

**Agenda Item 5****PATHFINDER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORK STREAM****Project Sponsor:** Karen Satterford**Project Manager:** Charles Meakings**1. RECOMMENDATION/FOR DECISION**

- (i) To note the position reached with this Work Stream;
- (ii) To establish a Member Sounding Board for the Community Engagement work stream, with each Council being asked to nominate their appropriate Cabinet Member or spokesperson;
- (iii) To support, in principle, the pilot community engagement proposals for 2008 in Wycombe District, which will now be passed to the participating authorities for consideration, with a subsequent report back to the Joint Improvement Board in February 2008; and
- (iv) To consider how best to engage with Town/Parish Councils on an on-going basis across the range of Pathfinder activities.

**2. PROJECT VISION/OBJECTIVES**

Our vision for community engagement is to ensure more responsive public sector services, develop more cohesive communities and strengthen the community leadership role of elected councillors of all three tiers of local government in Buckinghamshire. A Project Brief and Plan has been agreed.

**3. TIMESCALES AND KEY MILESTONES**

Attached as Appendix 1 is the progress report against the agreed Project Plan as at 16 November 2007. We are on target to achieve our key milestones and progress is reviewed at each meeting of the Project Board.

Since the last report the Government, in conjunction with the Local Government Association, has issued an Action Plan for Community Empowerment: Building on Success. The opportunities and requirements will be developed as part of the pilot in 2008, including exploring participatory budgeting.

**4. DELIVERABLES/QUICK WINS**

The Project Board is in a position to recommend a pilot in Wycombe District in 2008, following detailed discussions between the County Council, Wycombe District Council, Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The pilot is for a single streamlined multi-agency community engagement framework for the Public Sector in Buckinghamshire. A summary of the proposals is attached as Appendix 2, which have yet to be formally submitted to the individual Councils and partners for consideration and approval. A copy of the more detailed supporting paper is available upon request.

Investigations are also being undertaken into running a pilot scheme in Aylesbury Vale District in 2008 under the Pathfinder model.

The new Deal for Buckinghamshire, proposing opportunities for devolution to Town/Parish Councils is on schedule to be launched in February 2008. One general issue that has arisen is the need to consider how best to engage with Town/Parish Councils on an on-going basis across the whole of the Pathfinder activities.

## **5. FINANCIAL UPDATE**

A mapping exercise to capture the costs of community engagement is well advanced and, when completed, will give the baseline to gauge the efficiency gains towards the target of £250,000.

External funding bids totalling £225,000 have been submitted to the MKOB Improvement and Efficiency Partnership to assist with the community capacity-building aspects over the next three years. The Project Board is not yet therefore in a position to seek the release of £10,000 for pump-priming costs.

## **6. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**

The pilot places Members at the heart of the community engagement model and a Member Sounding Board is being recommended. It is suggested that this should comprise the relevant Cabinet Member from each Council, or their nominated spokesperson.

## **7. RELATED PROJECTS/WORK STREAMS**

The proposal regarding linking front-line staff together will require separate consideration and development, as it is currently outside the community engagement project brief.

The Board is also receiving regular updates on the MKOB project on 'Improving Services through Community Engagement', and will use the outcomes to help inform and develop the Wycombe District pilot in 2008.

## **8. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

This is in place and the key messages from the 28<sup>th</sup> November meeting are:

- Buckinghamshire has registered its interest with Government to be considered as a national pilot for participatory budgeting.
- Multi-agency community engagement pilot to be undertaken in Wycombe District in 2008 and consideration is being given to another pilot in Aylesbury Vale District.
- Member Sounding Board, at Cabinet level from all five Councils, is being proposed for the Pathfinder Community Engagement Work Stream.

- Joint Improvement Board being asked to consider how best to communicate and engage with Town/Parish Councils on an on-going basis for the whole of Pathfinder.
- A New Deal for Buckinghamshire to be launched in February 2008, offering devolution to Town and Parish Councils.
- Links continue to be made with the MKOB Improvement programme work on community engagement, and the learning will feed into the Pathfinder pilot in 2008. Funding bids totalling £225,000 have been submitted and discussions are being held with Government about a secondment arrangement.

## **9. KEY RISKS AND ISSUES**

The Project Board reviews risks at each meeting and the Project Board next meets on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008.