

<b>NEIGHBOURHOODS, COMMUNITIES &amp; EQUALITIES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item 57</b>  Brighton & Hove City Council
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Developing and improving the functioning and outcomes of Local Action Teams</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> March 2016</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Director of Public Health</b>
<b>Contact Officer Names:</b>	<b>Peter Castleton/Simon Bannister and Garry Collins</b> <b>Tel: 29-2607</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to give an overview of the Local Action Team (LAT) project work undertaken to date, specifically phase 1 work from June to December 2015, and to update on planned work to take place under phase 2 of this initiative which will conclude in June 2016.
- 1.2. The outcomes of this work will help the council in the development and delivery of co-operative working in neighbourhoods.
- 1.3. This work will assist LATs to proactively respond to community safety issues in their locality and contribute to the developing City Neighbourhoods agenda.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the committee note the report and recommendations developed from phase 1 of the initiative
- 2.2 That the committee agrees the proposed activities within phase 2 of this initiative.
- 2.3 The committee notes progress toward developing an independent Local Action Team Chairs Forum, which will give the LAT structure an improved opportunity as a recognised community voice enhancing collaborative relationships with council services and the NCE Committee.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 LATs have been in existence across the city for the past 10 years. They were originally pulled together and supported by the police to identify crime and

- community safety concerns in neighbourhoods. LATs were asked to come up with three priorities which the police sought to address.
- 3.2 Phase I of the LAT development project (June-December 2015) established that there are currently 32 LATs in the city which vary considerably in the size of the area they cover, levels of attendance, governance, accountability and their willingness to work collaboratively to address the wellbeing and community safety needs of residents in their areas. The meetings are often attended by the police and a council officer, some LATs expect attendance of officers who they perceive should be accountable to them.
  - 3.3 The project aim is to seek to improve the functioning and outcomes of LATs, specifically seeking to enhance the capacity of individual LATs and the network as a whole to offer strong, representative and independent community voices, better able to raise and reflect community concerns, and to work collaboratively with the council and other stakeholders to seek community and neighbourhood improvements in relation to community safety.
  - 3.4 Seeking to enhance independence, representation and collaboration as key outcomes includes supporting LATs to understand and articulate shared neighbourhood priorities, identify and manage their own resources, seeking good standards of governance and community involvement and developing the role of LATs from a sometimes reactive 'problem identification' role to a more proactive 'problem solving' role and developing stronger partnerships with service providers to achieve this.
  - 3.5 Phase 1 of this initiative has comprised of a review of the existing LAT network, focusing on the functionality and capacity of individual LATs, identifying strengths and weaknesses of the existing network as described by LAT members, police and council staff and has sought to identify key issues and areas affecting functioning and outcomes across the network.
  - 3.6 A number of recognised strengths have been identified, particularly the LATs strong identity as independent community led groups, which are ideally placed to promote a wide range of preventative action and education in both community safety and public health/well-being. The groups also serve as a credible sounding board to raise concerns and develop local interventions. Again good examples exist in this area, particularly with ASB, working closely with the Community Safety Casework Team.
  - 3.7 Areas of work to develop further include local membership and representation to improve inclusion and capacity within many of the LAT groups. This would help improve resources, visibility, credibility and an improved ownership and understanding of neighbourhoods' priorities and concerns.
  - 3.8 Phase 2 (outlined in Appendix 1) will focus on areas of need or for development which have been identified in Phase 1, and will put in place a resource structure which LATs will be able to access and contribute towards to support improved functioning and outcomes.

- 3.9 Cutting across both phases has been a distinct sub project aimed at developing the LAT Chairs Forum as an independent umbrella group for the LAT network and a representative voice able to contribute to city-wide and strategic discussions around crime reduction and community safety.
- 3.10 Findings from the phase 1 work identify variations across the LAT network, with groups falling into three distinct types:
1. Local 'friends of' or street based groups operating informally with limited governance or proactive partnership links
  2. Local area action groups which come together around particular community issues or concerns but may be limited in their role or capacity to deliver solutions
  3. Neighbourhood forum groups which are generally well organised with a full constitution, forward planning based around a proactive vision of their community with an active officer group each requiring a distinct response and occupying a distinct role, and

This project seeks to work with the strengths and ambition of each type to enable them to best support neighbourhood work in their chosen way rather than attempting a 'one size fits all' approach toward them. Levels of support and engagement with LATs by the council will be determined within phase 2 and will be influenced by which type of LAT they are or aspire to be.

A development day is planned in March/April 2016 which will offer training to LAT Chairs and members to enable them to function at the level they are comfortable with and give them an opportunity to consider how they would like their LAT to develop in the future and how that might be achieved. This is being developed in conjunction with the Trust for Developing Communities.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1. The LAT network forms the most comprehensive community response to community safety issues across the city, and without investment in the network identified within this process there is a risk that groups will become less able to contribute and that the network as a whole will weaken over time.
- 4.2. In addition to community safety concerns, the LAT network forms a valuable function in terms of local consultation and provides a representative community voice in neighbourhoods.
- 4.3. A strong and functioning community network is important to support the delivery of the council co-operative ambitions. A wide range of alternative community groups, forums and associations exist across the city. Many are small charity or local neighbourhood groups which do not have a set constitution or specific role in working with the council on community safety themes. Therefore, they have not been considered a viable option to replace the existing established LAT structure. However, they do form a key community stakeholder link at a local level.

- 4.4. Many tenant and resident groups also exist across the City with some having formal arrangements that link directly into BHCC Housing responsibilities. Some of these have evolved into the LAT structure, merging into one collective community group in a larger forum structure. This approach can help with the connectivity of various stakeholder groups covering a single demographic area. However, it is the LAT element which will set annual priorities linked specifically to community safety, with a direct link into the LAT Chairs Forum which aligns to the NCE committee.
- 4.5. The LAT structure is therefore the most suitable community group that delivers a single credible contact point to best support service delivery, community consultation, resilience and intelligence in relation to community safety.

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1. All local action teams have been informed about this process by council staff attending LAT meetings, and opportunities to engage in the process have been through a questionnaire circulated to all LATs, through conversations with individual council officers, via email updates and at the LAT Chairs Forum.
- 5.2. Consultation arrangements vary across the LAT structure with some meetings being much more inclusive involving a wide range of partners and community groups. A number of key stakeholders have been identified to enhance the partnership links at a local level including the active involvement of local ward Councillors. The importance of this key role has been acknowledged in supporting LATs deliver against locally identified priorities. Some LATs are chaired by Councillors in the absence of a willing community member. However, generally, LATs should to be chaired by a community member with the LAT supported by Councillors.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Engagement has been very positive by LAT chairs, local Councillors and residents attending all public meetings. This has helped establish good communication links in both the LAT Chair Forum and individual local meetings. The initial phase 1 collaboration work has set a strong knowledge and relationship foundation to build upon to progress the phase 2 work. This phase 2 work will now involve individual development work to better measure input/output and outcomes to the local community for each LAT area. This evidence will then be tracked and compiled for the final LAT project report in June 2016.
- 6.2 Establishing stronger and more accountable LATs, able to identify achieve and manage resources, will help in the collaboration with the council in delivering key community safety outcomes or neighbourhood services. This will enable LATs to occupy a more proactive role, extending outcomes which not only identifying problems but collaboratively develop better solutions and share best practice.

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

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The Community Safety Partnership has previously made funds available for LAT expenses. Under the new model being developed this will no longer be available, however LATs will be directed toward and assisted to apply for funds from other sources. Additionally support is currently provided to meet the cost of LAT Chairs meetings, which is being resourced from the existing Community Safety Partnership budget. There are no other anticipated costing implications.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley*

*Date: 25/2/2016*

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no legal implications in relation to this report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Simon Court*

*Date: 25/2/2016*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 No EIA has been completed as this work is currently at an early stage and this will be completed as part of the phase 2 work. A key outcome of this project is to improve representation and governance within the local action team network, this has the potential to impact positively on equalities issues

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.4 The outcome of this work will assist LATs to proactively respond to the developing City Neighbourhoods agenda.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 The project recognises the importance of the LAT Chair role (held by a community member) in leading the group. This need will be supported in the phase 2 project which will provide training for LAT Chairs developed in partnership with the Trust for Developing Communities.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1. – Range of options / opportunities for Phase 2 work:

#### **LAT Development Phase 2 Goals**

1. Governance & organisational support for LAT structure. Continue to build stronger formal LAT structure, attendance, priorities & accountability. Determine how complaints about LATs can be resolved.
2. Formalise LAT Chair Forum meeting arrangements quarterly for the year linked to NCE Committee.
3. Increase community awareness of Domestic and Sexual Violence across LAT structure, including recognised champions to support specific campaigns.
4. Expand local 'self-help' resilience plans across the LAT structure sharing best practice.
5. Expand community assets, including venues to encourage inclusion, increased membership volume, inclusive representation & shared information/intelligence.
6. Develop closer links across Tenant & Resident Forums/associations to ensure LAT structure is more inclusive/accessible to others local groups.
7. Community Safety Caseworkers continue to work with local LAT ASB priorities, attending meetings when possible gathering and sharing information (prevention & detection).
8. CCG links to support Public Health and better care agenda across LAT structure, specifically utilising Patient Participation Groups (PPG) opportunity.
9. Embed Fire/Police Community volunteers into established LAT structures to assist delivery of LAT, Fire, Police & Health prevention priorities.
10. Wider Neighbourhood Watch Coordination across LAT structure sharing best practice from established schemes.