

**Central Area Committee - 7 November 2006**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Neighbourhood Management Activities in Central Area**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To advise Committee of current Neighbourhood Management activities taking place in the Central Area.

**Background**

2. The report provides an update for Central Area committee on the activities undertaken through Neighbourhood Management to work towards changing our neighbourhoods in a sustainable way so that people can enjoy better housing, health, education, environment and job opportunities regardless of where they live and to involve communities in leading the changes necessary to achieve that. Specifically the neighbourhood managers' role is to coordinate the activities in an area to enable service providers and communities to work together to address the needs of disadvantaged areas.  
There is an appendix giving more specific detail of each neighbourhood and the current activities.
3. Because of the pattern of disadvantage in Central Area, Neighbourhood Management is organised on a ward basis and covers Castle & Priory, St Thomas's, St James and Netherton, Woodside & St Andrews (including Bowling Green, Saltwells & Darby End). This arrangement is slightly different to other areas of the borough and is not out of keeping or uncommon when compared to other national and regional arrangements. As far as possible neighbourhood management arrangements reflect local conditions.
4. Originally as the Priority Neighbourhood Initiative, Neighbourhood Management focused on a many smaller neighbourhoods spread across the borough. Good practice examples nationally and difficulties in engaging agencies have meant that during the past two years neighbourhood management has evolved to a broader geographic approach. This has been coupled with working at a more strategic level with partners to plan activities in neighbourhoods, rather than the more intensive community development approach previously necessary. The aim is for a balance between co-ordination over the wider neighbourhoods, picking up specific issues with partner agencies, whilst allowing for more intensive management of smaller "neighbourhood renewal" areas
5. Data provided through the Dudley MBC's strategic intelligence team allows the neighbourhood manager to "evidence" need at neighbourhood level; this is set in the context of community conditions and brought together with issues and

priorities identified by local people.

As a result each neighbourhood has a themed project plan aimed at addressing needs and issues. The objective is narrowing the gap in the measures of deprivation between the neighbourhood renewal areas and the rest of the borough, whilst at the same time encouraging local people to take responsibility for their neighbourhoods and to become engaged in the decision making process.

### **Community Safety**

6. Many of the successes of the neighbourhood management process have occurred in the community safety arena although much still remains to be done. Typically local community safety management groups have been in existence since 2003 and have engaged partners and communities in addressing local community safety needs. They have been particularly well placed to facilitate the implementation of neighbourhood policing partnerships and in most neighbourhoods have evolved into the PACT (police and community together) whilst at the same time providing a forum for statutory agencies to discuss confidential items and exchange information away from the public.

Examples of community safety successes are:

- the nominated neighbour scheme and associated property security upgrades at Sledmere;
- the engagement of young people in many and various diversionary and stakeholder activities
- environmental improvements linked to community safety identified through the partnerships
- Piloting of a proactive PACT across policing sector c in south Netherton – which has led to the development of effective projects to tackle community issues and a more positive relationship between local people and the police and agencies.
- The involvement of elected members has had a positive effect on empowerment and partnership.
- The capacity building of local people through neighbourhood watch at Russell's Hall and the PACT has enabled severe issues of antisocial behaviour to start to be tackled.

### 7. **Other themes of note and some examples**

Environment and Housing

- Friends of Parks
- Litter and fly tipping – increased levels of street sweeping in some priority areas
- Housing Market renewal
- Health through warmth

### 8. Children and Young People

- Children's centres engagement
- Youth facility development together with young people
  
- Developing a new approach to dealing with ASB (St Thomas's)
- Football league development

9. Community Engagement and Cohesion
  - Continued support for Castle and Priory area Board with the development of task partnerships
  - Lodge Farm Network
  - Sector c partnership
  - Sledmere CA
  - Other smaller groups aimed at building individual citizenship e.g. Lodge Farm angling club Lads and Dads
  - Investigating processes around racial harassment
  - Facilitating volunteer support for new communities (asylum seekers and refugees)
  - Supporting communities to come together through networks, activities, events and fun days
  
10. Jobs and Skills
  - Involvement with schools
  - Positive directions – mentoring, information, advice and guidance for jobs and training
  - Learners of the year
  - City strategy
  - Local Enterprise Growth Initiative

### **Equality Impact**

11. All neighbourhood management activities are assessed for their impact on diverse groups and for perverse effects on particular groups. Neighbourhood management activities are targeted at socially exclusion and disadvantaged areas

### 12. **Finance**

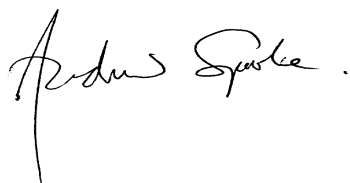
Neighbourhood management is part financed by neighbourhood renewal fund through Dudley Community Partnership and part funded by Dudley MBC as part of its neighbourhood renewal and citizen engagement responsibilities. Neighbourhood renewal fund currently allocated to neighbourhood management is available until March 2007.

13. **Legal Requirements**

Section 111 of the local government act of 1972 enables the council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of it's functions.

**Recommendations**

14. That members of the area committee note the activities of the neighbourhood management team and the positive impact upon disadvantaged neighbourhoods and their communities.



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**Chief Executive**

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