

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods, Community & Customer Services
Scrutiny Panel

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WARD(S): All

PART I

INFORMATION

The Council's role in supporting local Neighbourhood Action Groups

1. Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the relationship between the Council's operational teams, the Safer Slough Partnership (SSP), Slough Police and local Neighbourhood Action Groups and to:

- help inform the Council's response to the Thames Valley Police (TVP) Review of Neighbourhood Policing and
- a local review of Neighbourhood Action Groups

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

- The Panel is requested to note the report as background information to support the Council's contribution to the TVP review of neighbourhood policing and a local review of Neighbourhood Action Groups in Slough.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Corporate Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

Neighbourhood Action Groups have considerable potential to impact positively upon the '**Safer Slough**', '**Housing**' and '**Regeneration & Environment**' priorities of the Joint wellbeing Strategy

Cross-Cutting themes:

Neighbourhood Action Groups strongly support **Civic responsibility**, the part that residents can play in delivering Safer Communities and in improving Slough for the benefit of everyone.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications of the information report.

(b) **Risk Management**

There are no risks associated with this information paper

(c) **Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

There are no Human Rights Act Implications associated with this information paper

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1

Neighbourhood Action Groups are described as 'multi-agency problem solving groups consisting of partner agencies, key stakeholders but most importantly members of the local community brought together to plan and action the main concerns identified by the local community'. They have the potential to be a valuable community asset in helping to support and improve communities in Slough

5.2

The council's Neighbourhood Services teams, the Community Safety team and other council teams work closely together to focus on ensuring consultative engagement as key stakeholders in the Slough Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs). The council teams provide operational cooperation and support in respect to environmental crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and respond to secure improvements by design initiatives, for example gating projects.

5.3

Collectively, the Slough Police Neighbourhood teams, Council teams and other agencies help provide the NAGs with expertise, knowledge and resources to meet individual NAG objectives. From the council side the principal support to NAGs comes from 3 community project officers, part of Neighbourhood Services, who respectively focus upon the East, North and South areas of Slough, which originally mirrored the Slough Police Neighbourhood operational areas prior to changes in ward boundaries.

5.4

The Safer Slough Partnership (SSP) was created in 2000 with the objective to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in Slough; it is a partnership spanning the council, Slough Police and other agencies including the voluntary sector. The SSP annually produces a strategic assessment which identifies trends in crime and disorder in Slough and sets local priorities for the coming year, which also take into consideration the Thames Valley Police priorities. The SSP data is available on a ward basis and can help inform local action managed via Sector Tasking meetings which are hosted by Slough Police with Council officers attending. Should further resources be required for an area this is agreed at the fortnightly Local Police Area (LPA) Tasking meetings which are attended by partner agencies including representatives from the Council's Neighbourhood Services, Community Safety and CCTV teams.

5.5

The current situation with Slough NAGs shows that whilst some work very well, effectively focusing local activity around key community priorities, in other areas NAGs are working less well, experiencing a variety of difficulties surrounding membership and ongoing commitment. Also some NAGs have evolved to become part of Community Forums. The effective NAGs in Slough are the ones which consistently involve community members in activities.

- The NAGs still running in the East are Langley St Mary's, Foxborough and Colnbrook. However, Wexham, Central and Kedermister NAGs and the Poyle BAG (Business Action Group) have all stopped running due to poor attendance and momentum.
- In the North, there are currently two operating NAGs - Britwell & Haymill, The NAGs for Stoke & Baylis & Farnham were disbanded some years ago, owing to poor attendance. However, there is also Slough North Action Project (SNAP) which amalgamates Farnham + Stoke & Baylis Wards into one entity.
- In the South NAGs have become part of existing residents groups, West Cippenham Tenant and Residents Association and the Chalvey Community Forum. The Upton NAG disbanded in 2010 due to poor attendance. In addition the town centre businesses are represented by Slough Town Against Crime BAG (Business Action Group)

5.6

Members will be aware that in 2010 that the Council embarked on a 'Neighbourhood Working Strategy' where the East, South and North areas were each assigned a pilot area. In the North, for example, the assigned pilot area was Manor Park, which straddled both Baylis & Stoke as well as Farnham. Attendance levels were very good and it was agreed that the then Manor Park Community Forum should take over the role of the NAG in that area. Some good community outcomes were achieved from the pilot including, resurfacing of a car-park, installation of new play equipment and an installation of an infra-red CCTV. However, numbers and attendance dwindled over time with the committee having to be reappointed. The group was subsequently re-branded to become SNAP.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7. **Conclusion**

Whilst the council actively supports NAGs in Slough there is varied success in that community engagement is inconsistent across the borough. The current TVP review of Neighbourhood Policing presents an opportunity to comment on the concept of NAGs in terms of crime and disorder issues and also review the local operation of NAGs and similar groups.

8. **Background Papers**

'1' - Thames Valley Police Delivery Plan 2014/15