

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Select Committee No 1 – Townships

6 February 2008

Present at the Meeting:

Councillor Mrs J S Birch (Chairman)
Councillor M Klieve
Councillor B Bourne
Councillor Mrs S Loudon

.1 Apologies for absence: Councillor P A Tushingham, Councillor H L Cadman, and Councillor R T Splaine.

.3 Minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 10 December 2007 were approved as a correct record.

.4 PACTS: Discussion with Chief Inspector J Rogerson and Inspector R Pell from Greater Manchester Police (GMP). The representatives from GMP presented the Select Committee with a thorough outline of the PACTS process, the reasons why they have been developed and the initial and potential benefits of the approach. They gave full details of the 6 step process to PACTS, highlighting that members would have a key role in all steps of the process right from the very beginning. Elected Members, in their role as community leaders and with the experience and knowledge they have at local level will provide a crucial scrutiny role to the PACTS process as well as informing and shaping the approach. Throughout the discussion numerous examples of how PACTS have made a real difference were shared.

The focus of the Select Committee's investigation is Townships. Whilst Chief Inspector J Rogerson and Inspector R Pell were not in a position to outline exactly how PACTS and Townships would align they did express the need for a strategic area based body like Township Forums to carry out a scrutiny role of the PACTS process as well as informing and shaping the approach. Experiences of the PACTS process so far suggest that it is an effective vehicle for dealing with low level problems in neighbourhoods even when these issues are complex and involve multiple agencies. The role of a Practitioner Group was outlined that deal with any complex problems that prove difficult to solve. Elected Members may be invited to attend these groups at suitable times to add local knowledge and experience. The structure of the wider approach needs to be thought through to ensure that collective issues from communities are identified in strategic discussions about use and direction of mainstream resources (such as LAA). Attendance, involvement and commitment of key agencies and members is critical to the success of the process.

Resolved: The Select Committee thanked Chief Inspector J Rogerson and Inspector R Pell for attending

.5 PACTS: Discussion with Mr I Harrison & Ms J Ridgeway from Environmental services, regarding PACTS and how they link with/affect Townships. Mr I Harrison and Ms J Ridgeway developed the discussion that had taken place with representatives of GMP and provided more examples including some statistics on the benefits experienced so far from the PACTS pilot work. Mr I Harrison and Ms J Ridgeway emphasised the importance of Elected Members to the PACTS process both in an advisory and scrutiny role. Mr I Harrison and Ms J Ridgeway illustrated some of the lessons that have been learned from the pilot work and changes to the new area profiles. It has been recognised that more can be done to harness the significant body of local people willing to get involved. A key element of PACTS will be capacity building in communities so that issues are dealt with together and skills developed so that involvement of local people can be grown where appropriate. It is planned that PACTS will be rolled out to all areas of the Borough and not be contained to priority neighbourhoods.

Mr I Harrison and Ms J Ridgeway were not able to illustrate exactly how PACTS and Townships will align as a decision has not yet been taken. However the transfer of Township staff to Environmental Services means that resources can be used in the most appropriate way to support community engagement either through Townships or PACTS. Support for Elected Members is also being looked at to ensure that members have the support they need to carry out their duties effectively.

Resolved: The Select Committee thanked Mr I Harrison and Ms J Ridgeway for attending

.6 Forward plan for future meetings: Resolved: The Select Committee agreed that we meet again on Thursday, 21 February 6:00 p m at Wigan Town Hall in the Charter Suite.

Chairman