

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Rugby Area Committee

Date of Committee 22 March 2007

Report Title Update on Electoral Divisional Panels

Summary This report provides a timetable for Electoral Divisional Panel meetings in 2007, and clarifies our current approach in the light of developments such as Safer Neighbourhoods Policing.

For further information please contact: Nick Darwen Rugby Area Manager Tel: 01788 533570 nickdarwen@warwickshire.gov.uk Claire Lloyd Area Administrative Officer Tel: 01788 533570 clairewildsmith@warwickshire.gov.uk

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No

Background papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s) Cllr John Vereker, Chair - Rugby Area Committee
- Other Elected Members
- Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Legal Peter Endall, Solicitor
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Rugby Area Committee – 25 January 2007

Update on Electoral Divisional Panels

Report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development

Recommendation

That members endorse the interim arrangements as described in this report, and agree to the programme of Panel meetings as set out in the appendix.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report introduces a schedule of Electoral Divisional Panel meetings for 2007 (attached as an appendix) and clarifies current arrangements in the light of Safer Neighbourhoods Policing, and, in the longer term, the development of integrated locality arrangements across the County.

1.2 The Area Team is looking to enhance the support it provides to Electoral Divisional Panels, and to provide this support more consistently. The proposals in this report are essentially about firming up current practice, rather than making any significant changes.

1.3 No Electoral Panels have been held since the last Area Committee meeting, although five Panels are meeting in March.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Rugby Area Office has over the past few years supported Councillors to hold Electoral Divisional Panels meetings.

2.2 These meetings bring together County, Borough and Parish Councillors, along with other community interests and local residents, to discuss local issues with officers from the local public services.

2.3 Some Councillors have chosen to hold regular meetings, while others have tended to hold meetings as and when issues arise.

2.4 Over the last few months, Warwickshire Police has introduced Safer Neighbourhoods Policing. The Police see our Electoral Divisional Panels as a suitable mechanism for Councillors and local communities to get involved in the setting of local policing priorities. There is widespread agreement that this is preferable to creating separate 'Safer Neighbourhoods' meetings in addition to the Electoral Divisional Panels.

Electoral Divisional Panels are not primarily a mechanism for finding out community needs, but of identifying responses to community needs. Community concerns are identified through a variety of means, including Residents Groups, Councillors and

grass-roots community workers (such as PCSOs). The Panel provides an opportunity to bring these issues together and to develop solutions.

2.5 There is broad agreement that 'Safer Neighbourhoods Policing' provides opportunities to improve community engagement, communication and joined-up working between agencies in tackling local issues, and enhances the community leadership role of Councillors. This supports the key objectives of the County Council's Rugby Area Team.

2.6 The 'Safer Neighbourhoods' agenda does, however, create some issues for the management and administration of meetings. It requires that we adopt an approach that differs slightly to current practice, and co-ordinate things in a more consistent and rigorous manner.

2.7 It should be noted that in the longer term, the County Council is working with partners across the County to develop integrated community engagement and locality working arrangements across public service provision. (Reference to this can be found in both the draft Local Area Agreement and the recent submission 'enhancing two-tier working in Warwickshire').

2.8 This report sets out an 'interim' approach to Electoral Divisional Panel meetings until an integrated framework for locality working and community engagement is agreed.

3.0 Issues created by Safer Neighbourhoods Policing

3.1 Decision-making:

The Police's expectation is that locality meetings should be able to set priorities for local action. This may involve making decisions as to whether to prioritise one issue over another.

If decisions are to be informed and considered, this requires that information is available in advance of meetings.

3.2 Boundaries:

The Safer Neighbourhoods Policing areas are broadly co-terminus with our Electoral Divisions, as follows:

WCC Electoral Division	Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team
Fosse	Rural North
Earl Craven	Rural West
Dunchurch	Rural South
Brownsover	Rugby Town North
Eastlands and Hillmorton (& part of Caldecott)	Rugby Town East
Lawford & New Bilton, Admirals, Caldecott	Rugby Town West

There are, however, a few anomalies that we are discussing with the Police. If the purpose of the Electoral Divisional Panel is to set the priorities of the Local Safer

Neighbourhoods Team, it creates difficulties if the boundary of the Electoral Division and that of the Team are slightly different.

3.3 Other requirements:

The Police expect that meetings are held on a regular basis, and that the public are able to attend and speak at meetings.

3.4 Resourcing

The 'Safer Neighbourhoods' agenda has the potential to significantly increase the number of meetings supported through the Rugby Area Team. While the Team sees this as a key part of its role, and there are advantages to administering all the meetings through a central resource, we are also looking into ways in which responsibilities might be more equitably shared with our partners.

We also need to make sure we do not expect officers from various public services to spend an unnecessary amount of time attending public meetings rather than delivering services.

4.0 Suggested Interim Solutions

4.1 We will continue to support all our Councillors to hold EDP meetings as and when they see fit, although we advise that it is best to timetable these as far as possible in advance.

We will continue to use our 'Electoral Divisional Panels' as the primary mechanism through which local issues are raised and discussed with officers and agencies.

4.2 We will also set up a new 'Rugby Town West Panel' in order to set priorities for the Rugby Town West Safer Neighbourhoods Police Team, broadly comprising the Divisions of Lawford & New Bilton, Admirals and Caldecott, and led by the County Councillors for these Divisions.

4.3 Each Panel will agree actions and priorities for the locality (and review progress against actions and priorities previously agreed). These actions may require the intervention of a single agency or more than one agency.

4.4 The Rugby Area Office will continue to service all meetings (with and on behalf of Councillors) including timetabling, arranging venues, preparing agendas, and creating leaflets; but is not responsible for 'publicising' meetings.

4.5 Publicity of meetings will be done through a variety of mechanisms including PCSOs.

4.6 The Rugby Area Team will ensure that Councillors are provided with the following information in advance of each meeting:

- Community Concerns
- Statistical Information
- Progress against previously agreed actions and priorities

4.7 This information will be collated and circulated in advance of the meeting to Councillors.

4.8 The Rugby Area Team will ensure that officers are available who can respond to issues that have been raised as community concerns

4.9 The setting of priorities at meetings will be done by elected Councillors (Parish, Borough, County) through the Chair. If there is not a consensus, then decisions are made through the Chair.

4.10 All actions and priorities agreed at meetings will be assigned a lead officer as appropriate. If the priority is a multi-agency 'problem' it will be the lead officer's responsibility to pull together a 'problem-solving team' and report back for the next meeting.

4.11 The Police are responsible for maintaining and up-dating the 'safer neighbourhoods' web-site.

4.12 The Rugby Area Team will ensure that issues arising from Panel meetings are fed to the appropriate agencies or partnership structures such as the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).

5. Future meetings

5.1 Calendar of planned Rugby Electoral Divisional and Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings 2007:

Date	Division
Wed 14th March	Admirals
Tues 20th March	Eastlands & Hillmorton
Wed 21st March	Dunchurch
Mon 26th March	Fosse
Thurs 29th March	Earl Craven
To be confirmed	Brownsover
Tues 12th June	Earl Craven
Wed 13th June	Dunchurch
Sat 23rd June	Eastlands & Hillmorton
To be confirmed	Rugby Town West
Wed 12th September	Dunchurch
Thurs 20th September	Earl Craven
Wed 26th September	Eastlands & Hillmorton
Tues 30th October (TBC)	Fosse
To be confirmed	Brownsover
To be confirmed	Rugby Town West
Wed 12th December	Dunchurch
Thurs 13th December	Eastlands & Hillmorton
Thurs 10th January	Earl Craven
To be confirmed	Brownsover
To be confirmed	Rugby Town West

5.2 Please note that County Council Officers are advised not to organise public meetings during 'election periods'. The Earl Craven EDP on 29th March will therefore only be open to Parish, Borough and County Councillors.

DAVID CARTER
Strategic Director of
Performance and
Development

Shire Hall
Warwick

**RUGBY AREA
ELECTORAL DIVISIONAL & SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS PANELS
CALENDAR 2007/08**

Date	Division
Wed 14th March	Admirals
Tues 20th March	Eastlands & Hillmorton
Wed 21st March	Dunchurch
Mon 26th March	Fosse
Thurs 29th March	Earl Craven
TBC	Brownsover
Tues 12th June	Earl Craven
Wed 13th June	Dunchurch
Sat 23rd June	Eastlands & Hillmorton
TBC	Rugby Town West
Wed 12th September	Dunchurch
Thurs 20th September	Earl Craven
Wed 26th September	Eastlands & Hillmorton
Tues 30th October (TBC)	Fosse
TBC	Brownsover
TBC	Rugby Town West
Wed 12th December	Dunchurch
Thurs 13th December	Eastlands & Hillmorton
Thurs 10th January 2008	Earl Craven
TBC	Brownsover
TBC	Rugby Town West