



AGENDA ITEM: 10

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	10 September 2014
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

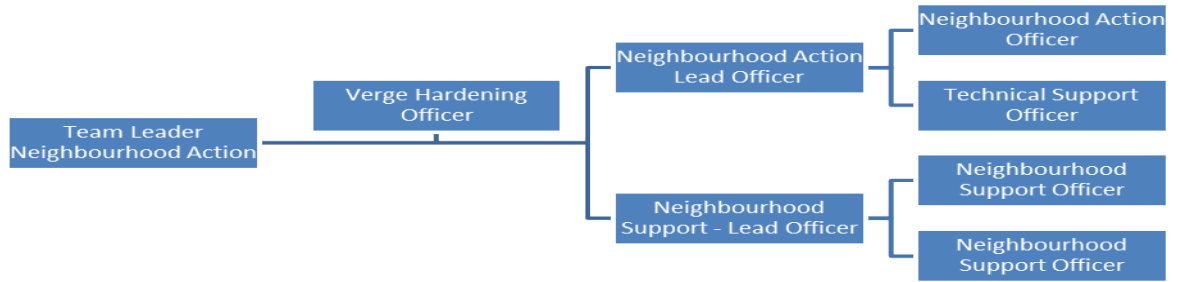
Title of report:	Neighbourhood Action
Contact:	Councillor Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Resident and Regulatory Services Authors/Responsible Officers Julie Still/Joe Guiton
Purpose of report:	1. To inform members of a proposed pilot programme, based on evidence, to test and evaluate approach to the delivery of changes to the Neighbourhood Action Service
Recommendations	1. Members note the proposal and identify any concerns or comments
Corporate objectives:	Community Capacity Clean and Safe Environment
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> Pilot within existing budgets.
'Value For Money Implications'	<u>Value for Money</u> Full evaluation of pilot project to be completed – targeted approach based on evidence.
Risk Implications	To be completed as part of project
Equalities Implications	To be completed at the start of the project
Health And Safety Implications	All elements of the project will be risk assessed

Consultees:	Neighbourhood Action Team, Joe Guiton NA Team Leader, David Austin, Assistant Director, Cllr Neil Harden Portfolio holder
Background papers:	Neighbourhood Action Report – January 2014
Historical background <i>(please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i>	In January 2014, this committee asked for a report on the proposals to review this service to provide a more targeted approach to community involvement.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	HRA – Housing Revenue Account SLA – Service Level Agreement NAG's – Neighbourhood Action Groups NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training LOSA – Lower Super Output Area

Background

1. Current Service

- 1.1 At this time there are 10 wards and 4 'sections' of wards involved in Neighbourhood Action Groups with differing levels of support from the Neighbourhood Action Team and differing levels of resident involvement. The wards covered are Grovehill / Woodhall Farm, Highfield, Adeyfield East / Adeyfield West, Chaulden / Warners End, Gadebridge, Bennetts End, Hemel Hempstead Town Centre, Watling and the sections of wards include Piccotts End, Box Lane, Felden and Bourne End.
- 1.2 All of the Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAG's) are chaired by at least one of their Ward Councillors and in addition to this have regular support at Neighbourhood Action Steering Group meetings from County Councillors.
- 1.3 In addition to the Neighbourhood Action areas this team deals with Community Cohesion, Youth Democracy and a range of large projects including Play Area improvements, Verge Hardening and the Tour of Britain as well as one off events.
- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Action Team consists of: - Team Leader –Neighbourhood Action; 2 Neighbourhood Action Officers(one of these posts is a Lead Officer); one Technical Support Officer and a Verge Hardening Officer (a fixed term post).
- 1.5 In addition to the core Neighbourhood Action Team there is a small team of 3 Neighbourhood Support Officers (including one Lead Officer post) which are funded, except for 20% of one post, by the HRA and work to an SLA which is agreed with Housing. In the past this team have been involved in the clear landings implementation but these roles will be changing significantly as the Cleaning Service are taking over the management of the clear landings procedures.



2. Budget

2.1 The budget for 2014/2015 is £237,410 which does not include the cost of the salary for the project officer for Verge Hardening, or the costs of the capital works on verge hardening and play area improvements.

2.2 In addition to the above the budget for the HRA funded Neighbourhood Support Officers is £97,800.

2.3 Total budget is £335,210

3. The last 12 months

3.1 The recent Neighbourhood Action Annual Public meetings have seen a reduction in the attendance of residents at the meetings and the regular steering groups have also seen a reduction in attendance – see Appendix A.

3.2 This appears to be connected with increased satisfaction with their local areas as is reflected in the latest Neighbourhood Action Survey which ended 31st July 2014. See appendix B.

3.3 There is a high level of satisfaction in all of the areas with key issues of concern for residents relating to the condition of roads, parking and some environmental issues which reflect the priorities of the Neighbourhood Action Groups.

3.4 The local groups have not got the momentum or the attendance that they had previously but the 'Love Your Neighbourhood' approach that was used in Woodhall Farm has been extremely successful in engaging residents and been an ongoing project with the most recent event taking place on 27th August 2014. This followed the Food Festival at Easter with a number of organisations coming together to meet specific targeted needs of the community.

4. Pilot Project

4.1 It is proposed that a new approach to delivering Neighbourhood Action is piloted in the next 6 months and evaluated to assess its value for money and the impact on Neighbourhoods.

4.2 The proposal is for an evidence based pilot project, based on the Love your Neighbourhood model, that would be delivered and co-ordinated by The Neighbourhood Action Team by the end of the financial year – a provisional date is planned for February 2015 at half term.

4.3 We have a range of measures of where the Neighbourhood Action Groups and communities are at now with the recent public meeting attendance figures, the consultation results and the strong evidence gathered as part of the Evidence Based Decision making project. This information will allow us to tailor make projects that directly target Neighbourhoods and smaller lower super output areas specific needs.

- 4.4 Based on this we have selected Highfield as the pilot area as we know that we have strong evidence that requires support from not only Dacorum Borough Council, but a range of agencies, to address the specific needs of the community.
- 4.5 We will be working with the Policies and Partnerships Team and their partners on the delivery of the Get Set Go Dacorum in Highfield in regard to the health issues and benefits of exercise but in addition to this it is proposed that we target other areas of need such as community safety, environmental concerns, child poverty, NEETS (not in Education Employment or Training) domestic abuse, young and older peoples needs and other relevant specific deprivation indicators associated with the Ward.
- 4.6 The Neighbourhood Action Team will be co-ordinating a week of highly visible action in the Ward over the period of one week to include participation from a range of services and partners relevant in addressing Highfield's. The week would end with a community event where the action taken would be fed back to the community.
- 4.7 A full evaluation of all agencies involved would follow and allow us to measure against the evidence base and potentially calculate the financial benefits to services.
- 4.8 If the project is successful, this approach would allow all areas of need within the borough to receive a tailored service which is dependent on need and not be restricted to a ward level.
- 4.9 For example: -
- There is a small area, a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), in Tring which has a level of child poverty of 22.2% which is above the national average of 20.6% and the Hertfordshire average of 13.5% – the population of a LSOA is approximately 1500. This level is three times that of the surrounding LSOA's in the same ward and knowing this will allow us to target the area with the relevant agencies and services. If we look at ward level the average is 11.9%.
- 4.10 A very specific, multi agency, income maximisation project in this small area targeted at the 1500 people who live there could maximise the impact and make a real difference. This method can be applied to target any identified need in any area.

5. Neighbourhood Support Officers – Environment and Street Champions

- 5.1 The change in the role of the Neighbourhood Support Officers provides the opportunity for a team to concentrate on the environmental issues that are one of the areas most identified by residents as of concern.
- 5.2 The proposal for this area is that these officers will be responsible for the existing Street Champions and for involving more residents in this scheme. They will arrange regular meetings and 'neighbourhood inspections' where the environment will be graded and issues addressed. There will be a formal Service Level Agreement with the Housing Service relating to Housing areas but the audits will be inclusive of all areas including other landlords.
- 5.3 As part of these audits, the Neighbourhood Support Officers will work with the Police Community Support Officers, the Fire Service and registered Housing Providers.
- 5.4 The inspections will be a regular occurrence and members will be invited to take part in the audits and the Street Champions meetings would replace the NAG steering group meetings.

5.5 The Neighbourhood Support Officers will continue to manage the Community Payback Scheme which delivers 3 days per week of varied work delivered by offenders subject to community orders.

6. Feedback

6.1 It is important that residents receive information about the issues they have raised and been involved in – this worked well in the Love Your Neighbourhood events in Woodhall Farm. See Appendix C

6.2 It is proposed that a full report of the project is given at next year's public meeting and all participating agencies and services are involved.

7. Cohesion and Youth Democracy

7.1 The work with the Youth Forum, Youth Action Entertainers, interfaith and Communities Together groups will continue.

8. Results

8.1 If the pilot is successful it is proposed that this model is used to address the specific needs of areas and that a priority list is brought to members for consideration.

8.2 In addition to ongoing environmental audits via the Street Champions and Neighbourhood Support, it is proposed that there would be 2, projects involving a week long event per year and up to 3 smaller targeted events according to need and in consultation with members.