

<b>Parish Council Liaison</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 4</b>
<b>23 March 2010</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Director of Operations**

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### **Neighbourhood Council Progress Report**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

To provide the Parish Council Liaison meeting with an overview of the progress of Neighbourhood Councils so far in order that Parish Councils can provide input into their continuing development.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

Neighbourhood Councils were introduced in May 2009 and meet quarterly. The Parish Council Liaison meeting has requested an update on Neighbourhood Council work since its previous meeting.

#### **3. KEY ISSUES**

There are a number of key issues already identified that require improvement to maximise the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Councils:

- A meeting has been arranged for 21<sup>st</sup> April at 7pm at the Town Hall for Parish Councils to discuss their relationship to the Neighbourhood Councils with the Head of Neighbourhoods, Democratic Services and the Neighbourhood Management Team. All Parishes in the Rural North area (formally known as North West 1) have been invited, as agreed at the Rural North Neighbourhood Council Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> March 2010. A request for 2 members of each Parish to attend has been included. All Ward Councillors for the Rural North area have also been invited and the Neighbourhood Council Chair, Cllr Pat Nash.
- Agendas, Minutes and associated paperwork have substantial amounts of jargon and can alienate members of the community and the meetings need to be more interactive.
- New approaches to marketing Neighbourhood Councils need to be considered to boost public attendance and give clarity over the differences between Neighbourhood Management and Neighbourhood Councils;
- The Neighbourhood Council meetings should be less officer, more member lead;
- Display Boards will now be used to inform the meeting of the 'You Said We Did' part of the agenda, with relevant staff in attendance for any queries by attendees at the Neighbourhood Council meetings;
- An initial Community Planning Event has taken place in the Rural North area and further discussion on the approach to Community Planning work will be discussed at the Parish and Neighbourhood Council meeting in April;

- The Executive Director of Operations will circulate in writing, information on the Statutory Consultation process for planning to all Parish Councils;
- The Executive Director of Operations is to arrange a meeting between representatives of Parish Councils, the Highways Departments, The Education Department and Planning Department to discuss the Site Allocations planning document in detail.

#### **4. IMPLICATIONS**

There should be a much improved understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Neighbourhood Councils going forward and further wider engagement with communities across Peterborough.

#### **5. CONSULTATION**

Consultation has taken place with Parish Councils, Corporate Management Team, Democratic Services, Media and Communications and the Neighbourhood Management teams and there have been some suggestions for prospective improvements:

- The principles behind Neighbourhood Council activity should be dynamic, informative, interactive and relevant;
- Agendas should focus on feedback from previous meetings and open debate sessions and discussion;
- There should be visually impacting content using mapping and photographs;
- There should be time before the meeting set aside to display items of public interest;
- Cabaret Style seating to give a more informal feel and promote discussion;
- Members should be encouraged to lead the meetings;
- There should be some targeted marketing work, highlighting the differences between the roles and responsibilities of Neighbourhood Councils, Neighbourhood Panels and Parish Councils.

#### **6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

It is anticipated that members of the meeting will discuss the above suggestions, provide challenge to the processes developed, and offer further suggestions for alternative measures.

#### **7. NEXT STEPS**

Following discussions at the Parish Council Liaison meeting, any comments and recommendations will be taken forward as part of the ongoing development of Neighbourhood Councils and the next round expected in early summer (subject to any change)

#### **8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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

None.

#### **9. APPENDICES**

None.