

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Community Development Strategy &amp; Neighbourhood Governance</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>8 December 2011</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director, Communities</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>David Murray</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 29-
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<b>david.murray@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>TBC</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

1.1 This report sets out a revised approach to the Council's Community Development Strategy.

1.2 The updated Community Development Strategy replaces the previous Community Development Strategy, (2004), and will enable the council to focus its work within the context of very challenging economic times and increasing need.

Implementation of the agreed strategy will focus on supporting the most deprived neighbourhoods and communities of interest, and to achieve this, a commissioning process will commence on agreement of this strategy.

1.3 The Strategy will support implementation of the new Corporate Plan (2011-14), in relation to tackling inequality and ensuring that communities are actively involved in all aspects of the council's work. This work will be a fundamental part of delivering the pilots exploring new forms of neighbourhood governance and the city's response to the recently agreed Localism Act.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

2.1 That Cabinet endorses the community development strategy set out in Appendix 1.

2.2 That Cabinet notes the importance of a corporate approach to this work and requests that the Strategic Director Communities work with commissioners and heads of delivery to deliver this approach.

2.3 That Cabinet recognises the community development strategy as a key delivery mechanism of the City's Community Engagement Framework.

2.4 That Cabinet recognises the clear relationship between community development and effective delivery of neighbourhood governance arrangements, and notes particularly that a whole city approach is essential and within this that a clear emphasis be placed upon deprived neighbourhoods and communities of interest likely to be most marginalised or excluded.

- 2.5 That Cabinet agrees to delegate the decision on the appointment of providers to meet the needs arising from the Community Development Strategy to the Strategic Director to deliver agreed programmes of work

### **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **3.1 Brighton & Hove's community development activity and the need for a new strategy.**

3.1.1 Community development in neighbourhoods has been funded by a range of government initiatives including Neighbourhood Renewal and New Deal. With the completion of these programmes and an understanding of its importance as a tool for community empowerment, the council has continued to allocate core funds to commissioning for community development.

3.1.2 As a result there has been a rolling programme of community development commissioning to support priority neighbourhoods in the city. Currently this programme supports 14 neighbourhoods with a budget of 400k.

A social return on investment (SROI) review of this activity showed that for every £1 invested it created a social value of £11 which included an increase in volunteering, well-being and income raised by community groups and organisations (see Strengthening Communities Review for further details).

3.1.3 The Strengthening Communities Review, (undertaken on behalf of the Stronger Communities Partnership), recommended that the council's community development strategy, (2004), was refreshed to ensure that it was fit for purpose and reflective of the significant learning of the last 4 years. It also recommended that the strategy consider and integrate new national and local policy and priorities, including a growing emphasis on neighbourhood governance.

3.1.4 In October this year the council adopted a new Corporate Plan, a key strand of which is to ensure that communities are able to play an active role in all aspects of its work. The proposed Community Development Strategy provides a framework for commissioning and implementing Corporate Plan commitments.

3.1.5 The Stronger Communities Partnership, (SCP), is successfully taking forward the broader cross sector approach to the community engagement and delivering on the Strengthening Communities chapter of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It is leading on the implementation of the Community Engagement Framework and associated action plan.

#### **3.2 The Strengthening Communities Review**

3.2.1 The Strengthening Communities Review took place between January 2010 and July 2011. Regular reports on review progress and findings were presented to Cabinet and Governance Committee as well as the Stronger Communities Partnership. Funding for the review was allocated by the Public Sector Board and a final report was tabled at its meeting of x September 2011.

3.2.2 The review found that community development had strong and positive impact on neighbourhoods in terms of engagement, empowerment, volunteering, well-being, cohesion and improved perceptions of place.

3.2.3 As part of a national pathfinder programme with the New Economics Foundation, a social return on investment analysis was undertaken to examine the impact of the council's commissioning for neighbourhood community development. Key findings from this work included:

- a. Residents directly involved in community development projects give on average 21 hours of volunteer time per month, 9 hours more than the Brighton and Hove average (Taking Account, September 2008)
- b. The average value of this volunteering per annum is £153,530 (this is the combined value of stakeholders a and b described above)
- c. 90% of residents who are directly involved in the community development projects feel that they can influence local decision-making
- d. 33% of the wider community feel able to influence decisions that affect their local area compared to 28% on average in Brighton and Hove (Place Survey, 2008)
- e. 100% of residents who are involved in community development projects feel they have gained skills, confidence and knowledge. This includes things such as how to be a leader and becoming more aware of issues in the community

3.2.4 However, the Brighton and Hove Reducing Inequality Review and State of the City Report indicate that inequality remains an issue in deprived neighbourhoods and amongst those facing multiple disadvantage. The review therefore concluded that there was a need for a stronger focus on measures which will serve more directly to reduce inequality, particularly those from protected equality groups.

### **3.3 Neighbourhood governance**

3.3.1 Options around new forms of neighbourhood governance that recognise current arrangements and seek to find a "Brighton & Hove" approach to central Government's "Localism Act" are currently under discussion.

3.3.2 Central to these discussions are commitments to a more open and transparent approach to residents and other key stakeholders in terms of the power to make decisions about services for their neighbourhoods and potentially influence the way budgets are shaped on key issues.

3.3.3 There have been a number of initiatives over the years in the parts of the city, funded by, for example, New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. They have all had slightly different approaches. The Council run projects have used Neighbourhood Management as a model and the programmes commissioned through voluntary sector partners have used Community Development methodology. This approach has enabled communities to influence decisions but has not often included any financial control.

3.3.4 One key aspect of the current work on "neighbourhoods" concerns boundaries. There are various definitions and understanding of the term 'neighbourhood' used in the City. Residents will relate to their area in all sorts of different ways. Wards cover a complexity of different communities with different issues and needs and this will need to be explored as part of the consultation process.

- 3.3.5 Data collection and understanding issues at a neighbourhood level can also be complex as we collect information and data in a range of ways which include ward and sub ward levels but may not always correlate when neighbourhoods are 'resident defined'.
- 3.3.6 Current work encompasses the approach other statutory organisations are also undertaking to maximise and clarify the way that residents can engage with the emerging neighbourhood policing plans in, for example, policing and healthy and, within the Council, planning.
- 3.3.7 Work will need to be carried out to explore how to bring in line boundaries and definitions that differ between service providers, (Police, the Clinical Commission Group and Council all map and provide neighbourhood services differently this also extends to different delivery units within the Council).
- 3.3.8 National evaluations show that neighbourhood working can get bogged down in structures and create additional layers of bureaucracy.
- 3.3.9 To counteract this, work will need to create a variety of ways residents can input their thoughts, ideas and be part of informed discussion and decision making including the use of new technologies such as multi media.
- 3.3.10 The city currently has a proliferation of neighbourhood and community structures such as Tenants Associations, Friends of Parks, Neighbourhood Forums, Local Action Teams, Health Action groups, conservation groups.
- 3.3.11 Most of these groups and structures work with the public service providers but are independent groups in their own right. In order for residents and communities to support the neighbourhood governance approach we will need to respect and work with the current groups to ensure we build a culture of partnership.
- 3.3.12 Communities of Interest and Identity groups are sometimes more developed at a city wide level. We will need to ensure the voices of these residents are also heard and listened to at a neighbourhood level.
- 3.3.13 A one size fits all approach is unlikely to work and arrangements for neighbourhood councils/governance may need to vary from place to place, to reflect the demographic make up, diversity and varying circumstances of communities.
- 3.3.14 As part of our consultation process we will ask communities to put forward 'expressions of interest' if they are interested in developing Neighbourhood governance in their area.
- 3.3.15 Devolving services to a neighbourhood level may create a situation where issues are not linked and therefore not dealt with strategically.
- 3.3.16 When devolving budgets and services, there is a risk of losing 'economies of scale' and we will need to balance value for money with the requests/expectations of communities, particularly in the current economic climate.

- 3.3.17 Evidence shows that a neighbourhood governance approach creates huge expectations from communities. There is a need to be very clear about real boundaries if the community are restricted in the use of any resources.
- 3.3.18 The Localism Act enables the establishment of Neighbourhood Forums to develop Neighbourhood Development Plans. Through this process these Forums could gain access to funding streams via the New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy. In line with the proposals in the Localism Bill Rottingdean Parish Council are working with the planning team as a pilot area to create a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 3.3.19 The plans for neighbourhood governance are set within the national policy context of the Localism Act. The Act sets out a series of required actions the Government believes will deliver a substantial and lasting shift in power away from central government and towards local people.
- 3.3.20 As part of the consultation process a key consideration will be how to develop a joint role for Neighbourhood Councils and Neighbourhood Forums (with planning responsibilities).
- 3.3.21 A further report on neighbourhood governance will be presented to Cabinet in March 2012 and will encompass a summary, and response, to the key aspects of the Localism Act.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Over 300 stakeholders took part in the Strengthening Communities Review and 500 people were engaged as part of the social return on investment process. This included members of the public either actively or not involved in community activities.
- 4.2 Stakeholder events were undertaken to consult on the production of the Community Development Strategy including engagement with key community and voluntary sector organisations, public sector partners and council staff.
- 4.3 A significant programme of consultation on neighbourhood governance is currently underway, working in partnership with the elected members, residents, voluntary and community organisations, business and other statutory partners, and is attached at Appendix two.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The costs associated with the consultation process will be met from within existing resources.
- 5.2 The financial implications and funding arrangements for the implementation of Neighbourhood Councils/Governance will be complex and will in part be informed by feedback gathered from the consultation. It is proposed to report back to Cabinet with results from the pilot, which will set out further details of the likely scale of financial implications.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Mike Bentley*

*Date: 12/10/11*

Legal Implications:

- 5.3 Under the Local Authority constitution and current legislation we do not have the ability to delegate or devolve budgetary decision making about public services to unelected groups.
- 5.4 At present the Leader of the council can only delegate executive decisions to a Cabinet member or Council officer. However under the Local Government & Public Health Act 2007, there is provision for a Ward Councillor to be given delegated powers and budgets although this has not been done within Brighton & Hove Council.
- 5.5 The Localism Act will create legal powers for recognised 'Neighbourhood Forums' to have some formal decision making in relation to planning issues.
- 5.6 Any proposals to change the Council's constitution would need to be considered by Governance Committee and approved by Full Council. At the point when specific proposals come forward, the legal implications will need to be considered in detail. In particular this will need to include consideration of the Council's statutory responsibilities and the impact of proposals on the existing mechanisms for accountability of local authority decision making – such as Overview & Scrutiny, appeals, standards committees and access to information and decision making meetings.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Oliver Dixon*

*Date: 21/09/11*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.7 As part of the process the Communities and Equality team have started the process of undertaking an Equalities Impact Assessment. This process will fit within the agreed corporate process and will better reflect the nature and decision making arrangements of this work.
- 5.8 Development of this process will involve the Corporate Communities and Equality team and their involvement will continue. Equalities Impact Assessment for the scheme will be carried out with stakeholders.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.9 Future commissioning arrangements will take into account the need to promote sustainability considerations in all aspects of planning and delivery. The Community Development Strategy will help to support sustainable communities, through activities such as sustainable funding, resilient individuals and self help groups. In the design of the Neighbourhood Governance consultation process consideration will need to be given to how to ensure we use a limited paper approach by using new technologies. As part the consultation we will be asking residents and communities about their neighbourhood level sustainability issues.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.10 The Safe in the City Partnership, the Partnership Community Safety Team (PCST), Communities against Drugs and Environment Improvement Teams deliver a range of activities which engage and build cohesive communities. Some of these activities are integrated within the delivery plans of priority crime areas: facilitating the community led Racial Harassment Forum is one example of that. Other work such as supporting the network of Local Action Teams link closely with meeting the delivery requirements of Neighbourhood Policing and as such, have specific outcomes which are about identifying local policing priorities and delivering community safety solutions in partnership with local people. The PCST carries out targeted work with refugee and migrant individuals and communities and its programme of activities to 'build resilience to violent extremism' is a specific programme of work with Muslim and other faith based communities. Performance on this programme is measured against national indicators within the LAA process.
- 5.11 The Partnership looks forward to working with future commissioning approaches and achieving a consistent approach across the City. The Partnership Community Safety Team will be key partners in the development of Neighbourhood Councils/Governance. We will also ensure that our Police colleagues and Local Action Teams are fully consulted as part of the process.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.12 There will be a risk register to identify and prioritise those issues which have the potential to affect achievement of objectives, so that mitigating actions can be developed and incorporated as part of project delivery. The risk register will be regularly reviewed as part of the ongoing project management for this initiative and accords with the council's Risk & Opportunity Management Strategy 2008-11.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.13 Public Health colleagues will be key partners in the development of Neighbourhood Councils/Governance. We will also ensure that other health providers both statutory and community and voluntary sector are fully consulted as part of the process.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.14 This is a council strategy, designed to set out the vision, aims and objectives of council commissioning for community development. It is one of the ways in which the Council is supporting implementation of the Community Engagement Framework action plan and makes links with other commissions and projects such as youth work, adult social care (embrace), neighbourhood governance and housing participation. It is led by the council's Communities and Equality Team in cooperation with the Stronger Communities Partnership, and contributes to many of the city's key policies and plans.
- 5.15 The Corporate / Citywide Implications for the implementation of neighbourhood governance will be complex and will in part be informed by feedback gathered from the consultation. It is proposed to report back to Cabinet with results from the pilot, which will set out further details of the likely scale of the broad corporate implications. This has implications for all wards and supports the corporate

objectives of tackling inequality and involving communities in everything that we do.

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 The consultation results and pilot programme will inform the range alternative options for city wide roll out.

**7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 This report set out next steps to for the Council to progress the Community Development Strategy and within this, the development of neighbourhood governance across the city, working in partnership with the other elected members, residents, Voluntary and Community organisations, business and other statutory partners.
- 7.2 The current community development strategy is now out of date and this strategy replaces it and ensures that our approach reflects the new corporate priorities.
- 7.3 To confirm Cabinet’s commitment to ongoing resources for community development commissioning.
- 7.4 To support and encourage a corporate approach to this work.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Brighton and Hove City Council – Community Development Strategy
2. Neighbourhood Council - draft consultation timetable

**Documents in Members’ Rooms**

None

**Background Documents**

The Strengthening Communities Review – Final Report