

Issue C - The future Corporate role of Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAP's)

1. The Local Government White paper introduced a concept of Neighbourhood Charters for local neighbourhoods. DCLG in the Action Plan for Community Empowerment propose to publish guidance and a toolkit for the development of local charters, which they see as voluntary agreements between local authorities and communities and to introduce a final programme to run to March 2008. It is envisaged that Neighbourhood Charters will not be required by statute but will become good practice in the neighbourhood and public engagement fields; however, this will be dependant on the nature of the guidance from DCLG.
2. The NMU have already responded to this element of the White Paper through the development of NAP's. These have been developed in a phased and incremental approach over the last 12 months, covering the whole of the city via ward committee geographical areas. Key to their success has been the continued level of public involvement in shaping the documents over time.
3. The first phase consisted of the collation of baseline information which was provided to the public about the nature of their ward. This included statistical information about health, schools, and crime etc, taken from a variety of sources such as the census. Having provided this information a consultation exercise took place in which the public were asked what they would like to see improved in their local neighbourhood. In May and June 2007 all ward committees utilised this information and the knowledge of elected members, officers and partners, to produce an ambition/ vision statement for the ward. These detail the key issues that the community or neighbourhood at large would like to see addressed. These were sent to every household as part of July's edition of Your Ward. At this time the public were also asked to suggest schemes utilising the ward committee funding, bearing in mind the ambitions and visions for the ward committee area. Through the next phase of the NAP's the public have been informed of achievements in delivery to date against these ambitions and visions. In the latest phase of the NAP's the public are voting for and against the ward committee scheme suggestions.
4. In 2006/07 the NMU received 797 suggestions for schemes to be funded via the ward committee revenue and capital budget, for delivery in financial year 2007/08. With the introduction of the NAP's and ambition and vision statements this figure has risen to 989 suggestions for funding in financial year 2008/09. This is an increase of 24% on the previous years figure. It is believed that this may be due to the targeted nature and approach of the NAP's. These documents have demonstrated that the public can influence improvements against issues to which they can relate at a local level.

5. The potential and opportunity provided by NAP's has been recognised by other service providers and partners of the council in terms of linking their own strategic and service delivery requirements to local issues (i.e. the ambitions and visions). For example, 17 out of the 18 NAP's have an ambition around crime and disorder / community safety. North Yorkshire Police (NYP) are utilising this clear direction statement and the platform of the NAP's to enable them to consult with the public at ward committees over the local police priorities. In this NYP are not only satisfying their need to consult with the public over local police priorities but are also embracing the need to assist the authority to deliver against this key ambition and vision. Elected ward members are at the forefront of making sure that this delivery happens. This process has continued to strengthen partnership service delivery at a local level around crime and disorder issues.
6. All 18 ward committees also have an ambition and vision statement referring to the local environment and / or environmental crime issues. Neighbourhood Pride Services, Street Environment Service and Enforcement team are addressing these.
7. Other areas of the council and partners have also realised the potential that NAP's offer. Recent work with the LAA and Local Development Framework teams have identified areas where the local vision of wards could help shape the strategic and spatial vision of the city. For example some ward committees have highlighted issues around the need for community facilities. The PCT and corporate Health Champion are also looking at engaging with the NAP's process to provide health information at a ward level around the 11 'Determinants of Health'. It is hoped that this will be fed into the April edition of the NAP.
8. NAP's have obviously provided a good platform on which to build. It is proposed that the first generation NAP's are developed to enable the chosen model of neighbourhood management (discussed in Annex 4) and associated model of devolution (discussed in Annex 5), to be effectively delivered.
9. It is essential that the NAP's are also developed to enable them to play a more central role in providing a direct link (golden thread) between the Local Strategic Partnership 'Without Walls' and its vision for the city the Sustainable Community Strategy, the 3 year delivery plan of the Local Area Agreement, the Local Development Framework and local neighbourhood issues, in a more comprehensive manner. Furthermore, NAP's will also be critical in demonstrating delivery against the new statutory requirement, (which will be placed on local authorities from April 2009), to consult, engage and involve the public in local decisions, services and policies. NAP's can achieve this as all residents of York have the opportunity to help shape their local neighbourhood on a regular basis (4 times a year). The NAP's themselves probably provide the only sustained citywide consultation

undertaken by the council which involves every household, which enable the public to shape the local vision.

10. To facilitate a strengthening of the corporate role of the documents discussions have been held with key officers, in particular those in Planning and Partnerships and Performance and Improvement (PIT). Officers from the PIT team, supported by Neighbourhood Services, will collate information from service plans, currently being produced by all services, against the ambitions and visions of all of the ward committees. Discussions will then be held with key service plan holders to ascertain what local actions are taking place to assist with the delivery and to respond to the content of the ambitions and visions.
11. It is recognised that the development of NAP's will be incremental and this is difficult to achieve at this point in their development cycle. Therefore, the January/ February 2008 edition of Your Ward and NAP will contain the priority lists of schemes approved by members for funding in 2008/09, (obviously subject to budget availability). In addition to this, further achievements against the ambitions and visions will be listed. In April 2008 the NAP's will contain 'added value' information, providing information from services and partners where they are delivering at a local level in areas that support and improve the ambitions and vision for the ward committee. Along with this partners, who have not been involved in NAP development to date are also wanting to get involved, for example the PCT. In July 2008 the NAP will contain in an Action Plan which will detail delivery against each of the ambitions / visions.
12. It is at this point that the documents can be developed to further strengthen their corporate role. The public will be asked to refresh the ambitions and vision, should they feel that this is necessary, via a consultation exercise. This information will be collated and fed into the service planning process for 2009/10, to ensure that services are responding to local needs and taking this information into account when shaping their service delivery. In July the public will also be asked to identify local improvement schemes for ward committee funding. At the same time the LAA indicators; of which there will be up to 35 selected from the new set of national indicators could also be included within the NAP's. This would need to be done with a local emphasis.
13. The development of NAP's will clearly be incremental. These documents are currently being funded within the NMU from the Your Ward budget. This can continue on an interim basis. However, should the documents grow in nature, status and size as indicated above, further budget may be required to support this. Funding resource implications may need to be reported to Executive at a later date.

14. In summary Members are requested to note the content of this section of the report and are recommended to support the development of NAP's as a central vehicle for delivering the adopted neighbourhood model and in making the necessary links between the corporate strategic direction of the authority and the local vision for the city.

Indicative Financial Impacts

The NAP's are currently funded via the NMU Your Ward budget. This budget is predicted to have a spending pressure in the region of £20k recurring. With any expansion of the NAP documents in size, frequency or format an additional revenue resource may be required covering as a minimum the spending pressure within this budget.