

REPORT TO:	COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM: 11
DATE OF MEETING:	26th FEBRUARY 2018	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	CHRIS SMITH Ext. 5925	DOC:
SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF AREA FORUM MEETINGS	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Members approve the recommended merger of the public Safer Neighbourhoods Meetings and Area Forums into one single meeting.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The report provides information on the current system of Area Forum and Safer Neighbourhood meetings and a proposal for modernising the structure of the meetings.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The report provides a proposal to merge the existing Safer Neighbourhoods Meetings and the Area Forums into one meeting. Currently they operate as two separate meetings, held on the same night and at the same venue, with the Safer Neighbourhood meeting commencing at 6.15pm and the Area Forum commencing at 7.30pm. In recent times this has caused issues with the Safer Neighbourhoods meetings finishing early forcing attendees to wait for up to 45 minutes for the next meeting to start. The proposal also offers some additional changes which aim to make the meetings more engaging and appealing to local residents.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 In 2013 the current system of holding Area Forums and Safer Neighbourhood meetings on the same evening was introduced. The Safer Neighbourhood meeting structure was established several years previously and issues of community safety previously discussed at the Area Forums were then raised at the new dedicated Safer Neighbourhood meetings.
- 4.2 For a number of years having two meetings on the same night has operated well, with consistent attendances and the full time allocations being used. However the past two years has witnessed a decline in attendances, particularly of the Area Forum meetings, and on regular occasions there has been a significant gap between the ending of the Safer Neighbourhood meeting and the start of the Area Forum meeting. Appendices No.1 provides a breakdown over the past two years.

- 4.3 Consequently, it is an appropriate time to review the reasons for this change and consider any renewal / modification to the current meeting structure.
- 4.4 Officers from the two meetings have considered the reasons for the change and identified the following:
- The Safer Neighbourhoods meetings are often finishing before the full allotted hour. As the Area Forum is constituted and cannot start until 7.30pm this has resulted in people having to wait a considerable amount of time. The Newhall Safer Neighbourhood meeting held in January 2018 had finished by 6.50pm and therefore attendees had to wait 40 minutes before the Area Forum commenced.
 - Appendix No 1 shows that more people attend the Safer Neighbourhoods meeting than the Area Forum. This means some people are taking the opportunity to leave during the break between the two meetings.
 - The Area Forum agendas can be uninspiring. Only occasionally are special items added, generally at the Etwall Area Forum, and there is not an incentive for the general public to attend unless a key local concern is evident.
 - The community awareness of the Area Forum meetings is limited and the agenda does not lend itself to widening a debate about the needs of an area.
- 4.5 In discussion with representatives from the community and voluntary sector, Police and District Council officers, it is felt that while the current format is not working it is very important that a programme of community meetings is still maintained. Such meetings allow public officials and elected representatives to be questioned directly by residents and for organisations to disseminate important messages to the community. Consequently, a proposal for merging the Safer Neighbourhood meeting and the Area Forum has been developed.

Proposal

- 4.6 The agenda setting of a new forum would need to be proactive in order to attract members of the community and the branding of the meetings as part of a 'communication plan' to promote the meetings would be important.
- 4.7 The meeting would also include an opportunity for a presentation or an open discussion about a pre-determined local issue which could provide for the identification of priorities and an action plan.
- 4.8 The presentation / open discussion item will be included on the agenda and decided by the previous meeting or by the Chair, SDDC Officers or community and voluntary sector should the previous meeting not identify anything.
- 4.9 The current Safer Neighbourhood Grant Scheme would be amended to help support these identified priorities and could be used for both community development and community safety. The current scheme has not fully allocated its last two annual budgets.
- 4.10 A suggested agenda template is as follows:

AREA FORUM
Potential AGENDA
7.00PM – 8.30PM

1. Open meeting (Introductions and apologies, declarations of interest, Chair's announcements, to receive the minutes of the last meeting)
2. Safer Neighbourhood report (Police & SSDP) & Police Questions
3. Local Authority Public Questions
4. Communities update & Neighbourhood grants
5. Local Authority issues
6. Open discussion / presentation on a local / community issue
7. Summary of agreed priorities / actions
8. Date of next meeting & Close

- 4.11 From initial discussions with members of the community and voluntary sector there is an opinion that the formal room layout may be detrimental to involving the community and some attendees may be reluctant to take part in the meetings. It is suggested that an alternative layout be tried to encourage more input and discussion and a more joint approach to problem solving. It has been suggested that alternative room layouts (round table, cabaret style) are trialled at the next round of meetings, if possible.
- 4.12 The police have requested that they are allowed to leave the meeting after Agenda item 2.
- 4.13 The chairing of the meetings would be as per described in the Council Constitution (Article 9- Area Forums); 'Full Council will appoint the Chairman of each Area Forum'.
- 4.14 The administration of the meetings will remain with the Council's Communities Team, a minimum of three meetings will be held within a calendar year and meeting dates for a 12-month period will be set and distributed on an annual basis.
- 4.15 Where possible, the meetings will be held in different venues across each Neighbourhood area.
- 4.16 It is recognised that additional promotion and marketing of the meetings is required. The Council's Communications Team has been approached to assist in promoting the meetings via press releases and social media. Additional posters will be provided to the Parish Councils and SNT teams to distribute to shops and services in the local area.
- 4.17 Initial and informal discussions with the Police and the community and voluntary sector have taken place and the proposal is considered to be a move forward from the current system and, if supported by all parties, would be successful.

- 4.18 The proposed merger of the two meetings has been discussed and was supported at the Safer and Stronger Communities Board Meeting held on December 14, 2017.
- 4.19 A report (Review of Area Forum Meetings) was submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on September 6, 2017 where members noted the report and agreed that the review process should continue.
- 4.20 At the meeting held on September 6, Scrutiny members queried or raised comment on the selection of a chairman / vice-chairman for a combined meeting as proposed, the choice of topics, dates and venues, the need for greater publicity and ongoing Derbyshire County Council participation. This report has commented on each of the queries / raised comments.
- 4.21 It should also be noted that the constitution (Article 9 –Area Forums) states; ‘Full Council will consult with relevant Parish and Town Councils and the chairs of relevant Parish Meetings when considering whether and how to amend the operation of its existing Area Forums’.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 None arising directly from this report.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The Council’s Corporate Plan aims to ensure that the local community is fully engaged in what the Council’s priorities are and maintaining a well-attended and informative programme of community meetings is key to the Council’s success.

7.0 Community Implications

- 7.1 Engaging local communities and identifying local issues and actions through a community led approach is an important aspiration for the Council and its public and voluntary sector partners.

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 **Appendix No.1** Safer Neighbourhood / Area Forum Attendees 2015-2017

2015-2016**Area 1- North West and Etwall**

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	1 July 2015	15
Area Forum	1 July 2015	8
Safer Neighbourhood	11 November 2015	10
Area Forum	11 November 2015	5
Safer Neighbourhood	16 January 2016	17
Area Forum	16 January 2016	9

Area 2- Mercia and**Repton**

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	21 July 2015	22
Area Forum	21 July 2015	12
Safer Neighbourhood	13 October 2015	23
Area Forum	13 October 2015	13
Safer Neighbourhood	16 February 2016	20
Area Forum	16 February 2016	9

Area 3- North East and Melbourne

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	22 July 2015	20
Area Forum	22 July 2015	11
Safer Neighbourhood	29 October 2015	19
Area Forum	29 October 2015	11
Safer Neighbourhood	26 January 2016	18
Area Forum	26 January 2016	6

Area 4- Central and Swadlincote

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	30 June 2015	22
Area Forum	30 June 2015	16
Safer Neighbourhood	12 November 2015	54
Area Forum	12 November 2015	22
Safer Neighbourhood	02 February 2016	35
Area Forum	02 February 2016	19

Area 5- Newhall and Midway

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	16 July 2015	29
Area Forum	16 July 2015	21
Safer Neighbourhood	04 November 2015	29
Area Forum	04 November 2015	21
Safer Neighbourhood	03 February 2016	21
Area Forum	03 February 2016	11

Area 6- South and Linton

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	15 July 2015	23
Area Forum	15 July 2015	10
Safer Neighbourhood	18 November 2015	18
Area Forum	18 November 2015	11
Safer Neighbourhood	27 January 2016	25
Area Forum	27 January 2016	19

Average Safer Neighbourhood= 23

Average Area Forum= 13

2016-2017

Area 1- North West and Etwall

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	27 June 2016	18
Area Forum	27 June 2016	15
Safer Neighbourhood	11 October 2016	18
Area Forum	11 October 2016	10
Safer Neighbourhood	30 January 2017	13
Area Forum	30 January 2017	13
Safer Neighbourhood	12 June 2017	21
Area Forum	12 June 2017	23
Safer Neighbourhood	3 October 2017	16
Area Forum	3 October 2017	22

Area 2- Mercia and Repton

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	05 July 2016	13
Area Forum	05 July 2016	10
Safer Neighbourhood	04 October 2016	19
Area Forum	04 October 2016	10
Safer Neighbourhood	31 January 2017	15
Area Forum	31 January 2017	15

Safer Neighbourhood	26 June 2017	19
Area Forum	26 June 2017	17
Safer Neighbourhood	10 October	13
Area Forum	10 October	19

Area 3- North East and Melbourne

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	14 July 2016	16
Area Forum	14 July 2016	10
Safer Neighbourhood	10 October 2016	15
Area Forum	10 October 2016	7
Safer Neighbourhood	24 January 2017	14
Area Forum	24 January 2017	7
Safer Neighbourhood	19 June 2017	11
Area Forum	19 June 2017	11
Safer Neighbourhood	24 October	20
Area Forum	24 October	17

Area 4- Central and Swadlincote

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	07 July 2016	26
Area Forum	07 July 2016	16
Safer Neighbourhood	03 October 2016	13
Area Forum	03 October 2016	12
Safer Neighbourhood	15 February 2017	21
Area Forum	15 February 2017	16
Safer Neighbourhood	13 June 2017	16
Area Forum	13 June 2017	14
Safer Neighbourhood	4 October 2017	27
Area Forum	4 October 2017	12

Area 5- Newhall and Midway

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	29 June 2016	20
Area Forum	29 June 2016	18
Safer Neighbourhood	12 October 2016	19
Area Forum	12 October 2016	13
Safer Neighbourhood	01 February 2017	23
Area Forum	01 February 2017	17
Safer Neighbourhood	20 June 2017	21
Area Forum	20 June 2017	13
Safer Neighbourhood	11 October 2017	25
Area Forum	11 October 2017	19

Area 6- South and Linton

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Attendees
Safer Neighbourhood	20 July 2016	20
Area Forum	20 July 2016	21
Safer Neighbourhood	31 October 2016	15
Area Forum	31 October 2016	18
Safer Neighbourhood	06 February 2017	18
Area Forum	06 February 2017	17
Safer Neighbourhood	28 June 2017	14
Area Forum	28 June 2017	14
Safer Neighbourhood	25 October 2017	24
Area Forum	25 October 2017	20

Average for Safer Neighbourhood= 18.1

Average for Area Forum= 15.2