

9 July 2013

To: Councillor Hacker (Chair);  
Councillors Ballsdon, Benson, Cumpsty,  
Davies, K Edwards, Gittings, Rynn, Singh,  
Terry, Whitham and Williams.

Your contact is: Amy Bryan - Committee Services

**NOTICE OF MEETING - HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE - 17 JULY 2013**

A meeting of the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee will be held on **Wednesday 17 July 2013 at 6.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading.

**AGENDA**

	<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	<b>PAGE NO</b>
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in relation to the items for consideration.		-
2. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES Community Safety Partnership - 13 March 2013		1
3. PETITIONS Petitions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been received by Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.		-

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4.	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS		-
	Questions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been submitted in writing and received by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.		
5.	DECISION BOOK REFERENCES		-
	To consider any requests received by the Monitoring Officer pursuant to Standing Order 42, for consideration of matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been the subject of Decision Book reports.		
6.	LOVE CLEAN READING	BOROUGHWIDE	5
	A report asking the Committee to note the results of the six-month trial and to approve the continued use of the app and increase the number of reporting categories for use by other council services.		
	There will also be a presentation on this item.		
7.	PRESENTATION - TACT (TENANT AND COUNCIL TOGETHER)	BOROUGHWIDE	12
	A report providing information and background to the development of Reading's Tenant Scrutiny Panel "TACT" (Tenant and Council Together).		
	There will also be a presentation on this item by representatives of TACT.		
8.	OUTREACH SERVICE FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS TENDER	BOROUGHWIDE	16
	A report providing an update on the re-tender of the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers and to consider giving authorisation to enter into a new contract following the conclusion of the procurement process.		
9.	DECENT NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND	BOROUGHWIDE	26
	A report providing background on the Decent Neighbourhoods Fund and reporting what estate improvements have been achieved so far.		

## COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP MINUTES - 13 MARCH 2013

### Present:

Avril Wilson (Chair)	Director of Education, Social Services & Housing, Reading Borough Council (RBC)
Councillor Tony Page	Deputy Leader, RBC
Asha Bahden	Thames Valley Probation
James Hahn	Local Police Area Deputy Commander, Thames Valley Police (TVP)
Lorraine Joslin	Voluntary and Community Sector representative
Michelle Tenreiro Perez	Reading Drug and Alcohol Manager, RBC
Jo Daley	Anti Social Behaviour Team Manager, RBC
Anthony Brain	Community Safety Manager, RBC
Sarah Gee	Head of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Community Services, RBC
Julie Pett	RBC
Simon Hill	Committee Services, RBC

### Apologies:

Councillor Skeats	RBC
Stuart Greenfield	Local Police Area Commander, TVP
Lindsey Bass	Youth Offending Service Manager, RBC
Ann Manning	Magistrate

### 1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

#### a) Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Further to Minute 2, Councillor Page reported that a private meeting had been held to brief the PCC on issues in Reading.

#### b) Third Party Reporting Centres

Further to Minute 3, Anthony Brain reported that potential funding for a Third Party Reporting Service had been identified. Anthony would be meeting 'Stop Hate UK' to discuss possible contractual arrangements.

#### c) Alana House

Further to Minute 4, it was reported that Alana House had secured a year's funding from Thames Valley Probation, and a group led by Sarah Holland were now looking at longer term options. Lorraine Joslin asked that she be included in future meetings of the group.

### Agreed:

- (1) That the positions be noted;
- (2) That Sarah Gee speak to Lorraine Joslin about the Alana House group.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP MINUTES - 13 MARCH 2013

### 2. STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Anthony Brain gave a presentation on the Strategic Assessment, a draft of which had been circulated with the agenda.

The presentation outlined the current crime rate and significant issues in the following areas:

- Overall crime rate - there had been a 14% reduction in all crime, which equated to 2,461 fewer offences. However Reading was still 12th out of the 15 areas in the 'Most Similar Group' (MSG) and above the group average.
- Theft from Vehicle - this had increased by 18%, which was likely to be associated with one multiple offender.
- Burglary - this had decreased by 34%. However, Reading remained above the MSG average and burglary was still a neighbourhood priority.
- Robbery - had decreased by 31% and was below the MSG average.
- Theft from Person - had decreased by 2% and the 'spike' in offences around the Reading Festival had reduced.
- Shoplifting - there had been a 12% increase (identical to the national increase) and Reading was now worst in the MSG. Possible reasons included higher reporting, security cutbacks, and performance pay schemes that encouraged security staff to make arrests rather than prevent offences occurring. The profile showed an even spread of offences across the week and no obvious type of goods being targeted. James Hahn noted that this might be evidence of a shift beginning to occur from burglary to shoplifting.
- Serious Violent and Sexual Offences - serious violence had decreased by 22% and serious sexual offences by 10%. There had been a recent rise in reporting of historic cases, which could be associated with media coverage of Jimmy Savile.
- Violence Against the Person (VAP) - this had decreased by 27%. However the detection rate had also reduced, which could be associated with a difficulty getting victim and witness statements for incidents of town centre violence associated with alcohol.
- Domestic Violence - there had been an increase in the number of reports to the police and a 19% reduction in repeat victimisation, which suggested that there had been more successful interventions. An increase in reports of honour-based violence could also suggest increased awareness and confidence within the community. These reports had peaked in July, which needed to be analysed. Domestic Violence where children were involved had been featured as a problematic issue. There was significant under-reporting of domestic violence and the emphasis was on increasing the rate of reporting rather than reducing the recorded rate of offences.

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- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) - there had been an overall reduction in both Council and Police reports, and 83% of respondents to the Place Survey had reported that ASB was not a problem in their local area. However, this remained a priority and concern for the community.
- Hate Crime - there had been an 11% reduction in reports, which could indicate a lack of confidence. An increase in reporting of all categories of hate crime in Slough was noted.
- Offender Management - there had been significant reductions in the re-offending rate of Prolific and Priority Offenders, which had helped achieve reductions particularly in high impact crimes such as burglary. With an ever-changing cohort it was difficult to monitor annually but October - December 2012 had shown a 51% reduction in re-offending.
- Substance Misuse - Reading would no longer be a DIP Intensive area after March 2013. A need for separate focus on drug and alcohol issues had been identified, as well as a need to look specifically at the different needs of young people.

Anthony also reported that some of the emerging issues for TVP included London-based drug dealers; persistent issues concerning burglary offences and the volume of different criminals who resorted to this type of offence (a relatively low proportion were Class A drug users), and child sexual exploitation, for which there was a lack of data. James Hahn also noted that disposal of stolen goods was a current issue.

From the Assessment a set of potential priorities had been identified:

- Theft from Vehicle
- Burglary
- Shoplifting
- VAP offences with a focus on Detection
- Domestic Violence including the impact on Children & Safer Relationships
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Hate Crime
- Substance Misuse with a separate focus on Alcohol, and Young People

These draft priorities had been mapped against the Police & Crime Commissioner Plan and were also discussed in a workshop (see Minute 3 below).

**AGREED:** That the presentation and draft Strategic Assessment be noted.

### 3. STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP

The meeting divided into two groups for a discussion of questions related to the Strategic Assessment.

#### 1) Are the draft priorities correct and what are the gaps?

It was suggested that burglary and 'domestic violence including the impact on children & safer relationships' should be priorities. Hate crime and 'Substance Misuse with a separate focus on Alcohol, and Young People' should also be

## COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP MINUTES - 13 MARCH 2013

priorities but both needed a more specific focus. 'Violence against the person' offences needed further analysis in order to decide whether there was a particular aspect that should be a CSP priority, and Shoplifting could be a priority, with a possible link to burglary.

Anti-social behaviour was seen as 'business as usual' for neighbourhood-level working, but a specific aspect such as 'street population' could be a priority. Theft from vehicle was seen as 'business as usual' for TVP and not requiring CSP focus.

### 2) Can the current CSP structure deliver these priorities and have we got the right links to other delivery structures?

It was noted that there was currently some overlapping and multiple reporting on community safety issues, which created additional work and made it more difficult to focus on specific priorities. Different bodies were also not always clear on each other's roles, and accountability and reporting lines therefore needed to be clarified.

It was suggested that the delivery group structure be rationalised once the CSP's priorities had been agreed, with the Executive Group then setting clear outcomes and accountability which would allow the delivery groups to focus on their core priorities and, if necessary, refuse other work. However, it was noted that a degree of adaptability and 'covering gaps' was needed during the current transition to new structures e.g. in health.

### 3) During the assessment some people have suggested 'special interest' themed groups - how might this work or not?

It was generally agreed that standing 'themed' groups should not be pursued. Where a particular theme was emerging as a concern a short-term task & finish group could be appointed or a themed meeting of the CSP held. Twice-yearly strategic sessions, with follow-up actions carried out by the delivery groups, were also suggested.

There was also a question on future alcohol and drug strategy, but it was agreed to defer this for discussion elsewhere or at a future meeting.

#### AGREED:

- (1) That Anthony write up a summary of the workshop, in consultation with Sarah Gee and James Hahn, and circulate it to the CSP Management Group;
- (2) That the Management Group consider the workshop feedback and make any recommendations to the CSP.

#### 4. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The meeting dates for 2013/14 would be circulated in due course.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30am and closed at 12.00pm)

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND SPORT

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	17 JULY 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	6
TITLE:	LOVE CLEAN READING - REPORTING OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES USING 'SMART PHONE' TECHNOLOGY		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR LIZ TERRY	PORTFOLIO:	NEIGHBOURHOODS
SERVICE:	ENVIRONMENT AND CONSUMER SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	CHRIS CAMFIELD	TEL:	0118 9373040 Ext 73040
JOB TITLE:	STREET ENVIRONMENT MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Chris.Camfield@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A key Council priority is 'To keep Reading Clean with a crackdown on Fly Tipping and Graffiti'.
- 1.2 Last year Reading Borough Council announced a 6 month trial of a 'Love Clean Reading App' for the reporting of issues such as graffiti, fly-tipping, refuse and abandoned vehicles. It was requested that for the period of the trial only 'Streetcare' related issues would be reported by its users.
- 1.3 The 'Love Clean Streets App' is a web based application that is freely available to anyone; the 'Reading' version is based on this. Once installed on an appropriate smart phone the 'App' makes the reporting and management of environmental issues easier, quicker and, importantly, it provides the means for us to feedback to users the actions taken. It will also enable us to publicise and provide evidence of the successful actions and works carried out by the council to resolve problems and complaints.
- 1.4 Typically a user would take a photograph using the 'App' loaded on a mobile phone and send it. Once received by the council, the report is allocated to the appropriate teams for action and published on the Love Clean Reading website. Officers are able to update the website with details of the completed work (including a photo) or with a progress report. Reports can also be made via the Love Clean Reading website <http://loveclean.reading.gov.uk> or by text or MMS message.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the results of the 6 month trial; and
- 2.2 Consider the options set out in section 6 with a view to approve 6.3 for the continued use of the 'App', increase the number of appropriate reporting categories for use by other council services and promote the 'app' to the wider community.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Council's priority is to 'Keep Reading Clean with a crackdown on fly-tipping and graffiti'.

### 4. THE TRIAL

4.1 Following the trial, which we believe has been a huge success, there are 127 registered users of the 'App' who have made over 500 reports. The cost to make these reports into the Contact Centre would have been £6000. It is also clear that response times for some of the more basic reports made during the trial have been reduced from an average of 3 days to an average of 1 day.

4.2 The information received through the trial has highlighted issues that affect residents the most. The table below indicates the top 3 issues.

Reporting Category	No of Reports
1. Fly Tipping or rubbish on road	138
2. Graffiti - non offensive	113
3. Dog fouling	50

4.3 The information has highlighted Wards where issues are more prevalent. The table below shows the number of those reports made from the top 3 issues within each ward:

WARD	No OF REPORTS
Abbey Ward	50
Battle Ward	78
Caversham Ward	14
Church Ward	7
Katesgrove Ward	27
Kentwood Ward	5
Mapledurham Ward	6
Minster Ward	13
Norcot Ward	25
Park Ward	19
Peppard Ward	2
Redlands Ward	23
Southcote Ward	6
Thames Ward	5
Tilehurst Ward	8
Whitley Ward	13
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>301</b>

4.4 Using the information from these tables it would be possible for services to target key areas where there are high numbers of similar reports being made. This information could be used to encourage cross service working with a view to utilising resources for specific campaigns as well as the monitoring of the key issues being reported.

4.5 Additional information about the trial, what the 'Love Clean Reading App' is and how it works is attached in Appendix 1.



## **5. MAIN ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED DURING THE TRIAL**

- 5.1 The 'App' is generally very easy to use. However those using their own smartphones (the majority) found it easier and quicker to use than those using RBC Blackberry devices because they did not have to enter a 7 character password before accessing the 'App'. Following the outcome of the pilot we will work with Corporate ICT to see if we can extend the range of RBC devices or find a solution which makes this easier.
- 5.2 It has been noted that 'users' expectations have increased when reporting issues via the 'App' with regards to response times. Whilst we work within current service standards we are looking to tailor the message that users receive after submitting a report to manage their expectations.

## **6. OPTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- 6.1 Stop using the 'Love Clean Reading App'.
- 6.2 Carry on using the 'Love Clean Reading App' in its current format until its licence expires in 2015.
- 6.3 Carry on using the 'Love Clean Reading App' and increase the number of reporting categories to include other appropriate council services such as Highways, Drainage, Parks, Building Cleaning and Housing as well as promote its use including via the Reading Borough Council web site.

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 7.1 The 'Love Clean Streets App' is available to download and is free of charge to anyone with a suitable device. A 'Smart Phone' is not needed to make use of the services but access to the internet/email on a normal PC is required along with use of a digital camera if the user wishes to submit a photograph.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The principal environmental legislation enforced by the Council is the Environmental Protection Act 1990; other relevant provisions are in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. There are also provisions in the Highways Act 1980 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Localism Act 2011 gave Councils additional powers relating to flyposting and graffiti.
- 8.2 Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 contains offences relating to waste and flytipping, while section 34 imposes a duty of care on those keeping, transferring or disposing of waste. Sections 46 and 47 contain provisions relating to waste receptacles (domestic and commercial); sections 86 to 98 contain provisions relating to litter. The Council has adopted Schedule 4 of the Act which contains powers to deal with abandoned trolleys.
- 8.3 The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 contains provisions allowing fixed penalty notices to be given for offences such as graffiti (under the Highways Act 1980) or fly-posting (Town and Country Planning Act 1990).
- 8.4 The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 contains powers to deal with abandoned vehicles.

- 8.5 The Council has made a Dog Control Order under provisions in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, which allows fixed penalty notices to be given for dog fouling offences.
- 8.6 Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides for notice to be served where the condition of land is detrimental to the amenity of an area, requiring the owner of the land to remedy the condition e.g. by removing rubbish, clearing overgrown vegetation etc.
- 8.7 The Council has a statutory duty under section 89 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to keep certain land such as highways clear of litter and refuse. Section 87 of the Act creates the offence of leaving litter, for which a fixed penalty notice may be given under section 88. Litter Clearing Notices under section 92A may be served requiring land owners to clear their land of litter, and Street Litter Control Notices may be served where there is recurrent defacement by litter on the street or adjacent land, which arises from certain types of premises.
- 8.8 Some of the above legislation contains powers for the Council to take action and recover its costs from those responsible; for instance the Localism Act 2011 amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, introducing powers to serve notices requiring occupiers of premises to remove graffiti. Where the graffiti is not removed the Council may remove it itself and recover its costs from the occupier; the Council may also remove graffiti on request and recover its expenses from the owner or occupier making the request.

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The financial implications arising from the proposals are set out below:-

### Revenue Implications

	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000
'Love Clean Streets App' personalised to RBC Annual Cost.	7.5	7.5	7.5
<b>Expenditure</b>	7.5	7.5	7.5

<b>Equality Impact Assessment Report</b>		
<b>Name of Directorate and Service</b> <i>ENCAS - Street Environment</i>		
<b>Name of function/policy and scope</b> <i>Results of the 6 month trial for the 'Love Clean Reading App'.</i>	<b>Date</b> July 2013	
<b>Summary</b>		
<i>The introduction of a suitable branded 'App' would allow residents, businesses and partners to swiftly report local issues to the council using modern technology. It would also give Officers and local groups the ability to publicise the good work that has been carried out.</i>		
<b>Background</b>		
<i>Smart Phones and 'Apps' are now considered to be a part of everyday life. There are now over 500,000 apps available to down load and businesses worldwide are taking advantage of the technology to engage with their customers. Councillors have asked Streetcare to trial and look at the feasibility of adopting this type of technology.</i>		
<b>Methodology &amp; Sources of Data</b>		
<i>Streetcare have met with representatives from Lewisham Council, other local authorities using the 'App' and have also carried out a trial of the 'Love Clean Streets App'.</i> <i>A small trial of the 'fix my street App' has been carried out on a personal mobile phone as the 'App' is not available for the Blackberry device.</i>		
<b>Key Findings and conclusions</b>		
<i>The introduction of a 'branded App' increases the number of ways that customers can contact the Council.</i> <i>The use of the 'App' allows customers who would not normally contact the council by email or telephone to report issues affecting their local area.</i>  <i>Reporters are kept informed of progress through automatic notifications via email, text messages and device notifications.</i> <i>Having an additional tool for residents, customers, visitors, partners and staff to report issues efficiently allows the Council to respond more quickly and also to promote the good work that the council carries out.</i>		
<b>Recommendations and Action Plan</b>		
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Key Activity</b>	<b>Progress Milestone</b>
<i>Continue to use the Love Clean Reading App and increase the number of appropriate reporting categories as well as promote its use.</i>	<i>To ensure that the agreed chosen option meets the needs of the Council and its users.</i>	<i>Increase of the number of reporting categories.</i>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE LOVE CLEAN READING TRIAL AND LOVE CLEAN READING APP

### What is Love Clean Streets?

'Love Clean Streets' is a web based reporting tool used primarily for reporting environmental issues such as fly tipping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles, contaminated bins etc by members of the public, staff and partners.

The 'Love Clean Streets Apps' are available for iPhone, Android, Blackberry, and Windows Phone and are freely available from 'App stores'. Citizens can download them for free and begin sending reports straight away. The emphasis is on simplicity—anyone can use them!

Typically a user would take a photograph using the 'App' loaded on a mobile phone and send it. It will then be received by the council and allocated to the appropriate teams for action. The facility also allows the council to upload a photo and information of the completed works onto the web site which can be viewed by all.

The person who made the report also receives an update informing them that the work has been completed.

Issues can also be reported via the Love Clean Streets website or by text or MMS message.

### The trial

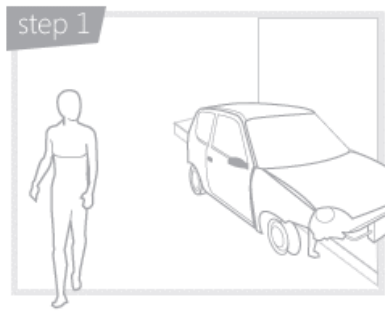
The trial of a Reading 'branded app', Love Clean Reading, was carried out by Councillors and selected Streetcare staff.

The reports came into the Streetcare office, were issued to the appropriate team and then published on the Love Clean Reading branded website. When the work request was carried out another photo showing the completed works was taken and the back office staff updated the record on the website. Occasionally an update / progress report was made for complex issues or where a third party was responsible.

As the website is accessible to everyone it is easy for staff and the public to monitor the progress of any reports made and see the resulting action taken by the Council. This system has enabled Streetcare to show-case the good work they carry out, which often goes unseen by the public. The 'App' also enables the public to upload images of areas or incidents they have cleared or cleaned themselves promoting social responsibility and community spirit. The 'App' has enabled staff to target workloads more effectively with the public as well as staff becoming our eyes on the ground.

It takes approximately 40 seconds to open the app, take the photograph, categorise the issue and submit the app.

Easy Guide



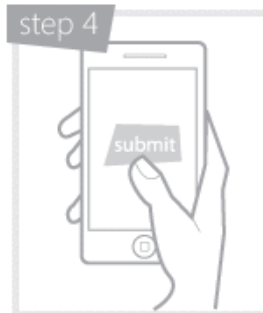
1. See a problem



2. Open the 'Love Clean Reading App'



3. Take a picture, your location is automatically detected



4. Enter some basic information and post the report - in 40 seconds!

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	17 JULY 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL TACT		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	RICHARD DAVIES	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD OFFICER:	ZELDA WOLFLE	TEL:	
JOB TITLE:	HOUSING OPERATIONS MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Zelda.wolfle@reading.gov.uk

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information and background to the development of Reading's Tenant Scrutiny Panel "TACT" (Tenant and Council Together). This report will accompany a presentation to the Committee made by representatives of TACT setting out their experiences and their achievements to date.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That members note the contents of the report.
- 2.2 That members commend the work of TACT and its' tenant members

**3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The foundations for a regulatory system, for both housing associations and local authorities that formally incorporated tenants' views and concerns were set in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. Part of the context for the development of Tenant-Led Scrutiny in Reading is the new system for the regulation of social housing introduced in 2010 and since revised to take effect from April 2012.
- 3.2 Tenant scrutiny aims to give tenants more power in holding their landlords to account for their decisions, performance and conduct. It is based on the specific principle that the priorities and views of tenants should be at the heart of a housing organisation's framework for directing, monitoring, assessing and modifying its own activities.
- 3.3 Where it works well, the benefits of tenant scrutiny include service improvements, efficiency savings, enhanced tenant satisfaction and staff confidence, tenant input into self-assessments; and a high level of challenge as to how landlords operate. Tenant scrutiny is intrinsically linked to the delivery of value for money services that meet local needs with transparency about how investment is made.

- 3.4 The original six national standards are now known as either consumer standards or economic standards. Consumer standards are concerned with all the housing services received by residents and applicants for housing.
- 3.7 The co-regulatory principles underpin the regulatory approach. Co-regulation is different to the previous system of regulation in how it defines the roles of each of the parties involved in it. Under co-regulation the role of:
- The Housing Regulator is to set clear standards for social housing.
  - A Registered Provider and its tenants is then to work together to achieve the required housing service standards.
  - Boards or councillors are responsible for meeting the standards and accountable for their organisation's delivery of its social housing objectives."<sup>1</sup>
- 3.9 Tenant scrutiny is an approach rather than a process. It is flexible in terms of context and application. There is no "one size fits all" model and there are many examples of different Scrutiny structures and tenant arrangements employed by social housing providers. The guidance recommends that structures are established that work best for the organisation and are responsive to tenant wishes and needs. There should be formality around these structures however reflecting the status of the scrutiny function within the organisation.

#### 4. THE PROPOSAL

##### Background:

- 4.1 In 2011 the Housing Service began working with a steering group of tenants and with a TPAS representative (employed as an independent mentor for the tenants) tasked with establishing and setting up scrutiny arrangements for Reading Borough Council tenants. The steering group activities included:
- Raising awareness of the context and role of scrutiny for all stakeholders to achieve understanding of the role of tenant scrutiny and "buy-in". There was an initial launch event in March 2011 and a subsequent promotions campaign involving posters, information packs and publicity at local events.
  - Agreeing a terms of reference for a Scrutiny panel covering panel remit, scope, composition, levels of authority, code of conduct, safeguards and escalation/disputes process. The terms of reference also set out how review topics are to be identified and selected.
  - Designing a recruitment process for panel members based on an agreed competency model and "job description."
  - Developing training, support mechanisms and succession planning to those who want to get involved ensuring that the scrutiny function is sustainable.
  - Establishing and undertaking a pilot or test scrutiny review for evaluation prior to wider role out.

##### Current Position

- 4.2 So far, TACT has undertaken 2 Scrutiny Reviews into the delivery of Housing Services resulting in excess of 50 recommendations, all of which have been accepted by Reading Borough Council's Housing Management Team:

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<sup>1</sup> The regulatory framework for social housing in England

- Appearance of Estates - focussing on whether Local Offers are being applied effectively
  - Anti-social behaviour - focussing on quality of communication, access and tenant satisfaction
- 4.3 TACT has provided update reports to Tenants through Housing News Articles in December 2012 and June 2013. They are also looking to provide an update in the Annual Report (Autumn 2013)
- 4.4 The choice of service area/provision for the third scrutiny review is currently under consideration by TACT.

## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The overall aim of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel "TACT" is to "Ensure that RBC Housing is a well managed, viable organisation which places the Tenant at the heart of its business through tenant led scrutiny." The development of a Tenant Scrutiny Panel will contribute to the Council's strategic aims by ensuring that priority is given and resources directed to those areas of service of most concern and importance to service users and customers (customer focus). The focus on performance and comparison with other housing providers will encourage the adoption of best practice and learning from others.

## 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The development of a Tenant Scrutiny Panel was driven by a steering group of involved tenants and council officers. Tenants were (and continue to be) supported in undertaking this role by an independent tenant advisor (TPAS) responsible for offering independent advice, examples of good practice and direct training.
- 6.2 Widespread publicity and recruitment campaign was carried out 2011/12 to raise awareness of tenant scrutiny and encourage tenants to apply to join the panel from the whole of the tenant body. Through an extensive and effective recruitment process (billed as 'Have you got the Tenant Factor?) incorporating open information sessions attended by in excess of 50 tenants, and a rigorous selection process to find the best candidates, a Scrutiny Panel with 12 members was established.
- 6.3 This approach followed an independent review of RBC Tenant Involvement mechanisms that recommended a concerted focus on expanding both the number and the diversity of tenants taking part in formal tenant involvement mechanisms.

The development of the **Tenant Academy** a structured 10 week training programme for tenants (leading to an NVQ qualification) has been very well received and has gone some way to support and empower tenants to take on their new role within the co-regulation framework.

- 6.4 The action plans arising from Scrutiny Reviews will be monitored by the relevant Tenant working Groups with progress and achievements being reported to JCC (Joint Consultative Panel - the Strategic and Policy arm of the Tenant Involvement mechanisms).
- 6.5 It is intended that reports, recommendations and progress resulting from Scrutiny will be made available via the website and summarised within future Annual Reports and Housing News available to all tenants.



## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 A “preferred composition” for Panel membership was agreed that, as far as possible, aims that membership of TACT will reflect the existing tenant profile/composition.
- 7.2 Training and (independent) support will be available for Panel Members.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The National standards for Social Housing became a requirement for Housing Providers in spring 2010.
- 8.2 The Tenant involvement and Empowerment standard sets out a requirement for social housing landlords to offer all tenants opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing. This must include opportunities to :
  - Influence housing related policies and how housing related services are delivered.
  - Be involved in scrutinising performance in delivering housing related services
- 8.3 Housing providers must offer tenants support so that they are more able to be effectively engaged, involved and empowered.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) supports the operation of TACT with a commitment to resource both the operational costs and expenses associated with each review and the overhead costs associated with the Panel Structure (further recruitment, training, administration, expenses and publicity).
- 9.2 It is intended that a system of regular review/assessment of the Panel’s effectiveness and impact is undertaken by a nominated group of stakeholders.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 Summary of regulatory standard on Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	17 JULY 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	OUTREACH SERVICE FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS TENDER		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR RICHARD DAVIES	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	BRYONY HALL	TEL:	0118 937 2631
JOB TITLE:	ACTING HOUSING NEEDS MANAGER	E-MAIL:	bryony.hall@reading.gov.uk

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the retender of the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers and seeks authorisation to enter into a new contract following the conclusion of the procurement process.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers is to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in Reading. The service provides support to rough sleepers and motivation to engage with offers of help, including drug and alcohol treatment, healthcare and accommodation.
- 1.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out, and this is attached at Appendix 1.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That the Director of Education, Social Services and Housing, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing be authorised delegated authority to award the contract for the provision of an Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers in Reading for a period of three years commencing on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 and expiring on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 with an option to extend up to a maximum of three years from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, to the successful tenderer in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

**3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 In *No Second Night Out* (June 2011) the Government stressed its commitment to preventing and tackling homelessness. The report encourages Local Authorities to identify new rough sleepers and help them off the streets immediately, so they do not fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle. The Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers is the key agency in Reading for identifying rough sleepers and helping them into accommodation.
- 3.2 Reading Borough Council has shown a strong commitment to reducing rough sleeping numbers in Reading as far as is possible. In November 2011 Cabinet approved proposals for a 'Homelessness Pathway' approach to supporting single homeless

people in Reading from homelessness all the way into independent living. The Homelessness Pathway approach has now been fully implemented and has been very successful in increasing the overall number of bed spaces and integrating services to provide improved outcomes for homeless people. The Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers supports the Homelessness Pathway by identifying and referring rough sleepers into accommodation. This Service has been pivotal in reducing the number of rough sleepers in Reading and has enabled a continued reduction in the number of people sleeping rough despite National trends, showing an overall increase.

3.3 The government announced in September 2012 the continuation of the Preventing Homelessness grant over the next two years.

3.4 In December 2012 a report to the Decision Book set out the decision to extend the current provision of the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers for 12 months to December 2013 whilst the procurement exercise was completed.

#### **4. CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 The current provider, St Mungo Community Housing Association, has delivered the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers in Reading since January 2008. The option for a final contract extension was exercised in January 2013 for 12 months and the contract is due to expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

#### **5. THE PROPOSAL**

5.1 It is proposed that the new contract is awarded for this service in September 2013 on the completion of the tender evaluation process, subject to a decision book report. This course of action will allow the minimum anticipated lead-in period in the event that an alternative provider is appointed. Delegated authority will be required in order to award the contract within the required timeframe for the successful completion of the tender exercise. The contract will commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 and expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016, with an option to extend up to a maximum of three years from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

5.2 The current contract arrangements are due to expire at the end of December 2013. This is a critical service during the winter months, when the provider coordinates the provision of emergency shelter during any periods of severe weather. It is proposed that a detailed implementation plan will be agreed so that there is no disruption to the service at this vital time. It is anticipated that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) are likely to apply to this contract, in the event that a new service provider is appointed.

#### **6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

6.1 The Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers contributes to the Council's aims to promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all. The service will enable rough sleepers into housing and drug and alcohol treatment services, ensuring that they are not socially excluded and are safely housed. Because they are often interrelated, the service will also address other issues related to street based activity, including begging and street drinking.

#### **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

7.1 Service users of the current provider of this service were consulted as part of the wider consultation on the Homelessness Pathway in October 2011. This included people rough sleeping at the time and previous rough sleepers who had been helped into accommodation.

- 7.2 There has been on-going involvement of all key stakeholders in the wider work on the development of services for single homeless people. This has included the development of the Homelessness Pathway and review of accommodation and support services for homeless people.

## 8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 *Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—*
- *eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
  - *advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
  - *foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The Equality duty is relevant to this decision. The Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers is a contract retender. Any changes to the service as a result of the retender and a new Service Specification must be assessed so that the impact of the proposed changes can be fully understood.

- 8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix 1. The assessment found that some groups may be affected differently but the impact was assessed to be positive overall.
- 8.3 The Outreach Service will be available and accessible to all rough sleepers and is assessed as having a positive impact. There is one part of the service that is intended to work with a specific group and that is additional activities to support non-UK EEA nationals to assess whether they have the right to benefits and housing in the UK. The service would also liaise with and assist the UK Border Agency to take action against those people who are rough sleeping and do not have the right to reside in the UK. Support is always offered before enforcement action is considered and it is clearly arguable that returning someone to the country where they are eligible for public funds and help with their housing is a more positive outcome than leaving someone homeless in Reading with no eligibility for assistance.

## 9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 It will be necessary to enter into a contract with the winning tenderer.
- 9.2 Whilst the current EU and UK procurement regulations do not require health and social services to be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) RBC decided to publish a voluntary contract notice in OJEU (Part B Service) owing to the present threshold values and to ensure full transparency. A two-stage restricted tendering procedure has been applied which is compliant with the EU tendering regime and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

## 10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 It is estimated that the total annual value of this contract is £192k. The service is to be funded from existing Preventing Homelessness Budgets.

	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000
Employee costs			
Other running costs - payments to service provider			
Capital financings costs			
<b>Expenditure</b>	192,000	192,000	192,000
Income from:			
Fees and charges			
Grant funding (specify)			
Other income			
<b>Total Income</b>			
<b>Net Cost(+)/saving (-)</b>	192,000	192,000	192,000

## Equality Impact Assessment

**Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed**

Retender of Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers

**Directorate:** DESSH

**Service:** Housing

**Name and job title of person doing the assessment**

**Name:** Tom Simpson

**Job Title:** Acting Customer Service Improvement Manager

**Date of assessment:** 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013

**What is the aim of your policy or new service?**

To address rough sleeping within the borough as well as related issues including begging and street drinking. It is a retender rather than a new service; however there is a revised service specification. The updated specification does not propose any changes that will affect who is eligible for the service or what service users receive. It does bring the specification up to date with how the service has developed with emerging trends since the last procurement exercise and service specification which was six years ago.

In this respect the service is required to provide specialist additional activities in order to assist those rough sleepers who are non-UK EEA nationals. People from Central or Eastern Europe are recognised both nationally by central government and locally in Reading, as making up a significant percentage of current rough sleepers. A report by Broadway in 2012 found that 28% of those who sleep rough in London are from Central and Eastern Europe. 14% of those identified as rough sleeping in Reading in 2012 were recorded as White European.

The revised specification refers to this group in three sections:

- 1) The provider is required to implement good practice actions from other organisations working within the field of rough sleeping to reduce rough sleeping levels, including developing innovative solutions to successfully work with non-UK EEA Nationals.
- 2) The provider is requested to have experience of working with non-UK EEA national rough sleepers and effectively delivering a range of service offers, including: liaising with the UKBA; advising to help exercise treaty rights; supporting reconnections; accessing translation and interpretation services.
- 3) An outcome of the service is that there is a sustained reduction in the number of non-UK EEA nationals who are rough sleeping within the Reading borough.

The impact is described in more detail below and is assessed to be positive.

**Who will benefit from this proposal and how?**

Rough sleepers will benefit as the service is intended to engage them into support services, including accommodation and drug treatment.

There is also a benefit for residents and visitors to Reading, as there is a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour as rough sleepers are helped to address their issues.

**What outcomes will the change to achieve and for whom?**

The number of individuals rough sleeping across the Reading borough continues to reduce and move as close to zero as possible.

Rough sleepers who are not normally resident within the Reading borough are reconnected with services and support in their home area.

There is a sustained reduction in the number of non-UK EEA nationals who are rough sleeping within the Reading borough.

**Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?**

Homeless people - majority want help to access accommodation as quickly as possible and support to regain their independent living skills

Criminal Justice System - wants support for homeless ex-offenders to secure housing in order to reduce their risk of re-offending

RBC statutory homelessness service - to ensure that suitable options for homeless people with support needs are available in order to prevent homelessness and reduce levels of rough sleeping

Mental health services - want support for homeless people with mental health issues in order to reduce readmissions and promote recovery

Drug and alcohol agencies - want access to stable accommodation for homeless people with drug and/or alcohol use issues so that they can promote recovery with their service users

Members of the public - want housing options and support for rough sleepers and a minimum impact from rough sleeping and associated antisocial behaviour including begging, street drinking and street based sex work.

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)

Yes  No

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.

Yes  No

## Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts?		
Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
Rough sleepers	Easy read consultation documents and questionnaire completed with the current provider of the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers as part of the wider consultation on the Homelessness Pathway	27 - 28 October 2011
Statutory and voluntary agencies working with homeless people	Key stakeholders have been involved over a long period of time in our wider work on services for homeless people including the development of the Homelessness Pathway and review of provision of accommodation and support services for homeless people.  Final proposals for the whole of the Homelessness Pathway were then consulted on with key stakeholders and other agencies during October and November 2011.	2009 - Present  20 October - 9 November 2011

## Data collection and assessment

### **Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups**

The current provider collects information on the ethnicity of each person that they assess. Not all of these people will be confirmed rough sleepers and not all will be offered or will accept a support service, but they will have some reason to believe that they are a homeless person.

During the whole of the calendar year 2012, 300 people were assessed. Of these 63% were White British. This is slightly less than but very close to the figure of 66.9% for Reading in the 2011 Census.

Of the 33% who identify themselves as black, Asian and minority ethnic people there are no major outliers compared to the 2011 census except for those that are White European - 14% of those assessed by the Outreach Service compared with a total of 7.9% who



identified themselves as Other White in Reading in the 2011 Census. This is not unusual in this context however and throughout the country there is a recognised issue of non-UK EEA nationals over-represented in rough sleeping numbers.

The Outreach Service will be available and accessible to all rough sleepers and is assessed as having a positive impact. There is one part of the service that is intended to target a specific group and that is additional activities to support non-UK EEA nationals so that they gain the right to reside in the UK but also liaising with and assisting the UK Border Agency to take action against those people who are rough sleeping and do not have the right to reside in the UK. Whilst this is viewed by some as a less positive impact on this group, support is always offered before enforcement and it is clearly arguable that returning someone to the country where they are eligible for public funds and help with their housing is a more positive outcome than leaving someone rough sleeping in Reading with no eligibility for assistance.

Is there a negative impact? Yes  No  Not sure

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)**

Males make up the huge majority of the users of this service - 86% of those in 2012. The service is available equally to males and females however and the impact of the service is positive for both. There are no available figures however it is very rare to find pregnant women sleeping rough as there are statutory duties to provide accommodation in that circumstance. Therefore this service - if anyone is assessed as pregnant - is able to positively impact someone by offering a clear housing and support option.

Is there a negative impact? Yes  No  Not sure

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability**

Only data on those with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is recorded and 4% of those using the service were identified as such. Research nationally suggests that people with mental health issues are over represented in rough sleeping numbers and that those who do have mental health issues are more likely to become homeless than those who do not.

This service will identify anyone who is rough sleeping and has a disability and anyone who has a health problem or disability is prioritised into accommodation and support services so that there is a positive impact on this group.

Is there a negative impact? Yes  No  Not sure

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)**

Data has only recently begun being collected on sexual orientation and at this time there is not enough to enable meaningful analysis.

Any impact on sexual orientation or civil partnership will be positive as the service is available equally and aims to offer all rough sleepers - regardless of sexual orientation - services that are positive for their well-being.

Is there a negative impact? Yes  No  Not sure

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Age**

The age groupings collected against for clients that used this service during 2012 are different than those used in the 2011 Census; however a broad analysis is possible of the ages of rough sleepers in Reading compared to the general population of Reading.

10% of those using this service were over 55, whilst 16% of the population in Reading was over 60. The majority of those assessed by the Outreach Service were aged 25-54 at 78%.

60% of the population of Reading in 2011 was aged 20-59.

It is very rare (0% in 2012) for anyone under 16 to be found rough sleeping and relatively unusual for anyone under 18 - there are statutory duties to provide accommodation in these circumstances.

The Outreach Service is available and accessible to all rough sleepers and is assessed as having a positive impact on all age groups.

Is there a negative impact?      Yes       No       Not sure

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief?**

Data has only recently begun being collected on religious belief and at this time there is not enough to enable meaningful analysis.

Any impact on religious belief will be positive as the service is available equally and aims to offer all rough sleepers - regardless of religious belief -services that are positive for their well-being.

Is there a negative impact?      Yes       No       Not sure

Decision

- 1. **No negative impact identified**      Go to sign off
  
- 2. **Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason**   
You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.
  
- 3. **Negative impact identified or uncertain**   
What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?

**How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?**

The service specification requires the provider to ensure equality of access to all. Equalities monitoring is also required and this data will be submitted and analysed quarterly. During this new contract period, sexual orientation and religious belief will be collected throughout.

Signed (completing officer)      **Tom Simpson**      Date **25/02/13**

Signed (Lead Officer)      **Bryony Hall**      Date **26/02/13**

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	17 JULY 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	DECENT NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR RICHARD DAVIES	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD OFFICER:	ZELDA WOLFLE	TEL:	0118 9372285
JOB TITLE:	HOUSING OPERATIONS MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Zelda.wolfle@reading.gov.uk

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides background on the Decent Neighbourhood Fund established by the Housing Service and funded from the Housing Revenue Account, and sets out the scope of the funding and an update on what estate improvements have been achieved so far.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That members note this report and endorse the approach to tenant and community engagement in setting local priorities for investment.

**3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 Over the last few years the Housing Service has placed considerable emphasis on achieving the Decent Homes Standard, with funding being put into improving individual properties. Although it is important to continue to improve individual properties it is of equal importance for tenants that investment is made to improve the appearance of the neighbourhood in which they live.
- 3.2 In order to invest more money in improving neighbourhoods the Housing Service set up the Decent Neighbourhood Fund (DNF) in 2009/10 with the aim of improving local neighbourhood estate areas. The funding comes from the Housing Revenue Account which is the rental income received from tenants. As such it is a condition of the DNF that the money spent must be shown to benefit Council Housing estates and tenants. The budget for the DNF is £490,000 and is spent in consultation with tenants

- 3.3 The DNF can contribute towards a broad range of environmental and community initiatives designed to improve the appearance of neighbourhoods and quality of life of those living in a neighbourhood. Local residents are asked for ideas on improvements that could be made to the area they live in; the ideas are then developed into small or larger projects on which local residents are consulted before work commences. It is important the projects reflect the concerns and issues raised by local people.

The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), a tenant policy group, were involved in agreeing:

- Prioritisation of areas/neighbourhoods which would benefit from the fund
- Agreeing priorities for spend within given areas
- Agreeing which types of projects the fund can be spent on

#### 4. DECENT NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND

- 4.1 It was agreed with the JCC that around 70% of the Decent Neighbourhood Fund should be targeted at existing Thriving Neighbourhood Areas - particularly Whitley, East Reading (Orts Road) and Southcote (these match closely with Housing estate areas). The remaining 30% is spread through other estate areas across the Borough.

- 4.2 Deciding priorities for projects is done through a combination of:

- The Neighbourhood Officer identifying projects through their knowledge of the area and as a result of the outcomes of estate inspections in consultation with local Community Voices and Sounding Board members.
- Wider consultation through surveys such as the Tenancy Neighbourhood Survey, Building Cleaning Survey etc.
- Views being sought through local Neighbourhood Officer Newsletters and Housing News.

- 4.3 The DNF can cover a broad range of environmental issues designed to improve the appearance and quality of life of those living in a neighbourhood. The works can be divided into a number of broad themed areas:

- Traffic/Parking
- Landscaping/General appearance
- Security/Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

In general the fund will cover:

- Landscaping
- Painting
- Brickwork/Pavements
- Lighting (improving existing or providing new lighting)
- Provision of new parking bays

- Marking out of existing parking bays to make them more effective
- Road signage, block signs, estate maps - securing grass verges.
- Notice boards
- Improvement to block communal garden areas
- Improved street furniture

The aim is to ensure all works use environmentally friendly and sustainable materials and technology.

- 4.4 In addition one-off grants for community groups can be considered where they contribute towards enhancing a local service to make necessary improvements and assist in ensuring the long term sustainability of a community project. Examples would include contributing towards funding equipment for a baby and toddler group or funding the kit for a junior football team.
- 4.5 The budget for 2012/13 has funded a range of different projects including:
- Granville Road car parking scheme
  - Landscaping to various locations across the borough
  - Play equipment on Hexham Road
  - Improvements to the communal areas in and around Caversham Road flats
  - Closing off the Arthur Place walkway in Orts Road (a 'design out crime' initiative to reduce drug activity).
  - St Giles Close parking scheme
  - improvements to Southcote Youth and Community Centre
  - Jim Hanley Memorial garden

Extensive consultation with local residents, ward councillors and other stakeholders took place on all of these projects.

## 5. "YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR CASH"

5.1 A slice of the DNF budget is spent using a participatory approach named "Your Community, Your Cash" (YCYC). A local pot of money is made directly available for communities and neighbourhoods to bid for. The bidding process usually takes place at a community event where residents "vote" for their favourite projects. This approach helps to develop social capital within a community and its transparency enables residents to be certain that the expenditure clearly reflects local priorities.

5.2 Last year's winning projects have been very successful, they include:

- The Coley Park Radio Station Project which gave 22 young people the chance to learn production skills whilst another 43 took part in a film at Coley Park Community Centre's Winter Barbecue
- Lots of young people joined the Kickz street dance, hair and beauty sessions in April half term
- Whitley Wood Football Club has been competing in the Berkshire County Cup
- Local residents have enjoyed Boxercise and Yoga sessions at Hexham Community Centre

In addition funding was given to the Whitley Excellence Cluster to fund projects in schools. As a result:

- Parents from Geoffrey Field School have been enjoying the new outdoor shelter and garden created
- The new bike shed at New Christ Church Primary School has enabled an extra 22 children to cycle to school and take part in bikeability courses
- Whitley Park Primary School are growing their own vegetables and learning about healthy eating

5.3 This year so far, successful YCYC events have already been held in Dee Park Tilehurst, Hexham Road Whitley, Southcote and Whitley Wood. One further YCYC event is planned for Coley in August. Some of the successful bids voted on by local residents at the events already held include:

- The Grange Café (United Reform Church) which aims to provide a place where parents can socialise and children can wind down after school (Southcote)
- The MAD Academy (Music and Dance) will offer courses combining lively music and dance for toddlers/children under 5 years (Southcote)
- The Mens' Room at Hexham Community Centre to engage men in social and healthy activities (Whitley)
- Health and Well Being Group at Hexham Community Centre (Whitley)
- School Holiday Activities at Whitley Wood Community Centre (Whitley Wood)
- The Homework Club for 8-15 year olds (Dee Park)
- Community Café (Dee Park)

5.4 School Holiday Activities at the Whitley Wood Community Centre Youth Forums have also had a successful voting event and the following bids were approved:

- Community Park Days
- Community BBQ
- Cook It, Eat It

5.5 The Housing Service is currently working with Aspire and the Whitley Schools Cluster to agree bids that will be voted on by Whitley School Youth Councils in Autumn 2013.

## 6. DNF PRIORITIES FOR 2013/14

6.1 Priorities for the 2013/14 budget have already been set. These are based on the outcomes from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey results 2011 and 2012, local offers to residents, Thriving Neighbourhood Action Plans (themselves based on a series of local resident surveys), Tenant Scrutiny Inspection reports, NAG priorities, Health and Safety issues and the corporate priorities of the Council. The priorities include:

- Landscaping - bulbs, trees, improvements to communal gardens.
- Parking - new parking bays, marking out of existing bays, better design of existing space to create more bays and more effective parking.
- Dog issues - dog fouling campaigns, dog bins, dog walking areas.
- Pavements/Roads - resurfacing of car parks, resurfacing of pavements, and replacing slabs with tarmac.
- Grass verges - create parking bays, some form of bollard to prevent parking on them.
- ASB - designing out crime initiatives, lighting, and fencing.
- Initiatives to improve community spirit including community events/fun days, adult learning classes, initiatives to support inequalities in poor health or education, employment skills; life skills for young people, arts projects, support to estate football teams etc.

6.2 A number of potential commitments to the 2013/14 budget have already been identified. These include projects that were put forward in the previous financial year once funding was no longer available. They include:

- Landscaping projects in a number of areas across the borough
- Hexham Road play equipment upgrade
- Southdown Road (Caversham) - improvements to the pathways, steps, and railings
- Amersham Road/Alston Walk - improvements and resurfacing to pathways
- Easter Holiday Youth Activities at Whitley Youth and Community Centre
- Chequers Way, Woodley - improved/additional car parking and resurfacing of car park area
- Caversham Road flats, graffiti proof paint
- Dee Park Youth Club 8 - 11 year olds (Friday evenings for 50 weeks)



- Virginia Way, Southcote, new play equipment for 8-13 age group
- Granville Road car parking improvements
- Southcote Summer Holiday Childrens activities (joint with Play Rangers)

6.3 For the future the Housing Service is aiming to work with other Registered Social Landlords in areas where Housing Association properties border or are located on RBC estate areas. Contributions from Registered Social Landlords will enable an expansion of what has been achieved so far and bring wider benefits to neighbourhoods across the borough. In Dee Park this year we achieved this in partnership with Catalyst Housing Association.

## 8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

8.1 Community engagement is a key part of the process in deciding the priorities for funding. The 'Your Community Your Cash' scheme is a form of 'Participatory Budgeting' - this directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending and priorities for a defined public budget. It's an approach centred on the importance of valuing the knowledge and experience of local people and empowering them to identify their own priorities, find solutions to the problems affecting them and to make their own decisions about how public money should be spent. This approach is in line with the Council's commitment to involving communities in decision making. It encourages and supports local people to have a real voice in their community, to identify their own needs and priorities, and develop and deliver projects to meet those needs.

## 9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no current legal implications in relation to the Decent Neighbourhood Fund

## 10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Decent Neighbourhood Fund is funded from the Housing Revenue Account and is maintained within budget. As such the main focus of spend is directed towards tenants.

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None