

REPORT TO	DATE OF MEETING
Governance Committee	27 June 2012

Report template revised June 2008



SUBJECT	PORTFOLIO	AUTHOR	ITEM
My Neighbourhood - Governance Arrangements	N/A	M. Wood	10

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 developed to control the decisions surrounding the My Neighbourhood forums. Members will recall that the committee requested, at its meeting in April, that a further report to be brought to this meeting explaining how the system would work.

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 proposed.

BACKGROUND

The My Neighbourhood framework and its supporting arrangements were approved by full Council at its meeting on 21 September 2011. The following extract from the Council's constitution explains the scope of decision making for the My Neighbourhood areas:

- 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.

In December 2011 the Governance Committee received a detailed report on the decision making aspects of the My Neighbourhood arrangements. Following the December meeting, Members within each Forum considered the projects identified by the public and proposed 10 projects within each of the My Neighbourhood Plans. These projects were then prioritised following public consultation and were agreed with the majority of the Members within each Forum. The proposed

My Neighbourhood Plans were approved by full Council at its meeting on 29th February 2012 and are now available on the Council's website.

They set out the priority schemes including an estimate of the Council's contribution towards the total project cost. The proposed funding for these schemes is made up of core funding that was allocated in 2011/12 and further budget that was identified in 2012/13. A further report was presented to this committee in April 2012 which explained the process to approve a capital funded scheme. At that meeting the committee expressed its concern about how members are involved in the process to approve work on a particular scheme identified in the Community Improvement Plan. This report presents further controls to govern the approval of each My Neighbourhood scheme and the release of appropriate Council funding.

DETAILS

The process has previously been presented to the Governance Committee and is outlined at Appendix A. Governance Committee were particularly concerned about step 3 which is highlighted in green.

Each of the My Neighbourhood forums is now actively developing schemes and maintaining a close working relationship with the Community Involvement team. Initial criteria are applied to each of the projects to ensure they are robust, sustainable, demonstrate value for money and will make a difference to the community. The information will be considered against the criteria before work commences. This includes establishing a genuine need that links with priorities, a clear outcome, identifying community involvement, joint working and match funding where appropriate.

The My Neighbourhood Plans include projects that are mixed in scale and activity. These range from large corporate schemes e.g. Leyland Regeneration and Wesley Street Mill, to smaller scale activities e.g. Community Clean ups. Some of these projects require significant resources and others do not. Not all projects can be undertaken at once and an indicative timetable was included in the My Neighbourhood Plans approved by full Council. These plans form the work programme for the Community Involvement team. This team of officers are working with Members within each Forum on particular projects. Each member in the My Neighbourhood area is given the opportunity to express their views on potential projects identified in the Community Improvement Plan. These discussions usually take the form of member meetings.

For each project a business case and scheme will be developed by officers and considered by Members. Each project will only progress if a majority of the Members in that relevant Forum agree to support it. Members will be asked to complete a formal electronic record that will be kept as documentary evidence and to provide an audit trail of approval for work to continue on the project.

The actual financing arrangements and legal requirements will be determined once projects are formally scoped and appraised. The scheme decisions will be channelled and controlled through the existing approval processes as documented in the Council's constitution. In effect this will mean that each decision will be fully documented, transparent and will require professional clearance by both Legal and Financial Services to assess the potential risks, implications and level of resources required.

In the case of capital expenditure each scheme will require a full financial appraisal (as detailed in the financial regulations) and legal agreement to use the monies for the proposed scheme. In particular, Legal Services will need to ensure that the proposed expenditure is in accordance with the terms and conditions of any associated S106 agreement. To this aim an internal guidance document is currently being drafted on the use of S106 monies that will assist both officers and members to understand the process that will be followed.

The Director of Regeneration and Healthy Communities will work closely with the chair of the My Neighbourhood forum and also the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) to produce a detailed report to support each scheme for approval. Formal approval will be sought from Cabinet or through the

delegated process depending on the amount of capital funding required. If the decision is delegated then all relevant parties will need to sign up to the approval. This should include the relevant officers from Financial and Legal Services, the Director of Regeneration and Healthy Communities, the My Neighbourhood Chair and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).

All decisions are subject to the Council’s “call-in” process which means that the decision is not effective until the 5 day “call-in” period has elapsed. If approval is successful then the decision will be published on the Council’s website.

To supplement the approval and financial controls each scheme is available on the Council’s website to ensure transparency and also to improve engagement with the community. A separate page on the Council’s website is now devoted to each of the five areas and is used to publish each individual scheme as it is being developed, including the funding as it is planned to be spent. All the My Neighbourhood decisions that have been approved are shown on the website with a record of those members who support each decision.

To ensure that members fully understand the process awareness sessions are planned for Chairmen and Vice Chairmen and these will be followed by further sessions for all members in each of the 5 My Neighbourhood Areas.

The Corporate Governance service continues to work closely with this committee and with the Community Involvement team to ensure robust arrangements support the developing My Neighbourhood framework.

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>

MY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE DELEGATED DECISION

