

To: City Executive Board

Date: 6 October 2010

Item No: 4b

Report of: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Title of Report: Tackling Inequalities and Support for Communities Review and the Development of the new Communities and Neighbourhoods Team

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To outline the scrutiny committee's views of the work in this area

Key decision - No

Executive lead member; Councillor Antonia Bance

Report approved by:

Scrutiny Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor Gill Sanders

Legal: Steve Smith

Finance: Gillian Chandler

CEB is asked to consider the recommendations in the body of the report and say if it:

- Agrees; or**
- Disagrees and why**

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Scrutiny Committee has had on its agenda for some time an item to consider the outcomes of the corporate review which was set to consider the Corporate Priority "Tackling inequalities and support for communities" and judge how our services and strategies delivered towards this aim. The original brief was to:
 - Identify services, strategies and partnerships working in this area and their outcomes in terms of change and improvement
 - Consider evaluation frameworks
 - Gather information on spending (take a view of the value for money of our actions)
 - Gather best practice in other authorities
- 2 Funding from the MKOB Improvement and Efficiency South East programme was secured to support the review programme. At the early stages the committee heard that a number of overlaps existed between this corporate priority and "Improve the local economy and quality of life" consequently the programme was extended to consider this at the same time

- 3 A number of delays have occurred within the project delivery and the report attached at Appendix 1 is the information provided in response to the committee's request to see the projects findings and outcomes
- 4 At the same time and in support of the scrutiny debate in this area the committee was interested to see future thinking and working on community cohesion and engagement and requested information on the development of the new communities and engagement team. The report on this is attached at Appendix 2

Scrutiny Committee Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5 The committee was disappointed with the outcomes of the corporate review and in particular the lack of any real data allowing us to make judgments on our current actions, priorities and methods of working. As budgets contract the outcomes of a review of this nature would have given us a head start in any refocusing work. The committee was reassured to see that work on developing evaluation frameworks is now to commence and hope this can be pursued as quickly as possible to allow the evaluation of our choices and actions within a much tighter budgetary framework

Recommendation 1

For City Executive Board to note:

Accepting that the focus for delivering on the corporate priority of "Tackling inequalities and support for communities" will be the Regeneration Framework the committee has asked to see at their December meeting:

- **The Chair of the Regeneration Steering Group along with an update on delivery of the Regeneration Framework Action Plan**
- **The outcomes of the work that is underway in the organisation and the OSP making a judgment on the "gaps" that are to be produced in this area by reduced public sector spending and the withdrawal of grants in the public and voluntary sectors**
- **Progress on developing evaluation frameworks**

- 6 In contrast the committee welcomed the very well developed structure supporting the Communities and Neighbourhoods Team and is interested to see the development of their work. Linked to the views above the committee felt that it was crucial for us to be able to evaluate the outcomes in this area and so the production of sound evaluation frameworks was needed. To quote a committee member:

"At the moment this looks good on paper but it is what we actually do and deliver that will make the difference"

- 8 The Committees immediate concerns are to see how the teams will tackle:
 - The building of sustainability into community projects so that the capacity of the community to support itself and further engage grows
 - The "gaps" in community support that could begin to show as funding from various sources slows, reduces or stops
 - The balance within team leaders jobs between thematic and area working

The committee also wished to see details of the work being done by Community Champions currently and what they have achieved so far

Recommendation 2

City Executive Board note that a report outlining the issues of concern above plus the actions and targets for the service has been requested at the February scrutiny meeting

Recommendation 3

That City Executive Board requests an update on the service and its programme of work and outcomes a year from now

Comment from the Board Member for Regeneration and Community Development

None

Comment from the Executive Director for City Regeneration

Scrutiny Committee received two interconnected reports. In terms of the policy review Members received a candid assessment from the Policy Officer that the original workstream had been overtaken by events in that that the City had joined with the County Council, PCT, Cherwell District Council and Thames Valley Police to drive the multi agency "Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation Programme", within which evaluation frameworks are to be developed, underneath the overarching umbrella of the Regeneration Framework.

The second report considered implementation arrangements for the council's community development and regeneration work on the ground through the Communities and Neighbourhoods Team which has recently come up to staffing compliment. It was pleasing to note the general welcome received to these organisational arrangements as a key tenet of the Regeneration Framework is that regeneration interventions will be shaped by local people and this re-shaped team represents the council's commitment to ensure that this is the case.

The Chair and other colleagues from the multi agency Regeneration Steering Group will be invited to attend the December meeting of Scrutiny Committee to report on progress against the Regeneration Framework Action Plan.

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Appendix 1

To: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Date: 13th September 2010

Item No:

Report of: Head of Policy, Culture and Communications

Title of Report: Tackling Inequalities Strategy Review Update

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report on the progress of work being undertaken to review the corporate priority to tackle inequalities since last reported to Scrutiny Committee in April 2010

Report approved by: Mel Barrett, Executive Director, City Regeneration

Finance: Emma Burson

Legal: Jeremy Thomas

Recommendation(s):

As the work of the Regeneration Steering Group is driving the tackling inequalities work in the city through the regeneration framework action plan, Scrutiny Committee may wish to invite members of the Oxford City Regeneration Steering Group and the Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation Programme Manager to update and report on their work in the city and developments around measuring outcomes and value for money.

Introduction

1. This report updates on work carried out as part of the review into the City Council's corporate priority to tackle inequalities.
2. It should be noted that this work (and indeed the future work to review other corporate priorities) has been overtaken by budgetary and service reviews currently taking place. However, the Council's policy aspirations remain intact. The issue for the Council, however, is how we can deliver these aspirations given seriously reduced resources - 25% to 40% reductions are the guidelines. The work that officers are carrying out in preparation for the budget will by its very nature constitute an examination of the links between policy aspirations and available resources.

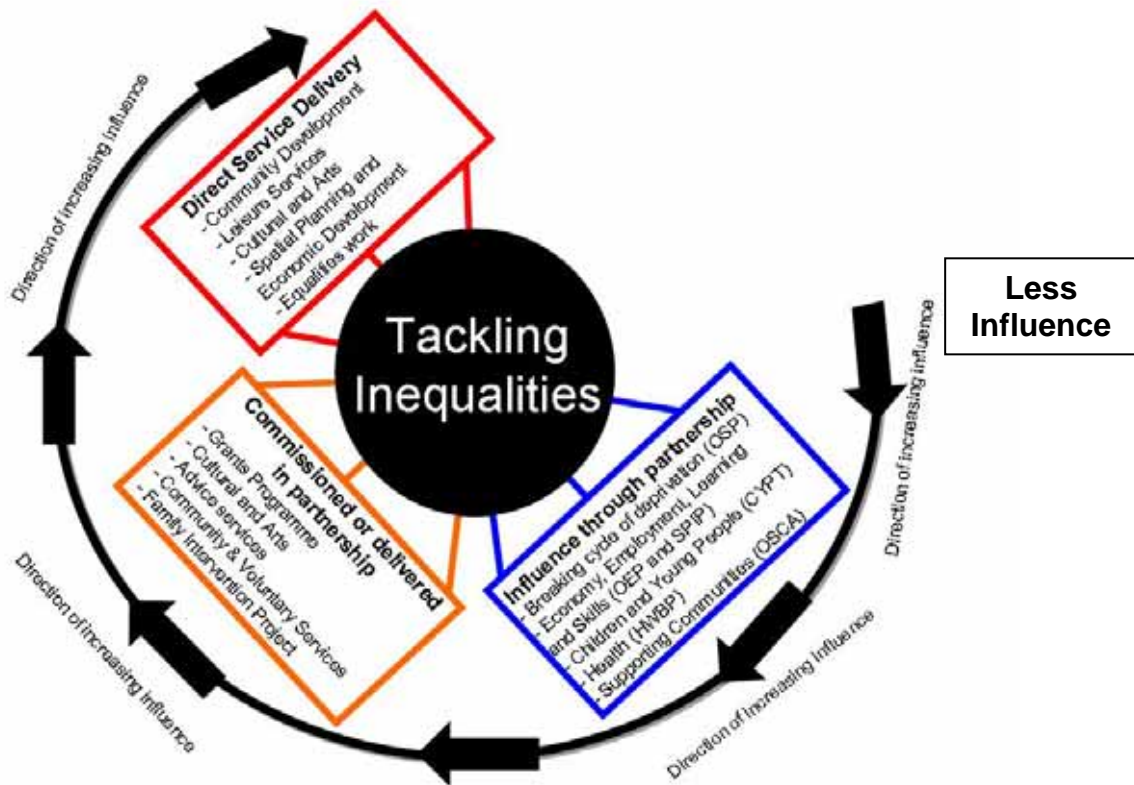
Work and Service Areas and our Sphere of Influence

3. As part of the Strategy Review work was undertaken to define work and service areas relevant to our work to tackle inequalities. It should be noted that the review would not look at work areas covered by other strategic priorities (e.g. housing and housing support, safer communities and environment). The following table summarises the findings:

Directly delivering a service	Contracting or funding and delivering in partnership	Delivering or influencing through partnership
Spatial Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development	Development of community and voluntary infrastructure (e.g. volunteering, managing projects, BME Champions, LAA reward Grant fund)	Regeneration and breaking the cycle of deprivation – <i>through the Oxford City Regeneration Steering Group reporting to the OSP</i>
Cultural and Arts Services (including Oxford Museum)	Cultural Services (e.g. Oxford Inspires)	Economy, employment, learning and skills and business support (including the Destination management Organisation) - <i>through Oxfordshire Economic Partnership and Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership</i>
Leisure services (e.g. free swimming, sport and play provision, SLICE card)	Grants Programme	
Tourism Management (e.g. TIC, Visit Oxford)	Holiday activities for Young people	
Retail and City Centre Management	Advice Services	
Community Development (including management of community centres)	Family Intervention Programme	Children and young people (e.g. keeping all children and young people safe; family support; raising achievement for all young people) - <i>through Children and Young People Trust</i>
Equalities work (internal and external)		
Concessionary Bus Fare Scheme		Health Services (e.g. reducing health inequalities; ageing successfully; mental health and well being) - <i>through Health and Well Being Partnership</i>
		Supporting communities (e.g. volunteering opportunities; Migrant Bid) – <i>through Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance</i>

4. The Local Strategic Partnerships and Thematic Partnerships provide opportunities for the Council to identify and promote joint / partnership working and where the Council has no direct responsibility or duty to deliver services in the city an opportunity to influence policy and delivery (e.g. schools, education, health services). This is illustrated below using a sphere of influence model.
5. Our influence to manage and direct our focus of work and resources is most significant where we deliver direct services and this influence lessens as we become less involved in direct delivery. This is illustrated as follows:

Significant Influence



6. In areas of work such as health and education where we have no or very limited direct service delivery but the impact on tackling inequality is great it is important that we ensure that the most appropriate members and officers are representing the views of the City Council and the needs of Oxford City at partnership meetings. This work is co-ordinated, managed and over-seen by Val Johnson in her capacity as Corporate Partnerships Manager.
7. Current budgetary and service reviews being carried out by service heads will provide options for how direct services are prioritised, resourced and delivered in the future and will also inform what funds are available for commissioning services.
8. Government announcements and legislation will help to clarify the future of Local Strategic Partnerships and Thematic Partnerships.
9. The recent Health White Paper has indicated that the Government's preferred model for health is continued partnership management and accountability through the Health and Well Being Partnership.
10. The Coalition Government has also announced the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies (Oxford is part of SEEDA) and has invited local government and business leaders to put forward proposals for local enterprise partnerships (LEPs). The County Council is leading the development of a bid for an Oxfordshire LEP and has stated in the draft bid that the LEP will:
 - Involve the county's most senior public, academic and private sector leaders in articulating a shared vision for the future of the county's economy;
 - provide the framework in which a smaller public sector works differently with the private sector to realise its full potential for long term wealth creation;
 - tackle barriers to business growth and innovation;

- focus on the development of key sectors that complement national priorities; and
- provide an effective interface with national programmes for economic development.

Regeneration Framework and Regeneration Steering Group

11. The regeneration objectives for Oxford (outlined in the Regeneration Framework) are:
 - to reduce inequalities between citizens;
 - to increase the supply of housing, particularly affordable housing;
 - to create places where people wish to live;
 - to increase skills and promote skills development;
 - to provide sustainable jobs for all through economic growth in central Oxfordshire;
 - to improve connectivity between employment, housing and those seeking employment.
12. The first of those objectives “to reduce inequalities between citizens” clearly illustrates that the Regeneration Framework is the leading policy document and key strategic framework and action plan for our work on the corporate priority to tackle inequalities. This work is being overseen and managed by the Oxford City Regeneration Steering Group.
13. Funding has been secured from LAA Reward Money to employ a Programme Manager working to an Oxford City Regeneration Steering Group (although this was reduced post general election as Reward Money was cut by Government). The Steering Group is responsible for ensuring that outcome based targets are identified and agreed and that appropriate monitoring and review is in place.
14. These programme management arrangements have been clearly set and agreed as part of the City Council’s Corporate Board and Programme Management Arrangements – see appendix one
15. Whilst the Council’s policy aspirations remain intact during the existing budget and service review it may be appropriate to change the emphasis to acknowledge the focus of our regeneration work and how this work covers several existing priorities, namely, tackling inequalities, supporting communities, providing more and better housing and improving the economy and quality of life
16. The work being led by the newly formed Communities and Neighbourhood Team will drive much of the City Council’s aspirations around supporting communities and Scrutiny will be receiving a report and update on their work separately.

Measuring Outcomes and Value for Money

17. The review has identified that models for measuring outcomes and value for money around work to tackle inequalities need to be strengthened. Funding has been secured from Improvement and Efficiency South East Fund to develop ways of measuring outcomes and value for money. This work will be co-ordinated by a small working group overseen by the Regeneration Steering Group and it is hoped will have developed some findings by the end of the year.

Recommendations to Scrutiny Committee

18. As the work of the Regeneration Steering Group is driving the tackling inequalities work in the city through the regeneration framework action plan, Scrutiny Committee may wish to invite members of the Oxford City Regeneration Steering Group and the Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation Programme Manager to update and report on their work in the city and developments around measuring outcomes and value for money.

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List of background papers:

Appendix One – Corporate Board and Programme Management Arrangements

Version number:

To: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Date: 13th September 2010

Item No:

Report of: Head of Community Housing and Community Development

Title of Report: Development of new Communities and Neighbourhoods team and building cohesive and stronger communities

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide an overview of the development of the new Communities and Neighbourhoods team and building cohesive and stronger communities

Report Approved by:

Finance: Penny Gardner, Finance

Legal: Steve Smith, Law and Governance

Head of Service: Graham Stratford

Recommendation(s): Request CAP Scrutiny Committee to comment and note report

Background

(a) National

1. Nationally through a number of past government strategies and by legislation there has been an increased emphasis on enhancing community engagement and promoting the sustainability of local communities. Communities have been defined for place shaping concentrating on a neighbourhood approach and also of interest focusing on cross-cutting issues such as young people, faith groups, disabilities etc. Within this context the development of addressing community cohesion has been another aspect of building stronger communities.

2. The recent change in Government has seen the development of the Big Society which is the Government's vision of a society where individuals and communities have more power and responsibility, and use it to create better neighbourhoods and local services

This has developed by building on discussions with people who live and work in neighbourhoods, and nationally the Government is looking at how it can help to remove barriers that get in the way of neighbourhood working, and make sure that people can access the support they say they need to take greater control over what happens in their neighbourhood.

As part of this, the Government want to ensure that neighbourhoods can act as the building blocks for regenerating the most disadvantaged areas.

3. The Local Government Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and Local Government Association agreed the definition of community cohesion as 'what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another'.

Thus, community cohesion refers to a much wider sense of concerns in relation to a community as a whole which may include service provision, economic development, social inclusion, education and planning. The knowledge and skills required to address community cohesion work are applicable across much of the work of community development, community health and education, youth work and equality work.

4. The development of community cohesion is to build communities with four key characteristics:

- A common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- Valuing diversity
- Similar life opportunities for all
- Strong and positive relationships being developed between people from differing backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, schools and within neighbourhoods

(b) Local

5. The approach to neighbourhood/area management needs to mainstream community cohesion and ensure that any action plans address the points above especially related to service planning and performance management. Delivering the foundations needs a shared understanding and agreed approaches between all partners. Effective leadership and an in-depth knowledge of communities are vital. There is an important link with the equalities agenda and to deliver equalities and cohesion effectively, they need to be part of the core business of the local strategic partnership.

6. Area working across the City has been developed through the Area Committee structure. The outcomes which can be achieved through a neighbourhood/area approach include:

- Engaging and actively involving local communities
- Involving a range of agencies to solve complex issues
- Enhance community leadership role of elected members
- Local decision-making and scrutiny of local issues

- Development of local performance and quality targets
- A more appropriate allocation of resources by responding more effectively to the different needs of each area
- Translating corporate objectives into practical local actions

Although the structural component has been in place, there is a need to further develop community engagement and involvement in order to effectively achieve more sustainable and stronger communities

Communities and Neighbourhoods Team

7. The new Communities and Neighbourhoods team has been formed following a restructure of the Community Housing and Community Development service, which identified a need to integrate the functions related to Area Committees, Community Development, Community Centres and Grants.

The formation initially saw the Area Coordinators team amalgamate with the team formally referred to as Neighbourhood Renewal; which encompassed community development, health promotion, community centre management and grants

8. The new Communities and Neighbourhoods team structure provides a service that:

- Develops social regeneration initiatives within the areas specified through the Regeneration Framework, Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation programme and other corporate and partnership priorities
- Engages residents in place shaping to design, plan, develop and manage social and physical improvements in their local areas
- Builds capacity in communities and neighbourhoods to increase the ability of local people to engage effectively with local services as well as providing opportunities to build sustainable communities
- Create opportunities for people from different backgrounds and communities to come together to develop areas of interest

9. The key roles and responsibilities within the team are listed below and a structure chart included as Appendix 1:

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager will lead the new team and provide the overall strategic direction related to the above priorities. The Manager will also lead on partnership working, development of area/neighbourhood working including area committees, social regeneration, community development, community-led planning and engagement in building sustainable communities and overall performance and programme management for the team.

Team Leaders

There are three new Team Leader posts whose key responsibilities will be to manage a team to deliver service priorities related to the social regeneration

work, managing and developing area committees in relation to area/neighbourhood working, community engagement and capacity building. Each team leader will also have a specific cross-cutting city-wide responsibility. across the City. This will ensure a consistent team approach, provide a point of contact for other agencies and ensure issues are addressed in relation to the service aims. These themes will be: young people, older people, and black and minority ethnic groups

Locality 1	Locality 2	Locality 3
Area boundaries defined as North Area Committee and Central, South and West Area Committee	Area boundaries defined as East Area Parliament and North-East Area Committee	Area boundaries defined as Cowley Area Committee and South-East Area Committee
Community Centres: North Oxford Jericho, West Oxford South Oxford Cutteslowe	Community Centres: Barton Risinghurst Northway Cheney Asian Cultural Centre Donnington East Oxford Wood Farm Headington	Community Centres: Blackbird Leys Jubilee 77 Rose Hill Littlemore Regal Florence Park Bullingdon Cowley

Locality Officers

Responsible for supporting and developing Community Associations in the management of their activities and ensuring effective management of Community Centres. This will include assisting Community Associations to achieve VISIBLE or equivalent status, development of greater community engagement, assessing local needs and community development initiatives in the locality.

Community Development Officers

Focussed on social regeneration activities, community/neighbourhood led planning, community capacity building within a specific team and also across the City

Grants/External Funding Officer

Responsible for managing the grants budget and externally funded contracts, and ensuring that effective financial and monitoring systems are in place.

Asian Families Development Officer

To promote equality of opportunity for Asian Families to access services in Children's and Community Centres as identified by the City and County Councils, promoting community cohesion, social inclusion and equalities.

Community Facilities Officer

Responsible for supporting community facilities such as the Sports and Games Halls.

Support Officer

Responsible for providing a comprehensive range of business support functions for the Communities and Neighbourhoods Team, leading on communication and consultation projects and managing the Apprentice Administrator post.

Apprentice Administrator

To provide general administrative support to the Communities and Neighbourhoods team

Areas of work

10. Community led planning

Development of the community led planning approach and building on the previous models of area/neighbourhood planning will be a key part of the new work programme. The area planning process has been developed to incorporate local identified needs and recent consultation has been taken to a neighbourhood level. The community led planning model was originally developed within three areas of the City (Cowley, West Oxford and West End) and in partnership with the County Council. This approach used the parish planning model and was evaluated to assess its relevance to a more urban setting. The evaluation showed that the model could be used with some adjustments on consultation methodology.

The community led planning approach has also been further developed within the areas of:

- Barton
- Wood Farm
- Northway
- The Leys

This work will continue to be developed to create neighbourhood /community action plans and build capacity within communities. There is also developmental work to link emerging neighbourhood forums to the Area Committees structure and also the Neighbourhood Police initiative.

11. Regeneration Framework Strategy

This strategy has a substantive engagement project which will contribute to the delivery of regeneration and development programmes on the estates. The programmes will deliver substantial benefits for the residents of the estates and of the city generally, in terms of the reduction of levels of deprivation across all domains (Income, Employment, Health Deprivation and Disability, Education, Skills and Training, Barriers to Housing and Services, Crime & Living Environment). The key areas targeted are to:

- Establish Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys Steering Group with key partners and create Leys Area Regeneration Plan
- Continue to develop the Barton Regeneration Forum with key partners and create Barton Area Regeneration Plan
- Further develop partnership arrangements at Rose Hill to focus Rose Hill Area Regeneration Plan on social and community regeneration aspects
- Support and further develop the West End Residents Community Involvement Group
- Establish suitable partnership mechanisms for Littlemore

Many of the above initiatives are underway and build on the residents' research projects.

In Barton, issues arising from the residents' research has led to development of areas focused on young people and learning communities. A partnership of all agencies involved in working with young people has been established to improve coordination of activities, funding bids and share good practice. There has also been a network group established to further develop adult learning and training initiatives and provide accessible learning locally on the estate

A Community Mapping exercise has also been undertaken of all community and local groups and services available within the Leys, Barton and Rose Hill.

12. Community Centres

We have been working with Community Centres towards achieving the national VISIBLE standard. Currently three have achieved the standard with a further two undergoing a reassessment. There has been a further suitable VISIBLE standard developed through Community Matters for smaller community centres which will be more appropriate and achievable for many of the Community Centres in Oxford.

There will be further work with Community Associations to continue to support their work and links with local communities. We will also be working with them on satisfaction surveys both of users and the local community.

There are key development projects related to Northway, Cowley and Wood Farm Community Centres which we are actively involved in. The projects will create new facilities in these three areas which involves active engagement with the local communities to ensure the facilities meet local needs and are sustainable for the future.

We are also working with the Federation of Community Associations to address issues common to Community Associations. This year there will also be a small grants scheme for Community Associations run jointly by the City

Council and the Federation.

13. Community and Voluntary Sector

This area continues to develop and we run two Forums each year together with OCVA to bring together community groups to discuss areas of interest and concern. We have agreed with OCVA to run the next Forum at the beginning of November as this is a key time when there will be a clearer indication of funding for the voluntary sector in the coming years. The new team will be developing links with groups across the City to assist and support their development and address sustainability issues.

14. Other areas

The Team Leaders have areas of work to take a lead in including young people, older people and black and minority ethnic groups. Once in post they will be addressing these themes and connecting with the key agencies and groups across the City, to ensure that Oxford City Council's community development work is meeting the needs of our diverse communities.

There is already work underway with a range of groups including

- the development and support for the 50+ network which has over 150 members
- development of network of partners involved in addressing needs of young people in East Oxford
- development of Asian women's and families support work

Summary

15. There is a range of work to be delivered through the Communities and Neighbourhoods Team which will contribute to the Council's key priorities. This work programme will also need to be shaped by the national Government priorities.

More detailed plans and monitoring information will be able to be provided once the staff of the new Communities and Neighbourhoods team are all in place. However the new structure allows for a more targeted and team based approach to working with residents and communities across the City.

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