of the borough in areas such as public realm works where need is universal but will continue to use deprivation indices where appropriate in tackling poverty.*
 - *To introduce a fully transparent decision-making process in neighbourhood management area working and moving forward there will be full disclosure of monies allocated and spent including the possibility for on line access to grants. To be led by the leader of the council.*

- *A commitment to have pre-budget talks with supportive parties, on how to best allocate the councils scarce resources and prioritise resources to the areas of greatest need. A commitment to once again go out into the community, to area forums and town councils to explain the budget process and the choices that need to be made. Deputy leader of the council to lead.*

3. **OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Following discussions with the Cabinet Member, a range of options were identified with regard to the funding of Area Working and Neighbourhood Management in the current 2019/20 financial year, and future local engagement mechanisms, as follows;

Option 1

- 3.2 Continue to use the existing mechanism for allocating funding in 2019/20, updated to reflect the most up-to-date deprivation data, and subsequently undertake a future review of funding allocations, funding distribution rules and local engagement mechanisms to inform allocations for 2020/21 onwards. (Appendix A summarises the overall 2019/20 allocations to forums based on this option, taking into account all three funding strands).

Option 2

- 3.3 Cabinet to allocate funding on a flat rate basis, so that every ward receives the same amount of funding; this would be followed at some point by a review of existing area working and neighbourhood management arrangements, and how it can align with and further complement emerging local engagement and neighbourhood delivery requirements. (Appendix A shows the £300k budget allocated on a flat rate basis, based on discussions with the Executive Cabinet Member). This allocation would be available as a single pot to be spent by ward members, without the pot A / pot B / pot C classifications.

Option 3

- 3.4 Freeze the distribution of 2019/20 area working and neighbourhood management funds to forums, whilst the basis for determining future funding allocations, funding distribution rules and local engagement mechanisms is reviewed. This means that local forums will be unable to allocate any new funding to local priorities until this review has taken place.

- 3.5 The Cabinet Member (Stronger Communities) has recommended option 2 to Cabinet, bearing in mind a range of factors including:

- The need to allow ward members to work up and implement delivery plans for the 2019/20 year as soon as possible, against a known budget.
- The ability to give further consideration to future years funding and service priorities, allowing them to be discussed and reviewed in a considered manner and allowing wider member involvement in the review process.
- Providing time for members to consider alternative mechanisms for engaging with local communities, and what rules and guidelines will be put in place to ensure this funding is properly distributed and secures intended outcomes, including

furthering the Vision priority of “Stronger, cohesive, more confident communities in which people feel safe, welcome and connected”.

- A thorough review process could involve wider-member, cross-party participation, which could help to produce a wider consensus as to the best future mechanisms for engaging with local communities.

3.6 If a PDG becomes the preferred option for determining future funding allocations, funding distribution rules and local engagement mechanisms, officers will be expected to draft the initial Terms of Reference in consultation with the Executive Cabinet Member.

3.7 Key issues to be considered during any review of future funding allocations, funding distribution rules and local engagement mechanisms will include:

- What funding formula should be used for future allocations across the Borough.
- Whether or not to publish all funding decisions online – this will require support from ICT in order to identify a suitable location and method for disseminating this information via the Council website and other appropriate channels. Subject to identifying a method for publishing which is simple, accessible and does not require significant resources to support it, this could be implemented quickly.
- How the current area forum mechanism compares to other, alternative mechanisms for engaging with local communities
- Any other related issues members may wish to include within the scope of the review.

4. IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS:

Financial

4.1 The proposals set out in this report relate to the £300k available funding for Neighbourhood Management & Area Working for 2019 / 2020.

4.2 Removing the pot A / pot B / pot C classifications will mean that all monies allocated to a forum can be disbursed according to ward members' decisions, and does not require them to spend on specific types of work or projects (notwithstanding the need to comply with the conditions outlined in 4.3 to 4.7 and any other relevant guidance & legislation).

4.3 All expenditure will be subject to the Council's standing orders and usual audit process to ensure probity and good governance.

4.4 Proposals seeking budget support should not conflict with Council policies and regulations.

4.5 Funding is not available to support religious or political purposes.

4.6 The proposal should benefit an area or project, i.e. not an individual.

- 4.7 Elected members should declare any interest in the project / proposal.
- 4.8 The recommendations in this report do not specifically require additional financial resources; but the option to publish funding decisions online may require some small additional investment if current systems are not able to support it. This can be explored further during the PDG process.

Legal

- 4.8 Changes to the operating model may require consultation with Legal and Democratic Services to ensure that they can either be accommodated within the current constitution, or that the constitution can be amended to accommodate the proposed changes. This can be explored further during the PDG process.

HR

- 4.9 NONE

Other

- 4.10 NONE

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESMENT (EIA)

- 5.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council must have due regard to:
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
 - Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 5.2 It is therefore important to consider how the proposals contained within this report may positively or negatively affect this work. The EIA looks at the anticipated (positive and/or negative) impacts of the proposal on people from Bolton's diverse communities, and whether any group (or groups) is likely to be directly or indirectly differentially affected.
- 5.3 At this stage it is not anticipated that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any of Bolton's diversity groups, including staff. A full EIA screening form is therefore not required. The EIA will be revisited following the PDG process to assess whether there are any changes with any future proposals.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Once the nature of the review process has been determined and an agreed set of proposals have been developed, consideration should be given to consult with ward members and wider stakeholders before presenting to Cabinet for decision.

7. VISION 2030

- 7.1 The Bolton2030 Vision is summarised as follows:
“Bolton will be a vibrant place, built on strong cohesive communities, successful businesses and healthy residents”.
- 7.2 Clearly, engagement between local communities and the Council is a vital element of building this strength and cohesiveness. It is therefore important that any review of area working and neighbourhood management takes into account how best the services resources can be deployed in order to support and increase local engagement.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Cabinet is asked to:
- a) Confirm that they wish to implement option 2 (as set out in para 3.3)
 - b) Confirm that a full review process should be initiated to determine the basis for area management and the allocation of associated funding across the Borough, and to issue clear rules and guidance governing the subsequent distribution of this funding.
 - c) Confirm that the nature of the review process is to be agreed with the relevant Executive Cabinet Member and outcome of the review is to be used as the basis for seeking Cabinet approval for future Area Management arrangements.
 - d) Authorise the Director of Corporate Resources to carry out all necessary financial formalities.
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Bolton Council

Public Interest Checklist

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST – CHECKLIST

Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972

Name of Report:

Meeting:

Executive Cabinet

Member/Cabinet/Committee/Council

Date:

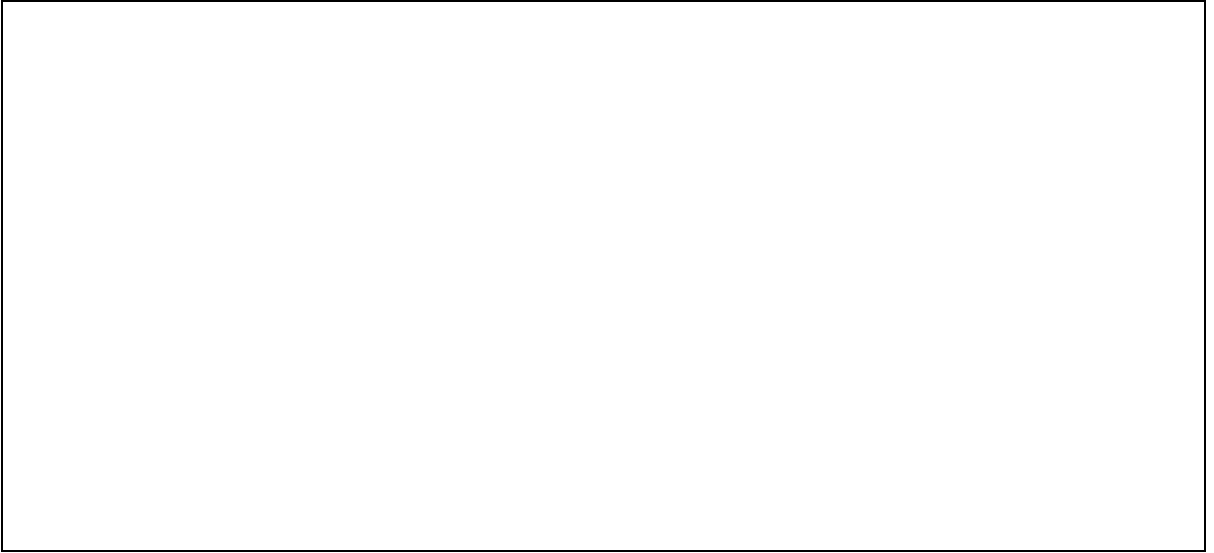
Please remember that the starting point for all reports is that they should be available for members of the public to gain access.

Public Interest Test Questionnaire

This is not a definitive list, however, it does provide a series of questions that you should ask yourself when recommending confidentiality.

FACTORS WHICH SUPPORT DISCLOSING INFORMATION

Will disclosure help people to understand and participate in public debate about current issues?	
Will disclosure help people to understand why the Council has taken certain decisions?	
Will disclosure give the public information about the personal probity (or otherwise) of elected members or council staff?	
Will disclosure encourage greater competition and better value for money for council taxpayers?	
Will disclosure allow individuals and companies to understand decisions made by the Council that have affected their lives?	
Is the information about factors that affect public health and public safety? (NB you should be careful if considering the release of information which might adversely affect public health and safety.)	
Will disclosure reveal incompetent, illegal or unethical decision making or examples of malpractice?	
Will disclosure reveal that such maladministration has not in fact occurred?	
Will disclosure damage the Council's interests without giving the public any useful information?	
Will disclosure damage another organisation or person's interests, without giving the public any useful information?	
Will disclosure give an unfair, prejudicial or inaccurate view of a situation?	
Will disclosure prevent the effective delivery of services without giving the public useful information?	
Will disclosure put the health and safety of any group or individuals at risk?	
Is there a clear and coherent reason why the community in general would benefit more from information being withheld?	
Justification of decision (Please provide explicit reasoning)	



Appendix A – funding per ward for 2019/20 based on options 1 and 2

	Total Neighbourhood Management Budget £225,000		Total Area Working Budget £75,000	OPTION 1	OPTION 2
	POT A (25%)	POT B (50%)	POT C (25%)	Total Funding (Pot A / B / C)	Total Funding Flat Rate
Ward	Neighbourhood Management Areas	Deprivation Monies – must be spent in the target areas	Area Working Flat Rate		
Astley Bridge	£0	£1,275	£3,750	£5,025	£15,000
Bradshaw	£1,313	£2,550	£3,750	£7,613	£15,000
Brightmet	£8,506	£13,155	£3,750	£25,411	£15,000
Bromley Cross	£0	£0	£3,750	£3,750	£15,000
Crompton	£6,848	£16,080	£3,750	£26,677	£15,000
Farnworth	£10,013	£19,785	£3,750	£33,548	£15,000
Great Lever	£9,456	£17,355	£3,750	£30,561	£15,000
Halliwel	£8,683	£19,665	£3,750	£32,098	£15,000
Harper Green	£6,096	£9,060	£3,750	£18,906	£15,000
Heaton & Lostock	£198	£255	£3,750	£4,203	£15,000
Horwich & Blackrod	£0	£1,275	£3,750	£5,025	£15,000
Horwich North East	£0	£780	£3,750	£4,530	£15,000
Hulton	£2,677	£7,665	£3,750	£14,092	£15,000
Kearsley	£1,414	£3,060	£3,750	£8,224	£15,000
L Lever & D Lever	£0	£1,275	£3,750	£5,025	£15,000
Rumworth	£11,715	£17,490	£3,750	£32,955	£15,000
Smithills	£2,077	£4,335	£3,750	£10,162	£15,000

Tonge with the Haulgh	£3,697	£11,880	£3,750	£19,327	£15,000
W'htn N & Chew Moor	£561	£255	£3,750	£4,566	£15,000
Westhoughton South	£1,746	£2,805	£3,750	£8,301	£15,000
Totals	£75,000	£150,000	£75,000	£300,000	£300,000