

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE - 30TH SEPTEMBER 2010

AREA COMMUNITY RENEWAL PLAN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT, COMMUNITY AND HOUSING SERVICES

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on the development and progress to date of the Brierley Hill Area Committee Community Renewal Plan.
2. To discuss direction for the work programme for the next year.

Background

3. At the previous Brierley Hill Area Committee meeting held on 1st July 2010, it was agreed that the Community Renewal and Young People's Working Group be not reappointed and that reports be submitted by the Area Community Renewal Officer and Area Youth Team Leader to each future meeting of the Area Committee.
4. At each of the previous working group meetings, members of the working group have helped identify priorities, monitor performance and explore details of concern that may prevent successful delivery of the Area Community Renewal Plan.
5. To ensure that the plan reflects community issues, the results of engagement with local people and local community and voluntary groups are fed into the plan.
6. This is further enhanced by neighbourhood statistics and the engagement of partners within the public and private sector who have detailed knowledge and experiences of local issues.
7. Actions to address community issues are agreed with all interested parties and are based upon localised knowledge and expertise. This not only ensures an appropriate and sensible approach towards tackling local issues, but also helps maximise impact and efficiency.

Current Key Activities

Redevelopment of a derelict and abandoned land site to the rear of Hawbush Primary School, Hawbush Road, Hawbush.

8. A detailed report was presented to the previous Brierley Hill Area Committee meeting on 1st July 2010 that illustrated work that has been undertaken to create a community garden.
9. Since this date, it should be noted that further progress has been achieved as follows:
 - Identification and engagement of 11 local people who are committed towards establishing a community led committee to manage and oversee all future site developments.
 - Use of the site by partner organizations to provide a range of weekly activities designed to engage and support local people. Organizations include the Hawbush Youth Project, Dudley Youth Offending Team, West Midlands Police, DMBC Youth Services, Primary Care Trust and Time Step Dance Studio.
 - Further interest for use of the site has also been received from Hawbush Primary School and the Princes Trust.
 - Consultation with local people to identify future improvements to the site as part of major funding application to the Community Spaces Fund.
 - Development of a Hawbush Community Garden website that will help promote the facilities, regular activities and all future events being held on site.

Tackling worklessness in the most deprived wards in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area.

10. To date the following activities are being delivered in the Brierley Hill, Brockmoor and Pensnett wards that have the highest rates of worklessness.

Community Information and Recruitment Events:

11. Earlier this year, these events were recognized as good practice by the Audit Commission and are designed to provide opportunities for local unemployed people aged 16 plus to access a variety of education, training and employment programmes which most meet their needs. To date an event has been held in each of the following 4 areas::
 - Brierley Hill Central
 - Hawbush,
 - Pensnett
 - Brockmoor.

12. To date, 356 people have so far been engaged and received free information, advice and guidance, of which 136 people are now receiving tailored education, training and employment support from local providers including Neighbourhood Learning Centres, Future Skills, Connexions, Dudley College, Juniper Training, Princes Trust, NACRO and Seetec.
13. At each event, specialist advice and information was also available for any persons wishing to return to work who were experiencing debt or who were dealing with the effects of long term limiting illnesses.
14. As a result of these events, there has been a noticeable increase in the take up of employability, numeracy and literacy courses across a range of services, particularly at the Brierley Hill & Pensnett Neighbourhood Learning Centres.
15. Due to the success of these events, further events will be held in each of the 4 target areas during the current 2010/11 financial year.

Home Visits:

16. For residents who were unable to attend the above events, home visits have also been undertaken in each of the 4 target areas.. This has further raised awareness of the services available to local people, resulting in an additional 37 people now receiving tailored education, training and employment support.

JSA Seminars:

17. Detailed discussions are currently being undertaken with Job Centre Plus and other partners to provide early intervention support to newly registered claimants of Job Seekers Allowance from DY5 postcode addresses. This reflects resource limitations of Job Centre Plus to actively support claimants from day 1 to 13 weeks and will provide an opportunity for claimants to receive information and tailored support from a wide range of local education, training and employment organizations. Four x 2 hour seminars will be held between 21st September 2010 and 2nd November 2010 at Brierley Hill Neighbourhood Learning Centre as part of an initial assessment, before consideration is given for roll out into Brockmoor and Pensnett and other Brierley Hill Area Committee areas.

Partnership Directory:

18. A directory of all local education, training and employment services has been developed and circulated amongst a range of local front line services to ensure client referral and progression between agencies. This has lead to local Housing Management Services referring unemployed clients when accepting the offer of a new tenancy and the Police referring any clients taken into custody who are out of work and seeking support.

Local Economic Assessment:

19. In compliance with a new statutory Local Economic Assessment duty for Local Authorities, work is currently being undertaken with partners to prepare an assessment of the economic conditions of Brierley Hill.
20. The core themes to be addressed in the Local Economic Assessment are as follows:
 - Business and Enterprise
 - People and Communities
 - Sustainable Economic Growth
21. The will involve:
 - Providing a robust and well informed evidence base that tells the story of place.
 - Providing a sound understanding of local economic conditions and how they affect residents and businesses.
 - Identifying the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the local economy and the nature and form of local economic challenges and opportunities.
 - Identifying the local economic geography, including economic linkages between the area and the wider economy.
 - Identifying the local constraints to economic growth and employment and the risks to delivering sustainable economic growth.
 - Improving economic interventions, including better spatial prioritisation of investment/funding.
 - Reflecting the views of local businesses and social enterprise.
22. The assessment will provide a common and robust evidence base, detailing key economic challenges for the Brierley Hill area and a better understanding of local economic conditions which will inform future priorities for economic regeneration interventions.
23. Furthermore, it will help to specifically address the area of Economic Inclusion to identify communities that face high levels of deprivation and economic exclusion and identify the key underlying economic and social barriers to economic participation.

Reduction of youth related crime and anti social behaviour associated with under aged drinking

24. Work continues in identified “hot spot “areas to:
 - Monitor and enforce Social Responsibility Scheme protocols signed by 25 off licence premises. This includes implementation of Challenge 25 Proof of Age Scheme, staff training, maintenance of refusal registers to aid enforcement and monitoring purposes, and early reporting mechanisms to alert services of any problems.

- Confiscation of alcohol from any under aged person found in possession or persons of legal age if there is reason to suspect there is intent to supply.
- Meetings with parents of any young person found in possession of alcohol to identify causes and solutions. This includes signposting onto other services.
- Ongoing consultation with young people to identify activities of interest that will divert them away from becoming involved in crime and anti social behaviour.

Development of neighbourhood health inequalities programmes to address causes of health inequality and promote healthier living

25. **Project Neimo** (Not engaged in mainstream organisations):

This project has been developed in recognition of the difficulties engaging 13-25 year olds in regular physical activity, and in particular young people disengaged from post 16 education.

26. The intention is that these young people will undertake more than 2 hours of physical activity per week and that the project group will work in partnership with other organisations to identify those young people who are not already engaged in mainstream services; are doing less than 2 hours physical activity per week or have been identified as being at risk or harm or disengagement from mainstream services.

27. Pending partner go ahead, it is planned to deliver the project on Friday evenings at the Dell Stadium, Pensnett and will be delivered in distinct phases.

Phase 1 (12 weeks): 2 hour sessions where young people engage in 2 activities per session. One activity will be their preferred option, the other an activity whereby they can experience something they may not have previously tried.

Phase 2 (12 weeks): 2 hour sessions where young people can undertake one physical activity and another that they will have identified as part of their personal aspiration plan.

Phase 3: At week 22, work will begin on an exit strategy for these young people and support will be offered to facilitate this process.

28. The intended outcome is that throughout the duration of the programme, young people will build up self esteem, re-engage with mainstream service provision and develop transferable skills relating to physical activity such as volunteering for peer mentoring, fitness programmes, health trainers and possible progression into further education, training and employment.

ActivKids:

29. Activkids is a physical activity and sport outreach project into local communities that acts as an early intervention programme that young people can take ownership of and which offers opportunities of training, developing entrepreneurial skills and potential commercial benefits.
30. The programme is designed to assist in reducing perceptions of youth related crime and anti social behaviour and promotes fun and energetic activities that motivate and inspire young people to create healthy habits.
31. Detailed discussions are currently being undertaken with a range of interested public, community and voluntary organisations to design a phased roll out approach across all Brierley Hill Area Committee areas that will not only provide a new service in areas where there is no or very little youth provision, but also help enhance existing services.

Look Out Project:

32. For 12 years, The Look Out Project have been supporting local young people living within the Pensnett and Brockmoor areas to make positive life choices, offering guidance through issues such as debt, sexual health and substance misuse, further education, training and employment, as well as opportunities to participate in volunteering and peer mentoring programmes.
33. The project, run by volunteers living in and around Pensnett have recently announced the opening of a new centre, based at the former Pensnett Estate Office, Commonsides, Pensnett which will provide potential for the project to provide further support to the community to which the Area Community Renewal Officer is providing assistance.

Hawbush Community Gardens:

34. In addition to information contained within Item 8 and the report presented to the previous Brierley Hill Area Committee meeting, a range of regular on site activities are now being delivered to address causes of health inequality and promote healthier living amongst local people.
35. These include:
 - Street dance and cheerleading
 - Activkids
 - Crusaders
 - Hands Up Volunteer Programme
 - Learn to grow & healthy eating sessions

Adoption of growing areas by local people and organisations i.e. Adult Learning, Youth Offending Team and Hawbush Primary School to promote and encourage growing of crops and healthier lifestyles.

Finance

36. The Community Renewal team deliver the aims of localism by coordinating services within area committee areas to improve the effectiveness of service delivery in meeting community needs and so achieve better value for money and reduce wasted resources. Through better coordination and focussing onto the communities concerned the community renewal team enables services to be more effective in delivery and thus achieve greater value for money and social benefit.

The Area Committee Community Renewal Plan is developed in line with the overall Council Plan and priorities whilst encouraging innovation in the commissioning of activities from a variety of partners which will add value and achieve objectives for their area.

Law

37. The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 gives local councils and communities the opportunity to put forward new thinking on how best to improve quality of life and wellbeing in their local areas. The act provides a statutory framework for councils working with community groups and local people to put forward proposals on sustainable improvements to economic, environmental and social wellbeing.

The Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on local authorities to establish a Local Strategic Partnership to address collaborative working and develop a community strategy and local neighbourhood renewal strategy. Neighbourhood management through community renewal is part of that approach.

Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1980 enables the Council to do anything which is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social and environmental well being of the area.

Equality Impact

38. One of the objectives of Community Renewal is to promote inclusion and social cohesion. The Community Renewal strategy targets those most in need in terms of social and economic inequality.

Community Renewal officers work to support the coordination of service delivery to communities as they affect a geographical place and in particular enable plans to come together in a more effective way for a local community . The Area Committee Community Plan is developed in line with the overall Borough Community Plan and priorities; in meeting the needs of areas the partners and Communities are encouraged and supported to co-deliver activities which will achieve objectives and add value to both service objectives and community needs.

Communities themselves are involved in deciding issues and in contributing to the delivery of activities to address issues. Where children and young people are involved they are directly consulted frequently design and deliver the response to local issues.

Recommendation

39. That the committee notes the report and continues to support the implementation of the Local Community Renewal Plan.



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List of Background Papers

Brierley Hill Area Community Renewal Plan