

## NEIGHBOURHOOD AGREEMENTS

Author: Lee Mooney (Social Inclusion and Health Inequalities Officer)

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform Forum members about the Council's trial introduction of "Neighbourhood Agreements" for Beanhill (2007) and Tinkers Bridge (2008).

### 2. Recommendation

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| 2.1 To note the report. |
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### 3. Background

- 3.1 Council Priority 3, "Promote equality and social inclusion and improve health" has as part of its objectives, 3b and 3c, a commitment to introduce Neighborhood Agreements on two trial areas of Milton Keynes, detailed above, and an objective of increasing the percentage of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area.
- 3.2 This approach compliments the recent Local Government White Paper which proposes, amongst other things, greater empowerment for citizens and enabling citizens to have control over services that they receive.

### 4. Neighbourhood Agreements

- 4.1 A Neighbourhood Agreement is one where the Council and its partner agencies, in this case Thames Valley Police; the Primary Care Trust and, hopefully, Woughton Parish Council, agree to provide the best possible services to an estate using existing resources and taking into account local priorities.
- 4.2 The Neighbourhood Agreement works like a contract and is an agreement between residents, **of all tenures**, and the Council and its partners. It aims to give residents more say about how their communities are run without them having to take management responsibilities themselves. Over the lifetime of the Agreement residents will have the opportunity to

influence delivery of the services they receive as well as identifying and prioritising their future needs.

#### 4.3 Neighbourhood Agreements

> Can last from 1 to 3 years but the intention on Beanhill and Tinkers Bridge is to initially have 4 monthly reviews to monitor their effectiveness and to adapt more speedily on changing priorities. It will also enable targeted information to be added e.g. advice on fuel economy and keeping warm in winter; health promotions and advice; forthcoming activities etc.

> Are “incorporated” i.e. have no legal status and so cannot be legally binding (unless a service standard set down in the agreement is already contained in another contract and, therefore, may be legally binding). They are though a clear act of good faith between the service providers and residents.

> Monitor services.

> Provides an agreed way of dealing with unacceptable standards of service.

> Are a vehicle for the Action Groups and resident associations to promote themselves.

#### 4.4 Neighbourhood Agreements typically contain:

> Priorities for action – identified by residents.

> The standards services should meet and how they are delivered.

> How residents will be kept informed.

> The role of the Action Groups and how residents can get involved.

> How service standards will be monitored.

> Arrangements for tackling poor standards of service.

> How residents can complain if service standards are not met.

#### 4.5 As part of the Neighbourhood Agreement residents will have responsibilities as well as the service providers. These will include;

> Reviewing services via the Action Groups.

> Agreeing plans for service delivery.

> Involvement in setting standards.

> Community responsibilities e.g. correctly disposing of rubbish and bulk items; parking; resolving neighbour disputes etc.

4.6 Every home on Beanhill and Tinkers Bridge will receive a copy of the Neighbourhood Agreement, therefore, everybody should know the general standards of service they can expect to receive and what is expected from them as members of the community.

4.7 The Neighbourhood Agreement will also act as a “welcome pack” for new residents providing information to help them settle into their new community.

## 5. **Conclusion**

5.1 The introduction of Neighbourhood Agreements will give residents the opportunity to become more involved in their community and the services they receive now and in the future. Its effectiveness will be carefully monitored and any necessary changes made during the review periods.