

REVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCILS – Part 2



Report of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee

March 2011

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1. Introduction

At its meeting on 10th November 2010, the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a Task and Finish group to conduct a review of Neighbourhood Councils.

A Task and Finish Group was established to examine this in detail on behalf of the Committee.

The Task and Finish Group comprises the following members:



Cllr Colin Burton
Conservative



Cllr John Fox
Independent



Cllr Stephen Goldspink
English Democrat



Cllr Nazim Khan
Labour



Cllr Nick Sandford
Liberal Democrat



Cllr George Simons
Conservative



Cllr Marion Todd
Conservative

2. Objective of the Review

2.1 Scope

- To review the processes and principles of Neighbourhood Councils and to come forward with recommendations for their continued development
- To examine all aspects of Neighbourhood Councils, including their funding, delegated responsibilities and logistical arrangements
- To look at how the meetings can be developed to meet the expectations of local residents

2.2 Terms of Reference

To review the process and principles of Neighbourhood Councils, taking learning and experience from the first year of operations, in order to produce recommendations for their continued development. The review is to include:

1. The overarching terms of reference for Neighbourhood Councils as set out in the Constitution
2. The range of responsibilities and decision-making powers delegated to Neighbourhood Councils as set out in the Constitution
3. The relationship between Neighbourhood Councils and other Council forums, committees and meetings
4. The relationship between Neighbourhood Councils and other neighbourhood or community focussed forums (e.g. Neighbourhood Panels), to ensure minimum duplication and maximum delivery
5. The process of engaging with Councillors outside the formal Neighbourhood Council meeting to progress decisions made and actions agreed during the meeting
6. The revenue and capital funding delegated to Neighbourhood Councils
7. The process for making decisions on allocating delegated finance, including Section 106 funds
8. The logistical arrangements that support Neighbourhood Councils, including meeting venues, accessibility, times, dates, frequency, presentation including sound equipment, refreshments, seating arrangements and the associated costs.
9. The methods used to promote Neighbourhood Council meetings to the public and partners to ensure maximum and appropriate levels of attendance and public participation
10. The processes used to develop the agendas, including reviewing how best to ensure agendas are relevant, meaningful and interesting and how best to involve the public in the debates
11. The process of reviewing previous actions and how those results are presented to the public
12. The process for distributing the agenda packs before, and the minutes after, each Neighbourhood Council meeting

3. Approach and Timetable

To complete the review in a timely manner, the Task and Finish Group agreed to organise the review into four distinct but broad areas of focus:

1. **Financial**, including revenue and capital funding, and the costs associated with supporting Neighbourhood Councils
2. **Decision Making Powers and responsibilities** delegated to Neighbourhood Councils
3. **Relationships** with other committees, panels, groups, forums etc, both internal and external
4. **Engagement** with the public, officers, press, Councillors etc, both internal and external

In order to meet the timetable for feedback on the Cabinet's financial proposals, the first of these four areas of focus (relating to financial issues) was reviewed first. The findings and recommendations from Part 1 of the review were submitted to the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2011 where the recommendations put forward were agreed. The report was then submitted to Cabinet on 7 February 2011.

This Stage 2 report focuses on the remaining aspects of the review referred to above.

3.1 Reporting Timetable

The reporting timetable for the second stage of the review will be:

COMMITTEE	DATE
Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee	9 th March 2011
Cabinet	21 st March 2011
Council	16 th May 2011

3.2 Key Witnesses

The Task and Finish Group identified key witnesses to be interviewed throughout the course of the review, and the following witnesses were invited for interview as part of the second stage of the review:

1st February 2011

- Helen Edwards, Solicitor to the Council
- John Harrison, Executive Director of Strategic Resources
- Alex Daynes, Senior Governance Officer
- Paul Smith, Development Implementation Manager (Planning)
- Cate Harding, Neighbourhood Manager, Central and East
- Councillor Yvonne Lowndes, Chair of the Neighbourhood Councils in the Central and East area
- Councillor David Over, Chair of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities

10 February 2011

- Andrew Mackintosh, Director of Communications
- Simon Machen, Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services
- Kevin Roddis (resident)
- Wayne Stimson (resident)

11 February 2011

- Gary Roberts, Area Committee Support Manager & Neighbourhood Crime & Justice Coordinator, Luton Borough Council

14 February 2011

- Adrian Chapman, Head of Neighbourhoods
- Paul Phillipson, Director of Operations
- Councillor Peter Hiller, Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning

4. Process and Findings

4.1 Stage 2 Review

The Task and Finish Group met on the following dates:

- 26th January 2011 Group Meeting to discuss way forward for Part 2
- 31 January 2010 Group Meeting to prep for interviews
- 1st February 2011 Interviews with key witnesses
- 10th February 2011 Interviews with key witnesses
- 11th February 2011 Interview with key witness
- 14th February 2011 Interviews with key witnesses
- 16th February 2011 Group Meeting to prepare draft report and recommendations

4.2 Findings

This report will deal with the findings relevant to Part 2 of the review only. All other findings have been reported in the report from the first stage of the review.

The review group wrote to the following organisations and people for their comments on how they thought Neighbourhood Councils were currently working and for their ideas on how they could be improved and developed further:

- Parish Councils
- Rural Ward Councillors
- Police
- Housing Associations
- Community Associations
- Residents Associations
- Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service
- Werrington Neighbourhood Council

The full list of those contacted and responses received are attached at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

All Councillors were invited to comment on Neighbourhood Councils during Part 1 of the review. Rural Councillors were given a second opportunity to comment during Part 2 of the review as stage 2 covered the relationship between Parish Councils and the Rural North Neighbourhood Council.

A short questionnaire was issued to the Youth Council and a selection of young people from Hampton and the Millfield area. The questionnaire sent out and a summary of their results is attached at Appendix 3.

(i) Interviews with key witnesses

Interviews with all key witnesses focussed on helping to establish what their perception was of Neighbourhood Councils, how this may have differed from their original vision, and what needs to change, if anything, to make sure they are delivering for the community.

The Solicitor to the Council, Helen Edwards, was asked specifically about issues associated with the Constitution, including delegated responsibilities, as well as the community action planning process and its status within the council.

The Executive Director of Strategic Resources, John Harrison, was asked about matters relevant to stage 1 of the review, particularly matters associated with financial processes and disaggregated budgets. The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering was also interviewed on matters largely relevant to stage 1 of the review, particularly those associated with the Planning Obligations Implementation Strategy.

The Senior Governance Officer, Alex Daynes, was asked about governance support, and gave suggestions for how delegations could be better used and processes improved.

Wayne Stimson and Kevin Roddis were asked about their perceptions of why Neighbourhood Councils haven't been successful so far. Both suggested ideas and improvements linked to needing to define the overall purpose of Neighbourhood Councils and demonstrating that the public truly do have a voice and an influence over what is decided.

The interview with the Director of Communications, Andrew Mackintosh, centred on the marketing and communications activity delivered so far for Neighbourhood Councils. Andrew suggested many ways of improving awareness and attendance through better and more innovative marketing techniques.

The Executive Director of Operations, Paul Phillipson, gave his views about the potential that Neighbourhood Councils offer to deliver real results for local people, from relatively local issues whose resolution has perhaps become blocked, through to larger scale community planning of services, their design and delivery.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning, Councillor Peter Hiller, was asked about his vision for Neighbourhood Councils. Councillor Hiller expressed a clear passion for the principles of Neighbourhood Councils and gave his commitment to supporting the lead officers responsible for delivering them.

Finally, the review group interviewed an officer from Luton Borough Council, Gary Roberts. Gary is the Area Committee Support Manager and Neighbourhood Crime & Justice Coordinator in Luton, and is responsible for co-ordinating all activity associated with Luton's equivalent to Neighbourhood Councils.

Luton Borough Council

Luton Borough Council has been operating Area Committees for over ten years, and before them a similar structure that linked councilors to communities to help make decisions. Luton's model is working well with good levels of public attendance at meetings, full participation from councilors, strategic and operational support from officers at all levels of the organization, and demonstrable delivery coming from agreed actions. Gary emphasized that much of this success is linked to the length of time that Area Committees have been running in Luton and the fact that they have become fully embedded into the council's decision making process.

Gary shared a wealth of knowledge and experience based on the Luton model, and also provided examples of materials and templates used to promote Area Committees and to co-ordinate their output.

(ii) Comments from Councillors

The Review Group would like to thank those Councillors who contributed valuable information to this review process. Whilst it is acknowledged that not every Councillor is in favour of the Neighbourhood Council model, the Task and Finish group have taken a pragmatic view to try to support their continued development. ***Comments received that are relevant to stage 1 of this review have already been reported; all other comments are set out below.***

Councillor David Over

The Neighbourhood Council struggled. Mainly through lack of direction and leadership this NC had significant problems from the start. Immediately, it antagonised the parish councils. These councils have run, with varying degrees of success, for over 100 years and are part of the identity of each village. Volunteer councillors work hard and have a direct connection with the well being of their village.

The NC encouraged individuals and groups, often unelected or single issue supporters, to contribute to the NC. This was seen as a direct attack on elected parish councillors. At the same time parish councillors found they had no vote on the NC.

Consequently, cooperation for the NC from the parish councils is limited. Ward Councillors will support the parish councils because that is where the local vote lies.

The leadership of the NC was poor. With a number of officers coming and going there was no continuity. Leadership was limited and included a tirade against ward councillors for not attending a youth concert in Bretton!

A useful procedure would have been to follow the parish council pattern. The chair and officer put together the agenda. Public contributions would be heard at the beginning of the meeting and then the work of the NC would be carried out by ward councillors.

Recent discussions on changing the nature of the NC show some promise. However, what seems to be suggested is just a consultation body where parish councils can put their views forward. It would be a brave ward councillor to go against the views of their parishes.

Councillor June Stokes

I attended last night's meeting of the above.

It was well attended, especially as it was such a cold night. I really like the idea of the neighbourhood councils as it gives the residents a chance to air their views.

I can't really think of anything that can be improved in the way they are run. But just a suggestion, now and again could we not have a daytime meeting, perhaps in a school hall to get the kids interested in their communities or a meeting in a Warden controlled elderly residents complex i.e. such as Napier Place because the elderly don't like to go out at night.

Councillor George Simons

Re the meeting of December 15th held at the Voyager School.

Plenty of refreshment was available for all.

I have to say I was very disappointed regarding the agenda and subsequent voting to approve funding for listed items. Plenty of time was given for discussion with the attending public. Alas only a handful turned up. This may have been due to lack of notification as it only appeared in the E.T. paper the day before.

Elected members were issued with all relevant information well in advance of the meeting. Too much time was wasted with back and forth comments regarding each item by a couple of Councillors when a straight forward yes or no vote should suffice.

It must have appeared to those public that the Councillors were not acting in the correct manner, and therefore it created a poor impression and this could have a knock on effect for attending future meetings.

Without the public support these meetings could be discontinued. The attendance of above consisted of about 30 people with the majority being Councillors and Council Officers.

Ideally local problems should be dealt with by the elected Ward Councillors. Also giving the public more say so that it is felt they are actually involved.

(iii) Survey results

A short survey was issued at the last round of Neighbourhood Council meetings and is attached at appendix 4. For the purposes of this report, the focus is on the following survey questions.

- Why have you attended your Neighbourhood Council?
- How would you prefer to receive feedback from your Neighbourhood Council?
- How did you hear about this meeting?
- Do you have any other venues that you think these meetings should be held at to increase attendance?
- What changes would you make that you think would really encourage your friends and neighbours to attend Neighbourhood Councils regularly?
- Do you have any other comments regarding the Neighbourhood Council, for example what their objective should be, choice of venue, etc?

68 surveys have been completed, and the results are shown at appendix 5. Many comments were added to completed surveys, **but only those directly associated with this stage of the Review of Neighbourhood Councils are captured in this report.** ALL other results and comments were recorded in the report for the first stage of the Review.

***N.B.** Surveys were completed anonymously in most cases, and it is therefore possible that some of the responses are from partner organisations, councillors and officers.*

(iv) Information from other local authorities

N.B. Information directly associated with this stage of the Review of Neighbourhood Councils is included below; all other information was included in the stage 1 report.

Thurrock Council

Thurrock Council are in the process of establishing Area Forums, but report that it is unlikely that any funding will be delegated to them. Their proposal is that each forum is chaired by a Councillor and supported by a Head of Service, but that they will receive no additional allowance for doing so. Instead, a budget will be devolved to each individual Councillor.

Luton Borough Council

This Council operate 5 Area Committees with an approximately equal population size in each. They also operate a model of Ward forums – a meeting specific to each ward that runs immediately before an Area Committee meeting.

See section 4.2 (i) for more details.

North Lincolnshire Council

This Council is currently in the process of developing Local Area Forums, and there will be one in each of the 5 areas of North Lincolnshire, typically covering around 3 electoral wards each. The first meeting of the pilot was due to be held in December 2010, and consisted of a mixed group of elected members (who Chair), officers from the Council and partner agencies, community members, and trained community ambassadors. The local parish/town council is also represented.

In addition, they have been working with the Community Development Foundation on the design of their new arrangements, and a community involvement project has been running since June 2010 as a pathfinder for this. A learning report from this was due to be drafted in January 2011.

Officer support is provided by the Council's Stronger Communities team. They have appointed an Area Based Working Programme Manager who is leading on the design and support of the process.

Swindon Borough Council

Swindon provided a great deal of information about their 'Connecting People, Connecting Places' initiative which they developed around two years ago. They have divided Swindon into 7 'clusters' or areas to work more closely with their communities. Ward Councillors and Cluster Leads (existing senior managers within the Council) were given the freedom to develop cluster based working in whatever way was most appropriate. In one area (West) this has resulted in the development of an area forum. Other area work has been based on networking, open invitation events, project based activity etc.

They have been developing this work over the last 2 years with progress being reviewed annually. The programme has changed considerably during its development.

The West Area forum does not have decision making powers. Instead it is to enable members of the public to raise or take forward issues with other members of the community, the Council and other public sector partners. It is supported by the Cluster Lead and other invited officers depending on items submitted by the public for the agenda. The meetings are held monthly with attendance of around 50 people.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations for Part 2

Alongside the recommendations made in the first stage review, the recommendations set out below continue to strengthen the role of Neighbourhood Councils in Peterborough, and both clarify and confirm the important role they will play in the future of our city.

The principles by which the recommendations in this report have been made centre on (i) learning from the first few months of Neighbourhood Council delivery in practice, and (ii) taking that learning and using it to redevelop the model so it places Neighbourhood Councils at the heart of decision making and development in our communities and provides a robust vehicle for delivering the Big Society.

As with the overall approach taken during the review process, the recommendations are set out in three distinct but inter-related sections:

- Decision making powers and responsibilities
- Relationships and organisation
- Engagement

Section A: Decision making powers and responsibilities

The review group firmly believe that Neighbourhood Councils must have and be seen to have the same status as other formal committees of the Council. There is a balance to be achieved between formal committee structure and informal engagement, and this is addressed in further recommendations below. However, initially the review group recommend that the term 'Neighbourhood Council' be replaced with the term 'Area Committee'. This will help to reinforce the fact that these are formal committee meetings and an extension of existing decision making structures. Additionally however the name change will also support the principles of a relaunch for the new municipal year – a new name, a new brand, and a wholly fresh approach to delivering local decision making.

Recommendation 1:

Change the name of Neighbourhood Councils to Area Committees

The change of name alone, although significant, will not be enough to signify the positive and dynamic focus the review group envisage for Area Committees. Although terms of reference and formal delegations do exist at present, the review group feel that there is no clear vision for Area Committees. A strong vision will help to demonstrate to our residents, other councillors, officer and partners the important role that Area Committees will play in our future.

Recommendation 2:

Adopt the following as the vision statement for Area Committees:

“Area Committees will deliver improvements for the local area by identifying, overseeing, monitoring and driving actions to support all issues relevant to the area, including service delivery, service improvements, and area developments”

In the spirit of recognising that the Area Committees are indeed formal committees of the Council, it is important that they are supported in the same way as, for example, scrutiny committees. The review group felt that, even though Neighbourhood Councils have been operating as formal committees, they have not enjoyed the same level of planning and input as other such committees. A reinforcement of this is therefore recommended in order to ensure the Area Committees can fulfil their responsibilities and duties appropriately.

Recommendation 3:

Amend the Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution to reflect these recommendations, and to ensure that Area Committees are supported by similar procedures that support other Council committees (for example, agenda setting meetings with Area Committee members, and provision of full committee reports)

Although formal terms of reference have existed for Neighbourhood Councils, the review group believe these need to be more clearly articulated and have greater impact. They should follow on from the new vision for Area Committees, and be both accessible and relevant to the role that Area Committees will play. They should be clearly understood by all councillors, officers and partners, and be readily available to the public.

Recommendation 4:

Replace the existing terms of reference for Area Committees with the following:

- (i) Area Committees are established in Peterborough in accordance with the provisions set out in Local Government Act 2000**
- (ii) Area Committees will require the proactive support of all elected Councillors, officers, and partner organisations to ensure their full and positive success**

Area Committees should:

- (iii) Make decisions within the remit of the terms of reference and the formally delegated responsibilities, or make recommendations to the Executive as appropriate on issues which affect the area**
- (iv) Be the committee where members of the Area Committee and members of the community can discuss issues of concern or interest, including those that are not the direct responsibility of the Council as well as those that are**
- (v) Set the standards for services to meet local needs which are outside the immediate responsibility or budget of the Area Committee, and seek agreement for any changes from the Executive**
- (vi) Be the primary focus for public involvement and consultation within the area, working closely with other public, private and voluntary agencies, and advising and/or making recommendations that arise to the Executive as appropriate on issues which affect the area**
- (vii) Develop community action plans, and monitor their implementation, to ensure the promotion of economic, environmental, cultural and social wellbeing of the area, that service delivery improvements are made and that better outcomes are achieved**
- (viii) Carry out any non-Executive functions delegated by the council, and any Executive functions delegated by the Leader, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations set out in Part 3 sections 1 and 3 of the Constitution**
- (ix) Be directly responsible for any delegated funding identified by the Council and invest that money in ways that support the priorities identified through the community planning process**

Neighbourhood Councils have had formally delegated responsibilities since their inception, although have only limited evidence of decision making or delivery as a result of these delegations. In part, this may be because of the important developmental period that is required to implement any new major strategy. However, the review group also felt that, because there was a lack of purpose and agreed vision for Neighbourhood Councils, delivery against any delegated responsibility was very difficult to achieve.

The strategy that the review group are recommending is to refocus the existing delegations around a smaller number of more specific responsibilities that they are confident can be delivered to benefit our communities during the 2011/12 municipal year. Part of this approach will also include a review of those delegations during the year, with a view to broadening out their scope once again from 2012/13 onwards.

Recommendation 5:

For the Municipal Year commencing May 2011, replace the existing Delegations to Neighbourhood Councils with those set out below. Keep this under review during that year, with a view to expanding the delegations from the start of the Municipal Year commencing May 2012:

- (i) The Leader retains responsibility for functions delegated and may exercise those functions in person, regardless of further delegation. Further, the Area Committees must act with due regard to all other Council policies and procedures**
- (ii) To promote the Council's role as a community leader in its area, giving a meaningful voice to the community and fostering good and productive working relationships with the Council's partner organisations, including Parish Councils, Police, Fire, Probation, criminal justice agencies, health and social care agencies, education agencies, young peoples' services, community associations, residents associations and voluntary sector agencies**
- (iii) To take a leading role in promoting the economic, environmental, cultural and social wellbeing of the area, and develop community action plans to achieve this that improve service delivery and achieve better outcomes**
- (iv) To set the standards for all former City Services operations now contracted to Enterprise to ensure effective delivery of all services, including making decisions on the maximum amount of any delegated budgets allowable within the terms of the contract to be deployed on local priorities (*to be confirmed subject to details of the contract*)**
- (v) To agree the annual programme of works contained within the Highways Capital Programme for 2012/13 onwards**
- (vi) To act as consultees on all major or significant Executive and Council proposals that affect the area, including those affecting both capital and revenue spend**
- (vii) To act as consultees in respect of Major Planning applications relevant to the area, and report views to the relevant Committee**
- (viii) To carry out any actions that the Executive authorises in addition to those set out above, until such time as that authorisation is revoked**

Significant debate was held regarding the roles of Chair and Vice Chair of Area Committees. The review group felt that the role of Chair needed to be more clearly articulated so that there was a shared understanding of that role amongst all councillors and officers. Further, although Vice Chairs have been in post since the inception of Neighbourhood Councils, their role has not been well developed and they are therefore a valuable leadership resource that may not be fully utilised.

Recommendation 6:

Create a job description for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair of the Area Committee that reflects the changes of emphasis and focus set out in these recommendations, and the role these posts will play in support of the broader neighbourhood management structure referred to in section B below

Although many existing Neighbourhood Councils have demonstrated real development and are showing positive potential, the relationship between them and rural parish councils has perhaps been the most concerning. Parish councils have existed for many years, and already benefit from decision making powers. They act as a voice for their local communities, and are elected by those communities to represent them on local matters.

Such has been the strength of feeling regarding the relationship between Neighbourhood Councils and parish councils, a sub-group of the Neighbourhood Council review group has been working on proposals to create a new arrangement relevant to the existing Rural North Neighbourhood Council only. This sub-group has comprised a number of rural City councillors, representatives from a number of parish councils, and officers from the council.

Recommendation 7:

Deliver the recommendations set out in the report from the sub-group of the Neighbourhood Council Task and Finish Group which has focussed on rural/parish issues, specifically:

- (i) create a new committee to replace the Rural North Neighbourhood Council, that comprises rural Ward Councillors and one co-opted representative from each of the 23 rural Parish Councils**
- (ii) appoint a rural Ward Councillor as the Chair of this committee**
- (iii) hold all meetings at a rural location within any of the 23 rural Parish Council areas**
- (iv) decisions relating to non-financial matters or those that are not formally delegated responsibilities will be debated by all members of the committee, with all members having a single vote each**
- (v) matters relating to financial or delegated responsibilities will be decided solely by elected City Councillors**

Section B: Relationships and organisation

The recommendations contained in this and the previous report should deliver an Area Committee structure which will make a real and lasting difference in our communities. However, it will require focussed officer support to co-ordinate all arrangements and to monitor and manage the various action plans that emerge from Ward Forums and Area Committees. Whilst the Neighbourhood Managers have the strategic responsibility for the existing Neighbourhood Councils and much of the logistical work is carried out by colleagues in Democratic Services, there are new functions and duties that are imperative to the success of the re-launched Area Committees that will require dedicated officer time. This was further demonstrated by the successful Luton Area Committee model which benefits from dedicated officer co-ordination and support.

Recommendation 8:

Create a lead officer role within the Neighbourhoods division to co-ordinate and facilitate the entire Neighbourhood Management meeting and engagement structure, including:

- **Developing, co-ordinating and monitoring delivery of action plans at Area Committee, Neighbourhood Panel, Ward Forums, and locality tour levels, holding Members, officers and partners to account as necessary**
- **Liaising with key PCC departments, notably Democratic Services and Communications, to ensure all required actions are delivered**
- **Arranging agenda setting and planning meetings for Area Committees in accordance with the Constitution**
- **All logistical arrangements for Area Committees, Neighbourhood Panels, Ward Forums, Neighbourhood Management Delivery Team meetings and any other related forums, including venues, refreshments, access, transport etc**
- **Liaising with Council departments and partners regarding information to be made available at each meeting (e.g. literature or a staffed information stand)**
- **Managing the agenda plan for each Area Committee containing items for future discussion**
- **Developing, managing and co-ordinating a full contacts database of residents, community groups, officers and partners to ensure maximum awareness of all relevant meetings and opportunities for engagement**

Recommendations relevant to engagement techniques and maximising attendance are set out in section C below. However, as important are issues specific to the relationship that the Area Committees need to have with other local forums as well as with officers and partners. Limited public attendance levels have caused the review group some concern, although where there have been agenda items at Neighbourhood Councils which are particularly significant or controversial, unsurprisingly attendance levels have been relatively high.

The conclusion therefore must be that the business of the Area Committees needs to be more interesting and impactful if our communities are to engage with them and develop the rich debate needed to make better decisions. Alongside this, the neighbourhood panels that have been developed by the Police have been running now for some time, and generally do enjoy higher levels of attendance. They focus on identifying three local priorities that the Police, Council and other agencies will focus on, progress against which is then reported back at the next meeting. Currently these meetings are held quarterly, and separately from any other local forum.

Finally, the review group felt that as the Area Committees adopt a more formal approach to achieve more significant outcomes, this may deter some local residents from engaging. However, if they are to be successful it is of course critical that intelligence and information is provided in some way to councillors and officers to ensure appropriate actions are taken.

Adopting an approach which provides an informal opportunity to engage, an opportunity to identify three local priorities and an opportunity to participate in decision making at the Area Committee, all on the same evening and at the same location, is therefore recommended. Early discussions with senior colleagues in the Police have confirmed their support for this approach.

Recommendation 9:

Create a single, seamless approach to neighbourhood engagement by creating a structure which enables the following to be delivered in each Area Committee area during the same session:

- **Ward Forum: a ward-specific informal forum where ward councillors can engage with their constituents and discuss informal issues or issues which may require escalation to the Area Committee. During these forums, key officer representation should also be available, including from the Neighbourhood Management team, Trading Standards, Community Safety, Police, and Enterprise**
- **Neighbourhood Panel: formally Police-led but now partner-wide meetings during which three local priorities are identified for resolution**
- **Area Committee: re-launched former Neighbourhood Council meetings, focussing on more strategic or impactful issues affecting the area**

For example, the Ward Forums may run from 6pm until 6.50pm, and the Area Committee meeting may run from 7pm until 9.00pm with the first 30 minutes given over to the business of the Neighbourhood Panel

To ensure real and positive action is delivered as a result of this new approach, and to hold councillors, officers and partners to account, the review group recognise the need to implement a process of action planning to capture agreed actions and to monitor their delivery. This approach will also help identify barriers and blockages in order that they can be overcome.

Action plans for neighbourhood panel meetings are already produced, and so the review group recommend that this be extended for both the Ward Forum and Area Committee meetings.

Recommendation 10:

Alongside formal minutes from the Area Committee, comprehensive action plans should be created from (i) every Ward Forum and (ii) every Area Committee meeting, setting out clearly what actions have been agreed, and naming a lead officer (with the consent of the officer named) and a lead councillor jointly responsible for ensuring the action is achieved

The review group have become increasingly aware of the significance of the neighbourhood management framework within which sits the Area Committee itself. Area Committees will be held quarterly, but the actions that come from them will need to be delivered swiftly and responsively if we are to demonstrate their effectiveness. Progress on achieving outcomes, information about emergency priorities, and an opportunity to formally engage with the relevant neighbourhood manager are all essential components of a successful neighbourhoods approach.

Further, the principles of the Big Society, and the information that is emerging from the Localism Bill, all require structures that ensure local issues are identified and actions taken by and with local people. There is a rich fabric of local community, voluntary and faith organisations across Peterborough, each of whom have a different perspective and who have significant levels of information and experience critical to delivering better outcomes for our residents.

However, we have fewer staff resources available to engage directly with these groups, which means there is a huge risk that their knowledge but also capacity is lost. By creating forums or partnerships where these groups can come together to enable a single conversation to be had will ensure this does not become the reality.

Recommendation 11:

Ensure the broader neighbourhood management framework shown at appendix 6 is in place and is able to respond to the opportunities provided in the Localism Bill and other relevant emerging legislation. Further, ensure that monthly Neighbourhood Management Delivery Team meetings are in place for all Area Committee areas, that there is full commitment from all councillors, and that the role of community partnership organisations is firmly established

To support the important role that Area Committees will play, and to better illustrate their significance to the public, the review group recommend that the seating arrangements be changed. Although a minor point at face value, this change will truly demonstrate who has voting rights and how those votes are used.

Recommendation 12:

Formalise the seating arrangements at Area Committee meetings so that all Members sit at the front of the audience in a horseshoe arrangement, making it clear who has voting rights, how those rights are used, and who is not in attendance

In addition to the support and commitment of councillors, if Area Committees are to be truly effective it is essential that officers are also fully committed. The review group felt that this needed to be demonstrated from the top of the organisation, and that a sense of real ownership is developed across all departments. Officers should feel that the Area Committees provide them with an opportunity to engage directly with the public so that they can make better and more informed decisions about service design and delivery.

Recommendation 13:

Identify a different member of the Corporate Management Team to act as champion and advocate for each of the seven Area Committees, and to ensure that the principles of Area Committees are given the appropriate status amongst all officers

Creating a sense of ownership of an Area Committee area is important to all those supporting that committee – for example, councillors who may not be familiar with all parts of the locality, officers and partners. Whilst the committee process itself will help to develop this sense of ownership, the review group recognise the importance of making the local knowledge as real as possible. One way to achieve this is to organise tours of the local area which would focus on strengths and weaknesses, areas of concern and areas where good work has been delivered. This would also be an excellent opportunity to show all those involved with the Area Committee the positive difference the committee is making by visiting ‘before and after’ areas.

Recommendation 14:

Organise a minimum of two Area Committee locality ‘tours’ per annum, during which ALL members of the Committee, the nominated CMT member, key PCC officers, key officers from partner organisations, key community leaders/representatives and the local media explore the area in more depth focussing on particular problems, hotspots and successes

Section C: Engagement

Information, intelligence and engagement from residents is critical if Area Committees are to be a success, and the review group recognise the importance of accessible, relevant and timely media and communications activity to promote meetings to all. Information that promotes Area Committees and that provides updates on agreed actions also needs to be considered, with more effective use of social media, local venues as information providers, and local newsletters.

It will also be important to promote the achievements of Area Committees and Ward Forums to demonstrate their value.

Recommendation 15:

- (a) Develop a single media and communications strategy, supported by an action plan, which proactively promotes Area Committees and Ward Forums and their achievements in a timely manner**
- (b) To help achieve this assign an officer within the Communications team to have responsibility for coordinating publicity and marketing for Area Committees and Ward Forums**
- (c) Produce a publicity 'pack' of template materials and formats that promote Area Committees, including 'soft' formats (via the use of the web, social networking etc) and 'hard' formats (posters, leaflets etc)**

In order to engage with as many people as possible, but to also make sure that the widest cross-section of residents can become involved it is important to think creatively about how the meetings should be organised. There may be a need, for example, to vary start and finish times, or to hold meetings in different types of venues.

Recommendation 16:

Be creative and flexible with the logistical arrangements for neighbourhood engagement activities set out in recommendation 9, providing they follow the Access to Information rules. For example, vary the start and end times of the meetings to ensure engagement with different residents, and ensure venues have enough space and capacity to cope with the requirements of both formal and informal forums during the same session

The Council is fully committed to supporting all residents, including those who are vulnerable or who find it difficult to engage with councillors and service providers. Area Committees and Ward Forums will be held in venues within each Area Committee area but there may be some residents who are keen to attend but who are unable to do so because of mobility issues or because they are particularly vulnerable.

Recommendation 17:

Officers should explore transport initiatives as and where appropriate for each of the Area Committee meetings to support attendance from residents

As part of the report from stage 1 of this review, the recommendation to form an implementation plan which would be overseen by the existing task and finish group was agreed. For clarity and consistency, that same recommendation is repeated below.

Recommendation 18 (already agreed):

That the recommendations, when agreed, form part of an overall implementation plan for Neighbourhood Councils alongside the recommendations that emerge from stage one of the review. This implementation plan should be overseen by the cross-party working group formed from the task and finish group, and become a standing item at all Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meetings, with regular updates also provided to Cabinet and Group Representatives

Finally, there is a real opportunity to promote the fact that we have all learned from the experiences of running Neighbourhood Councils to date and to celebrate the fact that we are hugely optimistic about the future of Area Committees. The scale of change being recommended is significant, and the review group are confident this will deliver the outcomes we need for our residents and be an important part of our response to the challenges of the Big Society.

A full re-launch of Area Committees in the context of these recommendations prior to the first meetings in the new municipal year will kick-start this approach.

Recommendation 19:

Re-brand and have a major re-launch of Neighbourhood Councils as Area Committees. This should include raising awareness to all councillors, PCC officers, external partners, and residents to actively promote their purpose including the vision set out in recommendation 2 along with the new delegations and terms of reference

6. Summary list of recommendations, with lead officers and target dates identified

	RECOMMENDATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	TARGET DATE
1.	Change the name of Neighbourhood Councils to Area Committees	Democratic Services	May 2011
2.	Adopt the following as the vision statement for Area Committees: "Area Committees will deliver improvements for the local area by identifying, overseeing, monitoring and driving actions to support all issues relevant to the area, including service delivery, service improvements, and area developments"	Adrian Chapman	May 2011
3.	Amend the Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution to reflect these recommendations, and to ensure that Area Committees are supported by similar procedures that support other Council committees (for example, agenda setting meetings with Area Committee members, and provision of full committee reports)	Democratic Services	May 2011
4.	Replace the existing terms of reference for Area Committees with the following: (i) Area Committees are established in Peterborough in accordance with the provisions set out in Local Government Act 2000 (ii) Area Committees will require the proactive support of all elected Councillors, officers, and partner organisations to ensure their full and positive success Area Committees should: (iii) Make decisions within the remit of the terms of reference and the formally delegated responsibilities, or make recommendations to the Executive as appropriate on issues which affect the area (iv) Be the committee where members of the Area Committee and members of the community can discuss issues of concern or interest, including those that are not the direct responsibility of the Council as well as those that are (v) Set the standards for services to meet local needs which are outside the immediate responsibility or budget of the Area Committee, and seek agreement for any changes from the Executive (vi) Be the primary focus for public involvement and consultation within the area, working closely with other public, private and voluntary agencies, and advising and/or making recommendations that arise to the Executive as appropriate on issues which affect the area	Democratic Services	May 2011

	RECOMMENDATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	TARGET DATE
	<p>(vii) Develop community action plans, and monitor their implementation, to ensure the promotion of economic, environmental, cultural and social wellbeing of the area, that service delivery improvements are made and that better outcomes are achieved</p> <p>(viii) Carry out any non-Executive functions delegated by the council, and any Executive functions delegated by the Leader, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations set out in Part 3 sections 1 and 3 of the Constitution</p> <p>(ix) Be directly responsible for any delegated funding identified by the Council and invest that money in ways that support the priorities identified through the community planning process</p>		
5.	<p>For the Municipal Year commencing May 2011, replace the existing Delegations to Neighbourhood Councils with those set out below. Keep this under review during that year, with a view to expanding the delegations from the start of the Municipal Year commencing May 2012:</p> <p>(i) The Leader retains responsibility for functions delegated and may exercise those functions in person, regardless of further delegation. Further, the Area Committees must act with due regard to all other Council policies and procedures</p> <p>(ii) To promote the Council's role as a community leader in its area, giving a meaningful voice to the community and fostering good and productive working relationships with the Council's partner organisations, including Parish Councils, Police, Fire, Probation, criminal justice agencies, health and social care agencies, education agencies, young peoples' services, community associations, residents associations and voluntary sector agencies</p> <p>(iii) To take a leading role in promoting the economic, environmental, cultural and social wellbeing of the area, and develop community action plans to achieve this that improve service delivery and achieve better outcomes</p> <p>(iv) To set the standards for all former City Services operations now contracted to Enterprise to ensure effective delivery of all services, including making decisions on the maximum amount of any delegated budgets allowable within the terms of the contract to be deployed on local priorities (<i>to be confirmed subject to details of the contract</i>)</p> <p>(v) To agree the annual programme of works contained within the Highways Capital Programme for 2012/13 onwards</p> <p>(vi) To act as consultees on all major or significant Executive and Council proposals that affect the area, including those affecting both capital and revenue spend</p> <p>(vii) To act as consultees in respect of Major Planning applications relevant to the area, and report views to the relevant Committee</p> <p>(viii) To carry out any actions that the Executive authorises in addition to those set out above, until such time as that authorisation is revoked</p>	May 2011	May 2011

	RECOMMENDATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	TARGET DATE
6.	Create a job description for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair of the Area Committee that reflects the changes of emphasis and focus set out in these recommendations, and the role these posts will play in support of the broader neighbourhood management structure referred to in section B below	Adrian Chapman	May 2011
7.	<p>Deliver the recommendations set out in the report from the sub-group of the Neighbourhood Council Task and Finish Group which has focussed on rural/parish issues, specifically:</p> <p>(i) create a new committee to replace the Rural North Neighbourhood Council, that comprises rural Ward Councillors and one co-opted representative from each of the 23 rural Parish Councils</p> <p>(ii) appoint a rural Ward Councillor as the Chair of this committee</p> <p>(iii) hold all meetings at a rural location within any of the 23 rural Parish Council areas</p> <p>(iv) decisions relating to non-financial matters or those that are not formally delegated responsibilities will be debated by all members of the committee, with all members having a single vote each</p> <p>(v) matters relating to financial or delegated responsibilities will be decided solely by elected City Councillors</p>	Julie Rivett	May 2011
8.	<p>Create a lead officer role within the Neighbourhoods division to co-ordinate and facilitate the entire Neighbourhood Management meeting and engagement structure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing, co-ordinating and monitoring delivery of action plans at Area Committee, Neighbourhood Panel, Ward Forums, and locality tour levels, holding Members, officers and partners to account as necessary • Liaising with key PCC departments, notably Democratic Services and Communications, to ensure all required actions are delivered • Arranging agenda setting and planning meetings for Area Committees in accordance with the Constitution • All logistical arrangements for Area Committees, Neighbourhood Panels, Ward Forums, Neighbourhood Management Delivery Team meetings and any other related forums, including venues, refreshments, access, transport etc • Liaising with Council departments and partners regarding information to be made available at each meeting (e.g. literature or a staffed information stand) • Managing the agenda plan for each Area Committee containing items for future discussion • Developing, managing and co-ordinating a full contacts database of residents, community groups, officers and partners to ensure maximum awareness of all relevant meetings and opportunities for engagement 	Adrian Chapman	May 2011

	RECOMMENDATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	TARGET DATE
9.	<p>Create a single, seamless approach to neighbourhood engagement by creating a structure which enables the following to be delivered in each Area Committee area during the same session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward Forum: a ward-specific informal forum where ward councillors can engage with their constituents and discuss informal issues or issues which may require escalation to the Area Committee. During these forums, key officer representation should also be available, including from the Neighbourhood Management team, Trading Standards, Community Safety, Police, and Enterprise • Neighbourhood Panel: formally Police-led but now partner-wide meetings during which three local priorities are identified for resolution • Area Committee: re-launched former Neighbourhood Council meetings, focussing on more strategic or impactful issues affecting the area <p>For example, the Ward Forums may run from 6pm until 6.50pm, and the Area Committee meeting may run from 7pm until 9.00pm with the first 30 minutes given over to the business of the Neighbourhood Panel</p>	Adrian Chapman	May 2011
10.	Alongside formal minutes from the Area Committee, comprehensive action plans should be created from (i) every Ward Forum and (ii) every Area Committee meeting, setting out clearly what actions have been agreed, and naming a lead officer (with the consent of the officer named) and a lead councillor jointly responsible for ensuring the action is achieved	Neighbourhood Managers	From May 2011
11.	Ensure the broader neighbourhood management framework shown at appendix 6 is in place and is able to respond to the opportunities provided in the Localism Bill and other relevant emerging legislation. Further, ensure that monthly Neighbourhood Management Delivery Team meetings are in place for all Area Committee areas, that there is full commitment from all councillors, and that the role of community partnership organisations is firmly established	Adrian Chapman/ Neighbourhood Managers	From May 2011
12.	Formalise the seating arrangements at Area Committee meetings so that all Members sit at the front of the audience in a horseshoe arrangement, making it clear who has voting rights, how those rights are used, and who is not in attendance	Democratic Services	May 2011
13.	Identify a different member of the Corporate Management Team to act as champion and advocate for each of the seven Area Committees, and to ensure that the principles of Area Committees are given the appropriate status amongst all officers	Paul Phillipson	May 2011

	RECOMMENDATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	TARGET DATE
14.	Organise a minimum of two Area Committee locality 'tours' per annum, during which <i>ALL</i> members of the Committee, the nominated CMT member, key PCC officers, key officers from partner organisations, key community leaders/representatives and the local media explore the area in more depth focussing on particular problems, hotspots and successes	Adrian Chapman	May 2011
15.	(a) Develop a single media and communications strategy, supported by an action plan, which proactively promotes Area Committees and Ward Forums and their achievements in a timely manner (b) To help achieve this assign an officer within the Communications team to have responsibility for coordinating publicity and marketing for Area Committees and Ward Forums (c) Produce a publicity 'pack' of template materials and formats that promote Area Committees, including 'soft' formats (via the use of the web, social networking etc) and 'hard' formats (posters, leaflets etc)	Andrew Mackintosh	May 2011
16	Be creative and flexible with the logistical arrangements for neighbourhood engagement activities set out in recommendation 8, providing they follow the Access to Information rules. For example, vary the start and end times of the meetings to ensure engagement with different residents, and ensure venues have enough space and capacity to cope with the requirements of both formal and informal forums during the same session	Neighbourhood Managers	From May 2011
17.	Officers should explore transport initiatives as and where appropriate for each of the Area Committee meetings to support attendance from residents	Neighbourhood Managers	From May 2011
18.	That the recommendations, when agreed, form part of an overall implementation plan for Neighbourhood Councils alongside the recommendations that emerge from stage one of the review. This implementation plan should be overseen by the cross-party working group formed from the task and finish group, and become a standing item at all Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meetings, with regular updates also provided to Cabinet and Group Representatives	Adrian Chapman	May 2011
19.	Re-brand and have a major re-launch of Neighbourhood Councils as Area Committees. This should include raising awareness to all councillors, PCC officers, external partners, and residents to actively promote their purpose including the vision set out in recommendation 2 along with the new delegations and terms of reference	Adrian Chapman/ Andrew Mackintosh/ Neighbourhood Managers	May 2011

The Review Group would like to note their thanks for the support given to them by Paulina Ford, Scrutiny Research and Project Advisor and Adrian Chapman whilst conducting this review.

They would also like to thank and acknowledge the support and information given to them by all of the key witnesses interviewed, and those organisations and people that have contributed to the review by sending in their comments and ideas. A particular thank you to Gary Roberts, Area Committee Support Manager at Luton who visited Peterborough to inform the Task and Finish Group on how Area Committees work in Luton.



Appendix 1: Details of individuals and organisations contacted

The following organisations, associations, groups and people were sent a letter or email inviting them to comment on Neighbourhood Councils:

Parish Councils:

- Ailsworth Parish Council
- Bainton and Ashton Parish Council
- Barnack Parish Council
- Borough Fen Parish Council
- Bretton Parish Council
- Castor Parish Council
- Deeping Gate Parish Council
- Etton Parish Council
- Eye Parish Council
- Glinton Parish Council
- Hampton Hargate and Hampton Vale Parish Council
- Helpston Parish Council
- Marholm Parish Council
- Maxey Parish Council
- Newborough Parish Council
- Northborough Parish Council
- Orton Longueville Parish Council
- Orton Waterville Parish Council
- Peakirk Parish Council
- Southorpe Parish Council
- St Martins Without Parish Meeting
- Sutton Parish Council
- Thorney Parish Council
- Thornhaugh Parish Council
- Ufford Parish Council
- Upton Parish Meeting
- Wansford Parish Council
- Werrington Neighbourhood Council
- Wittering Parish Council
- Wothorpe Parish Council

Community Associations:

- Dogsthorpe Community Association
- Saxon Community Association
- Parnwell Community Association
- Millfield Community Association
- East Community Association
- Wilfred Wood Hall Barnack Community Association
- Eye Community Association
- Helpston and Etton Community Association
- North Bretton Community Association
- Northborough Community Association
- Paston & Gunthorpe Community Assoc.
Community Centre
- Stafford Hall - Westwood and Ravensthorpe Community Association
- Walton Community Association

Residents Associations:

- Bluebell Residents' Association
- Broadway Residents Association
- Fulbridge Residents' Association
- Mill Area Residents' Association
- Old Dogsthorpe Residents' Association
- Parnwell Residents' Association
- Welland Residents' Association
- Clifton Court Resident Association
- Eastgate Resident Association
- Fengate park Resident Association
- Gains Resident Association
- Gladstone Connect
- Greater Dogsthorpe Environmental Forum
- Garton End Resident Association
- Hankey Street & Bamber Street Resident Association
- MANERP
- Community Action Peterborough
- Desi Ladies
- PACO
- Peterborough Bangladeshi Welfare Association UK
- PARCA
- Step Up
- St Mary's court Resident Association
- Princes Street Residents Association
- Victoria Park Residents Association
- Brookfield & Dukesmead Residents Association
- Brookfurlong Residents Group 'Four Seasons Square Group'
- Ellindon & Adderley Residents' Association
- Hodgson Community Association
- Langley and Pyhill Residents Association
- Morland Court Residents Group
- Netherton Neighbourhood Association
- North Bretton Residents Group
- Paston and Gunthorpe Community Association
- Residents of Ravensthorpe Residents' Association
- South Honeyhill Residents Association
- Thorpe Gate Residents Association
- Walton Action Group
- Werrington Neighbourhood Council
- Westwood and Ravensthorpe Community Association
- Westwood Residents Association
- Glebe Road and Fairfield Road Residents Association
- Fellowes Gardens Residents Association
- Hinchcliffe and Neighbourhood Tenants & Residents Association (HANTRA)
- Hartley Residents' Association
- Orton Southgate Residents' Association (OSRA)
- Goldhay Horseshoe Residents' Association
- Orton Wistow Residents' Association
- Phoenix Residents Association
- Saltmarsh Residents' Association
- St. Botolph Lane Residents' Association

Werrington Neighbourhood Council

Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service

Police – Kevin Vanterpool

Rural Councillors

- Councillor Ray Dobbs
- Councillor David Saunders
- Councillor John Holdich
- Councillor Diane Lamb
- Councillor Peter Hiller (interviewed on 14 February 2011)
- Councillor David Over (interviewed on 1 February 2011)
- Councillor David Harrington (comments received during Part 1 of the review)

Housing Associations:

- Axiom Housing Association
- Cross Keys Homes
- Accent Nene
- Minster General Housing Association

Letter and attachments which were sent out to those listed in Appendix 1

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E-Mail: paulina.ford@peterborough.gov.uk
Please ask for:
Our Ref: Scrutiny Review of Neighbourhood Councils
Your Ref:

**Scrutiny Team
Democratic Services
Chief Executive's Department
Town Hall
Bridge Street
Peterborough
PE1 1HG**

DX 12310 Peterborough 1

Telephone - 01733 747474

February 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

Scrutiny Review of Neighbourhood Councils

The Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee have formed a Task and Finish Group to conduct a review of Neighbourhood Councils. The group consists of Councillor Burton, Councillor Todd, Councillor Simons, Councillor JR Fox, Councillor Khan, Councillor Sandford and Councillor Goldspink. The Task and Finish Group would like to receive comments from XXXXXXXXXX on how they feel the Neighbourhood Councils are currently working and any thoughts that they may have on how they could be developed further.

The Task and Finish Group are currently working on stage two of the review which is looking at:

1. **Decision Making Powers and responsibilities** delegated to Neighbourhood Councils
2. **Relationships** with other committees, panels, groups, forums etc, both internal and external
3. **Engagement** with the public, officers, press, Councillors etc, both internal and external

I have attached the Terms of Reference of the review which may help you to focus your comments.

If you have not heard of Neighbourhood Councils or have not had a representative of your xxxxxxxxx attend any of the meetings the review group would like to know.

If you would like to feed into this review please can you send me your comments by xxxxxxxxx? When submitting the comments please can you confirm that you would be happy for your comments to be published in the final report?

Comments can be submitted either by email to paulina.ford@peterborough.gov.uk or by post to:

Paulina Ford
Scrutiny Performance and Research Officer
Peterborough City Council
Democratic Services

Chief Executives Department
Town Hall
Bridge Street
Peterborough
PE1 1HQ

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Paulina Ford
Scrutiny Performance and Research Officer

Review of Neighbourhood Councils

A review group, made up of City Councillors from the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee, has been formed to carry out a review of Neighbourhood Councils and make recommendations on their continued improvement.

The review group will be examining the following aspects of Neighbourhood Councils, and would be very interested in your own views on some or all of these areas:

- 1. The overarching terms of reference, the range of responsibilities, and the decision-making powers for Neighbourhood Councils that are set out in the Council's Constitution (the relevant pages of this are attached for your information).**
Do you think these are too narrow or too broad? Do you have other ideas about what should be included here?
- 2. The way in which Neighbourhood Councils interact with, or should interact with, other Council forums, committees and meetings (e.g. Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet, Full Council etc).**
What do you think the relationship should be between these meetings?
- 3. The way in which Neighbourhood Councils and other neighbourhood or community meetings (e.g. Neighbourhood Panels) work together, or should work together, to ensure minimum duplication and maximum delivery.**
Do you think there is duplication at the moment? If so how can we avoid this? What purpose do you believe each of the community meetings should have? Is the name 'Neighbourhood Council' meaningful and appropriate or can you suggest an alternative?
- 4. The process of engaging with Councillors and partners outside the formal Neighbourhood Council meeting to progress decisions made and actions agreed during the meeting, and how those actions are communicated to the public**
What role do you think Councillors should have in relation to Neighbourhood Council business outside the formal meetings? How can we best ensure that agreed decisions and actions are progressed? How should we make sure that communities are kept up to date on progress?
- 5. The logistical arrangements that support Neighbourhood Councils, including meeting venues, accessibility, times, dates, frequency, presentation including sound equipment, refreshments, seating arrangements and the associated costs.**
Do you have any views on any aspect mentioned above? Are there things we can do to improve the experience of attending a Neighbourhood Council meeting?
- 6. The methods used to promote Neighbourhood Council meetings to the public and partners to ensure good attendance. The process for ensuring agendas are relevant, meaningful and interesting and how best to involve the public in the debates.**
What do you think we should do to make the meetings more relevant, accessible and enjoyable? How can we best ensure that the items for discussion are what local people really want to talk about or progress?
- 7. The process for distributing the agenda packs before, and the minutes after, each Neighbourhood Council meeting.**
How should we make sure that as many people as possible are aware of the meeting, have access to the agenda, and have access to the minutes?

Comments received from:

Name:

Address

Email address:

Please write your comments below

Appendix 2: Comments received from Housing Associations / Parish Councils / Community and Resident Associations / Werrington Neighbourhood Council

Name	Association	Comment
Housing Association Comments		
June Campbell Community Development Co-ordinator	Accent Nene Ltd	<p>The overarching terms of reference, the range of responsibilities, and the decision-making powers for Neighbourhood Councils that are set out in the Council's Constitution (the relevant pages of this are attached for your information). <i>Do you think these are too narrow or too broad? Do you have other ideas about what should be included here?</i> <i>I think that they are about right at the moment, the issue will always be ensuring good attendance from a diverse group of residents who really understand the processes and what their own community can get from these council's</i></p> <p>The way in which Neighbourhood Councils interact with, or should interact with, other Council forums, committees and meetings (e.g. Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet, Full Council etc). <i>What do you think the relationship should be between these meetings?</i> <i>It's important that all groups know what the others are doing – I assume that minutes and agendas are shared – so there is no duplication. If Neighbourhood Council's are going to succeed it is important that all the other Council forums and committee recognise the decisions, ultimately made by community representatives, at Neighbourhood Council meetings, and act on them accordingly.</i></p> <p>The way in which Neighbourhood Councils and other neighbourhood or community meetings (e.g. Neighbourhood Panels) work together, or should work together, to ensure minimum duplication and maximum delivery. <i>Do you think there is duplication at the moment? If so how can we avoid this? What purpose do you believe each of the community meetings should have? Is the name 'Neighbourhood Council' meaningful and appropriate or can you suggest an alternative?</i> <i>In my opinion there is some duplication between Neighbourhood Council's and Neighbourhood Panel meetings and the public that I work with are confused about what the differences are. I believe the Neighbourhood Panels should continue to deal with the issues that cause offence in the community, ie graffiti, litter, ASB, and crime. These should be resolved through the Neighbourhood Delivery Team approach. The Neighbourhood Council's should concentrate on the larger issues that have not been able to be resolved – issues that might include physical changes to a Neighbourhood to resolve ASB, asset transfer and what the council should spend money on in each Neighbourhood. A strong focused inclusive group of residents attending or reporting to the Neighbourhood Council's should help to achieve this. Having the word 'Neighbourhood' in each case does not help and 'Council' seems very formal – but I can't think</i></p>

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Name	Association	Comment
		<p><i>of an alternative</i></p> <p>The process of engaging with Councillors and partners outside the formal Neighbourhood Council meeting to progress decisions made and actions agreed during the meeting, and how those actions are communicated to the public <i>What role do you think Councillors should have in relation to Neighbourhood Council business outside the formal meetings? How can we best ensure that agreed decisions and actions are progressed? How should we make sure that communities are kept up to date on progress?</i></p> <p><i>Councillors need to fully engage with the process and support the Council outside of meetings. They have been elected as the representative of their community and I would therefore expect that those who voted for them would expect them to be involved. Unfortunately the only way to ensure that actions are progressed is for an administrator to keep on top of this, which would have financial implications. An agreed process of reporting on progress should be part of the administration of each meeting and assurances should be sort with those that have actions which have come out of the meeting. To engage with all age groups in the community many various methods could be used. A written update could be sent via each councillor which he/she is expected to report back to each community group in his area. Updates could appear in each Neighbourhood Council's area on PCC website and on PeteYouth website. Email briefings could be sent to members and twitter, facebook etc could also be utilised. Positive press releases on successes are always helpful.</i></p> <p>The logistical arrangements that support Neighbourhood Councils, including meeting venues, accessibility, times, dates, frequency, presentation including sound equipment, refreshments, seating arrangements and the associated costs. <i>Do you have any views on any aspect mentioned above? Are there things we can do to improve the experience of attending a Neighbourhood Council meeting?</i></p> <p><i>As much of the formality as possible needs to be taken out of the meetings to ensure that residents attend. Sound equipment is important and meetings in each locality are essential</i></p> <p>The methods used to promote Neighbourhood Council meetings to the public and partners to ensure good attendance. The process for ensuring agendas are relevant, meaningful and interesting and how best to involve the public in the debates. <i>What do you think we should do to make the meetings more relevant, accessible and enjoyable? How can we best ensure that the items for discussion are what local people really want to talk about or progress?</i></p> <p><i>I am currently in the process of developing a Parnwell Local Delivery Group who will be preparing an action plan for Parnwell. I feel that this is the best way to highlight issues that residents are concerned about as consultation will have taken place with a wider group of residents to produce the plan. There is always a concern that 'those that shout loudest get</i></p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p><i>heard', and unless consultation has taken place, the wrong priorities for NCs might be set. Communication with whole communities is therefore essential to get the right balance</i></p> <p>The process for distributing the agenda packs before, and the minutes after, each Neighbourhood Council meeting. <i>How should we make sure that as many people as possible are aware of the meeting, have access to the agenda, and have access to the minutes?</i></p> <p><i>As stated before, all different forms of communication will need to be used to ensure that the wider community is aware of these meetings, PCC website, email and social networking sites. Unfortunately paper copies will still need to be distributed as some members of the community would prefer not to access them electronically and also there is a cost issue in printing out agendas and minutes for certain members of the community and thus these would not be accessible to them</i></p> <p><i>The help of the local press I believe is essential to advertise Council meetings and adopting a logo specifically for Neighbourhood Council's might mean that residents are more likely to look at adverts. Also the use of local community notice boards would be a good idea. The community advertising TV screens as used in doctors surgery's community centres and shopping malls would also prove successful I believe and consideration of some of the most pertinent text produced in other languages could be considered to ensure inclusivity.</i></p>
Cheryl Arnold Community Regeneration Coordinator	Accent Nene Ltd	<p>Response to Terms of Reference of Neighbourhood Councils</p> <p>4 – Conflict of Interest 4.1 OK 4.2 OK</p> <p>5 Co-optees 5.1 OK 5.2 Very important – this is something which need monitoring and evaluating. I have asked for both PLDTs to be added to the standing invite list</p> <p>6 Meetings of the Neighbourhood Councils 6.4 2 hrs – some agenda items / lengthy discussions / prior knowledge and dos where possible especially to the relevant groups who will ultimately be interested in the item</p> <p>6.5 clear instructions using 'Plain English' for code of conduct needs to be 'taught' via some open training sessions to support the development and engagement of local residents and executive members/participants</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>6.6 propose a pre-meeting pack be made available on-line to assist people with this part of the proceedings</p> <p>8 Public Participation NB: overall the process is one that has been adapted from the higher Cabinet level and it will work. However, much more training and advice for elected members and members of the general public MUST be set up and offered a.s.a.p. How will local people get involved if they don't understand the basic principles of the process you have chosen to adopt.. Information is power and most local residents I work with don't have any ambition to come along to the meetings at the moment, mostly due to time and lack of knowledge about what difference they can really hope to achieve</p> <p>8.1 No one I knows gets details re the meetings notes or decisions other than via the notes. Therefore no real debate outside of the ¼ ly meetings takes place with key agencies, residents etc Similarly, I can't recall seeing any publicity which has impacted on the residents I work with in Paston / Parnwell. Even the agencies I coordinate for the Paston Local Delivery Team don't recall seeing overt publicity to entice local residents to meetings Have you considered FaceBook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc?</p> <p>Propose an additional point at 8.4 which would enable a 'on behalf' – spokes person/written request option for people who cant get to the meetings for whatever reason</p> <p>12 Work Programme 12.1 need to include actions from the Community Action Plans and these need to be ratified across the decision making process from grass roots up to executives</p> <p>13 Agenda Items</p> <p>13.3 [see 12.1 comments] in addition – more work needs to be done to promote the Neighbourhood councils to local residents – The Paston Local Delivery Team has been working on this for over a year with very limited resources, there are now the bare beginnings of a sense from local residents that they are aware of Neighbourhood councils, however, they do not know how to get issues onto the agenda NB We will be running some training sessions during the coming weeks to train residents in this matter – if you're interested to take part please get in touch</p> <p>Response to 7 questions in the paper: Review of Neighbourhood Councils</p> <p>1 Please see attached itemised critique of the ToR's (above)</p> <p>2 there should be a 'named' person from each committee who interact with a Neighbourhood Council</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>coordinator. It should be the duty/responsibility of the coordinator to ensure that communication is effective between all interested persons/officers</p> <p>3 I'm not aware of too much duplication in this area other than perhaps the Police Panel meetings. Much of this business could be brought to our Paston Local Delivery Team meeting thus reducing the over attendance at multiple monthly meetings by the same people – especially local residents – who from experience sometimes seem confused by all the different meetings, and equally confused about their capacity for involvement. The name Neighbourhood Council is very meaningful. It says what it should do. However, at this point in their emergence, not much is really getting done.</p> <p>4 Accent Nene have established a working model for Paston and Parnwell which we believe could be rolled out across the City/Rural areas. To progress actions and decisions it is crucial to engage local services providers at the grass-roots levels. Accent Nene has successfully developed a set of ToRs, and Work Plan which will dovetail neatly with the wider strategies for P'Boro's Neighbourhood Council scheme. During July 2010 and Dec 2010 Accent Nene commissioned a ward wide consultation using Planning for Real methodology. Many local residents from across the ward have attended planned / structured events to 'have a say' on issues that affect their lives. Data collected is now being developed into Paston's first draft Community Action Plan. All this work has been strategically aligned to national, regional and local agendas of Sustainable Resident Involvement. The group overseeing this work is the Paston Local Delivery Team. We have worked in partnership with the council's community development department – Julie Rivett and Adrian Chapman.</p> <p>5 this is a difficult area to attain sustainability and needs time and patience to evolve – our experience has been to 'go with the flow' whilst maintaining a business mind. By this we mean that we want to convey a high level of professionalism alongside recognising the need to engage with often non-professional residents. Our attentions have been focused on developing positive working relationships with our key partners [including key residents], along with this we have not broken any promises, we have not bitten off more than we can realistically 'chew', and above all we have a level playing field. We now set the time, date, venue, we promote on Twitter, FB and all RSL websites. The 'traditional' model of them and us has been replaced with us. By this I mean that we don't have a top table set up to our meetings, we always have a tea and chat before business, we have an excellent coordinator who keeps everyone on track and in order – very similar to the NC's meets but its much more personal. Having attended all of the NWA2 meetings so far, I can only say that I find the venue too large, the PA system is not very effective, it feels more like an old style 'Trade Union' conference set up – suggest some research into how other councils do this part of their business – perhaps look to Wolverhampton for ideas?</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>6 [see above] in addition, set up sustainable 'Focus Groups'. Not everyone attending will be interested in all topics – perhaps the time is right now to consider introducing 'themes' onto the agenda. Giving local people something to do, which they know they can achieve will be extremely helpful to the committee and also give a sense of involvement to local residents. For example one resident in Paston has a flair for publicity and has sole responsibility for producing the Lets Change Paston newsletter [copy can be provided on request]</p> <p>I still think the area meetings are generally too big to meet the very local and personal needs of each community/neighbourhood they are representing.</p> <p>Children's centres [SureStart] also have Parent Boards, User Forums and other established local support groups so this may be a useful starting point</p> <p>Exploration into this aspect needs urgent attention</p> <p>7 Twitter, FB, email, libraries, local shops, supermarkets, garages, health centres, garden centres, - got to think out of the box on this one really, be brave and take a few creative 'risks'</p>
Stuart Fort Operations Director	Axiom Housing Association	<p>The overarching terms of reference, the range of responsibilities, and the decision-making powers for Neighbourhood Councils that are set out in the Council's Constitution (the relevant pages of this are attached for your information).</p> <p><i>Do you think these are too narrow or too broad? Do you have other ideas about what should be included here?</i></p> <p>They have to be sufficiently broad to reflect the local interests of people. So broad enough to encompass that, without being too narrow to be meaningless. Above all the councils must not be talking shops, but meaningful with the ability to take action and make a difference to the lives of local people.</p> <p>The way in which Neighbourhood Councils interact with, or should interact with, other Council forums, committees and meetings (e.g. Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet, Full Council etc).</p> <p><i>What do you think the relationship should be between these meetings?</i></p> <p>From simply a resource perspective there needs to be close liaison to be more efficient, but also very clear communication channels to avoid duplication and ensure streamlined and transparent decision making.</p> <p>The way in which Neighbourhood Councils and other neighbourhood or community meetings (e.g. Neighbourhood Panels) work together, or should work together, to ensure minimum duplication and maximum delivery.</p> <p><i>Do you think there is duplication at the moment? If so how can we avoid this? What purpose do you believe each of the community meetings should have? Is the name 'Neighbourhood Council' meaningful and appropriate or can you suggest an alternative?</i></p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>Neighbourhood is meaningful – the issue is making it relevant to all smaller neighbourhoods within the larger neighbourhood. Communication is important and taking active steps to engage and involve people so they feel a component part of the communication process.</p> <p>The process of engaging with Councillors and partners outside the formal Neighbourhood Council meeting to progress decisions made and actions agreed during the meeting, and how those actions are communicated to the public <i>What role do you think Councillors should have in relation to Neighbourhood Council business outside the formal meetings? How can we best ensure that agreed decisions and actions are progressed? How should we make sure that communities are kept up to date on progress?</i></p> <p>Neighbourhood newsletters. Councillor involvement ensures that local issues are heard and transmitted through to the higher levels of decision making – making those decisions more relevant to people at ground level.</p> <p>The logistical arrangements that support Neighbourhood Councils, including meeting venues, accessibility, times, dates, frequency, presentation including sound equipment, refreshments, seating arrangements and the associated costs. <i>Do you have any views on any aspect mentioned above? Are there things we can do to improve the experience of attending a Neighbourhood Council meeting?</i></p> <p>No major comments here. Clear communication channels are obviously important that appeal to all parts of the community. The community also needs incentives and potential power to really make a difference.</p> <p>The methods used to promote Neighbourhood Council meetings to the public and partners to ensure good attendance. The process for ensuring agendas are relevant, meaningful and interesting and how best to involve the public in the debates. <i>What do you think we should do to make the meetings more relevant, accessible and enjoyable? How can we best ensure that the items for discussion are what local people really want to talk about or progress?</i></p> <p>Have standing items on the agenda that tackle issues that local people raise. Ensure all issues – no matter how difficult – are tackled and openly <i>discussed, debated and feedback given to people on the subsequent actions taken.</i></p> <p>The process for distributing the agenda packs before, and the minutes after, each Neighbourhood Council meeting. <i>How should we make sure that as many people as possible are aware of the meeting, have access to the agenda, and have access to the minutes?</i></p> <p>Use all forms of communication – from social networks to community leaders.</p>

Name	Association	Comment
Louise Fife Services Manager	Minster Housing	<p>The overarching terms of reference, the range of responsibilities, and the decision-making powers for Neighbourhood Councils that are set out in the Council's Constitution (the relevant pages of this are attached for your information). <i>Do you think these are too narrow or too broad? Do you have other ideas about what should be included here?</i> Happy with above</p> <p>The way in which Neighbourhood Councils and other neighbourhood or community meetings (e.g. Neighbourhood Panels) work together, or should work together, to ensure minimum duplication and maximum delivery. <i>Do you think there is duplication at the moment? If so how can we avoid this? What purpose do you believe each of the community meetings should have? Is the name 'Neighbourhood Council' meaningful and appropriate or can you suggest an alternative?</i> There does to appear to be duplication would it not be possible for the Neighbourhood councils and Police Panel meetings to be held jointly.</p> <p>The purpose of the community meetings should be to agree priorities taking into account all residents views.</p> <p>No opinion on name happy with existing.</p> <p>The process of engaging with Councillors and partners outside the formal Neighbourhood Council meeting to progress decisions made and actions agreed during the meeting, and how those actions are communicated to the public <i>What role do you think Councillors should have in relation to Neighbourhood Council business outside the formal meetings? How can we best ensure that agreed decisions and actions are progressed? How should we make sure that communities are kept up to date on progress?</i> The role of the councillor should be to engage and inform local residents of actions agreed at these meetings.</p> <p>By making sure all agencies who are involved in making these actions move forward are aware and that operational views are taken into account before agreeing actions. Set realistic timeframes.</p> <p>Engage with communities by promoting in various ways ie newsletters local newspapers, door knocking, website.</p> <p>The logistical arrangements that support Neighbourhood Councils, including meeting venues, accessibility, times, dates, frequency, presentation including sound equipment, refreshments,</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>seating arrangements and the associated costs. <i>Do you have any views on any aspect mentioned above? Are there things we can do to improve the experience of attending a Neighbourhood Council meeting?</i> Be more interactive with all members.</p> <p>The methods used to promote Neighbourhood Council meetings to the public and partners to ensure good attendance. The process for ensuring agendas are relevant, meaningful and interesting and how best to involve the public in the debates. <i>What do you think we should do to make the meetings more relevant, accessible and enjoyable? How can we best ensure that the items for discussion are what local people really want to talk about or progress?</i> In order for the public to become more involved then would it be possible to have more consultation prior to meetings so that they feel that they are having an input in setting the agenda opposed to being set by the councillors.</p> <p>Make it more interactive sessions, more open question time and plain English not political speech.</p> <p>The process for distributing the agenda packs before, and the minutes after, each Neighbourhood Council meeting. <i>How should we make sure that as many people as possible are aware of the meeting, have access to the agenda, and have access to the minutes?</i> By ensuring there a distribution list where all the above can be sent in advance.</p>
Residents Associations and Other Associations		
Pamela Chelmiah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Peterborough NHW • Chair East Ward Neighbourhood Panel • Chair Parnwell Residents Association 	<p>Neighbourhood Council meetings in theory very good idea, but we have also Neighbourhood Panel meetings and this is where we have duplication of problems, and actions. The public only attend meetings when there is a local problem i.e just suggest a travellers transit site and you are guaranteed a massive turnout!</p> <p>Having attended a Neighbourhood Council meeting in the East it was clear to everyone that Millfield needs help, where as Parnwell having strong local Residents Association in . solving problems for themselves do not need to attend Neighbourhood Council meetings, the council should therefore concentrate all resources to Millfield and rest of East /Dogsthorpe</p> <p>Also please take into account that Peterborough being very diverse City having large Eastern European population who have been used to corrupt police and council officials in their own country will shy away from being involved, also the general public over bankers bonuses , MPs expenses ,are so disillusioned that people just refuse to get involved.</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>Personally the way forward is to join up under one heading the Neighbourhood Panel and Neighbourhood Council meetings with the council being in attendance discuss the problems with the public and solve the issues there and then, This should save time and money for Peterborough City Council, and if you do not have the money that may be needed for the problem tell the people immediately do not waste our time , by suggesting further meetings and possibilities. As this is where people get most frustrated.</p> <p>Personally I have been volunteering for may years and have found the police and council very helpful and all Parnwell problems have been solved,</p> <p>Trust this may be of some help to you</p>
Alan Clarke	Fellowes Gardens Residents Association	<p>I have no comments to make about the Neighbourhood Councils. I can ring and talk to the team if I get any problems. The Neighbourhood Council team and I try and to work and help each other. So I can only say thank you very much to Lisa Emmanuel and all her team for all the work you have done for us at Fellowes Gardens. Thank you very much.</p>
John Bell	Member of Northborough Community Association	<p>Dear Madam</p> <p>I refer to your communication of 7th February 2011 addressed to xxxxxxxxxxxx and comment:</p> <p>From what I little experience I have recently had with Neighbourhood Councils I feel that the forming of Task and Finish Group is somewhat out of place</p> <p>It appears that these Councils exist and function under the general umbrella of the City Council purportedly to "support" the management of neighbourhood activities at a lower level than Full Council</p> <p>It is noteworthy that in the papers issued there is no mention of Community Associations and from Minutes I have received I see no representation other than the Councillors and City Council support staff</p> <p>Is this just another strata of unnecessary City Council? In my view yes although I do note that "Members of the Public" are invited to attend and may, if the Chair permits, speak but other than that they have no input or voting rights. In fact I tendered my apologies for non attendance at the January meeting only to find that there were no apologies noted in the Minutes and my interpretation of the response I received was that this was by Councillors for Councillors only</p> <p>Rural areas are not, as far as I am aware, represented on the Task and Finish Group and until such time as such representation is afforded to Rural areas I do not believe that the City Council are being "representative" of the general public</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>It also begs the question, in times of austerity and cuts, why has such a group been established with Councillors no doubt being able to claim attendance allowances?</p> <p>I also, like others, question why these Meetings are held on what appears to be the third Thursday of the month which is the Committee Meeting night for a number of Associations thereby precluding their attendance</p> <p>Please note that these are personal observations and may not reflect the views of other Members of Northborough Community Association as the short space of time given to formulate a wider response was insufficient.</p>
<p>David Jost Chairman GAINS</p>	<p>GAINS - Group Action In Norfolk Street</p> <p>A local residents' association</p>	<p>In your letter of 4 February you invited comments on the performance of Neighbourhood Councils. I am sorry that I am late in submitting comments. I hope nevertheless that they can be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We were a little surprised to read the range of powers delegated Neighbourhood Councils. The range of functions seem quite appropriate but we have been unaware that to date that the Central and North Council has exercised all these functions. We do not recall, for instance, that our Neighbourhood Council has agreed a programme of Highways works or designated any conservation areas. We would welcome the continuation of the list of delegated powers but suggest that the local public should be made much more aware of what our Neighbourhood Council can decide. • “Central and North Neighbourhood Council” does not resonate with local people. It needs a title that gets across what area is covered eg “New England, Millfield and Gladstone Neighbourhood Council”. • We should like to see the Neighbourhood Council meetings merging with the Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s Local Panel meetings for the area. There are only so many evening meetings that local people will turn out for, no matter how conscientious. • Representatives and the general public need to be made really welcome at meetings. Attendees should be offered refreshments to be served by Council staff or volunteers – not left to a serve-yourself arrangement. The venues should be comfortable but business-like. Cavernous echoing halls should be avoided. We don’t think there is much need for microphones (they are often a distraction) but rather speakers invited to stand and speak clearly. Good chairmanship is essential. Officers should help the chairpersons of meetings to keep to a clear timetable and not let commentators witter on! A recent Neighbourhood Council meeting began at 6 pm (with displays to be read beforehand) and did not finish until after 9 pm! Three hours sorely taxes the interest of local people. Meetings should be restricted to two hours at the most.

Name	Association	Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater effort should be made to involve local schools – both the staff and the governing bodies. Schools are well equipped to disseminate information such as notices of meetings and summaries of decisions. All organisations within a Neighbourhood Council area – churches, mosques, playgroups, schools, social clubs, GP practices, sports clubs and so on should be sent short briefings by email about Neighbourhood Council activities. Most organisations are contactable by email. We don't think there is any justification to go to the expense of mailing organisations. But notices could be displayed on the notice boards of post offices, schools and churches etc. We think that it is well worth persevering with the concept of neighbourhood councils / panel meetings despite the severe rationing of funds at the present time. Council staff and police personnel need to work together to support lively, relevant meetings where local people can get across their views and can influence the decision-making process of the City Council.
Parish Council and Werrington Neighbourhood Council Comments		
Brenda Stanojevic Eye Parish Clerk	Eye Parish Council	<p>Eye Parish Council is of the view that Neighbourhood Councils duplicate meetings that are already in place and have been for some years.</p> <p>That Neighbourhood Councils duplicate the work carried out freely by Parish Councils at extra cost to our parishioners and ratepayers.</p> <p>The Parish Councils are elected representatives of the areas concerned and that Neighbourhood Councils appear to be unelected quangos of council officers and councillors from other areas.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Councils are spending, what appears to be monies raised as 106 agreements, in areas unaffected by developments and with no consultation with Parish Councils.</p> <p>It would also appear from media reports and other sources, Cambridgeshire radio interview, that this review and our input are a waste of time when the leader of the council, Marco Cereste, as made his mind up that these are relevant.</p> <p>Meetings are held at the same time in the village as Parish Council meetings even though our meeting dates are published at least 12 months in advance.</p> <p>We are of the view that these Councils could have a role in the inner city wards or areas not covered by Parish Councils.</p> <p>Parish Councillors feel that they are wasting their time and efforts attending meetings in Thorney, Wittering or where ever in the large area covered by these councils to discuss topics such as bus</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		timetables etc that have no relevance to the parishioners that have elected us.
Mike Chambers.	Orton Waterville Parish Council	<p>I am listing below my comments on the Neighbourhood Councils:-</p> <p>1 Terms of reference are broadly ok. However it should be possible to allow Parish Councils a voice in decision making-I thought this was one of the so called aims of the Coalition-i.e. to pass decision making down locally!</p> <p>2 I am not able to comment on the interaction with Cabinet, Full Council or Scrutiny commission. However it has somewhat cut the ground from under the Parish Liaison meetings and it would make sense to combine the two PROVIDED we get the same type of information about Council budgets etc. There is a tendency for the neighbourhood council to be more of a talking shop.</p> <p>3 See above</p> <p>4 We seem to be lucky in that June Stokes usually attends Parish Council meetings and reports back on developments. However there is a tendency for officials to think that big brother knows best. Thus we have been pressing for a crossing to the Nene Park across the Oundle road but this has been deemed unnecessary and too expensive. The cost of investigating a casualty would dwarf the cost of a crossing.</p> <p>5 Times and frequency of meetings seem ok but publicity is weak. It would help if meeting arrangements were sent to each Parish Council representative as well as clerks. There is a need for more publicity-most Parishes have at least one notice Board so leaflets would help. Meetings could also be advertised in Oracle and the other free papers. 7 See above. Hope the comments are of use</p>
Frieda Gosling	Ufford Parish Council	<p>Q1 Neighbourhood Councils may have a role in the city wards where there are no parish councils but, in the wards with parish councils, their grandiose terms of reference and responsibilities appear to be a futile attempt to justify the creation of another tier of local government, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “identify and meet the needs of the community in the local area...” • “develop master plans and action plans...” • “be a primary focus for public involvement...” • “act as consultees in respect of planning and licensing applications...”

Name	Association	Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “be consulted on all executive and council proposals that affect the local area...” • “monitor service delivery...” • “designate conservation areas...” <p>With only 4 ordinary meetings a year of 2 hour duration and the policy that only the ward councillors can vote, the Neighbourhood Councils are unlikely to meet expectations. At present they are seen primarily as a source of funding, but with a budget of only £25,000, this is going to be spread very thinly.</p> <p>Q2 The aim appears to have been to create a hierarchy of meetings from the community meetings at grassroots level up through the ward councillors to the various city council meetings but so far there has been little evidence of this interaction. To monitor service delivery, parish councils prefer to liaise directly with the relevant departments such as planning, highways, tree management and grass cutting, wildlife.</p> <p>Q3 The name Neighbourhood Council is unfortunate in city wards where there are already neighbourhood or community meetings. The best way forward would be to abolish the Neighbourhood Councils and to create elected parish councils in all wards. Parish councils are statutory bodies, democratically elected to represent their communities. By inviting members of the public to raise issues at Neighbourhood Council meetings, policies may be based on who shouts loudest and has the biggest axe to grind. Alternatively, the proposed Rural Affairs Committee should be considered to provide a strong rural voice within PCC and reduce the number of meetings.</p> <p>Q4 It is essential for ward councillors to have frequent meetings in their ward. The Barnack Ward model has been particularly successful. Following the city council decision a few years ago to give each ward £10,000 a year, representatives from each parish council have met every few months to consider proposals and agree on priorities for schemes which would benefit the community, visitors and the environment. These have ranged from a lorry ban on the B1443 and speed reduction schemes to tree and hedge planting, circular walks and cycle ways and historical village boards. The meetings are minuted and there are terms of reference and full accounts of expenditure. Most important of all, the parishes now work together and the funding has made a real difference. This is a better way of implementing the Localism agenda.</p> <p>Q5, 6, 7 The wide geographical spread of the Neighbourhood Council rural areas has been one reason for the poor attendance at meetings. People are not inclined to drive a 30 mile round trip to discuss anti-social behaviour or street lighting problems in another village when their local concerns are the condition of footways and speeding traffic. The cost of petrol and the absence of expenses are</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>disincentives. Meetings have been arranged so that they clash with parish council meetings although these have been notified. Very often there has been short notice of meetings. The provision of refreshments and agenda packs are not going to persuade people to attend unless the topics to be discussed are relevant to them. It is often felt that the meetings and the professional support are a waste of public money in times of austerity and that the police, for example, could be better employed.</p>
Bernard	Bretton Parish Council	<p>Many thanks for your e-mail and the chance to make comments on the Neighbourhood Councils. Unfortunately the full council did not meet in time for this to be discussed but it was considered by a committee last night. Rather than to answer the specific questions I have been requested to respond and I hope that this e-mail will be sufficient.</p> <p>It was considered that in view of the present economic climate and the cuts that we have to take it was felt that perhaps the Neighbourhood Council was using funds that could possibly be used elsewhere. This was considered to be more appropriate where there was already a Parish Council looking after local issues and which of course Bretton is such an area. The Neighbourhood Council seems to be duplicating the role of the Parish Council and real Neighbourhood Councils such as Werrington. Likewise it was felt that the role of the Neighbourhood Council is not fed into the democratic process as any decisions can only be taken by City councilors and not the members of a particular Neighbourhood Council. However where there is no Parish Council then it is felt that a Neighbourhood Council can assist where there are specific local issues that have to be addressed.</p> <p>It is hoped that these points will be considered helpful and taken into account.</p>
June Woollard Chairman of Barnack Parish Council	Barnack Parish Council	<p>Barnack Parish Council do not see any benefit in the North West Neighbourhood Council. It has not worked and has proved an inefficient use of time and a complete waste of valuable public money. The Parish Council have tried to support this initiative and understand that it was formed in an attempt to give the public a voice. In urban wards where there are no parish councils these neighbourhood councils could have some worth, but in rural parishes they are not successful for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If residents want to put their views forward they have every opportunity to do so through their parish councils. In villages all residents know their parish councillors, who all live in the village and are very easy to contact on a daily basis to address matters of concern as they arise and before they get to be a problem. There is also an open forum at each parish council meeting when residents have the opportunity to bring matters of concern to the notice of the parish council as a whole. Residents are encouraged to attend these public parish council meetings and take an active interest in how the parish council operate and see the democratic process in action. 2. The Neighbourhood Council is simply duplicating the work covered by parish councils. At the meetings of the North West Neighbourhood Council no matters other than those covered by parish

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>council work have been discussed. Very few if any members of the public from the rural areas have been present, as they have already raised any concerns they may have within their own parishes.</p> <p>3. Parish Councils have easy access to officers within the City Council and do not need the Neighbourhood Council to facilitate a channel of communication. A large number of City Council officers and staff seem to be present at the North West Neighbourhood Council meetings, which in itself is not a good use of public time and finance. Halls have to be hired at great expense, which again is a waste of limited resources.</p> <p>4. The City Councillor for the Barnack Ward attends all parish Council meetings each month and has an intimate knowledge of the business being discussed. He also visits his ward each week and is a familiar face in the village at weekends, so that residents can bring matters of concern to him and through good liaison with the parish council can enable parish councillors to immediately address any concern which might arise.</p> <p>5. The Barnack Ward Group has been in existence now for five years and is a well established group enabling all the parish councils in the ward to work together on matters common to all parishes. This has proved to be invaluable. It has also enabled the villages to work together on joint projects thus making the best possible use of public money.</p> <p>6. The same topics are being discussed at present by a number of bodies therefore Parish Councillors are required to attend numerous unnecessary meetings and City Council officers are required to present the same material at numerous meetings, which is not an efficient use of their time.</p> <p>7. Barnack Parish Council support the work done by the Rural Working Group chaired by Henry Clark.</p> <p>8. Perhaps the most efficient way of working would be for the City Councillors in the North West Neighbourhood Council area to meet perhaps once a year to bring together the projects discussed at their individual Ward Group meetings to enable them to provide finance from Neighbourhood Council funds.</p>
J Buddle Chairman	Thorney Parish Council	<p>The overarching terms of reference, the range of responsibilities, and the decision-making powers for Neighbourhood Councils that are set out in the Council's Constitution (the relevant pages of this are attached for your information).</p> <p><i>Do you think these are too narrow or too broad? Do you have other ideas about what should be included here?</i></p> <p>Quite frankly and brutally we don't want a Neighbourhood Council we want a Northern Rural Affairs Group that truly reflects our needs.</p> <p>The way in which Neighbourhood Councils interact with, or should interact with, other Council</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>forums, committees and meetings (e.g. Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet, Full Council etc). <i>What do you think the relationship should be between these meetings?</i> Scrutiny Committees are pointless – the public can't speak at them. We want the Northern Affairs Group (NAG!!) to react directly with Ward Councillors and the Cabinet.</p> <p>The way in which Neighbourhood Councils and other neighbourhood or community meetings (e.g. Neighbourhood Panels) work together, or should work together, to ensure minimum duplication and maximum delivery. <i>Do you think there is duplication at the moment? If so how can we avoid this? What purpose do you believe each of the community meetings should have? Is the name 'Neighbourhood Council' meaningful and appropriate or can you suggest an alternative?</i> We don't want a Neighbourhood Council. We want a Northern Affairs Group and proposals reflect our rural concerns.</p> <p>The process of engaging with Councillors and partners outside the formal Neighbourhood Council meeting to progress decisions made and actions agreed during the meeting, and how those actions are communicated to the public <i>What role do you think Councillors should have in relation to Neighbourhood Council business outside the formal meetings? How can we best ensure that agreed decisions and actions are progressed? How should we make sure that communities are kept up to date on progress?</i> Ward Councillors <u>must</u> attend PC meetings and Northern Affairs Group.</p> <p>The logistical arrangements that support Neighbourhood Councils, including meeting venues, accessibility, times, dates, frequency, presentation including sound equipment, refreshments, seating arrangements and the associated costs. <i>Do you have any views on any aspect mentioned above? Are there things we can do to improve the experience of attending a Neighbourhood Council meeting?</i> 4 times yearly is sufficient. Thorney will happily host meetings.</p> <p>The methods used to promote Neighbourhood Council meetings to the public and partners to ensure good attendance. The process for ensuring agendas are relevant, meaningful and interesting and how best to involve the public in the debates. <i>What do you think we should do to make the meetings more relevant, accessible and enjoyable? How can we best ensure that the items for discussion are what local people really want to talk about or progress?</i> Stop filling meetings with repetitions and ego trips by Councillors.</p> <p>The process for distributing the agenda packs before, and the minutes after, each Neighbourhood Council meeting.</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p><i>How should we make sure that as many people as possible are aware of the meeting, have access to the agenda, and have access to the minutes?</i></p> <p>Keep your web site much simpler.</p> <p>Scrutiny Committees are a total waste of time and public money. If we attend we can't speak. We may as well not be there. Nothing is scrutinised.</p> <p><u>Neighbourhood Councils</u></p> <p>We recognise that in Urban Area this is a useful concept. However in Rural Areas as in the North of P'boro there are 23 villages each of which is very different. "One size <u>does not fit for all</u>". We want to be able to talk to Ward Councillors about our issues which are rural and different from those in the urban/city wards. We want to see the "Localism" idea exercised "locally" not in the City Hall.</p>
<p>Alan Smith and David Hedges Planning Chairman & Chairman Werrington Neighbourhood Council</p>	<p>Werrington Neighbourhood Council</p>	<p><u>Werrington Neighbourhood Council Comments Based on a Discussion at their Meeting of 21 Feb 2011</u></p> <p>We welcome the idea of the Council setting up a forum which is more local and has the potential to allow more input and engagement by residents and local representatives with the operations of the Council and other statutory and non statutory services working in the area. We do not think our Community Committee is currently achieving this. There are fundamental reasons for this as well as logistical ones. We want to engage with these difficulties to find a way through.</p> <p>In our area we do not find the area covered by the Community Committee (NC) has meaningful identity as a united area. It is not a Neighbourhood. It is quite disparate in character and recent history and does not have unifying features. It is not for example grouped around a single centre. There are different priorities across the locality and trying to bring these into a coherent pattern may not be possible or desirable. There are commonalities and shared issues but these are also shared with the rest of the City.</p> <p>The NCs derive their legitimacy from the electorate. However the Councillors were elected to the Council not the local grouping. They are not independent of the City Council and everything that the NCs do is ultimately controlled by the PCC. In that sense they are not the local voice but rather the local operation of the Council as a whole. This has implications for their remit and their ability to hold a united agreed position on local issues where there are significant differences of opinion. Their remit seems too broad both in this respect and in the extent of the issues they are expected to cover. It is not clear from experience so far how their meetings are going to be able to be effective in many of the matters within their terms of reference. Single issues affecting a very small part of the community seem to</p>

Name	Association	Comment
		<p>predominate and the process of dealing with them is far more protracted than might have been the case if taken up by one Councillor.</p> <p>Until it is clearer as to what the Community Plans and the Action Plans will contain, and their format/level of detail/timeframe has been specified, it is difficult to form a view. But they are potentially a very significant task and there needs to be a clear means of giving them legitimacy. There needs to be clarity on what resources will be available to secure their preparation and then their implementation, both in staffing and budgets.</p> <p>There is particular concern that comments on planning proposals will not work at this level and should not replace the responses of, in our case, the Werrington Neighbourhood Council.</p> <p>In terms of giving local leadership we feel that the Chairman should have a close relationship with the locality and be the Chairman for only one Neighbourhood Council. This gives them clarity of position and enables them to give voice to the locality without ambiguity or potential conflict of interest. The current arrangement with Chairmen means there is too much emphasis on process and not enough on content.</p> <p>We want to see something which improves Werrington's linkages and interaction with the City Council. The NCs could just introduce a block or tier between us and the Council officers. We would like to have a better understanding of what the NCs are expected to achieve. What are the overall outcomes which determine their medium term objectives? Are they, for example, aiming to get better services locally, and/or ones better tailored to local needs? Are they looking to improve the quality of life? The economic viability of the local facilities? Introduce more employment? Improve health and well being? Improved security and quality of the public environment? Or is it more modest: a more effective Councillor surgery, dealing with similar issues across a greater than ward area? Until there is more understanding of the ultimate ambition behind the concept it is difficult to discuss the mechanics of achieving those objectives. We need to agree what we want to do, then we can debate how best to do it.</p>

Appendix 3: Questionnaire given to the Youth Council and a selection of young people, and their responses

Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee - Review of Neighbourhood Councils

Questionnaire for Young People and the Youth Council – 34 young people were asked to complete the questionnaire and 34 responses were received

1. Have you heard of the Neighbourhood Councils?

If yes please go to question 2, if no go to question 6

Yes	19	56%
No	15	44%
Total response	34	

2. Have you attended a Neighbourhood Council meeting?

If yes please go to question 4, if no go to question 3

Out of 19 who had responded YES to question 1 gave the following responses:

Yes	7	37%
No	12	63%
Total response	19	

3a Why have you not attended a Neighbourhood Council meeting?

Out of 12 who had responded NO to question 2 gave the following responses:

I don't understand what they are	0	0
I don't think they would interest me	2	17%
I have not seen them advertised and don't know when the meetings are	8	66%
I thought they were just for Councillors	2	17%
Total response	12	

Comments received:

- I am not sure what issues are talked about in Neighbourhood Councils.
- I haven't been available when meetings are going on.

3b. If you knew when and where the meetings were being held do you think you would attend?

Yes	4	33.33%
Occasionally if there was something on the agenda that interested me	7	58.33%
No	1	8.33%
Total response	12	

Please write other comments below:

No comments were received.

4. When you attended the Neighbourhood Council meeting did you find it interesting?

Out of 7 who had responded YES to question 2 the following responses were given:

Yes	5	71%
No	2	29%
Total response	7	

Comments received:

Those who responded YES commented:

- To hear what the Neighbourhood Council has to say and how they listened to us.
- Topics were very relative.
- All ages attended.
- Was relative to local issues that will affect me, friends and family etc.
- It was interesting to find out what happens in other local areas and what they need and want from the Council.
- They listened to the young people and stuff.

Those who responded NO commented:

- It was a little repetitive and monotonous and also a little long.

5. Do you have any suggestions of ways that Neighbourhood Councils can better engage and communicate with young people?

Comments received:

- Flyers in the newspaper and write in graffiti on walls
- Newsletter through doors
- Facebook
- Cover topics more relevant to young people e.g. bus fares
- Email local meeting dates as is done with Youth Council meetings, posters in schools
- Flyers, put in oracles
- Advertise better and aim more at young people
- Promote them so that people are aware of them e.g. schools
- Make them accessible
- Better advertising and publicity of the meetings
- Advertise the meetings at schools
- Show they actually want our attendance and views
- Invite youths from the local schools e.g. School Councils
- Advertise them a lot more and make sure invitations are sent out
- Publicise through the media what neighbourhood councils do and help young people to contribute to meetings

6. Would you like to know more about Neighbourhood Councils and receive an invitation to attend the Neighbourhood Council meeting in your area? If so please can you give your contact details below?

23 (68%) of the 34 respondents gave their contact details.

Neighbourhood Councils - Evaluation and feedback

1. Do you believe that the Neighbourhood Council has given you a greater say in what happens in your community?

Yes No 1a. Please explain your answer:

.....
.....

1. Why have you attended your Neighbourhood Council?

I regularly attend to report a single issue Network

Other Interested in a particular agenda item

If other, please explain:

.....
.....

3. Do you believe that you can really influence the Council and its decision makers through the Neighbourhood Council?

Yes No 2a. Please explain your answer:

.....
.....

3. How would you prefer to receive feedback from your Neighbourhood Council?

Verbal next meeting PCC Website Email Letter Your Peterborough

Other (specify)

4. How did you hear about this meeting?

Your Peterborough PCC Website Email Poster Direct Invitation Other

If other, please explain:.....

5. Do you have any other venues that you think these meetings should be held at to increase attendance?

.....

6. What changes would you make that you think would really encourage your friends and neighbours to attend Neighbourhood Councils regularly.

.....

.....

7. Do you have any other comments regarding the Neighbourhood Council, for example what their objective should be, choice of venue, etc?

Appendix 5: Responses received to the survey issued at the latest round of NC meetings

Why have you attended your Neighbourhood Council?

- To participate in discussions which hopefully will end in the betterment of Park Ward
- Part of a youth forum
- We are here for the young people's forum
- I am part of Fletton Stanground and Woodston
- I do attend regularly but today I supported the youth forum
- The only reason one attends these meeting is so that non-attendance cannot be used later by officers to neglect a point
- To support Julie and Alex in their hard important and necessary work
- Gather information for local community associations, but have found more generally helpful, wish I'd known about it before.
- I am interested in the proposed development of Great Haddon
- As representative of Bainton & Ashton PC
- To show interest in our community and have a say
- By chance, asked to attend by parish council
- To try and understand how they operate democratically
- As a parish councillor
- Bus service
- I am interested in what ways people are able to participate in the way we function
- I had hoped to see local people having a direct say in how their services are met
- I try to attend regularly
- I regularly attend
- To meet and see what is discussed
- I regularly attend, network

How would you prefer to receive feedback from your Neighbourhood Council?

- By E mail
- Post
- E mail and Verbal Via our youth worker
- Via youth worker
- I thought your Peterborough has been dropped
- Through parish clerk
- Sent to parish councillor who will arrange for distribution to residents
- Through Parish council
- Displayed in parish notice boards village halls etc
- More diaries regarding content of meetings
- By Post
- Evening Telegraph
- Verbal
- Verbal next meeting, letter, Your Peterborough

How did you hear about this meeting?

- Post
- Invited
- Via our youth worker
- Through our youth worker
- Youth worker
- Last meeting
- Attended last meeting
- Invited by councillor after raising issues otherwise ignorant of NC initiative, which I now very much welcome
- Evening Telegraph
- Through parish council
- Second hand
- Orton Medical Practice
- With great difficulty, 1 line in your Peterborough is not sufficient
- By chance
- Ward councillor
- By word and mouth
- From parish clerk
- Friend who though it was at village hall but was not sure of time
- My son received an e-mail this morning from the parish clerk which said I was an officially invited person. Before 6.30 am we knew nothing of tonight's meeting
- I saw letter in ET and rang your staff
- Direct invitation
- Email and invite

Do you have any other venues that you think these meetings should be held at to increase attendance?

- Woodston community centre
- Cherry Tree
- Ken Stimpson School
- Hodgson centre, village hall – Werrington, other schools
- Local community centre
- Venues with good public transport access e.g. Voyager and Ken Stimpson Schools
- Coalies
- Venues tend to cover most of the area
- All the suitable venues I know of are used
- Matley area
- Possible local schools, bigger halls available
- Somewhere in Hampton
- Ravensthorpe
- St Johns Hall
- Mayor Walk PE3. Why do you not have a list of possible sites
- Local schools
- Pyramid centre
- Quaker hall
- Stafford Hall St Johns Hall
- Mind, Lincoln Road
- Best 4 Baby, Newark Avenue
- Bluebell – always central of very near Fulbridge. Need to encourage Bluebell input

What changes would you make that you think would really encourage your friends and neighbours to attend Neighbourhood Councils regularly?

- More time for residents to raise concerns, less time for council officers to talk on what interests them
- Make agendas more freely available
- Things seen to be done
- More publicity
- No meetings just before Christmas
- Less official
- This meeting needs to be a little more relaxed I understand the importance but a more informal start for YP would be better
- Better advertising posters available to go in community centres churches and other places
- Residents set the agenda, make decisions setting clear objectives for the council. The council are then responsible to the residents in ensuring that the officers carry out that of residents' wishes
- Less regular meetings
- I would like to see these meeting advertised on local radio
- Make sure dates and locations are advertised not just once, twice in ET
- Greater impact upon decision and policy
- Different night of week, better advertised locally – leaflet drop/postal
- More publicity in local paper
- Earlier notification as item was printed in last night's ET
- More voting
- Make meeting known by flyers in house and locals to deliver
- Better publicity including local notice board
- Take a more personal approach and get to know local people
- Better advertising of dates but also what has been achieved
- Better communications generally, you'd have to really involved already to turn up out of the blue
- The neighbourhood council would be of much greater interest to the general public if it had more funds to use to deal with problems
- Try meeting on Saturday mornings
- All parish councillors
- Actually achieve something, make decisions
- Power to make a difference that existing bodies cannot
- Better meetings and clarification of purpose of the council vs parish councils and ward councillors
- Opportunity to actually speak at the meeting would help the open session being cut short does not help
- Get out information of meeting early
- To inform them that 200 homes will be built next door
- For them to be able to have some say or influence on decisions that are made
- Know where and when meetings are to be held
- If the chairmen and others were paid
- Publicise the meetings in local parish newsletters
- Have meetings chaired by people who live in area, other councillors and residents are to take more action
- Invite PCVS, senior citizens forum, business and T.U.C
- They will be more encouraged to attend if they see that their concerns are actually addressed satisfactorily
- Communications via schools
- Day time meetings

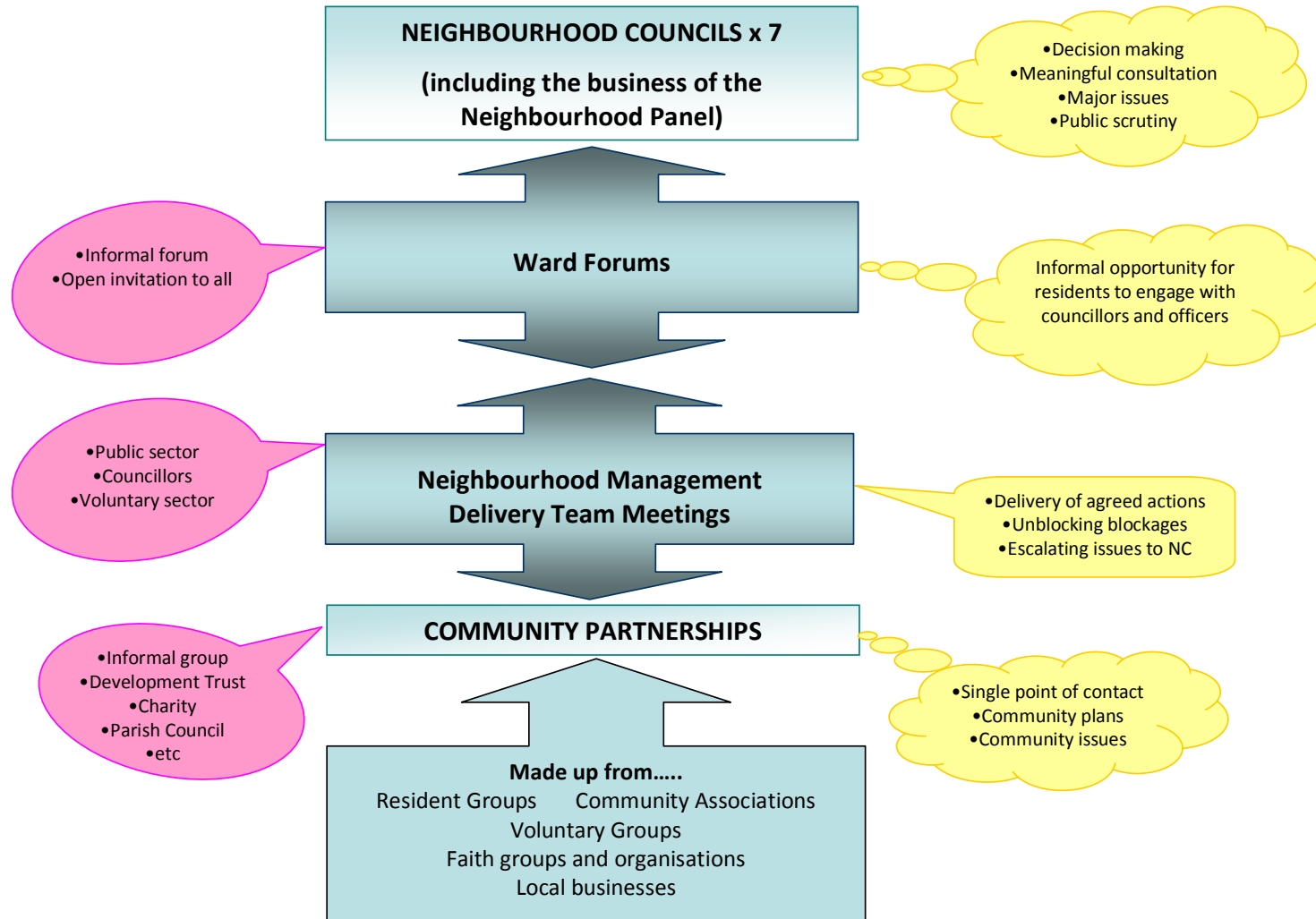
- Reduce the areas they relate to. A west ward or Longthorpe community council would be more efficient for me
- Make sure things are fed back directly to members of the public who raise the issues
- Achieve results that are highly visible and improve the neighbourhood
- Reminder on the day of the meeting for some people - possibly a few sessions earlier or afternoon
- Interesting agenda items with outcomes/decisions made that truly reflect the public view. Not consultation but debate and input with a collaborative decision including people's right to vote not just councillors. Change to constitution to allow this would help fill meetings with residents and encourage Big Society and Localism in areas not currently covered.

Do you have any other comments regarding the Neighbourhood Council, for example what their objective should be, choice of venue, etc?

- More people would attend if they knew about meetings. Notice boards to be repaired so they can be used
- More posters on local notice board and community centres
- Venues are always a good choice (mostly) Refreshment is good maybe biscuits could be supplied soft music in background to be an enjoyable environment to walk into
- Their objective should be to drive the business of the council
- Unless drastically revamped they represent poor value for time and costs
- Should take less time more focus and better decision making
- Lack of information
- My area committee are the best - first give them support
- I think its good that they exist
- Act locally
- If the government want to pass down the decisions to the local people then the money should follow
- Seems "a good thing" reassuring on my key issues today
- Regarding the neighbourhood council budget. This needs carefully monitoring. You must list the following and present the list at each meeting. What is going to be done? Who is going to do it? When are they going to do it? Where it will be done? The current situation. I accept that you may be doing this already, but it was not clear from the meeting
- Allow members of public etc more participation/ vote
- Starts too early for people who work
- Widen the membership to include reps from parish councils. Make more use of parish councils to engage with community groups
- Question the overall need if parish councillors and ward councillors are doing their job correctly. What a disorganised meeting
- Dates of meetings being notified well in advance would make the meetings seem more welcoming
- Waste of time no support off panel bodies. Rural areas need to be interested too
- If you want residents to attend the dates the agenda must be available for village notice board at least two weeks in addition
- I think the concept is a fine idea but that's all it is. Let the parish councils do the work they have been doing and doing well for years
- Waste of time
- Waste of time and money
- This was a waste of time and money
- Get rid of neighbourhood councils
- Was the meeting called to score brownie points? Ineffective sound system as not everyone could hear certain people on the top table. At the moment NC meetings are too much like mini PCC meetings

- The councillors who give their time have moved their surgeries to a group basis on one night
- Better if they were by single ward so issues are focused on
- Please combine this with the police panel meeting
- Hold the executive to account - waste of rate payers money
- Perhaps invite speakers from key Eastern European Communities to give a talk on related issues re their communities.

Appendix 6: Neighbourhood Management Framework



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