

Halesowen Area Committee 11th November 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 made by the Working Group in progressing and updating the Halesowen Area Committee Community Renewal Plan.

Background

2. At their meeting on 10th September The Working Group received an organisational flowchart setting out the various work streams, Groups, Forums, etc. involved in community renewal activity in Halesowen. The flowchart demonstrated how the various work streams and activities fitted together to enable a more strategic overview of community renewal work, with an emphasis on avoiding overlap and duplication of activity.
3. From the organisational workflow members requested the Area Community Renewal Officer (ACRO) provide the following:-
 - A list of community groups be circulated to members inviting further contribution
 - An update by the Neighbourhood Services Group at the next meeting and that any minutes produced be circulated to all Halesowen Councillors for information.
4. Members referred to problems that had arisen with liaison between ward Councillors and the Police and ongoing difficulties with relationships and partnership working. Concerns were expressed that Councillors were not being routinely kept informed of crime and anti-social behaviour issues. There was a need to improve working relationships, communication and adopt a more streamlined and consistent process for providing regular feedback from the Police to Ward Members and the ACRO was asked to explore avenues for improvement.
5. The Working Group undertook a detailed discussion on the Area Committee Community Regeneration Plan for Halesowen. The Plan listed key actions and activities together with associated timescales and progress. Specific comments and discussion focussed on certain aspects of the plan as follows:-

- Anti-social behaviour and criminal damage based on data supplied by the Safe and Sound Board for the Cradley and Foxcote Ward. A working group had been established to tackle these problems and this would also include Fatherless Barn estate. Partnership working, member involvement and identifying problems on a ward by ward basis were discussed.
- Healthy Towns: The ACRO reported on the recent stakeholder meeting. The scheme would now move forward to obtaining planning permission for the new Hub Building at Huntingtree Park. There will be ongoing public meetings to follow progress and there would be separate progress reports to Area Committee.

Finance

6. In line with the draft local community plan, Area Committees plan 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

7. 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.

Equality Impact

8. The objective of Community renewal is to promote inclusion and social cohesion. Community renewal plans target those most in need in terms of deprivation. Information is collected through each CR intervention or consultation to monitor the exclusivity 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 frequently design the response to local issues - such as youth PACT, Junior rangers, Breakfast clubs, Dance groups, football league, homework mates, places to play , young consultants, intergenerational work

Recommendation

9. That Committee Members note the report and accept the Plan as a working document for the year ahead, and with the Community Renewal Service reporting progress to the Committee through the Working Group.



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