



To: Executive Cllr Community Development and Health
Report by: Trevor Woollams (Head of Community Development)
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services March 15th 2012
Wards affected: Abbey, Arbury and Kings Hedges

Review of Neighbourhood Community Planning projects in Abbey, Arbury and Kings Hedges Wards

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The council established 3 Neighbourhood Community Planning (NCP) projects in Abbey, Arbury and Kings Hedges in the late 1990s. The idea behind this approach was to try and address the lack of opportunity for residents in wards with lower levels of income and higher levels of deprivation, to improve communication, consultation and participation and build a stronger sense of local ownership within these wards.
- 1.2 Initially, a capital budget was made available to the projects, which was spent in each ward according to priorities agreed with local people. This process was overseen by steering groups of ward councillors and local residents in each of the 3 wards.
- 1.3 The steering groups were also given a revenue budget which supported part time dedicated community worker hours and enabled them to produce newsletters and put on local events and activities. The capital budgets were spent many years ago but the revenue funding has continued and is part of the Community Development Service's base budget.
- 1.4 The project as an entity has not been formally reviewed since its inception. This report summarises the work of each NCP project since it began, highlighting their considerable success, key achievements and identifying how each NCP aims to continue delivering work in the future.
- 1.5 The report makes recommendations about the future funding of the three NCPs for consideration.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To acknowledge the achievements of the 3 NCP projects.
- 2.2 To agree changes to project funding for the next 3 years for the 3 NCP projects as set out in the table at 5.8.

3. Background

- 3.1 The NCP projects in Kings Hedges, Abbey and Arbury wards were established c. 1997. Each NCP project had a capital sum of £200,000 to spend on local initiatives following consultation with local people. A revenue budget of approx £20,000pa was made available to each NCP project to develop ongoing initiatives and activities. This budget continues as part of the Community Development Service's base budget. Each NCP project has dedicated Community Worker support paid for from their revenue budget.
- 3.2 The Community Workers report to the NCP's steering groups and are line managed by the City Council's Neighbourhood Community Development Team. The NCP projects are each linked with and supported by members of the Neighbourhood Community Development Team. They are as follows :
 - **Abbey Action** continues as an umbrella organisation for groups meeting in Abbey ward and meets approx every two months. A range of local organisations come to the steering group including local ward Cllrs, local churches, residents groups, reps from East Barnwell Community Centre and other local voluntary organisations. In the past the group has discussed options for becoming a more independent and formal organisation along the lines of the Kings Hedges Neighbourhood partnership (KHNP), but has felt that the informal steering group meets the needs and capacity of groups involved. However, Abbey Action more recently re-considered this issue and plans are underway to look at different options for the future organisation of the NCP project. The project is supported by a part time Community Worker (18.5 hrs).
 - **Arbury NCP** also has an informal steering group, which meets quarterly to discuss progress on the project and to input into current projects. The group is currently made up of ward councillors and other local residents' groups. The NCP does a lot of work with young people and people from different ethnic communities. The project is

supported by a part time Community Worker (18.5 hrs) and Project Workers (8 hrs) who work with young people primarily from the Asian communities within Arbury.

- **Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership (KHNP)** has become an independently constituted voluntary organisation, which now has day to day management responsibility for their base at No. 37 Lawrence Way, which is leased from City Homes North. The remainder of their revenue budget, after staffing costs, is given to the partnership in the form of a grant. The partnership is run by a voluntary management group. KHNP can generate small amounts of income through hiring a room at Lawrence Way which helps to offset their running costs. As an independent constituted voluntary group, they have also been able to successfully apply for small grants. They are supported by a part-time Community Worker

3.3 As evidenced in Appendix A, the NCP projects have organised and supported a range of activities in each of the neighbourhoods they serve. Examples include neighbourhood newsletters delivered to each household, networking lunches for organisations and groups working in the area and events such as street parties and Christmas activities. They provide a focus for engagement and activity and often provide a vital information giving and linking role within their neighbourhood.

3.4 Current base budget support given to the NCPs by the Council is shown in the table below.

NCP	Budget				Community Worker Hours
	Staff	Rent / Phone	Project	Total	
Abbey	£13,820	£2,500	£5,900	£22,220	18.5 hours
Arbury	£18,750	£1,700	£4,460	£24,910	26.5 hours
Kings Hedges	£13,760	£5,750	£8,380	£27,890	18.5 hours
Total	£46,330	£9,950	£18,740	£75,020	63.5 hours

4. Development and Future Sustainability of the NCPs

- 4.1 The individual NCP projects have all developed their own identity. The KHNP has become an independently constituted voluntary group and Abbey Action now seriously considering this option. This direction of travel fits well with the original concept behind the Neighbourhood Community Development approach which was to try and address the lack of opportunity for residents in wards with lower levels of income and higher levels of deprivation, to improve communication, consultation and participation and build a stronger sense of local ownership within these wards. In particular, it opens up other opportunities for these groups to take on more responsibility for their local area and to consider other sources of funding. However, such a move does rely heavily on the leadership and time commitment of individuals within the community and, until such time as a group can become self sustainable, on the dedicated support from an experienced Community Worker.
- 4.2 As mentioned above, the KHNP now wants to explore options for taking on responsibility for managing Nuns Way Pavilion. Initial discussions have taken place between the partnership and the Head of Community Development which have proved positive, and it is proposed that this idea should be explored further with relevant stakeholders.
- 4.3 Abbey Action intend to become an independently constituted voluntary group in the near future and have plans in place to make this happen. They are actively engaging with the County Council and other partners in discussions about the future of East Barnwell Community Centre (which is owned by the County Council) as part of the County Council's 'community hubs' initiative which has the potential to bring significant improvements to the community facilities within the area.
- 4.4 Whilst Arbury NCP is more content to remain as an informal group for the time being, they want to continue to be responsive to the issues and changing needs of their diverse local community. In particular the group aims to continue and build upon its valuable work and activities with young people, BME communities and disadvantaged groups to help strengthen community cohesion.

5. Conclusions and Options

- 5.1 'Community Development' is about bringing people together and helping and supporting them to grow or develop so that their sense of collective pride in their local area grows stronger as their confidence and their ability to influence decisions that affect their lives increases.
- 5.2 This process can take many years but eventually the amount of direct support required from the Council should reduce as the group becomes more self-sufficient and able to draw in funding from other sources.
- 5.3 All three of the NCPs have worked hard over the years to support their local communities and together they have helped many local groups and projects and have provided important communication links to local residents, informing them of local activities and initiatives.
- 5.4 Kings Hedges and Abbey NCPs have ambitions to develop further and are very positive about growing stronger, taking on new responsibilities and ultimately becoming self-supporting. They both have plans in place to achieve this and officers are recommending that they continue to receive staff support to enable them to take this work forward.
- 5.5 Arbury NCP does not currently have ambitions to develop in a similar way to Abbey and Kings Hedges NCPs. However, Arbury NCP continues to oversee important community work within the ward, particularly with hard to reach and disadvantaged groups. Again, officers are recommending that they continue to receive staff support but that they are also encouraged to move forward towards becoming an independently constituted voluntary group.
- 5.6 The Council continues to give significant support to the voluntary sector through its grants. The various grants budgets are awarded according to the Council's key priorities so that the money goes to the projects that bring the most benefit to, for example, vulnerable residents or the local environment.
- 5.7 In recent years there have been under-spends on area committee grants budgets in both the north and East areas. Officers believe that the 3 NCP projects (subject to being independently constituted voluntary groups) should be encouraged to apply for grants from area committees to supplement their project budgets. Officers are recommending that funding for the 3 NCP projects should remain as planned for 2012/13 but that their project budgets should be cash

limited and reduced a little in 2013/14 and 2014/15. The small funding reduction can be made up through grant applications or through other income generation (e.g. through selling advertising space in newsletters).

- 5.8 The table below shows recommended 'project' funding for the next 3 years.

NCP	Proposed Project Budget		
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Abbey	£5,900	£4,720	£3,776
Arbury*	£4,460	£3,568	£2,854
Kings Hedges	£8,380	£6,704	£5,363
Comment	As planned	20% reduction	20% reduction
Saving (on-going)	£0	£3,748	£6,747

- 5.9 This recommendation will provide the 3 NCP projects with some certainty over funding for the next 3 years whilst they pursue their ambitious plans and move towards greater independence from the Council. Reducing their project budgets by 20% in 2013/14 and 2014/15 will give the NCPs time to seek alternative funding through area committee grants or income generation schemes to make up the modest shortfall.
- 5.10 The process of seeking area committee grants will help to improve and strengthen the visibility and accountability of the NCP projects. The under-spend in north and east area committee grants in the 2 previous years would have covered this shortfall.
- 5.11 As a condition of the Council's continued funding, each NCP project should be required to produce a short Annual Plan setting out key activities and goals for the coming year and reviewing achievements over the previous year.

7. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

These are set out in the report. No additional finance is required.

(b) **Staffing Implications**

None anticipated

(c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**

The work of the NCP projects was included in the EIA for neighbourhood work in 2008. A specific EQIA will be required should any significant changes to the funding of the NCPs (in addition to the recommendations) be proposed.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

None

(e) **Consultation**

- Each of the NCP steering groups was circulated with a review document in November 2011, with a series of questions about their aims, objectives, key achievements and future plans.
- Each steering group has sent in information following discussion with their members. The questions officers asked the NCPs form the headings in the document at Appendix A which also gives a summary of their responses. Papers giving their detailed responses are available on request.

(f) **Community Safety**

The NCPs often work with local groups on issues around community cohesion in particular and community safety in general.

5. **Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Report to City Board July 1996
- Report to City Board July 1998
- Review documents from each NCP project
- Newsletters and documents provided by each NCP

6. Appendices

Appendix A: NCP review document – summary of responses.

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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Appendix A

REVIEW OF NCP PROJECTS 2012 SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Question	Abbey Action	Arbury NCP	Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership
<p>1. Describe your neighbourhood project?</p>	<p>Unconstituted informal steering group – av 12-15 people attending from cross section of community. Chaired by Community development Officer. Meets 5-6 time per year Community worker employed 18.5 hrs per week</p>	<p>Un constituted informal steering group. Attended by local ward Cllrs and other local volunteers / representatives. Role of chair rotated amongst members of the group. Meets every 2-3 months Community worker employed 18.5 hrs per week. Plus 3 project workers for art project with children and yg people</p>	<p>KHNP has a constitution and is a company limited by guarantee. The group is made up of local residents and is supported by the CDO (North). The chair is elected annually following an AGM Meets every 6 weeks, plus two away days per year Community worker employed 18.5 hrs per week. Funded by City Council with additional income through hire of Lawrence way, advertising in newsletter and ticket sales</p>
<p>2. Please describe how the communities that your neighbourhood project supports have</p>	<p>I improved links between local groups and facilities Partnership projects with other organisations</p>	<p>Arbury NCP has supported the following groups and activities: Street Voices group of</p>	<p>Partnership work with faith groups, sharing skills, experience with others eg Orchard Park, Abbey</p>

Question	Abbey Action	Arbury NCP	Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership
changed as a result	Range of events and activities Advice and information to range of local groups	homeless adults / temporarily housed. Over 50's group Soni Kuriz Asian girls groups Support to range of local residents groups to put on activities including street party Range of events such as Xmas tree events, cultural events Promoting English classes, computer courses, grow your own project	action Links with Arbury Court traders. Representative on North Cambridge Community trust
2a Has number of active groups and individuals within your community increased	Number of groups remained relatively high Support to groups to ensure they are sustainable Abbey action provide one stop shop for information and support Support for Fields allotment project	Yes various groups have become more independent and running activities for themselves	Groups established by the partnership eg NQOTHC, AMBABYS, have developed their skills are now involved in other community initiatives /have used skills to gain work

Question	Abbey Action	Arbury NCP	Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership
2b has active number of groups and individuals increased	Remained relatively high. Community directory compiled which highlights range of groups	Yes see above	
2c has overall capacity increased	Yes Support and contribution to newsletter . More groups applying for own funding via area cttee	Yes, Arbury NCP has supported groups of individuals to increase self confidence and esteem, access grant aid, work to develop partnerships between groups and joint working	Skills and confidence has increased through involvement with various cttees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement by residents in events. Links with other partnership projects and initiatives in the area
2d What do you think would be different if the NCP project had not existed	Links and networking role would not have occurred Less support and info to groups Less community event and activity	Certain groups and activities would not have happened Development of skills and confidence Working together amongst certain groups	There would be no community newsletter Fewer networks No. 37 wd have been lost to community as a community facility Affordable events and activities for families Signposting to new residents
2e How do you measure success	Feedback / comments Attendance at events Response to newsletter	Evaluation reports, feedback, numbers attending, individual	Feedback form people attending events, courses, visitors to Lawrence way

Question	Abbey Action	Arbury NCP	Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership
		progress from involvement in projects	
3. Examples of initiatives	Supporting groups in the community to continue to be independent Fields allotment project Newsletter Support to EBCC and the library	50+ friends Soni Kuriz English classes Under 5's group Street Voices group	NQOTHC, reading group, crochet group are now independent
4. Key achievements over last 3 years	Community newsletter Networking meetings Community events Environmental events and projects Community directory	Soni Kuriz Asian girls group initially run by City council now independent grp Street Voices group 50+ friends monthly group for Over 50's, now formed cttee Smart Art – art project for children and young people – engagement of yg people in the running of the sessions Newsletter Information exchanges	Taking on the development and running of the community house (No. 37 Lawrence way) Community Newsletter Development of website Development of events Craft fair showcasing local talent.
5. Project development	More emphasis on	Less involvement by	More involvement by BME

Question	Abbey Action	Arbury NCP	Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership
over last 3 years	<p>working with groups, pooling knowledge and skills</p> <p>Enlargement of ward boundary meant extending links and networks in new area</p> <p>More outdoor rather than indoor events</p>	<p>residents in the steering group, but more involvement in the different projects.</p> <p>Less one off trips</p> <p>More capacity building</p> <p>Groups requiring grant aid now referred to Area cttee grants.</p> <p>Projects spread over wider geographical area</p>	<p>groups. Increase in partnership work</p> <p>Increase in range and number of activities – pantomime, Easter egg hunt, trips, local community action day</p>
6. What are your Groups ambitions for the next 3 years?	<p>Become formally constituted group.</p> <p>Raise income through variety of means</p> <p>Organise variety of events</p> <p>Support local facilities and play key role in any new facilities</p> <p>Set up website</p> <p>Continue to develop networks</p> <p>Develop skills of local people</p>	<p>To continue to be responsive to changing needs of the community and work particularly with hard to reach and disadvantaged groups in the community</p> <p>Arbury NCP aims to continue in its current form unless a need arises to change.</p>	<p>Aim to see asset transfer of Nuns Way Pavilion to KHNP</p> <p>Secure funds and raise income to become self sufficient</p> <p>Increase number of volunteers and groups that we work with.</p> <p>Becoming a registered charity</p>