

PROTOCOL FOR THE LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORK (LINK)

In order that the Council can respond effectively to issues that are raised by residents, it is necessary to maximise communication between those expected to respond. This includes Councillors, who are often the first point of contact for residents wanting to tackle issues that affect them in their day to day life. It also includes officers working in the day to day delivery of key services provided by the Council.

The Council has, therefore, put in place a mechanism (the LINK process) to facilitate effective neighbourhood engagement and support Ward Councillors in resolving grass roots issues.

The LINK process enables Councillors to take a lead in co-ordinating responses to resident enquiries, working with officers best placed to deal directly with issues as they arise. Management of issues in this way can also facilitate links into the corporate/democratic mechanisms by influencing the Scrutiny Review Programme. It also provides a mechanism that will support the future development of resident involvement approaches such as resident forums, community/neighbourhood charters and participatory budgeting at neighbourhood level.

The process involves a bi-monthly meeting being held in each of six 'neighbourhood areas' and each meeting being attended by the Ward Councillors, a facilitating officer, representative officers from the relevant divisions of the Council and representatives from Sussex Police. Representatives from other external organisations may also be included where agenda items require input. This may include Councillors and officers from West Sussex County Council.

Items for the agendas for these meetings may arise as a result of links with external partners and will have regard to other neighbourhood engagement approaches (e.g. County Local Committees, Police Neighbourhood Ward Panels and Health 'Links').

Matters for discussion may include, for example:

- Information and requests for action from Police Neighbourhood Ward Panels
- Relevant Intelligence information from Community Safety Action Groups
- Issues brought forward by Councillors as a result of liaison with constituents
- Updates from officers on development of local programmes
- Information brought forward by officers from resident contact

An action plan will be produced following each meeting. Action may include, for example:

- Specific Councillor or officer actions
- Allocating work to 'Neighbourhood Action Teams'
- Engagement of Neighbourhood Forums or alternative resident/tenant groups to support problem solving
- Formation of Local Action Teams
- Co-ordinated development of new resident engagement approaches including engagement events to seek resident views
- Partnership projects to address area issues – influencing service planning

Recurring or complex issues may be referred to specialist action groups or scrutiny to decide on appropriate action and, in some cases, to the County Local Committee

The implementation of any action proposed will be monitored.