



## **2. Decision(s) Recommended**

- 1.1 The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities and Partnerships is recommended to approve:
- (a) The review findings for the street association pilot scheme, which operates in seven streets across Solihull.
  - (b) Further investment in a small number of identified streets, which align to the Council's strategy for Local Area Coordination.
  - (c) The development of a differentiated approach to developing street associations in Solihull that responds to range of needs within communities based on their relative level of existing social capital.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 In 2015, as part of an ambition to tackle the underlying determinants of problems experienced in neighbourhoods, a number of partners agreed to support a genuinely targeted approach in very small areas (50 to 100 residences) to test if this could make a real and sustained improvement.
- 3.2 This ambition recognised that whilst Solihull had made progress in a number of areas in relation to its community strategy 2014/18 to address a range of socio-economic inequalities there were still areas where impact was limited.
- 3.3 A key element of the plan was to identify a number of streets where there was evidence of low social capital and where it was unlikely that community support networks, such as neighbourhood watch would be established or flourish. The plan was to understand the value of taking a community strengths based approach and how through identifying and building assets in the community greater social capital and cohesion could be generated that would reduce the demand on public services.
- 3.4 In 2014, the Solihull Partnership commissioned U- Turn Community Interest Company (CIC) to work with residents to start two street associations in Smith's Wood (Vauxhall Crescent, Armstrong Drive). A qualitative evaluation of the Smith's Wood street associations and two others in Walsall was carried out nine months after they were formed (see attached summary evaluation: Street Associations in Low Income Neighbourhoods) demonstrated that they have increased people's sense of well-being, reduced isolation and led to the emergence of new community leaders.
- 3.5 On the basis of the evaluation, in September 2015, the Solihull Partnership commissioned U Turn CIC to develop another five street associations, funded through a combination of funding from: Solihull Partnership (£5K), Early Help (£5K) Public Health (£2K) and Local Welfare Provision's Small Grants Scheme (£8K).
- 3.6 The five additional street association locations were chosen to test the effectiveness of the street association concept in different communities in Solihull. The streets were identified by overlaying data about demand for public services with data giving an indication of underlying concerns that might be driving that demand. All of the urban locations identified are a priority for partners due to high levels of anti-social behaviour and all have a variety of underlying issues including high levels of

unemployment. All are also in areas where there is a low level of existing community organisation e.g. there are few neighbourhood watch or resident groups and where a street association would not be expected to emerge without some positive action to encourage it.

3.7 The Cars Area Big Local community partnership has also invested in the development of two street associations in the Smith's Wood Area.

3.8 The Following street associations have now been developed:

	<b>Street Association</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
1	Armstrong Drive and Cowley Close	Smith's Wood	Sept 2014
2	Vauxhall Crescent	Smith's Wood	Sept 2014
3	Green Hill Way	Shirley East	Sept 2015
4	Ely Close	Chelmsley Wood	Sept 2015
5	Ipswich Walk	Chelmsley Wood	Sept 2015
6	Alspath Road	Meriden	April 2016
7	Greenfinch Road	Smith's Wood	June 2016
<b>Cars Area Big Local - Investment</b>			
8	Rover Drive West, Humber Grove & Morgan Grove	Smith's Wood	April 2016
9	Rover Drive East and Sunbeam Close	Smith's Wood	July 2016

3.9 In the report to Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities and Partnership (19 January 2016), a number of building blocks were endorsed to support the Council's Building Stronger Communities priority. This included the following building block:

- (a) Promoting strong '**Locality Networks**' by creating the conditions where people are able to make connections within their community, creating greater community cohesion and resilience and reducing social isolation for some living in those communities.

3.10 Street associations were identified as a potential mechanism for promoting more 'connectedness' with a commitment to evaluate their effectiveness in building community spirit and impact on reducing calls for public services over time.

#### **4. The Street Association Approach**

4.1 A street association offers a catalyst to bring neighbours together and a simple structure to keep them together and unleash the potential of each street. The purpose of street associations is encapsulated by the strapline "*friendship, fun and a helping hand*". Street associations are a type of asset based community development; they encourage people living on the same street to make friends, have fun together and support each other, helping everyone to make the best of where they live and taking pride in their street. The street association concept was developed by U-Turn UK CIC five years ago and there are now well over 100 street

associations in the UK, each covering 50-100 houses. A pack of resources is available at <http://streetassociations.org/> to help those who are interested in starting a street association.

4.2 U Turn's role is to make initial connections on the street through a door to door survey and then organise a barbeque or similar social event where residents can get to know each other. At the barbeque they seek volunteers to form a core group, attend the initial meeting of the core group and they then provide on-going support to the core group tapering over a year to the point where residents become largely self-supporting.

4.3 Each Street Association is then run by a core group of 6-10 people, who meet once a month for an hour and organise events to bring people together (barbecues, quiz nights, parties etc.) encourage friendships and find ways to help neighbours who might need a lift or help with a bit of DIY etc.

## 5. Key Findings from the Pilot

5.1 The evaluation of the street associations has looked to provide evidence to consider their effect on:

- (a) People's sense of well-being and community spirit – tested through a survey carried out at the start and again nine-twelve months later;
- (b) The emergence of new community leaders; and
- (c) Reactive calls for public services (e.g. Police callouts, reports of anti-social behaviour, environment services calls) as we would expect these to decrease over a period of time due to people's increased pride in where they live.

### 5.2 People's Sense of Wellbeing and Community Spirit:

The following feedback is based on 44 completed surveys from the seven street associations commissioned by Solihull Partnership.

#### More Connectedness and Cohesion

- Number of neighbours known – up from average 8 before street association, to average 17 now. An increase of 113%.
- 87% say the street has become friendlier and 90% that the street association has helped new friendships to form.
- 95% say the street association has helped people to feel they belong.
- 70% say that the street association has brought people of different races together.
- 95% say the street association has brought people of different generations together.

#### Reducing Isolation

- 59% think that elderly and other vulnerable people are more likely to receive practical help as a result of the street association.

- 85% think the street association has helped some residents to feel less lonely or isolated.
- 56% say the street association has helped them personally to feel less lonely or isolated.

#### **Feeling Safer**

- 69% say the street association has helped residents to feel safer.
- 67% say that the street association has reduced antisocial behaviour.

#### **Being Active and Taking Part**

- 78% of street association core group members say that being part of it has helped increase their confidence.
- 64% had not been part of an organising committee before.

5.3 A number of comments and views were expressed that supported the sense of wellbeing and community spirit.

#### **More Connectedness and Cohesion**

- “I got to know the new-comers”, (female, 20s/30s).
- “Mums getting to know each other” (female, 40s/50s).
- “Brings kids together (as they all attend different schools)” (female, 40s/50s).
- “People have come together where this never happened before. Most people on the street haven’t got to know the elderly but now we’ve met they feel comfortable asking for support. I’ve made new friends, have come to know new people and gained trust in people and the neighbours, which is a lovely feeling” (female, 20s/30s).
- ”People acknowledge each other more. The street association is a catalyst to speak to neighbours”, (female, 60+).
- “More friends. Enjoyed coach trip to Weston” (female, 60+)
- “Broken the ice. Friendly faces. Learned names. Restored a little faith in the word ‘community’” (female, 40s/50s)
- “People mixing more, saying hello. People will rally more to help each other. Take pleasure out of seeing people mixing and smiling” (female, 40s/50s).

#### **Reducing Isolation**

- “Getting out of house” (gender not specified, teenage).
- “Made more friends and became less isolated”, (female, 40s/50s).
- “Being friends is enough”, (male, 20s/30s).
- “Big difference. Everyone has got together and got to know each other. It gets [older people] out of the house to speak to people who they would not have spoken to before” (male, 20s/30s).

- “They are aware of us [the elderly]. I’ve met some lovely new friends and look forward to events with them all” (female, 40s/50s).

### **Feeling Safer**

- Safer for myself and also for my children. Also a lot more easy and comfortable to live. Some people we saw but never spoke to, but now know them on a face-to-face basis. My children know other children from the street” (male, 20’s)
- “People seem more friendly now. They feel safer. Met lovely friend only a few doors away who hadn’t long moved in and knew nobody” (female, 40s/50s).

### **Being Active and Taking Part**

- “I am now going to volunteer and it is a great opportunity to meet new people” (female, 20s/30s).
- “The volunteers are great as are the neighbours on the committee. Pleasure working and socializing with them” (female, 60+)
- “Help with meals. Just generally helping each other now”, (female, 20s/30s).
- “Making new friends. Helping with chores and shopping. More people speak to each other” (female, 60+,)
- “We all look out for each other. Been out on day trips. Made friends” (female, 40s/50s).
- “Much more community spirit. People helping the aged if they need it. People who were less able were made to feel welcome” (female, 40s/50s).

## **5.4 New Community Leaders**

The sustainability of a street association is reliant on developing a core group of people willing to be have a long term involvement and able to develop the confidence to run the street association unaided by external support agencies. There has been encouraging progress in emerging community leaders, although the results are more successful in some Street Associations than others. The following provides the latest reported position:

### **Armstrong Drive & Cowley Close**

Larger core group established with two leading residents initially, however following a clash of personalities one resigned. More work required to spread the burden of leadership within the core group.

### **Vauxhall Crescent**

Highly successful core group that has organised a number of successful event. The group is now entirely resident led, has formally constituted and set up its own bank account. Successfully applied to Big Local for a grant, which enabled them to buy a bouncy castle, barbecue and more. The two lead women have helped form street associations elsewhere in the borough.

### **Green Hill Way**

Large core group established with six regular members, with a range of others providing support for the various events. The core group meets regularly and is now chaired by a resident, with the group formally constituted and with a bank account (with 3 signatories). The group is well supported by two local councillors and have also secured a £400 grant, from the local Asda store. Nearly all of the events have been well attended (over 50 people). The lead woman ready to help form street associations elsewhere in the borough.

### **Ely Close and Ipswich Walk**

Took a lot of time and persuasion to get residents involved. A small core group of four women was initially established and organised events across the two streets. Some reluctance for more people to join/support the core group and get involved in organising events resulted in the initial core group members walking away. A new small core group of six people has been established after a concerted effort to engage more people. The status of the core group remains fragile.

### **Alspath Road**

A large and committed core group established, now chaired by a local resident. . They are demonstrating enthusiasm to extending involvement of local residents in the street association and are progressing well towards being self-supporting.

### **Greenfinch Road**

A relatively new street association with the initial events well attended and a core group has been established. It is still a little too early to be clear on how the leadership will emerge, however there are promising signs.

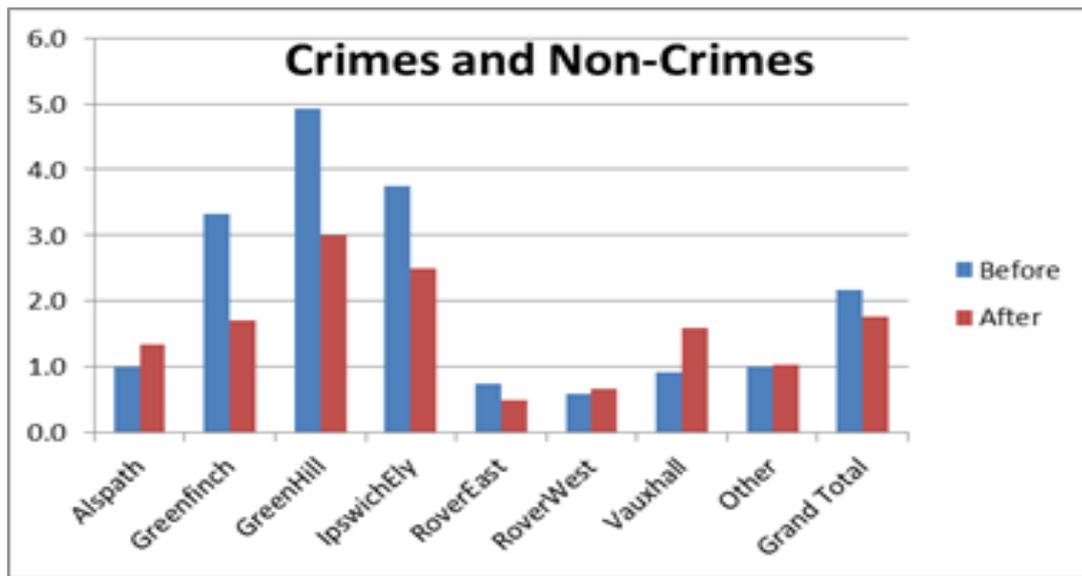
## **5.5 Reducing demand for public services**

The original background data analysed to identify potential areas for street associations was assembled in 2014, as part of a wider exercise to understand the potential opportunities for integrating services. The data built a graphical record of areas with 'extraordinary' demand for public services within Solihull (apart from health data, which was not available) overlaid with information relating to households in receipt of council tax award which was a proxy for social, economic need. Through this process a range of potential areas were identified as well as identifying streets with similar characteristics that could act as 'controls', supporting any future analysis of return on investment.

- 5.6 To undertake a comprehensive assessment of the reduction in demand for public services would require collation of information from a range of sources and service areas, including services to families (including early help, missing education, safeguarding, etc.), housing (including tenancy breakdown, public protection, etc.) and a range of community safety and advice and general customer service enquiry services. This information would also need to be collated retrospectively for before the establishment of the street associations, and subsequently to assess any different they had made to demand. For this report, we have looked specifically at data relating to crimes and police call outs. In addition, we also keen to look at data from the Council's Customer Relations Management (CRM) system to capture the

impact on demand in relation to environmental crime and 'avoidable' general enquiries to the Council, which will be available in the next few weeks.

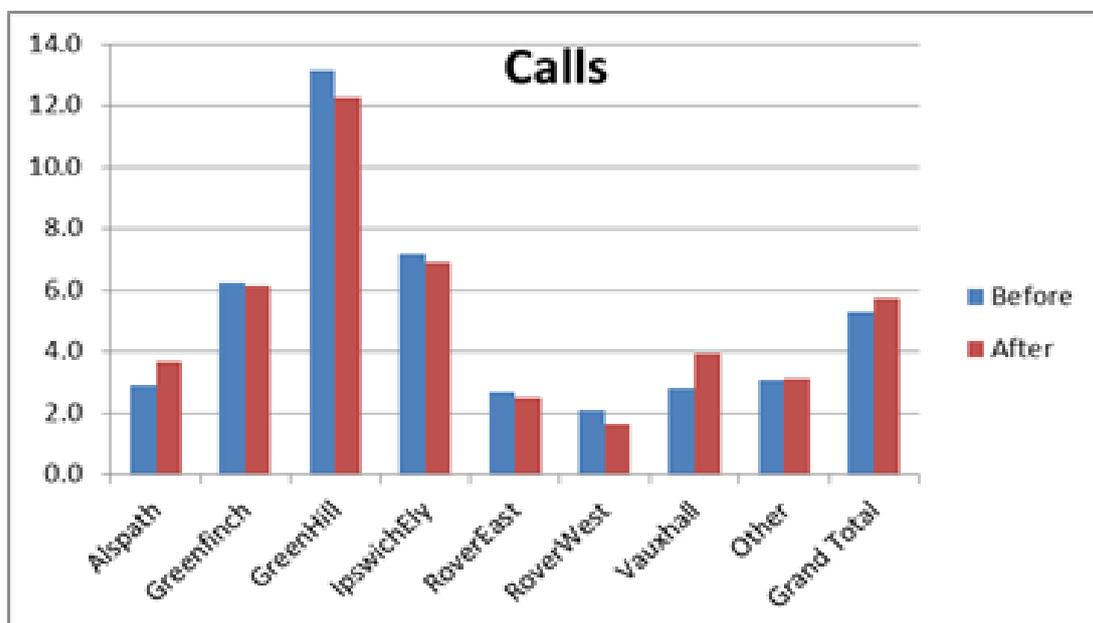
### 5.7 Impact on Crimes and Non Crimes:



The graph compares the number of recorded crimes and non-crimes (which includes domestic abuse, hate crime, etc.) for the 12 months preceding the start date of the street association compared to the 12 months following the start date. Over the respective 12 month periods, the level of recorded crimes and non-crimes has fallen in all areas except Rover Drive, Vauxhall Crescent and Alspath Road. This represents an average reduction of 4 crimes per month across all street association areas. Green Hill Way saw the most significant reduction, with nearly a 40% drop in the average number of recorded crimes/non-crimes a month.

### 5.8 Impact on Police Call Outs

The impact of Police Call outs was relatively limited, with no overall change in the number of call outs when comparing the 12 months preceding the start date of the street association to the 12 months following the start date. A small reduction was evident in five, which was offset by increased in two areas (see below).



## 5.9 Comparing Demand in Control Areas

A number of the street association had an identified control area which had similar levels of demand and socio-economic make up. The control areas were also sufficiently distant geographically to mitigate any diffusion/ displacement of benefit/demand from the pilot areas. The treatment and control areas for comparison are:

Treatment Street Association	Control Area
Ely Close	Falklands Way
Ipswich Walk	Wheatcroft Drive
Green Hill Way	Woodlands Way
Greenfinch Road	Tamar Avenue

5.10 When comparing with control areas, the results are more impressive, demonstrating reductions in average number of crime/non-crime levels from an average of 4 per month to 2.5 per month, compared to an increase from 2.3 per month to 3.1 per month on average in the control areas. Police call outs within the control areas rose from an average of 7.7 call outs per month to 8.6 per month over the same period.

5.11 There is always a question to be considered on whether the reductions would have happened without the street association. The nature of the control provides a level of assurance that the reductions seen can be attributed to some extent to the increases in community cohesion, which have been developed through the street association approach.

## 6. Understanding Return on Investment

6.1 **Social Return on Investment:** With regard to the social return on investment, through improvements in community cohesion, reduced social isolation and developing greater participation and community leadership there is clear evidence of the impact from the street association approach. The investment made, has in a number of areas shown that the streets associations have a sustainable future, with residents actively leading the groups. This should be seen as encouraging, due to the low level of participation and cohesion evident in the streets prior to the community development work.

6.2 Although the review has not been able to capture impact on health, research through Public Health England provides a clear link on how connected and empowered communities are healthy communities. Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive, Public Health England and Simon Stevens, Chief Executive, NHS England, stated in the publication: A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing, *“Communities that are involved in decision-making about their area and the services within it, that are well networked and supportive and where neighbours look out for each other, all have a positive impact on people’s health and wellbeing. Three million volunteers already make a critical contribution to the provision of health and social care in England. This is a huge asset to our nation’s health.... Our challenge is to create the conditions for community assets to thrive, to remove any barriers and for*

*our services to work alongside communities in ways that are empowering, engaging and meaningful.”*

6.3 **Fiscal Return on Investment:** National development in the understanding of return on investment through cost benefit analysis has been led by ‘New Economy’, supported by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Through this research, a range of public and voluntary services have been costed to understand the fiscal, economic and social costs/savings. Appendix 2 provides an extract from New Economy’s toolkit with costing in relation to community safety. This has been used to understand the fiscal cost benefits from street associations in relation to the demand reductions identified in relation to crime, non-crimes and police call outs.

6.4 Crimes and non-crimes, costed at £663 per incident demonstrate a potential fiscal return on investment of £31.8K across the street association areas.

<b>Crimes and Non Crimes</b>				
Street	Before	After	Average Monthly Saving (£)	Estimated Annual Saving (£)
Alspath	1	1.3	-198.90	-2,386.80
Greenfinch	3.3	1.7	1,060.80	12,729.60
Green hill	4.9	3	1,259.70	15,116.40
Ispwich & Ely	3.8	2.5	861.90	10,342.80
Rover East	0.8	0.5	198.90	2,386.80
Rover West	0.6	0.7	-66.30	-795.60
Vauxhall	0.9	1.6	-464.10	-5,569.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>2,652.00</b>	<b>31,824.00</b>

6.5 Police call outs costed at £40 per call out

<b>Police Call Outs</b>				
Street	Before	After	Average Monthly Saving (£)	Estimated Annual Saving (£)
Alspath	2.9	3.7	-32.00	-384.00
Greenfinch	6.3	6.1	8.00	96.00
Green hill	13.2	12.3	36.00	432.00
Ispwich & Ely	7.2	6.9	12.00	144.00
Rover East	2.7	2.5	8.00	96.00
Rover West	2.1	1.7	16.00	192.00
Vauxhall	2.8	3.9	-44.00	-528.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>48.00</b>

6.6 By applying a similar analysis of the fiscal return on investment (ROI) to the control areas it can also provide some insight in the potential additional demand that was avoided through securing greater cohesion, reduced social isolation and developing greater participation in the street association areas. The follow table highlights, for the 4 street association areas with identified control areas, in addition to the £11.9k return on investment and further potential demand of £6.3k was avoided. There is also a small ROI associated with avoidable demand from police call outs (£0.4k)

Analysis based on comparison to Control Areas				
Crimes and Non Crimes				
Street	Before	After	Average Monthly Saving (£)	Estimated Annual Saving (£)
Treatment	4	2.5	994.50	11,934.00
Control	2.3	3.1	-530.40	-6,364.80
Police Call Outs				
Treatment	8.9	8.8	4.00	48.00
Control	7.7	8.6	-36.00	-432.00

- 6.7 These ROI are likely to be an under- estimation, as the review has not been able to assess impact on demand in other public service areas. In addition, particular for some of the crime and non-crime incidents further costs will be associated from criminal proceedings and interventions.

## 7. Proposed Options for the Future

- 7.1 The review of street association pilot provides evidence of the positive impact of the approach from both a social and fiscal return on investment. Even though, the level of this return is likely to have been under-estimated there is a positive ratio of 1:1.6 ROI. This provides a persuasive case for further investing and promotion street association across Solihull, to support the Council's wider ambitions in relation to building stronger communities.
- 7.2 The streets targeted in the pilot had been identified because of the evidence of low social capital and higher levels of demand for public services within Solihull. This is not universal across Solihull therefore it is proposed that a 'differentiate' approach is required, providing:
- Intensive and sustained support for a period (approximately 12 months) to initiate and secure a self-sustaining street association, in those streets identified with existing low social capital.
  - Time limited support focused on the initiation phase of a street association, in streets where there is desire to have a street association but some external support is required to get it off the ground.
  - 'How to resources' provided (online) for those streets that have the capacity to self-organise.
- 7.3 To take forward this differentiated approach, it is proposed that further investment in securing street associations is made for a small number of identified streets (up to four in 2017/18), which require **intensive and sustained support**. As already highlighted in Para 3.10, street associations provide underpinning asset based community development which is complementary to the Council's strategy for Local Area Coordination, to supports and encourages vulnerable people to find solutions to their needs in their community as opposed to a service response (promoting self-reliance and mutual support). Therefore it is proposed that a large proportion of the

investment is focused on streets within the wards with a Local Area Coordinator (LAC). Currently, Kingshurst, Lyndon and Olton wards have a LAC but do not have an established street association.

- 7.4 For streets that require **initial support** to start a street association can be taken forward though a mix of support from existing council, voluntary sector services and community leaders as well as access to seed funding for the initial 'met your neighbours' social event. This approach would require a small amount of induction into the street association approach and skills development in how to have 'asset based conversations'. There are a range of existing community initiative funds, such as the Police and Crime Commissioners 'Active Citizens Fund', which could be bid for to support the initial first event.
- 7.5 For streets that can **self-organise**, the street association web-site provides residents on how to undertake a 'do it yourself' launch using the free starter pack. Any street wishing to do this is required to sign up to their terms and conditions in relation to branding and promotion, as well as to become part of the network a make a small donation. If required, they would also be able to bid into existing community initiative funds available in the borough.
- 7.6 The total investment to take forward this 'differentiated' approach would be in the order of £20-£25K in 2017/18, which would support the establishment of at least four new street associations, in targeted areas as defined above. Funding is available through the Partnership Local Area Agreement reward grant for 2017/18.

## 8. Reasons for Recommending Options

- 8.1 There are a number of reasons for recommending the options identified in Section 8 of the report. These include:
- (a) There is a demonstrable return on investment from street associations that supports Council's priorities to 'build stronger communities' and 'improve health and wellbeing'.
  - (b) The investment in wards with local areas coordination will provide additional support to secure success, which is likely to increase the return on investment from both approaches.
  - (c) Provides an approach designed to build local expertise in developing street association. The approach recognises the latent capacity within the Council, voluntary community sector and existing community leaders to build stronger communities and provides the vehicle and support to develop this capacity.
  - (d) The differentiate approach enables resources to be targeted based on need, and promotes options for self-organising which are low/no cost options.
- 8.2 The Street Association model was developed by U-Turn UK CIC, and the branding and logo are registered trademarks. There is evidence from previous commissioning processes that they were the only supplier that offers services supporting the formation of street associations. Whilst there are other community development methodologies, this evaluation of the pilot provides evidence that it is an effective model. Any future commissioning would be tested against the market, and assessed along similar lines and outcomes this review looked at. .

## **9. Scrutiny**

- 9.1 The street association approach and the proposal to fund the pilot in five streets in Solihull have been considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board, through its Prevention and Early Intervention Board and also the Action Against Poverty Champions Group.

## **10. Implications**

### **10.1 Delivery of the Council's Priorities**

The options/proposals in this report will contribute to the delivery of the Council's priorities 'Building Stronger Communities' and 'Improve Health and Wellbeing' The proposals indirectly contribute to the Council priority 'Deliver Value'.

### **10.2 Meeting the duty to involve**

The duty to involve is integral to the development of street associations. Relevant stakeholders have been engaged in the development of proposals to develop community led approaches.

### **10.3 Financial Implications**

The cost to the Council of commissioning four additional Street Associations in targeted areas is £20k (£5,000 per association based on 240 hours of staff time per Association and overheads in relation to events and marketing). Additional funding up to £5,000 would assist in building local expertise in developing street association and support the self-organised approach.

The Partnership Local Area Agreement reward grant has been identified to fund the total investment for 2017/18 of £25K. This is one off funding that has been ring-fenced to support partnership priorities in relation to addressing socio economic inequalities identified in the Solihull Community Strategy and promoted public service reform. Any future investment, beyond 2017/18 should be considered as part of the broader business case for Local Area Coordination and the Community Wellbeing Offer (under the Solihull Together Programme), as the street association approach is seen as complementary to these strategies.

### **10.4 Legal implications – None identified**

### **10.5 Risk Implications - No direct implications from this report**

### **10.6 Statutory Equality Duty**

The proposals will help the Council and Partners to meet the statutory equality duty particularly in promoting good community relations (community cohesion) and by working together with communities to develop solutions that are personalised to individuals and communities.

### **10.7 Carbon Management/Environmental – None identified**

### **10.8 Partner Organisations**

Partner organisations have been engaged in the process and will continue to be engaged in the development and promotion of street associations.

10.9 **Safeguarding/Corporate Parenting Implications** – None identified

10.10 **Customer Impact**

The proposals are intended to support working together with communities to develop solutions that are personalised to individuals and communities. This will promote independence and resilience and for those customers receiving public services, an improved customer experience.

10.11 **Other implications** – None identified

**11. List of Appendices Referred to**

11.1 Appendix 1 - Street Association in Low Income Neighbourhoods Summary

11.2 Appendix 2 - New Economy Cost Benefit Toolkit 2015 - Extract

**12. Background Papers Used to Compile this Report**

12.1 Street Association in Low Income Neighbourhoods 2015 – Full Evaluation Report

12.2 Cost Benefit Toolkit – please see:

<http://www.neweconomymanchester.com/our-work/research-evaluation-cost-benefit-analysis/cost-benefit-analysis>

**13. List of Other Relevant Documents**

13.1 None