

What are Area Partnerships?

An Area Partnership is a framework for agencies, sectors and partners to work collectively to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of the area. By working together, partners can secure the best use of resources and add value to the work of their individual organisations through co-ordinated and focussed joint action.

What is their purpose?

Their purpose is to work in partnership:

- To develop and agree a shared vision and set of priorities for the area.
- To take action to meet the needs and priorities of their communities and to solve problems in an effective and timely manner.
- To work together efficiently and dynamically by maximising resources and concentrating on activity that compliments and adds value to the work of individual partners.
- To encourage equality of operation and participation.
- To provide a clear message and a strong voice to influence countywide decision making bodies; to attract external funding; and to promote the area's identity.
- To share best practice in the delivery of services to the public.
- To deliver the area objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement for Shropshire.

How do they work?

Each area partnership is structured to ensure it is directed by the widest possible grouping of partners; it is able to take operational decisions effectively; and can bring key players together to focus on delivery of actions against area priorities.

This works as follows:

A **Partnership Forum** comprising the wider audience of partners meets at least twice per year to provide an overall steer for the Area Partnership and to agree the headline priorities and objectives. An **Executive Board**, drawn from a tighter group of key partner organisations, meets at least six times per year to take operational decisions on behalf of the Partnership, including the approval of action plans and the allocation of funding. Themed **Delivery Groups** reporting to the Executive, bring together those partners with an interest in a particular priority area and the desire and ability to commit time and resources to support the implementation of themed Action Plans.

How do they fit with the Shropshire Partnership?

Each Area Partnership reports to the Shropshire Partnership, the statutory, Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Shropshire, and works to co-ordinate partner activity at the local level to deliver area based priorities in support of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.

Do they have a budget?

Each Area Partnership has access to a budget of £160,000 per annum that can be used to fund activity that will support and initiate actions to address agreed area priorities. Whilst applications for funding from voluntary sector organisations will be considered for projects that help meet area priorities, the main focus of expenditure will be on initiating and commissioning actions identified through the work of the themed delivery groups.

How are parish and town councils involved?

The Partnership Forum is the means by which all parish and town councils can get involved in helping to set the strategic direction of their Area Partnership. Each Executive Board also has two representatives from parish and town councils, selected through the Shropshire Association of Local Councils. Interested parish representatives who have expertise or resources to bring forward can get directly involved in the work of the themed delivery groups.

What Officer support do they have?

Each Area Partnership is supported and facilitated by an Area Partnership Officer from the Community Working Team. These officers work to bring partners together, to help identify area priorities and to develop and implement actions to address these priorities. Other officers of the Council will support the work of the Area Partnerships as appropriate and necessary, particularly in the development of local partnership projects and initiatives.

What relationship do the Area Partnerships have with the Local Joint Committees (LJCs)?

There is no direct reporting relationship between the Local Joint Committees (LJCs) and the Area Partnerships. The LJCs report directly to Shropshire Council and are part of the Council's committee structure. The Area Partnerships report directly to the Shropshire Partnership (the LSP) and their function, and success is based on a participative democracy model. However, LJCs will be encouraged to make links to the Area Partnerships as appropriate and the Community Working Team will seek to ensure that issues raised in LJCs, that may be best tackled through an area based partnership approach, are referred to the Area Partnerships for the development of solutions.