

Appendix 2: Community Enablement Projects in Bath and North East Somerset

Key Principle 1. HELPING THOSE WHO NEED IT THE MOST

Background

Bath and North East Somerset, whilst relatively prosperous, has pockets of deprivation. The Local Strategic Partnership has sought to use its combined resources to identify specific issues and concerns, often at very local level, and tackle them head-on, tailoring the exact solution to local circumstances. In this way, partners can mobilise local community knowledge, skills and neighbourliness to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

Case Study: the Chew Valley Village Agents

In 2009, Bath & North East Somerset Council commissioned Community Action and then latterly, SWAN Acre Network, to improve access to services within the Chew Valley area, to reduce the affects of isolation for the most vulnerable people. The pilot scheme was initially funded by the Council and latterly by NHS Bath & North East Somerset.

The project covers 10 rural parishes in the Chew Valley area, a total population of 6,462 and 2,800 households. The majority of clients are aged over 70 years and 1/3rd are over 80 years. 67% of clients are female. These clients are isolated and generally are not already in contact with the Council or other agencies. The Agents have met with 64 people of which there were 434 different interactions recorded, and referrals were made to 52 Agencies. Many referrals come from concerned neighbours.

Potential next steps

- Developing and extending Village Agents in other areas and linking with innovative schemes such as social prescribing
- Supporting “good neighbour” schemes

Key Principle 2- PROMOTING CIVIC PRIDE

Background

Bath and North East Somerset already has the highest rate of volunteering in our area compared to similar authorities.

Case Study: the Chairman’s Awards

Bath & North East Somerset Council is committed to recognising the value of volunteering through its supported volunteering programme and annual Awards ceremonies. There is an increasing focus on students as volunteers and being seen as an asset to our communities. The Chairman of Bath & North East Somerset Council organises three annual Awards that aim to recognise the value of volunteering and highlight the contribution they make to our area. These are

- the Community Awards
- the Sports Awards and;
- the Business Awards.

Potential Next Steps

- A Council-wide Employee Volunteering scheme, linking also with businesses looking for volunteering opportunities in the area
- Producing clear guidance for local individuals or groups who are interested in getting involved in practical community initiatives
- Developing and enhancing Council volunteer roles such as Street Champions

Key Principle 3: LOCAL INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Background

The LSP in Bath and North East Somerset has piloted a number of localised schemes which are designed to change the way in which local residents engage with public

services.

Case Study: Changes in Whiteway

In November 2008, B&NES Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) commissioned Re:generate to undertake an intensive piece of community engagement and empowerment work in the Whiteway area of Bath.

Two years on, this has resulted in a wide range of different projects run by members of the Community, which come together under the umbrella of the *Changes* community group. These include the Proud of Your Doorstep scheme; a nascent social enterprise to tackle flytipping and litter. *Changes* is working hard to improve the local area and engage with agencies to support them to better deliver services in Whiteway.

Potential Next Steps

- to seek to extend schemes to new areas where capacity needs to be improved and long-term relationships with the community improved
- to build on the success of existing projects by
 - leveraging-in investment for sustainable social enterprises
 - signing Neighbourhood Agreements that set out the obligations of partners and the community

Key Principle 4: PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Background

Bath and North East Somerset is a complex and diverse area made up of distinctive market towns, villages, countryside and of course the World Heritage site of Bath. The Council therefore does not adopt a “one size fits all” approach to working with local communities, preferring to work with the grain of communities and how they evolve. It is the role of our local elected members to represent the views of local people and to reflect the needs of local communities and their skills and capacity will increasingly be crucial. In parished areas of course this also means working closely with parish and town councils and also through our successful Parish Clusters.

Case Study: the Ward Councillors’ Initiative

The Ward Councillors Initiative was introduced in August 2008 and was designed to help Bath and North East Somerset Councillors respond quickly to needs within their wards.. Each Councillor was eligible to apply for up to £4,000 for their ward. The scheme has so far involved 65 Councillors in total, with a budget £260,000. Councillors are required to demonstrate community consultation and support for the project.

The key aspect of the scheme is that it is tailored to local needs, and aims to be a quick and clear way of making a difference in local communities. The range of projects supported has been wide, including support for local community and youth provision but also investment in schemes such as a composting club and a school garden project. A key aim has been to support appropriate projects quickly and with the minimum of fuss and bureaucracy.

Potential Next Steps

The Council will play a key role in

- ensuring a smooth transition for the new Town and Parish Councils in our area
- supporting and developing elected members elected to Bath & North East Somerset council in May 2011
- further developing of the Ward Councillors’ Initiative
- work with local elected members to develop “Local Action Profiles” for local communities so we can ensure areas get the help and support they need

KEY PRINCIPLE 5: INVESTING FOR THE LONG TERM

Background

The LSP has sought to focus on involving local people in seeking long-term solutions to issues such as promoting good health, re-offending, the challenges of an ageing population and local regeneration. People aged over 80 will increase by 40% between 2010 and 2026. Addressing these complex issues require long-term thinking and unlocking the capacity that exists within local communities.

Case Study: Community Planning

Community Planning is a way of drawing on the views and skills of a local community to meet local needs by drawing up a Plan for a local area. In Bath and North East Somerset, The Council can provide a wide range of help and support for local communities seeking to develop their Plans, including a “Community Planning Toolkit”.

Since adopting its community plan, Paulton now has five groups of volunteers working to tackle local issues. They focus on: speeding; litter; provision of a social hub; sustainable living; and running a village website. There are now 16 adopted Parish Plans in Bath and North East Somerset.

Potential Next Steps

- Continue to work with Parish Councils to develop sustainable facilities for young people
- Using Parish planning to engage on key long-term issues facing the area
- Develop a vision for Paulton Library as a multi-use community facility
- Parish involvement in delivery of services and facilities
- Utilise under-used council assets to kick-start regeneration in London Road