

Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item no.
Councillor Vivien Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Engagement and Marianne Hesketh, Service Director Performance and Innovation	Cabinet	19 October 2016	5

Together we make a difference in Wyre

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present the findings and recommendations following a review of the Council's 'Shaping Your Neighbourhood' (SYN) approach.
- 1.2 To outline a new approach to neighbourhood engagement for the Council.

2. Outcomes

- 2.1 Improved community ownership and a shared responsibility for improving our neighbourhoods.
- 2.2 To support Elected Members and Parish and Town Councils to improve neighbourhoods through empowering communities and encouraging active citizenship.

3. Recommendation/s

- 3.1 That Cabinet agree to disestablish the SYN programme including all grant functions and the Lead Member role.
- 3.2 That a new approach to neighbourhood engagement in Wyre be agreed as outlined in this report, which provides sustainable, cohesive and place based solutions to resolve identified community priorities.
- 3.3 That community development and engagement technique training is provided for all Elected Members.

4. Background

- 4.1** In April 2012, the Council agreed the SYN initiative. The purpose of the project was for Members to engage better with communities so that local people were more involved in shaping future service delivery to meet local needs and priorities. Wyre was split into 6 areas – Fleetwood, Cleveleys, Thornton, Poulton, Rural West and Rural East.
- 4.2** The initiative was led by six neighbourhood lead Members who were responsible for engaging with local Parish and Town Councils, resident and community groups and business groups. The focus was intended to be around allocation of funding to deliver community projects which addressed local needs and priorities.
- 4.3** Over the last few months, a review of SYN has been undertaken. As part of the review, all lead Members, Town and Parish Councils and relevant Heads of Service were interviewed and asked for feedback. All existing reports, relevant performance measures and all related overview and scrutiny papers were also reviewed.

5. Key issues and proposals

5.1 SYN review findings

During the review a number of issues were revealed:

SYN has been highly regarded by Elected Members and project beneficiaries and had a positive reputational impact for the Council across the borough.

Partnership working had not been central to projects funded through SYN and this encompassed working with internal and external services and the identification and delivery of projects.

£521,978 has been spent over the life of SYN to date and key officers dedicated significant time to facilitating meetings, project managing and reporting on the programme. In addition to this, considerable time was spent by support services for example to monitor budgets and facilitate payments, councillor engagement and public relations.

SYN has in the main worked well and rewarded community spirit and innovation. However this was linked to SYN being a grant programme rather than a tool for long-term and meaningful community development and engagement.

Whilst the funded projects have been well received by the community, the funding has perhaps not, in most cases, been used to tackle long standing community issues and producing sustainable results. However there is some valuable learning from a number of projects such as the Willow Garden and Cook & Eat projects both of which have had a significant impact in their local communities.

The programme looked at an interest base in the community. This meant match funding and partner interest was not consistent.

Some Elected Members felt that they already undertook the role of developing their community as part of being a councillor and that the lead Member role was confusing.

It was widely felt that funding decisions had not been made in an open forum and had excluded both Borough and Town and Parish Councillors.

5.2 Recommendations from review

Based on the issues which have been highlighted as a result of the review, the following recommendations are proposed to ensure that the council has a mechanism in place to effectively engage with communities in Wyre to resolve identified community priorities:

- SYN to be disestablished in its current format including the lead member role and areas. Any outstanding grant funded projects to be completed by March 2017.
- SYN to be replaced with a more collaborative approach which provides sustainable, cohesive and place based solutions to resolve identified community priorities. A 'Together we make a difference' network will be established to oversee the delivery of the approach and membership of the network will include relevant Wyre Council officers, partner agencies and the Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Engagement. This network will not be a formal board but instead members will be brought together as and when necessary and would be dependent on the current issues.
- The 'Together we make a difference' network will be led by the Policy & Engagement manager and will operate with the following remit:
 - To co-ordinate community action on community priorities;
 - To accept areas of work through a referral process open to all Wyre Council officers, elected members and partners;
 - To oversee council led community development work to establish community priorities.
- To establish a place based community development referral process for community concerns and issues with a lead community development officer in the following role:
 - Receive and investigate the validity of referrals;
 - To work up and evidence any referrals received;
 - Identify any resources that may be needed and liaise with the external funding team accordingly;
 - Present referrals to the network for discussion, decision and project planning;
 - Plan and project manage subsequent agreed projects.

- To establish a programme of community development and engagement support for Elected Members:
 - Plan and deliver bespoke training for Members on developing community projects;
 - Supporting Members to use digital engagement methods such as social media.

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	There are no immediate financial implications to this report. However it is proposed that any Performance Reward Grant (PRG) remaining from the SYN programme, be made available in order to resource community activity as required and evidenced by the appropriate officers. This would be a one-off allocation with no facility for ongoing support.
Legal	There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	✓
equality and diversity	✓
sustainability	X
health and safety	X

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
climate change	x
data protection	x

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Rosie Green	01253 887553	rosie.green@wyre.gov.uk	21/9/16

List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection