



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

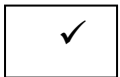
North East (Inner) Area Committee

Date: 19th October 2009

Subject: Priority Neighbourhoods – Building on the Intensive Neighbourhood Management Approach

Electoral Wards Affected:

Chapel Allerton
Moortown
Roundhay



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive summary

The report proposes how those involved in helping improve the fortunes of our most deprived communities can come together as a 'team' with dual accountabilities – one to their organisation/profession and another to the neighbourhood itself and its residents. The report argues that this must be achieved within existing mainstream resources. The benefits would be derived from a joint assessment of the households in the priority neighbourhoods and coordinated action on a focussed set of priorities. The report proposes a common planning framework for our priority neighbourhoods, leadership by local councillors, roles for the Area Committees, the city's Neighbourhood Policy Group and Narrowing the Gap Board and area based officer coordination groups. The report also seeks Area Committee approval to extend the contract of the Neighbourhood Manager in the area using Wellbeing funds from 2010/11 for three years, subject to the revised roles set out in this report, an annual review and availability of funds.

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks to set out the proposed future management of our priority neighbourhoods. The report makes proposals around the concept of bringing all the frontline staff, community activists, local businesses and voluntary, community & faith sector (VCFS) together as one 'team' under the leadership of the local councillors.
2. The report follows previous update papers to the Area Committee on progress with the Intensive Neighbourhood Management approach in the area, particularly around the use of local Safer Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) monies. The report includes further detail on proposals to develop the role of the dedicated Neighbourhood Manager in the area, post SSCF, to be funded by the Area Committee. This follows in principle agreement to this at the Member Wellbeing Budget Working Group and at the Area Committee meeting of 22nd June 2009.
3. The report also builds on discussions that have taken place with the council's Corporate Leadership Team on 'One Council Locality Working', with the Neighbourhood Policy Group on 'Neighbourhood Level Partnership Working' and with local partners on the area thematic partnerships covering Children & Young People and Community Safety. A version of this report has also been presented to the Area Committee Chairs' meeting.
4. Future neighbourhood management must rely on mainstream resources and this report proposes a way that, by improving the way we work together within neighbourhoods, we can still drive improvement and 'get things done' that lift the fortunes of our most deprived communities and their super output area rankings.
5. This is about doing more with less as the city loses the benefit of the neighbourhood renewal funding (NRF) and Safer Stronger Communities Funds (SSCF) that have both funded much of the work in recent years on the management and additional activity in our priority neighbourhoods.

Background Information

6. All the Area Committees' Area Delivery Plans (ADPs) make reference to partnership work in priority neighbourhoods with these being centred on the most deprived neighbourhoods. Many of these neighbourhoods have benefited from additional input from NRF and SSCF funding. They all have some form of action planning and all have witnessed improvements across a range of indicators. Services have changed in recent years and most now recognise, and contribute to, the local priority neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood policing has been successfully introduced, joint tasking on crime and grime has proven to be of real value and the new NHS Leeds has a declared focus on the worst 10% of neighbourhoods. These just give a flavour of the background context within which we are seeking to turn attention to building on these initiatives and successes to sustain the improvement agenda within our mainstream resources. How we can do more with less – this paper contributes to the discussion and sets out a vision for a 'team' approach to neighbourhood working and building sustainable communities.

Aspiration

7. The aspiration is to embed a jointly owned and coordinated neighbourhood management service in our most deprived neighbourhoods using a 'team' approach that will be illustrated later in this report. The objective will be to raise the Super Output Area (SOA) rankings within the neighbourhood, contributing to the vision for Leeds to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged communities and the rest of the city. Ultimately we will want to build sustainable communities identified by good quality service provision and residents able to

share in taking responsibility for improving their quality of life.

8. It is not the intention of the proposals in this report to undermine those initiatives and structures that are already bearing fruit – such as the ALMO area panels, school cluster arrangements, joint tasking with the police on crime and grime, etc. The aspiration is to build on these and adopt a ‘team’ approach to priority neighbourhoods and to do this from within our current resources.
9. The Leeds Strategic Plan (LSP) sets out the improvement priorities across a number of themes for the city. These improvement priorities are agreed between all the partner agencies and with government office as the local area agreement (LAA). The area committees give expression to the actions the council and partners can make to securing the LSP improvement priorities locally through their ADPs and within this they can narrow down to identifying the most deprived neighbourhoods where coordinated neighbourhood management action is required. The Area Committees ensure that partnership working within localities is democratically accountable through ensuring there are neighbourhood improvement plans in place for each of these – again reflecting the LSP priorities and any others determined locally.

Characteristics of Priority Neighbourhoods

10. Through the Officer Coordination Group, the council and its key partners have identified a three defined areas as priority neighbourhoods in Inner North East and are seeking approval for these by the Area Committee. The defined areas across the city will also need endorsement by the Neighbourhood Policy Group and the Narrowing the Gap Board. The recommended defined areas have been established by considering a number of factors:
 - evidence of deprivation using the new Neighbourhood Vitality Index and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation;
 - by the geography of a neighbourhood and resident perceptions of their neighbourhood; and
 - the perspective of service providers and organisational effectiveness.
11. They share a number of characteristics in common in implementing a coordinated neighbourhood management approach through the proposals in the paper. These are:
 - Frontline staff working in the neighbourhood and resident activists will recognise themselves as part of a ‘team’ responsible to the local neighbourhood community and to their organisation and profession;
 - There will be good communications between frontline staff and with local residents;
 - There will be a neighbourhood improvement plan in place following a planning template that is shared across all priority neighbourhoods and is linked to the LSP and area committee ADP;
 - There will be clear leadership through a small steering group Chaired by a local councillor;
 - The area will be a high priority for basic services; and
 - All involved in the ‘team’ will be encouraged to take an entrepreneurial approach to their work, finding creative solutions to problems that may involve some risk taking.
12. At the heart of the matter is the proposal to establish the ‘team’ approach to make all this happen.

The ‘Team Neighbourhood’ Approach

13. A review of the intensive neighbourhood management work undertaken in the Gipton neighbourhood of Leeds asked the question about whether or not there were sufficient resources in the area to sustain, and develop further, the initiatives and improvements made

through having SSCF funding. The answer was yes there are abundant resources in the neighbourhood we just need to organise them better. The count of those who might form 'Team Gipton' is currently at over 120 people – these are front line staff from across council services, partner agencies, local VCFS groups, local councillors and resident activists e.g. chair of residents & tenants association. The list would grow if it included local businesses. The question is how to bring this resource together with a common vision, understanding and purpose.

14. Each priority neighbourhood would need a small local steering or executive group to provide the leadership for the 'team'. Adapting current arrangements where necessary it is suggested that such a group should be chaired by a local councillor and have representation from the main service areas as well as from residents. This executive group would have responsibility for overseeing local community engagement, the development of a NIP for the area and oversee a joint assessment framework for the neighbourhood.
15. The neighbourhood joint assessment framework idea comes from the understanding that local residents and front line staff know where the problem households are and also know those who add value to life within the neighbourhood; they know the issues that drag an area down e.g. flytipping – but what they don't have is an agreed joint approach to these issues – experience to date is that the issues are addressed from each agency separately. The joint assessment would involve capturing the local knowledge – possibly through the joint tasking arrangements, school clusters and local forums and agreeing a joined up set of interventions from all those with a contribution to make.
16. The full 'team neighbourhood' (the 120 or so people) would only need to come together at the beginning and perhaps on an annual basis thereafter. Each partner organisation would need to reinforce the concept with their frontline staff that they have dual accountabilities both to the neighbourhood community and to their respective organisations. All the public sector agencies would need to contribute towards helping the 'team' come together and resource expert facilitation to enable this to happen. The idea would have to be reinforced through day to day line management, induction of new staff and through local communications, including ensuring that the whole 'team' is loaded onto each team members mobile phone. The NIP would need to be owned by all the 'team'; the problems and issues of the neighbourhood should concern everyone on the 'team' and not be passed over if they don't fit with the day job - but rather are dealt with or passed on appropriately to 'team' mates. The executive group would develop a communications and engagement plan as part of its NIP using existing media where sensible.
17. There is no suggestion that we should abandon structures that currently work and deliver results – so 'team' members would still participate in joint tasking, ALMO area panels, local forums, resident & tenant groups, police PACT meetings and school cluster arrangements as appropriate. This approach is not starting from zero and would need to incorporate and adapt current neighbourhood partnerships and working arrangements by consensus. This is particularly important with regard to making the links with regeneration schemes/programmes such as EASEL, Town and District Centre Regeneration, Chapeltown Town Heritage Initiative and local affordable housing schemes/PFI opportunities.

Permissions and Accountabilities

18. It is a matter for the Area Committee to determine their priority neighbourhoods on the back of advice, evidence and support from their officer coordination group (OCG). Each area management area has an OCG that brings together chief officers from across agencies and council services to support the delivery of the area committees ADPs and to help shape their annual refresh. It is suggested that, with regard to the priority neighbourhoods, each OCG could perform the following functions:
 - Coordination of resources
 - Reports to area committees, NPG and Narrowing the Gap Board

- Recommends what priority neighbourhoods to area committees
 - Monitors and manages performance of the NIPs
 - Contributes to deciding on the strategic priorities
 - Ensures buy-in and understanding throughout each partner organisation
 - Facilitates the 'team' neighbourhood concept with staff supporting the dual accountabilities involved.
19. The Area Committee will receive reports from the Area Manager on behalf of the OCG and will provide the democratic accountability so often missing in partnership working. With a local councillor leading each priority neighbourhood executive group the structure will serve to augment the role of local members as community champions and 'place shapers'.
20. The Neighbourhood Policy Group that has senior representation of partner agencies, including the VCFS, from across the city can ensure that there is organisational buy-in at a strategic level, they can support consistency of approach to our priority neighbourhoods citywide and share best practice and learning.
21. The Narrowing the Gap Board of Leeds Initiative will receive reports on the progress being made on the improvement priorities in the LSP and will seek to ensure that work on priority neighbourhoods has a strategic fit with the city wide initiatives supporting the narrowing the gap part of the vision for Leeds.

Sustainability

22. Sustainability will be achieved by this approach to 'team' working in a priority neighbourhood being delivered within mainstream budget provision. The motivation and commitment that the team approach can generate will sustain improvements and augment local leadership and resident engagement. The sense of direction within a clear improvement programme (NIP), the monitoring of effectiveness and the release of creativity that the approach encourages will all help with building more sustainable communities.

Proposals for Inner North East

23. Thanks to the progress made at Inner North East Area Committee already, we are in good position to drive forward much of what has been set out in this report and make some immediate decisions about the initial priority neighbourhoods, how they will be supported and an outline work programme for the Area Committee to monitor.
24. The proposed priority neighbourhoods are:
- Bechhills (inc Miles Hills and extended to bring in Meanwood Valley towards city centre)
 - Chapeltown (inc Scott Hall)
 - Moor Allerton
25. Maps and a statistical analysis of each priority neighbourhood are provided in Appendix A.
26. These build on the Intensive Neighbourhood Management areas which were largely determined by the restriction of spending Safer Stronger Communities Fund in the bottom 3% Super Output Areas (SOAs) only.
27. By widening the priority neighbourhoods to the bottom 10% SOAs, this now brings in the Bechhills and Moor Allerton areas and extends Chapeltown to include Scott Halls. It is important to note though that this does not mean all of a priority neighbourhood will be tackled at once – decisions will need to be made within each priority neighbourhood on a programme of intervention/support which targets hotspots and maximises opportunities.

28. It is also proposed to identify the Brackenwoods in Roundhay ward as a neighbourhood to develop a localised action plan for. Part of the estate falls within the bottom 10% SOAs, but the reasons for that are not clear at this stage. The view of local members is that this may be a statistical anomaly based on one or two localised indicators. As such the proposal is not to identify this as one of the priority neighbourhoods for intensive neighbourhood management.
29. The proposal also includes the separation of the top end of Harehills from the existing Chapeltown and Harehills INM cluster – resulting in two new priority neighbourhoods of Chapeltown and Harehills. The rationale for this is a greater synergy with operational structures such as Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Area Committee boundaries, ward boundaries/clearer democratic links and natural communities. This proposal has the support of ward members.
30. In terms of Neighbourhood Manager responsibilities, the proposal is focus their work on the Chapeltown and Beckhill priority neighbourhoods and for Moor Allerton to be led by other staff from within the Area Management Team (as it spans two Area Committee areas/wards).
31. The proposal is to revise the job description of the Neighbourhood Manager post, which has been made clear in the recent recruitment process. This would take effect from 1/4/10 when the funding changes from SSCF to LCC Wellbeing budget so that the role of the post reflects the challenges set out in this paper and the Area Committee's priorities.
32. The revised Job Description will include clearer responsibilities around:
- Developing and ensuring implementation of a Neighbourhood Improvement Plan (NIP) for each priority neighbourhood which sits within the Area Committee's Area Delivery Plan.
 - Accountability to the Inner NE Area Committee – providing regular performance reports and updates on local actions contained within the NIP.
 - Developing and leading the "team neighbourhood" approach in each priority neighbourhood – starting with Chapeltown as one of the 2 pilot neighbourhoods in East North East (the other being Gipton).
 - Co-chairing of Crime and Grime Tasking and Preventative Tasking as appropriate
 - Developing operational, local practices that better connect professionals working in priority neighbourhoods around common issues such as safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, offender management and reducing worklessness.
 - Increasing the number of residents involved in influencing decision making and shaping how local services are delivered – and supporting local ward members in their representative role. Including residents networks and an annual neighbourhood satisfaction survey.
 - Managing the ward neighbourhood management/tasking budget
33. The cost of continuing the post will be a maximum of £45k per year (top scale cost subject to annual pay award). This does not include management, IT, office and materials, training or other running costs. All these resources will be provided by Area Management as in-kind match funding.

Conclusion

34. This report builds on previous debates and reports on this topic and suggests that a 'team' neighbourhood approach is adopted for our priority neighbourhoods along with a new joint assessment framework for improving coordinated service delivery and interventions. In the

ENE area, the approach is to be piloted in the Chapeltown and Gipton priority neighbourhoods initially. This can be delivered within existing resources as the team members are already working in the neighbourhoods but just haven't been brought together yet. Nothing need stop this approach working apart from organisational inertia – it can work if we make it work and we can deliver more with less.

Recommendations

35. The Area Committee is asked to:
- a. Note the contents of the report and provide feedback on the proposed “team neighbourhood” approach
 - b. Approve the three priority neighbourhoods being proposed for Inner North East from 2010/11 as defined in Appendix A and the identification of the Brackenwoods for a localised action plan.
 - c. Approve sufficient Wellbeing revenue funding as set out in paragraph 33 to allow the continuation of the existing Neighbourhood Management post beyond 2009/10 for a further 3 years; subject to a revised job description as set out in paragraph 32, annual performance review and availability of funding.

Background Papers:

‘Neighbourhood Level Partnership Working’ – Neighbourhood Policy Group, Dave Richmond, 27th March 2009.

Wellbeing Budget Report – North East (Inner) Area Committee, 22nd June 2009