

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS WORKING GROUP
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At its meeting in November 2011, following a request by the Cabinet, the Panel established a Working Group to undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire. As part of their investigations the Working Group was apprised of the "Shape Your Place" initiative. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's endorsement of the initiative for implementation within Huntingdonshire.

2. SHAPE YOUR PLACE INITIATIVE

2.1 At the Working Group's initial meeting on 23rd November 2011, Members of the Working Group received a presentation from the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects), the Corporate Team Manager and the Healthy Communities Manager on the "Shape Your Place" initiative currently being piloted in Fenland.

2.2 "Shape Your Place" is a web based site which has been established by Cambridgeshire County Council who are leading on the scheme. Partners who have subscribed to the Fenland scheme include Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and a local community group called Community Fair. The initiative seeks to promote community engagement by enabling local public bodies to establish dialogue with local residents. An important aspect of this is that some of these residents might not utilise the Neighbourhood Forums. The site can be accessed via the following link - www.shapeyourplace.org and encourages residents to either report any issues of local concern or to post ideas on how to make their neighbourhoods a better place to live. It operates sub-district neighbourhood areas, which are larger than towns or parishes.

2.3 The initial costs of establishing the scheme within Huntingdonshire is estimated to be around £2,000 plus ongoing costs. Work is currently being undertaken by Officers to define the geographical areas within Huntingdonshire on which the initiative will operate. Dependant on the number of areas proposed, the costs will vary. The figure of £2,000 has been based on the establishment of 4 neighbourhood areas. Whilst the ongoing costs are yet to be confirmed, Members have been informed that this will cover maintenance of the site and any monitoring activity undertaken by the County Council.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Panel has formed the view that the "Shape Your Place" initiative should be adopted within Huntingdonshire. Members of the Working Group have concluded that it will promote community engagement by enabling public bodies to establish a dialogue with a sector of local residents who would not normally be inclined to attend the existing Neighbourhood Forums. Furthermore, it will allow members of the public to feed into the democratic process and provide a means to report back to them on outcomes. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has endorsed these views. It is therefore

RECOMMENDED


that the Shape My Place initiative is adopted within Huntingdonshire.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) 1/11/2011 and 6/12/11 - Minutes and Reports.

Contact Officer:

Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer

 01480 388006

 Habbiba.Ali@huntingdonshire.gov.uk