

# CABINET

## The Development of Neighbourhood Management Arrangements for the District

31st July 2008

### Report of Corporate Director (Community Services)

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
This report suggests a model for the way that Neighbourhood Management could be developed in Lancaster District and seeks approval to develop this approach into a practical implementation plan.			
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	29 <sup>th</sup> May 2008		
This report is public			

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the suggested approach to the development of neighbourhood management arrangements for the District be approved in principle.
- 2 That a further report be prepared setting out how this approach could be practically implemented and the resource implications of such an approach.

#### 1.0 Introduction

- The 2006 Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, whilst making no explicit reference to area committees or neighbourhood forums, encouraged nonetheless the development across local authorities of neighbourhood management and local neighbourhood charters as well as community calls for action and local petitions.
- The 2007 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act subsequently gave local authorities the duty to provide information and consult and involve local people in service delivery and policy-making.
- The Action Plan for Community Empowerment, published in October 2007,

foresees the further engagement of local people in the development of Local Area Agreements and planning processes, as well as increased recourse to participatory budgeting schemes, citizen juries and local petitions.

- On 7 February 2008, Sir Ronnie Flanagan presented the final report of his policing review to the Home Secretary. A key part of his report refers to 'delivering in partnership through neighbourhood policing and involving local people'.
- Likewise, Lancashire's Chief Constable hosted a conference on Neighbourhood Management in December 2007.
- The Government's CLG is currently consulting in preparation for the publication of a white paper on Community Empowerment in which neighbourhood working is expected to figure prominently.

- 1.1 Neighbourhood Management has been successfully used within Poulton (which has been operating since 2002) and the West End areas of Morecambe (for the past two years) to address inequalities relating to crime, the environment, education, health and unemployment.
- 1.2 It is not intended to extend the present arrangements for Neighbourhood Management in Poulton beyond its planned expiry date of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.
- 1.3 The current programme of Neighbourhood Management in the West End of Morecambe has been a blend of community cohesion/empowerment work, support for vulnerable tenants and physical regeneration. Area Based Grant, which the City Council has been directing to work in the West End ceases as of March 2010 and thought will need to be given as to how the Council can both sustain the current programme of work being funded through this source whilst at the same time developing appropriate forms of neighbourhood working in other parts of the district.
- 1.4 With no external funding it will not be possible to replicate the scale of programmes taken forward, hitherto, in Poulton and the West End.

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 Any proposal to roll out neighbourhood management approach to public service delivery must aim to:
  - Provide better quality and more 'joined-up' forms of service delivery based on community priorities.
  - Ensure that local authority main programmes and budgets are better targeted at community needs and priorities.
  - Provide an area based focus for crosscutting measures which help to deliver the district's Sustainable Community Strategy objectives at a local level.
  - Present the opportunity for enhanced community participation.
  - Strengthen the community leadership role of elected councillors.

- 2.2 Nationally, Neighbourhood Management has been primarily seen as a tool which is effective in addressing relative deprivation. Any proposal to roll out neighbourhood management should in the first instance be incremental and continue to focus on those areas where there are significant gaps in key deprivation indicators between these neighbourhoods and the District as a whole.
- 2.3 Using 2004 'Indices of Multiple Deprivation' it is possible to identify, those communities which fall significantly below the district average and thus should be prioritised in terms of a neighbourhood management approach.
- 2.4 In relation to Poulton, progress made over the last seven years has been significant and with arrangements put in place for the continuation of community and Member involvement, and the continuation of the Poulton Housing Capital programme, it is believed that Poulton no longer requires the traditional neighbourhood management arrangements it has had for the past seven years.
- 2.5 Subject to Cabinet approval, Neighbourhood Management will continue to be externally funded in the West End of Morecambe until March 2010 and the gains that have been and will continue to be made over the lifetime of the programme will need to be sustained and built upon if successful regeneration is to be achieved.
- 2.6 It is proposed to take forward a Neighbourhood Management approach which is more strongly embedded within the City Council's structure, utilising existing resources, and allowing a stronger neighbourhood influence in corporate decision making.
- 2.7 Such a model would not be based on replicating existing Neighbourhood Management delivery. The current arrangements whereby a programme of community cohesion runs in tandem with a grant based project development model would not be financially sustainable.
- 2.8 As a starting point, within these priority neighbourhoods, a "Neighbourhood Charter" would be developed which would assess 'performance within the neighbourhood' i.e. levels of crime, antisocial behaviour, health statistics, relative income, educational attainment, and any other measures considered useful locally detailing how the area is performing against the rest of the district, north west region and nationally. Models exist within Neighbourhood Management delivery plans and existing parish plans which could be built upon to achieve effective Neighbourhood Charters.
- 2.9 This information will be made available to the Council and its partners within relevant thematic groups of the LSP so that informed decisions can be made about local priorities, how the area is performing and the outcomes that need to be achieved.
- 2.10 The charter would identify and set out the local priorities which would be identified by local communities based upon consultation and community engagement carried out within the neighbourhood.
- 2.11 Ward councillors, in exercising their community leadership role, would be assisted in bringing together community representatives to develop this process. The basis for these structures already exist in the form of parish councils, school governing bodies, PACT arrangements etc. and new groups representing neighbourhood interests would not, necessarily, have to be formed. Local service providers, voluntary, community or faith sector organisations would also be invited to be part of the process of developing the Neighbourhood Charter.

- 2.12 The Community Safety Partnership is considering ways in which it can tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in partnership with other service providers at a neighbourhood level. Plans are in hand for a pilot of such an approach which should provide some very useful learning in the Council's development of Neighbourhood Management. In any event, Lancashire Constabulary are an enthusiastic supporter of Neighbourhood Management and would be a key partner in future developments.
- 2.13 Services will be required to analyse their functions in terms of what can be influenced, prioritised, funded or delivered at a community/local level. This information will help the ward councillors and communities in making informed decisions as to how to address their priorities without putting undue pressure on services to make changes that are not feasible and to construct a mutually agreed action plan.
- 2.14 These groups and structures formed to put together the Neighbourhood Charter would then be supported and encouraged to form a neighbourhood forum to direct and co-ordinate work at a local level. These would be properly constituted bodies with extensive local representation and a local City Councillor as chair. Such forums would meet regularly to consider implementation of the charter, raise relevant local concerns, monitor progress, discuss significant planning applications within the area, assist with planning future programmes of work within the area etc. These forums would require administrative support to arrange meetings, take minutes, and prepare agendas.
- 2.15 Senior officers of the Council (Service Heads or Directors) could assume a specific geographic responsibility for a particular area in addition to their other duties - in effect becoming neighbourhood champions for that area.
- 2.16 In considering the local priorities of any particular area the Council (and its partners within the thematic groups of the LSP, and any parish councils) might wish to commit to delivery of particular levels of service or activity that best meet the needs of that local area. These in all probability would not be the same in each area. Over time these responses would become mainstreamed and form part of the Council's Service business planning process. With regard to local authority services, a key issue will be deciding which tier of government, e.g. City, Police or any Parish, takes on delivery of any changes to service delivery, as that may influence who pays for it (through Council Tax).
- 2.17 Consideration could be given to establishing an annual neighbourhood ward budget to be available to spend on addressing local priorities identified within the individual Neighbourhood Charters. It may be spent on levering in matched funding or to assist community led delivery of local services.
- 2.18 To help support ward councillors in this process, services would identify areas within their function that the ward budget could be spent on to gain additional service levels. This could include, for example, the cost of extra bins, CCTV, a summer activity programme for young people, planting or parks maintenance. However, budget spend would not be limited to Council services and work could be commissioned from other public service providers, the voluntary, community or private sectors.
- 2.19 It is vital that in developing this approach the Council works closely with other public service providers within the structures of the Lancaster District LSP who also recognise the challenges in these areas for their services and the advantages of enhanced partnership working.

- 2.20 Within the LSP it is recognised that neighbourhood management is a key delivery mechanism for sustainable Community Strategy objectives and the development of action plans within the LSP's Thematic Groups.
- 2.21 Thought will also need to be given as to how best the intelligence gathered at a neighbourhood level through development of the Charters is fed in to the central decision making process of the Council and the thematic groups of the LSP. The specific roles and responsibilities from the Council's establishment of senior officer neighbourhood champions will also need further consideration.
- 2.22 It further needs to be recognised that staff within the authority and other public agencies will need to develop new skills to work with local communities and client groups and operate across professional and departmental boundaries within and between organisations. Attention will also need to be given to resolving competing local interests and balancing local priorities with the need for an equitable distribution of resources and effective service delivery across the whole of the district.
- 2.23 A modest pilot scheme has been running in Ellel since November 2007 and indications are that there will be some significant lessons learnt in terms of developing more effective lines of communication between parish councils and public service providers. This, in itself, is not Neighbourhood Management but does point to how local forums such as parish councils can become more effective.

### **3.0 Details of Consultation**

- 3.1 The findings of this report have also been influenced by various consultation events/surveys etc. carried out in Poulton and the West End of Morecambe.

### **4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)**

#### **4.1 Option 1**

This is the option as outlined in this report which builds on the success of Neighbourhood Management so far whilst utilising modest resources in integrating the Neighbourhood Management approach into the mainstream activity of the City Council and its partners within the LSP.

#### **Risk**

That insufficient resources are made available thus diluting the impact of this changed way of working. This can be overcome, should members approve the recommendations set out in the report, by developing this approach further and identifying the resource requirements required to deliver it. These could then be fed into the budget process and if approved, the proposals could go ahead.

#### **Option 2**

Researching and bringing forward other neighbourhood models.

#### **Risk**

There has been much interaction between the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder in Poulton and other neighbourhood initiatives nationally since 2002.

Visits have been conducted to other programmes, lessons learnt at national conferences and best practice shared by neighbourhood renewal advisors. It is not envisaged that any significant new approach is likely to be uncovered and momentum is lost.

### **Option 3**

This is a 'do nothing' option which assumes that the current Neighbourhood Management programme finishes in 2010 when the Area Based Grant allocation ceases and it is no longer possible to support Neighbourhood Management in Morecambe's West End.

### **Risk**

That the learning from the past six years of operating successful Neighbourhood Management is wasted and that an opportunity to develop a new cross-cutting, neighbourhood, agenda with our partners is lost.

## **5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)**

5.1 Option 1 is the officer preferred option which, as outlined in the body of the report, allows for an integrated approach whilst keeping costs to a realistic minimum.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

6.1 Neighbourhood Management can be a significant delivery vehicle of both the Council's and our LSP priorities. The Council's Corporate Plan has within it a priority that local communities have more influence and involvement in the way services are delivered" by "developing neighbourhood management arrangements for the district". These proposals have been put forward on the basis of the Council's experience of six years of successful neighbourhood working.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The development of Neighbourhood Management arrangements for the district is a City Council Corporate Priority. A significant part of Neighbourhood Management activity links directly to Community Safety priorities, support for Children and Young People, the Council's Housing Strategy and Health and Well Being.

As well as the Council's Corporate Plan, Neighbourhood Management fits within the Strategic Vision of the District as put forward by the LSP.

### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

Neighbourhood Management can be used as an effective tool to address the needs of diverse communities, it empowers people by increasing citizens' influence at a local level and has been used to good effect to increase community safety and to address crime and the fear of crime.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The time limited funding arrangements regarding existing neighbourhood management arrangements are made clear within the body of the report.

The financial implications of a transition (and the ongoing implications) to a new neighbourhood management form of working would be the subject of a further report. At present, the current budget projections do not allow for any specific funding for rolling out neighbourhood management. Therefore, if Members wish to pursue the proposals, then additional resource requirements will need to be identified and budgeted for, as highlighted within the report. These would then be considered as part of a future budget process.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The recommendations would allow the proposals for rolling out neighbourhood management to be considered alongside other competing demands for resources, in a future budget exercise.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Contact Officer: John Deacon**  
**Telephone: 01524 405831**  
**E-mail: [jdeacon@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:jdeacon@lancaster.gov.uk)**

### Superoutput area based deprivation levels

