

STRATEGIC SENIOR OFFICER GROUP**31 OCTOBER 2007****PRIORITY NEIGHBOURHOODS****REPORT OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****Purpose of Report**

1. To consider the strengthening and future resourcing of neighbourhood management arrangements in the County, and to recommend a review of existing arrangements with a view to building on best practice.

Background

2. The meeting of SSOG on 1/8/07 considered the development of neighbourhood management in the new LAA. Theme partnerships and district LSPs were asked to consider the neighbourhood dimension in developing thematic and place-based priorities for the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA.
3. The emphasis placed by Government and others on the importance of neighbourhood management continues to increase. For instance:
 - Para 2.39 of the Local Government White Paper encourages the expansion of neighbourhood management, a statement repeated in CSR07.
 - The Flanagan Review of Policing states that 'neighbourhood policing... will only be successfully mainstreamed if it is entrenched within a much broader and multi-agency approach known as 'Neighbourhood Management'. (para 2.11)

Whilst CLG is encouraging the introduction of Neighbourhood Management it will not impose it, nor will it fund it.

A Review of Neighbourhood Management in Leicestershire

4. As previous reports have noted the establishment of neighbourhood management arrangements across the 19 priority neighbourhoods in the County has been variable. Current practice ranges from robust action-focused activity in Melton Mowbray with some elements of service delivery reconfigured to specifically address neighbourhood issues to a situation in some neighbourhoods where neighbourhood action teams (NATs) remain to be established and there has been very limited activity. In most neighbourhoods the focus has been on 'forming' NATs, appointing

neighbourhood managers and in some cases establishing neighbourhood forums.

5. The new SCS/ LAA is expected to have a stronger focus on the priority neighbourhoods and it is likely that the delivery of LAA outcomes will rely more strongly on delivery in the priority neighbourhoods. This will particularly be the case if there is an overarching objective to 'narrow the gap' between the priority neighbourhoods and the rest of the County. Such an approach will necessitate robust neighbourhood management arrangements being in place from April 2008.
6. 18 months after the start of the existing LAA is perhaps a good time to commission an independent review the progress made to date on neighbourhood management. Such a review could consider a range of issues including:
 - the effectiveness of arrangements put in place to date in Leicestershire with a view to identifying best practice and focussing on arrangements which have delivered outcomes and involved elected members and local communities;
 - the extent to which the current priority neighbourhoods match the priority areas for partner agencies, particularly the Police;
 - how this compares with best practice elsewhere;
 - the involvement of key agencies and services in NATs which have been established – 'identifying the hard-to-reach service deliverers';
 - barriers to effective neighbourhood management activity, including
 - funding availability;
 - cultural factors/ residual silo thinking and resistance in partner agencies and services/ extent of senior level buy in.
 - developing a 'business case' for mainstreaming neighbourhood management;
 - the effective use and distribution of LAA pump-priming or other funding available to support neighbourhood management activities, and the contribution such pump-priming can make to delivering real outcomes and establishing sustainable (ie durable) arrangements;
 - the leverage of additional funding to support neighbourhoods, both individually and across all 19 neighbourhoods;
 - the organisation and management of links between county-level LAA performance management, and district-level neighbourhood activity
 - the availability of relevant local data and intelligence
7. The review should seek the views and input of key local partners, including representatives of key partner agencies (eg local authorities, VCS, PCT, Police), neighbourhood managers and members of NATs.
8. A partnership working group would need to be established to produce a tender for this piece of work, run the tender process and report back the findings to SSOG. It is suggested that the cost of the review (estimated at

circa £30k) will be incurred by the County Council but will be reimbursed from expected LAA underspends in 2007/8.

Funding

9. Capacity for effective neighbourhood management can be generated by service redesign and moving away from traditional service based silos to a more neighbourhood-focused approach.
10. Furthermore there is considerable evidence that effective neighbourhood management pays for itself – many times over. For example:
 - By reducing the number of vacant properties in an area there is increased rental income for social landlords and reduced costs in managing empty homes;
 - Reduced crime saves police and court time;
 - Costly duplication of activity between agencies can be reduced;
 - Cleaner and safer environments can become the norm and are cheaper to maintain at high standards.

As the National Neighbourhood Management Network says neighbourhood management should not involve large amounts of money – rather using existing resources in a better way. A partnership approach is essential as the savings secured may not always accrue to the agency which incurred the costs which brought them about.

11. Notwithstanding the above a funding gap for neighbourhood management in Leicestershire has been identified by partners. This is summarised on the attached spreadsheet (Appendix A). This information should be taken account of in the proposed review.

Recommendation

12. SSOG is recommended to establish a working group to commission and steer a review of Neighbourhood Management arrangements in Leicestershire, and to note the funding information set out in Appendix A.

Officer to contact: Tom Purnell, Leicestershire County Council
tpurnell@leics.gov.uk o116 305 7019