
Meeting of Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel

21st January 2008

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

Update on Neighbourhood Action Planning

Summary

1. This report outlines the approach and development of Neighbourhood Action Plan's (NAP's) across the city, taking into account the details and ethos contained within the *Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities*¹. The report updates members and summarises the progress of the first year of their delivery within the city along with their future development over the coming months.
2. The Executive Member is asked to note the development of the documents to date and to approve the new delivery framework contained within Option One paragraphs 15 to 18 below.

Background

3. On the 7th December 2006 members of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel were presented with a paper which detailed the Neighbourhood Management Unit's (NMU) proposed approach to the development of NAP's across the city². The report contained a framework for the content of NAP's and a delivery timetable over which this would be implemented. These are reproduced in **Annex 1** and **Annex 2**.
4. At the meeting members approved the recommendations of the report, including a requirement that officers should further develop the NAP's in light of the content of the White Paper and report back at a later date. This recognised the need to incorporate information such as standards and targets which are to be met within the ward(s) and to ensure that other service providers and partners contribute to their content, thus providing a greater breadth of information about the neighbourhood.

Government policy context

¹ Referred to subsequently as the White Paper

² Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel, 7th December 2006 , report entitled 'New Neighbourhood Action Plans'.

5. The White Paper 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. It sets out new responsibilities concerning empowering citizens and communities and devolving more power locally, to give local citizens and communities a greater say over their lives.
6. As part of this responsibility the White Paper introduced the concept of Neighbourhood Charters for local neighbourhoods. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), in the Action Plan for Community Empowerment³, propose to publish guidance on the development of Neighbourhood Charters along with a toolkit. These documents are seen as voluntary agreements between local authorities and communities. It is understood that the requirement for Neighbourhood Charters will not be statutory, rather good practice in engagement and involvement of the public in decision making processes.
7. The *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007* (LGHIP Act 2007), has legislated some of the proposals contained within the White Paper. From April 2009 the Act, (under Part 7 – Best Value), will place a new duty on authorities to inform, consult and involve local people in local decisions, services and policies. HM Government have published Statutory Guidance⁴ for consultation which includes information on the ‘duty to involve’. The aspiration of this are to embed a culture of empowerment and engagement, allowing people to have greater say. Should the guidance remain in it’s current form the authority will be required to demonstrate that:
 - We understand the interests and requirements of the local community
 - We use our understanding of the local community to ensure involvement is provided on the right issues, targeted at the right people and accessible.
 - We have a corporate approach to providing information, consulting and involving that flows through the organisation from strategic policies into individual service delivery and that they work with partners where appropriate.
 - Local people feel that the authority provides relevant and accessible engagement opportunities and will know how to get involved, either directly or through their elected representatives. Local people will recognise that the authorities polices reflect this involvement and services are tailored to local needs.
8. With the delivery of NAP’s since December 2006, the authority has not only responded to the content of the White Paper and the ethos of government policy, but is also starting to address some of the issues contained with the new ‘duty to involve’ requirements. The NAP’s however, will need to continue

³ Local Government Association and Department for Communities and Local Government ‘Action Plan for Community Empowerment. Building on Success’ October 2007.

⁴ HM Government, November 2007 ‘Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities Statutory Guidance: Draft for Consultation.

to develop and evolve taking into account these new requirements to ensure that not only do the documents provide a local voice for influencing decision making, but that the links between this and the strategic vision of the council and it's partners are strengthened to ensure that this is taken into account.

Development of NAP's to date

9. It was proposed in December 2006 that each NAP would be populated utilising the framework contained in **Annex 1**. Each NAP having 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.

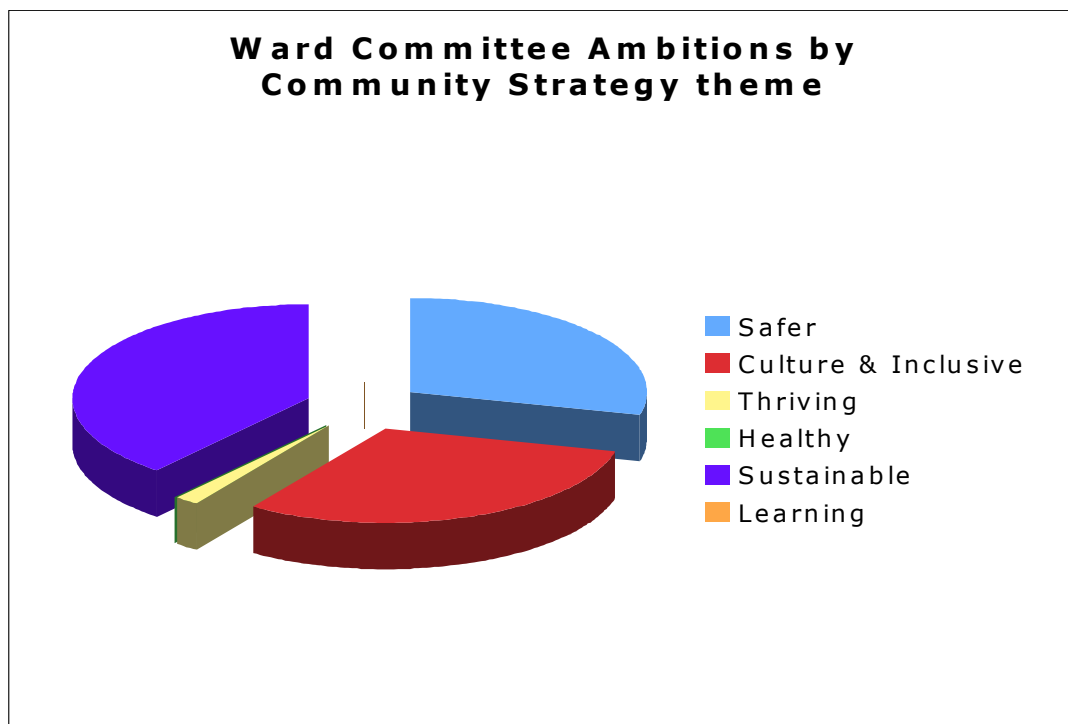
Part Five Monitoring and review details.

10. Their development has been incremental in line with this approved framework. Part One was issued to every household as part the January 2007 Your Ward. This consisted of the collation of baseline information which was provided to the public about the nature of their ward. It 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. In line with Part Two, once developed 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 local improvement scheme funding, bearing in mind the ambitions and visions for the ward committee area. The public have been informed of achievements in delivery to date against these ambitions and visions. In October and November 2007 the public have voted for and against the ward committee scheme suggestions, so that members priority lists can be drawn up and included within the January 2008 edition of Your Ward and the NAP.
11. 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 for 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.

Analysis of the content of NAP's citywide

12. **Annex 3** contains a table detailing the NAP ambitions by Ward committee. There are a total of 59 ambitions contained within the NAP's across the 18 ward committee areas of the city. Each ward committee area has between 3 and 4 ambitions within their NAP. A total of 17 out of the 18 NAP's contain ambitions around the theme of community safety. A total of 7 out of the 18 contain a specific reference to road and pedestrian safety, with 2 of these also indicating a desire to increase sustainable and public transport in the wards. All the 18 include an environmental theme in their ambitions, with 3 ward committee areas indicating that they would like to make improvements to local recycling. A total of 17 out of 18 NAP's contain an ambition to increase community facilities or the opportunities for ward residents. Of these 8 specifically mention young people opportunities and 5 inclusivity and neighbourliness. Two NAP's contain an ambition or vision around economic development and wellbeing.
13. Key areas contained within the Community Strategy feature strongly in the NAP's, such as Safer, Culture and Inclusive and Sustainable, whereas there are no ambitions specifically dealing with the themes of Health and Learning. (This is demonstrated by the chart below).



14. 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 with 17 out of the 18 NAP's contain an

ambition around 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.

Future development of NAP's

15. NAP's have obviously provided a good platform on which to build. It is essential that the NAP's are also enhanced to enable them to play a more central role in providing a direct link (golden thread) between the LAA and Sustainable Community Strategy. Furthermore, through this phase NAP's need to be developed and delivered in conjunction with the public and our partners. This will not only increase participation and engagement within the community but 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. The NAP's themselves provide the only sustained citywide consultation undertaken by the council which involves every household, which enable the public to shape the local vision.
16. 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) Teams. 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.
17. 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. 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 Primary Care Trust (PCT). This will assist with the lack of information and ambitions contained within the NAP's which tackle the Healthy Theme of the Community Strategy, In July 2008 the NAP will contain in an Action Plan which will detail delivery against each of the ambitions / visions.

18. It is at this stage that the documents will 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 2008 the public will also be asked to suggest local improvement schemes for ward committee funding.

Consultation

19. Consultation with the public at each stage of the NAP development has been key to the process, and will continue to be so. It is fundamentally important that the documents are utilised to provide the public with the opportunity to help shape their local priorities and thereby the local vision for each ward committee. In this way public involvement will be seen as further embedded in the work of the ward committees and in successful local delivery by the council.

Options

20. The options for Members are to:
 - a) Option One – To implement the continued development of the NAP's as detailed in paragraphs 15 to 18 above.
 - b) Option Two – To request that officers develop further models for their delivery and report back to Neighbourhood Services EMAP at a later date.

Analysis

21. The advantage of the proposed development contained within Option One, at paragraphs 15 to 18 is that it continues to provide wards, and therefore elected ward members with the opportunity to utilise existing resources in a planned and targeted way, with the corporate support of the council and its partners. This will enable the public influence over local decision making to continue and be strengthened and thereby potentially increase engagement at a ward committee level across the city.
22. This delivery will also place the authority in a strong position in terms of implementation of the governments latest thinking on the neighbourhood agenda and with the new legal duty to inform, consult and involve the public in local decisions by April 2009.
23. By not implementing the NAP's development in this way progress will be delayed and momentum gained in particular with partners may be lost. In turn engagement with the public may reduce. 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

24. Even at their current development stage it can be demonstrated how NAP's support the councils Corporate Strategy in a number of ways whether through their content, framework or level of consultation, involvement and engagement with the public. They support the Corporate Values of:

- Delivering what our customers want .
- And encouraging improvement in everything we do.

They support a number of the 10 year Direction Statements in particular:

- Listening to the community and ensuring that people have a greater say in deciding local priorities.

But also in terms of:

- Providing strong leadership for the city using partnerships to shape and deliver the Community Strategy for the city.
- Promoting a cohesive and inclusive community.
- And placing environmental sustainability at the heart of everything we do.

Their content also supports the majority of the Corporate Priorities.

- Reduce the environmental impact of council activities and encourage, empower and promote others to do the same.
- Decrease the tonnage of biodegradable waste and recyclable products going to landfill.
- Increase use of public transport and other environmentally friendly modes of transport.
- Reduce the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible space.
- Reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York.
- Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects.
- Improve economic prosperity of the people of York with a focus on minimising differentials.
- Improve the health and lifestyles of people who live in York, in particular amongst groups whose levels of health are the poorest.
- Improve the chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city.

25. NAP's are also playing a role in providing a 'bottom up' link (golden thread) between the strategic documents of the city, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the local needs and vision. NAP's 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 providing the only sustained citywide consultation

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

Implications

26.

- **Financial** – To be met from existing Neighbourhood Management budgets.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – NAP's will be delivered utilising existing resources within the Neighbourhood Management Unit.
- **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 has been identified in all but one NAP. Ward Committees are working in partnership with NYP to address this.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – None.
- **Property** – None.
- **Other** – None.

Risk Management

27. In compliance with the council's risk management strategy. The main risk relates to not progressing the development of NAP's. This could lead to damage to the council's image and reputation and failure to meet the public's and partners' expectations.

Recommendations

28. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to:

- a) Note the content of this report and the development of NAP's citywide to date.

Reason: So that Members are aware of the content and development of NAP's to date.

- b) Approve Option One as outlined in paragraphs 15 to 18 for the future development of the NAP's to enhance their corporate role and greater involve partners in identification and resolution of local priorities.

Reason : To comply with the Council's obligation contained within the Council's Constitution Part 3 Schedule 2 concerning the functions of ward committee. To deliver strategic links with the Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Community Strategy and comply with the requirements of central government in terms of the neighbourhood management and engagement and involvement ethos.

Contact Details

Author:

Author's name: Zoe Burns
Title: Head of Neighbourhood Management and Business Support
Dept Name: Neighbourhood Management Unit
Tel No: 1817

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Chief Officer's name: Andy Hudson
Title: Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)
Tel No. 551514

Report Approved

Date 13/11/07

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

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

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

- Meeting of Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel 7th December 2006 – New Neighbourhood Action Plans
- Department for Communities and Local Government, Strong and prosperous communities, The Local Government White Paper October 2006.

Annexes

Annex 1 Proposed framework for Neighbourhood Action Plans
Annex 2 Timeframe for the delivery of Neighbourhood Action Plans
Annex 3 Neighbourhood Action Plan Ambitions by Ward Committee