

Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education 29th October 2007

Report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services

Report on the Review of Netherton Regeneration Centre

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Select Committee on the:-
 - Progress and achievements of the Netherton Regeneration Centre to date.
 - The continuation strategy for the centre.

Background

2. During 2004 Dudley MBC in partnership with local community and statutory bodies put together a funding application to build a regeneration centre with business units and community café. Capital funding totalling in excess of £2.25 million with revenue funding of £1.25 million was granted from funders including European Regional Development Fund and Advantage West Midlands.
3. The Netherton Regeneration Centre is funded until 31st March 2008 through revenue funding provided via Advantage West Midlands.

Impact

4. To date the Centre with the help and support of the Strategic Group has achieved all required targets in addition to supporting work relating to the heritage of Netherton Town Centre and linking to other local initiatives such as the Children's Centre.

AWM Outputs Achieved against Total Project Profile

Output	Actual to date	Total project profile (To March 09)	% Achieved to date
Jobs Created	10	12	83.33
No of people assisted into jobs (Full time Equivalent)	114	134	85.07
No of Business Supported	17	28	60.71
No of Learning Opportunities Created	271	357	75.91
No of Business Created	3	4	75.00

Additional recorded outcomes of the project

No of Individuals gaining qualifications	1025
No of Enrolments	4381
No of People into Employment	135

- As part of funding approval Advantage West Midlands requested that an independent and impartial consultant carry out an interim evaluation/review, which was completed in March 07 by J & AB Associates.

Conclusions from interim evaluation

- Overall the evaluation has found a highly effective project engaging key organisations, groups and sectors and reaching out to the groups and geographical areas in greatest need of support. The funding has brought organisations together in partnership and delivered services tailored to the needs of the residents and businesses of the area. Such support provides an invaluable contribution to the skills, competitiveness and prosperity of the region.

Working methods have been adapted as lessons have been learnt, producing effective, transparent decision making and support mechanisms for the project. Outreach work has added to the effectiveness of this process, meeting and liaising with the community, community groups and organisations to raise awareness of the centre and ensure that the services provided are relevant to area needs.

Ultimately it has been found that the project, to date, has been effective in enhancing current services, training provisions and promoting participation at all levels and across all groups and sectors. The effect of the support has been an increase in joined up thinking, participation rates and the numbers engaging and learning, resulting in local area regeneration and increasing skills levels and business development.

Continuation Strategy

7. As part of the original business plan relating to the continuation of the Netherton Regeneration Centre, it was agreed that the Centre would be handed to an appropriate community group. Work is continuing to develop and support such a group and an interim agreement has been made with Black Country Housing to take over lease arrangements for the Centre until such time as the Centre can be handed to the community.
8. The exit strategy of the funders, included the requirement that an action plan be developed to include the following actions, to be completed by March 2008. This will include the:-
 - Proposed future management arrangements for the Centre
 - Funding Package and Income Generation plan
 - Core staffing structure
 - Updated Marketing strategy
 - Updated Business Plan

Finance

9. The Dudley MBC and its partners received European Regional Development Fund, Advantage West Midlands, and Neighbourhood Renewal Funding of £3.5 million to build and deliver agreed targets. The service delivery capacity of the team is dependent on external funding.

Law

10. The Council is under a duty to secure the provision of adequate facilities for further education under Section 15 of the Education Act 1996.

Planning for Adult and Community Learning is set within the context of local, regional and national policies and priorities for adult and community learning.

The work of the Adult and Community Learning Team contributes to all of the key priorities of the Black Country LSC.

Equality Impact

11. The work of the Netherton Regeneration Centre is specifically targeted at those living in the target ward, which nationally equates to one of the top 10% of areas of deprivation. Service priorities enable targeting of services to meet individual and community needs.

Adult Learning is jointly planned with local partners to ensure that all providers address low skills, gaps in provision and prioritise meeting the needs of individuals, communities and employers in the Borough.

Recommendation

12. That the Committee note the report.



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Director of Adult Community and Housing Services

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List of Background Papers

Appendix 1: Interim Evaluation of 'Bridges to Success in Netherton and Woodside'.

Bridges to Success Business Plan

Savoy Centre Away Day Report

All paperwork will be publicly available by Nov 07 on Savoy Website. Hard Copies available from Savoy centre manager.