
North Dudley Area Committee 2 December 2009

Report of the Director of Adult, Community, and Housing Services

Community Renewal Working Group

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on the progress to date of the Working Group and development of the North Dudley Area Committee Community Renewal Plan.

Background

2. The establishment of the North Dudley Area Committee Community Renewal Working Group was approved by North Dudley Area Committee at their meeting in July 2008.
3. The Working Group met on four occasions during the municipal year 2008/09 and three times during the current municipal year, to develop and monitor the Area Community Renewal plan for North Dudley.
At each of the working group meetings the community renewal plan was considered and noted with further activities added where appropriate
It was agreed that North Dudley Community Renewal Forum be re-established to bring community groups together, including those "hard to reach" groups.
Priorities within the plan were identified and once targets achieved they were added to the Achievements and Completions spreadsheet.
4. At North Dudley Area Committee on 24 June 2009 it was resolved that the North Dudley Area Committee Community Renewal Working Group be reappointed for the ensuing municipal year with its existing terms of reference and that the working group comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillors Caunt, Mrs Ridley and Stanley.

Report from Working Group

5. The Working Group met on 4 November and discussions were held about the current work plan activities.
A Chair of the Community Renewal Forum has not yet been elected therefore
 - 5.1 there is no co-opted member from that forum
The working group approved the updated Community Renewal Plan.
 - 5.2 It was resolved to investigate the possibility of using land near to Coseley Station
 - 5.3 for additional parking. The Cabinet Member for the Environment who is also a member of the working group, undertook to speak with officers of the Directorate of the Urban Environment to identify ownership of the land
 - 5.4 The Area Community Renewal Officer gave an oral update on work undertaken with regard to Wallbrook estate, Coseley and Grosvenor estate, Lower Gornal

6. Completions and achievements

6.1 Sedgley Lantern project

The Area Community Renewal Officer and the Manager of the Queen Victoria Children's Centre worked with the Adult and Community Learning team who led on the Sedgley Lantern Project. Families took part in workshops at various locations to make lanterns prior to the parade through Sedgley on the 22 October which ended at the Queen Victoria Children's Centre with family learning activities and refreshments where over 300 people attended.

6.2 Coseley Information Event

An information event, organised by the Area Community Renewal Officer was held on Wednesday 11 November at Roseville Day Centre.

The purpose of the event was to advise people of the opportunities available to them with regard to employment, training, adult learning and voluntary work. Invitations were sent to benefit claimants in the Coseley area, NEETs (young people who are not in education, employment or training) as well as advertising the event in local shops, on buses, libraries and through schools.

Organisations involved in the event included Job Centre Plus, Adult and Community Learning, Future Skills Dudley, Dudley MBC Human Resources, training agencies, Connexions, Barnardos etc.

6.4 Dudley Council for Voluntary Services Volunteer Awards

The Area Community Renewal Officer nominated two groups to this award who she has supported and worked with for a number of years - Upper Gornal Pensioners Club committee and The Oval and Tudor Newsletter editorial committee. The groups have become more confident and self reliant in their voluntary work with the aim of being sustainable in their activities. The Pensioners Club received certificates in recognition of their work and the newsletter committee won Community Group of the Year - Local Awareness Award at the awards ceremony on 15 October.

7. Current and planned key activities

7.1 Grosvenor Estate

An estate walkabout has taken place with the Area Community Renewal Officer and the Housing Manager to identify any problems and issues. It was noted that this is a stable community in the main with the majority of 2 and 3 bedroom houses with some low rise flats. There are some concerns amongst older residents about lifestyle clashes with younger tenants of the flats. Some work will be undertaken to ascertain with the residents a way forward e.g. tenancy sustainment and support for young tenants. Community safety issues were also highlighted around the use of cannabis.

Partnership work with Sanctuary Housing Association is already taking place around the worklessness agenda. A survey is currently being carried out of Sanctuary tenants to identify needs in relation to employment and training opportunities. This survey will be replicated with residents on the remainder of the estate in the future.

The Area Community Renewal Officer will plan to work in partnership with the Participation Development Officer from Housing to consider resurrecting the Grosvenor Forum

Crime and anti social behaviour statistics will be analysed to consider partnership work with the Police.

7.2 Wallbrook Estate

An estate walkabout has taken place with the Area Community Renewal Officer and the Housing Manager to identify any problems and issues.

There is a high turnover of tenancies on the estate but voids are always very quickly let to new tenants. There is also a stable element of tenants who are happy with the environment and the cleaning of the blocks and enjoy living there. Security on the estate has increased considerably in the past few years with all the blocks being fitted with security doors and the square in the centre of the estate fenced off. Both of these measures have reduced anti social behaviour. Residents in partnership with the Police and Community Renewal organise an annual fun day which has increased community spirit and well being for all who live in Wallbrook.

There was, in the past, a Wallbrook Forum, but this has not met for some time. The Area Community Renewal Officer will work in partnership with the Participation Development Officer from Housing to consider the possibility of resurrecting this forum or encourage residents to become part of the wider Coseley Community Forum.

7.3 Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP)

A programme for young people in the Gornal area is taking place with partners from Community Renewal, Youth service, Connexions and the Police. The programme is aimed at changing the behaviour of a targeted group who are at risk of causing anti social behaviour or criminal activity. The programme includes workshops, mentoring by Young Advisors and activities. Good progress is being achieved by this programme.

7.4 Youth Café

Progress the development of a volunteer led youth club/café at The Quarry with partners from the community, youth service, Prince's Trust, West Midlands Police and ward members. Several meetings have been held both with the steering group and with the young people who are very enthusiastic about the project.

7.5 North Dudley Community Renewal Forum

The forum held their third meeting on 2 November. Terms of Reference for the forum were agreed. A Chair has not yet been elected, but training is planned for the members of the forum to ensure they are effective and accountable to the groups they represent. Once this training is complete it is hoped to elect a chair. Issues reported by members at the forum:

- Derelict land at various locations including Ellowes Road, Stickley Lane, Kent Street and Eve Lane.
- Overgrown trees that require cutting back at numerous locations
- Communication between the Council and the community groups needs to be improved.

7.6 Neighbourhood Services Group

The Area Community Renewal Officer has brought together officers from the Local Authority e.g. Housing, Green Care, Waste Management and Enforcement, Schools, Extended Services, Community Safety, and various other statutory organisations e.g. Police, Fire Service, Housing Associations to work in partnership to resolve problems and identify where joint working can be more effective and avoid duplication of services and make best use of resources. The Neighbourhood Services Group met on 8 October and agreed Terms of Reference and met again on 26 November.

8 **Finance**

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

9. **Law**

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. 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.

10. **Equality Impact**

The objective of Community Renewal is to promote inclusion and social cohesion. The Community Renewal strategy targets those most in need in terms of deprivation.

Information is collected through each Community Renewal intervention or consultation to monitor the inclusivity and difference made for various groups and people involved. Where inclusion is an issue ACROs engage through various community or interest groups locally to design appropriate responses to different circumstances

Where children and young people are involved they are directly consulted and involved in designing solutions.

11. **Recommendation**

That Committee Members note the report and continue to support the work of the Community Renewal team in community localities.



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List of Background Papers

Community Renewal Strategy

North Dudley Area Committee Community Renewal Plan