

MAJOR REVIEW – DIVERSIFYING THE STREET CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE – WITNESS SESSION 1

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REASON FOR ITEM

To enable the Committee to gather evidence as part of their Major Review into diversifying the Street Champions Initiative.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE

1. Question the witnesses
2. Highlight issues for further investigation
3. To make a note of possible recommendations for the review

INFORMATION

On 30 July 2014 Members agreed that the first major review of this municipal year would focus on the role of the Borough's street champions. It was decided that the review would also explore ways in which the Street Champions initiative could be better linked with the Borough's Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

For this review witness sessions will be divided into two sections. The first sections (starting at 5.30pm) will be with 2 active street champions who have volunteered to provide evidence to the Committee. Over the 3 witness sessions, this will mean that Members will hear from a total of 6 Street Champions from across the Borough. Once Members have heard from these volunteers they will be allowed to leave the session before the second section in which other witnesses will be present to provide evidence.

Witnesses for the first session are as follows:

Name	Position
Street Champion	Eastcote & East Ruislip Ward
Street Champion	Pinkwell Ward
Liz Jones	Community Safety & CCTV Manager
Ed Shaylor	Anti-Social Behaviour Investigations Team Service Manager
Louise Forster	Access Channel Manager

PAPERS WITH THE REPORT

Review Terms of Reference
Written Submission - Community Safety & CCTV Manager

Terms of Reference

Setting the context

1. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the current Street Champions initiative to include:
 - a. The current level of uptake across different areas of the Borough;
 - b. The volume and nature of the issues raised;
 - c. The remit and accountability of the role; and
 - d. The barriers to involvement and reporting issues.
2. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme to include:
 - a. The findings of the pilot project into linking the Street Champions Initiative and the Borough's Neighbourhood Watch Scheme;
 - b. The current level of uptake across different areas of the Borough;
 - c. A clear idea as to where schemes are located in the Borough; and
 - d. The barriers to involvement.

Better Access and Reporting

1. To explore ways in which the Council could better use its current resources (e.g. its website) to increase the ease with which volunteers are able to report issues;
2. To assess the viability of using new forms of digital media in order to make reporting issues more accessible; and
3. To explore ways in which those volunteers who do not wish to use digital medias can better report issues.

Street Champions and Neighbourhood Watch

1. To put forward recommendations on how the Street Champions initiative could be linked with Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the Borough;
2. To explore ways in which Street Champions could be encouraged to engage more generally in the community safety agenda; and
3. To explore how these initiatives might be linked through the use of the technologies highlighted above.

DIVERSIFYING THE STREET CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE – WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Name: Liz Jones

Role: Community Safety Manager

Organisation: London Borough of Hillingdon

CONTEXT

The London Borough of Hillingdon's Community Safety Team contributes £5,000 (2014/15) towards the running of the Borough's Neighbourhood Watch scheme. This year this funding is dependent upon Neighbourhood Watch setting up new Watches in areas of high need (long-term crime hotspots).

Hillingdon Neighbourhood Watch plays a role in our community engagement strategy. It is possible to use the Neighbourhood Watch network to gather information about crime and disorder priorities and to distribute "slow time" messages about seasonal crime prevention hints and tips for residents.

Hillingdon Neighbourhood Watch is an independent organisation that receives support either in cash (from the London Borough of Hillingdon) or in kind (use of Ruislip Police station from the police). There is a small Board made up entirely of volunteers. The Board is responsible for distributing a regular newsletter to individual, active Watches across Hillingdon and for managing a local Neighbourhood Watch website.

Individual Neighbourhood Watches do not need to be "endorsed" by the Board to be effective, or to be "allowed" to set up. It may well be the case that many Watches are active without the knowledge of the Board.

GAPS / CHALLENGES

There are currently no formal, direct links between the Street Champions scheme and Hillingdon Neighbourhood Watch.

There are three main challenges facing Hillingdon Neighbourhood Watch:

- Difficulty getting Neighbourhood Watch scheme set up in the south of the Borough, often in areas of high crime. These communities are generally very challenging to work in as there is often a high turnover of residents due to the high proportion of private rented housing stock, plus a high proportion of recent arrival communities who do not have English as a first language.
- Difficulty getting residents to volunteer to sit on the Board of Neighbourhood Watch. The current Board is very small (only 4 or 5 members) and this presents a challenge when asking NHW to commit resources it doesn't easily have access to.
- Communication to Watch members. The primary media for communication with Watch members is via a printed newsletter. This does not allow for fast time communication, is costly (in terms of money and time) to produce and distribute and gives an impression of an organisation "out of touch" with modern communication methods using social media.

IMPROVEMENTS AND WORK FOR THE FUTURE

Community development and engagement with residents in the south of the Borough, especially those in long-term crime hotspots would be beneficial to encourage residents to take steps to keep themselves safe (e.g better home security, supporting and assisting more vulnerable members of their community). However, this is very resource intensive in terms of staff input and would be difficult to deliver within current resource levels.

Links to other community engagement groups such as police Ward Panels (which are currently being reviewed) may identify willing individuals who would want to play a role in Street Champions and/or Neighbourhood Watch.

Use of social media and digital communication may help to interest younger people in becoming active members of any group, including Neighbourhood Watch. Whilst relying totally on new media could isolate current, older active members there is a risk that by relying so heavily on traditional communication Neighbourhood Watch does not attract a new generation of participants.