Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission Report

Update Report on the Approach to the Transforming Neighbourhood Services Programme

3rd September 2013

Assistant City Mayor, Councillor Sarah Russell

Lead director: Liz Blyth

Useful information

" Ward(s) affected: All

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1. Purpose & Summary

The first aim of this report is to outline lessons learned on the approach to successful community engagement from recent service change projects in the city. The report also summarises progress on these projects.

The second aim is to outline how these lessons will be used in the next stage of engagement required for the Transforming Neighbourhoods Services (TNS) Programme, which incorporates Libraries, Community Services, Adult Skills & Learning, and, neighbourhood based customer services.

This engagement will be localised and in depth. The city will be looked at in 6 geographical areas in sequence. The first part of the city to be addressed is described as "South". This includes neighbourhood services in Eyres Monsell, Freeman, Aylestone and Knighton wards. The report lays out in draft the approach to how engagement will be carried out in this area and then in the remaining 5 areas of the city.

Lessons learned from community engagement work and consultation undertaken for the Aylestone library move, the development of the St Matthews multi-service centre and the Brite Centre shared reception service have informed proposals for the community engagement approach to the TNS Programme.

Between April and July 2013 a consultation has already taken place, aimed at all citizens of Leicester, to gather opinion on which services people most valued. This also gave people the opportunity to register their interest to be involved in the development of the programme going forward.

The introductory consultation asked people to prioritise services in order of importance to them. This information will be used as an input for developing an agreed list of local services. Proposals for change may vary from area to area and can then be measured against this to ensure that an appropriate level of service is delivered throughout the 6 areas.

A multi-step approach will start with sharing information and analysis with Ward

Members, community leaders, groups and associations, and, those people who registered an interest in the first consultation held. The analysis will be used to show what the issues are around delivering services with fewer resources while seeking to provide a set of local services, valued by the community.

Ward Members will contribute to the development of options and be involved in any change projects.

Challenges and questions that the data raises will be shared with community leaders and groups. Officers will use the sessions with them to gather opinion and take this into account when developing options for transformation projects in the area.

These projects will form the initial proposal for the area, which will then be taken to the City Mayor and Executive for agreement to go out to consultation. The proposal will then be formally consulted using online material, public meetings and displays with comments forms.

Following consultation the proposal will be refined and a final proposal will be presented to the City Mayor and Executive for decision to proceed.

Scrutiny will be asked to scrutinise the proposal after the consultation process for each area and prior to implementation, in order to take their views and comments into account

The final decision will be announced and projects set up to deliver the decision.

The process will then move on to the next area.

Any decision on targeted services will be considered once the pattern for the delivery of core services has been agreed in all 6 areas

Attached at Appendix 1 are the details of the first cross city consultation on the programme.

Attached at Appendix 2 is a communications plan for engagement in the area South

Attached at Appendix 3 is a facility map of the South area

2. Recommendations

That the Scrutiny Commission note the planned approach to community engagement in the pilot and subsequent TNS Programme areas.

That the Scrutiny Commission note the progress made to date in the service change projects

3. Background:

3.1   Community Engagement Experience

3.1.1 Aylestone, St Matthews Projects

A staged approach to community engagement has been successfully used in working with communities to deliver necessary service change in the Aylestone and St Matthews areas.

The project at Aylestone involved moving the library from a stand-alone Victorian building in a side street to a busy and popular Leisure Centre on the main road, whilst making a budget saving. The library service is now in a much more accessible site open for longer hours. The relocation has led to improved usage and positive customer comment. Membership is increasing noticeably in the early weeks of operation of the relocated service. The introduction of self-service machines ensures that staff can concentrate on helping customers with more complex enquiries and helping customers with computer use.

At St Matthews, the library is to move into the Community Centre in the autumn as will Housing and STAR. The effect is that 7 services will be provided from a single site. The Community has been engaged over an extended period to ensure an understanding of the need for the move and then in helping to develop the design for the look of the exterior of the building, the reception area and the library. All these subjects were discussed and agreed with community leaders at meetings. Proposals have also been exhibited at various community locations to encourage further community comment. The Assistant Mayor and Ward Members worked closely with officers to ensure that community leaders were involved in discussions around planning. A more responsive approach to community comment allowed the project to be adapted to suit local issues. This responsiveness helped ensure local commitment to the projects and a shared understanding of the benefits of the changes.

The lessons learned from the Aylestone library relocation and the St Matthews co-location projects are to:-

- Contact Ward Members and community groups and leaders face to face at an early stage when there are proposals for change and explain the need for change and the pros and cons of any proposals
- Engage with staff to identify suggestions and to take into account community

knowledge in proposals

- Ensure that any proposals are in draft and that amendment or adjustment is expected as a normal part of the process working with communities to get the best outcome for the community and within the resources that the council has available
- By working together with community groups over a period on a project, the council can develop a better understanding of what communities value about a service and how that may be possible to deliver in a different way.
- Community input to design and configuration of relocated services can make them better suited to local need and more likely to be owned by that community
- Listen to concerns and check to see that any comments and issues fed back from the community are included in the rationale around proposals
- Note that a good quality Equality Impact Assessment will help identify where extra thought will need to be given to any options for change
- Keep communication channels between the council officers, elected members and local groups and communities clear and open
- Rework options where community intelligence or concerns can improve them within available resources
- Select a site for relocation that is, where possible, where other activities already draw local people, is on a main road, has bus routes and parking and has long opening hours and other staff based there

3.1.2. Community Engagement and Shared Reception Experience at Brite Centre

Services already operate out of the same building at BRITE but following the decision to remove the Customer Services staff due to low usage of the service, improvements were made by providing a joint reception and first point of contact, as well as training up library and community services staff to answer some queries previously only dealt with by Customer Services. The key lessons learned are:

- Solely co-locating staff from different service areas is not enough to provide an integrated customer experience
- Customer comments showed the desire for a single reception point and once achieved, this increased satisfaction amongst customers
- That staff from Community Services and Libraries could provide a single friendly and helpful joint reception instead of staffing two points
- Each member of staff on reception duty would learn key customer service operations for both services and would refer customers to specific service staff for more specific issues
- Each member of staff on duty would act as a contact point for key council services such as the provision of blue badges and bus passes. For other more specialist services, reception staff help customers to access advice from other parts of the council
- Training was developed by Libraries to enable a consistent approach to key

issues to be developed by the staff from both services

- In addition, key roles such as the coordination of health and safety throughout the building are now the responsibility of one service, in the case of the BRITE centre, Community Services.
- Sign up to the changed reception was best done by the services working with the steering group that includes services users and other residents

3.1.3. Influence of Lessons learned on proposed approach to engagement in TNS Programme

- Engagement with community groups prior to options for change being put forward helps to ensure greater buy-in to any options generated from the process
- Early discussions that share the problem but do not provide a pre-decided solution help to build trust and a stronger continuing relationship between the council and community groups
- Flexibility needs to be built in to any options for change so that speedy agreement can be given to the way in which changes are made in response to community concerns
  e.g. The agreement to retain Toddler time and Study Support staff at the new St Matthews library service was key to achieving consensus over the changes in that community

3.2   Initial consultation on TNS Programme carried out April to June 2013

An initial consultation on the TNS Programme was carried out between April and June 2013. The purposes and aims of this consultation were:

- To raise awareness with citizens of Leicester that this programme is underway at the earliest opportunity
- To be the 1st step of a longer engagement process, taking the opportunity to be open, up-front and transparent
- To gain an overview of the general feelings of residents towards the relative importance of neighbourhood based services

The survey was intended to provide a snapshot of views at a particular point in time rather than a major consultation and is not statistically significant in its results and findings from this work should be taken in that context.

An initial report on the results of this consultation has been included as Appendix 1 to this document. The key outcomes and lessons learned were:

3.2.1 Consultation Outcomes

- The results represent a city wide picture and these results may differ when results from a specific area are considered
- The survey found that people identify a social element to accessing the services as most important (meet friends and ask and receive advice), in addition to borrowing books and using computers.
- Respondents view the community service elements (help to set up or join a community group and rooms for hire for community meetings or family events) as of least importance
- Use of public Wi-Fi and online information sources appear to be not as important as may have been perceived.
- There appears to be a strong feeling that accessing services locally rather than in the city centre is preferred. There was no standout service use in the city centre compared to locally
- There appears to be a strong preference on accessibility towards services being within walking distance, opened for longer and services co-located. A one stop shop available after working hours
- There is a theme of service users not inclined towards online usage, however due to the questions asked it is not possible to draw the reasons for this
- The Council may need to consider significant changes to operations to meet local aspirations e.g. Changes to pattern of opening hours.

3.2.2 Lessons Learned

- Raise awareness to increase number of responses for better representation – 299 responses out a total population of c. 320,000 residents may not provide a comprehensive view of needs and aspirations but does provide a snapshot of customer views.
- More targeted responses per neighbourhood i.e. Northwest only 14 responses received.
- Encourage more people to complete the identifying information i.e. name, post code
- Consistent between online method and hardcopy method of responses received, in the questionnaire sent out it was possible to answer differently if hard copy was used than online
- No representation of age groups to understand/support responses.

3.3   Proposals for the approach to Ward Member and community engagement in each area of the TNS Programme

The key steps that are proposed for community engagement in each of the six areas (up to the point of implementation) are expected to take three months. These are as follows

1. Brief City Mayor and Executive on an analysis of current service provision and on potential change scenarios that arise from this around future provision.

2. Brief Staff and Trade Unions

3. Discuss the data and approach with staff and Elected Members from affected wards

4. With input from the Assistant Mayor and Ward Members, officers would propose that the main engagement effort would take place through discussions with community leaders and groups in the area. The discussions would cover the reasons for needing to change and what an analysis of current provision has identified.

   In the discussions as well as explaining the need to change, questions and challenges would be put forward based on the research into current provision. The challenges would be put forward and seek feedback would be sought on potential options for change arising from the challenges.

   Drop-in sessions will also be advertised and held in existing facilities in the area to allow non-service users to also have their input into the development of proposals.

   The questions and challenges would vary from area to area.

   An example of a challenge could be that there are 3 groups of facilities in this area, 2 of the groups of facilities have more than one community meeting space. Is more than one needed? It may be that a facility is comparatively costly per visit and that its customers could visit another site. Should the facility move to another site to be provided as a joint offer with other services?

5. Report back to the City Mayor and Executive, taking into account feedback from the community and draw together proposals for the area

6. Feedback to Ward Members, groups and community leaders with proposals, to give sight prior to consultation

7. Consult on the proposals through ward meetings, electronic consultation on the council website and through hard copy consultation forms distributed through local centres in the area and exhibitions of the draft proposals at locations in the community

8. Seek decision from the City Mayor and Executive on whether to proceed with

the original or amended proposals

9. Invite Scrutiny commission to scrutinise the proposals for each area prior to a decision being made for the area

10. Implement final decision

A draft communications plan is attached as Appendix 2 to this document for comment.

3.4   Mapping

A map of the South area of the city has been included to this report as Appendix 3 and it is accompanied by a table of information that provides identifying information, opening hours and usage data where known.

The table is split into three separate areas reflecting the buildings that are managed by the services directly in scope, those that are managed by other services but retain a working relationship with the services directly in scope, and, those buildings which are managed by other services but should be taken into account when viewing the assets in the neighbourhood.

The map also includes locations of non-LCC buildings owned by partners such as police, health and those that have an element of community use.

Data on the socio–economic make up of each area is also being gathered to inform service planning and the necessary Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) work for change proposals. This is being gathered from the 2011 census and is dependent on information being released. The information released will be used as and when it becomes available over the coming months to provide background information surrounding the area and to give contextual information surrounding the perceived needs of an area, in terms of the services that should be concentrated upon.

The map information, table and socio-economic data will be used to ask questions about how services can be provided, and to help shape any potential change projects.

The information will also be used to assist in the creation of EIAs that will be required going forward.

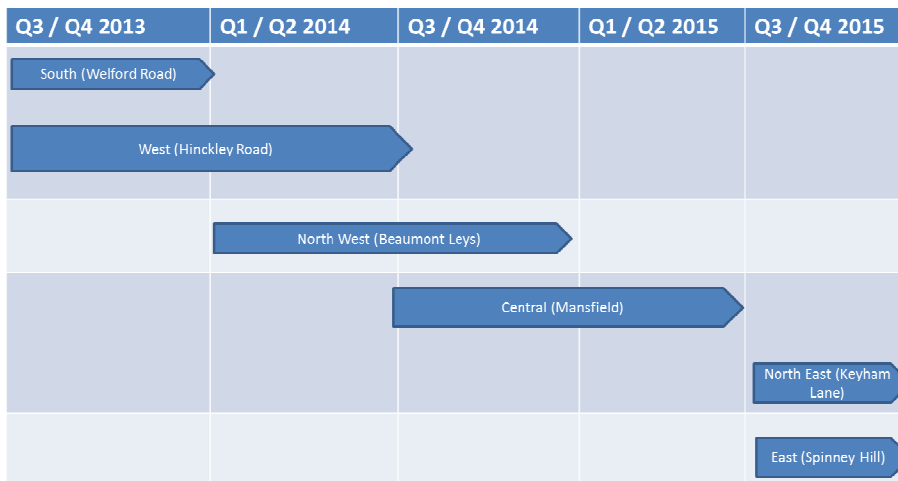## 3.5   Monitoring Progress on the Programme

Key Milestones

- It is expected that a report on the programme will be presented to the City Mayor and Executive at end September 2013. The report will include a proposed detailed engagement programme for the South area. It will also lay out a time-

line for when each of the 6 areas will be addressed and the order in which they will be taken will be developed and approval sought for it from the City Mayor and Executive

A draft communications plan for the first area South is attached at Appendix 2.

- Once the process in the first area is well underway, its effectiveness will be checked and any necessary amendments made. The approach can then be used as the agreed method of consultation and engagement for the remaining areas.
- Once the communities' responses to the challenges faced have been gathered, these will be translated into proposals for change projects in that area.
- These proposals will be taken to the City Mayor and Executive for agreement
- Proposals consulted in the area, online and in displays in centres
- Finalised proposals taken back to City Mayor and Executive for approval and finalised projects announced
- Finalised proposals scrutinised by Scrutiny commission
- Final decision taken and announced
- Projects developed to deliver the agreed changes
- Lessons learned are evaluated and used to inform the process in the next area.
- Programme moves on to next area. Indicative timescales for the development of options for each area are shown in the diagram below:

Q3 / Q4 2013	Q1 / Q2 2014	Q3 / Q4 2014	Q1 / Q2 2015	Q3 / Q4 2015
South (Welford Road)				
West (Hinckley Road)				
	North West (Beaumont Leys)			
		Central (Mansfield)		
				North East (Keyham Lane)
				East (Spinney Hill)

3.6   Next Steps

- Report to Executive end September
- Announcement of commencement of area reviews
- First engagement plan for first area goes into action e.g. early meetings with Ward Members and then community leaders as illustrated in 3.3 above

4. Details of Scrutiny

This report is being considered by the Neighbourhoods Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission on 3rd September 2013

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The gross spending on the four services directly within the scope of this review is circa £14m per year. After allowing for income from charges and external funding (in particular funding for Adult Skills and Learning), the Council's annual net spending is circa £6m per year. The TNS programme takes place in the context of very significant reductions in the funding received by the Council from the Government as a contribution to the cost of local services.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 29 7390.

5.2 Legal implications

"Legal advice on consultation principles has been disseminated through departments. DCLG Statutory Guidance on Best Value and the Leicester Compact create similar obligations on the Council to: "… consult widely and early enough to make a difference, allowing at least 12 weeks' consultation … giving feedback on the outcomes; and "… give at least three months' notice of the actual reduction to both the organisation involved and the public/service users."

In addition, although they do not have legal force, Cabinet Office guidance issued in July 2012 suggests principles that the Council should adopt to engage stakeholders in policy developments. The governing principle of the guidance is that the type and scale of the consultation is proportionate to the potential impact of the proposal or decision being taken. In particular, the guidance states that:

- Longer and more detailed consideration will be needed where smaller organisations could be affected by the proposals.

- Consultation should begin when the policy development under consideration is at an early stage. The timeframe for consultation should be proportionate and

realistic to allow stakeholders a sufficient period of time to respond and, depending on the nature and complexity of the proposal, may vary between two and 12 weeks (currently specified to be 12 weeks as the standard minimum).

- The information that is provided as part of the consultation should be useful and accessible and the objectives of the consultation should be clear.

- Consideration should be given to more informal ways of engaging with stakeholders, for example e-mail or web-based forums, public meetings, working groups, focus groups and surveys."

Gregory Surtees, Senior Solicitor – 37 1421

5.3 Equality Impact Assessment

A full EIA will be carried out on proposals for each area at the appropriate time

5.4 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. **Background information and other papers:**

7. **Summary of appendices:**

Attached at Appendix 1 are the details of the first cross city consultation on the programme

Attached at Appendix 2 is a communications plan for engagement in the area South

Attached at Appendix 3 is a facility map of the South area

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

Yes/No

9.   **Is this a "key decision"?**

No