

Bath/Wansdyke Development and Support Policy Review Group (2014)

1. Introduction

1.1 This review group was convened in July 2014 at the request of the County Commissioner (Dan Wood) for the purpose of identifying the principles that should underpin effective support and development in the area to strengthen quality, efficiency and growth of Scouting. (The full remit is given in Appendix 1.) The purpose included considering any changes needed to the configuration, support and development, resources, governance, leadership and management arrangements in the Districts to ensure that they are as effective as possible and more sustainable for the future.

1.2 We have met on four occasions, identified and gathered information required and engaged in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including members of the District Teams (including GSLs) and District Executive Committees/Trustee Boards. This has been conducted using a variety of methods during September, October and November as reported below.

1.3 The review group consisted of John Kirwan (County Chairman, Convenor), Mike Banfield (CC's Representative), Louise Madden (GSL, Bath); Simon Crowden (DDC, Bath); Graham Bush (GSL, Wansdyke); Ian Carter (GSL, Wansdyke); Tony Comer (Trustee, Bath), Stuart Ballard (Acting DC, Wansdyke). The County Commissioner attended some meetings.

1.4 We set out below our thoughts about opportunities for growth and development in Scouting in this geographical area, and on the support structure that will be needed to make it happen

2. Potential for growth

2.1 The proportion of young people of appropriate age who are currently members of Scouting in Bath and Wansdyke (2014 census) is as follows:

Scout District	Beavers	Cubs	Scouts	Explorers
Bath	9%	10%	7%	1%
Wansdyke	13%	17%	11%	4%
Avon County	11%	12%	8%	2%

2.2 We know nationally, regionally and locally that there are many more young people who would like to be Beavers, Cubs, Scouts or Explorers. In Avon County there are hundreds of young people waiting on joining lists, but also there are many young people who have not had the opportunity to consider joining Scouting, as such an opportunity does not exist near where they live. There are thus many more young people over and above the figures shown above who would welcome the opportunity to benefit from Scouting if it were offered to them. If we are to meet their aspirations we need to increase the availability of Scouting, and so there is an urgent need for growth. (Information in other Districts is given in Appendix 2)

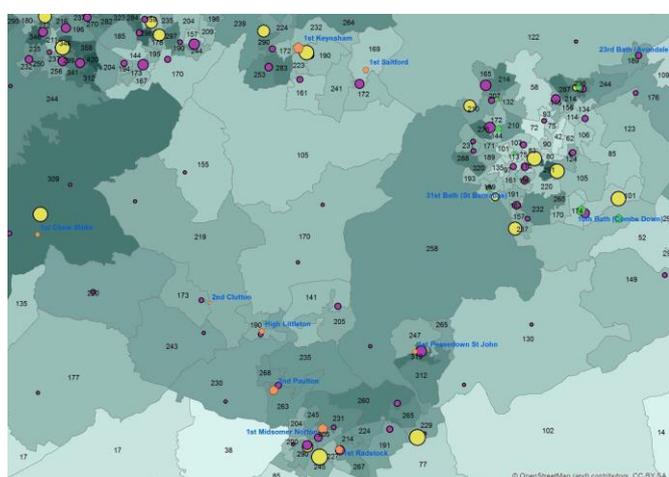
2.3 The current adults in Scouting are busy supporting young people in Sections and Groups, and do not have the time (nor necessarily the skills) to take forward such a programme of development. Avon County (supported by Scouting HQ) is actively promoting growth by employing people to help find and support the recruitment of new adult leaders, arrangements for meeting places and initial contacts with young people. This in no way detracts from the fundamental volunteer provision of Scouting which is the heart of our movement, but takes on a development role which allows the expansion of that volunteer base. This has proved successful in other Districts, and the assumption that this approach could be used in this geographical area lies behind our further conclusions.

2.4 A review of current and proposed housing developments suggested that while such developments are continuing steadily, the impact on numbers of young people of Scouting age over the next 5 years will be small and would not directly influence development decisions. There are some school expansions planned that may point to areas of further Scouting development.

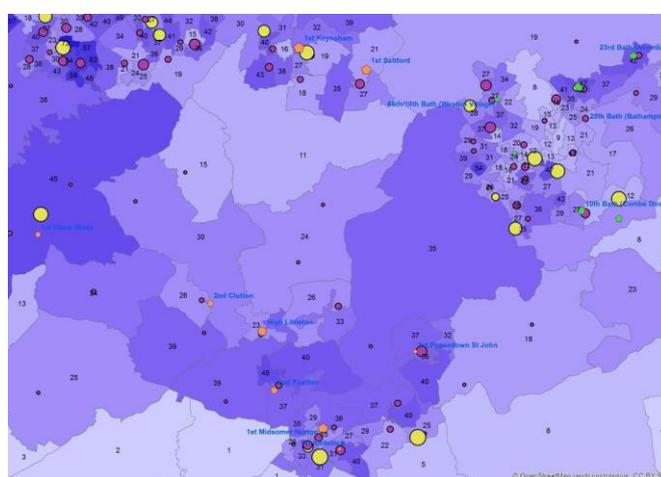
2.5 A review of the geographical distribution of young people and the size and positioning of Scout Groups in this geographical area was undertaken. A summary of the NDP analysis is shown below. There are several area where there are many young people of appropriate age and no local Scout Group, or where current provision does not meet the potential demand. The main areas are Twerton, Weston, Peasdown and Radstock. While expansion and development in other areas would be welcome, we concentration on these areas initially would be beneficial. This will require the type of input provided by the 'Pears Project', the Regional Development Service and other forms of financial investment as discussed above.

National Public Database analysis report showing density of young people of appropriate age. Scout Groups are shown as pentagons of relative size, and schools as circles.

Beavers

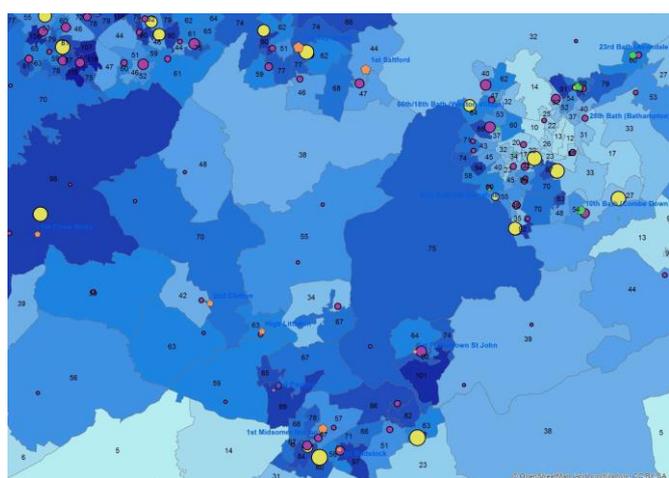


Cubs

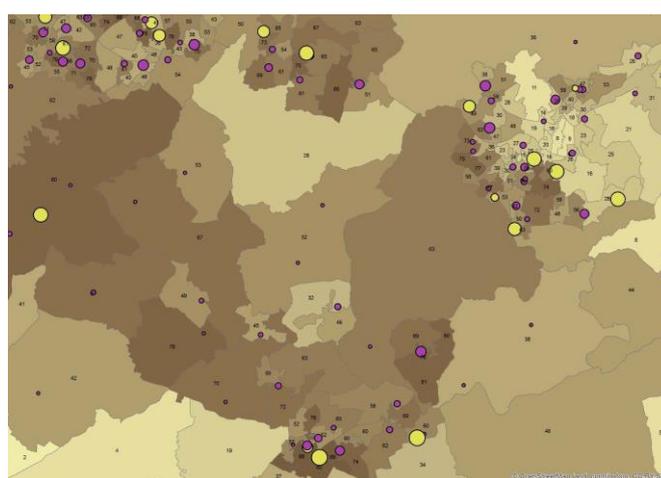


NB The numbers are incorrect on the Beaver map but the shading is correct.

Scouts



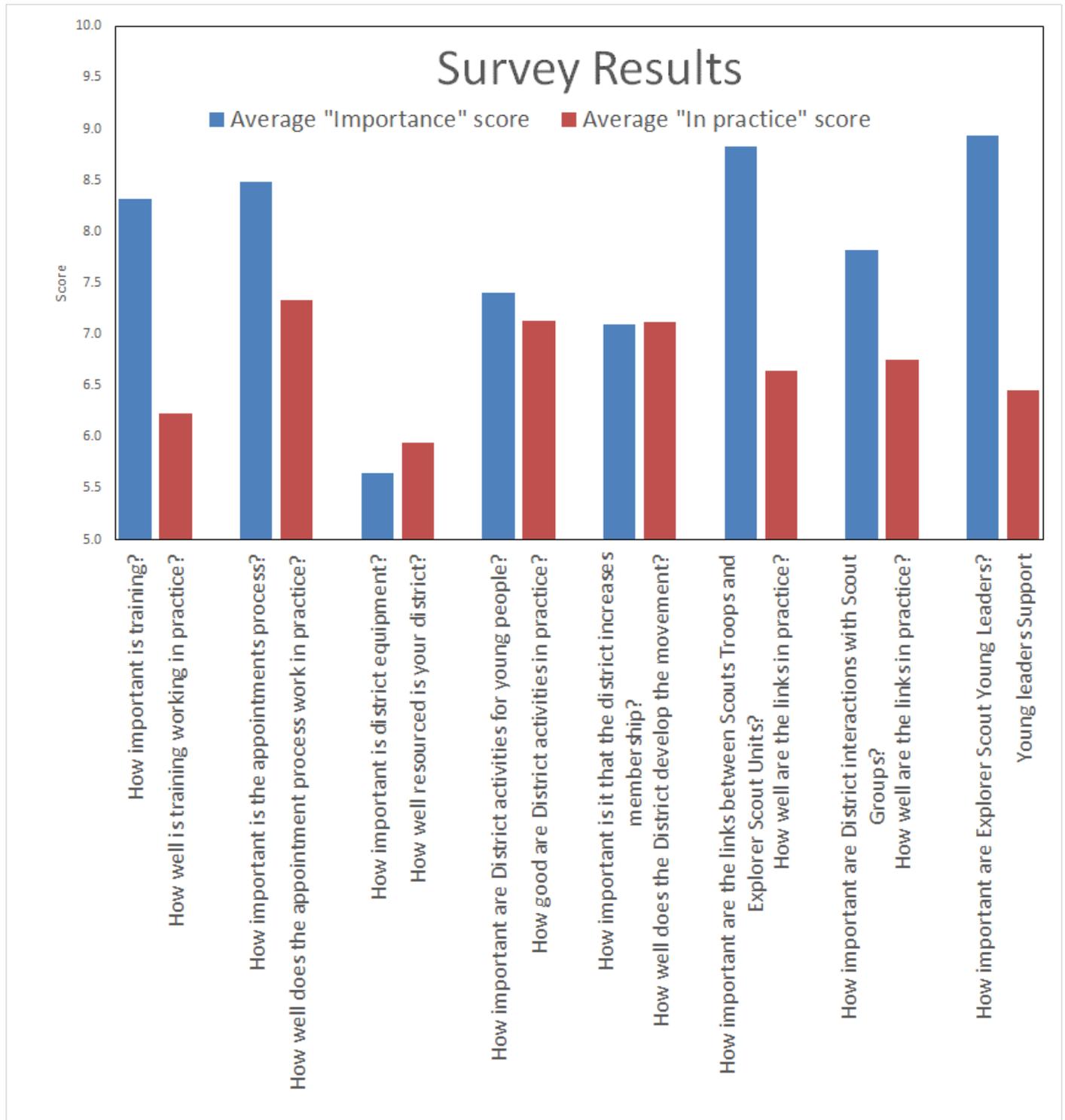
Explorers



3. Review of District support structures – Online Questionnaire

3.1 The main purpose of the on-line questionnaire and consultation meetings was to hear first-hand the views of members of Bath and Wansdyke Districts on how Districts could best support Scout Groups and what District structures might be arranged to facilitate this. Sixty two responses

were received. The full results of the questionnaire are shown in Appendix 3, and they are summarised here. There were some differences between respondents from the two Districts, but broadly responses were similar. Respondents were asked about the importance of particular District functions, and how well these were working in practice. We were particularly interested in differences between these two assessments.



3.2 Training: There are clearly some difficulties here in an area considered important. This is probably related to both District and County approaches to training. In Districts there are insufficient active Training Advisers, and Line Managers need to increase the support and encouragement available to Leaders undertaking training. (The County Training Team are already aware that local provision needs to be strengthened and this result showed the questionnaire.) There is a call for County to provide more locally based training opportunities. Several Leaders

suggested a person working at District level should have the specific remit of supporting and encouraging Leaders to progress with their training.

3.3 Appointments: We noted that some people had not had a good experience of the appointments process. We are aware that County is currently conducting a review of appointments processes in the Districts.

3.4 Increasing membership: We felt that the comments related to this suggested that Section Leaders did not feel a direct link to (adult) recruitment at District level – but see the priorities and discussion meetings below.

3.5 Explorer Scouts: These responses show this is considered a particularly important District activity and there is clearly room for improvement in links between Explorer Units and Scout Troops and for the support for Explorer Scout Young Leaders.

3.6 Separate questions were asked of Executive Committee Members / Trustees. We note that many trustees do not have an induction and are not aware of Group development plans.

Executive Questions	Yes
When you first took up your role, did you get an induction to your role as a trustee?	56%
Does your District have meetings for all group Chairpersons, Secretaries and Treasurers?	20%
Have you attended Executive training?	16%
Would you like more support for your role as a trustee?	56%
Do you have a copy your district directory?	44%
Were you invited to the District Annual General Meeting?	96%
Did a district representative attend your Group Annual General Meeting?	76%
Does your group have a development plan you have seen?	44%
Were you aware that this support was available?	56%
Have you or your Group ever been offered this type of support by your District?	48%
Would you like to access this support in the future? (Yes / Not sure)	42%

3.7 All respondents were asked to identify two top priorities for the District for the future.

Proportion of responses (%)	1st priority	2nd priority	1st or 2nd priority
Recruiting adults	43%	25%	68%
Activities for young people	18%	20%	38%
Training	18%	13%	31%
Explorers	8%	7%	15%
Help in the opening of new sections and groups to help grow the movement	7%	13%	20%
Appointments	3%	5%	8%
Equipment	2%	2%	3%
Recruiting young people	2%	12%	13%
Network		3%	3%

3.8 Sixty eight percent of respondents placed ‘recruiting adults’ as one of their top two priorities for Districts. Activities for young people and training were the next two items most frequently identified.

3.9 A wide range of additional free text comments were made (see Appendix 3), which we generally thought supported the above interpretations.

4. Review of District support structures – Consultation Meetings

4.1 Sixty-four people from a wide variety of Scouting roles attended the consultation meetings.

<u>People who came a consultation meeting*</u>			
	<u>District</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Sections</u>
Wansdyke	7	10	17
Bath	5	6	19

*Those attending both are counted once

4.2 The programme consisted of an initial introduction to Vision 2018 and how this can be achieved with expansion of Scouting in Districts, given by Hamish Stout, Regional Commissioner. A brief review of the online survey findings, all of which were available to meeting participants in paper format, was followed by discussion groups facilitated by County or Regional Trainers. The discussion groups first considered the survey responses and how they felt about them, then went on to consider how Districts should be structured to deliver what is needed to support Groups.

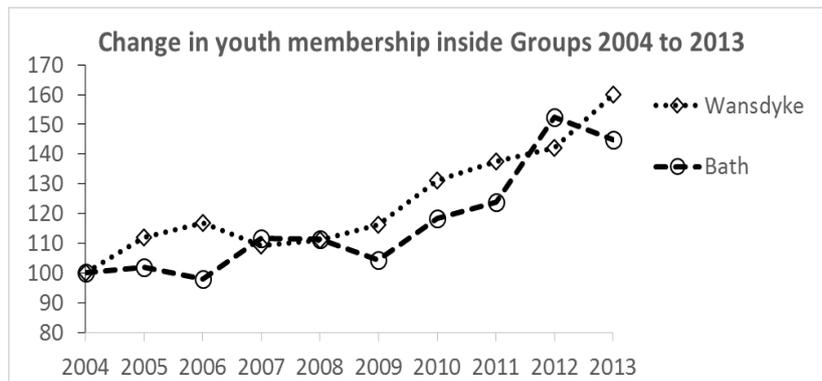
4.3 In general, the feedback comments (Appendix 4) reflected the survey. A particular feeling was that Leaders wanted more local training. Our impression was that many people did not really know what District should be doing, partly because they did not have personal experience of District support. Groups were clearly looking for Section support at ADC level with both direct support to adult Leaders and the coordination of District level activities for the Sections. There was a strong feeling that there should be better District support/provision for Explorer Scouts and their links with Troops, and for better management and support of Explorer Scout Young Leaders and for the Section Leaders who are working with them.

5. District ‘Red, Amber, Green’ (RAG) Reviews

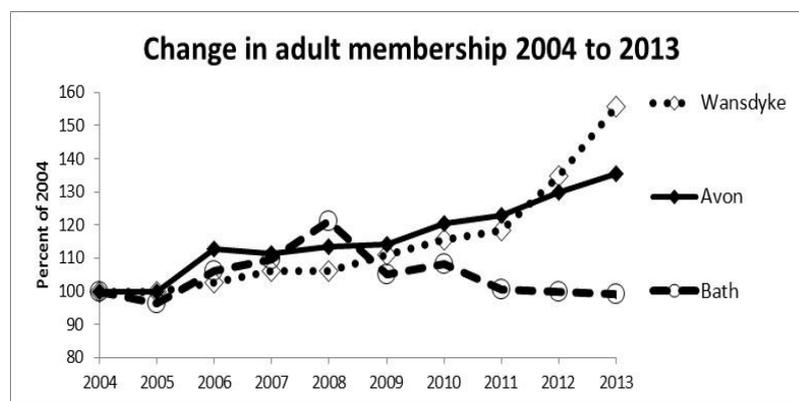
We examined the District RAG reviews undertaken in 2014 (Appendix 5). We felt that these had been a new thing for many GSLs. The results bear out some of the comments from the survey and our observations. We felt that the self-assessments were occasionally over generous when compared to census findings but clearly there is much good Scouting delivered in many Groups. Regular RAGs should be part of District activity. The ambers and reds tend to coincide with the issues leaders identified as problems in the discussion meetings and questionnaire.

6. Census review

6.1 We reviewed some of the census data from recent years. We noted the clear increase in youth membership over the last 10 years in both Districts (2004-2013 data - recording procedures changed in 2014 for adults so the numbers from that year are not directly comparable). However, there are noticeably less for Explorer Scouts in Bath (44 in 2014) than in Wansdyke (132) or the average for Avon (without Bath) of 125.



6.2 We also note little increase in adult leaders in Bath. There was some consideration about whether this might have been related to the way SAS members were recorded – but over the time period concerned and with such a large difference from the rest of Avon County it was felt this was a real reflection of the situation on the ground.



6.3 This leaves Bath District with noticeably less adult appointments per section and a much higher young person / adult appointment ratio.

Census 2014 - Groups and Sections

	Scout Groups	Beaver Colonies	Cub Packs	Scout Troops	Explorer Units	Total Sections
Bath	10	9	11	10	4	34
Wansdyke	9	11	16	13	5	45

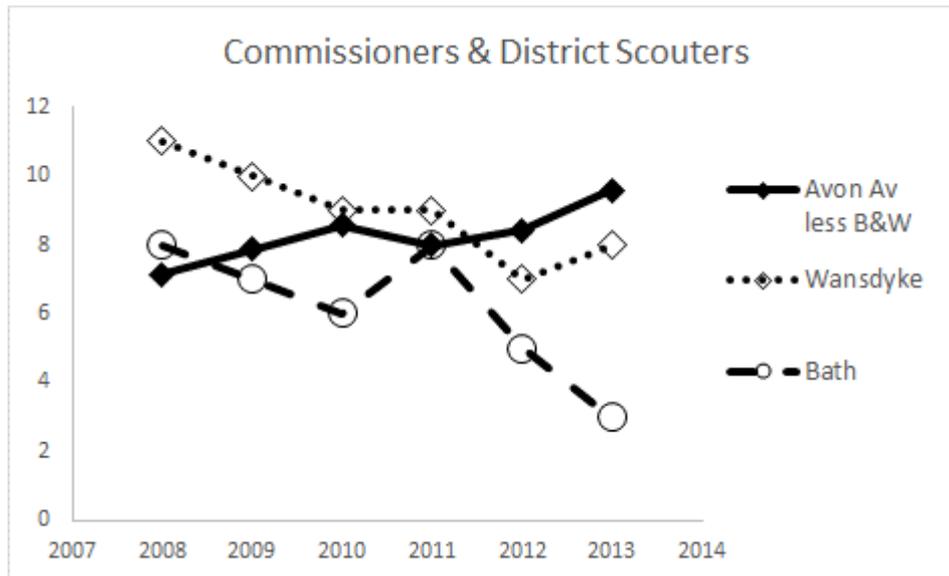
Census 2014 - Membership

	Total Young People	Beavers	Cubs	Scouts	Explorers	Group / Unit Adult Appointments	Young Leaders
Bath	685	185	235	221	44	82	11
Wansdyke	1053	235	348	332	138	200	42

Census 2014 - Youth membership per Group/Section

	Scout Groups	Beaver Colonies	Cub Packs	Scout Troops	Explorer Units	Adult Appointments per Section	Young People per Adult Appointment
Bath	69	21	21	22	11	2.4	8.4
Wansdyke	117	21	22	26	28	4.4	5.3

6.5 We also noticed a steady decline in the appointments at District level (DCs, ADCs and District Scouters), both for Bath and Wansdyke Districts.



7. Conclusion

7.1 There are great opportunities for the growth of Scouting in the areas covered by Bath and Wansdyke Districts. To take advantage of these will require a clearly thought out strategic focus and adequate District structures characterised by the features outlined by the consultation process and which we support. These need a District leadership team that includes: A District Commissioner (and perhaps a Deputy with specific support responsibilities); Sectional ADCs for Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts; a District Explorer Scout Commissioner (and in future a Network Scout Leader); an appointment with responsibility to monitor and promote adult training; and an appointment to lead on the development of new Scouting opportunities. Additional District leadership support and strong Executive / Trustee support will be required to realise the exciting potential for development. District resources and financial plans should overtly reflect the District's strategic plan

7.2 To this end there is a clear need for the role of the Executive Members / Trustees to become more acquainted with the potential of their role in supporting the District, and to have some training and development opportunities. Executive members should all be entered on the HQ database and so receive regular information about Scouting developments, and be contactable directly by County when appropriate. Executives / Boards of Trustees need some external (non-Scouting or 'lay') members to provide links to the community. There needs to be conversations and interactions between District and Group Trustees, and most importantly a continuous interaction between the District Executive / Board of Trustees and the District Team led by the District Commissioner

7.3 One potential solution – combining the resources of both Districts by merging them into one, was raised as a possibility by some members. Although discussion of this was not the main purpose of the consultation meetings, a short time was given over to brief round-table discussions and then written feedback on this idea for those attending the consultation meetings. Although no specific proposal had been made, no formal arguments for or against were considered and this review was still being conducted, nevertheless, they provide a 'snapshot' of the views of those attending. The majority of comments related to difficulties such a combined District might face, particularly from the point of view of practical difficulty for Leaders in travelling or adjusting to a new arrangement. There was also a strongly expressed feeling by many that young people living

in a city would require a different sort of support structure than those living in the countryside and/or rural areas. There were also concerns about the overall size of a combined District and whether the District level roles would therefore prove too demanding for potential role holders. There was some recognition that a combined District would have a larger pool of adults to call on, and might provide a greater range of activities and support to young people. A full copy of all the comments has been passed to the County Commissioner.

7.4 Both Districts have used this review as an opportunity to look at their current setup and workings, and several initiatives have already been taken which will help with the growth of Scouting (Appendix 6). However, establishing appropriate District Team arrangements to turn the potential for development into a reality will be a challenge in the light of recent trends in District Team numbers in both Districts.

5th March 2015