

Cabinet – 8th February 2006

Report of the Chief Executive

Neighbourhood Management Annual Report

Purpose of Report

1. This report is to bring to the attention of the corporate board the recent neighbourhood management annual report and to highlight some of the examples of good practise and achievements of the neighbourhood management team and its partners in engaging people in communities and in addressing local disadvantage across the borough. The annual report has been compiled to illustrate the neighbourhood management approach and the team's work as part of promoting understanding of the role of neighbourhood management and what has been undertaken over the past year.

Background

2. The neighbourhood management mission is to change things in a sustainable way for the most disadvantaged communities. We want to ensure that people living in those communities have better housing and physical environment, reduced crime, improved health and job prospects and better educational opportunities, so that no one is seriously disadvantaged by where they live. We want to make sure that people in communities lead the changes needed in their neighbourhoods and are fully engaged in decisions about what needs to be done.
- 3.. The report sets out an explanation of neighbourhood management and its approach and acknowledges partners in the process. It illustrates some of the activities that are helping to make *local people matter* throughout Dudley. There are some tremendous examples of innovative practice that illustrate the commitment from partner agencies (both internal and external) to *quality service matters*.
Each section contains a summary and examples of the work that has been carried out. The report is organised into sections based on the Neighbourhood management teams; the North, Central, and the South. There is some statistical information at the beginning of each section. Achievements are described under the council plan "matters"
3. The report shows how neighbourhood managers together with partners from both the statutory and community and voluntary sectors have addressed local issues, coordinated partners and funding to address service gaps and involved some of the most excluded people in our borough.

4. Some of the programmes that have been adopted as part of the council's and partners neighbourhood management approach are
 - The smoke detector project – now being rolled out by the fire service and DMBC Housing;
 - Extended schools partnerships based on good practise developed at Caslon;
 - Local community safety groups involving housing, police, youth service and other relevant agencies are allowing a local approach to anti social behaviour and vulnerability to influence Safe and Sound strategy.
 - Children's Safeguarding networks are being piloted using neighbourhood management networks
 - Youth forums are being developed in disadvantaged neighbourhoods based on good practise developed in St Thomas's.
 - Extending liveability funding to friends of the parks in managed neighbourhoods so they are included in the council's strategy for improving parks
 - Bringing a local focus to environmental issues through the Strategic Housing and Environmental theme partnership of Dudley Community partnership.

5. An example of good practise being noted regionally is the swimming and healthy eating project that was developed in partnership with Beauty Bank School.

6. The neighbourhood management approach demonstrates how one partnership activity can benefit individuals and communities and also the wider impacts across several partners' service areas. For example
 - The increase in adults taking up learning opportunities at Beauty Bank has raised the self esteem of individuals and thus increased their overall well-being, has promoted the value of education and positively impacted on school attainment and attendance and has increased the capacity of local people to take more responsibility for their community.
 - The coordination of community safety at Sledmere has enabled vulnerable adults to be identified and both community and service solutions to be put in place. It has enabled positive activities for young people to be developed and for service providers to take a common approach to enforcement against antisocial behaviour.

7. Working in partnership with communities enables service providers to focus activities on the issues that will make a difference to people's lives locally and also draws in the added value of the community resource (Champions Church, Nominated neighbours and environmental volunteers). It also means rather than each service area having to devote a disproportionate amount of resource into an area of disadvantage, their contribution is remains the same in terms of resource although it may be delivered differently. The "extra" is achieved by combining efforts of the agencies.

8. The neighbourhood managers have used creative ways to enable changes and to fill gaps in services particularly through the community, voluntary sector and external or discretionary funding. New ways of working with services through neighbourhood management still go largely unrecognised or acknowledged by statutory agencies at strategic level.

9. The challenges for the future will be to

1. Evidence service changes and transfer learning from the changes that are happening within the main body of services as a result of the neighbourhood management approach and
2. Reflect the neighbourhood management approach within each directorate's service planning as part of the council plan to show how directorate strategies are being translated locally.

Finance

10. The neighbourhood management team is financed jointly between the local strategic partnership and the council. The balance of this is under review. So far this year £498,000 has been drawn into managed neighbourhoods from external or discretionary funding sources. Additional resources are brought to bear in terms of staff from various directorates and agencies and community time.

Law

11. 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 is part of that approach.

Other applicable local authority guidance: Sustainable Communities, local development frameworks, Citizen Engagement in Public Services: why neighbourhoods matter, National Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, Respect Action Plan. In addition white papers on the charter for neighbourhoods and Fairness for all: a new commission for equality and human rights.

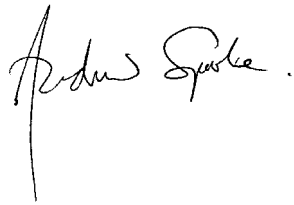
Equality Impact

12. Neighbourhood management is focused on geographical areas of disadvantage within the borough. These areas map directly to the geographical distribution of ethnic minority populations, people who are disabled and in poor health, children and older people who are suffering from poverty and economic disadvantage. The work of the neighbourhood management team has had a positive impact on sections of the populations who suffer inequalities.

Recommendation

13. It is recommended that:-

- The contents of the annual report are noted.
- That directorates consider how they can reflect their contribution to the neighbourhood management approach within their directorate plans
- The contribution of neighbourhood management brought to the local implementation of services and strategies is recognised.



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Chief Executive

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List of Background Papers

This section should include a list of those documents, which disclose facts or matters on which the report is based and which have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report. Published works or documents containing exempt or confidential information must not be included in this list.