

<b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY PANEL</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 4</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup> December 2008</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Head of Strategic Growth and Development**

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### **REVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD INVESTMENT**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

Following the recent Senior Management Review and to prepare more effectively to respond to recent legislative and inspection changes, a review of our existing Neighbourhood Investment Strategy has begun. As part of this review, Members will be updated, via a presentation, on (i) the current status of the Neighbourhood Investment Strategy and (ii) outline proposals for strengthening the approach in the future.

#### **2. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT**

The Council's approach to working with and supporting our neighbourhoods is key to the effective delivery of our corporate priorities, the Sustainable Community Strategy *and* the Local Area Agreement. There is an increasing expectation that our services will respond appropriately to the needs and expectations of our citizens, and this will form a significant part of the impending Comprehensive Area Assessment process, the new audit regime being led by the Audit Commission.

The outline proposals for discussion with Members will provide a robust response to these challenges whilst also ensuring that both the Council and our partners can plan and design services more effectively to help deliver transformation and regeneration of our communities.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

Launched at the start of 2007, the Neighbourhood Investment Strategy was developed to ensure that all of our communities benefit from growth and regeneration. It is based on three core themes of activity:

- Community Planning – formal medium and long term planning with local community stakeholders to ensure investment is secured via our growth and regeneration plans
- Strategic Alignment – ensuring that all Council Departments and all of our key partners are signed up to and operating within the principles of Neighbourhood Investment, and that a shared approach to problem solving is adopted
- Using Data as Intelligence – making better use of information and data to help make informed decisions about our neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Investment has enjoyed a mixed response from both local communities and key stakeholders. Some areas have embraced the concept of long term community planning whilst others have expressed a stronger desire to focus on current issues affecting their neighbourhood.

An initial review meeting involving key partners was held in November 2008 at which a new model, building on the existing Neighbourhood Investment Strategy but responding to local, regional and national policy changes, was discussed which focuses on delivering a 'neighbourhood management' solution for our communities – essentially, a multi-partner approach to problem solving, community planning and driving the improvement agenda, which connects the 'bottom up' (i.e. community engagement, local aspirations, local needs), with the 'top down' (i.e. legislation, regional policy, data and intelligence).

Whilst a key focus of this new approach will be to resolve the root causes of current issues affecting a neighbourhood, there will need to be an element of medium and long term planning to ensure the original values of the Neighbourhood Investment Strategy – to ensure all communities benefit from growth and regeneration – are maintained.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES**

At this early stage of thinking, Members will be asked to provide feedback on the current Neighbourhood Investment approach, and to make initial comments on the emerging thinking that will be presented to them at the Panel meeting.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

Any new model that is developed to support our work within neighbourhoods is likely to have far-reaching implications across the Council and beyond. For example, there is likely to be an expectation that Council departments and our partners adapt, modify and/or redesign their services to better meet the needs of different communities in response to the outcomes of neighbourhood focussed interventions.

#### **6. CONSULTATION**

This project is at an early conceptual stage and so an initial workshop event has taken place with key partners only. A fully worked up proposal will be developed over time which will be subject to appropriate consultation.

#### **7. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

The outcomes of discussions at the Scrutiny Panel meeting will contribute to the development of the new neighbourhoods model. The experiences and opinions of Members is critical to ensure that any new model best meets the needs of elected Members in their capacity as community leaders.

#### **8. NEXT STEPS**

Following discussion at the Scrutiny Panel meeting, a detailed proposal will be developed for wider discussion and consultation with officers, elected Members and other organisations.

#### **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable.

#### **10. APPENDICES**

The Neighbourhood Investment Strategy Cabinet Report, November 2006