
Central Dudley Area Committee - Briefing Note
Community Renewal Working Group Update July – September 2010

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Area Committee on the Central Dudley Area Committee Community Renewal Plan and working group.

Report from Working Group

2. The Working Group consisting of Councillors Ahmed, Waltho, and Martin met on 21st July 2010 to consider the direction for the Central Dudley Area community plan for the next municipal year
3. Members of the working group were updated on the progress of the plan and in particular noted the progress made on the coordination of youth activity. The progress made on Neighbourhood Employment and Skills work is reported below
4. Members also noted that some issues had not progressed and in considering the effectiveness of the Area Community Renewal Plan, the Working Group took the preliminary view that, rather than establishing a list of issues that would be unlikely to be proceeded with, given the level of resources available, the Community Renewal Plan should concentrate on a small number of achievable issues, which could then be developed realistically and implemented.
5. The working group agreed that the work programme should continue to concentrate on the priorities established by the previous working group : supporting partners to work with and develop activities for young people and that work should also be developed with the Private Sector Housing team to deal with the issues where they impact on the neighbourhoods; for example empty properties being used for drugs or poor housing conditions effecting educational attainment.

A co-ordinated approach to derelict and abandoned land sites within neighbourhoods, especially sites of under 0.2 hectares.

6. The working group discussed the need for regular litter picks instead of ad hoc litter picks and expressed concerns with regard to the increasing amount of rubbish accumulating on council owned land.
7. The working group acknowledged that the majority of problems were with abandoned sites and that these sites could often be in the ownership of different directorates or private owners making a coordinated approach more challenging . The working group agreed to concentrate on the poor environmental conditions and following consideration by Members on priority sites the following sites were

identified and recommended for inclusion in the plan:-

- Russell Street/Nelson Road/Edward Street/Alexander Street- poor housing with the area suffering from crime and severe environmental issues
- Fulwood Road, Woodside – old changing rooms get regularly vandalised and complaints had been received in relation to anti-social behaviour. .
- Baptist End Road - empty and derelict house
- Windmill End Road, Darby End – land overgrown and derelict.
- Strip of land next to Green Park – the member for St Thomas' requested an investigation into this area of land
- Priory North site –funding for phase one of the site has now been approved for release and works should now be going ahead which would help to alleviate problems here
- Former Duncan Edwards public house site –the land is for sale

Working with the Youth Service and partners to develop a youth offer for Central area that meets the needs of its Young People and community

8. The working group acknowledged the progress that had been made in this area such as the Netherton Youth PACT and the St Thomas's environmental group and were particularly keen to see this area of work developed further . The working group agreed that more could be done in terms of raising awareness and attracting more young people to take part in the activities being offered and that better co-ordination and shared information between partner groups providing youth activities would help to avoid duplication of activity and facilitate cooperation between groups in the area.

9. The working group noted that an event engaging all voluntary and community youth service providers in central area is being planned in conjunction with CVS and Children's Services to join up and explore the services on offer

Health Inequalities

10. The working group noted the progress being made towards increasing healthy activities and on health plans for neighbourhoods – they agreed to monitor this area of work.

Removing the barriers to work and employment. Creating the conditions with individuals and communities to enable them to take up economic and enterprising opportunities.

11. The working group acknowledged the work coordinated through the Community Renewal team led Neighbourhood Employment and Skills partnerships (NESP's) and were updated on progress and requested that the verbal information provided to the last area committee be included in written form for this committee.

12. Job fairs and information events were held at St James, St Thomas' and Netherton and Woodside. The events were successful with 94 people engaged with 40 people signed up for courses and skills opportunities at Netherton/Woodside; 170 engaged with positive outcomes for 7 people placed in employment through St James jobs fair ; and 74 engaged at the St Thomas's community information day with 56 progressed onto employment and training skills activity. All events have led to increased referrals for Future Skills Dudley, the Adult and Community Learning and employability teams and the local jobs clubs.

13. A similar event at Castle and Priory was less successful in engaging people and steps have been taken to address this by re-engaging partners into the Neighbourhood Employment and Skills Partnership (NESP) with a focus on working together to meet the needs of the under 25s and those with health issues which act as a barrier. The group is now chaired by Bromford Group and, in line with other NESPs, attendees also include Dudley College, Connexions and Job Centre Plus.
14. Bids through partners have been successful in bringing back into use the computer suite at Wrens Nest Community Centre and has led to the development of a job club at the Wrens Nest Community centre to complement the one operating from the Priory Neighbourhood learning Centre. Job clubs also operate from St Thomas' Network and from the Midland Heart community house in Duncan Edwards Close.

Other activities

15. Castle and Priory
Further development of the Neighbourhood Employment and Skills Partnership (NESP) with an event targeted at young people in the first instance.

Further development of the Connecting to Communities programme which include proposals for young advisors dedicated to the ward and a local assembly to engage more people in working together on the priorities of the ward.

St James and St Thomas'

- 16 The Area Community Renewal Officer for St James has now moved to Stourbridge working and the Area Community renewal Officer for St Thomas' will now be managing the St James ward as well- in much the same way that the 2 wards of Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood as well as Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews are. Whilst recognising that this will bring some community changes it is necessary for the long term position in relation to resources for Community renewal.
- 17 St Thomas' ward has attracted support and input from the neighbourhood resource team to enable a programme of community capacity building and engagement – the programme is due to start in July and will be steered by the Kate's Hill and Sledmere Association.
- 18 Joint working and co-ordination of development of junior neighbourhood watch programme across the St James ward. Extensive partnership work activity with neighbourhood schools, both primary and secondary school involvement. Lead partner PCSO's team of local neighbourhood police team. JNHW presentation held mid march with mayor in attendance.

Netherton Woodside and St Andrews /Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood.

- 19 Netherton and Woodside / Holly Hall PACTs are in the process of merging . Police have agreed to alternate venues between Netherton and Woodside area.
20. The Healthy Hub is well underway - outdoor gym complete and the hub building near completion. There have been a few minor problems with alleged ASB but

police are monitoring the situation

- 21 The Youth Service and the Police are developing youth provision in the Quarry Bank area and Quarry Bank Community Centre has been able to provide the venue.

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List of Background Papers

Community Renewal Strategy

Central Area Committee Community Renewal Plan