

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT SERVICES

19 FEBRUARY 2008

Councillors *Davies (Chair), * Bevan, and * Weber

* Members present

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no received.

2. URGENT BUSINESS

There was none

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December were confirmed as a correct record. Details of schemes that had brought in regeneration resources to be provided to the Panel. Also Members expressed a wish to visit projects in Haringey and other Borough's Neighbourhood Management Services.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There was none

5. PROVISION OF HOLISTIC COST EFFECTIVE SERVICES TO LOCAL RESIDENTS

The Panel received and noted details of presentations as follows:

Safer Neighbourhoods

There were involved in Area Based working, bringing local partners together to look at crime, disorder and environmental problems, issues that fell across several agencies. In order to evaluate the work a trial had been undertaken whereby partners worked towards joint priorities and an evidence base line was set. Priorities were set every six months based on a combination of residents' perceptions and intelligence on the ground. This priority setting had been rolled out to Bruce Grove and West Green and in March the trial was being extended to Woodside, Noel Park and Bounds Green.

Neighbourhood Managers were involved in chairing the Area based meetings. Although working relations with Neighbourhood Management were good, some areas were better than others. Consequently there was a need to develop proper structures and processes to work towards priorities. The Head of Partnerships explained that the role of Neighbourhood Management was to co-ordinate and facilitate arrangements. Overall priorities came from the

Strategic Assessment data which was a national requirement for Crime and Disorder, although there was local priority setting through the community safety strategy which was reviewed every three years.

Urban Environment

Area based working had been piloted in four areas since January 2006. The key objectives were to improve services and to find synologies to increase residents satisfaction. Although it had worked well in identifying and dealing with local issues and had strengthened partnerships, it had also highlighted the need for more and better based performance data and it needed to be embedded into business planning and performance management. Also the potential to jointly prioritise and task across teams was not sufficiently developed. A key change was the re-shaping and delivery of front line services with services being shaped to meet users' needs not department functions. From April 2008 two Area based action teams Enforcement and Street scene would be merged. The service was working through Area action plans which had to be linked to community leadership. Commissioning and procurement of front line services would be in force by the end of 2009. There was a need for more quality area based data.

Neighbourhood Management played a role in terms of identifying local priorities. However there a need for a change to the organisation's structure and governance, behaviour and accountability and people's perceptions of working in communities. Whilst accountability, resources and operational responsibility for projects rested with the service, Neighbourhood Management had a key role to play as a facilitator for community engagement and participation. The Assistant Director advised that a report being prepared on links with Neighbourhood Management would be available to fed into this review. Also Neighbourhood Management had a role to play in co-ordinating multi agency working to solve complex issues.

For the future whilst evidence based Local Area Agreement targets would set the priorities, there was a need to ensure that there was better use of local intelligence to co-ordinate resources with Neighbourhood Management being engaged in building communities not service delivery.

Children and Young Peoples Service

As a result of working with the Primary Care Trust local service delivery was organised through three Children's Networks:- west, North East and South East. but that from April 2008 there would be a single referral point into the service. Local Area Agreements were in place across each network and the Children and Young People's service were discussing synologies with Neighbourhood Management. The Director stated that Neighbourhood Management played an important role as "the eyes and ears on the ground" and so they had good local intelligence. There was, however, a need to be clear of their role in helping to shape service delivery. For example with new initiatives there had been some blurring of responsibilities such as the Summer holiday activities where Neighbourhood Management had been involved in service delivery.

Assistant Director – Policy, Performance, Partnerships and Communications

The most recent key legislation for Neighbourhood Management was the Local Government White Paper “Strong and Prosperous Communities and the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Act which set out a duty to inform, consult, involve and devolve. The Council had to ensure that people were better informed about services and how they performed. It was crucial that Neighbourhood Management was responsive to local needs, in the delivery of joined up local services, and that they supported community groups and citizens. Civic engagement was central to supporting and building community networks. This was achieved by seeking the views and experiences of the community in order to shape service provision. Also they brought together strategic partners and the LAA. Their role was to support organisations to deliver neighbourhood working.

Workload priorities and the workplan for Neighbourhood Management was determined through the LAA priorities, discussions with Councillors, and community intelligence but at times there were conflicting priorities. Short term issues should be resolved swiftly and for larger issues it was suggested that there should be an Annual Action Plan.

MATT DAVIES
Chair