

THE FUTURE OF LEGACY HOME ACCIDENT PREVENTION COMMITTEES	5th April 2016
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE	
FOR DECISION	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Convergence of Home Accident Prevention Committees
Lead Officer	Bryan Edgar
Cost: (If applicable)	Officer/Volunteer Time

Further to committee item 7 151201 a workshop was held on the 2nd March 2016 to consider the future of the legacy Home Accident Prevention committees (HAPC). The aim of each of these committees is to “advance education and raise public awareness in relation to home safety throughout the district”. HAPC’s currently receive £880 of funding from the Public Health Agency (PHA) per annum. Prior to the workshop a background paper was issued together with a number of options for consideration. This may be found at Appendix I.

It should be further noted the each of the legacy HAPC’s have their own constitutions, bank accounts and arrangements for dissolution.

By way of information, The Home Safety Officer (HSO) service is part funded by the PHA and part by Council. The HSO delivers a range of interventions including the home safety check scheme to those over 65 years and to families with children under 5 years old, providing “free” appropriate home safety equipment. The service is monitored by the PHA on a quarterly basis and is also included within the Health and Built Environment Service business plan. The strategic objectives for the service are taken from the Department for Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) Home Accident Prevention Strategy 2015-2025. A copy of this strategy may be found at the following link.

<https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/home-accident-prevention-strategy-2015.pdf>

Following discussion and debate at the workshop the recommendations below are put forward for consideration.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:-

1. One Home Accident Prevention Committee be established to service the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area (Option 3 from the Workshop).
2. Membership should where possible be representative of all District Electoral Areas and should include one member from each political party together with a substitute.
3. Invitations to be issued to other statutory organisations (Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service & Northern Ireland Housing Executive) and interested local groups (volunteers/Voluntary sector).
4. A Home Safety Officer will service the Committee which will meet no more the 4 times per annum. The work of the Committee will be reported via the Environmental Services committee.
5. The Public Health Agency be approached to increase funding provided to support a Home Accident Prevention Committee across the entire Borough on a pro rata basis.

Home Accident Prevention Groups Workshop

1.0 Background

Home Accident Prevention Groups (HAP) were formed around 2003/2004 in Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle with similar constitutions and aims. The Limavady group has not been active for several years, leaving 3 groups still in existence.

The aim of the HAP groups was to advance education and raise public awareness in relation to home safety and had a membership of:

- Councillors
- Council officers
- Members of statutory agencies (such as Fire & Rescue Service, Housing Executive, Health Trust)
- Volunteers

Each HAP group had a management committee elected at an Annual General Meeting and usually met 10 times per year. Although the groups have changed significantly over the years, the Home Safety Officer provided updates on the progress of their work, and the group devised ways to promote home safety in the community, and supported other home safety initiatives, such as Streetwise, Hazard House in Ballymoney, Safe and Sound, and Alive and Well.

Some of the work carried out through the groups has included, electric blanket testing, slipper amnesties, promoting blind cord safety and the dangers of carbon monoxide.

Each of the three groups were funded by the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the HAP groups would have decided on the best way to use this funding to promote home safety in their district.

2.0 Current Situation

Since Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has come into existence, the three remaining HAP groups have been suspended until the future is decided.

The current funding provided by the PHA for 2015/2016 was £2,460 for the existing three HAP groups. There are some sums of money left within each of these three accounts, none of which are significant.

3.0 Factors to Consider

- Currently the funding for the HAP groups comes from the PHA, however this is for the Northern area only, and at the moment cannot be used for projects in the legacy Limavady area.
- HAP NI carried out a review of HAP in 2013 and in particular at the effect Local Government Reform would have on the future delivery of HAP. HAP members were questioned and the majority of respondents felt that HAP

groups should come into line with the new council areas. There were a number of other recommendations made in the review which should be taken into account when considering the future of HAP in our Council area.

- The Head of Finance for Causeway Coast & Glens has requested that individual bank accounts should no longer be held for groups such as HAP but that funding should be held centrally within the Council as a separate budget and subject to the normal governance and procurement rules that apply to all Council budgets and expenditure.
- Over recent years the number of members from other statutory agencies has dwindled as resources have become tighter and agencies find it increasingly more difficult to attend regular meetings across several HAP groups
- The need to ensure all seven District Electoral Areas (DEA) of the new Council are represented and services delivered across the whole borough whilst acknowledging the limitations of the current funding arrangements

4.0 Way Forward

Number of HAP groups

As there are currently only three out of the four legacy Council areas with HAP groups it is necessary for there to be a change in the future set up. Below are a number of options and some of the associated strengths and weaknesses of such approaches:

4.1 Option 1

Continue with 3 existing groups and set up a 4th to service the legacy Limavady area

Strengths

- Only one new group to set up with rest already existing

Weaknesses

- Currently no funding to set up such a group
- No group in existence for some time so may be lack interest from volunteers and/or other agency representatives
- The four groups would probably work to address similar themes however with potentially four different ways of rolling out programmes across the Borough therefore not consistent or the most effective use of resources

4.2 Option 2

Establish 2 groups each covering half the Borough

Strengths

- Having two groups would be more efficient and consistent.
- It would ease the time commitments required of the Home Safety Officer(s)

- Less time commitments required of other agencies therefore more likely to engage and attend meetings

Weaknesses

- Potential for less local focus
- Some volunteers may not find the location of the new groups easy to access
- Potential difficulties in funding the group containing the legacy Limavady area

4.3 Option 3

Amalgamate the 3 existing HAP groups into one that covers the entire borough

Strengths

- Most efficient option with no duplication of work, particularly for the Home Safety Officer (s)
- Consistency of delivery of initiatives across all communities in the entire Borough with all seven DEAs represented (by councillors and volunteers)
- Entire funding budget at the disposal of one group providing more spending power for initiatives
- The group would mirror the boundaries of other agencies therefore greater chance of engagement and increased likelihood of representation at the meetings
- Larger group has potentially more sustainability and presence

Weaknesses

- Potential for less local focus
- Volunteers may find it difficult to get access to meetings
- Funding issues for the Limavady area

4.4 Option 4

Close all 3 HAP groups and disband

Strengths

- Frees up Home Safety Officer(s) time

Weaknesses

- Loss of engagement with the local community
- Loss of PHA funding
- Missed opportunities to promote home safety messages which otherwise may have resulted in a reduction in accidents in the home
- The loss of a service to some of the most vulnerable residents in the Borough
- Loss of the successful partnerships that have been set up over the last number of years and the collaborative working that resulted from these unions
- Reduction in support provided for other home safety initiatives such as, Streetwise, Hazard House in Ballymoney, Safe and Sound, and Alive and Well

5.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the four options detailed in this report are considered along with any other options proposed. The recommendation from this group will then be presented to the Environmental Services Committee.