

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee**

**Nuneaton & Bedworth Area  
Committee**

**Date of Committee**

**25<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

**Report Title**

**Responsive Services and  
Empowered Communities –the  
development of a locality approach**

**Summary**

This report follows on from the decision of the Cabinet on 10th May 2007 authorising consultation with elected members through the Area Committees on the principles and issues relating to the development of a Locality approach by the Council.

**For further information  
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**Would the recommended  
decision be contrary to the  
Budget and Policy  
Framework? [please identify  
relevant plan/budget provision]  
Background papers**

No

- Report to Cabinet dated 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007 'Locality proposals'
- Warwickshire Local Area Agreement 2007-2009 (final version dated 20/3/2007)
- Quality of Life in Life in Warwickshire – key trends 2000-2007- Warwickshire Observatory
- Local Government White Paper – 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' – October 2006
- Report to Council dated 23 January 2007 'Enhanced 2 tier working'
- Closer to People and Places – Local Government Association Campaign
- 'The Politics of Place' – Leadership Centre for Local Government – October 2006
- The Lyons Enquiry into Local Government – March 2007
- Changing Neighbourhoods – Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2007

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-**

Details to be specified

- |                           |                                     |   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Other Committees          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | .....   |
| Local Member(s)           | <input type="checkbox"/>            | .....   |
| Other Elected Members     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | .....   |
| Cabinet Members           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Cllr Peter Fowler   |
| Chief Executive           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Jim Graham, Chief Executive   |
| Legal                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Greta Needham, Sarah Duxbury, Sian Stroud   |
| Finance                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | David Clarke  |
| Other Strategic Directors | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | William Brown – Community Protection<br>Marion Davis – Children Young People & Families<br>John Deegan – Environment & Economy<br>Graeme Betts - Adult Health & Community Services  |
| District Councils         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council’s attention has been drawn to both the Cabinet Paper dated 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2007 and this Paper. A meeting has been arranged with the Chief Executive of the Borough Council in order to take matters further |
| Health Authority          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | A meeting has been arranged with the Chief Executive of NHS Warwickshire as part of the consultation and engagement arrangements  |
| Police                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | A meeting has been arranged with the Chief Executive of NHS Warwickshire as part of the consultation and engagement arrangements  |
| Other Bodies/Individuals  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Further consultation with partner agencies on the implementation of the localities approach will take place in due course, in all probability through the district- based Local Strategic Partnerships  |

**FINAL DECISION**

**No**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by the Cabinet  On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007
- To Council  30<sup>th</sup> October 2007
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

Nuneaton & Bedworth Area Committee – 25<sup>th</sup> July 2007

**Responsive Services and Empowered Communities –the  
development of a locality approach in Nuneaton &  
Bedworth  
Report of the Strategic Director for Performance &  
Development**

**Recommendations:**

1. That members consider the contents of this Report and express their views on the principles set out, including the boundary and governance options, and how they relate to this area
2. That views expressed by the Area Committee are relayed to the Cabinet when it next considers the proposals at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

**1 Introduction and Strategic Context for the Proposals**

- 1.1 The Lyons Inquiry, the Local Government White Paper and the Local Government Association all see local authorities as ‘place shapers’ of their localities – determining the outcomes needed from public services and ensuring that they are set up to deliver them.
- 1.2 A quick glance through some of the Warwickshire Quality of Life publications and similar reports produced by other local authorities shows, in a nutshell, some of the key aspirations of local people are that:
  - Their environment is clean and well maintained
  - When they are out and about they feel safe from traffic and street crime
  - There are safe play areas for young children and good levels of activities and facilities for teenagers
  - The essential character of the community is preserved through appropriate decisions about development
  - Refuse collection happens appropriately and the service responds to community issues

- 1.3 These and other more complex local issues (such as community cohesion) show themselves differently from community to community – are more pronounced in some places than in others, and the solutions that local people need from service providers can also be markedly different. However, traditionally, the public sector has tended to provide single and often uncoordinated uniform solutions without taking sufficiently into account either local community differences or the activities of other agencies.
- 1.4 The Local Government Association has consistently argued for local differentiation of service provision and greater connection with local people to enable them to engage with service providers:
- ‘Councils and their partners such as police and health must respond to the needs of the town, city or village they serve, not be constrained by a plethora of targets set in London (which can be up to 1000 per council); We want to achieve high-quality services everywhere, but with **'post-code choice'**, depending on what is important to the city, town or village’
- 1.5 Over recent times, a raft of publications, reports and programmes (most notably the White Paper ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’) has reinforced this approach and made clear the key role of local government as strategic leader, place shaper, and as the convenor of public sector services.
- 1.6 Information available from public perception surveys, including those conducted by the County Council, has indicated that a number of satisfaction indicators are moving in the wrong direction. These are indicative of a growing level of ‘disconnection’ between the Council and its communities. For example, satisfaction with the way the Council runs things has fallen from 63% in 2000 to 55% in 2006, and fewer people feel that they get good value for money from the County Council.
- 1.7 The Local Area Agreement has a number of Outcomes and Targets that are relevant to this issue – most notably found in the Stronger Communities Block of the LAA. For example there are Outcomes relating to:
- ‘Empowering local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in public service delivery’ (St1)
  - and
  - ‘Vibrant communities where people are likely to access facilities, services and amenities locally and participate in community life through shared activities’ (St2)
  - and
  - ‘Creating fair, tolerant and cohesive communities’ (St3)
- All efforts made by the Council and its partners to deliver these outcomes are at least to an extent contingent on the establishment of shared arrangements to ‘get closer to the people’.
- 1.8 There is increased recognition of the fact that no single agency can produce a suitable response to many of the most complex issues on the ground in local communities and that, in order to address these matters, there is a need for

much closer joint working between agencies on the ground. This is made clear in the introduction to the Warwickshire Local Area Agreement:

'These complex issues cannot be addressed by one agency working in isolation and joined up and focused delivery through partnership... these are typically problems which extend beyond the remit of one agency and require a multi agency response in order to achieve significant and sustained improvement'.

- 1.9 Against this background, the Council should consider the best way in which it can get closer to local communities, encouraging their engagement with the Council and its key partners, in order to identify priority local issues, the solutions to local problems and what services should be commissioned in response.
- 1.10 The remainder of this Paper explores further the potential for locality working in Warwickshire and focuses on the following matters:
- The general issues raised in the Cabinet Paper dated 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007 (Paragraph 2)
  - The various options for the designation of locality boundaries in each of the five areas of the County (Paragraph 3)
  - The options available in respect of local forums and structures (Paragraph 4)
  - The relationship between localities and existing democratic and governance structures and the options, which exist in this respect. (Paragraph 5)
  - A Conclusion (Paragraph 6)
- 1.11 It is hoped that this Paper will inform and guide the discussions of the Area Committee. In turn, these and other discussions will be summarised and incorporated in a comprehensive further paper to be considered by the Council's Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

## **2. The Cabinet Paper of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

- 2.1 On 10th May, Cabinet considered a short report on Locality Working coupled with a more detailed discussion paper entitled 'Locality Proposals for Warwickshire'. Cabinet resolved:

That the Cabinet approve the attached paper as the basis for:

- Consultation with members of the County Council
- Discussion with District and Borough Councils and other partners
- Approve the development of a locality working pathfinder project in the Stratford area, subject to agreement with Stratford on Avon District Council

- 2.2 The following matters were raised during the discussion at Cabinet:

- There would be benefits in individual presentations being made to each area committee before they considered the issues rather than one presentation being made to all members of the Council.

- The views of the area committees would be submitted to the Cabinet when considering the issues.
- Consideration should be given to the preparation of a business case.
- The proposals would enhance members roles as community leaders
- The benefits in the pilot being undertaken with the Stratford on Avon District Council were acknowledged.

2.3 The Discussion Paper considered by the Cabinet is attached as Appendix One. This is in its original form apart from the fact that it has been edited to ensure an exclusive focus on the proposed locality arrangements affecting this area alone.

Members will note that the Discussion paper sets out:

a) A Vision for Locality Working:

*To deliver responsive services, extending choice and control, giving individuals and groups a real say over services and strengthening the role that councillors, citizens and communities play in shaping the places they live.*

b) The principles underpinning Locality Working:

*Responsive Service Delivery  
Effective Governance  
Community Development  
Enhancing Local Strategic Partnerships and the delivery of local priorities through the LAA  
Rationalisation of local service delivery and access points*

c) A proposed definition of Localities

*Members are reminded that in order to ensure the best possible balance between 'community identity' and 'Manageability' that we have been working, wherever possible, to the population in each Locality being within the range of 15,000 – 30,000 people.*

d) Options for Locality Working in the Area

*See Paragraph 3 below*

### **3. Locality Options in this Area**

- 3.1 An Officer Working Group has developed two options for the Nuneaton and Bedworth area, building on natural boundaries, existing arrangements and knowledge and intelligence from those officers involved, related to local issues.
- 3.2 The first option proposals at **Appendix A**, are coterminous with Borough Council wards and with Safer Neighbourhoods Policing areas. In relation to this

first option, there are anomalies between the boundaries of proposed localities and County Council electoral divisions. These anomalies are principally due to the Safer Neighbourhood areas being aligned with District and Borough Council ward boundaries. The implication of these anomalies is that in those instances, the County Councillor representing the divisions concerned will relate to more than one locality.

3.3 The second option generally seeks to increase the size and consequently, the population served and provides an option based on WCC electoral divisions rather than Borough wards. These options do not fit as closely with Safer Neighbourhoods Policing areas, which are currently in operation through the local PACT meetings.

3.4 Further information on Option 1 (**Appendix A**)

There is no comprehensive network of local forums or electoral divisional panels in Nuneaton and Bedworth. Consequently, the proposals in this area have involved developing a new model to achieve our objectives. The model fits the population size criteria of 15,000 to 30,000 and has reflected the locally accepted geographical areas of West and East Nuneaton; taken into consideration the two town surrounds; Policing Areas; and where possible, local peoples natural affinity and travel patterns.

3.5 Five locality areas are proposed in this first option. These are:

West Nuneaton (1)	(29,400 population)
East Nuneaton (1)	(21,500 population)
Central and South Nuneaton (1)	(27,900 population)
East Bedworth and Bulkington (1)	(20,100 population)
West Bedworth (1)	(21,400 population)

Discrepancies exist between locality proposals and WCC Divisions in the following instances:

**East Bedworth and Bulkington** – a very small area of the Bulkington division is proposed to be included in the Central and South Nuneaton area.

**Arbury and Stockingford** – this division is proposed to be divided, between two locality areas. The Stockingford area to the north of Arbury Road is included in the West Nuneaton Area and the more rural Arbury area is proposed to be in the Central and South Nuneaton area. Arbury and Stockingford is a two-member division.

**Nuneaton Whitestone** is affected, with the majority of the division lying in the East Nuneaton Area, but with a smaller area included in Central and South Nuneaton.

The final anomaly is in **Bedworth**, where the **Bede** division is split in two, with the northern part proposed to be in East Bedworth and Bulkington and the southern part in West Bedworth.



## Option 2 (Appendix B)

Option 2 at **Appendix B** involves realigning the locality proposals with WCC electoral divisions. The proposals below are considered to provide the "best fit" available in balancing population size and sense of community whilst not splitting WCC divisions. One area is over the 30,000 population criteria. There are several anomalies between this model and Borough Council Wards / Safer Neighbourhoods Policing areas. These proposals are:

West Nuneaton (2)	(35,200 population)
East Nuneaton (2)	(26,200 population)
Central and South Nuneaton (2)	(16,100 population)
East Bedworth and Bulkington (2)	(24,400 population)
West Bedworth (2)	(18,400 population)

### 4. The purposes of a Locality Group

- 4.1 This paragraph examines the relationship between some of the options for localities and the possible impact on existing democratic and governance structures within Warwickshire at both the County and District/Borough level.
- 4.2 At the heart of Locality Working will be the establishment of a Locality Group. This could either be established as an Advisory Forum or as a decision-making body – see Paragraph 5 below.
- 4.3 In **all options**, the broad purposes of a Locality Group would be to:
- Provide an opportunity for elected members of the County, District and (where applicable) Town and Parish Councils and other stakeholders to debate and lead on important local matters.
  - Improve local coordination between services – for example – housing and social care or youth services and the police
  - Provide a means for Councillors and local people to greater influence the development of local services
  - Provide a single and agreed local forum for consultation with local people – to be used by all local services
  - Enable local stakeholders – for example businesses, the voluntary and community sector to become more engaged with local people and shaping local public services
  - Strengthen local governance and the role of the front line elected member, providing a single visible forum for local discussions and consultation where the public attend and contribute their views
  - Establish a single local point of focus for local people to know:
    - ✓ Where to sort out any local problems swiftly and efficiently
    - ✓ When local issues are being discussed, and how they can input

- ✓ Who makes local decisions
  - ✓ Why those decisions have been made
  - ✓ How they can influence the future provision of their services
- Make better use of time and effort through the creation of a simpler system of locality governance with fewer partnerships and meetings
  - Support work on a range of issues – most notably the enhancement of community cohesion and the vibrancy of communities at a very local level.
  - Enhance links between local people, elected members, and Local Strategic Partnerships and their Theme Groups
  - Give a positive and higher profile for elected members in local community activity

4.4 Again, in all cases, the Locality Groups would be responsible for:

- Co-ordinating local consultation
- Deciding on how issues raised by residents will be resolved and by whom
- Developing local actions and targets associated with the countywide LAA and the area Sustainable Community Strategy
- Better engagement with those who don't often speak up or get involved
- Managing local expectations about what can and cannot be delivered
- Supporting service providers to deliver local priorities

4.5 Membership of the Locality Group would be shaped by the locality's remit and powers, as well as local interest, although it would be expected that membership should include:

- The County Council elected member(s) for the Locality
- The Borough/District Council representative(s) for Locality
- The Police
- Representation from Town and Parish Councils
- Representation from the Health Sector
- Education/Learning representatives (School and FE College)
- Business Sector representation
- Representation from local voluntary sector and community groups

Service provider engagement would depend on the agenda /issues being discussed and developed.

4.6 The following includes a summary of the types of issues that might appear on the agenda from which it can be seen that the Groups should focus on those issues and services that most interest local people. Evidence from a range of sources provides a broadly consistent view of what local communities collectively are interested in:

- Cleaning up streets, parks and open spaces – litter, dog fouling, graffiti, refuse collection, abandoned vehicles, fly tipping and grass cutting
- Traffic and road safety issues

- Facilities and activities for children and teenagers
- Road and pavement maintenance
- Crime & Community Safety
- Public Transport
- Health services – especially the reconfiguration of services affecting local communities
- Affordable housing
- Sports, leisure and cultural facilities
- Range and types of shops available locally
- Planning
- Local employment and volunteering opportunities

## **5. Governance Options**

5.1 The options for the structure and powers of Locality Fora are set out below for members to consider.

### **5.2 Option 1**

Locality Fora sit alongside existing member/ partnership bodies (e.g. Cabinet, Area Committees (at County and District level), LSPs)

#### **(i) General Information**

This option would involve using existing local arrangements as the ‘locality forum’ for the area wherever possible. In other words, with the support of Warwickshire Police, PACT Panels and/or other local agencies, area panels would fulfil the function of the locality forum with a brief which extends beyond community safety issues.

Area Committees of the County Council and also any local area committees operating at Borough / District Council level would continue to operate.

#### **(ii) Membership**

It is anticipated that membership would follow a similar pattern to membership of the LSPs with a range of agencies represented (as set out in paragraph 4.5). Where locality fora are fulfilled by PACT Panels, the Home Office guidance on membership of such panels would need to be taken into consideration.

#### **(iii) Role and Powers**

This option tends towards locality fora more as being advisory forums. There may be occasions when Council officers are in attendance and can take operational decisions (similarly with Senior Police Officers who could take operational decisions at such meetings). However, generally speaking, in respect of Council functions these fora would not have decision making powers and all local authority decisions relating to locality and area issues would continue to vest with the relevant Area Committee(s) or other local authority executive body. This position may well change with the advent of individual decision making powers for councillors contained in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill which is making its way through Parliament.

The fora would have a key role in providing local intelligence and feedback to relevant decision makers (e.g. the Area Committee of the County Council, the Area Committee of the District/Borough Council). They could be an appropriate forum for consultation on local issues and in such a role, the locality forums could report to the LSPs, as well as to the consultation proposers, in view of the LSP's multi-agency composition and partnership focus.

Some linkage would be required between the Area Committee and the LSP to ensure that all locality issues were being picked up and appropriately addressed. A locality action plan could address this and a number of practical steps could reinforce this: reciprocal circulation of minutes and standing agenda items for locality issues, an agreed "call for action" procedure; attendance of the Chair of the locality as a non-voting invitee (if not already represented) at the LSP and Area Committee.

In such a model it would be necessary to manage the expectations of those attending and participating at meetings in respect of decision-making and actions arising. The powers of, and political support for, localities must be such that local people perceive a real benefit in their existence and that another layer of governance is justified.

#### **(iv) Servicing arrangements**

The responsibility for servicing arrangements for locality forums could be shared between the statutory and non-statutory partners within a local area, although it would probably be necessary for either the County or District/Borough Council to retain overall responsibility for the management of locality forums to ensure the consistency and frequency of meetings, attendance and agenda management and to take forward any actions arising.

- 5.2 **Option 2:** This would be Option 1 but with a commitment to review after 12 months to consider the effectiveness of the arrangements that had been put into place and whether they may be enhanced by the addition of more formal decision making arrangements.
- 5.3 **Option 3:** Locality Fora would replace existing member bodies (eg Area Committees at County and District level).

#### **(i) Structures**

Under current legislation, in order for locality fora to be decision making in respect of Council functions, they would need to be established as a joint committee comprising County and District Council members. Other agencies could be represented but would not have the power to vote. In due course, when the law allows for individual decision making powers for councillors this position will alter.

Giving locality fora decision making powers would call into question the continued role of Area Committees. The future role for Area Committees is also compounded by the prominence given to multi-agency LSPs (rather than

single authority Area Committees) by national policy and the imperative of delivering the Warwickshire LAA. .

Under this model therefore, Area Committees of the County Council and any local area committees operating at Borough / District Council level would cease to operate and any residual powers would be transferred down to locality level, or to individual councillors or officers, or up to the local authorities' executive bodies..

#### (ii) Membership

Until such time as individual decision making powers are in place for councillors, this arrangement would involve a joint committee comprising county and district councillors. Other agencies would be able to attend and participate but in respect of any issues which require a Council decision, they would not be able to vote.

#### (iii) Role and Powers

This option would give locality fora decision making powers. This might give a stronger local authority identity to meetings and give local people a real sense that decisions which affect their community and address their needs can be taken at a local level in a responsive way.

In this sort of arrangement, there might still be a number of local authority-specific decisions that should not be made at a locality level - because of the impact on a wider area- for example, where a school's priority area or a traffic calming scheme crosses several localities. In the absence of Area Committee these issues would have to be decided elsewhere, ultimately by the local authorities' executive bodies.

Under this model, the role of the LSP would become enhanced, as the body with primacy for area-wide strategy. The LSP already reports into the Public Service Board on county-wide issues and LAA implementation, but the local authorities would also need to link into the LSP to pick up any locality issues that require specific action by one or both of the local authorities rather than the LSP or the Public Service Board.

#### (iv) Servicing arrangements

Any formal decision-making arrangements between the local authorities, at locality level, would require servicing in accordance with local government committee legislation. The additional impact of servicing would need to be outweighed by the benefits of the new local decision-making powers.

## **6. Summary and Conclusion**

- 6.1 This paper has set out the national and local strategic context to enable elected members to offer their views on the establishment of a Locality Approach. It suggests that the establishment of such an approach should be seen as being

key to the achievement of better, more responsive and more coherent services for the public and the development of more engaged communities through the establishment of Locality Groups.

- 6.2 The paper offers a number of options for consideration by elected members and the outcomes of the Area Committee discussions will be summarised and reported to Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007 and thereafter to the County Council on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

David Carter  
Strategic Director for Performance & Development

27<sup>th</sup> June 2007

# **Responsive Services and Empowered Communities**

## **A Discussion Paper on Locality Proposals for Warwickshire**

## **A Discussion Paper on Locality Proposals for Warwickshire - Responsive Services and Empowered Communities**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1** One of the key themes of the County Council's new ways of working involves the concept of locality working.
- 1.2** **The proposed vision for locality working is:  
To deliver responsive services, extending choice and control, giving individuals and groups a real say over services and strengthening the role that councillors, citizens and communities play in shaping the places they live.**
- 1.3** The approach has real potential for transforming the way that public services are delivered and is clearly echoed in the Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities. To deliver this vision, the approach needs to be agreed by all public service providers, working to common definitions of localities and with common structures and processes. A unified approach to localities will provide one of the building blocks of enhanced two-tier working in Warwickshire.

### **2.0 Principles**

The principles behind this approach to locality working are:

#### **2.1 Responsive Service Delivery**

- All public sector service providers working together to address local needs – able to address cross cutting issues
- Common structures for engaging / consulting local communities
- Common locally defined priorities arrived at through a process that enables local communities to shape and influence the delivery of services
- Mechanisms to hold service providers to account

#### **2.2 Effective Governance**

- Councillors supported in their role as community champions, leading the process of shaping services for local communities
- Councillors playing a pivotal role in linking community priorities with those of the councils on which they serve
- All tiers of local government working effectively together

#### **2.3 Community Development**

- Building the capacity of local communities to influence and shape services
- Rationalised approach to supporting the voluntary and community sector at a local level
- Rationalisation of the approach to financial support for local groups and local initiatives

#### **2.4 Local Strategic Partnerships**

- Local delivery of Local Strategic Partnership and LAA priorities
- Ensuring local priorities are addressed through strategic partnership working

#### **2.5 Rationalisation of local service delivery and access points**

- Establish models of local service delivery and access to services and information appropriate to individual communities



### **3.0 Definition of Localities.**

**3.1** For locality working to be effective, there needs to be a balance between creating localities that are small enough for people to identify with, yet large enough to be manageable within the resources available to partner agencies.

**3.2** An officer working group involving staff from the County Council and Warwickshire Police has produced an initial set of locality proposals which have sought to achieve the balance set out above. The proposals have been built upon the need wherever possible to align locality proposals with:

- County Council electoral divisions
- Safer Neighbourhoods Policing areas
- Schools extended services clusters (draft proposals shown on attached maps).

**3.3** In seeking to achieve a balance between localities that are small enough for people to relate to and large enough to be manageable, there has been an attempt to arrive at a fairly uniform population size. However, a clear pattern of differences between urban and rural areas emerged in the first set of proposals for each area, with rural areas being geographically larger, but less populous than the smaller urban areas.

**3.4** These locality proposals should be seen as the starting point for discussions with partners, particularly Warwickshire's District and Borough Councils. To deliver our vision for localities we need the agreement of key partners to work to common structures and processes and critically to work to agreed geographic areas.

### **4.0 Options for Locality Working**

**4.1** Options for locality working are set out in this paper for each of the 5 areas of Warwickshire. The first option in North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby and Warwick are the initial options from the locality working group. In all areas (except Rugby where there is an anomaly), these proposals are coterminous with District / Borough Council wards and with Safer Neighbourhoods Policing areas. In relation to these first options, in some instances, there are anomalies between the boundaries of proposed localities and County Council electoral divisions. These anomalies are principally due to the Safer Neighbourhood areas being aligned with District and Borough Council ward boundaries. The implication of these anomalies is that in those instances, the County Councillor representing the divisions concerned will relate to more than one locality.

**4.2** The second option for each area generally seeks to increase the size and consequently the population level of the more rural localities and provides an option based on WCC electoral divisions rather than District / Borough wards. These options do not fit as closely with Safer Neighbourhoods Policing areas.

**4.3** Whilst a limited number of options per area are set out here, there are numerous possible variations that can be developed depending on the weighting attached to the criteria used to define localities. **Appendix 1** to this paper comprises a map of WCC electoral divisions for reference purposes.

## **5.0 Stratford on Avon Pathfinder**

**5.1** In Stratford on Avon, discussions have progressed more quickly than elsewhere because of the District Council's desire to move from the existing four-area model based on areas used by District Council Area Committees (this model, with minor variations is also the current basis for Safer neighbourhoods Policing in Stratford). The principal problems with the four-area model have been the large size of the geographic areas covered and the lack of a clear local identity. Three additional models for Stratford have therefore been considered.

**5.2** Discussions have also taking place with Stratford on Avon District Council over the nature of locality working. A paper setting out the current state of these discussions is attached as **appendix 2** to this report.

**5.3** Stratford on Avon District Council's Executive considered and deferred a report by its own internal working group which has reviewed the role of its Area Community Committees and locality working at its meeting on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. However, because of the District Council's ongoing interest in moving towards revised locality structures and because the discussions between the County Council, Stratford on Avon District Council and Warwickshire Police have made positive progress, it is proposed that Stratford should be used as a pathfinder for locality working in Warwickshire, subject to the agreement of the District Council. The lessons learned from developing locality working here in the short - term can be applied across the County in the longer - term following more detailed discussion with other partners.

## **6.0 Locality Structures and Processes.**

### **6.1 Locality Fora**

At the same time as considering the geographic basis for locality working, we also need to be considering the structural, reporting and decision making arrangements that would sit at a local level. It is proposed that local fora arrangements should be developed, building on existing local arrangements where possible rather than duplicating them. For example, the local fora may be based on existing electoral divisional panels, Safer Neighbourhoods Policing PACT panels or area fora – whichever may be appropriate for the area in question. Only where no existing structures exist is it proposed that we should look to establish totally new arrangements.

**6.2** Whatever local fora are established, they should bring together local government representatives, local service providers and local community organisations in order to ensure that local people have the opportunity to influence the delivery of public services within their community. The local fora could also:

- Act as the vehicle for consultation and engagement
- Act as the vehicle for identifying local priorities and raising local concerns
- Provide the opportunity for the community to hold service providers to account
- Act as the vehicle to deliver at a local level the priorities of the LAA and the Local Strategic Partnership

- Promote the links between the neighbourhood, sustainable community strategies and the LAA
- Allow councillors to fulfil their role as community champions, leading the process of shaping services for local communities and linking local community priorities with the those of the councils on which they serve
- Act as a focal point for local community development activity

**6.3** Further work will also be needed to ensure that the local fora relate to the existing tiers of local government and the governance arrangements that are being put in place as part of the LAA arrangements and enhanced two tier working. Particular challenges are likely to include the lines of communication / reporting arrangements between locality fora and LSPs and also the role of Area Committees within the new proposed locality arrangements.

**6.4** **Appendix 2** comprises emerging locality proposals for Stratford on Avon District, which explore going beyond locality fora, to consider the concept of locality committees. As we negotiate with partners over the development of locality working across Warwickshire, as proposed in Para.5.4, it is recommended that the ideas being developed Stratford should be used as a pathfinder for the rest of the County.

## **7.0 Local Charters for Neighbourhoods**

**7.1** The Local Government White Paper advocates the idea of 'Local Charters for Neighbourhoods'. These local charters:

- Take the form of a voluntary agreement between the community and service providers
- Can be used to set out service priorities for action from partner agencies and also commitments that the community itself is able to make
- Can address the issues that the local community sees as appropriate
- Are the outcome of a dialogue between the community, local authorities and service providers
- Are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to be up to date and relevant

**7.2** The locality fora that are established could be the focus for developing local charters that are specifically aimed at meeting community need at a very local level whilst at the same time, enabling local expectations to be managed.

**7.3** The development of locality arrangements will also need a corresponding investment in developing the capacity of local people and groups to better influence and shape service delivery. This will be important if individuals and groups are to play a central role in locality forums. It is proposed that there should be a rationalised approach to supporting the voluntary and community sector at a local level and a rationalisation of the approach to financial support for local groups and local initiatives.

## **8.0 Balancing local and strategic priorities and servicing new arrangements**

**8.1** The proposed arrangements may present tensions between local priorities and countywide priorities that have been agreed through the LAA process and our business planning processes. This may impact on our ability to deliver flexible and responsive services at a local level, which are appropriate to the needs of individual communities. The implications of this for local communities and

service providers will need to be considered to ensure that expectations can be managed effectively. These issues will need working through in more detail in consultation with our partners.

**8.2** Servicing and supporting effective locality working will also need to be adequately resourced by the County Council and partners. Already, the implications of effectively supporting Safer Neighbourhoods Policing are starting to be felt. As proposals for locality working develop, the resource implications for the County Council and partners will need careful consideration. A significant resource shift will be required to effectively deliver these proposals.

**9.0 Rationalisation of local service delivery and access points**

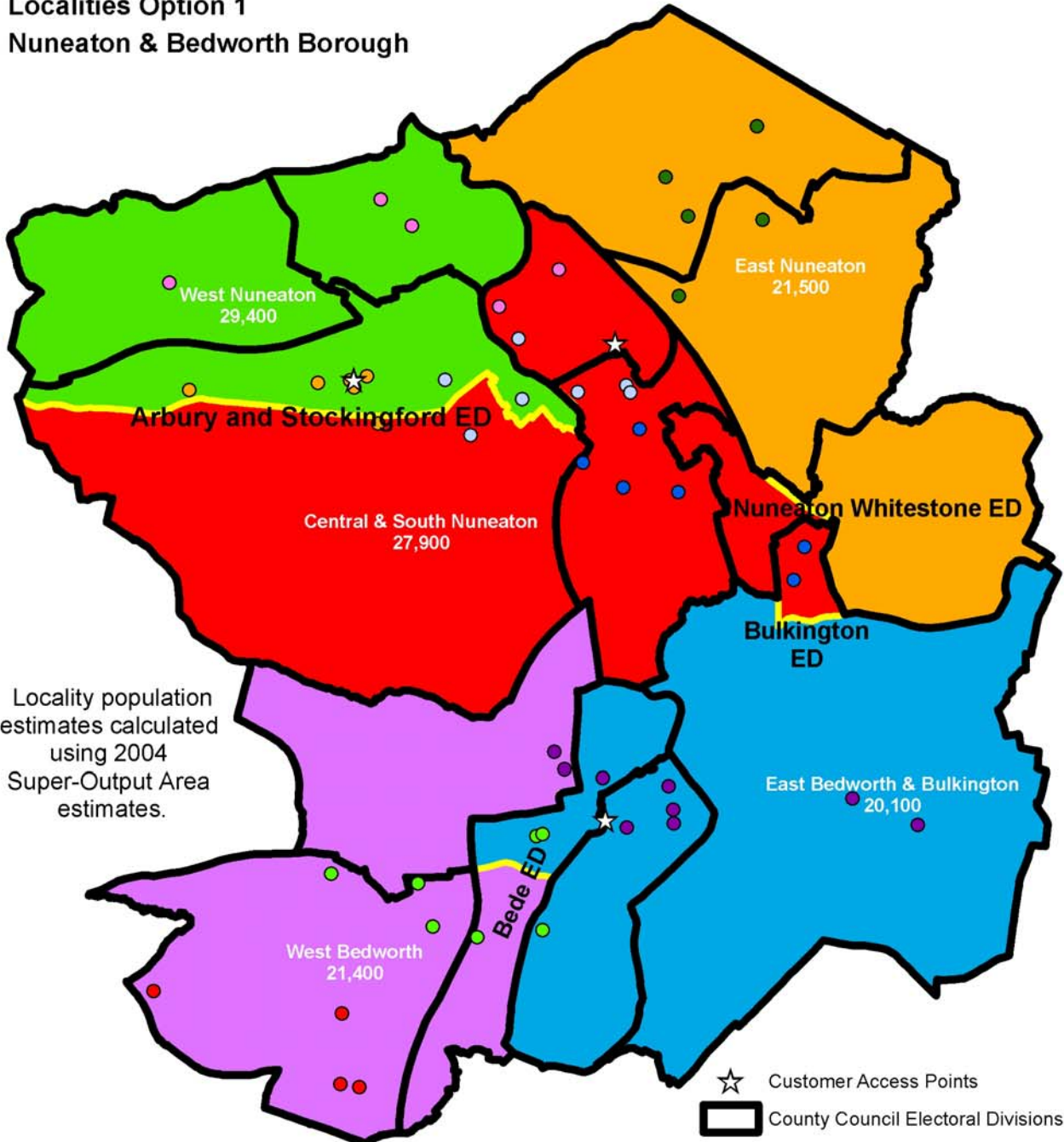
**9.1** Within localities it will be important to establish models of local service delivery and access to services and information appropriate to the needs of individual communities. The development of locality proposals and the implementation of our Customer Access Strategy will need to be carefully integrated.

**9.2** Work on the development of these proposals to date has been informed by the Customer Access Strategy and many of the specific proposals in the strategy provide ideal focal points for service delivery and access to information and services within the localities proposed. In other cases it may be necessary to provide service points serving more than one of the proposed localities. As the locality work progresses, work will need to be undertaken to develop comprehensive proposals for local service delivery and access to services and information to complement whatever locality proposals are agreed.

# **Locality Proposals**

## **Nuneaton and Bedworth**

**Localities Option 1**  
**Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough**



Locality population estimates calculated using 2004 Super-Output Area estimates.

N.B. A yellow line highlights where an Electoral Division is split by a proposed locality area.

**Checklist**

Coterminus with Electoral Divisions?	<b>No</b>
Coterminus with Borough Wards?	<b>Yes</b>
Coterminus with Safer Neighbourhood Areas?	<b>Yes</b>
Coterminus with Extended Services Clusters?	<b>No</b>
Populations within range of 15,000 - 30,000?	<b>Yes</b>

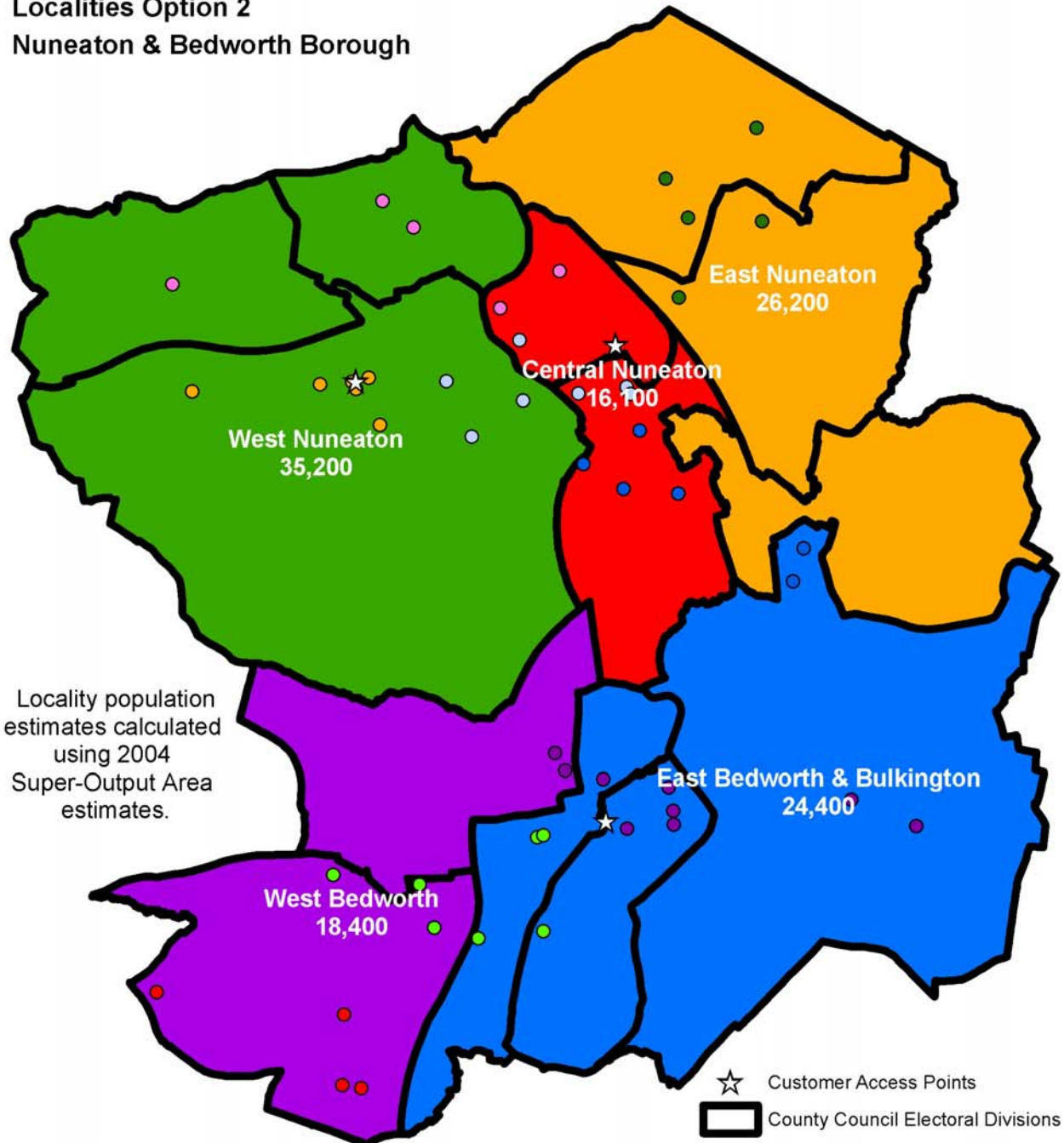
- ☆ Customer Access Points
- ▭ County Council Electoral Divisions

**Extended Services Clusters**

- Cluster**
- NB 1
  - NB 2
  - NB 3
  - NB 4
  - NB 5
  - NB 6
  - NB 7
  - NB 8

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**Localities Option 2  
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough**



☆ Customer Access Points  
 □ County Council Electoral Divisions

**Extended Services Clusters**

- Cluster**
- NB 1
  - NB 2
  - NB 3
  - NB 4
  - NB 5
  - NB 6
  - NB 7
  - NB 8

**Checklist**

Coterminus with Electoral Divisions?	<b>Yes</b>
Coterminus with Borough Wards?	<b>No</b>
Coterminus with Safer Neighbourhood Areas?	<b>No</b>
Coterminus with Extended Services Clusters?	<b>No</b>
Populations within range of 15,000 - 30,000?	<b>No</b>

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**Appendix 1**



# Electoral Divisions 2005

## North Warwickshire

- 1 Arley
- 2 Atherstone
- 3 Baddesley
- 4 Coleshill
- 5 Hartshill
- 6 Kingsbury
- 7 Polesworth
- 8 Water Orton

## Rugby

- 22 Admirals
- 23 Brownsover
- 24 Caldecott
- 25 Dunchurch
- 26 Earl Craven
- 27 Eastlands & Hillmorton
- 28 Fosse
- 29 Long Lawford & New Bilton

## Nuneaton & Bedworth

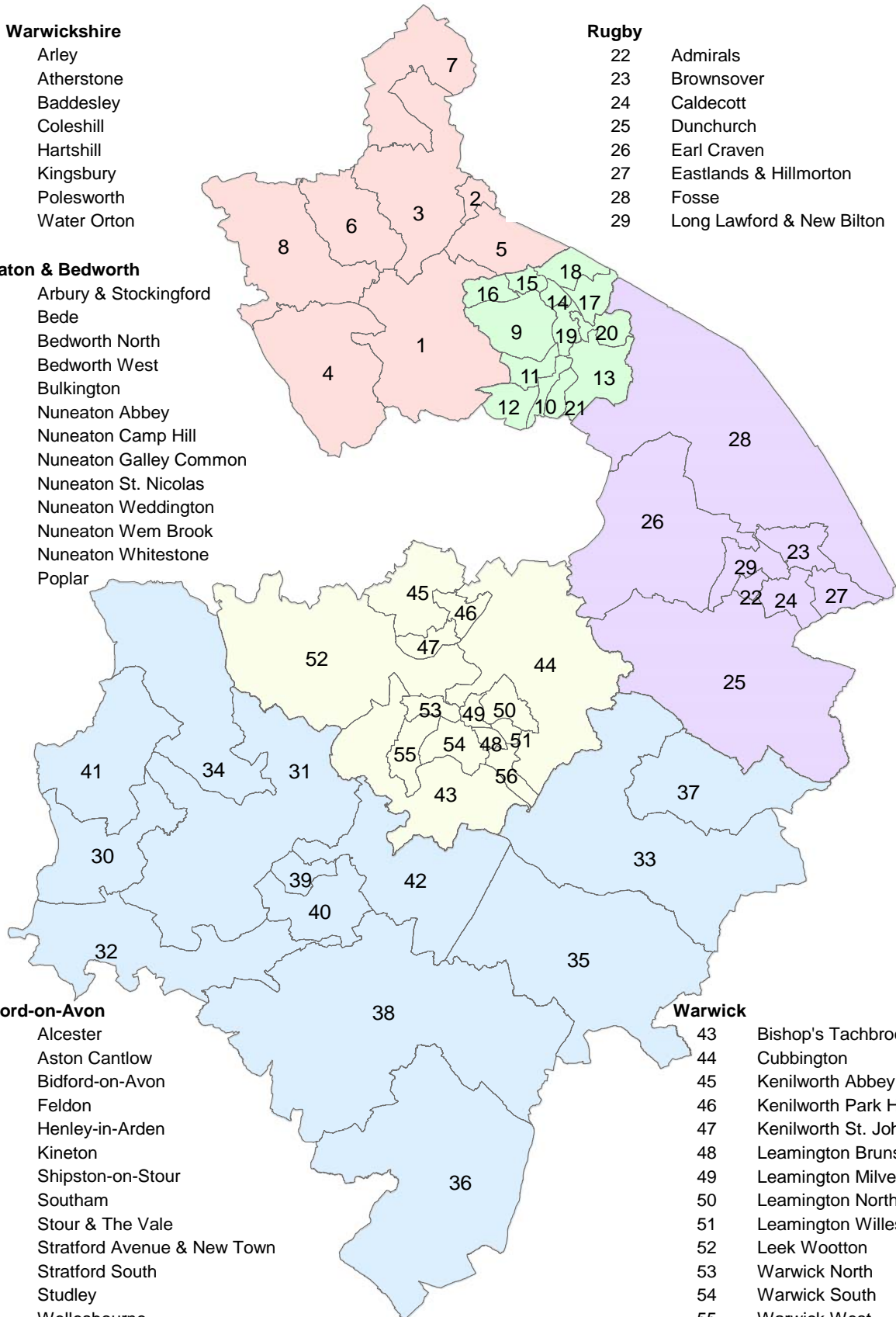
- 9 Arbury & Stockingford
- 10 Bede
- 11 Bedworth North
- 12 Bedworth West
- 13 Bulkington
- 14 Nuneaton Abbey
- 15 Nuneaton Camp Hill
- 16 Nuneaton Galley Common
- 17 Nuneaton St. Nicolas
- 18 Nuneaton Weddington
- 19 Nuneaton Wem Brook
- 20 Nuneaton Whitestone
- 21 Poplar

## Stratford-on-Avon

- 30 Alcester
- 31 Aston Cantlow
- 32 Bidford-on-Avon
- 33 Feldon
- 34 Henley-in-Arden
- 35 Kineton
- 36 Shipston-on-Stour
- 37 Southam
- 38 Stour & The Vale
- 39 Stratford Avenue & New Town
- 40 Stratford South
- 41 Studley
- 42 Wellesbourne

## Warwick

- 43 Bishop's Tachbrook
- 44 Cubbington
- 45 Kenilworth Abbey
- 46 Kenilworth Park Hill
- 47 Kenilworth St. John's
- 48 Leamington Brunswick
- 49 Leamington Milverton
- 50 Leamington North
- 51 Leamington Willes
- 52 Leek Wootton
- 53 Warwick North
- 54 Warwick South
- 55 Warwick West
- 56 Whitnash



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## **LOCALITY PROPOSALS FOR STRATFORD ON AVON**

This paper is based on the deliberations of an informal joint working group between Warwickshire County Council, Stratford on Avon District Council and Warwickshire Police. It has not been formally ratified by any of the agencies involved.

### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1** The recommended approach is based on the purpose of the locality arrangements as being principally related to:
- Improving community engagement;
  - Building a clear vision for the locality and pursuing its implementation ('Place Shaping'); and
  - Influencing service delivery in the locality by prioritising the issues that need to be addressed within the local area.
- 1.2** This approach should be extended to provide for decision making at the locality level, provided there is a business case for this based on there being a sufficient critical mass of topics for local decision to justify the costs of supporting it.
- 1.3** The approach needs to be agreed by all public service providers, with each agency working to a common definition of localities and sharing structures and processes. The agreed approach to localities within Stratford on Avon must produce more joined up working in the District.
- 1.4** The approach being proposed here incorporates the Safer Neighbourhoods initiative being led by the Police and provides the platform for partnership based PACT Panel meetings.
- 1.5** It is proposed that the identified localities be responsible for developing and implementing Locality Plans. This would incorporate work already undertaken within the four market towns (Stratford upon Avon, Alcester, Southam and Shipston) in developing local visions for the town and hinterland.
- 1.6** The localities will be linked into the wider LSP partnership arrangements and will help to provide a local focus for the work of thematic partnerships. This will ensure that there will be no duplication.
- 1.7** The agreed localities will provide a building block for Parish Councils to focus their collective working and will provide a vehicle for locally elected representatives to demonstrate their role in Community Leadership and championing community aspirations.
- 1.8** As noted above, in addition to providing the opportunity for engagement on a range of issues at a more local level, there is the option of establishing a committee between the two Councils, which could have some local decision-making powers.

- 1.9** The most suitable structure will partly be determined by the objectives of the locality arrangements, and particularly whether these are intended to be purely advisory or whether they would have any decision-making powers. Some clear objectives for the localities would need to be agreed, based on the aims set out at the beginning of this paper.
- 1.10** An incremental approach could be taken whereby the localities initially operate as multi-agency Locality Forums with an advisory/consultative remit and a fairly flexible structure. The working group believes that with the support of all three agencies a Locality Forum structure could be established within a matter of months, and Stratford on Avon District Council would prefer the establishment of new locality arrangements to occur as close as possible to the start of the new municipal year.
- 1.11** Formal joint Locality Committees between the County and District Councils could be established at a later stage if a “critical mass” of local functions is delegated to joint locality committees in order to justify the additional level of resources and commitment that would be required from both Councils.

## **2.0 Options for Locality Areas**

- 2.1** For locality working to be effective, there needs to be a balance between creating localities that are small enough for people to identify with, yet large enough to be manageable within the resources available to partner agencies. This is a major challenge within Stratford on Avon with such a large area and dispersed population.

**Note:** The Police have expressed concern that, whatever locality arrangement is agreed, the district wards must be kept together. They have aligned all their data collection and reporting on the Ward basis and any split of a ward(s) will present many, and costly, challenges to address and is something that would not be supported.

- 2.2** Options have been identified for 4, 5 and 6 localities. These are set out below.

### **4 Localities (Option 1 - main report)**

The size of some localities will always be in excess of the County Council threshold of 30,000. The areas are too large and have little by way of common identity across the localities that would be identified with by local people.

### **5 Localities (Option 2 - main report)**

This option still creates large areas, although it is possible to identify localities that fit within the County Councils 15,000 - 30,000 population threshold. The difficulty when looking at the 5 locality option is to create localities that people within the locality will identify with.

### **6 Localities**

The 6 locality option creates areas that people living within a particular locality should be able to relate to without creating areas that are administratively too

small. All the areas are within the WCC 15-30,000 population thresholds. The Police are supportive of the principle of 6 localities.

- **Proposal 1 (Option 3 – main report)**

The areas are mainly coterminous with both District Council ward and County Council division boundaries. There is also good fit with proposed Safer Neighbourhood Team areas. The one division where there are some issues is Aston Cantlow, which is split in two. The Fenny Compton ward and Snitterfield ward are split in two. This option presents particular issues for Cllr Richard Hobbs, as the splits mean that his division/ward would potentially be within 3 localities.

- **Proposal 2 (Option 4 – main report)**

This option is coterminous with County Council divisions and splits the District Council wards of Snitterfield and Fenny Compton in two. The Bidford/Alcester area will provide challenges for local people in identifying with the area given that it runs “around” the southern boundary of Aston Cantlow.

### **3.0 Governance arrangements - Locality Forum and Locality Committee**

#### Locality Forum

- 3.1** One option is to establish a Locality Forum as a multi-agency discussion group to consider issues relevant to the locality, for example to consider and determine the PACT priorities, develop the locality plan, monitor progress on specific issues etc.
- 3.2** There would be no legal difficulty establishing a Locality Forum with a wide membership to meet to discuss local concerns and priorities. In legal terms this Forum would be an advisory committee – in other words, it would have no decision-making powers – although this should not prevent it from putting forward recommendations for action by the Locality Committee or by individual organisations.

#### **Membership of Locality Forum**

- 3.3** Broad guidelines would need to be agreed to identify who would need to be represented on the Locality Forum. The guidelines would take account of the role of the Forum to act as a PACT Panel. The purpose of the guidelines would be to ensure consistency across the Locality Forums without being too prescriptive and allowing local flexibility.
- 3.4** It is expected that the Forum would be broadly based and bring together the local elected members with Police, health (GPs), community & voluntary sector, schools, business etc. with an interest in the locality. A typical forum could therefore include:
  - Safer Neighbourhood Officer
  - SNT Sergeant
  - County councillors
  - District councillors
  - Local residents and other community representatives
  - Residents’ association members

- Faith group representatives
- Representatives from schools/education providers
- PCT/ Health Authority representatives
- Local business representatives
- Parish/Town Councillors

**3.5** SDC & WCC Councillors would attend by virtue of place rather than by the choice of the respective authority. Dual-hatted members would be appointed by both Councils. Proportionate representation would not seem appropriate as there are too few WCC councillors covering the localities in the Stratford area.

**3.6** In view of the number of parish councils in any locality, it may be appropriate for the Locality Forum to invite two or three parish councillors (nominated by the parishes) to represent the parishes as a whole, although an alternative model might be to appoint one parish representative per district ward. Ideally this detail should be for local decision.

### **Locality Committee**

**3.7** A joint committee of the County and District could be established as the decision-making body at a locality level. While this inevitably has consequences for both Councils in terms of resources and servicing arrangements, the significant advantage in establishing a formally constituted local authority committee is the opportunity this creates for delegating a number of local functions to that committee for determination.

**3.8** The County and District Councils have power by virtue of s101 LGA 1972 and s20 LGA 2000 to establish a joint area committee, and to delegate a number of functions to such a joint area committee. Such committees do not have to be politically balanced provided they comprise no more than two-fifths of the local area's population or geographical area and the membership is the elected members whose electoral divisions or wards are wholly or partly contained within the local area to which the committee's functions relate.

**3.9** However, under the current legislative framework, a local authority committee can only exercise decision-making powers over a wide range of local functions if the membership of the committee is limited to County and District Council elected members. As a joint committee the locality committee would be subject to all the local government access to information and decision-making legislation, and executive decisions subject to the executive decision regimes (call in, key decision etc).

### **Relationship between Locality Forum and Locality Committee**

**3.10** If Locality Committees were established in addition to Locality Forums, the Forum in each locality would partly serve an agenda-setting and advisory role to the Locality Committee. The Forum could potentially meet immediately before the Locality Committee meeting, as both would be in public session and many of the interested parties would be the same.

**3.11** The Locality Forum would have a potentially wider focus on local issues than a Locality Committee given the Forum's wider membership and the fact that it encompasses the PACT panel process. However those issues raised by the

Locality Forum which can be addressed by the two Councils at a locality level could be referred to the Locality Committee for determination. The interests of good governance and the law around access to information would usually require an issue raised at a Locality Forum discussion to be brought back as a report to a subsequent meeting of the Locality Committee.

#### Membership of Locality Committee

- 3.12** The membership of a Locality Committee would be determined by place, and would comprise all County and District elected members whose electoral divisions or wards fall within that locality. This would mean that the dual-hatted County/District councillors would in effect be appointed twice: once by each Council.
- 3.13** The issue of dual-hatted members under this model should not present a problem any greater than that faced currently by councillors who are elected to both the County and District Council. Whilst any interests would have to continue to be declared in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, there should only be a limited number of instances in which dual-hatted status precluded a member from participating in a decision of the locality committee, by virtue of the level and nature of decisions being taken. The pending changes to the Code of Conduct will reduce this risk still further.

#### Powers of Locality Committee

- 3.14** The powers that can be delegated to a joint Locality Committee of the County and District Councils are set by legislation, but there are few limitations. The Secretary of State's guidance in Circular 23/90 notes that the councils' executives retain corporate accountability for the executive functions carried out by a joint committee, and that all delegations must be transparent and proportionate. The Circular recommends a clear scheme of delegation that sets some limits on the committee's decision-making powers, both in terms of the councils' policy framework and in expenditure terms. It would be possible for the joint committee to have a delegated budget to administer in its own right, on top of the two councils' existing grant funds.
- 3.15** Any executive functions can be delegated to a joint committee provided the level of delegation is proportionate and relevant to the local area. There would appear to be legal limits on the delegation of certain non-executive functions, which would need further discussion. Major decisions having wider impact than the locality should continue to be reserved to the two councils' executives. As well as some financial limits, the principle of "no harm" should be adopted whereby the committee cannot make a decision, which would have an adverse effect on the area beyond that locality.
- 3.16** A substantial delegation of functions would be required from both the County Council and the District Council in order for Locality Committees to achieve sufficient "critical mass" and significance to the local community to justify the creation of new local authority committees with the resource and servicing implications inherent in this.
- 3.17** It would seem that from the County Council's existing list of delegations to Area Committees that a number of functions could be delegated to Locality Committees if the legislative framework permits. These might include:

- Community development grants and well-being grants;
- Approving school crossing patrol and other road safety schemes;
- Road traffic management schemes and regulation;
- Power to create and divert footpaths and bridleways, other rights of way powers, powers to grant works on the highway;
- Opening hours of waste disposal sites

**3.18** The District Council's constitution identifies a number of general and specific functions currently devolved to the Area Community Committees, which would be capable of delegation to Locality Committees if the legislative framework permits. These might include:

- Consider initiatives to manage and protect archaeological sites, including those scheduled as ancient monuments and buildings of special or historic interest;
- Consider environmentally based initiatives, including those to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Cotswold AONB;
- To determine [a specified list of] matters within the control of the Planning and Regulation Committee which have a specific local significance;
- To deal with grant applications in accordance with the Council's agreed procedures.

**3.19** The District Council discharges its area planning functions through separate (and politically balanced) Area Planning Committees and whether the legislation would permit planning matters to be delegated to a joint Locality Committee is a specific issue that would require further consideration.

### **Funding**

**3.20** If Locality Committees were to be established there may be scope for devolving some funding powers to the joint committees, in the form of grants or a budget. Locality Forums, by their very nature, would not have funding powers.

**3.21** Both District and County Council currently provide grants within the district. The District Council currently provides each of its Area Community Committees with a budget of £50,000 capital and £10,000 revenue. The County Council operates the Community Development Fund £32,000, Well being Fund £63,000 and Social Inclusion Fund £50,200 across the district. If Locality Committees were to be established, some, or all, of these funds could be pooled and common criteria agreed for the provision of a grant fund for each Locality. In parallel, consideration should be given to establishing a grant fund that could be used strategically to address issues across the District.

**3.22** In the longer term, consideration could be given to delegating a budget to each Locality Committee to spend as it sees fit (within agreed parameters) to address locality issues.

### **Number of meetings and servicing arrangements**

**3.23** It may be appropriate to start with quarterly meetings of the Locality Forums but recognise that meeting frequency may need to be increased if Locality Committees were to be established, given the nature of decisions that they may take.

- 3.24** There might be different ways of providing support to the Forums - for example trained parish clerks could be paid to support some of the Forums and as a general principle, the servicing of Locality Forums could be shared between the main local agencies.
- 3.25** However if Locality Committees were to be established, the legal formalities applying to the conduct of local authority meetings would need to be factored into the servicing arrangements. Currently the County Council supports 6 Area Committee meetings per year in the Stratford area and the District Council supports 16 Area Community Committee meetings.