

**REPORT TO CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE REDCAR & CLEVELAND
PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING ON 9 NOVEMBER 2007**

REVIEW OF SOCIAL INCLUSION GROUP

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the review of the partnership's arrangements for managing the stronger communities' agenda locally.

2.0 AIMS & DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 2.1 The aim of the report is for members to consider the conclusions of the review and to determine the desired course of action

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members are referred to the Review of the Social Inclusion Group report, which is attached as Appendix A.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The review report was considered by the Social Inclusion Group when it met on 14 August 2007 and by the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership (SSCP) when it met on 18 October 2007. The SSCP has indicated a preference for option 5 (detailed in section 3.6 of the attached report).

5.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The options appraisal is detailed in section 4 of the attached review report.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members approve option 5 within the attached review report, and instruct officers to develop detailed proposals, addressing such issues as group membership and remit, and the arrangements for scrutiny and overview.

7.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

Option 5 is recommended as it will enable the partnership to embed the stronger communities' agenda across the partnership, secure an overview and scrutiny function/"critical friend" role, and provide access to direct decision-making and ensure expediency in addressing issues around social exclusion and community cohesion.

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REPORT TO CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP AND REDCAR & CLEVELAND PARTNERSHIP BOARD

REVIEW OF SOCIAL INCLUSION GROUP

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to review the partnership's arrangements for managing the stronger communities' agenda locally.
- 1.2 The report seeks the views of members on proposed future arrangements for managing this element of the partnership's work.

2.0 AIMS & DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 2.1 The aim of the report is for members to consider the review and to determine the desired course of action

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Chair of the Redcar & Cleveland Partnership, the Safer & Stronger & Communities Partnership (SSCP), and the Social Inclusion Group have requested that a review of the arrangements for the stronger communities' element of the SSCP be carried out. This has been undertaken by a working group consisting of Council officers and representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- 3.2 The review takes account of the current Government agenda in relation to stronger communities, considers the challenges of this agenda and makes proposals for the remodelling of the partnership's arrangements accordingly.

3.3 Current arrangements

Currently, the stronger communities' agenda sits under SSCP and is dealt with by the following groups: -

Social Inclusion Group

Formerly Priority Group 6, the group was remodelled as a task group reporting to SSCP in 2006/07. The remit of the Group is to promote social inclusion and renewal in the most disadvantaged communities within the Borough. It does this by means of research and programmes of action through partnership working.

In addition to operational programmes the following policy areas specifically relate to the work of the Social Inclusion Group.

Community Cohesion Partnership, Community Cohesion task group, and Hate crime task group

The Partnership meets quarterly and is chaired by the Council's Community Cohesion Champion; the group receives reports from the community cohesion task group which meets six-weekly and includes the hate crime task group.

The overall remit of the Community Cohesion partnership is to promote community cohesion throughout Redcar & Cleveland by coordinating community cohesion activities and raising awareness of community cohesion issues by means of a programme of training, activities, publicity and marketing.

Compact steering group

In 2004 a Compact steering group was formed to develop and extend the Compact to all of the Redcar & Cleveland Partnership, It is currently undertaking a refresh of the Compact plan.

Community Engagement Coordination Group

Following the adoption of a partnership-wide Community Consultation Strategy in 2001, the Coordinating Group has been meeting to share information and good practice which has resulted in joint consultation exercises taking place.

Currently the group are reviewing its future role and remit in the light of the recently commissioned community engagement capacity building plan.

3.4 Government agenda

The Government has been developing the stronger communities' agenda over the last four years, culminating in the recent White Paper, "Strong & prosperous communities".

The key themes of that agenda are as follows: -

Community engagement: Public bodies are required to inform, consult, involve and devolve to local citizens and communities in driving improvements resulting in better services and higher levels of public satisfaction. The Government also expects arrangements for involving local people in creation of strategic plans, such as Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreements, and the Local Development Framework all to be streamlined to avoid duplication and consultation fatigue. The Government's proposals include a strong focus on the strengthening of local overview and scrutiny arrangements.

This aspect of the Government's agenda is captured in the LAA under the priority of "involvement in local governance"

Third sector development and community capacity building:

Government sees a striving and vibrant third sector as a key policy objective. The Government has a clear expectation that the third sector is a key partner in place shaping. Government also stresses the importance of providing coordinated community capacity building support to citizens and community organisations to enable them to effectively take up the community engagement opportunities being made available.

This aspect of the Government's agenda is captured in the LAA under the priority of "VCS development"

Community cohesion: promotion of community cohesion

Local authorities and their partners are to have the leadership role in relation to community cohesion. The Government's priorities are to identify those places where cohesion should be a local priority reflected in improvement targets and to support the establishment of forums to address issues of extremism where appropriate. The Commission on Integration & Cohesion recently published its "Shared Futures" report, providing a new definition of integration and cohesion. The report highlights the following four principles:

- Principle of shared futures
- Principle of strengthened rights and responsibilities
- Principle of respect and civility
- Principle of visible social justice

The report also makes recommendations for practical action to make these principles a reality.

This aspect of the Government's agenda is captured in the LAA under the priority of "community cohesion and inclusion"

3.5 Implications of Government agenda

The key issues arising from the Government agenda for the partnership's current arrangements in relation to stronger communities can be summarised as follows: -

- lack of a specific focus in relation to third sector development and community capacity-building issues raised by the Government agenda
- lack of strong accountability arrangements or driver for Compact related issues
- need to strengthen partnership's response to the Government's community engagement agenda
- synergies between community engagement, third sector development and community capacity building, and community cohesion and integration agendas

- cross-cutting nature of Government's stronger communities agenda may not be best served by being subsumed under a thematic partnership having a primary focus on crime
- need to address scrutiny and overview issues within partnership and to link this to the third sector's role in relation to place-shaping

3.6 Re-shaping the existing arrangements for managing the stronger communities agenda within the partnership

A working group has been meeting to carry out this review.

The working group has had regard to the Government's agenda, lessons from a neighbouring local strategic partnership experience, and from the experience of restructuring the partnership over the last year. The group presented a paper setting out the case for option 3 to the Social Inclusion Group, when it met on 14 August 2007. The Social Inclusion Group discussed this paper and requested that additional options (options 4 and 5) be included.

The Middlesbrough Partnership have been undertaking a similar review exercise, resulting in the establishment of a Stronger Communities Action Group, which will take the lead in addressing the themes of neighbourhood renewal, engagement with the VCS, community cohesion, VCS capacity building, and the Respect agenda on behalf of that neighbouring local strategic partnership.

All of the options generally propose the re-shaping of task/policy groups, as follows: -

Community engagement task/policy group

This group will meet six-weekly to develop and oversee the partnership's work in relation to the following: -

- Streamlining community involvement in the development of strategic plans such as Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreements, and the Local Development Framework
- Coordinating partner organisations community engagement activities
- Developing the local neighbourhood action planning process

Third sector development task/policy group

This group will meet six-weekly to develop and oversee the partnership's work in relation to the following: -

- Volunteering
- Third sector development
- Third sector funding issues, including procurement
- Community capacity building/community development, including learning opportunities for community engagement and community assets

- Compact

Community cohesion and integration

This group will meet six-weekly to develop and oversee the partnership's work in relation to the following: -

- Practical action to address the four principles of Community cohesion and integration
- Social exclusion issues (six equality strands), including financial inclusion
- Hate crime reporting
- Drugs services

Options for consideration

In the case of option 2, these task/policy groups will report directly to the Safer Stronger Communities Partnership, eliminating the need for the existing Social Inclusion Group.

In the case of option 3, it is proposed that these task/policy groups report to a newly-formed (fifth) thematic partnership, the Stronger Communities Partnership.

In the case of option 4, it is proposed that these task/policy groups report to a Stronger Communities Group which, along with the existing Partnership Performance Management Group, will report to the Partnership's Governance sub-group.

In the case of option 5, it is proposed that these task/policy groups report to a Stronger Communities Group, having a smaller membership than the Groups proposed in option 3 and 4, and reporting directly to the Redcar & Cleveland Partnership Board.

In the case of options 3 to 5, the newly formed Stronger Communities Group/thematic partnership will meet quarterly.

Members are requested to indicate their preferred option and to instruct support officers – in conjunction with the working group – to develop detailed proposals, addressing such issues as group memberships and remits, and the arrangements for overview and scrutiny.

4.0 Options analysis

Option 1 Do nothing: will enable the partnership to build on existing social exclusion and community cohesion work, but will not effectively address the Government agenda in relation to third sector development or community capacity building.

Option 2 Re-shape arrangements under SSCP. This will streamline arrangements and enable a stronger focus on the three stronger communities' priorities within the LAA outcomes framework, but there is a risk that the cross-cutting nature of this agenda will be subsumed within the SSCP's primary focus on crime and anti social behaviour issues.

Option 3 Create a new thematic partnership and task groups: this will raise the profile of stronger communities, streamline the partnership's work on these issues, and enable third sector and community capacity building issues to be more effectively addressed. However, this approach may not secure the embedding of stronger communities' issues across the whole partnership. It may also militate against the embedding of a scrutiny and overview function/"critical friend" role at a strategic level within the Partnership.

Option 4 Develop a Stronger Communities Group, with task groups, which will report to the Partnership's Governance sub-group. This approach would have the benefit of enabling the Partnership to address these issues more thoroughly, work towards equity and excellence in monitoring cross-cutting issues, and create an opportunity to develop an overview and scrutiny function – including a more effective approach to compact issues – within the Partnership.

Option 5 As option 4, but the Stronger Communities Group will report directly to the Partnership Board instead. This option would give access to direct decision-making and ensuring expedience in addressing issues around social exclusion and community cohesion.

5.0 Recommendation

Members are requested to indicate a preference between options 4 and 5.

6.0 Reason for recommendation

Option 4 or 5 is recommended as either will enable the partnership to embed the stronger communities' agenda across the partnership, and secure an overview and scrutiny function/"critical friend" role within the Partnership.

7.0 Information sources

“Strong & prosperous communities” Local Government White paper
(October 2006)
“Our Shared Futures”, Commission on Integration & Cohesion (June
2007)
“The Future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration”,
HM Treasury (June 2007)
“Firm Foundations: The Government’s Framework for Community
Capacity-Building”, Home Office (December 2004)
“The Community Development Challenge”, DCLG (December 2006)
Establishment of a Stronger Communities Action Group – report to
Middlesbrough partnership (25 July 2007)
Redcar & Cleveland Local Area Agreement
Area Management & Chief Executive Dept. files

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REPORT TO THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE REDCAR & CLEVELAND PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING ON 9 NOVEMBER 2007

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CAPACITY BUILDING PLAN – UPDATE REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to update Members on progress made in implementing the community engagement capacity building plan work plan since May 2007.

The report also outlines how the Government's community empowerment agenda has developed in the meantime, highlights the implications of this agenda, and makes proposals to strengthen community capacity building and empowerment activities.

2. AIMS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

The aim of the report is for Members to agree a number of proposals to support an effective response to the Government's community empowerment agenda.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Community engagement capacity building plan update

3.1.1 Members will recall that they approved the Community Engagement Capacity Building Plan (CECBP) when they met on 25 May 2007. That plan proposed five work streams to be developed further as part of a four-to-five month work programme to mid-October 2007.

3.1.2 The work programme consisted of the following: -

- 1) The undertaking of an engagement resource review in order to secure the efficient and effective use of partnership engagement resources
- 2) The establishment of community structures for effective engagement to support effective community voices across geographic communities and communities of interest
- 3) The establishment of ways of managing data that support communities and service providers in developing area profiles and local neighbourhood plans
- 4) The establishment of proposals for the enhancement of coordination and joint working on engagement activities across all partnership organisations
- 5) The establishment of innovative engagement best practice tools and methods across the Borough to support innovative engagement work

6) Capacity Building Team continues to be responsible for the overall coordination of the work

3.1.3 Members approved a budget of £9,150 for the implementation of the work programme.

3.1.4 This report provides an update on the planning and implementation activities undertaken since then in line with the work programme agreed by Members.

3.2 Engagement resource review work stream: update

3.2.1 Following a review of the Redcar & Cleveland Partnership Community Engagement Coordination Group and taking account the development of the CECBP it has been agreed that the group should be strengthened and that a strategic overarching approach to community engagement be developed across the LSP. The group are currently:-

- Undertaking a review of the resources currently being invested in engagement activities including a commitment from organisations to commit people to coordinated consultation practice and resources.

3.3 Community structures for engagement work stream: update

3.3.1 Six geographic workshops were organised together with a seventh, communities of interest workshop. Fifty-five representatives from 38 voluntary and community organisations took part.

3.3.2 The workshops highlighted the great range of activity – often taking the form of informal public service – being delivered by voluntary and community organisations, including a great deal of engagement activity with their own communities, as well as joint working with public services and responding to existing engagement opportunities.

3.3.3 Attendees were motivated to continue to respond positively to engagement opportunities, and broadly supportive of the idea of collaborating with other community organisations in their area to establish community-led structures for engagement. However, there was a clear concern on the part of attendees about the capacity of theirs and other community organisations to respond without significant additional support.

3.3.4 The main issues highlighted are summarised below: -

- Supportive of community structure for engagement, but any proposed structure must be inclusive
- Supportive of neighbourhood action planning, but process needs to be resourced

- Administrative and capacity building support required to enable voluntary and community sectors to take up engagement opportunities
- Individual organisations will want to retain independence; need for further consultation with group members
- Proposed structures need to deliver action, rather than being “talking-shop”
- Independent campaigning role of sector not jeopardised
- Separate perspectives of different communities of interest need to be accommodated
- Equal partnership only if engagement process is two-way and communities not passive participants, but are involved in setting agenda, actively raising issues themselves with public services, and involved in strategic planning processes

3.4 Managing data work stream: update

3.4.1 The managing data workstream is being co-ordinated by the LSP Data Management Group (formerly Performance Management Group) and their work programme includes all of the area of work identified within the CECBP. The Borough’s first Area Profile has been published and is updated regularly (available from www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/statistics), and a set of ward profiles are currently being developed. Work around mapping data and data sharing is ongoing.

3.5 Coordination and joint working on engagement activities work stream: update

3.5.1 Through the Community Engagement Coordination Group a commitment has been made from partners to communicate, coordinate and to collaborate where appropriate all community engagement activity. The group are currently exploring -:

- Establishing a revised Terms of Reference
- Developing proposals to enhance the coordination of community engagement activities including a calendar of consultations both with service providers and with community organisations.

3.6 Innovative best practice work stream: update

3.6.1 A key tool in developing and sharing innovative best practice and joint working on community engagement will be a new ‘Community Engagement Portal’ - a website that can be accessed from the Partnership website as well as from the sites of individual organisations. The Portal will include a section for residents and other stakeholders, and a section for researchers/members of staff who are involved in engagement. The residents section will include a consultation database, a calendar of consultation and details of how to get involved. There will also be the facility for people to complete on-

line consultation. The researchers section will include detailed guidance on consultation, and a chat room/forum to enable the sharing of ideas and good practice. An estimate for developing this site has been provided, and is £5,000.

4.0 Further developments In the Government's community empowerment agenda

- 4.1 Since Members approved the Community Engagement Capacity Building Plan in May, the Government's drive to place community empowerment at the heart of its improvement agenda has gathered pace, and in future will become still broader and deeper in scope.
- 4.2 The Government has published a number of reports and action plans to further develop this agenda. Of particular importance are: *The Community Development Challenge*, the *Quirk Review*, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's *Our Shared Future* report, the *Third Sector Review*, and, most recently, *An Action Plan for Community Empowerment*.
- 4.3 A new *Public Service Agreement* focussing on community empowerment, cohesion and the third sector has been published. Local authorities and their partners are being encouraged to prioritise empowerment through Local Area Agreements, and evidence of empowerment will form a crucial part of Comprehensive Area Assessments.
- 4.4 Further piloting of and guidance on the community empowerment provisions of the *Local Government White Paper* is scheduled in 2008. The *National Improvement and Efficiency Plan* to be published in March 2008 will put community empowerment in the mainstream of the Government's public services improvement agenda, with local government's responsibility for empowering local communities likely to be established as part of a concordant between central and local government.
- 4.5 This policy development drive builds on the Government's earlier work developing the community empowerment agenda through its *Firm Foundations: the Government's Framework for Community Capacity Building*, published in December 2004.
- 4.6 The key messages and themes emerging from the Government's community empowerment agenda are: -
- 4.7 Central role of a strong and healthy third sector to the Government's work to build strong, active and connected communities, and transform public services**

4.7.1 Central to the Government's thinking on stronger communities is the idea that strong and vibrant communities have the capacity to bring people together to deal with their common concerns by forming and sustaining their own community organisations.

4.7.2 The local third sector has a crucial role to play in helping local people to make use of the White Paper's community empowerment provisions, a critical contribution to make to helping to build cohesive communities, and should be a key partner of particularly local government in place-shaping, with third sector representation well embedded into local decision-making areas. The third sector plays multiple roles in transforming public services, not just by delivering user focussed services, but also as a partner in innovation, in the design of services, and as campaigners for change in the way services are delivered.

4.8 Crucial role of community development practice in advancing the Government's community empowerment agenda

4.8.1 The *Our Shared Future* report is only the latest Government report to recognise the crucial role of community development in advancing the Government's community empowerment and community cohesion agenda. *The Community Development Challenge* report advocated a step change in levels of recognition, funding and support to community development, and *Firm Foundations* advocated the adoption of a community development approach as a key principle informing community capacity building.

4.9 The continuing relevance of the Government's *Firm Foundations* framework to this agenda

4.9.1 The Government's *Firm Foundations* framework for community capacity building continues to be the cornerstone of its thinking on community empowerment, particularly the support required by communities if to be able to take up the community engagement opportunities being made available, and so drive public service reform.

4.9.2 The key elements of the framework are:-

- Development of "community anchor organisations"
- Local-action planning
- Better collaboration between organisations supporting community capacity building
- Building up learning opportunities about active citizenship and community engagement
- Workers with community development skills, a meeting space or base or "hub", access to small grants funding, a forum or network that is inclusive, open and participatory, owned by and accountable to the community, and learning opportunities for active citizenship and engagement are the five key factors that must be accessible at

neighbourhood or community level if communities are to function cohesively and be empowered

4.10 Support to community anchor organisations

4.10.1 Community anchor organisations are large neighbourhood-based community organisations, often involved in forms of social enterprise, providing a focal point for local communities and the development of the community sector, delivering services and functioning as intermediaries between external agencies and grass-roots activity.

4.10.2 The Government accepts that many potential community anchors will not have all the elements in place or have the capacity to play the role demanded of community anchors without additional support and investment. The key to developing sustainable community anchors lies with providing asset development and enterprise support to facilitate the expansion of earned income.

4.11 Local-action planning and local charters as tools for empowering communities to set local priorities and shape public services

4.11.1 Local-action planning is a term the Government uses to describe any process whereby the members of any type of community work together to produce a plan setting out their vision and objectives for their neighbourhood or community, and the actions and initiatives which will help to achieve them, including those actions that a community proposes to take itself, and those actions, that to be successful, depend on influencing public statutory bodies.

4.11.2 *The Local Government White Paper* encourages Local Strategic Partnerships to consider the wider use of local-action planning as part of a strategic approach to community engagement, and highlights the crucial role that local-action planning processes can play in facilitating the development of local or neighbourhood charters, a key community empowerment proposal being made by the Government.

4.12 Better collaboration in the delivery of community capacity building support

4.12.1 The Government's view – re-affirmed in the *Local Government White Paper* – is that support for communities to make the fullest use of the range of engagement opportunities being offered by its community empowerment proposals is not currently sufficiently coordinated or targeted to maximise impact.

4.12.2 *Firm Foundations*, *The Community Development Challenge* and *Our Shared Future* all advocate a coordinated strategic approach to community capacity building, with community development as the driver, linking the community development inputs of all providers, forming a strong theme within the Local Area Agreement, located

within the Sustainable Community Strategy, and funded adequately through coordinated channels.

4.13 Support for volunteering and coordinated promotion of available active citizen and engagement opportunities

4.13.1 Volunteering is crucial to strengthening communities, civil society and supporting others. The Government acknowledges that volunteering is not a free good for organisations: investment is required to promote a culture of volunteering and volunteer development. Volunteers make a vital contribution to the direct delivery of public services, and Government wants to engage a wide range of volunteers in the direct delivery of public services.

4.13.2 Opportunities or entry points for people to take on active citizen and governance roles should be better promoted and coordinated, so that more people are recruited and retained in these roles.

4.14 Long-term funding structures a key issue

4.14.1 Fair and sustainable funding is vital if the third sector is to play a full role. Grants, alongside contracts, have a crucial role, and should be used when supporting the building of the capacity of third sector organisations. The starting point for grant-funding should be three years, unless it does not represent best value. Inappropriately short funding arrangements create inefficiency in local government and lead to financial instability for third sector partner organisations.

4.14.2 *The Community Development Challenge* report advocates funding for community development sufficient to achieve and maintain a major step change in the level of community strengths and empowerment, especially in disadvantaged areas.

5.0 The local context

5.1 Locally, the challenges to be addressed if progress made to date is to be safeguarded let alone further substantial advances made against the Government's developing community empowerment agenda, are as follows: -

5.2 Threat to community capacity building infrastructure locally

The ability of local support organisations to provide adequate conditions and support for community capacity building is vital. Yet the local context is that, despite much excellent work being carried out, including in support of the development of the recent Statement of Community Involvement and of the Community Engagement Capacity Building Plan, support organisations are fragile, and their long-term future is not secure.

Within Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council -;

- Community development activities – particularly in Area Management (Community Development) and Chief Executive's (Business Planning & Development and Regeneration Services) Departments – will shortly be reviewed across the authority

The Redcar & Cleveland Partnership has continuously supported the Community and voluntary sectors since 2001. The NRF/SSCF 2006/08 programmes alone will distribute around £1.2m to the sectors with a further £470,000 in core grant from the Local Authority over the same period.

- Partnership Community Grants (included in figures above): The Redcar & Cleveland Partnership's Community Fund (£80,000 per annum) and the Voluntary Sector Investment Fund (£100,000 per annum) will distribute around 70 Grants up to the 31 March 2008 when both funds come to an end further reducing community activity in the Borough post 2008.
- The Partnerships Community Skills Programme ends in March 2008, and the project is planned to be mainstreamed into Adult Learning Service: it is likely that fewer free courses, fewer courses for small groups, fewer short courses (half-to-one day), fewer non-accredited courses will be delivered as a result

Within the voluntary sector:

- Redcar & Cleveland Voluntary Development Agency is facing a significant potential funding shortfall in 2008/09
- post 2007/08 DEFRA funding for Tees Valley Rural Community Council is uncertain
- the future of the Community Network is secured only until end March 2008

Funding uncertainty directly threatens the continuance of vital specialist infrastructure support, and the charitable grant-giving sector is unlikely to be able to plug the gap because of the current economic climate.

5.3 Community sector capacity varies across the Borough and requires strengthening

Across the Borough there is considerable variation in the capacity of local community sectors to produce and sustain a sufficient number and quality of independent groups and organisations to provide the variety of activities, interests and networks needed to participate, generate mutual aid, mobilise representatives and active citizens, and deliver appropriate forms of public service, especially when more prosperous areas are compared with areas of disadvantage. The community workshops held over the summer as part of the community

engagement capacity building plan's work programme to date have provided new evidence of this. Attendees highlighted difficulties in recruiting and retaining active members and representatives, the challenges they faced in networking and taking joint action with other community organisations, and in responding as positively as they would like to community engagement opportunities

5.4 Local small grants programmes have played a vital role, but a coordinated investor approach will maximise impact

Local small grants programmes, such as the Partnership's Community Fund have had great success in encouraging community action in priority areas. Such programmes are vital and must be continued. Over the Comprehensive Spending Review period, the Government is investing £80million nationally into grass roots activity supporting grass roots community organisations supporting community action and voice and £50million nationally in endowments to local community foundations. A coordinated "investor" approach – such as has been very recently initiated by local support organisations with the BIG Lottery regional development team to ensure the area gets a fairer share of lotteries funding – should be adopted, embracing all significant grant-giving bodies active locally, in order to maximise impact.

5.5 Borough does not have a strategic long-term approach to community-capacity building, explicitly informed by Government's Firm Foundations framework with community development as a driving feature

Whilst much good work has been done over the past 12-18 months in moving towards a more coordinated approach to community capacity building, the Borough still does not have an overarching long-term strategy linking community development inputs from all providers, and explicitly adopting the framework suggested by *Firm Foundations*. Such an approach will be critical to further sustained development in this issue area.

5.6 Local-action planning not a feature locally

Local-action planning, whilst a feature of community empowerment in neighbouring Tees Valley authorities, is not a current feature within Redcar & Cleveland, despite efforts by TVRCC to promote parish planning in the rural areas.

5.7 Potential community anchor organisations are rare and a number or organisations have struggled or failed in the attempt to successfully make the transition

The local experience is that there are few organisations currently having the potential to take on the anchor role for their communities envisaged by the Government for what it calls community anchors. Amongst those that have tried some have seen their organisational development stall or even jeopardised their continued existence in the attempt. Substantial and coordinated support informed by a long-term strategy will be required if progress is to be made in this area.

6.0 **Proposed ways forward**

6.1 The following proposals are designed to address the stronger communities' priorities within the 2008/10 LAA refresh and the new series of Public Service Agreements (PSAs) specifically PSA21 'Build more Cohesive, Empowered and Active Communities and overall to further progress the Government's empowerment agenda. Particularly as both the Partnership Community Fund and Voluntary Sector Investment Fund come to an end in March 2008

- 1) Support key infrastructure organisations in addressing short-term funding issues and as a partnership, develop a long-term strategy – supported by a funding strategy underpinned by fair and sustainable local funding – to secure the delivery of core support services, which enables them and the local third sector to continue to respond to this community empowerment and agenda. This would include a capacity building element to support groups to make links to sources of advice and support (establishing need; setting priorities; project planning; implementation; and Organisational development), and adopt a coordinated investor approach with grant-giving bodies active locally.

Cost: up to £250,000 annually

- 2) Continue a small grants programme beyond March 2008.

Cost: up to £120,000 annually (grants)

- 3) Commission action planning for the five areas of the Borough, with a budget of £10-15,000 for each area to reflect the larger than normal scale than is typically adopted for local-action planning

- in least two area action plans to be completed by September 2008
- the remaining areas to be completed by June 2009
- build on parish/neighbourhood action planning process by commissioning work to develop five local charters by March 2010 (5 X £10-15,000; 5 X £2,500: £12,500; total: £62,500-87,500)

- 4) Commit partnership resources to developing area-based community networks strengthening networking and joint action between local community organisations and communities, in order to better coordinate support to the community sector at area level, and facilitate community engagement with area-action planning processes, as well as enabling communities to be better able to respond more effectively to engagement opportunities. This will complement the Borough-wide community network. Cost: nil to be delivered as part of work programmes associated with enhanced infrastructure. Timescales: December 2008

- 5) Build on the work already done and proposed here to develop a coordinated approach to community development, community capacity building and infrastructure development, which links the inputs from all providers and is explicitly informed by ***Firm Foundations*** and ***Our Shared Future***. Timescale: December 2008 Cost: £4,000 to cover production of report etc; the development of the strategy will be delivered as part of work programmes associated with enhanced funding for infrastructure
- 6) Undertake a review of the potential for the development of Community anchor organisations within the Borough, identifying organisations with the potential to take on this role, their support needs, and develop a long-term strategy, linking into the opportunities being created by Central Government's funding support for this strand particularly over the next three years. Cost: £15,000. Timescale: June 2008
- 7) Develop a district-wide community development network – Supported by a coordinating group – to facilitate the coordination of community capacity building by the various support organisations and emerging community anchor organisations. Cost: £1,200 annually; other costs to be subsumed within work programmes associated with enhanced funding for infrastructure

The total cost of these proposals is as follows:

<u>2008/09</u>	
Infrastructure	£250,000
Grants programme	£120,000
Area action-planning	£30,000/ £45,000
Strategy development	£19,000
Community development network	£1,200
Total, 2008/09	£420,200/ £435,200
<u>2009/10</u>	
Infrastructure	£250,000
Grants programme	£120,000
Area action-planning	£20,000/ £30,000
Community development network	£1,200
Total, 2008/09	£391,200/ £401,200
<u>2010/11 onwards</u>	

Infrastructure	£250,000
Grants programme	£120,000
Community development network	£1,200
Total, annually recurring costs	£371,200

7.0 **Option Analysis**

Option 1 Do nothing: this means taking no action to secure the long-term infrastructure capability locally, no introduction of local-action planning, not safeguarding a locally-controlled small grants programme or adopting an investor approach with grant providers active locally, not developing an overarching community development strategy for the Borough, and no consideration of the support needs of potential community anchor organisations. Local support organisations will seek to continue to create the conditions for a vibrant third sector locally, without any additional support, and the move towards better coordination will stall.

The adoption of this option will mean that there is very likely to be a loss of infrastructure capability locally, community sector capacity will continue to vary across the Borough, and will in fact deteriorate or be degraded. Locally, the gains made in positioning the Borough to be able to respond to the Government's community empowerment agenda will be threatened, even lost, particularly insofar as they depend on the existence of an active, strong third sector, and no further progress will be made, with negative consequences for Comprehensive Area Assessment performance.

Option 2 Implement the recommended proposals: as outlined in section 6.1. This will mean that local infrastructure capability will be safeguarded and enhanced within the framework of an overarching community development strategy, maximising impact, local-action planning will become a feature of community empowerment locally, grass roots activity will be well able to access small grant support and will be strengthened. Community sector capacity will grow particularly in areas where it is currently weak, the Borough will be well-placed to make advances against the Government's community empowerment agenda, and this will be reflected in Comprehensive Area Assessment performance.

8.0 **Recommendation**

Members are recommended to commit to securing option 2 as part of the re negotiation of the new LAA.

9.0 **Reason for recommendation**

Option 2 is recommended as it will create conditions for a vibrant, healthy third sector and will enable further substantive progress against the Government's community empowerment agenda, which in turn is crucial to the success of its local government modernisation agenda.

10.0 **Conclusion**

10.1 Much work has been carried out since May 2007 to progress the Community Engagement Capacity Building Plan approved by the Board on 25 May 2007. The Borough is increasingly well-placed to respond to the Government's community empowerment agenda as a result.

10.2 Community empowerment is a Government policy objective that has increasingly come to the fore. Major policy documents published since the Partnership embarked upon the development of its community engagement capacity building plan have given fresh emphasis to the need to support a healthy third sector able to be a key partner locally in place-shaping, in building stronger communities, in transforming public services, in promoting cohesion and integration, and in encouraging social enterprise.

10.3 A new *Public Service Agreement* focussing on community empowerment, cohesion and the third sector has been published. Local authorities and their partners are being encouraged to prioritise empowerment through Local Area Agreements, and evidence of empowerment will form a crucial part of Comprehensive Area Assessments.

10.4 Key themes emerging from the Government's policy development in the field of community empowerment include: -

- Central role of the third sector
- Crucial role of community development practice
- Continuing relevance of the Government's Firm Foundations framework
- Support to community anchor organisations
- Local-action planning and local charters
- Better collaboration in the delivery of community capacity building support
- Support for volunteering and coordinated promotion of available active citizen and engagement opportunities
- Long-term funding structures

10.5 Issues locally relevant to further progress against the Government's community empowerment agenda include: -

- Threat to community capacity building infrastructure locally

- Community sector capacity varies across the Borough and requires strengthening
- Success of local small grants programmes, but a coordinated investor approach is required
- Borough does not have a strategic long-term approach to community-capacity building, explicitly informed by Government's *Firm Foundations* framework with community development as a driving feature
- Local-action planning not a feature of empowerment activity locally
- Potential community anchor organisations are rare and a number of organisations have struggled or failed in the attempt to successfully make the transition to anchor status

10.6 Proposals have been developed to support further progress against the Government's community empowerment agenda. These are realistic and include: -

- Develop a long-term strategy – supported by a funding strategy underpinned by fair and sustainable local funding – to secure the core capability of key infrastructure organisations active in the Borough to be able to continue to respond to this agenda (£250,000 annually)
- Continue small grants programme, including a capacity building element, and adopt a coordinated investor approach with grant-giving bodies active locally (£120,000 annually)
- Commission action planning and area charters for the five areas of Borough to be completed by March 2010 at a total cost of £62,500-87,500 over two years
- Commit partnership resources to developing area-based community networks. Cost: nil. Timescales: December 2008
- Develop an overarching community development and community cohesion and integration strategy for the Borough, which links the inputs from all providers and is explicitly informed by *Firm Foundations* and *Our Shared Future*. Timescale: December 2008
Cost: £4,000
- Undertake a review of the potential for the development of community anchor organisations within the Borough, and develop a long-term strategy for this strand. Cost: £15,000. Timescale: June 2008
- Develop a district-wide community development network to facilitate the coordination of community capacity building by the various support organisations and emerging community anchor organisations. Cost: £1,200 annually

11.0 References

- “Community Engagement Capacity Building Plan: Report to the Redcar & Cleveland Partnership Board, 25 May 2007”
- “Firm Foundations: The Government’s Framework for Community Capacity-Building”, Home Office (December 2004)
- “Strong & prosperous communities: Local Government White paper” DCLG (October 2006)
- “The Community Development Challenge”, DCLG (December 2006)
- “Strong & prosperous communities: Local Government White paper: Making it happen: the implementation plan” DCLG (January 2007)
- “Planning Together: Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Spatial Planning: a practical guide” DCLG/RTPI (January 2007)
- “Making assets work: The Quirk Review of community management and ownership of public assets”, DCLG (May 2007)
- “Opening the transfer window: The government’s response to the Quirk Review of community management and ownership of public assets”, DCLG (May 2007)
- “Our Shared Futures”, Commission on Integration & Cohesion (June 2007)
- “Third Sector Strategy for Communities and Local Government – Discussion Paper”, DCLG (June 2007)
- “The Future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration”, HM Treasury (July 2007)
- “Letter from Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to Darra Singh, Chair of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion”, DCLG (6 October 2007)
- “PSA Delivery Agreement 21: Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities”, HM Treasury (October 2007)
- “An Action Plan for Community Empowerment: Building on success” DCLG/LGA (October 2007)

**Engagement Capacity Building Coordination Team
November 2007**

Redcar and Cleveland
Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement

Briefing Note for LSP Board: 09 November 2007

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to update the Board on to process for developing and agreeing the Local Area Agreement

2. The New Look Local Area Agreement and Relationship to the National Indicator Set

- 2.1 The new Local Area Agreement will run for three years from April 2008. It will include up to 35 improvement targets drawn from the new National Indicator Set (NIS) (see appendix 1) and 17 statutory targets for early years and education. A list of the statutory targets can be found at appendix 2.
- 2.2 The improvement priorities must be agreed through the LSP, and negotiated by Government Office North East on behalf of central Government. The LAA will effectively translate the priority objectives from the Sustainable Community Strategy into targets to 'secure the improvements local people want to see' (LAA guidance, pg 5).
- 2.3 According to the guidance, it is only those indicators selected for the LAA where Government would expect to see a quantified and specific level of improvement. In other words, while the partnership will still be expected to performance manage the full NIS, and any other relevant local indicators, government will only want to negotiate on the LAA targets. There will be "no other way of Whitehall managing local authority performance!" (CLG, New Performance Framework . . . Oct, 2007)

3. Developing the Sustainable Community Strategy.

- 3.1 As mentioned above, the LAA must be based on the objectives set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. Therefore, the first step in developing the LAA is to develop a robust SCS that clearly articulates the priorities for the borough. As CMT will be aware, the LSP is currently developing it's SCS, and the draft outcomes and objectives, which have been developed by Thematic Partnerships, are currently out for public consultation. A list can be found at appendix 3. While the main focus of the SCS is on local priorities, attempts have been made to adapt them to fit with new PSA's and the priorities that are evident in the NIS.
- 3.2 While the public consultation is taking place, thematic partnerships have been asked to complete the full delivery plan template. The template has been designed to ensure that the SCS can be effectively performance managed. It includes:

<u>Outcomes</u>	Ultimate long term effect that you hope to achieve
Objectives	Concrete statement about what you want to achieve as a priority in order to deliver the outcome
Key tasks/projects	<p>A list of discrete tasks or projects that will contribute to achieving the objective. Thematic Partnerships have been asked to state whether each task is:</p> <p>Short term - to be completed in 0 – 3 years medium term - to be completed in 3 – 5 years long term - to be completed in over 5 years</p> <p>Where robust strategies or action plans are already in place, it is sufficient to say ‘to implement the XXX strategy.</p>
Underpinning strategies and action plans	A list of documents that contain robust action plans that relate to the key tasks/objectives. Once the SCS is complete, an audit of these action plans will take place to ensure that they are fit for purpose (e.g SMART etc)
<u>Resources</u>	Details of how activities to achieve the objectives will be funded. While we are not asking for actual amounts, thematic partnerships will be asked to identify contributing organisations, and whether the finance is mainstream or grant funded.
Measures of Success	<p>All measures of success should be taken from the NIS where possible. Where there is nothing suitable in the NIS, local targets can be used – for examples ones taken out of the current LAA. All targets will then become the LSP Performance Management Framework.</p> <p>Thematic partnerships are being asked to identify:</p> <p>Primary Outcome Measures Indicator(s) that reflect the main intended outcome of the objective. For example, the main intended outcome of the objective to promote healthy lifestyles may be a reduction in adult obesity and circulatory disease.</p> <p>Secondary Outcome Measures Indicator(s) that reflect any other outcomes of the objective – these can be taken from other themes within the LAA. For the lifestyle example above, this could be a reduction in childhood obesity, and increased physical activity.</p> <p>Output measures Ideally, output measures should be kept to the underpinning action plans, but in some cases it is not possible to measure outcomes, so output measures are required (indeed, many of the NI’s measure outputs rather than outcomes)</p>

Lead Partner(s)	The lead organisation(s) responsible for delivering the objective. This will be the organisation who will be required to report on performance and who will be held accountable for delivery.
Contributing Partner(s)	Other organisations that have a significant role to play in delivering the objective

4. Developing the LAA

- 4.1 Now that Thematic Partnerships have agreed their draft outcomes and objectives, they have each been asked to prepare proposals for their LAA targets. However, we should not commit to any targets until we know exactly how they will be measured. The technical definitions for each indicator have not yet been published – consultation on the new definitions is likely to take place later this year.
- 4.2 The LAA targets must reflect local priorities for improvement and be evidence-based. A sound starting point for this is the Area Profiles which identified clear priorities for improvement based on trajectories and performance in relation to national data. A list of those that were identified as either high or medium risk, together with any relevant indicators from the national set can be found at appendix 4.
- 4.3 While the LAA must be developed through the LSP, the Council will be the accountable body and must therefore take a strong leadership role in this process. Members of the Councils Corporate Management Team, and the relevant Cabinet Member have therefore been identified as leads for each of the thematic areas of the LAA. Operational leads have also been identified (with whom the LAA co-ordinator will liaise on a daily basis), along with a lead representative from a key partner organisation. A list of suggested responsible officers can be found at appendix 5. The LSP Board is asked to comment on these proposals.

5. Duty to co-operate

Appendix 6 includes those organisations who are under a duty to co-operate in the development of the Local Area Agreement. Thematic Partnerships must ensure that effective mechanisms or structures are in place to ensure that the relevant organisations from the list are involved in, or have an opportunity to participate in the development of the LAA.

6. Funding

6.1 Area Based Grant

- 6.1.1 Under the previous LAA, the funding streams were tied to one of the four blocks. Under the new LAA, the blocks have been replaced by the following themes, which are only intended to be a guide to ensure the full range of national priorities are considered.

- Children and Young People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Economic Development and the Environment

6.1.2 Under the new arrangements, the previously ringfenced LAA Grant will be replaced by a new, un-ringfenced 'Area Based Grant.' It is intended that this will allow flexibility to allocate resources to meet local needs and priorities. A partial list of the grants to be delivered via Area Based Grant can be found at appendix 7. The comprehensive list, together will be published at the time of the provisional local government finance settlement. Allocations at local authority level will be provided in early December, and on a three year basis (except for those that are demand led or performance-related). In the meantime, an exercise will be undertaken to identify the organisations currently in receipt of the named grants, how much they receive or expect to receive, and what the funding is currently used for.

6.2 Performance Reward Grant

6.2.1 The new LAA will include a Performance Reward Element, but in a different format. While no formal guidance for PRE has been published, it is believed that Performance Reward Grant will not be tied to specific LAA indicators as before, but to the whole LAA. The pot will be smaller than in previous years and will be allocated according to a formula. There will be no pump-grant available.

7. Future Performance Management of the LSP and the LAA

- 7.1 Once the LAA has been signed off, the LSP will need to ensure that robust, integrated arrangements are in place for performance and financial management. A great deal of work has already been undertaken around this, with finance and performance being managed through the LSP Governance Sub-Group, who make recommendations to the LSP board regarding appropriate interventions where there are areas for concern. Their reports are also presented to Special Main Scrutiny for consideration and CMT and Cabinet for information.
- 7.2 With regard to performance, the Policy and Research Team has been liaising with Corporate Performance to ensure that the new Performance Management Software will accommodate the needs of the new LAA and the wider LSP Performance Management Framework (which will include the national indicator set). A request has been made for partners to be able to enter their performance data directly and this has been included in the brief.
- 7.3 From an accounting perspective, a grant claims procedure has been established for the LAA grant which can be adapted for the new Area Based Grant. However, given the large range of grants that are to be included, we are likely to require more capacity to enable the system to be managed effectively.

8. Timetable for Negotiation

- 8.1 Following delays around CSR and the release of the national indicator set, central government announced that the sign off of the new LAA's would be put back from March 2008 to June 2008. However, many authorities, including Redcar and Cleveland have made representations to GO's as a lot of work has been undertaken to align corporate planning and budget setting processes, both within and between partner organisations, with the majority (if not all) running from April. Thus, if LAA's were not signed off by March, corporate plans and service delivery plans will not reflect the new LAA – which is arguably the most important part! A letter is therefore being sent to all chief executives to ask whether they would like to aim for a March or June sign off. While central government cannot promise to accommodate all authorities for a March sign off, they will try to prioritise according to local circumstance, for example authorities such as Redcar and Cleveland who will be undergoing Corporate Assessment, may be in a stronger position.
- 8.2 However, regardless of whether Redcar and Cleveland is given a March or June deadline for sign off, by the end of March, we aim to have a clear idea of what our improvement priorities will be, and the targets that we aim to set. Ideally, we will have been able to have these signed off by Cabinet and the LSP Board. In order to achieve this, GO-NE has asked for an outline list of potential indicators for the LAA by late October/early November. This list will be discussed by the LSP Board on 09th November before being sent to GO-NE. By Christmas, GO-NE would like us to have a firm idea of the proposed indicators, so negotiations can commence in the new year.

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