



AGENDA ITEM NO.4

ST GEORGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP 11TH SEPTEMBER 2012

Title: Better Neighbourhood Working Pilot

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RECOMMENDATION

To note the council's proposals for piloting a new approach to Neighbourhood working within the St George Neighbourhood Partnership Area.

That the Neighbourhood Committee and Neighbourhood Partnership agree to work with the council to:

- develop a customer charter for neighbourhood working
- identify local priorities to inform the work of the team

Background

1. The City Council has a wide range of responsibilities to tackle issues within neighbourhoods, including carrying out work to improve community cohesion and engagement, undertaking educational work about citizen responsibilities, engaging with customers to tackle neighbourhood issues (in a variety of ways), undertaking preventative work to tackle neighbourhood issues at their roots, and formal enforcement action. For example, antisocial behaviour is currently tackled using most of these methods across a number of different services and partners.
2. These functions are distributed across a number of teams, in a number of Service Directorates within Neighbourhoods and City Development (N&CD) some of whom are structured geographically (patch working, e.g. Area Housing Advisors) and others who are process structured (by type of work e.g. ASB officers).
3. There are key issues within neighbourhoods that customers are not satisfied with the council's response to. Data from Neighbourhood Partnerships, Neighbourhood Forums, community outreach work, feedback from customers (including anecdotal feedback, Quality of Life survey results, Landlord Services

surveys), service data gathering and internal mechanisms (from scrutiny enquiry exercises through to officer feedback) shows us that there are issues that keep coming back and issues that are simply not resolved properly within neighbourhoods. Additionally, customers often feel that they are not kept informed about the outcomes of their service requests.

4. There are a number of examples in Bristol where better neighbourhood working has been extremely effective at tackling neighbourhood issues. Officers from many different teams came together as a task group to tackle a wide variety of issues on Stapleton Road and this has dramatically improved the street scene in this area over the last year. These examples have shown us that pooling existing resources delivers better results and the council are seeking to embed this way of working within neighbourhoods.
5. National guidance¹ shows that the best solutions to neighbourhood issues include the following elements:
 - Community involvement – including ensuring that local people are part of the solution and developing customer charters between the council and local people.
 - Clear and targeted education and information available to ensure that everyone knows their responsibilities
 - Public services being committed to dealing with issues quickly, at the root of the problem, and in a holistic way to prevent escalation
 - Robust enforcement action for ongoing issues

The Proposal:

6. That a new approach to neighbourhood working is piloted across four Neighbourhood Partnership areas; Cabot, Clifton and Clifton East, Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill, St George and Greater Fishponds.

7. That the main objectives for the pilot are to:

- Enhance the quality of life of Bristol's residents
- Empower people to take positive action for their own neighbourhoods
- Increase problem resolution and enforcement of neighbourhood issues
- Reduce crime
- Increase street and estate cleanliness
- Increase customer satisfaction with the council's response to their issues

8. That the key principles for the pilot are to:

- Ensure that engagement, prevention, education and enforcement are used together as the solution to neighbourhood issues.
- Explore and implement creative solutions to existing problems
- Use innovative technology and communication methods to maximise information sharing and communications
- Tackle the roots of problems as well as dealing with everyday issues

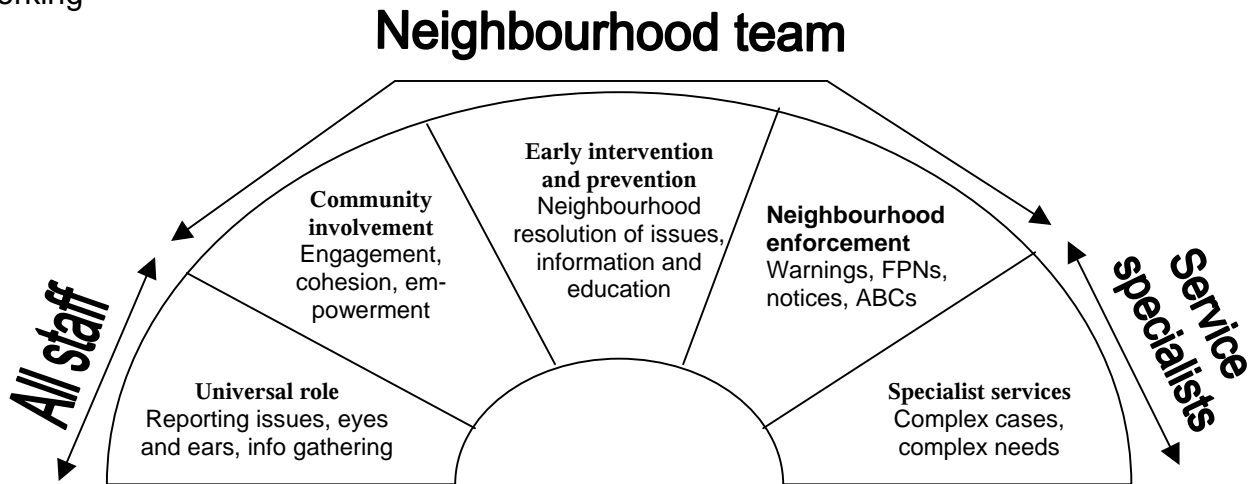
¹ Guidance from the Local Government Association, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for Communities and Local Government, Keep Britain Tidy (variety of guidance)

- Maintain a rapid and ongoing feedback loop for customers and focus on customer satisfaction
- Proactively manage all neighbourhood issues until they are complete or escalated for further action, and maintain the feedback to customers until the problem is solved
- Take joint responsibility for the work of the team and share resources and skills to enable this.
- Ensure that officers and partners work together to tackle neighbourhood issues in the most effective way
- Be a visible neighbourhood presence and ambassadors for the council within the neighbourhoods.
- Be a first point of contact for customers, while actively promoting reporting of issues through existing mechanisms

9. That the neighbourhood working areas are served by a neighbourhood team of existing staff whose role it is to manage neighbourhoods by informal and formal means. Officers will undertake positive, pro-active work and share responsibility within this team for a wide variety of neighbourhood issues. There will be approximately 30 staff per neighbourhood working area.
10. That the following officers (job titles) form the neighbourhood teams:
 - a. Community Safety Officers, Safer Bristol
 - b. Anti Social Behaviour Team, Safer Bristol
 - c. Neighbourhood Development Officers, Neighbourhoods and Communities
 - d. Area Coordinators, Neighbourhoods and Communities
 - e. Area Environment Officers, Environment and Leisure
 - f. Street Scene Enforcement Officers, Safer Bristol
 - g. Dog Wardens, Safer Bristol
 - h. Pollution Control Officers, Safer Bristol
 - i. Senior Housing Officers, Landlord Services
 - j. Assistant Housing Officers, Landlord Services
 - k. Tenant Participation Officers, Landlord Services
11. That officers within the neighbourhood team for the pilot area will have a clear work plan which will set out their roles within the neighbourhood team. Part of the work plan will be common to all roles within the team and part will be specific to the specialist tasks that each officer role undertakes. This working agreement will be developed and tested during the pilot.
12. That local priorities for the neighbourhood team will be formally agreed by each Neighbourhood Committee and regular progress reports will be provided. Some of the priorities may be specific to each Neighbourhood, and some may be common across the whole neighbourhood working area. The process for choosing priorities and communicating feedback on the team's work will be tested during this pilot.
13. Public engagement and visibility of the team is an important part of improving the perception of how the council delivers services within neighbourhoods. It is proposed that a customer charter is developed for each neighbourhood partnership area which sets out the role of the council and the role of local people in improving neighbourhoods. This will be drafted and developed during the pilot.

14. That the neighbourhood team forms part of a wider approach by the council to improve services to neighbourhoods. This approach is illustrated in Diagram 1 below and sets out role for all council officers that work within Bristol's neighbourhoods.

Diagram 1: Neighbourhoods and City Development approach to Neighbourhood working



15. That service level agreements with key partners will be developed during the pilot in order to embed partnership working within this new approach to neighbourhood working.
16. That the new approach to neighbourhood working is implemented in 3 phases as detailed in table 2 below.

Table 2: phases for implementation for better neighbourhood working

	Activity	Date
Phase 1	Implement a pilot across approx 1/3 of Bristol to introduce and test a new approach to neighbourhood working (already underway)	October 2012 – March 2013
Phase 2	Establish the new approach to neighbourhood working, modified according to knowledge gained during the pilot, across two further neighbourhood working areas (thereby covering the whole city)	April 2013
Phase 3	Full review of Neighbourhood Working project with the view to expanding on the work of the team and integrating more partners and services.	October 2013

Equalities Impact Assessment

Initial screening forms have been completed for the Better Neighbourhood Working pilot and full impact assessments are being completed for both staff and local community impact. Assessing equalities implications will form an ongoing workstream within this pilot.