Coventry City Council

Report to

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee	29th March, 2006
Standards Committee	29th March, 2006
Cabinet	4th April, 2006
Council	11th April, 2006

Report of
Chief Executive and Head of Neighbourhood Management

Title
Progress report on Neighbourhood Management and proposal for the creation of 18 Ward Forums

1   Purpose of the Report

1.1   The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress in the development of the Neighbourhood Management Service, and to put forward proposals for the creation of 18 Ward Forums to replace the 6 Area Forums.

2   Recommendations

2.1   Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee are requested to consider the report and pass any comment to Cabinet.

2.2   Standards Committee are requested to recommend that the City Council makes the appropriate changes to the Constitution.

2.3   Cabinet is requested to recommend the City Council to:

a) note the progress to date in developing Neighbourhood Management
b) endorse the draft Terms of Reference for Area Management Groups
c) endorse the proposal to create 18 Ward Forums and cease the existing Area Forums from July 2006
d) agree to the additional spend of £35,000 which will be funded from the policy contingency fund in the first year.

3   Information/Background

3.1   The Neighbourhood Management Service came into being on 1 October 2005, following the decision of Cabinet on 6 September 2005 to restructure the former Area Co-ordination service into three Neighbourhood Management areas to be coterminous with police Operational Command Units. The proposals were closely linked to moves to integrate the different wardens services into a single wardens service across the city.   Neighbourhood

Management was officially launched at a series of events aimed at communities in each of the three areas, elected members and a city wide partners' event in November 2005.

3.2 All area staff teams are now in place. Work is planned to make the accommodation of some teams more accessible for residents, and in some cases new premises are being sought. The move of the South main office to Stoke Aldermoor has been completed in conjunction with the opening of the One Stop Shop at Barley Lea House. Other premises options are being investigated, particularly opportunities to co-locate with other agencies.

3.3 Additional Neighbourhood Wardens have been recruited and new teams have been put in place to patrol the areas previously identified as hot spot areas. Work is currently underway to transfer the Hillfields wardens, the City Centre Street Crime wardens and the New Deal for Communities wardens to the corporate Neighbourhood Warden service within Neighbourhood Management. From 1 April 2006 all 75 Neighbourhood Wardens in the city will be managed as one service.

3.4 More structured approaches to the planning and recording of Neighbourhood Management activity with local communities are being put in place. This will give more complete information for councillors and partners about what activity is taking place in each area enabling Neighbourhood Management to work with local councillors to prioritise.

3.5 Work is still taking place on the future of neighbourhood plans and how best to work with local communities on them and integrate them into the planning processes of the Council and other partners.

4   **Key Issues and Proposals**

4.1 With the immediate Neighbourhood Management staff team structures in place preliminary work has started to develop the strategic framework within which Neighbourhood Management will work with other council departments and in partnership with other public agencies. It has previously been agreed that Neighbourhood Management is intended to achieve the following immediate outcomes:

- More joined up services which offer improved services, a better customer experience and better use of resources
- Better Value for Money in council and partner service delivery
- Achievement of agencies' service targets and objectives
- Better involvement and engagement of communities

The above outcomes encompass:

- Developing joint delivery of ambitions for the area
- Building a shared understanding of local needs between local residents, councillors and partners
- Continuing to try and close the gap between more and less prosperous communities
- Achieving long-lasting and sustainable change

Work has started and will continue to be developed to ensure that Neighbourhood Management is responsive to local issues. The proposed Ward Forums will provide one of the mechanisms to achieve these aims.

4.2 In order to achieve the above outcomes the council needs to work in partnership with other public service agencies, voluntary organisations and communities. There is already a strong foundation for working in this way through the Coventry Partnership and its delivery of the Coventry Community Plan and the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The 2005 – 2010 Community Plan has an underpinning theme of Neighbourhoods which includes priorities intended to improve the quality of life for people in Coventry and narrowing the gap in inequalities for disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The development of the Neighbourhood Management structure is, therefore, intended to be strongly linked to local councillors and to make strategic links between the Coventry Partnership and related partnerships such as the Community Safety Partnership and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and area based working. It is also intended to reflect a strategic approach at the three area levels, underpinned by work at a neighbourhood and ward level. This is being supported by moves towards neighbourhood policing.

4.3 Area Management Groups

It is proposed that Area Management Groups will consist of senior officers from a number of council services and other public agencies, working as a local partnership. It will meet quarterly to share each agency's key targets and objectives, and identify where these can be aligned to achieve better services, improve provision around identified gaps in local services and identify opportunities for service collaboration to create efficiencies. This will be a strategic meeting and should be chaired by one of the senior employees of partner organisations to enable employees of all the organisations involved to be held to account. Elected members for the wards in the area will have a standing invitation to attend AMG meetings and will be circulated with agendas and minutes. It is recognised that not all members will be able to attend these meetings regularly and therefore arrangements will be put in place to report back to members on the issues raised and discussed at the meetings. Draft Terms of Reference for Area Management Groups can be found at Appendix A of this paper.

4.4 Work is currently underway to develop an Area Management Group (AMG) for each area, (these were referred to as Area Teams in the Cabinet paper approved in September 2005). It is proposed that beneath each AMG will be a sub-group known as the Safer, Stronger Area Group. This group has been initiated by the Coventry Community Safety Strategy and fits between the fortnightly Active Intelligence Mapping (AIM) meetings and the neighbourhood based Safer Estates or Safer Neighbourhood meetings. Appendix B shows this in diagram form. Discussions are also taking place with PCT and Health Development Unit to create a similar sub-group to address the health inequalities/Choosing Health agenda in each of the Neighbourhood Management areas. These two themed sub-groups of the AMG create an area based network of officers to address operational as well as detailed strategic issues in delivering on two of the LAA blocks. Further consideration will be given to the creation of similar sub-groups to address the children and young people, and the economy and enterprise themes of the LAA.

4.5 All of this is underpinned at a neighbourhood level by safer estates or safer neighbourhood groups, health action groups or a replacement for them, ward forums and the many resident and community lead networks and forums. These structures are critical for ensuring community engagement and influence in the design and delivery of public services in neighbourhoods.

4.6 Creation of Ward Forums

4.7 There have been discussions for some time within the Council on Area Forums. A review was undertaken in 2002. Area Forums in some areas have come to be seen as effective.

In other areas there have been tensions between the size of the area and the public wanting a more neighbourhood focus. There has also been ambiguity about the roles of Area Forums, with some tensions between on the one hand trying to encourage uninhibited local involvement and debate and on the other making the Area Forums part of the Council's constitution and framework. Council members and officers alike reflect the concerns from Area Forums about over-domination of Forum by Council-led presentations, even though it is acknowledged that this has been motivated by entirely good intentions to consult.

4.8 During December 2005 and January 2006 Area Managers sought the views of ward councillors on what local consultation meetings they would like. Forty eight out of fifty four councillors were either interviewed or completed a questionnaire giving their feedback on what might work in their ward. A few councillors felt that Area Forums were beginning to work and wanted to retain them but most councillors were supportive of the concept of Ward Forums. The main criticisms of Area Forums are that they cover too wide an area to address issues of concern to residents in their neighbourhood, that too few residents take up the opportunity to attend Area Forum meetings, and this may be linked to the concerns that very often the meetings are overwhelmed by council department presentations with too little opportunity for community engagement.

4.9 At the meeting of the Members Advisory Panel on Neighbourhood Management held on 8 February 2006 members were able to discuss the idea of moving to Ward Forums. The Advisory Panel members all supported the potential introduction of Ward Forums, but acknowledged that there would be resource implications for supporting and servicing them. It was also accepted that there could not be a 'one size fits all' approach to Ward Forums. Whilst for many wards, meetings being held quarterly was considered appropriate some wards were felt only to need a forum twice a year and in a small number of cases there may be an argument for meetings to be held more frequently than quarterly. It should be noted however that the support arrangements for an increased number of forums will need careful consideration as it would be disastrous if the Council made commitments to local people which could not be supported.

4.10 There were also high levels of support for making Forums less bureaucratic, which could be achieved by removing the requirement to hold Forums from the Council's constitution and the associated need to service the meetings as a council committee. A multi-agency approach to Ward Forums was seen as potentially more attractive for communities who may have issues they want to discuss which relate to a number of public services including the police, Whitefriars or the Primary Care Trust and not just the City Council.

4.11 Advisory Panel members were keen to see Ward Forums have a more action-focused approach. They felt that it was not necessary to have so many officers present at the meetings, but key directorates such as City Services would need to be represented. In other cases people may be requested to attend depending upon issues raised on the agenda. More importantly clear recording of issues raised and prompt follow up activity, with feedback to residents raising issues was seen as what was needed, rather than waiting until the next meeting.

4.12 Work is currently being undertaken to map all groups and meetings in each ward, this includes residents groups, community forums and networks, local interest groups and specific groups such as safer estates groups. Once this information is collated ward councillors will be able to make an informed recommendation about how frequently Ward Forums will be needed in their ward, alongside other places that community members are able to share their ideas, aspirations and concerns. There has not yet been discussion with the existing Area Forums about proposals for Ward Forums. Clearly some members

of the public have given great commitment to Area Forums and will want to understand the implication of Ward Forum proposals. Proposals should also be tested out on existing groups in local areas.

4.13 It is proposed that Area Forums should be replaced by Ward Forums. The chair of the Ward Forum will be appointed by Council as is the case for Area Forums. There will be some standard approaches to ward forums such as each ward forum having a similar style of agenda and format for creating action notes, but that there will be local variations such as frequency of meetings. It is hoped that Ward Forums, while being structured will have a "more friendly" style in terms of format and arrangements and should have fewer council-led presentations. It is proposed that at the beginning of the municipal year members for each ward will agree the cycle of meetings in their ward for the forthcoming year. Consideration will be given to this alongside other ward or neighbourhood based meetings. It is proposed that members of the public who are currently regular attendees of Area Forum meetings should be involved in the process of discussing how best to move to ward forums.

4.14 Each Ward Forum will be allocated a senior council officer to provide support to the chair, and to be responsible for ensuring actions are followed up after the meeting. Each Ward Forum will be allocated a council officer responsible for taking action notes. It is expected that officers from across the council will take on these roles not just those from either Neighbourhood Management or Committee Services.

4.15 There will be publicity and promotional activity for each ward forum to ensure wider community involvement in the meetings. An annual budget of £25,000 will be required to support forums not only for promotional activity but also to support mailings to residents and partners and to pay for room hire and refreshments. A one off budget of £10,000 will be needed to launch Ward Forums and ensure a good profile is established for the new approach.

5   Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered

5.1   Cabinet is requested to recommend the City Council to:

    a) note the progress to date in developing Neighbourhood Management
    b) endorse the draft Terms of Reference for Area Management Groups.
    c) endorse the proposal to create 18 Ward Forums and cease the existing Area Forums from July 2006.
    d) agree to the additional spend of £35,000 which will be funded from the policy contingency fund in the first year.

6   Other specific implications

6.1

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Best Value		
Children and Young People	✓	
Comparable Benchmark Data	✓	
Corporate Parenting		
Coventry Community Plan	✓	

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Crime and Disorder	✓	
Equal Opportunities		
Finance	✓	
Health and Safety		
Human Resources		
Human Rights Act		
Impact on Partner Organisations	✓	
Information and Communications Technology		
Legal Implications		
Neighbourhood Management	✓	
Property Implications		
Race Equality Scheme		
Risk Management		
Sustainable Development		
Trade Union Consultation		
Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact	✓	

6.2 Neighbourhood Management
This paper puts forward a strategic framework for the council and its partners to work together through the Neighbourhood Management service to address the delivery of improved services in Coventry's neighbourhoods.

6.3 Comparable Benchmark data
We are seeking to develop better ways of measuring and monitoring the impact of neighbourhood management.

6.4 Coventry Community Plan, Crime and Disorder, and Children and Young People
The strategic framework for Neighbourhood Management working with other council departments and other partners will include addressing the objectives of the Coventry Community Plan, of the Community Safety Partnership and of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

6.5 Voluntary Sector
Activity involving the voluntary sector will be carried out in support of the Coventry Compact.

6.6 Finance
As stated above an annual budget of £25,000 will be required to support the Ward Forums and an initial promotional launch budget of £10,000, this will be funded from the policy contingency fund in the first year.

7 Monitoring

7.1 Progress on developing the next stages in the Neighbourhood Management framework will as now be reported in regular meetings between the Head of Neighbourhood Management and Cabinet Member (Finance and Equality). The Members Advisory Panel also provides an overview and monitoring function when requested by the Cabinet Member.

8 Timescale and expected outcomes

8.1 It is intended to hold the first Area Management Group meetings during April 2006, the cycle of meetings then to be agreed by the Council and partners to best meet the requirements of their own planning and meeting cycles.

8.2 Ward Forums are to begin by June/July 2006. However, further Area Forum dates have been identified and put in the diary as a contingency until all Ward Forum arrangements are satisfactorily in place.

	Yes	No
Key Decision	✓	
Scrutiny Consideration (if yes, which Scrutiny meeting and date)	✓ Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 29/3/06	
Council Consideration (if yes, date of Council meeting)	✓ Council Meeting 11/4/06	

List of background papers

Proper officer: Stella Manzie, Chief Executive

Author: Telephone 024 7683 1074
Janice Nichols, Head of Neighbourhood Management, Chief Executives
(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Other contributors:
Sue Iannantuoni Ext 3241
Ken Gould Ext 2566
Richard Brankowski Ext 3077
Kathy Rice Ext 4212
Papers open to Public Inspection
Description of paper   **Location**
None

Neighbourhood Management

Area Management Groups

Terms of Reference

Role of Area Management Groups

Area Management Groups (AMG) will work as area partnerships to support the outcomes Neighbourhood Management is intended to achieve:

- More joined up services which offer improved services, a better customer experience and better use of resources
- Better Value for Money in council and partner service delivery
- Achievement of agencies' service targets and objective
- Better involvement and engagement of communities

The above outcomes encompass:

- Developing joint delivery of ambitions for the area
- Building a shared understanding of local needs between local residents, councillors and partners
- Continuing to try and close the gap between more and less prosperous communities
- Achieving long-lasting and sustainable change

Function

Each of the three Neighbourhood Management Areas will have an Area Management Group which will:

1. Share each agency's key targets and objectives, and identify where these can be aligned to achieve better services, improve provision around identified gaps in local services and identify opportunities for service collaboration to create efficiencies.

2. Consider information and data to identify local issues such as gaps in local services or particular trends and concerns, and identify actions needed to address them.

3. To appropriately respond to area wide issues raised through the AIM process, from councillors work in the area and directly from residents.

4. Agree area priorities and formulate plans to address identified issues; taking account of Neighbourhood Plans and the actions that can be best met at an area level.

5. Provide a network of senior officers and ward councillors to support work undertaken in the area and to take action to unblock problems that may arise at an operational level.

6. Provide a forum to share information on programmes and initiatives that have service planning implications such as regeneration schemes or service changes that may have an impact on other services' delivery in the area.

Key Objectives/Outcomes

- Increased satisfaction, of residents, with their neighbourhood as a place to live.
- Increased satisfaction with public services in local neighbourhoods.
- Cleaner, safer and stronger neighbourhoods.

Achieved by:
- Development and delivery of planned and co-ordinated actions that are aligned with and complimentary to city-wide strategies and responsive to the needs of local communities.
- A more effective and efficient use of resources, for agencies, and delivery of sustainable solutions for residents.
- Improved local delivery of the Coventry Community Plan, the Local Area Agreement and neighbourhood plans.
- Effective communication with local communities, including publicity for achievements.

Membership

AMGs are senior officer groups to which ward councillors have an open invitation to attend. The membership of each Area Management Group will include:
- Ward members
- Neighbourhood Management Area Manager,
- Children's Services Neighbourhood Manager,
- Community Services Neighbourhood Manager,
- City Service Manager
- City Development Manager
- City Council Director(s) allocated to the area,
- Chief Superintendent, West Midlands Police,
- Locality Development Lead, Primary Care Trust,
- Station Officer, West Midlands Fire Service,
- A representative of local head teachers,
- Area Services Officers
- Community Safety Officer,
- Other relevant people e.g. North East AMG would include the Director of the NDC.

Accountability and Responsibility

Individual members are each accountable to their own organisation.

Each Area Management Group is accountable to the Coventry Partnership, which is responsible for the delivery of the Coventry Community Plan and Local Area Agreement; and to ward councillors who need to be kept informed of developments in their area. Mechanisms will be developed to ensure ward councillors are fully briefed following each AMG meeting.

Each Area Management Group is responsible for and will receive regular reports from the Safer Stronger Area Group for its area, and other themed groups as may be developed.

Individual organisations are responsible for ensuring that their nominated representative(s) or an appropriate substitute, are available to attend all Area Management Group meetings, which will be scheduled in advance.

Individual organisations are committed to ensuring that their representative is able to make/influence decisions and commit resources, where appropriate.

Working Arrangements

Area Management Groups will meet three to four times per year. They will be chaired by a member of the Area Management Group, a senior employee of one of the partner organisations. Executive support will be provided by the Neighbourhood Management Area Manager.

A meeting timetable will be scheduled for the year.

Agendas and papers will be despatched five days before the meeting.

Proposed Neighbourhood Management Area Structures

Area Management Group

Themes linked to
Local Area
Agreement

| Safer, Stronger Area Group | Health & Older People Area Group | Children & Young People Area Group | Enterprise & Economy Area Group |

Safer Neighbourhood Groups

Health Actions Groups