
Meeting of Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel

7th December 2006

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

New Neighbourhood Action Plans

Summary

1. This report outlines the proposed approach to the development of Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAP's) across the city, taking into account the details and ethos contained within the Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities. The content of this report supersedes the report entitled “Neighbourhood Action Plans” approved by the Executive Leader and Advisory Panel on the 20th February 2006.
2. Members are asked to approve the proposed framework for NAP's, the detailed delivery timeframe and to request officers to report back on options for the further development of NAP's at an appropriate time, in light of the requirements of the White Paper.

Background

3. On the 20th February 2006 members of the Executive Leader and Advisory Panel meeting were presented with a paper which detailed the Neighbourhood Pride Unit's (NPU) proposed approach to the development of NAP's across the city. At the meeting members raised concerns relating to the proposals for consultation and prioritisation of ward committee budgets. As a result of these concerns and to develop a proposal that would gain multi-party support, officers have revised the approach, to the development of NAP's, such that it encompasses the latest government thinking.
4. The Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities¹ sets out an aim to give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives, creating strong and prosperous communities and delivering better public services. The White Paper clearly sets out new responsibilities to give local citizens and communities a greater say over their lives.
5. As part of this responsibility there is encouragement of the development of local charters, setting out the agreement of standards in a local area. These are to take the form of voluntary agreements between a local authority and a

¹ Referred to subsequently as the White Paper

local community and are proposed to be developed through either a parish council, resident's association or other neighbourhood body. The White Paper recognises that local charters have been used to set out the service standards and priorities for action that local communities expect from either the local authority or in some cases partner organisations. It is proposed that they will contain:

1. Information communities can expect about decisions, policies and services that affect them.
 2. Details of standards and targets which apply to the neighbourhood, allowing for variation from normal or standard practice of the rest of the local authority area.
 3. Priority actions for service providers and commitment from the local community to assist by taking action itself.
 4. Options for communities to take responsibility for functions or facilities which serve them or are of interest to them.
6. Central government also want to see councillors having small budgets whereby they can tackle local problems and issues. (This is already provided for in York through the Local Improvement Schemes revenue and capital budget, which is allocated on a per capita basis to all ward committees).
 7. Local authorities will have a duty to inform citizens about services; consult them and communities on service provision; involve them in designing, delivering and assessing services and to devolve them direct responsibility for delivery, as is the case with York's Community Centre Management Committees who directly manage Community Centres at a number of locations. Central Government believe that local charters may be a way of helping to meet the new duty to secure participation of the public in local service provision.
 8. In addition ward committees are required to develop and approve NAP's by Part 3 Schedule 2 pages 110 – 110 of the Council Constitution, as shown in Annex 1.
 9. The content of this report therefore takes into account central government's desire for local charters, members comments on NAP's and the requirements of the Council Constitution.

Proposal

10. It is proposed that a phased approach is taken to the development of NAP's. Firstly to develop NAP's across all ward committee areas, and then at a later stage to incorporate the content of the White Paper and any relevant outcomes of the Lyons Inquiry. During Phase One, all ward committee areas, (of which there are 18), will each develop a NAP which is populated utilising the framework contained in Annex 2. Each NAP will have 5 common parts:

- Part One A position statement containing statistical information.
- Part Two A series of statements detailing the ambition or vision and detailing goals and objectives for the ward committee area.
- Part Three An action plan to achieve the vision over a timeframe.
- Part Four A delivery plan identifying resources.
- Part Five Monitoring and review details.

11. The NAP's will be developed within the timeframe shown in Annex 3, utilising the current cycle of ward committee meetings and Local Improvement Scheme process timescales. This will ensure that all ward committee areas will have a position statement published and distributed in January 2007 and the generation and of an Ambition / Vision statement produced following consultation in June 2007.
12. As a second phase, and to meet the requirements of the White Paper, NAP's will then need to be developed in 2008 to incorporate information such as standards and targets which are to be met within the ward(s). It will be key to their success that other service providers and partners contribute to their content, ensuring that NAP's provide a greater breadth of information about the neighbourhood. NAP's will therefore be dynamic documents which may need to change dependent on local and individual ward committee needs. This second phase of NAP development will also assist with the delivery of the Local Area Agreement at a neighbourhood level through prioritisation of services.

Consultation

13. Consultation on the Position Statement and Ambition / Vision Statement will take place as detailed within the delivery timeframe shown in Annex 3. Consultation will take place on a number of levels from individuals' comments to those from groups or organisations.

Options

14. The options for Members are to:
 - a) Approve the proposed framework for NAP's contained within Annex 2. Approve the proposed delivery timeframe for NAP's contained within Annex 3 and to request officers to further develop NAP's in light of the content of the White Paper and Lyons Inquiry and to report back at an appropriate date.
 - b) Not to the proposed framework and delivery timeline detailed in Annexes 2 and 3 for the delivery of NAP's.

Analysis

15. The advantage of the proposed framework is that it gives the wards the opportunity to utilise existing resources in a planned and targeted way. All ward committees will have a position statement early in the New Year to enable an ambition statement/ vision for the ward to be produced. This will occur within a delivery timeframe that will ensure all ward committees rapidly progress, not only fulfilling the requirements of the council's Constitution, but also taking into account some of the government's latest thinking in this area. These first phase NAP's can then be built on to incorporate other areas of local authority delivery which impact at a neighbourhood level and those of partner organisations.
16. If the NAP's are not delivered in line with the tabled framework and timeline then ward committees will not comply with the council's Constitution, as there is a requirement under their function to develop and deliver these in all ward committee areas. In not approving this key issue the authority will also not be addressing the priorities highlighted for delivery contained within the White Paper.

Corporate Priorities

17. The development of NAP's support the council's Corporate Aims of building strong and proud local communities. The subsequent delivery of Local Improvement Schemes in every ward committee also assist within the delivery of York Pride and Safe City Objectives through the creation of a clean and safe local environment.

Implications

18.
 - **Financial** – To be met from existing ward committee budgets. Should individual ward committees wish to consult more widely or use methods outside those described within the delivery timeframe shown in Annex 3 these will need to be funded via the ward committees allocation of revenue Local Improvement Schemes budget.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – The development and implementation of this phase of NAP's will be met by existing resources. However, the White Paper and Lyons Inquiry content may lead to more extensive content and role out of NAP's or local charters. This may require an evaluation of existing resources within the NPU.
 - **Equalities** – There are no equalities implications. The views of the ward committee and other groups, organisations and individuals will be taken into account when developing the NAP's.

- **Legal** – The development of NAP’s for all ward committee areas is a requirement of the Council Constitution Part 3 Schedule 2.
- **Crime and Disorder** – No implications. Crime and Disorder issues may be identified as part of the vision and ambition statement for the ward committee. Crime and Disorder statistics will be provided, where available, for inclusion within the Position Statement.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – None.
- **Property** – None.
- **Other** – None.

Risk Management

19. There are no known risks.

Recommendations

20. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to approve the proposed framework for Neighbourhood Action Plans contained within Annex 2 and outlined in paragraph 10 above.

Reason: This will comply with the Council’s obligations contained within the Council Constitution Part 3 Schedule 2 concerning the functions of ward committees. It will deliver the ‘bottom up’ elements of the Local Area Agreement and will also assist with the development of neighbourhood management at a ward level consistent with requirements of the White Paper.

21. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to approve the delivery timeframe contained within Annex 3 and outlined in paragraph 11 above for the delivery of Neighbourhood Action Plans.

Reason: To facilitate effective delivery of Neighbourhood Action Plans utilising the current cycle of ward committee meetings and Local Improvement Scheme delivery timeframes.

23. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to request officers to further develop Neighbourhood Action Plans in light of the content of the White Paper and Lyons Inquiry and to report back at an appropriate date.

Reason: To ensure that the documents comply with the requirements of central government, contain best practice and innovation and comply with the requirement of the new inspection regime.

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Specialist Implications Officer(s) *List information for all*
Implication ie Financial *Implication ie Legal*
Name Name
Title Title
Tel No. Tel No.

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

All relevant background papers must be listed here.

- Meeting of Executive Leader and Advisory Panel 20th February 2006 – Neighbourhood Action Plans
- Department for Communities and Local Government, Strong and prosperous communities, The Local Government White Paper October 2006.

Annexes

- Annex 1 Extract from the council Constitution Part 3 Schedule 2 concerning the function of ward committees
- Annex 2 Proposed framework for Neighbourhood Action Plans
- Annex 3 Timeframe for the delivery of Neighbourhood Action Plans