

## Keynote speaker presentations

### **Making a difference in local communities – supporting the development of Neighbourhood Management**

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Community Safety Champion – North Somerset Partnership Board**

#### **Presentation Summary**

##### **Introduction**

**In August 2005, the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced that new resources would be available to improve quality of life in the most disadvantaged Neighbourhoods. Two funding streams were established known as the Neighbourhood Element and the Cleaner, Safer, Greener Element.**

In North Somerset a Neighbourhood Element fund of £1.6million and a Cleaner, Safer, Greener element of £2.1million was allocated for work to be carried out in South Ward, Weston-super-Mare from April 2006. The Neighbourhood funding lasts for four years, and the Cleaner Safer Greener funding lasts two years.

**The North Somerset Partnership has been given responsibility for overseeing the development of the work with the Council acting as the accountable body. The aim is to set up a Neighbourhood Management programme that would enable communities to better influence and engage with Public Services. Ultimately the programme intends to make lasting improvements to the area by responding to local needs through more responsive services and facilities.**

##### **The North Somerset Partnership Approach to developing the work**

**In October 2005 the North Somerset Partnership Board set up a sub group that I chaired to work towards the establishment of a Neighbourhood Management Team for the South Ward by April 2006.**

**We had just 6 months to do a huge amount of work. However there was a lot of good practice to draw upon from other areas. We were able to benefit from lessons learned elsewhere and we enjoyed the support of a Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor, Chris Allen, recommended by GOSW who was tremendous help and support.**

**Essential at this early stage was transparency, communication and a clear understanding of local people's priorities.**

**In the first four months we met six times, visited a reference site in Gloucester and had a presentation from a Neighbourhood Manager from Morecambe.**

**We did not have time to begin a new consultation process so we reviewed a huge amount of information from community consultation and priorities gathered from residents of the South Ward over the previous two years.**

The sub group's work included:

- **Reviewing lots of statistics and data.**
- **Researching and identifying appropriate Neighbourhood Management structures.**
- **Looking at sample job descriptions and person specifications for Neighbourhood Management Team members based on experience elsewhere.**

- **Making a successful bid for additional support from ODPM (SELD)**
- **Making a successful bid to ODPM for the support of a Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor**
- **Holding an open drop in session at the Healthy Living Centre for the community to meet the Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor and subgroup members – to brief the community and take on board views.**
- **Organising four consultation sessions in the four Estates for community representatives and one session for South Ward service providers.**
- **North Somerset Council elected members received briefings and updates from the team.**

As we began to consolidate our thinking we recommended to North Somerset Partnership Board that:

- 1. In line with guidance we needed to recruit and establish a Neighbourhood Management Team to develop a work programme.**
- 2. A management board needed to be established that would be made up of local residents, local community and voluntary groups, service providers and other interests represented as appropriate.**
- 3. The sub group would prepare a programme of work of initial actions based on the things that the community told us they needed.**

**While recruiting the management team, the sub group prepared Terms of Reference and a Code of Conduct for Management Board members. We also worked together to plan early environmental improvement work, identified by residents as important.**

#### **How the work has developed**

**The Environmental programme commenced during June 2006 and early actions included rubbish clearing, tidying up overgrown shrubbery, clearing footpaths etc.**

A Neighbourhood Manager took up their post in July, based at the Healthy Living Centre. . We then set about recruiting the rest of the team and encouraging involvement in the establishment of the Neighbourhood Management Board for the area.

**It was a huge disappointment to all of us when, for personal reasons the Neighbourhood Manager gave notice of resignation after just a month and left in September 2006. However, with the strong commitment from partner organisations and members of the community, interim arrangements have been successfully made. We aimed to ensure that any slippage on this important programme was minimised so our set back did not affect progress within our communities.**

#### **Programme Management**

**There is now an interim Neighbourhood Management team in place in South Ward. This team consists of a Neighbourhood Manager Di Robinson (2 days), Operations Manager, Mark Gillespie GOSW (3 days across 5), Community Regeneration Officer, Christine Ward (4 days) and Data Analyst, David Davies (3 days). All these posts are filled currently by secondees from a variety of organisations and are in place until the end of December. The situation regarding staffing will need to be re-appraised at that time in the light of the recruitment campaign.**

**All the posts have been advertised. The interviews are being planned for the week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> December 2006.**

### **Neighbourhood Management Board**

The Board have now met three times as a full Board and these meetings have been very well attended and positive. The Board has elected a Chair – Paul Philips, Principal of Weston

College, who will take this role until April 07 when a Resident Chair will be appointed. Currently the Board is quite large – better to have interested people on board in early stages, but we have agreed that the existing group will act as the Interim Board, with full authority to make decisions. We will work towards an agreed final structure to take effect as of April 2007.

### **Work developed**

A number of developments have been taking place since the interim team has been in place. These include:

- Board established and decision making processes agreed
- Community Chest programme established focusing funding on community engagement activity. 5 residents are the decision making funding panel – based on criteria that everyone has agreed.
- Quick Wins Programme in development to progress smaller scale environmental and community safety improvements – decision to be made on the process on 28/11. There are a number of potential projects in the pipeline, all of which have been identified both via community information (South Ward Survey September 2006) and service information.
- Budget being prepared to 31/03/07 outlining the levels of under spend and potential actions to address the issues. Indicative budget for 07/08 also being prepared.
- Baseline data will now be reviewed commencing 20<sup>th</sup> November. This will provide the underpinning statistical evidence for all future work, coupled with service data and community information. Very important to show where we started so we can monitor what has been achieved over the life of the project.
- A Delivery Plan is being drafted to cover the final quarter of this year, and indicative approaches for 2007/08, to provide a working document for the new team.
- A Community Engagement plan is being drafted, with a view to co-ordinating community development activity to ensure we are all working towards the same aims. This will be a key element for the “stronger” agenda within the Local Area Agreement and will aim to be in place and agreed with all key stakeholders by February/March 2007.

### **Conclusion**

There is a clear sense of moving forward within this piece of work. The Board are engaging well and developing, the local partnerships between Neighbourhood Management and local service providers are developing well, and we are shaping up a clear work programme to take the project into 07/08 when the new team will be in place.