

REPORT TO	DATE OF MEETING
Governance Committee	1 December 2011

Report template revised June 2008



SUBJECT	PORTFOLIO	AUTHOR	ITEM
My Neighbourhood Governance Report	N/A	M. Wood	7

SUMMARY AND LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report has been prepared to provide the Governance Committee with information on the governance arrangements that are being implemented to deal with the My Neighbourhood areas. Members will recall that the Committee requested, at its last meeting on the 28 September, a report to be brought to this meeting.

The action reported on covers two of the Council's priorities namely efficient, effective and exceptional council and also strong and healthy communities and in particular corporate action 12 which is "empowering members to fulfil their role as community leaders".

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee note, review and comment on the actions that are reported on.

BACKGROUND

The My Neighbourhood framework and its supporting arrangements were approved by full Council at its meeting on the 21 September 2011. Appendix A contains those governance details that were approved and the necessary amendments to the constitution were delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance Committee to implement.

The particular interest at the last Governance Committee meeting focused on the decision making process, therefore the remainder of this report explains in more detail how that aspect is designed to operate.

We are designing a process that will be applied consistently and will ensure an open and transparent approach to enhance accountability and improve information to all elected members, but more importantly to local communities, South Ribble residents and the wider public. It is hoped that this approach will improve engagement with the community and openly demonstrate how money has been spent in each of the five areas.

Members should note that these arrangements are being developed and the Council's website will be the main vehicle for providing information. This information will include the amount of money available to each My Neighbourhood area and also how the money is being spent against specific actions identified in each of the five improvement plans. It is intended that a separate page on the Council's website will be devoted to each of the five areas and it will also facilitate progress to be monitored against each item of activity. It is anticipated that the web system will be operational by the end of December 2011.

DETAILS

One of the main aims of the My Neighbourhood Forums is to produce My Neighbourhood Plans. The My Neighbourhood Plans will be developed in line with the Corporate Plan to ensure they fit with the Council's priorities and objectives. Once the My Neighbourhood Plans are drafted, Cabinet will consider the Plans in line with the Corporate Plan and budget.

This will effectively give approval to warrant further exploration of the actions identified within each of the plans. Each My Neighbourhood forum Chairman has a key role to play in developing and maintaining a close working relationship with the Community Involvement team. Each area has a dedicated lead officer. Consensus with fellow members in the My Neighbourhood forum will also be essential to get support, buy in and agreement on how decisions are reached and how money should be allocated.

These decisions will be channelled and controlled through the existing delegated decision process. In effect this will mean that each decision will be documented and will require professional clearance by both Legal and Financial services to assess the potential risks, implications and level of resources required. Following successful clearance, the Director of Regeneration and Healthy Communities will also need to approve the decision before final sign off by the chair of the My Neighbourhood forum.

At this point the information of the delegated decision will be uploaded to the Council's website but will not become effective until the "call in" period has elapsed.

Each My Neighbourhood page will reflect the current position for each area. In particular showing budget available to be spent; each decision and supporting information; amount spent or committed to each action; what that action is intended to achieve and progress to date.

Appendix B shows a flowchart explaining diagrammatically each step in the process.

Appendix C gives an example of how we envisage the information on the My Neighbourhood expenditure will be published on the website. This will be in addition to dedicated pages on each of the My Neighbourhood areas promoting local activity.

The Corporate Governance service is working closely with the Community Involvement team to ensure these processes are transparent and accountable and delivered to agreed timescales.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

In the preparation of this report, consideration has been given to the impact of its proposals in all the areas listed below, and the table shows any implications in respect of each of these. The risk assessment which has been carried out forms part of the background papers to the report.

FINANCIAL	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.		
LEGAL	There are no legal implications arising from this report. However, the actions identified in this report comply with the latest recommended best practice for data transparency in local authorities.		
RISK	The delivery of the actions identified in this report should further enhance our governance and business control status thus minimising risk.		
OTHER (see below)			
<i>Asset Management</i>	<i>Corporate Plans and Policies</i>	<i>Crime and Disorder</i>	<i>Efficiency Savings/Value for Money</i>

<i>Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion</i>	<i>Freedom of Information/ Data Protection</i>	<i>Health and Safety</i>	<i>Health Inequalities</i>
<i>Human Rights Act 1998</i>	<i>Implementing Electronic Government</i>	<i>Staffing, Training and Development</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>

Governance Arrangements for Community Involvement

1. Appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs for “My Neighbourhood” meetings.
2. Approval of Community Improvement Plans.
3. Decision making and approval of expenditure to deliver Community Improvements.
4. Logistical arrangements.
5. Remuneration arrangements.
6. Title and job description.

Appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs:

- To be ratified by Council, following two nominations (1 for Chair and 1 for Vice Chair) from the political group with the majority of seats from amongst the Ward Members representing each “My Neighbourhood” Area. The appointment to be initially for 12 months and then reviewed.
- In the event of an equality of seats within the neighbourhood area, then one nomination from each political party from amongst the Ward Members representing each “My Neighbourhood” Area. The appointment of the position of Chair and Vice Chair to be ratified by Council and reviewed after 12 months.
- A mechanism will be included in the Constitution that will facilitate a change of position outside of the above process to cater for unforeseen circumstances. This would be reported to Council as above.

Approval of Community Improvement Plans

- Community Improvement Plans must be developed by each neighbourhood area.
- The plans to be approved by each Neighbourhood must be aligned with the Council’s priorities and they will be further considered as part of the Council’s corporate planning process.

Decision Making:

- That decision making be delegated to the Chair of the “My Neighbourhood” Area in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Healthy Communities and in accordance with the Council’s decision making processes.
- All decisions must be made in accordance with the agreed Community Improvement Plan and budgets allocated.
- All decisions must be properly recorded and will be published on the Council’s website.
- Expenditure should be of a “one off” nature and should not generate further on-going revenue expense to the Council.

Meetings:

- Up to 4 public facing meetings per annum are to be held which are to be open meetings to discuss community issues.
- Reduced administration and logistics are a key consideration i.e. locations, timing, publicity on topics etc to be decided by the chairs in consultation with other local neighbourhood members.
- Chairs will be required to propose the annual timetable of meetings by December each year to facilitate full integration and consultation on the Council's annual timetable of meetings.

Remuneration

- Appropriate allowance to be determined by the Remuneration Panel or alternatively the same allowance could be paid as contained in the existing scheme for Area Committee Chairs.

Title and Job Description

- The community meetings to be called My Neighbourhood meetings.

(Extracts from the Constitution Part 5 Protocol 10 and amended in light of proposals.)

The Council's My Neighbourhood meetings play an important role in involving local communities in the decision-making of the Council. Their key role is as follows:

- a) working with the local community and partners identifying the priorities of the area they serve.
- b) ensuring the Community Improvement Plan represents all sections of the community they serve.
- c) ensuring actions in the plan are agreed and reported back to the Community on an annual basis.
- d) ensuring that the views of local communities are taken on board in the way the Council and its partners conducts business.
- e) acting as a means for the Council and its partners to consult local communities on key issues.
- f) enabling Council decisions to be taken at a local level and in a way which allows public participation.
- g) explaining decisions made by the Council and reasons for them to local communities.
- h) enhancing links with local communities and local groups in a way which builds capacity in local communities to take action for themselves.

However, it is also important that members sitting on My Neighbourhood meetings recognise that, first and foremost:

- a) they must act with the interests of the whole Council in mind rather than the interests of any specific area; and
- b) their actions and conduct during My Neighbourhood meetings affect the reputation of the Council with local communities.

Roles and Responsibilities

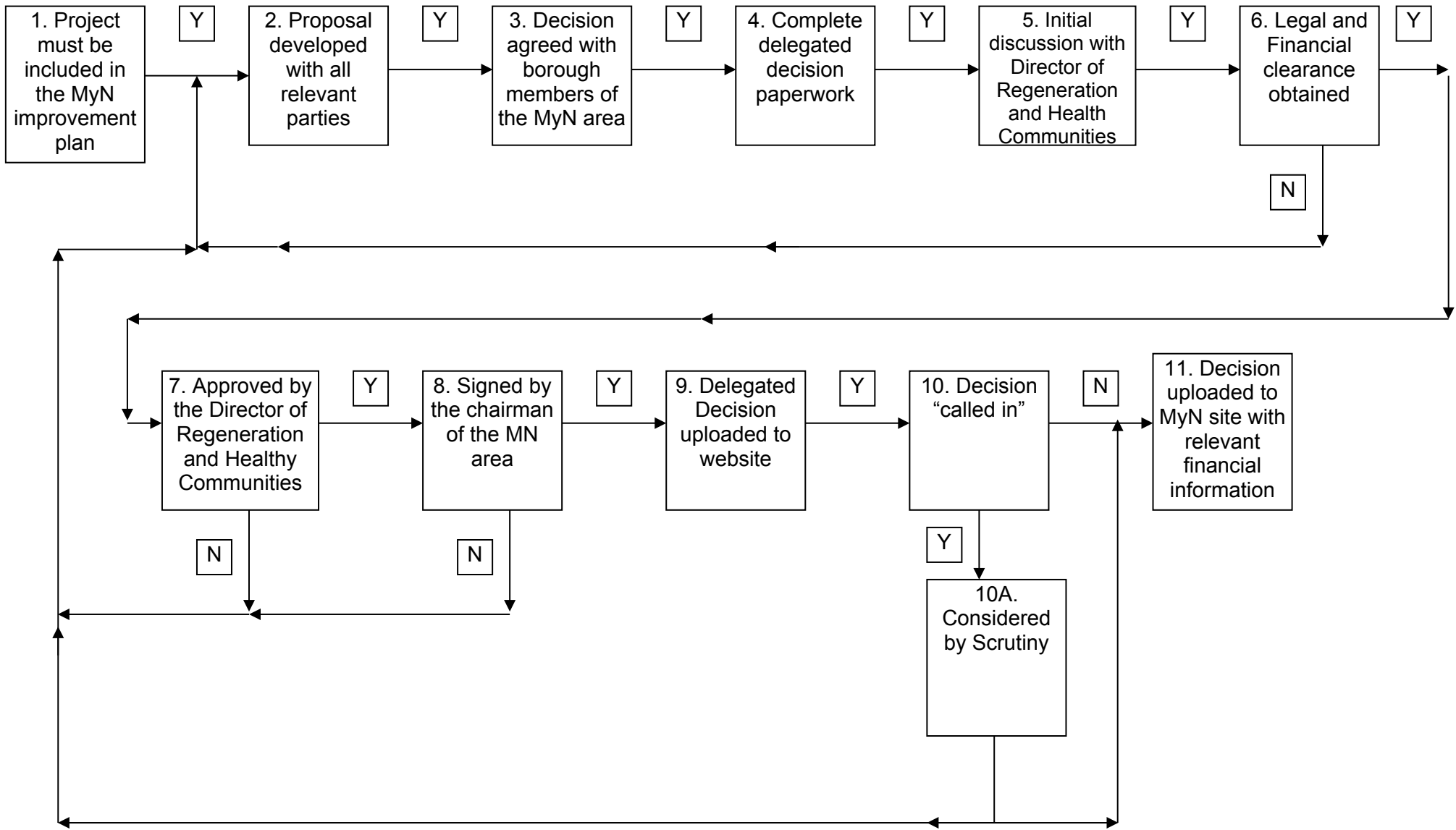
Responsibilities of My Neighbourhood Chairs

- a) Responsibility to work with other elected members, public and partners to draft a Community Improvement Plan.
- b) Responsibility to report the Plan to Cabinet
- c) Responsibility to provide leadership of and direction to their My Neighbourhood meetings.
- d) Championing their local area and My Neighbourhood meetings.
- e) Ensuring effective management of meetings.
- f) Developing links with the local community.
- g) Ensuring communication between all members in the area.
- h) Encouraging contribution from members in the area.
- i) Ensuring that respect is shown at all times to councillors, officers/and members of the public.
- j) Work with other My Neighbourhood chairs to share learning and experience.

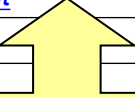
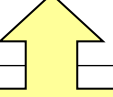
Role Description for Councillors – (Extracted from Leading from the Frontline – A Scrutiny Review into the Community Leadership and Ward role of Councillors).

- a) To lead and champion the interests of the local community and effectively represent the interests of your ward and its residents.
- b) To meet, communicate and liaise regularly with local people, involving and consulting them on local issues in order to develop strong positive relationships.
- c) To support and promote good citizenship locally and develop our communities to take part in local groups and community action.
- d) To undertake case work for residents in resolving local concerns.
- e) To communicate with residents and answer enquiries about decisions affecting them and opportunities in the community.
- f) To represent the Council to the community and the community to the Council and support fellow councillors.
- g) To develop and maintain a good knowledge of the ward and Council and develop strong relationships with residents, partners and officers.

Appendix B



**LIST OF SCHEMES AND EXPENDITURE APPROVED
FOR MY NEIGHBOURHOOD**

Ref. No.	Project	Amount £	Date Approved	Status	Notes
e.g. 101	Contribution to village improvement scheme – public art for junction of Long Lane & Hill Street	£2795	20 Feb 2012	Underway	Consultation complete Order placed, delivery 10/4/12
<div style="position: relative; width: 100%; height: 100%;"> <div style="position: absolute; top: -20px; left: 15%; width: 80%; text-align: center;">  <p>Hyperlink to My Neighbourhood page – more detail on projects</p> </div> <div style="position: absolute; top: 20px; left: 5%; width: 80%; text-align: center;">  <p>Hyperlink to delegated decision</p> </div> </div>					