



# West Lancashire Borough Council

Report of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
**'Neighbourhood Management – Costs and Benefits Review'**







# NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT – COSTS AND BENEFITS REVIEW

## Report of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee



### **FOREWORD by the Chairman Councillor James Kay**

“The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at West Lancashire Borough Council carried out a review on ‘Neighbourhood Management – Costs and Benefits’ the purpose of which was to examine the costs and benefits from adopting a Neighbourhood Management approach.

We started the scrutiny project in June 2009 and have learned much from the contributors.

In addition to the information provided by Officers of the Council, we would like to thank Chorley Borough Council, Halton Borough Council and Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council for the information they provided in relation to the case studies undertaken in those authorities and the Local Improvement Advisor, who provided valuable information through his presentation in relation to the evaluation work he had undertaken on the West Lancashire Neighbourhood Management Project. All of this has assisted us to explore the issues of the review topic.

A special thanks goes Members of the West Lancashire SSCF Board who accommodated our request to visit with them during the course of the review and provided invaluable information on the experiences and tangible results of the work undertaken within the communities of Digmoor, Tanhouse and Moorside in relation to the Neighbourhood Management Project.

I would like to thank Members and Officers and the following for their contribution to the review:

Mrs Margaret Highton  
Mrs Joanne Harrison  
Mrs Gail Mason  
Miss Rebecca Carson  
Mrs Lisa Larson  
Mr Chris Allen

Chairman, West Lancashire SSCF Board  
SSCF Board Member  
SSCF Board Member  
Young Persons’ Representative – SSCF Board  
Young People’s Service – SSCF Board  
Local Improvement Advisor (West Lancashire  
Neighbourhood Management Evaluation)

*“We are proud of what has been achieved. It has taught us a lot about our own community.” (West Lancashire SSCF – Board Member)*



## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Review was undertaken by the Committee between June 2009 and March 2010.

### **MEMBERS**

**Chairman:** Councillor Kay

**Vice Chairman:** Councillor Ms Melling

#### **2009/2010**

Councillors: Mrs Atherley, Collinson, Grice, Hennessy, Jones, Lea, Meadows, Mee, M Pendleton, R A Pendleton, Mrs Pollock, Mrs Stephenson, Saxon, Swiffen, Tattersall and West.

#### **Substitute Members**

The following Members acted as substitute Members for one or more of the meetings held when considering the review:

Councillors: Cotterill, Griffiths, McKay, Pratt

# **THE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **BACKGROUND**

Following the submission of topics by the public, Members and OMB, subsequent scoring exercise on submitted topics, at a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 June 2009 that Committee agreed to undertake a review on the topic 'Neighbourhood Management – Costs and Benefits'.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members of the Committee agreed to conduct the review in order to:

1. Examine the costs and benefits from adopting a Neighbourhood Management approach.
2. Compare alternative and best practice approaches to Neighbourhood Management from comparable authorities.
3. Present a report of the Committee's findings and recommendations to Cabinet and Council.

## **Objectives**

### **The present –**

1. To evaluate the existing Safer Stronger Community's Fund Neighbourhood Management Project and its impact in Digmoor, Claybrow and Tanhouse.
2. To examine the potential of implementing the Neighbourhood Management approach across Skelmersdale and potentially the whole of the West Lancashire Borough.

### **The future –**

1. To identify the associated costs and benefits of implementing a Neighbourhood Management style within West Lancashire.
2. To consider the opportunities for enhancing community empowerment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the Committee's enquiries and in identifying the recommendations appended below the Committee concluded that the approach of neighbourhood management based on a practical framework of engagement and support achieves significant benefits within those communities.

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee make the following recommendations:

- (1) That consideration be given by the LSP to the provision of our own model for Neighbourhood Management building on the principles of the West Lancashire SSCF Project that will enable local communities to work with the providers of neighbourhood services more effectively to meet local needs and expectations.
- (2) That in consideration of (1) above, that it be recommended that a "pilot" of the 'West Lancashire Neighbourhood Management Model' be undertaken in a designated locality in the Borough.
- (3) That in consideration of the provision of a "West Lancashire Neighbourhood Management Model", that the following findings are taken into account when evaluating the approach and location of the "pilot" study:
  - (a) That the model recognises the range of diverse circumstances (rural and urban), existing and potential community engagement structures and availability of neighbourhood services and facilities across the Borough.
  - (b) That the fundamental concept of the model is to develop a "Local Board" taken from a cross-section of the community, with a significant involvement of local democratically-elected Members.
  - (c) A key role for the Board is to develop meaningful links with public agencies, services providers and members of their community (particularly to include residents, local businesses, youth groups, etc).
  - (d) That a further role of the Board be to include the promotion of volunteering, community engagement and empowerment.
  - (e) That the Neighbourhood Manager's role be to focus on specific neighbourhoods around the Borough, according to need and opportunity, using a two stage approach on two neighbourhoods at a time, (with the Digmoor Project continuing to be 'managed' as one of those neighbourhoods, but with Stage 2 support for one year, as described at (g) below).
  - (f) That the first stage (being the more intensive 'development stage') be to include working with various agencies, locally elected Members and community representatives to develop the Local Board. The Board would then oversee the development of a practical Action Plan for improvement of their area based upon voluntary contributions, business contributions and the actions of public agencies (within existing resources).

Consideration should be given to providing the Board with a small budget for promoting community activities in that area. This stage to take approximately one year, before moving on to Stage 2.

- (g) That the second stage (the less intensive 'sustainability stage') be to develop the Board such that it is self-sustaining, with minimum support from the Neighbourhood Manager. Again, this support would last for approximately one year.
- (4)**
- (a) That, given this is a multi-agency and community engagement approach to improving the communities of West Lancashire, that the Local Strategic Partnership be asked to fund the post of Neighbourhood Manager, along with some administrative support.
  - (b) That this Authority consider whether it wishes to act as Employer of these posts and thereby become responsible for all on-costs including management, human resources, financial management and legal cost liabilities (as it currently does for the SSCF Project).
  - (c) That this Authority considers whether it wishes to allocate a small budget for local projects, possibly through the 'Community Chest' grant allocation mechanism.
- (5)** That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee review its recommendations in December 2010.



## **METHODS OF ENQUIRY**

### **MEETINGS**

Meetings were held on the following dates:

- A.** 24 June 2009
- B.** 23 September 2009
- C.** 2 December 2009
- D.** 3 March 2010

### **WORKSHOP SESSION**

A dedicated workshop session was held on 27 January 2010.

### **SITE VISITS**

26 January 2010 – Visit to meet Members of the Board of the West Lancashire SSCF Project held at Digmoor Community Centre.

### **SEMINARS**

- (1) 13 January 2010 – ‘Neighbourhood Charters: urban and rural’ – Learning Exchange Seminar facilitated by North West Together We Can Network
- (2) 24 February 2010 – ‘Better Outcomes for People and Places’ – Beacon Open Day facilitated by Chorley Borough Council.

## **INFORMATION GATHERED**

**Meeting held on 24 June 2009 in the Council Chamber, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk.**

### **Presentation 1**

Members received a presentation from Brian Lussey, the Council's Strategy and Project Development Manager. The presentation 'Safer, Stronger Communities Fund Neighbourhood Management Project' was supported by slides<sup>(1)</sup>.

Members heard about the work of the four-year Project, that had commenced in 2006, which had received funding through the Safer Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) and in partnership with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Neighbourhood Boards, worked with the communities of Digmaor, Tanhouse and Moorside to "make a difference."

He explained that the four key outcomes for the Safer, Stronger Communities Neighbourhood Area were to:

- Reduce crime and fear of crime, perceptions of anti-social behaviour and harm by illegal drugs.
- Create cleaner, safer, greener public spaces
- Increase capacity of local communities to participate in local decision-making and influence service delivery
- Improvement quality of life in most disadvantaged neighbourhoods

The Strategy and Project Development Manager then went on to explain the structure of the SSCF Project and the processes involved and highlighted some of the success stories showing, through photographic evidence, some of improvements that had already been implemented within the communities participating in the Project.

Mr Lussey concluded his presentation by drawing attention to some of the issues that had come through during the course of the Project in particular, how to manage the particular needs of communities locally by recognising that one size does not fit all and the importance of multi-agency partnership with and in those communities.

In discussion Members raised questions and comments in respect of the following:

- The upgraded Play Areas and how they attracted groups of teenagers.
- The use of the funding to improve some areas, yet the lack of funding to make repairs to existing community facilities, for example, Quarry Bank Community Centre.
- The importance of the sustainability and exit strategy of the Project.

Mr Lussey explained that the creation of multi-use play areas had assisted in containing physical activities to those areas and that the multi-agency approach and use of CCTV had also been effective in discouraging anti-social behaviour.

In general discussion the following views/comments were put forward in relation to the topic area:

- Sustainability and looking beyond 2010 when the Neighbourhood Management Project had concluded.
- The area of concentration of the existing initiative and how this could be extended.
- The devolvement of powers to local communities to assist in the decisions that affect them.
- Good neighbourhood management practice in other areas both locally and nationally.
- Multi-agency working.

### **Meeting held on 23 September 2009 in Committee Rooms 2/3, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk**

Members agreed the lines of enquiry and identified the next stages of the project.

In general discussion the following views/comments were put forward in relation to the topic area:

- The benefits of visiting or receiving a presentation from an existing Neighbourhood Management project in a neighbouring authority.
- Identifying the costs and benefits of introducing a neighbourhood management style Borough wide.
- Future sustainability of any neighbourhood management model proposed.
- Partnership working, including the sharing of resources.
- Links to others bodies working within the communities.
- The lessons to be learned from existing projects which have had a beneficial impact within those communities.

To assist with their enquiries Members identified the value of a site visit to meet with representatives of the existing Neighbourhood Management Project based in Skelmersdale currently funded through the Safer Strong Communities Fund (SSCF).

### **Meeting held on 2 December 2009 in the Council Chamber, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk**

#### **Presentation 2**

Members considered information provided by the Neighbourhood Manager in relation to visits to Chorley Borough Council, Halton Borough Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council<sup>(2)</sup> and also information on the Cost of Fire – Moorside, Digmaor and Tanhouse 2003-2006<sup>(3)</sup> and 2006-2009 and a sample of outcomes from the Halton Neighbourhood Management Project<sup>(4)</sup>.

In relation to the site visits the following information was provided:

- Structure of Neighbourhoods
- Size of the population of each Neighbourhood

- Neighbourhood Board, if any
- Structure of Neighbourhood Board
- Neighbourhood Management Team
- Previous Government Funding Streams
- Existing Funding Arrangements
- Proposed Funding Arrangements

Comments and questions were raised in relation to:

- The costs of providing a good neighbourhood management scheme at minimal cost.
- The long-term benefits of schemes to the community.
- The Safer, Stronger Communities Neighbourhood Management Project Crime reduction percentages in Moorside, Digmoor and Tanhouse from 2006-2009.
- The funding options being explored by neighbouring authorities of the schemes identified.
- The differences between and responsibilities of, “Estates Management” and “Neighbourhood Management.”
- Identifying the cost and practicalities of joint ward neighbourhood ventures.
- Devolvement of neighbourhood responsibilities to communities and the aspirations of those communities
- Further opportunities to visit other Neighbourhood Management projects.

The Neighbourhood Manager reported that arrangements were being made for Members to attend a meeting of the SSCF Board and for a presentation of the Commissioned Independent Evaluation Report in January 2010.

### **Visit to meet with Members of the West Lancashire SSCF Board at Digmoor Community Centre – 26 January 2010**

Members took the up to opportunity to meet with Members of the SCCF Board at a meeting held at Digmoor Community Centre, Skelmersdale.

In discussion comments and questions were raised in respect of the following:

- The positive results from the Project
- The feeling of “Neighbourhood spirit”
- The notable improvements in the area through participation in the Project.
- The interaction between the community and the various agencies involved.
- The effect on community members, and individuals, particularly young people, accessing the facilities at the Centre.
- The improvement in crime figures and anti-social behaviour.
- The role of volunteers.
- Sustainability, particularly of personnel, beyond March 2010.

Members enquired about the events that had inspired community spirit and encouraged engagement within the communities. Those highlighted included:

- A mobile “ice-rink” set up at the Fold, Tanhouse and Digmoor Community Centre. It was explained that for many youngsters this was their first experience of such an

activity. The Digmaor event had attracted over 1,000 people and the use of “the rink” had resulted in more people using, and being aware of what was on offer, at the Community Centre.

- “Fun Days” and “Information Days”, where members of the community had had an opportunity to try out a “club” at, or something “educational” run through, the Centre.
- Participation and attendance at a “Snooker Exhibition”, attended by snooker professional, Steve Davies.
- “Your Community Matters Events”. A fortnight of activities aimed at addressing priorities raised by both Partners delivering a service in the area and the residents living in the area. Some of the activities which took place during the weeks were to encourage the community to take pride in the area they live in by cleaning it up, through, for example, litter collecting and then improving the area for the future, for example, by planting bulbs.

Members enquired about the notable differences and improvements within the community from the start of the project in 2006 and the wider community’s perception of the improvements.

Improvements/initiatives highlighted included:

- The creation of a recycling point in the void garages in the Blackwell area. It was explained that this had been a site that had in past had attracted anti-social behaviour and was “an eye-sore”.
- Funding of a Neighbourhood Sergeant and Community Beat Officer for three years in the SSCF area. It was reported that as a result of the success and improved crime prevention of this police presence that the Constabulary would continue funding these posts at the conclusion of the project period.
- Improvements in the working relationships across the agencies including the Police, Fire and Rescue Service, the Youth Service and other stakeholders. Initiatives cited that have seen all the agencies, Members of the Board and volunteers working together included “Your Community Matters Events” and “Beat Sweep”.

Reference was made to the notable downturn in crime in the area, for example, automobile thefts (down by 25%) and anti-social behaviour (recorded as being down by 35%).

Members heard about the expectations of those involved beyond the completion of the SSCF Project in terms of sustainability of the work undertaken in the communities. Whilst it was well received that the Police would continue to fund the Neighbourhood Sergeant and Beat P.C., the importance of other professionals working with the young people was also highlighted. One suggestion was that the training of voluntary youth workers could assist.

The role of the volunteers beyond March 2010 was highlighted as was the devolvement as well as involvement of the Community once the Project had completed.

Reference was also made to the layout of the estates that had in the past precluded a sense of community spirit because of the division of the roads and layout of “the squares”. It was reported that the SSCF Project had assisted in breaking down a lot of

the “mental barriers” created by the Estates layout and through the dedication of those involved the intimidation issues were starting to disappear.

In conclusion, it was reiterated that the work of the Centre would carry on beyond March 2010, even without funding, as a lot could be done without a huge financial resource, for example, “Community Days” where the resource required was the time of volunteers. However, it was stated that without the smaller amounts of funding from the Small Voluntary Grants Pot, which for example had allocated a grant to a small group church group who provide a meeting place for people with disabilities, to purchase musical instruments. This type of assistance did not affect the whole community, but made a huge difference to a few families living in the area and could be lost. On a larger scale, the loss of Youth Workers, who had assisted and put on events in the school holidays, for example, may have to be undertaken by volunteers.

The impact on individuals and their achievements through attendance at the Centre was also referred to as was the continuance of long term Government funding for projects by the Young Persons’ representative .

In a final personal comment from an SSCF Board Member it was noted - “We are proud of what has been achieved. It has taught us a lot about our own community.”

## **West Lancashire Neighbourhood Management Evaluation Presentation – 27 January 2010**

### **Presentation 3**

Members received a presentation from Mr Chris Allen, Local Improvement Advisor. The presentation ‘West Lancashire Neighbourhood Management Evaluation’ was supported by a series of slides.<sup>(6)</sup>

In his opening to the presentation The Local Improvement Advisor highlighted the five key points used to describe what neighbourhood management is, as defined by the Neighbourhood Management Policy Action Team (PAT 4):

- (1) Someone with overall responsibility for service delivery at neighbourhood level (*coordination*)
- (2) Genuine community involvement and leadership (*customer insight and ownership*)
- (3) Systematic planned approach tackling local problems (*intelligence drive*)
- (4) Resources for delivery (*using money better*)
- (5) Effective mechanisms for delivery (*appropriate interventions*)

He then went on to explain the criteria sent to authorities and the process of assessment for participation in the SSCF Projects countrywide.

Members heard about the ethos of neighbourhood management and how by improvement and efficiency services could get better and savings could be achieved. Mr Allen explained the SSCF Outcomes, including the impact in the identified areas on reducing crime, fear of crime and perceptions of anti-social behaviour, developing cleaner, safer and greener public spaces, increasing the capacity of the community in decision-making and influencing service delivery and improving the quality of life in

those areas and making service providers more responsive. He then went on to explain the methodology used for the evaluation of the Project.

The presentation included an overview of what could and had been achieved through assessing

- the Strengths - to celebrate and promote
- the Weaknesses - in order improve
- the Opportunities - to develop in the future
- and the Threats - risks

The accompanying slides evidenced the above and in discussion during the course of the presentation particularly reference was made to:

### **Strengths**

- The Strong and effective engagement and empowerment of dedicated community members – evidenced by the passion and confidence gained.
- The tackling of local ‘eye sores’ and environmental change, changing perceptions of safety – evidenced by the affect on people’s response to the physical changes in their communities.
- Increased and positive relationships between local people and statutory agencies (especially young people and the Youth Services, Police and Fire and Rescue Service) – evidenced by the changes of attitude from young people, “trust” with uniforms and the “domino” effect.
- Initiatives that bring the community and stakeholders together to focus on joint problem solving – evidenced by the “Beat Sweeps” and engendering a culture to solve “our” problems.
- Confidence raised amongst community members as individuals and in groups – evidenced by neighbourhood management sowing the seeds of a “culture change” – to change communities.

### **Weaknesses**

- Project centre rather than process centred programme – opportunity to “roll-out” to another area, for example, using a neighbourhood management model within a current “set-up”, for example through a Parish Council.
- Lack of local data and baseline information – evidenced by the “barriers” where there can be a lack of willingness to share information, but experience had shown that agencies will “back track”.
- Limited community engagement – evidenced by the use of a dedicated “team member” that may have assisted.

### **Opportunities**

- Recognition of value by service providers (evidenced by Police continuation of posts). Good practice to build on (eg youth interventions, ‘Your Community Matters’, confidence raising initiatives, theme groups etc.) – engendering the response of taking ownership and the invaluable contribution of the volunteers.
- Development of Tenants’ and Residents’ Associations as hubs for building on NM – evidencing the need to create an infrastructure
- Mitigation against possible public service cuts via a ‘Total Place’ approach - to build on NM principles.

## Threats

- End of government funding period
- Loss of key staff across a range of providers
- Remaining negative perceptions of the “council”
- Remaining negative perceptions of area and residents – sometimes “historical”.
- Fragility of some working relationships.

Evidence of cost-savings and value for money were also presented and examples included the reduction in vehicle crime, criminal damage and deliberate fires. The latter resulting in the downturn of “call-outs” for tenders for more serious incidents.

In conclusion it was stated that the evaluation was seen as an assessment of the lessons learned to enable improvement and not an end of programme report and that the Board event scheduled for 10 February 2010 would be used as a development workshop.

In the discussion session at the conclusion of the presentation the following issues, comments and questions were referred to:

- The breakdown of the crime reduction figures and the possibility of “hot-spot” tasking to deploy resources.
- Additional police presence in an area can deter perpetrators, but displaces them elsewhere.
- Examples of how early intervention and building-up relationships is a key element to crime reduction.
- The provision of positive activities to deter misbehaviour.
- Stakeholders working together to common goals to bring about positive outcomes.
- The importance of Youth Inclusion Projects/Panels.
- Neighbourhood Management as a catalyst to help bring about a culture change.
- Sustainability once change has happened. Only those committed to change will remain.
- Becoming less dependent.

In a general discussion additional comments and questions were raised in respect of the following:

- Neighbourhood Charters and their role in encouraging communities to become less dependent.
- The parameters of a Neighbourhood Management approach and Neighbourhood Charters.
- Change of ethos to include the devolvement of powers to neighbourhoods.
- The process of establishing Charter ownership and using them for community engagement to achieve improvement and ownership.
- The boundaries of a Neighbourhood “scheme”. For example, could it be on “Ward” boundaries or a cluster across 3 or 4 areas.
- Input through the Market Town Initiatives.
- The service provision of statutory bodies and the devolvement of services not only from the Borough Council but other service providers too.

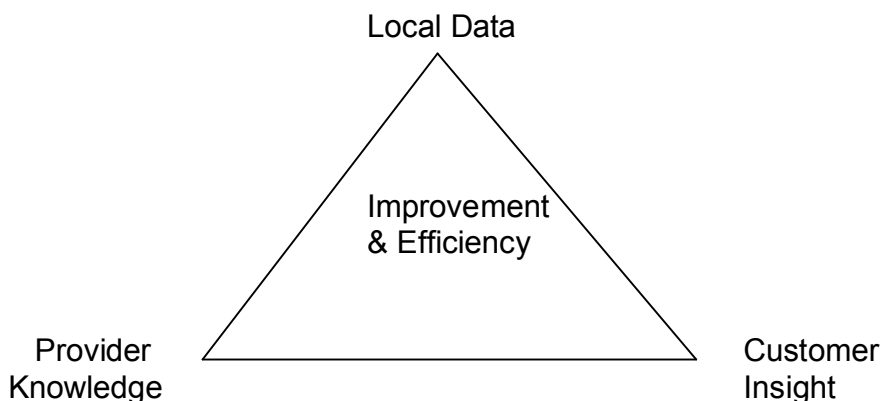


On behalf of Members the Chairman thanked Mr Allen for his attendance and contribution to the topic under review.

## **Workshop Session – 27 January 2010**

A dedicated workshop session was held towards the end of the review. Working in groups Members addressed a series of questions. The questions and summary of the group work is appended below:

### **What is Neighbourhood Management?**



- Bringing Partners, Community, Residents together
- Including Youth Organisations and Small Clubs
- Existing activities and provide what's missing
- Needs to be focussed
- Charters provide a structure for NW (Neighbourhood Working)
- Individual Responsibility for the area you live in
- Community Pride
- Develops Communities

### **What are the benefits?**

- Improved services
- Improved efficiency
- Cleaner, Safer, Greener
- Partnership Working
- Cost Savings
- Improved relationships with agencies
- Community confidence and empowerment
- Reduction in crime
- Raising community confidence
- Access to participation
- Pride and Respect for Neighbourhood
- Close the gap between older and younger people
- Shaping and Influencing decision-making
- Develops more volunteers
- Better understanding of services

- Names to faces
- More Pro-active
- Joined up working approach

**What are the costs and risks?**

Incorrect personnel involved  
Sustainability  
Staff wages

COSTS	RISKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need Neighbourhood Manager</li> <li>• Shared Costs</li> <li>• Are savings, but difficult to quantify (business involvement too)</li> <li>• Re-skilling and re-engineering of staff and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People losing interest</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• One size does not fit all</li> <li>• Failure to deliver</li> <li>• Raising expectations</li> <li>• Loss of staff</li> </ul>

**What approach should we take going forward?**

- Trial – minimum cost
- Based around a Parish
- Small enough to have local pride and be involved
- Big enough for agencies to change services
- Burscough?
- Self-sustaining
- Identify local groups to become “hubs”
- Plan and pick project areas
- NM areas to be manageable size
- Democratic accountability

**Staff resource**

- Minimum 1 person to liaise with all agencies
  - Neighbourhood Manager to “kick-start”
  - Act as a catalyst
- + identify additional funding  
+develop volunteers

Following conclusion of feedback from the group work, the workshop session concluded and final comments noted included:

- Location of a proposed “pilot” West Lancashire Neighbourhood Management scheme, referred to as the ‘West Lancashire Neighbourhood Management model.’ (*“the model”*)
- Feasibility and structure of “the model”.
- Idea of “the model” being rolled-out throughout the Borough.
- Suggested locations for the “pilot” (*Burscough, Halsall or another area within Skelmersdale*).
- Building on from the existing Neighbourhood Management programme.

- A trial that can be undertaken at “minimum cost”.
- Existing PACT meetings as a source of interaction with other service providers.
- A model that is flexible to recognise the particular needs of individual communities – “one size does not fit all”.
- The need for a change of ethos that allows “services” to be devolved to the community.

### **Meeting held on 3 March 2010 in the Council Chamber, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk**

The Committee considered the notes<sup>(5)</sup> emanating from the Visit with Members of the SSCF Board on 26 January and the Workshop Session<sup>(7)</sup> held on 27 January 2010.

The Committee also considered the draft of the final report, and recommendations, of its in-depth review ‘Neighbourhood Management – Costs and Benefits’ and agreed a series of recommendations to Cabinet and Council.

## SEMINARS

### Neighbourhood Charters – Urban and Rural Learning Exchange Seminar – 13 January 2010

#### Seminar 1

The Chairman, accompanied by the Assistant Chief Executive had attended this event facilitated by North West 'Together We Can Network' to hear about "neighbourhood" approaches across the country and provided feedback at the Workshop session held on 27 January 2010.

It was explained that the event, hosted by Lancashire County Council, included contributions from three authorities – Oldham MBC, King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC and Staffordshire Moorlands DC as well as contribution from Manchester University who spoke on the study of the "national picture" and community contracts. The event concentrated, in the main, on the theoretical approaches local authorities had taken, and advice on the framework to produce Neighbourhood Charters for their communities. In contrast to the practical methods highlighted at the meeting with SSCF Board Members on 26 January 2010.

It was stated that the representative from Manchester University had spoken of the evidence of the study (*that had evaluated 11 areas across the country who had piloted community contracts*) which showed that community contracts can help local people to understand the services they are entitled too, build better relationships with their councils and other agencies with a view to securing improvements to services and neighbourhoods. Also evidenced were samples of community agreements already available in communities, for example the "Community Pride Charter" produced by Biddulph East Neighbourhood Partnership.

Neighbourhood working was explained in a similar way to the West Lancs. SSCF Project, in terms of shifting from a dependency culture on agencies, helping communities to understand local services better and building up trust amongst agencies and residents, although the practical examples were not highlighted, but costs and resources was certainly a consideration, as evidenced by the example that one neighbourhood management scheme had a virtual team of 8 and another the equivalent of 1.5 Neighbourhood Manager.

In considering producing "Charters", themes picked-out included the involvement of partner agencies, principal and borough council (*and parish councils also*), other stakeholders, for example social landlords, police and the back-up of good enforcement.

In compiling the "Charters", the importance of a "neighbourhood footprint" and the legacy of a "feel good factor" to be left behind within those Communities was also referred to.

It was summarised that the Charters offered a different approach from the SSCF Project which is more "action- based" than "paper-based."

## **Better Outcomes for People and Places' – Beacon Open Day facilitated by Chorley Council – 24 February 2010**

### **Seminar 2**

An opportunity was taken to participate in the event. The Chairman, accompanied by the Assistant Chief Executive and Executive Manager Community Services attended the Beacon Open Day facilitated by Chorley Council to hear about partnership working in relation to community activities, the civic pride campaign and the Chorley Smile Weeks of Action.

Of particular interest was the roll out of a borough-wide approach to neighbourhood working. It was explained that seven Neighbourhood Areas had been set up using a multi-agency approach. The “neighbourhood team” was supported by a virtual team.

In explaining their approach to neighbourhood working, representatives of the Chorley model had been keen to stress that they were not fully dependent on budgets, but encouraged voluntary activities. Examples of community activities undertaken included Chorley Smile Weeks of Action, “Skip Days” and the Civic Pride Campaign that encouraged residents to get involved and take on some of the responsibility for making a difference to their area.

It was explained that a number of Community Centres in the Chorley area had managed to gain charitable status allowing access to funding that was not available to the Council.

The Executive Manager Community Services further explained initiatives undertaken in the Chorley borough in relation to enforcement, including a successful cross boundary “all vehicles” exercise which had taken an intensive approach to the issue by involving most of the enforcement agencies, including Customs & Excise, the Police as well as the Council’s own enforcement officers.

### **Project Plan**

The Project Plan was reviewed at each meeting of the Committee and is attached as Appendix 1.

## Other Information

Referenced material information that has assisted the work of the review and compilation of this report:

- (1) 'Safer, Stronger Communities Fund Neighbourhood Management Project' - (Presentation 1: Brian Lussey, Strategy and Project Development Manager, West Lancashire Borough Council)
- (2) 'Neighbourhood Working Case Study Visits to Chorley Borough Council; Halton Borough Council and Newcastle under Lyme) - (Presentation 2: Karen Warmington, Neighbourhood Manager, West Lancashire Borough Council)
- (3) 'Cost of Fire – Moorside, Digmoor and Tanhouse 2003-2006 & 2006-2009'
- (4) 'Halton Neighbourhood Management Project Outcomes'
- (5) Notes of the visit to meet with Members of the SSCF Board 26 January 2010
- (6) West Lancashire Neighbourhood Management Evaluation (Presentation 3: Chris Allen, Local Improvement Advisor)
- (7) Notes of the Workshop Session held on 27 January 2010

Other material information that has also assisted the review and compilation of this report:

- Minutes of the Meetings of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 June 2009, 23 September 2009, 2 December 2009 and 3 March 2010.

Supplementary Information:

- Neighbourhood Charters – Urban & Rural – Learning Exchange Seminar – 13 January 2010
- Better Outcomes for People and Places – Beacon Open Day – 24 February 2010

Documents:

- 'LSP Executive Report [www.westlancslsp.org](http://www.westlancslsp.org)
- 'Commissioned Independent Evaluation Report – when available
- 'Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders: Final Evaluation Report (The case for Neighbourhood Management and key 'how to' lessons sections). [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)
- 'Lancashire Local Area Agreement. [www.lancashirepartnership.co.uk](http://www.lancashirepartnership.co.uk)
- West Lancashire Borough Council's Sustainable Community Strategy for 2007-2017. [www.westlancs.gov.uk](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk)

Note: The documents listed are not attached to the report but are available through the web links above or, on request, from Member Services.

## **OFFICER SUPPORT**

Lead Officer: Kim Webber, Assistant Chief Executive  
Officers Reporting: Dave Tilleray, Executive Manager Community Services  
Karen Warmington, Neighbourhood Manager  
Andrew Hill, Environmental Protection & Community Safety  
Manager  
Brian Lussey, Strategy & Project Development Manager

Scrutiny Support Officer: Cathryn Jackson, Principal Overview & Scrutiny Officer

Legal Officer:  
(Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee): Mike Hynes, Assistant Solicitor

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

It is envisaged that a Neighbourhood Management Project, were it to be implemented within the Borough, would have a possible impact on the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area thereby contributing to the sustainability/community strategy aims.

## **FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Implementing a neighbourhood management approach carries costs and benefits. Should Members be of the view that a neighbourhood management approach should be approved sufficient resources would need to be identified from partnership and other resources in order to ensure the initiative was a success.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

There is a risk that given the tight financial climate facing public services that resources to implement a neighbourhood management approach will either not be forthcoming or may be found at the detriment of another service area. In a tight financial situation there is a risk that embarking on a Neighbourhood Management Project would raise residents aspirations to a unrealistic level.

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of a significant impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

### **Appendices**

(1) Project Plan (*not attached*)