

# Overview & Scrutiny Committee



**SCRUTINY PANEL R&P**  
Neighbourhood Model

**March 2011**



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## Foreword

The objective of this Scrutiny Panel was to review the effectiveness of the bi-annual public meetings of the Neighbourhood Model, after criticisms were raised about the lack of public participation. The Review took place between December 2010 and March 2011.

The Panel was made up from members of the Scrutiny Committee including Councillors Christopher Malpas (Chair), Councillor Lee Mason (Vice-Chair), Councillors Iftikar Choudary, Tony Clarke, Brendan Glynane, Richard Matthews, Dennis Meredith, Pam Varnsberry, & John Yates and Sheron Watson (Secretary of the Federation of Residents Associations) who we co-opted to the Review.

The Panel received both written and spoken evidence from a wide variety of interested parties including senior officers, the Police, several Residents Associations, the Vestia Community Trust, the Hindu Welfare Organisation, Neighbourhood Co-ordinators, Parish Councils, and the County Council. The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Paul Varnsberry, also gave information.

Desk-Top research was carried out by the Scrutiny Officer, Tracy Tiff, into how neighbourhood consultation is carried out in other areas, including Newcastle City Council, Manton Community Alliance (Bassetlaw), and Melton (Leicestershire Together).

The Panel also visited Oldington & Foley Park in Wyre Forest District to gain first hand experience of another Neighbourhood Model.

There was general agreement that the type of meetings should be expanded and the importance of good publicity and of active Councillor involvement in each of the 4 areas of Northampton.

Recommendations are contained within the report.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this Review.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Malpas'.

**Councillor Christopher Malpas**  
Chair, Scrutiny Panel R&P – Neighbourhood Model



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Mason'.

**Councillor Lee Mason**  
Vice Chair, Scrutiny Panel R&P – Neighbourhood Model

## Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review: -

- Councillors Ifty Choudary, Tony Clarke, Brendan Glynane, Richard Matthews, Dennis Meredith, Pam Varnsberry and John Yates who sat with us on this Review
- Sheron Watson, Secretary, Northants Federation of Residents' Association, was co-opted to the Review and provided valuable expertise and knowledge to inform the Review
- Steve Elsey, Head of Public Protection, for his support to this Review
- Julie Seddon, Director, Environment and Culture, for her support to this Review
- Nick Parker, Vestia Community Trust, for providing valuable information to inform the Review and spending time with the Panel on its site visit to Oldington and Foley Park on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011
- Mr Chris Swinn, for addressing the Panel with such enthusiasm at its meeting in February 2011. Sadly, Mr Swinn passed away recently and the Scrutiny Panel recognises the interest that he showed in the Overview and Scrutiny process at Northampton
- County Councillor Alan Wright, Richard Powell, Area Based Co-Ordinator, Andrew Leighton, Community Liaison Officer, Northamptonshire County Council, Ron Fitzhugh, Chair, Far Cotton Residents' Association, Tony Skirrow, Chair, Great Houghton Parish Council, Chief Inspector Fay Tennent, Inspector Lingley, Inspector Daemon Johnson, PS Martin O'Connell, PSCO Peter Middleton, Northamptonshire Police, Margaret Pritchard, Brookside Residents' Council, Tony Mallard, Northampton Federation of Residents' Association and Eastfield Residents' Association, Brian Burdett, Queens Park/ Kingsthorpe Residents Association, Neelam Aggarwal, Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation Colwyn Rd. Residents Association / Friends of Northampton Racecourse, Ruth Austen, Environmental Health Team Leader, Darren Berwick & Peter Strachan, Housing Team Leaders and Peter Strachan, Partnership Co-Ordinator, Northampton Borough Council for providing valuable information and advice to inform the Review
- Councillor Paul Varnsberry, Portfolio Holder (Community Engagement) for providing a response to the Scrutiny Panel's core questions

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Review was to investigate which groups will be engaging with and who the Council will be working with.

The Scrutiny Panel concentrated its Review on the public meetings of the Neighbourhood Model. The rationale being that at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members discussed the Neighbourhood Model, in particular public participation at the public meetings, and the main comment made was that these meetings were not felt to be satisfactory. Therefore, the Review was set up with the purpose "*to investigate which groups will be engaging with and who the Council will be working with*", and it will be investigating issues relating to the public meetings.

The current Neighbourhood Model was introduced in April 2010. There are four Areas (also known as Neighbourhood or Sectors) in Northampton - North, East, South west and Central. The commercial town centre continued under a different set of arrangements. The Borough Council's Cabinet agreed these arrangements on 3 March 2010.

The Neighbourhood Model aims to provide an opportunity for the citizens of Northampton to come together with the Police, Northampton Borough Council, Northants County Council, Northants Fire and Rescue Service and other key Agencies to discuss issues that are of importance to residents such as community safety issues. It provides an opportunity for the public to inform the Council of any concerns or issues they may have and help shape the priorities for their area.

This Review links to the Council's corporate priorities as it demonstrates the investigation of strong partnerships and engagement communities. Corporate priority 4 refers.

A Scrutiny Panel was established comprising Councillor Christopher Malpas (Chair); Councillor Lee Mason (Vice Chair); Councillors Ifty Choudary, Tony Clarke, Brendan Glynane, Richard Matthews, Dennis Meredith, Pam Varnsberry and John Yates. Sheron Watson, Secretary, Northants Federation of Residents' Association was co-opted to the Review.

A short sharp Review commenced in December 2010 and concluded in March 2011.

## CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

A significant amount of evidence was heard, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence the Scrutiny Panel established that: -

- 6.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel felt that Area Working is at its best when bringing people together to do holistic problem solving.
- 6.1.2 It was realised that it can be difficult to price up a budget for a Neighbourhood

Model as it all depends on what is going to be done and what geographical scale is.

- 6.1.3 It was acknowledged that adequate resources are required for the Neighbourhood Model to work properly. The Scrutiny Panel noted the revenue budget for Neighbourhood Working at Northampton for 2011/2012 is:
- Northampton Borough Council's existing £65,000
  - An internal bid for £107,000
- 6.1.4 It was realised that the budgets for Neighbourhood working in the organisations noted as examples of best practice were considerably more than that allocated to Northampton's Model.
- 6.1.5 It was emphasised that public meetings have to compete with social events; therefore it can be a task to encourage attendance at such meetings.
- 6.1.6 It was recognised that public meetings have mixed participation dependent upon local issues and local engagement generally. Large consultation events in areas of high footfall (shopping centres, supermarkets etc) have been shown to lead to much greater involvement and insight from local residents than Public meetings.
- 6.1.7 The Scrutiny Panel felt that publicity for the meetings could be improved and there was also a need for the posters to be produced and sent out well in advance of the meeting. It was realised that for further publicity to take place there would be the need for budgetary provision to be made available.
- 6.1.8 It was acknowledged that Residents Associations are a crucial link to Neighbourhood Management and that they should be fully included within the process.
- 6.1.9 Consultation events held in locations, such as shopping centres, provide an excellent opportunity to engage with the public.
- 6.1.10 The Scrutiny Panel recognised the examples of current good practice that had been identified within the Council's Neighbourhood Working Model, such as its dedicated webpage. Neighbourhood Models, such as Melton's, have introduced similar website pages.
- 6.1.11 The opportunities for Neighbourhood Management to take on an active role, as identified in the Localism Bill 2010 were recognised by the Scrutiny Panel. For example, the focus on giving local people greater influence over local planning, local Action Plans should be produced based on local people's priorities and at the heart of Neighbourhood Management, possible opportunities for Neighbourhood Management to take on an active role promoting and facilitating transfer of particular buildings to address local need, local availability and control of Public Sector funding is a natural evolution for Neighbourhood Management.
- 6.1.12 It was felt that the framework in Northampton would provide the ideal means

to disseminate information about the community budgets, to build local participation and provide the best possible local management information on which budgeting could be based.

- 6.1.13 The Scrutiny Panel expressed concerns that within the current Neighbourhood Model, public meetings are held just two times per year within each Ward area. Models that are felt to be examples of best practice, such as Newcastle, hold a minimum of six Ward Committee meetings per year, with some wards holding nine and some twelve meetings per year.
- 6.1.14 From the evidence gathered, it was apparent that the majority of expert advisors acknowledged that meetings held during the evening were the most convenient, in particular to those with working commitments. It would however, be useful to trial holding the meetings at different times so that the preferred time could be gauged.
- 6.1.15 The Scrutiny Panel supported work that is being undertaken to closer align the Environmental Warden Service with Neighbourhood Management and the intention not only to provide a responsive service to residents concerns but also to become increasingly proactive. It was acknowledged that the Neighbourhood Management framework has helped to facilitate productive working relationships with colleagues and other Agencies. Communication from the Neighbourhood Coordinators is good and there is effective liaison with the Police and Environment Wardens.
- 6.1.16 The Scrutiny Panel noted the concerns of some of the expert witnesses of the need for other Agencies to be engaged in the Neighbourhood Model, in particular, engagement from Northamptonshire County Council which currently appears limited and can present a problem, for example, there are a significant number of issues raised that are highways related. Neighbourhood Models that are felt to be examples of best practice, such as Newcastle, have the full support of other Agencies such as Council Officers, representatives from the Police and other Agencies as required such as the Fire Service, CVS or the local Primary Care Trust. The Scrutiny Panel recognised the benefit of the suggestion that Community Safety Partnerships should be able to feed into Neighbourhood Model by way of informing the Action plan.
- 6.1.17 The Scrutiny Panel realised that Neighbourhood Management and the Community Safety Partnership should link as they are part of the same area of work. It noted the concern of a key witness that the separation of the two areas of work is causing duplication of effort and meetings within organisations.
- 6.1.18 The Action Plans are well focussed and regularly updated, noted their transparency and quality of content.
- 6.1.19 There is a real opportunity for Members to contribute on a programmed basis rather than through ad hoc engagement with Coordinators. Many Members (both NBC and NCC) have actively engaged and added real value to the Neighbourhood Model.

- 6.1.20 The Scrutiny Panel recognised that elected Members working with the Neighbourhood Model process will enable them to have a strong community leadership role
- 6.1.21 The Scrutiny Panel also acknowledged the importance and value of all Members being involved in programmes and engaged processes within their ward area.
- 6.1.22 The Scrutiny Panel also felt that communication about the public meetings should be fit for purpose and contain no jargon.
- 6.1.23 As part of the Review to implement alternative methods of engagement, it is recognised that consideration will be given to the fact that ward boundaries and numbers are changing.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendation: -

- 7.1 Scrutiny Panel R&P – Neighbourhood Model, therefore recommends to Cabinet that:
- 7.1.1 A Workshop for all ward Councillors be held, after the Local Elections 2011 but before 1st September 2011, with the purpose to discuss the best use of resources in respect of the public meetings or other methods (as below) to engage and consult the public within their wards and neighbouring areas.
- 7.1.2 Alternative methods of engaging the public within the Neighbourhood Model be introduced by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011, such as: -
- Consultation events held in public places such as shopping centres, schools, university campuses, colleges and other places open to the public
  - Links with existing Parish Council meetings
  - Links with existing or newly created Residents' Association Meetings
  - Liaison with groups or their representative/community leaders of minority groups including those that do not speak English as their first language
  - Street Briefings
  - Internet based approaches
  - 'Door knocking' exercises.
- 7.1.3 In each area a minimum level of least two public meetings per year or equivalent alternative methods as in 7.1.2 and agreed in the Councillor workshops as detailed in recommendation 7.1.1.
- 7.1.4 Officer boards be redesignated Area Boards and that ward Councillors and chairs or representatives of Parish Councils and Residents' Associations be

invited to also attend. These are still to be chaired by the Police Sector Inspector for the Area and meet four times per year.

- 7.1.5 A budget of £4,000 pa for 2011/12/13 for the publicity of public engagement events and the production and distribution of information to promote Neighbourhood Management be granted.
- 7.1.6 Publication material regarding the public meetings, such as posters, is fit for purpose and written in clear, concise language. Posters are displayed approximately ten days prior to the meetings or events.
- 7.1.7 The Panel supports the provision of technology for large scale “block” text messages as an essential tool for the communication of information particularly concerning meetings and events.
- 7.1.8 It is ensured that that there are clear reporting back mechanisms from the meetings that the public can easily obtain and link into, such as the publication and circulation of the Area Action Plans.
- 7.1.9 Cabinet instructs the Chief Executive to write to his counterparts of the key Agencies, such as Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue, Northamptonshire Police, Northants Primary Care Trust and local business representatives encouraging their involvement in the public meetings.
- 7.1.10 The Head of Public Protection, in conjunction with the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), introduce mechanisms that enable Area Action Plans to complement and enhance identified Community Safety priorities for the area.
- 7.1.11 Cabinet be informed that the Scrutiny Panel supports the link between the work of the Environmental Wardens and the Partnership Co-ordinators and recommends that this close working relationship be further developed, in particular around community involvement and engagement.

# Northampton Borough Council

## Overview and Scrutiny

### Report of Scrutiny Panel R&P – Neighbourhood Model

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to investigate which groups will be engaging with and who the Council will be working with.
- 1.2 A copy of the Scope of the Review is attached at Appendix A.

#### 2. Context and Background

- 2.1 Following approval of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/2011, it was agreed that a short, sharp Review would commence in December 2010 and conclude mid-March 2011.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Panel concentrated its Review on the public meetings of the Neighbourhood Model. The rationale being that at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members discussed the Neighbourhood Model, in particular public participation at the public meetings, and the main comment made was that these meetings were not felt to be satisfactory. Therefore, the Review was set up with the purpose "*to investigate which groups will be engaging with and who the Council will be working with*", and it investigated issues specifically relating to the public meetings.
- 2.3 The current Neighbourhood Model was introduced in April 2010. There are four Areas (also known as Neighbourhood or Sectors) in Northampton - North, East, South west and Central. The commercial town centre continued under a different set of arrangements. The Borough Council's Cabinet agreed these arrangements on 3 March 2010.
- 2.4 The Neighbourhood Model aims to provide an opportunity for the citizens of Northampton to come together with the Police, Northampton Borough Council, Northants County Council, Northants Fire and Rescue Service and other key Agencies to discuss issues that are of importance to residents such as community safety issues. It provides an opportunity for the public to inform the Council of any concerns or issues they may have and help shape the priorities for their area.
- 2.5 Each of the four Areas has a Partnership Co-ordinator responsible for developing and driving the delivery of an Area Action Plan based on local needs and identified priorities.
- 2.6 Each Area also has an Officer Board consisting of a core of senior officers from key agencies and chaired by a senior officer from Northampton Borough Council (NBC) or Northamptonshire Police. Additional officers are invited on an ad hoc basis.

- 2.7 Within each Area, each ward holds public meetings at least twice a year and elected Members and local people will feed into the Neighbourhood Action Plan.
- 2.8 Officers representing the partnership organisations are present and, in most cases, ward Councillors rotate the chairing of the meetings. If the meeting is part of a Parish Council or a long established community meeting, the Parish Council or existing Chair presides.
- 2.9 A Scrutiny Panel was established comprising Councillor Christopher Malpas (Chair); Councillor Lee Mason (Vice Chair); Councillors Ifty Choudary, Tony Clarke, Brendan Glynane, Richard Matthews, Dennis Meredith, Pam Varnsberry and John Yates. Sheron Watson, Secretary, Northants Federation of Residents' Association, was co-opted to the Review.
- 2.10 The Scrutiny Panel agreed that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:
- Baseline data including itemised budgetary data
  - Officer's Reports, in particular detailing potential use of other resources
  - Officer's Report – Internal good practice
  - Best Practice external to Northampton
  - Witness Evidence – Verbal or Written:-
    - Evidence from key Agencies – Northants Police, Northamptonshire Fire Service, Northamptonshire County Council
    - Evidence from Community Leaders and Community Groups
    - Evidence from Portfolio Holder (Community Engagement), Northampton Borough Council
    - Evidence from Neighbourhood Co-Ordinators, Northampton Borough Council
- 2.11 This Review links to the Council's corporate priorities as it demonstrates the investigation of strong partnerships and engagement communities. Corporate priority 4 refers.
- 3. Evidence Collection**
- 3.1 In scoping this Review it was decided that evidence would be collected from a variety of sources:

### **3.2 Head of Public Protection, Northampton Borough Council**

3.2.1 The Head of Public Protection, Northampton Borough Council, provided baseline data:

#### **3.2.2 Details of the Internal Six Month Review of Area Working (Neighbourhood Model) – December 2010**

3.2.2.1 An internal review of Area Working (Neighbourhood Model) concluded its findings in December 2010, six months after Neighbourhood Model was introduced.

3.2.2.2 The observations and comments/options took account of the inputs to this internal review, details of which are contained within Appendix B.

#### **Service Budget data**

3.2.2.3 The budget for 2010/11:-

- Northamptonshire Police's contribution £65,000
- Northampton Borough Council's contribution £65,000

3.2.2.4 The budget provided funding for four Partnership posts (fourth post occupied by the existing Neighbourhood, Crime and Justices post holder that is funded by Central Government).

3.2.2.5 There is no other Revenue budget other than any remaining externally funded projects as detailed in Appendix D.

#### **On going or recent capital Community Projects and priorities schemes:**

3.2.2.6 The revenue budget for 2011/2012 is currently:

- Northampton Borough Council's existing £65,000
- An internal bid for £107,000

3.2.2.7 Northamptonshire Police is withdrawing its funding in 2011/2012 and the Crime and Justices fund will have expired. This is also not being renewed.

3.2.2.8 The proposed budget for 2011/2012 is approximately £172,000, which will fund the four Partnership Co-ordinator posts only. Any cost incurred for printing, meeting room hire etc is being subsidised by other Public Protection budgets.

### **3.2.3 Internal Best practice within Neighbourhood Management**

3.2.3.1 Key examples of examples of best practice within Neighbourhood Management at Northampton:

## **Community engagement**

- 3.2.3.2 Detailed Ward profiles were piloted in the South-West Area, drawing on community safety, environmental (fly-tipping and side-waste), crime, Police interactions and any other appropriate data and used as a basis to identify and develop the local priorities that have been put to public meetings. Information is displayed both online and hard copy in a readable and accessible format and highlights current areas of concern/interest. The information is used at public meetings to enable informed and effective public engagement and can also be used at other events such as shopping centre consultations. This process is also being adopted in the other three Areas in the future.

## **Neighbourhood Working ‘NBC Online’**

- 3.2.3.3 The aim of the Webpage is to provide an easy, accessible means for many residents to log and monitor their local priorities. Residents may wish to contribute but want to do so in a venue, and at a time, convenient to them. The Neighbourhood working Webpage has been developed bearing in mind that residents may wish to contribute but want to do so in a venue, and at a time, convenient to them.
- 3.2.3.4 The pages also make full use of the ‘My Council’ facility, an interactive mapping system on the NBC website that allows residents to report problems and get information simply by clicking on a map of Northampton. Not everyone is comfortable using a map, so these features are also available in text form through an easy to use menu on the homepage.

## **Consultation Events**

- 3.2.3.5 Police led Street Briefings have been supported by the Neighbourhood Model Partnership in targeted locations across the town. A mobile Police station is placed in a specific location and intensively publicised through leaflets and door-knocking in the 48 hours leading up to event and during it. Residents drop in to hear about priorities and proposed actions and share their concerns and intelligence.
- 3.2.3.6 “*Get it off your Chest*” events have been trialled in the East Area run in conjunction with Residents Associations and are run in a format similar to BBC Question Time, all households on a single estate would be leafleted direct over a two-week period with the details of the Panel attending.
- 3.2.3.7 Kingsthorpe Youth Forum ran Pizza and Opinions consultation events for young people to support funding applications to the Big Lottery for play spaces funding and two youth shelters.
- 3.2.3.8 Shopping centre consultations in major centres have typically collected views of around 200 – 300 people in a single day. It is aimed that these will be implemented across all areas when resources permit.
- 3.2.3.9 Over a two-week period, East Area Co-ordinator and Residents Association knocked on the door of all homes in Lumbertubs estate and much of Lings in

order to get views on spending of money available from Community Payback for local environmental improvements.

### **3.2.4 Community Projects and priorities and Environmental Projects**

#### **Junior Community Wardens Scheme**

- 3.2.4.1 An effective pilot in Lumbertubs, with strong support from Police and Wardens, now being rolled out town-wide and Street lighting put in place along Boughton Green Road to help reduce road traffic incidents by highways.

#### **Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**

- 3.2.4.2 Home Office funding of £80,000 was secured for the environmental element of Safer Thorplands Project and close involvement with Partnership implementation of project.
- 3.2.4.3 Targeted Police patrols and Youth Outreach work in Kings Heath, consulting with around 80 young people and informing the creation of new sports sessions (basketball and street dance) and a new drop-in session for young people. Funding was acquired from the Community Safety Partnership and Sport Unlimited.
- 3.2.4.4 Outreach work in East Hunsbury - Close co-ordination between Parish youth workers, Abbey Centre youth workers and the Police dealt effectively with issues around Grangewood Park over the summer.
- 3.2.4.5 Funding of £50,000 obtaining from a Lottery bid and some local match in 2008/09 for development of a new MUGA in Camp Hill. Subsequently led development of outreach work, supporting the set up of a new Street Football session at the MUGA and leading to a marked decrease in the number of reports of Anti Social Behaviour at problem locations in the area (such as the local youth shelter).
- 3.2.4.6 Funding identified for programme of youth activities (to be implemented by Service Six) and an environmental improvement to tackle ongoing ASB at Standen's Barn shops. Prior to this the Police and courts put in detention a local ringleader which also helped to make this process achievable.

### **3.2.5 Youth activity**

- 3.2.5.1 £229,000 was secured from a Lottery bid, matched by £30 cash and £34,000 in-kind from local sources for groundbreaking three-year Change of Scene Project to get young people from estates in Billing, Eastfield, Ecton Brook, Lumbertubs and Thorplands Wards engaged in active pursuits in the natural environment.
- 3.2.5.2 A plan has been developed for co-ordinated youth outreach and youth development work across the South-West Area, and secured Community Safety Partnership and Lottery Funding to support this. A dedicated team of youth workers has been commissioned through Buzz Box, a local social

enterprise, to target priority areas and directly engage with young people on the street in Kings Heath, Camp Hill and Far Cotton.

- 3.2.5.3 External funding was secured by Partnership Co-ordinators for a number of new play areas including Playbuilder schemes in Lings (Lumbertubs Ward) and Kingsthorpe (each in excess of £60,000), Billing Brook Road shops (Lumbertubs Ward £12,000), Camp Hill MUGA (Delapre Ward - £50,000), i-Play facility (£27,000 – Thorplands ward).
- 3.2.5.4 Funding and active support to a number of events at Kingsthorpe Children's centre, for example "*Your money matters*" and "*Get Active*" event.

### **3.2.6 Existing and potential future use of other resources**

- 3.2.6.1 Close working with Environmental Wardens is already developing to target responses to resident concerns issues such as fly-tipping and side-waste. The Wardens also work with Community Payback within the Probation Service.
- 3.2.6.2 Liaison with Northamptonshire County Council Highways Department has resulted in a number of specific improvements such as re-surfacing and railing protection of slippery footpath used by disabled residents of Longmead Court (Lumbertubs Ward), a programme of footpath and pavement improvements funded by Safer Lings and Lumbertubs Project, dropping of kerbs in Greenfield Ave (Eastfield Ward), pavement barriers outside Northampton Girls School (Parklands Ward) and resurfacing of pathway by Abbeyfield School (Delapre Ward).
- 3.2.6.3 In conjunction with the Police and Parking enforcement the 'inconsiderate parking' project was undertaken.
- 3.2.6.4 Hardingstone Primary School identified a garage area off Bouverie Road and obtained an agreement from Housing and funding from the Parish Council to proceed. Design is now being undertaken by Asset Management and publicity being undertaken with parents through school.
- 3.2.6.5 Neighbourhood Management is working closely with Town Centre Management to facilitate contact with various businesses in order to discuss issues raised at the public meetings have been addressed promptly and professionally.
- 3.2.6.6 Plans are in place so that the Environmental Warden Service will be closer aligned with Neighbourhood Management with the intention not only to provide a responsive service to residents concerns but also to become increasingly proactive. The Wardens will be assigned specific projects from this process and will lead the facilitation of community involvement.

### **3.2.7 Localism Bill 2010 and Neighbourhood Management Best Practice**

- 3.2.7.1 The Link between the Localism Bill 2010 and Neighbourhood Management is detailed at Appendix E.

### **3.2.8 Best Practice External to Northampton**

3.2.8.1 Desktop research was carried out regarding best practice external to Northampton and the salient points detailed below. Comprehensive details are contained at Appendix F.

#### **Newcastle City Council**

3.2.8.2 Key points:-

- Newcastle City Council has Neighbourhood Response Teams (NRT).
- Each NRT is responsible for liveability issues in their ward
- Newcastle is split into 26 Wards, each ward having approximately 5 – 7,000 households and 10 – 12,000 residents.
- Each ward has a Ward Committee governed by three democratically elected members and supported by a Ward Coordinator.
- Newcastle has a Neighbourhood Quality Indicator Suite to measure impact on the locality as a result of this activity.
- A minimum of six Ward Committee meetings are held per year, however, some wards hold nine and some twelve meetings.
- Agencies that support the meetings are Council Officers, representatives from the Police and other Agencies as required such as the Fire Service, CVS or the local Primary Care Trust.
- The Ward Committees are open forums to residents and they aim to seek to secure support of the community in achieving their local priorities by involvement / empowerment.

#### **Oldington and Foley Park**

3.2.8.3 Key points:

- The Wyre Forest Matters, the Local Strategic Partnership, were successful with a bid to the Governments Neighbourhood Renewal Unit for a Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder in the Oldington and Foley Park Ward. (Within the district of Wyre Forest.)
- The Pathfinder is a partnership of residents, voluntary groups, statutory agents and the private sector.
- Within the Pathfinder area, there are many local voluntary and statutory organisations providing key services to the community.
- Oldington and Foley Park reports that in order to deliver the Neighbourhood Management Strategy, the involvement and support of key Public Sector Agencies is critical. The Board also invites local businesses to nominate a representative to the Board.

- The Pathfinder Board meets no less than six times a year. Meetings take place within the ward. Additional meetings can be called if the need arises or at the Board request.
- The Pathfinder facilitates a Neighbourhood Forum with two to four representatives from each of the Forums coming together to report on the work of the different Forums and to receive reports on the overall working of the Pathfinder.

### **3.3 Site Visit to Oldington and Foley Park**

3.3.1 A site visit to Oldington and Foley Park took place on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011. The Panel received a comprehensive presentation on Neighbourhood Management at Oldington and Foley Park. Key points in relation to the public meetings:-

- Prior to the introduction of Neighbourhood Management, the priority was to understand the profile of the neighbourhood
- Need for Agencies to link together
- Residents' priorities were sought A survey of 500 households was undertaken in 2004 and 2007
- Joint working between various Agencies and the local school, particularly through the Community Hub (based at a local school which is an important landmark in the community)
- It is ensured that residents are fully involved in the meetings, such as:-
  - Clean and Safe Charter – written with resident input, in plain English
  - Tidy days
  - Neighbourhood Tasking – Initially Agency acted as the catalyst but the initiative is now run by Residents' Associations
  - Involving residents in solution finding, for example "Piggy Alleys"
  - Joint working with individuals responsible for the public realm
- Oldington and Foley Park has developed an extended community facility which has been recognised as good practice at a local level
- Residents were fully involved in a number of health issues such as the success of many registering with an NHS dentist
- The public meetings of Oldington and Foley Park are made up of a third from the Voluntary Sector, a third from Agencies and a third from a variety of Residents' Groups
- Themed Events are held with the aim to collect views
- Events held at schools to obtain the views of both parents and pupils
- Participative budgeting

### **3.4 Manton Community Alliance**

#### 3.4.1 Key points:

- Manton Community Alliance has taken a very different approach to neighbourhood working/localism, which is about changing relationships.
- It is intended to put local residents at the heart of a model of co-production with residents becoming equal partners in the process and seen as part of the solution rather than the problem.
- Residents and the Police jointly set local policing priorities.
- Manton Community Alliance has developed a range of tools to support this activity over the years, for example Participatory Budgeting
- Manton Community Alliance has moved away from a dependency on meetings to using broader more inclusive approaches.
- Manton Community Alliance's collaborative model is headed up by a Board comprising local residents, elected Members and Statutory Bodies (Councils, Police, NHS, Education, Housing, SureStart, JobCentre Plus and CVS). Other local Groups and Agencies take part in its more general activities.
- Manton Community Alliance has developed a comprehensive website.
- The population of Bassetlaw is around 108,000 and working from an annual budget, the next financial year of £285,000 equates to a cost of £2.64 per head.

### **3.5 Leicestershire Together**

#### 3.5.1 Key points:

- Leicestershire has 19 priority neighbourhood which were identified in consultation with the seven district Local Strategic Partnerships, data and information from the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Poverty and Social Exclusion Index and District Local Strategic Partnerships identified pockets of pronounced deprivation within the county, based around Output Areas.

#### **3.5.2 Melton**

##### 3.5.2.1 The Review investigated Melton (part of Leicestershire Together). Key points:

- Melton has a single defined priority neighbourhood which covers four separate communities.
- Neighbourhood management is run by the multi Agency Neighbourhood Management Group which meets quarterly. The key partners include the district Council departments, Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire Primary Care Trust, Connexions, Voluntary Action Melton and the local residents.

- Melton has a dedicated Neighbourhood Manager with fourteen members of staff who cover a variety of functions, including housing repairs and maintenance, community safety, anti social behaviour and resident involvement.
- Melton has set up Community Forums which are held two times per year with the aim to provide citizens of Melton with an opportunity to discuss local services with their local District and County Councillors and representatives from other Agencies such as the Health Service and the Police.
- There is a specific Community Forum website that the public can access which provides them with further details about Melton.
- Under LAA2, Leicestershire Together made available £20,000 per year to Melton Borough Council (up to March 2011) to support neighbourhood management in the district. The main team which supports Neighbourhood Management is mainstreamed and paid for through Council Tax and Government subsidy. The team does not just focus on Neighbourhood Management but also vulnerable people, housing repairs etc. The total costs invested in this area are £1.5million per annum.

### **3.6 Witness Evidence**

#### **Core Questions – Key Witnesses**

- 3.6.1 The Scrutiny Panel produced a set of core questions that it put to key witnesses over a series of witnesses, copy attached at Appendix C.
- 3.6.2 Key witnesses provided a response to the Scrutiny Panel's core questions at the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011:
- 3.6.3 Key points of evidence: -

### **3.7 Key Agencies – Written responses**

#### **3.7.1 Chief Inspector, Northants Police**

- It needs to be accepted that the Neighbourhood Model is essentially a set of meetings – some established with other, already established meetings. Public meetings have mixed participation dependent upon local issues and local engagement generally.
- It has to be recognised that these meetings need to be marketed as only one way of the public meeting their public servants – local authority and police etc. There needs to be more marketed about the “suite” of ways to make contact. A small number of participants do not necessarily mean that meetings should be stopped.
- Politicians need to engage with the meetings as part of the solution. Several meetings have been used to political ends and not to engage with the public and help resolve issues.
- What happens to the Neighbourhood Model meetings when politicians are not allowed to carry on with them i.e. when running up to local elections etc – the problems still need resolving.

- The Chief Inspector was concerned that Northampton Borough Council' (NBC)'s Strategy does not put Neighbourhood Management and the Community Safety Partnership together as they are part of the same area of work. The separation of the two areas of work is causing duplication of effort and meetings within organisations. Community Safety Partnerships should be able to feed into Neighbourhood model by way of informing the Action plan – after all, this is from community engagement also but brings in wider engagement that purely community meetings. Issues raised should be included on the NBC website etc.”

### **3.7.2 Inspector, Sector Commander, South West Sector**

- The new model has improved the community consultation and engagement but again has provided further evidence that public meetings are not the way the residents of this town would wish to have their say with the local authority or the police”.

### **3.7.3 Housing Team Leaders, Northampton Borough Council**

- Generally Housing Services experience is that the model is working satisfactorily and provides a framework for co-ordinating multi-agency activity at a local level.
- The Neighbourhood Management framework has helped to facilitate productive working relationships with colleagues and other agencies. Communication from the Neighbourhood Coordinators is good and there is effective liaison with the Police and Environment Wardens.
- Engagement from Northamptonshire County Council appears limited and can present a problem, for example, there are a significant number of issues raised that are highways related.
- The neighbourhood areas could be perceived as being too big. Each area covers several estates, which have their own unique identity. Residents on one estate will have differing priorities to residents on another estate in the same Neighbourhood Model area.
- The geographical housing areas are not an exact match with the Neighbourhood Model areas, although this has not cause any significant problems.
- The numbers of residents who engage with the Neighbourhood Model process is limited. Given that the model was originally conceived to increase resident empowerment, some thought should perhaps be given to how residents can be more effectively involved.
- Although there have been few housing specific issues raised through the Neighbourhood Model process the Action Plans developed from the public meetings do provided an valuable focus for residents concerns and an effective method of monitoring progress. Given the limited public engagement it does question how representative the resident's priorities emerging from the public meetings are
- The lack of any dedicated budget for each of the Neighbourhood

Model areas is a limiting factor on the impact and effectiveness of the model.

3.7.4 Representatives from Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council and Northamptonshire Police attended the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

3.7.4.1 Key points of evidence:

- Meetings are scheduled too infrequently
- Meetings are not currently attended by all Partners which does not indicate total commitment to residents
- Often the ward Public Meetings are sparsely attended by residents, and those that do attend are regular attendees
- Dependent upon the issue often determines the number of attendees at each meeting
- The current Model works well in some areas, but not in others; with effectiveness being variable
- One Model does not fit all
- Beneficial for the Council to consider ways of strengthening some communities such as through Residents' Associations and Parish Councils, the palette of engagement is also through the communities themselves which includes Community Anchors, several of which already exist in form or another in the town. A Community Anchor definition, as drawn up by a consortium of national organisations is attached at Appendix G.
- Community Anchors are premises based and community run. There are various models in the town already. It was suggested that NBC's devolvement of its community centres could enhance the opportunities to develop this approach in areas where there is appropriate need and provide scope for pro-active interaction in these localities linked in with the existing community anchors.
- The Area Operational meetings are arranged by the Partnership Co-Ordinators, some have been hosted by the Police, others by NBC. It is felt that these work very well with the support of Agencies; but it has proven difficult to engage with education services

### 3.7.5 **Community Leaders and Community Groups**

3.7.5.1 Written evidence was received from a number of Community Leaders and Community Groups. Key points of evidence:

### 3.7.6 **Brookside Residents' Council**

- Neighbourhoods are too big, so meetings are only attended by those living close to the venue. This could be helped in Northampton East by having the public meeting at Emmanuel Church rooms, where residents can get a bus to easily. The frequency of the meetings is not often enough - people want a response before six months. Solution - meetings should be held minimum of three monthly and frequent updates given on the

progress of matters that were brought up. This could be circulated by email to all resident groups in the area & individuals attending. Publicity is not adequate. Posters need to be produced three to four weeks before the event, in a size and format that people can download & print off.

- A comprehensive list of sites should be made where they can be displayed, & individuals tasked to put them up (Residents' Associations would probably carry this out or Police Community Support Officers). Coverage should be given in the local media – press and radio.  
Most people prefer an evening meeting but it needs to be later to allow them to get home from work and have dinner first.
- Meetings should not clash with local Residents' Associations meetings or the Federation of Residents' Associations.

### **3.7.7 Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation**

- The Neighbourhood Model is working to *some extent*. Although the representative of the Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation has found it very difficult to attend meetings, but found it a great help and very useful to continue to receive the minutes and agendas of the meetings which kept her informed about all issues in the area.
- Such meetings could be advertised on Community Group websites to cover wider audiences. Some Groups also produce newsletters and again a notice could be given in newsletters.
- Meetings could be held at alternate times, day time and evenings, to see what will suit most people concerned. This will also offer the opportunity to some who are not able to make evening meetings and put their points across.

### **3.7.8 Colwyn Rd. Residents Association / Friends of Northampton Racecourse**

- It is difficult to assess whether neighbourhood working is effective as it is still early days. The Neighbourhood Coordinator is easy to contact and responsive to queries (as are the Police). Action Plans are well-focussed and regularly updated but could become more balanced if proactive suggestions to improve the area are included (for example: need for youth work in the area), rather than merely 'trouble-shooting' problems.
- Community events should be included, not just statutory initiatives.
- The designated Area feels very large and with only two meetings a year, quite impersonal. And the new Ward boundaries will also have an impact -many local people are still unaware about these forthcoming changes.
- Publicity is inadequate. The most effective means is word of mouth via networks with local groups based upon relationships that are built up over time between the Neighbourhood Coordinator and local residents -of course this is very time-consuming with such large areas and only 1 NC. Posters on community notice-boards, on faith-based venues, on school playground notice boards, in shop windows, etc. are needed. (don't expect that a poster emailed

- out is sufficient)
- The posters need to be much more attractive and project that it is an important meeting to attend. The most effective means to increase attendance and participation is if the meetings are seen to effect change and improve areas, i.e. are worth attending. Participatory Budgeting would aid this - where it could be decided about how resources are allocated in the area. Similarly, articles in the local press about what has been achieved.
- Evening meetings are more suitable so that family commitments such as meals and child bed-times can be sorted. It is impossible to find a time to suit everyone – therefore the representative suggested that at least four meetings are held a year at differing times of day
- Overall, the Residents' Association is able to continue to put its skills and energy into 'improving its patch' (for example: flower baskets on streets, new play areas, paths & lighting on the Racecourse, community worker from the Open Door Community Shop, luncheon clubs, housing projects, youth work, community parties on the Racecourse, etc.) despite Neighbourhood Working
- Forums such as Area Committees, Joint Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)/Northampton Borough Council (NBC) meetings, have come and go over the years, but until there is a cultural shift, real empowerment and the investment to enable local residents, NBC and NCC officers and Councillors, and the Voluntary, Community, Statutory and Business Sectors to be equal partners in making decisions that effect the area, then Neighbourhood Working will not get the buy-in. It needs to work towards 'Big Society.'

3.7.9 Community Leaders and representatives of Community Groups attended the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011. Key points of evidence:

- Meetings are not held often enough; Neighbourhood Models that are felt to be examples of best practice hold meetings at least six times a year per ward
- The area is too large for each meeting and appears too remote and unwieldy
- Public attendance at the meetings has been poor
- All meetings should be chaired by a Councillor and not a senior officer of the Council
- Publicity is inadequate; leaflet drops, enhanced poster distribution to locations such as supermarkets, pubs, schools, libraries, Children's' centres etc would be help to promote the meetings
- Council language and the use of acronyms should be avoided at the meetings; leaflets should be simplified
- The public often sees the meetings as a two way information exchange
- Meetings held during the evening would be suitable for those attending with daytime commitments but different times could be trialled to gauge attendance and ascertain what suited the majority
- It would be advantageous for business representatives to be invited to take part in the meetings

- The Operational meetings hosted by the Police are very good but not open to the public, outcomes are detailed within SMART action plans.
- Staffing levels for Northampton's model are low in comparison to other areas, such as Melton.
- The budget for Northampton's model is also low, again in comparison with Neighbourhood Models that are felt to be examples of best practice
- Meetings should be recorded and minutes provided
- Community Councils have a crucial role to play in promoting and upholding local democratic accountability in Northampton.

### **3.7.10 Portfolio Holder (Community Engagement)**

#### 3.7.10.1 Key points of evidence:-

- Public meetings have to compete with residents' domestic commitments and social events, therefore it can be a task to encourage attendance at such meetings
- Alternative methods of engagement should be and have been used, including meeting the public at shopping centres, cafes and other places where the opportunity is available
- Development of neighbourhood working could lead to the formation more urban parishes, ward Committees, estate Committees and see Street Champions established. Such an approach would require the 'buy in' and support of both the Council and the public
- It is important that whenever issues are raised at public meetings, Residents' Associations are kept informed on a regular basis of how these issues are being addressed, so they can report back to residents at their own meetings.

### **3.7.11 Partnership Co-Ordinator**

3.7.11.1 The Partnership Co-Ordinator attended the meeting and also provided a comprehensive response to the Panel's core question, details of which are contained within Appendix H.

### **3.7.12 Ward Councillor for Lumbertubs, and member of the Scrutiny Panel**

#### 3.7.12.1 key points:-

- The previous Area Partnership model also had problems, but the Northampton East Partnership worked very well. It had the full involvement of local health, Northamptonshire County Councillors and other key Agencies. The meetings discussed key issues such as the role of the Health Centre and proposed Shopping Centre development.
- Residents Associations are a crucial link to Neighbourhood Management
- Consultation events held in locations, such as shopping centres, provide an excellent opportunity to engage with the public.

- Adequate resources are required for Neighbourhood Management to be successful
- Communication about the public meetings should be fit for purpose and contain no jargon.

#### **4. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 4.1. In investigating the Neighbourhood Model; the Scrutiny Panel also produced an Equality Impact (Screening) for the Review.
- 4.1.2 The Scrutiny Panel realised that a possible change to the current Neighbourhood Model may have perceived adverse and beneficial effects for all diversity groups. Although changes may be beneficial to other groups due to limited resources, resources will be refocused at the detriment to a small minority.
- 4.1.3 Within its Equality Impact Assessment (Screening), the Scrutiny Panel documented examples of initiatives that Neighbourhood Management has introduced/taken part in to ensure that equality groups benefit from its activities.
- 4.1.4 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that the public's lack of understanding of either the Overview and Scrutiny function or the Neighbourhood Model could lead to poorly attended and little public participation in the process. The more public participation in both the Overview and Scrutiny function and Neighbourhood Management will increase further participation; for example, should individuals be aware that neighbours and colleagues are attending such meetings and notice the difference that they can make; they too could become involved.
- 4.1.5 The Scrutiny Panel highlighted that the level of human and financial resources available to support this work means that it will not always be possible to meet best practice in all equalities areas.

## **6 Conclusions and Key Findings**

- 6.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:
- 6.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel felt that Area Working is at its best when bringing people together to do holistic problem solving.
- 6.1.2 It was realised that it can be difficult to price up a budget for a Neighbourhood Model as it all depends on what is going to be done and what geographical scale is.
- 6.1.3 It was acknowledged that adequate resources are required for the Neighbourhood Model to work properly. The Scrutiny Panel noted the revenue budget for Neighbourhood Working at Northampton for 2011/2012 is:

- Northampton Borough Council's existing £65,000
  - An internal bid for £107,000
- 6.1.4 It was realised that the budgets for Neighbourhood working in the organisations noted as examples of best practice were considerably more than that allocated to Northampton's Model.
- 6.1.5 It was emphasised that public meetings have to compete with social events; therefore it can be a task to encourage attendance at such meetings.
- 6.1.6 It was recognised that public meetings have mixed participation dependent upon local issues and local engagement generally. Large consultation events in areas of high footfall (shopping centres, supermarkets etc) have been shown to lead to much greater involvement and insight from local residents than Public meetings.
- 6.1.7 The Scrutiny Panel felt that publicity for the meetings could be improved and there was also a need for the posters to be produced and sent out well in advance of the meeting. It was realised that for further publicity to take place there would be the need for budgetary provision to be made available.
- 6.1.8 It was acknowledged that Residents Associations are a crucial link to Neighbourhood Management and that they should be fully included within the process.
- 6.1.9 Consultation events held in locations, such as shopping centres, provide an excellent opportunity to engage with the public.
- 6.1.10 The Scrutiny Panel recognised the examples of current good practice that had been identified within the Council's Neighbourhood Working Model, such as its dedicated webpage. Neighbourhood Models, such as Melton's, have introduced similar website pages.
- 6.1.11 The opportunities for Neighbourhood Management to take on an active role, as identified in the Localism Bill 2010 were recognised by the Scrutiny Panel. For example, the focus on giving local people greater influence over local planning, local Action Plans should be produced based on local people's priorities and at the heart of Neighbourhood Management, possible opportunities for Neighbourhood Management to take on an active role promoting and facilitating transfer of particular buildings to address local need, local availability and control of Public Sector funding is a natural evolution for Neighbourhood Management.
- 6.1.12 It was felt that the framework in Northampton would provide the ideal means to disseminate information about the community budgets, to build local participation and provide the best possible local management information on which budgeting could be based.
- 6.1.13 The Scrutiny Panel expressed concerns that within the current Neighbourhood Model, public meetings are held just two times per year within each Ward area. Models that are felt to be examples of best practice,

such as Newcastle, hold a minimum of six Ward Committee meetings per year, with some wards holding nine and some twelve meetings per year.

- 6.1.14 From the evidence gathered, it was apparent that the majority of expert advisors acknowledged that meetings held during the evening were the most convenient, in particular to those with working commitments. It would however, be useful to trial holding the meetings at different times so that the preferred time could be gauged.
- 6.1.15 The Scrutiny Panel supported work that is being undertaken to closer align the Environmental Warden Service with Neighbourhood Management and the intention not only to provide a responsive service to residents concerns but also to become increasingly proactive. It was acknowledged that the Neighbourhood Management framework has helped to facilitate productive working relationships with colleagues and other Agencies. Communication from the Neighbourhood Coordinators is good and there is effective liaison with the Police and Environment Wardens.
- 6.1.16 The Scrutiny Panel noted the concerns of some of the expert witnesses of the need for other Agencies to be engaged in the Neighbourhood Model, in particular, engagement from Northamptonshire County Council which currently appears limited and can present a problem, for example, there are a significant number of issues raised that are highways related. Neighbourhood Models that are felt to be examples of best practice, such as Newcastle, have the full support of other Agencies such as Council Officers, representatives from the Police and other Agencies as required such as the Fire Service, CVS or the local Primary Care Trust. The Scrutiny Panel recognised the benefit of the suggestion that Community Safety Partnerships should be able to feed into Neighbourhood Model by way of informing the Action plan.
- 6.1.17 The Scrutiny Panel realised that Neighbourhood Management and the Community Safety Partnership should link as they are part of the same area of work. It noted the concern of a key witness that the separation of the two areas of work is causing duplication of effort and meetings within organisations.
- 6.1.18 The Action Plans are well focussed and regularly updated, noted their transparency and quality of content.
- 6.1.19 There is a real opportunity for Members to contribute on a programmed basis rather than through ad hoc engagement with Coordinators. Many Members (both NBC and NCC) have actively engaged and added real value to the Neighbourhood Model.
- 6.1.20 The Scrutiny Panel recognised that elected Members working with the Neighbourhood Model process will enable them to have a strong community leadership role
- 6.1.21 The Scrutiny Panel also acknowledged the importance and value of all Members being involved in programmes and engaged processes within their ward area.

- 6.1.22 The Scrutiny Panel also felt that communication about the public meetings should be fit for purpose and contain no jargon.
- 6.1.23 As part of the Review to implement alternative methods of engagement, it is recognised that consideration will be given to the fact that ward boundaries and numbers are changing.

## **7 Recommendations**

- 7.1 Scrutiny Panel R&P – Neighbourhood Model, therefore recommends to Cabinet that:
- 7.1.1 A Workshop for all ward Councillors be held, after the Local Elections 2011 but before 1st September 2011, with the purpose to discuss the best use of resources in respect of the public meetings or other methods (as below) to engage and consult the public within their wards and neighbouring areas.
- 7.1.2 Alternative methods of engaging the public within the Neighbourhood Model be introduced by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011, such as: -
- Consultation events held in public places such as shopping centres, schools, university campuses, colleges and other places open to the public
  - Links with existing Parish Council meetings
  - Links with existing or newly created Residents' Association Meetings
  - Liaison with groups or their representative/community leaders of minority groups including those that do not speak English as their first language
  - Street Briefings
  - Internet based approaches
  - 'Door knocking' exercises.
- 7.1.3 In each area a minimum level of least two public meetings per year or equivalent alternative methods as in 7.1.2 and agreed in the Councillor workshops as detailed in recommendation 7.1.1.
- 7.1.4 Officer boards be redesignated Area Boards and that ward Councillors and chairs or representatives of Parish Councils and Residents' Associations be invited to also attend. These are still to be chaired by the Police Sector Inspector for the Area and meet four times per year.
- 7.1.5 A budget of £4,000 pa for 2011/12/13 for the publicity of public engagement events and the production and distribution of information to promote Neighbourhood Management be granted.
- 7.1.6 Publication material regarding the public meetings, such as posters, is fit for purpose and written in clear, concise language. Posters are displayed approximately ten days prior to the meetings or events.

- 7.1.7 The Panel supports the provision of technology for large scale “block” text messages as an essential tool for the communication of information particularly concerning meetings and events.
- 7.1.8 It is ensured that that there are clear reporting back mechanisms from the meetings that the public can easily obtain and link into, such as the publication and circulation of the Area Action Plans.
- 7.1.9 Cabinet instructs the Chief Executive to write to his counterparts of the key Agencies, such as Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue, Northamptonshire Police, Northants Primary Care Trust and local business representatives encouraging their involvement in the public meetings.
- 7.1.10 The Head of Public Protection, in conjunction with the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), introduce mechanisms that enable Area Action Plans to complement and enhance identified Community Safety priorities for the area.
- 7.1.11 Cabinet be informed that the Scrutiny Panel supports the link between the work of the Environmental Wardens and the Partnership Co-ordinators and recommends that this close working relationship be further developed, in particular around community involvement and engagement.

## **Appendices**



## Appendix A

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

#### Scrutiny Panel R & P Neighbourhood Model

##### 1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

To investigate which groups will be engaging with and who the Council will be working with.

##### 2. Outcomes Required

To recommend a system of community participation and involvement with other Agencies and interested parties.

##### 3. Information Required

- Data from other (best practice) Local Authorities
- Budgetary and resources data
- Published Guidance
- Evidence from internal Officers
- Evidence from appropriate external witnesses
- Evidence from partners
- Evidence from Portfolio Holder
- Evidence from key Officers
- Site visits and desktop research

##### 4. Format of Information

- Baseline data - Itemised budgetary data
- Officer's Report detailing potential use of other resources, such as Environmental Wardens
- Best Practice external to Northampton
- Officer's Report – Internal good practice
- Witness Evidence – Verbal or Written
- Evidence from key Agencies – Police, Fire Service, Northamptonshire County Council
- Evidence from Community Leaders and Community Groups
- Evidence from Portfolio Holder (Environment)
- Evidence from Neighbourhood Co-Ordinators

## **5. Methods Used to Gather Information**

- Minutes of meetings
- Desktop research
- Site Visits
- Officer reports
- Examples of best practice external to Northampton
- Witness Evidence: -
  - Key Agencies
  - Key Officers
  - Community Leaders and Community Groups
  - Portfolio Holder (Environment)

## **6. Co-Options to the Review**

- Chair, Northampton Residents' Association, to be approached by the Chair to be co-opted to the Review.

## **7 Equality Impact Screening Assessment**

- Scrutiny Officer together with the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel to undertake an Equality Impact Screening Assessment shortly after the Scoping meeting

## **8 Evidence gathering Timetable**

### **December 2010 - March 2011**

6 December 2010	Informal Scoping meeting
13 January 2011	Evidence gathering
16 February	Evidence gathering
10 March	Finalise Chair's report

Various site visits will be programmed during this period if required.

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room, Guildhall

## **7. Responsible Officers**

- Lead Officer Julie Seddon, Director of Culture and Environment
- Co-ordinator Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

## **8. Resources and Budgets**

Julie Seddon, Director of Culture and Environment, to provide internal information

**10 Final report presented by:**

- Completed by March 2011. Presented by the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

**11 Monitoring procedure:**

- Review the impact of the report after six months (approximately October 2011)

### Internal Six Month Review of Area Working (Neighbourhood Model) – December 2010

- 20 questionnaires returned – some on behalf of work teams.
- Other input by e-mail
- A workshop attended by 32 individuals representing various Agencies, including Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Police

Summary of the main findings from the consultation exercise:-

- It is early days for this model and jumping to too many conclusions or making too many changes should be avoided at this stage
- Area Working is at its best when bringing people together to do holistic problem solving
- The development and implementation of Area Plans and Locally Identified Priorities, both features of the former way of working, has been a continuing success
- Engagement is weaker and there is a need to be realistic about the extent to which people wish to get engaged
- The review does not present a clear picture about whether public engagement or service improvement/project delivery is the yardstick by which we should be measured. There is a slight lean towards being judged by results rather than community involvement
- There is a noticeable improvement in openness and partnership working in the former Neighbourhood Partnership areas. The reaction has been far less positive in former Neighbourhood Management areas where much is considered to have been lost and many partners are feeling disengaged and critical
- Ward Public Meetings are not working. Lack of resources and support is blamed by some (such as the times of the meeting and publicity) and there is widespread criticism of the format, but past experience suggests that by dedicating vast resources at such meetings does not produce spectacular results and most areas (this is also national experience). The consensus was to abandon them as a central feature of the model and put the resource into other approaches to public engagement. One Workshop Group described attempts to improve them as *“flogging a dead horse”* and a Police Inspector commented that *“they are our comfort blankets and we need to let go of it as we know it doesn’t work!”*
- Engagement events such as Street Briefings and Shopping Centre events appear to be the most favoured alternate means of consulting/engaging. There were more mixed feelings about Internet based approaches and door knocking exercises.

- A number of respondents accurately drew attention to the fact that the task of targeted positive action to ensure that the Neighbourhood Model is reaching the widest possible cross-section of the public has barely started.
- Resources are highly stretched – the Model is weakened by distractions. The East Area is most noticeably where several major projects have been delivered (Change of Scene, Lings Playbuilder, CASPAR closedown) but this Area is behind others on other activities. Elsewhere the Model is more developed but Co-ordinators have shied away from fundraising and taking on projects. There are clear capacity issues and either/or choices to be made.
- The main tasks for Co-ordinators are seen as being bringing partners together, leading projects, organising Ward Public Meetings and external fundraising in that order. There is a low level of priority given to community development work.
- There is a need to manage expectations carefully in the context of resource cuts.
- A number of partners are considered to be conspicuous in their absence. The absence of Northamptonshire County Council means that Co Ordinators cannot adequately respond to issues that are in their control and that issues come to be seen as a Police/Northampton Borough Council (NBC) problem that are not.
- Many respondents have drawn attention to the fact that some partners have been lost though the re-organisation, especially in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). Both Public Sector respondents and those in the VCS have raised this issue widely.
- It is know from workshops with Councillors and a numerous informal interactions that many elected Members are feeling similarly disengaged. Only three Members have formally responded to the review itself. It was felt that there is considerable wariness of the process becoming politicised if Members are more closely involved, especially though not exclusively from Police colleagues. Workshop sessions suggested that the channel for members was through the Ward Public Meetings while simultaneously acknowledging that these are ineffective and not working well.
- A wide range of future issues were identified such as the suggestion of the need to get the mechanics of the process right so that there is the capacity to engage effectively. Other issues include monitoring outsourced service delivery, the impact of boundary changes, planning for regeneration and growth and the whole “Big Society “agenda.

The internal Review proposed a number of suggestions for future working:

- Ward Public meetings could be replaced by consultation days at locations such as shopping centres as the principal means of identifying community priorities in any Ward.

- Public meetings could be used to engage the public where there is a specific case for doing so, for example, local high profile issue.
- There could be further use of existing meetings such as Parish Council meetings, Resident Association meetings. This would reinforce the value of these self-organised bodies as a channel for Big Society activities.
- The Area Officer Boards and Area Operational Teams should be revised:
  - Area Partnership Board, meeting no more than every three months and attended by Members, partners including VCOs and any other residents who choose to attend, will agree the means of consulting the public in each Ward in the Area and will hold the Area Partnership Co-ordinator accountable for the development and delivery of the Area Action Plan.
  - Area Executive Group, meeting every six weeks and involving front line partners including VCOs, will consider consultation input and other data to agree the local priorities and develop and support practical actions to tackle these.
- Both Bodies should be informed by Ward information, consultation events and ICT based data.
- Financial resources are required to make any model work effectively, at a minimum to fund publicity and engagement and to allow some seed money for new initiatives.



**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

**SCRUTINY PANEL R&P – NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT**

**Core questions- Community Leaders and Community Groups**

Does the current Neighbourhood Model meet your needs? If not, please explain how you feel it could be improved.

Do you feel publicity for the public meetings is adequate? if not, please provide suggestions for improvement.

What time can you attend a public meeting - morning, afternoon or evening?

Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2011

TT/Core Questions 17/1/11



## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

#### **SCRUTINY PANEL R&P – NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT**

##### **Core questions- Key Agencies**

Does the current Neighbourhood Model meet your needs? If not, please explain how you feel it could be improved.

Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2011

TT/Core Questions 17/1/11



**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

**SCRUTINY PANEL R&P – NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT**

**Core questions- Partnership Co-Ordinators**

What do you feel has worked well with the current Neighbourhood Model, and what to you feel could be improved upon?

Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2011

TT/Core Questions 17/1/11



## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

#### **SCRUTINY PANEL R&P – NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT**

#### **Core questions- Portfolio Holder (Environment) Portfolio Holder (Community Engagement)**

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members discussed the Neighbourhood Model, in particular public participation at the public meetings, and the main comment made was that these meetings were not felt to be satisfactory. Due to this, the Scrutiny Panel was set up with the purpose "to investigate which groups will be engaging with and who the Council will be working with".

How do you feel public participation could be improved to satisfactory levels?

Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2011

## Appendix D

Table 1

**CORPORATE FINANCIAL REPORTS (REVENUE): (Cost Centre & Subjective Summary)**  
**EXTRACT OF FINANCIAL YEAR 2010/2011**  
**As at PERIOD 08 (November 2010)**

<b>Existing Cost Centre &amp; Subjective Descriptions for 10/11</b>	<b>YTD Actual Income &amp; Expenditure</b>	<b>Forecasted Year End Spend</b>
<b>00904 - Change of Scene</b>		
11 - Employees	10,482	
12 - Premises	180	0
13 - Transport	2,208	1,430
14 - Supplies & Services	22,059	43,801
19 - Income	-18,782	-95,881
<b>Total for Cost Centre 00904</b>	<b>16,147</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>00905 - Far Cotton Residents' Association</b>		
14 - Supplies & Services	44	0
19 - Income	-2,300	-2,300
<b>Total for Cost Centre 00905</b>	<b>-2,256</b>	<b>-2,300</b>
<b>00906 - Neighbourhood Management Areas</b>		
12 - Premises	660	660
14 - Supplies & Services	23,690	44,719
19 - Income	-48,617	-45,379
<b>Total for Cost Centre 00906</b>	<b>-24,267</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>00907 - Money 4 Youth</b>		
11 - Employees	260	0
12 - Premises	-10	0
13 - Transport	574	0
14 - Supplies & Services	36,803	133,663
19 - Income	-26,612	-133,663
<b>Total for Cost Centre 00907</b>	<b>11,014</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>00909 - Lings Playbuilder</b>		
14 - Supplies & Services	1,771	3,000
19 - Income	-3,000	-3,000
<b>Total for Cost Centre 00909</b>	<b>-1,230</b>	<b>0</b>

**00911 - Camphill Sustainability Grant**

14 - Supplies & Services	600	0
<b>Total for Cost Centre 00911</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>0</b>

Due to the current financial situation and the demands put on to the Coordinators at present external fundraising activity since April 2010 has almost ceased. Further work on this aspect will develop next year.

## **Localism Bill 2010 and Neighbourhood Management Best Practice**

### **Implications and Synergies**

#### **Lift the burden of bureaucracy-Replace regional strategies with focused Local Plans**

Local Action Plans are produced based on local people's priorities and are at the heart of Neighbourhood Management. While this action may focus on planning strategy it is essential that local planning accounts for what local people say – Neighbourhood Management therefore has a key role in informing this process.

#### **Empower communities to do things their way- Neighbourhood Plans**

The focus is on giving local people greater influence over local planning, though any sensible, locally focused planning regime will need to account for local priorities. These often relate to local infrastructure and highlight where development may exacerbate current problems and how innovative planning might alleviate them.

#### **Community right to buy**

There may be opportunities for Neighbourhood Management to take on an active role promoting and facilitating transfer of particular buildings to address local need

#### **Increase local control of public finance-Community infrastructure levy**

A proportion of infrastructure funding from new developments will have to be allocated back to neighbourhood hosting the development. In practise this generally occurs with S106 anyway, though clearly local priorities should guide how best to spend this funding in a locality. Neighbourhood Management should at a minimum be part of decision-making process. Where appropriate consultation on particular funding allocations can be carried out through the usual channels employed by Neighbourhood management.

#### **Community budgeting**

Local availability and control of Public Sector funding is a natural evolution for Neighbourhood Management. The framework in Northampton would provide the ideal means to disseminate information about the community budgets, to build local participation and provide the best possible local management information on which budgeting could be based.

There is a role for Neighbourhood Management in building up to it slowly through the gradual devolution of funding to Ward/estate level decision-

making. This could be through allocating local budgets to be spent through local decisions or it could be (and has been) through community participation in managing external funds

As with priority setting, it will be vitally important that the needs and wants of a vocal minority do not exert undue influence on the budgeting process. Budgets should be set in the context of local priorities and the best possible raw local data and reporting information, with exceptional spending to be justified on a basis that will stand up to general public scrutiny.

### **Diversify the supply of public services-Community right to challenge**

In the case of local people given right to bid to run local services, reality will make this a challenging prospect for all but the most established and focused local organisations. Neighbourhood Management can help identify which service areas might benefit based on available local community infrastructure, and better frame these challenges to make them most productive both for the public sector and for those making the challenge.

### **Open up Government to public scrutiny-better information on what public spending achieves**

Neighbourhood Management must pride itself on its transparency; activities taking place to deliver local change are displayed for the public to scrutinise on the web and via regular email updates. In line with this action there is a need to focus on the outcomes and not the processes needed to achieve them (these are also available for scrutiny and evaluation)

### **Strengthen accountability to local people-Direct participation**

Neighbourhood Management is inherently about facilitating and encouraging local involvement.

### Best Practice External to Northampton

#### Newcastle City Council

Newcastle City Council has Neighbourhood Response Teams (NRT). Each NRT is responsible for liveability issues in their ward and their main tasks include:

- Being locally responsive to residents' needs in the ward & respond to problems they see on the ground via contact with residents and local groups – predominantly litter picking, emptying litter bins, removing fly tipping, street sweeping, graffiti removal & minor shrub bed tidying and maintenance
- Responding to requests for services via Envirocall, its local customer helpline
- Abatement and deterrence of fly tipping and littering via reporting of hot spots and liaison with enforcement officers
- Working closely with the local police Neighbourhood Beat Manager and their teams.
- Dealing with local community safety issues and anti-social behaviour via removal and reporting
- Liaison with “Your Homes Newcastle” and private landlords on tenancy management issues causing flytipping, littering and other environmental crime.
- Complementing mainstream resources for example grounds maintenance activity.
- Supporting one-off projects to improve local environmental quality for example: local schools, community groups and local businesses.
- Street furniture repairs and painting, repairs to fencing and other local infrastructure

Newcastle is split into 26 Wards, each ward having approximately 5 – 7,000 households and 10 – 12,000 residents. Each ward has a Ward Committee governed by three democratically elected members and supported by a Ward Coordinator.

Newcastle, is at present, at the heart of a transformation in the way Ward Governance works - not structurally, but in terms of process. It will also be introducing a Neighbourhood Charter, one for each ward of the city. The Charter is owned by the locality and championed by the Ward Committee. It contains a number of agreed priorities, with the community, and actions from the Council on what can be done to achieve these priorities. The Ward Committee monitor progress against these 'in year' priorities and refresh these annually.

Newcastle has a Neighbourhood Quality Indicator Suite to measure impact on the locality as a result of this activity. This measurement framework is focused

on understanding peoples' wellbeing and how quality of place is changing. This is a proactive process responding to strategic local priorities as opposed to ad hoc service requests, and using this local information to inform corporate budget and planning cycles.

A minimum of six Ward Committee meetings are held per year, however, some wards hold nine and some twelve meetings. Agencies that support the meetings are Council Officers, representatives from the Police and other Agencies as required such as the Fire Service, CVS or the local Primary Care Trust.

The Ward Committees are open forums to residents and they aim to seek to secure support of the community in achieving their local priorities by involvement / empowerment. Residents are free to comment on / discuss Committee business and apply for funding. Residents also have the opportunity to meet locality based staff such as the Council's Neighbourhood Response Manager, Neighbourhood Beat Manager, Children's Services Integrated Services Manager (on request) face to face to discuss specific issues that require a more rapid response.

The public's views on this model is at present measured via the Council's Annual (soon to be bi-annual Residents' Survey), which asks a range of questions to understand residents' perceptions, more generally, about the Council. Examples are detailed below that have been extracted from the 2009/10 Survey:-

- Percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood - **56.6%**
- Percentage of respondents that said that they agreed that they could influence decisions in their locality - **41.9%**
- Percentage of residents that say they have been treated with respect and consideration by local public services - **73.8%**

The Neighbourhood Management Consultant provided details of the costs. Following the decision by the Council's Executive, to introduce Neighbourhood Charters in December 2008 the following costs have been accrued:

**December 2008 – March 2009**

Staff costs = £17,644.20

**April 2009 – March 2010**

Staff costs = £65,095.92

**April 2010 – Sept 2010**

Staff costs = £21,295.37

Copywriting costs =	£ 2,500
Printing costs =	£ 8,250
Distribution costs =	£ 7,800
Photography costs =	£ 1,000
Design costs =	£ 1,368

Total costs December 2008 – September 2010 are £124,953.49

Salary costs relate to the Neighbourhood Management Consultant and one part time member of staff.

## **Oldington and Foley Park**

The Wyre Forest Matters, the Local Strategic Partnership, were successful with a bid to the Governments Neighbourhood Renewal Unit for a Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder in the Oldington and Foley Park Ward. (Within the district of Wyre Forest.)

Oldington and Foley Park Ward ranks in the 10% most deprived wards in the country.

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder is to help residents and local service providers, work together at a neighbourhood level to tackle the issues that make the area one of the most deprived in the country.

The Pathfinder is a partnership of residents, voluntary groups, statutory agents and the private sector. The Accountable Body, Wyre Forest Community Housing, administers the Pathfinder. .

The Accountable Body employs the Pathfinder staff; support the provision of office facilities and initial funding for projects. The Accountable Body will recover the costs incurred by the Pathfinder in Quarterly Claims from Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM).

The partnership and its staff act in accordance with the following regulations and guidance:

- Government legislation and regulation
- NRU guidance
- GOWM guidance
- The Financial Procedures of the Accountable Body (Wyre Forest Community Housing)
- The Pathfinder Delivery Plans
- Pathfinder Standing Orders

The Board is responsible for the development of a Neighbourhood Management Strategy, approval of the Delivery Plan including a neighbourhood baseline and targets for improvement within the different themes and implementation of that strategy and action plans to achieve the targets. The Board has between 16 and 18 voting members, six observers and an independent chair, to build the partnership and implement actions of the Neighbourhood Pathfinder.

- Five Resident Forum members
- Five Community Organisation Members
- Five Partner Representatives
- One Business Representative
- Two Co-opted Representatives (no more than one from any group)

The Partnership has an independent Chair. The Chair does not have a vote and all votes must be a majority of those members present and voting.

The Pathfinder supports, through Service Level Agreements, five Forums covering the key themes of the Pathfinder; Youth, Education, Crime, Environment and Health. Each Forum is intended to bring together residents and service providers to develop the Pathfinders action plan around that theme. Each Forum is invited to nominate one resident representative to the Pathfinder Board.

Within the Pathfinder area, there are many local voluntary and statutory organisations providing key services to the community. The Board invites nominations to the Board.

Oldington and Foley Park reports that in order to deliver the Neighbourhood Management Strategy, the involvement and support of key Public Sector Agencies is critical. The Board also invites local businesses to nominate a representative to the Board.

In consultation with the Chair, the Neighbourhood Manager agrees the Agenda for each meeting of the Board. Any Member may request items for inclusion on the agenda by raising the request at a meeting of the Board or writing to the Chair or Neighbourhood Manager two weeks before the Board Meeting. Minutes are taken at each Board meeting.

Each year the partners, Community Groups and Forums are asked to confirm the Board representative.

The Pathfinder Board meets no less than six times a year. Meetings take place within the ward. Additional meetings can be called on by the Chair and Neighbourhood Manager if the need arises or at the Board request.

Any individual attending the meeting who wishes to contribute must ask the Chairs permission first. It will be at the discretion of the Board whether speaking rights are granted. There are other Groups such as Forums and Sub Groups in existence.

The Pathfinder facilitates a Neighbourhood Forum with two to four representatives from each of the Forums coming together to report on the work of the different Forums and to receive reports on the overall working of the Pathfinder. The reported aim of this Group is to share knowledge of the issues and actions of the different Forums, encourage joint approaches to tackling problems and delivering services and ensure joined up working of partners.

The Board agrees a procedure to approve a 'Quick Win' and delegate authority to approve projects up to agreed limits to a 'Quick Win Panel'.

The Quick Win Panel includes:

- Resident Board Members
- One Resident Forum Member from each Forum

A 'Customer Panel' is established with the aim to build the capacity of residents to participate in the Pathfinder and its Board. This includes resident members of the different Forums who will have an opportunity to hear and discuss non confidential reports that are being made to the Board. The meetings are of an open and informal nature to encourage those attending to build up an understanding of the issues and working of the Board. The Customer Panel has the option of sending an observer to the Board Meeting.

Two Assemblies have been set up. It is the intention of the Pathfinder to give all residents an opportunity to comment and contribute to the work of the pathfinder. As well as the Forums and Board the Pathfinder will organise two Assemblies each year when residents may have an opportunity to talk to Board Members, give their views on the work of the pathfinder and to have these recorded and considered by the board.

In 2003 the organisation was awarded a grant as a Pathfinder of £2.million over seven years so which equated to approximately £342,000 per year. This included a grant to pump prime activity, staff time and an element of the Manager's time which was to promote the work and share learning with others. The Manager also sat on a number of national Working Parties.

Currently, there is an annual budget of £350, 000 which is for support work

in three neighbourhoods, community safety activity and some training.

## **Manton Community Alliance**

Manton Community Alliance was set up in 2004.

Manton Community Alliance has taken a very different approach to neighbourhood working/localism, which is reported as being more about changing relationships rather than just delivering projects and it is intended to very much put local residents at the heart of a model of co-production with residents becoming equal partners in the process and seen as part of the solution rather than the problem. Manton Community Alliance set up a method whereby residents and the Police jointly set local policing priorities. This therefore has the aim that “local policing is better linked to local needs”.

One of Manton Community Alliance's driving principles is that “residents are part of the solution”, it is reported that the Alliance is changing the way residents relate to Agencies, bring people together to find joint solutions and to design services that are better matched to local needs and circumstances.

Some of the key elements that Manton Community Alliance reports to offer through its approach are:

- Effective Coordination (Of people and Services)
- Enhanced Local Intelligence (Current rather than just using historical statistics)
- People Taking Part (Participatory Democracy - currently over 60% of residents)
- Effectiveness and Efficiency

Manton Community Alliance has developed a range of tools to support this activity over the years, for example Participatory Budgeting, informing the development of a living Neighbourhood Agreement to reflect reality, in place of traditional 'delivery plans', which Manton Community Alliance reports tended to be aspirational rather than actual.

More recently Manton Community Alliance has been developing its Assets Approach' to identify the skills and abilities that exist within a neighbourhood to contribute to meeting the needs of the neighbourhood.

Its methods of participatory activity has been reported as also moving the Alliance away from a reliance on meetings and 'talking shops' to ways in which local people can exercise genuine influence and constructively take part to identify needs and shape services to meet those needs through collaboration with partner agencies.

Manton Community Alliance has moved away from a dependency on meetings to using broader more inclusive approaches. This means that in excess of 60% of the residents of the area are taking part at some level.

Traditionally people tend to measure success by attendance at meetings where as our experience has shown that this is neither accurate nor the most effective way of involving residents or agencies. Tends to result in activity but not necessarily productivity. Also tend to be high maintenance for little outcome.

Manton Community Alliance has a Partnership Board that comprises:

- Thirteen Resident Representatives (initially this included 1 representative from each Issue Group with the remaining nominees being other local residents)
- Two Bassetlaw District Council (1 Elected Member and 1 Officer - Currently Executive Director)
- Two Nottinghamshire County Council (1 Elected Member and 1 Officer - Currently Chief Officer)
- 1 Local Strategic Partnership
- Business Sector
- 1 Voluntary/Community Sector
- 1 Police (Currently Divisional, now County, Commander)
- 1 Primary Health Care Trust (Currently Executive level)
- 1 Housing (Currently Director level)
- 1 Job & Pensions (Executive level)
- 1 Education (local school) (Currently 2 head teachers, one primary one secondary)
  
- The Board seeks additional support from ad-hoc advisors where appropriate and meets at least once every three months

Some of the results of this approach include but are not limited to:-

- NI4 - In an neighbourhood that was previously an engagement wasteland now 41% of residents believe they can influence what happens where they live
- The neighbourhood traditionally with the highest crime figures now seeing crime falling faster than other parts of the division and at the same time fear of crime is also falling
- Local residents believe the neighbourhood is getting better
- Manton Community Alliance selected to be one of 10 'pioneer areas' to work with Big Society Network and National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA)

Manton Community Alliance's collaborative model is headed up by a Board comprising local residents, elected Members and Statutory Bodies (Councils, Police, NHS, Education, Housing, SureStart, JobCentre Plus and CVS) and is supported by the Manton Community Alliance Pathfinder team. Other local

Groups and Agencies take part in its more general activities. Manton Community Alliance has developed a comprehensive website.

Manton Community Alliance reports that it can be difficult to price up a budget for a Neighbourhood Model as it all depends on what is going to be done and what geographical scale is. For Manton Community Alliance, it has now been asked by its Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to lead on the co-ordination, development and delivery of localism for the Bassetlaw District. The population of Bassetlaw is around 108,000 and working from an annual budget, the next financial year of £285,000 equates to a cost of £2.64 per head.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) commissioned an independent report into different approaches to neighbourhood working and this showed that costs can range from as little as 60 pence through to £91 per head . This report identified that average costs for a single Neighbourhood approach (i.e. an approach that focuses on one neighbourhood and has a dedicated Neighbourhood Manager and Team) was £58 per head per year. This can be compared to the estimated costs for some Housing Associations of their community and resident involvement activities to be in the order of £92 per tenancy in 2003-2004 (Audit Commission).

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### **Leicestershire Together**

Leicestershire has 19 priority neighbourhood which were identified in consultation with the seven district Local Strategic Partnerships, data and information from the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Poverty and Social Exclusion Index and District Local Strategic Partnerships identified pockets of pronounced deprivation within the county, based around Output Areas.

The Review invested Melton (part of Leicestershire Together).

## Melton

Melton has a single defined priority neighbourhood which covers four separate communities. Neighbourhood management is run by the multi Agency Neighbourhood Management Group which meets quarterly. The key partners include the district Council departments, Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire Primary Care Trust, Connexions, Voluntary Action Melton and the local residents. It has been suggested that the Police contributions and commitments to date have been especially positive but it is reported that the PCT and Connexions, along with Environmental Services, have encountered the most problems in fully engaging with the process.

Melton has a dedicated Neighbourhood Manager with fourteen members of staff who cover a variety of functions, including housing repairs and maintenance, community safety, anti social behaviour and resident involvement. Although staff work across the board they tend to focus on the priority neighbourhoods.

Melton has recently set up Community Forum meetings which have the aim of ensuring that the community's needs are met. Community Forum meetings are held two times per year with the aim to provide citizens of Melton with an opportunity to discuss local services with their local District and County Councillors and representatives from other Agencies such as the Health Service and the Police. The public can raise questions and comment about the services that they receive and any changes coming up that will affect the local area.

There is a specific Community Forum website that the public can access which provides them with further details about Melton. It is entitled *Melton On-Line* and reports to contain a lot of powerful features, and aims to provide site visitors with a rich, rewarding experience. Leicestershire Villages is home to online communities across the county and it is reported to provide:

- easy access to a wide range of services
- a powerful database to find groups and organisations
- a simple way to add news, events and notice board items
- Freeuse Items - to recycle things you no longer need

The site contains an interactive map which enables the users to select a village to visit. It is reported that all the communities are 'self-managed' and volunteers in each community are called for help develop the site.

Under LAA2, Leicestershire Together made available £20,000 per year to Melton Borough Council (up to March 2011) to support neighbourhood management in the district.

The main team which supports Neighbourhood Management is mainstreamed and paid for through Council Tax and Government subsidy. The team does not just focus on Neighbourhood Management but also vulnerable people, housing repairs etc. The total costs invested in this area are £1.5million per annum.

In relation to the £20,000 from Leicestershire Together, this is devolved to the Community Associations which represent each of Melton's four priority neighbourhoods in Melton Mowbray. This year the groups decided to jointly fund:

1. Play Area replacement in South Melton (£10,000)
2. Summer activities for young people (£3000)
3. Older People's Activities (£2000)
4. Youth Clubs in 3 areas (£5000)

The groups have also been successful in gaining external monies from grants and so has Melton Borough Council to make improvements in each area such as a £200,000 Big Lottery Grant to build three Multi Use Games areas and a BMX track.

## Appendix G

A community anchor definition, as drawn up by a consortium of national organisations is ;

*The term 'community anchor' refers to a certain kind of independent community-run and led organisation, rooted in a sense of place (whether an inner city neighbourhood or a rural district), and with a mission to improve things for the whole community, not simply a part of it.*

- *A building: physical space which is community led, owned or controlled.*
- *A focus for services and activities meeting local need*
- *A vehicle for local voices to be heard, needs to be identified and for local leaders and community groups to be supported*
- *A platform for community development, promoting cohesion while respecting diversity*
- *A home for the community sector which is supportive of the growth and development of community groups*
- *A means of promoting community led enterprise, generating independent income while having a social, economic and environmental impact*
- *A forum for dialogue within communities, creating community led solutions*
- *A bridge between communities and the state which promotes and brings about social change.*

### Partnership Co-Ordinator, Northampton Borough Council

#### Witness Evidence

##### Worked well

- The quality of partnership working at officer level, and project outcomes achieved as a result
- Many Members (NBC and NCC) have actively engaged and added real value to the Neighbourhood Model
- Development of local action plans, their focus, transparency and quality of content
- Early stages of development of online presence for Neighbourhood Management - ability for local people to contribute and find out activity taking place at their convenience
- Area Operational Team meetings - opportunity to identify issues that staff have been contacted with directly by the public, develop solutions together, share information and escalate intractable problems as appropriate
- Development of new partnership arrangements with external locally-based organisations including Parish Councils and residents groups in areas which were not covered by Neighbourhood management arrangements before – e.g. particular Hardingstone Parish Council, Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council, Upton Parish Council, Friars and Delapre Residents' Associations, Open Door Centre in St Crispin

##### Could be improved

- Ward Public Meetings have suffered from very low turn-out, especially in more deprived areas. Most of those attending are already active in their Resident Associations anyway and are mainly drawn from a narrow demographic spectrum. This aspect of model is seen as ineffective and positively exclusive of some. Large consultation events in areas of high footfall (shopping centres, supermarkets etc) have been shown to lead to much greater involvement and insight from local residents than Public meetings.
- Some lack of buy-in to the model from certain departments within Northampton Borough Council, for example, lack of attendance at key Officer Board meetings where strategic problems raised at local level need resources allocating if they are to be resolved.
- Structure is extremely demanding of staff resources which has contributed to incomplete attendance at Public Meetings /AOT by NBC staff and others
- Poor buy-in from NCC, often due to the fact that one person covers whole town
- Some elected Members and community partners in the former Managed Areas have felt excluded since the demise of the Neighbourhood Management Boards

- Opportunity for Members to contribute on a programmed basis rather than through *ad hoc* engagement with Coordinators
- Neighbourhood working is, at best, peripheral to the planning process. Without the insight of residents and officers dealing day to day with the outcome of estate and town design, future developments will miss important opportunities to design out problems associated with waste, crime, parking and anti-social behaviour.
- Resources - just a small amount of funding needed to better publicise the model to residents and to provide more ways for people to engage through multiple channels in locations convenient to them.
- The demonstrated ability of Neighbourhood Management to draw in external resources/funds and deliver project outcomes has suffered – Coordinators no longer have time to undertake this very demanding work and those with projects carried forward from previous arrangements have struggled to implement new arrangements in full
- Until Neighbourhood priorities are written into the action plans of all NBC departments, they will often be seen as secondary to core business. The argument from Neighbourhood Management has and will continue to be that local priorities, robust and with a sound basis, should be core business and have resources allocated as such as part of service planning. (and partners)