

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee

Date of Committee 28th September 2005

Report Title Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone: Key Project Updates

Summary The report deals with three projects in the Nuneaton and Bedworth part of the Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone. The report is split into three sections covering each project.

- (i) The Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods programme: the programme is half way through its external funding life and the report reviews the annual report 2004/05 and achievements over the last year.
- (ii) A proposed programme of Neighbourhood Business Support in small parades of shops across the Zone.
- (iii) An update on the Voluntary Sector Consortium proposal for a new purpose built community resource centre in Nuneaton town centre.

For further information please contact Mandy Walker
Regeneration Zone Manager
Tel. 01926 412843
mandywalker@warwickshire.gov.uk

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? Yes/No

Background Papers Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods Annual Report 2004/05.
Voluntary Sector Consortium Proposal Pack.
Neighbourhood Business Support Brief July 2005.

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- *Details to be specified*

Other Committees

Local Member(s)
(With brief comments, if appropriate)

Councillor R Chattaway – “I fully welcome the proposal as a vital element in regenerating our neighbourhood centres”
Councillor A J Farnell
Councillor P Henry
Councillor R D Hicks
Councillor M Jones
Councillor B Longden
Councillor F McCarney
Councillor K Singh
Councillor Mrs J A Tandy

} for information

Other Elected Members

Cabinet Member
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)

Chief Executive J Lyons - agreed

Legal J Norris - comments incorporated

Finance

Other Chief Officers D Halsall, Property Services - agreed

District Councils C Kerr, Chief Executive
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council,
L Snowdon, Regeneration Manager
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Health Authority

Police

Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** (If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee 30th November 2005

To Council

To Cabinet 8th December 2005

To an O & S Committee

To an Area Committee

Further Consultation

**Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee -
28th September 2005**

**Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone:
Key Project Updates**

**Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and
Economic Strategy**

Recommendation

That Members:-

1. Note the achievements of the Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods (BSN) programme in 2004/05, give their continued support for the project and for the development of a succession strategy, to enable continuation beyond March 2007 when current funding runs out.
2. Support the proposed business support programme for eight pilot neighbourhood areas and note the longer term intentions for a programme of environmental works, subject to approval of capital funding.
3. Reaffirm their support for the Voluntary Sector Consortium(VSC) project and to continuing to explore ways in which Warwickshire County Council (WCC) and other partners can contribute to help make the resource centre happen in the next 12 months.

PART ONE: Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods (BSN)

1. Background

- 1.1 The Terms of Reference of the BSN Board require that the Board reports to WCC, as Guarantor of the project, annually on the overall progress of the programme.
- 1.2 Members will recall that this is a mainly externally funded community regeneration project. WCC is the lead partner, working with Advantage West Midlands (AWM), Coventry Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership, Government Office for the West Midlands, the Police, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) and a host of other partners including the George Eliot Primary

Care Trust and Nuneaton and Bedworth Council for Voluntary Services. The project aims, amongst other things to:-

- (i) Improve the economic well being of communities by working with groups to help them become more sustainable.
- (ii) Improve access to services and facilities
- (iii) Help people into jobs and training
- (iv) Help to improve neglected environments
- (v) Support social enterprises.

Achievements in 2004/05

1.3 The £2.4 million programme is over half way through its contractual life. In summary in the last financial year:-

- (i) 31 projects have been helped.
- (ii) £586,000 has been spent on local projects.
- (iii) 10 new jobs and 63 learning opportunities (training places) have been supported.
- (iv) Four social enterprises and six community projects have been assisted.

1.4 Projects helped this year include:-

- (i) The Crescent Youth Association – creation of an internet café.
- (ii) Bedworth Heath Activity and Leisure Centre – completion of phase 2 building refurbishment.
- (iii) Happy Tykes Pre School- expansion of premises and support for additional staff.
- (iv) George Eliot Community Centre – development of an IT training suite and establishment of a shared development worker.
- (v) Nuneaton Women’s Multicultural Resource Centre- provision of office space.
- (vi) Old Hill Top Tenants and Residents Association- provision of community building (POD).
- (vii) Environmental improvement projects including a community clean up at Bedworth Heath and completion of the Whittleford Park Masterplan .

- 1.5 The 2004/05 annual report provides full details of the programme and the range of projects and organisations helped in the last year, along with a financial statement. Copies of the Annual Report will be available at Committee.
- 1.6 This year's annual conference with stakeholders was hosted at the newly refurbished Bedworth Heath Leisure and Activity Centre on 22nd June. Over 40 community representatives and partners came together and were taken on a tour of four projects within the Zone to see first hand achievements on the ground and to hear direct from community representatives about their projects.
- 1.7 2005 has been another successful year for the (BSN) programme, with the project running on track to deliver contractual outputs and meet spend targets and most importantly, helping local groups to make a difference to their communities in a sustainable way.

The Future

- 1.8 The end of the project, March 2007, is looming and a succession strategy is currently being developed. This will examine various funding options to try and ensure that the programme can continue in some shape in the future. Much has been achieved and delivered, but there remains much to be done. The 2004 quality of life statistics show some improvements across the Borough, however, some areas of high deprivation remain, including several high ranking super output areas. BSN's job is not therefore complete. Local pockets of unmet need exist and it is clear that reducing disparity and building sustainable communities takes longer than four years - as was recognised at the start of the programme. A separate report on succession will be brought to Members later in the year.

Conclusion

- 1.9 Members are asked to note the success of the BSN programme to date and to give their continued support to the programme and to the development of a succession strategy. In addition Members are requested, in their capacity on other Boards and Committees, to play a pro-active role in galvanising partners and funders to help continue BSN beyond 2007.

PART TWO: Neighbourhood Business Support

2. Background

- 2.1 Building on the success of the business support and environmental improvement programme in Abbey Green, Nuneaton, officers have been examining the scope for rolling out this approach to local neighbourhoods. The County Council is taking the lead to develop a new project which will assist retailers in deprived neighbourhoods. The project is being developed in conjunction with Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber and Business Link, as part of the Regeneration Zone's (RZ) Strategic Business Support Package, with Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and with the Learning and Skills Council.

Aim

- 2.2 The aim is to deliver a package of retail measures and minor environmental improvements aimed at assisting neighbourhood parades of shops. By tackling business support together with environmental improvements the confidence of areas can be lifted and the economic turnover of business improved and sustained, safeguarding jobs and community services. Specific outputs include jobs created and safeguarded and businesses improved.

Where?

- 2.3 Eight pilot areas have been identified across the Borough including 6 in the RZ, plus 2 additional high ranking Super Output Areas (SOAs) (Grove Farm and Chapel End).
- (i) Pine Tree Rd, Bedworth
 - (ii) Coalpit Fields, Bedworth
 - (iii) Kerseley, Bedworth
 - (iv) Exhall, Bedworth
 - (v) Donnithorne Avenue, Nuneaton
 - (vi) Grove Farm, Kingswood
 - (vii) Blackatree, Stockingford
 - (viii) Chapel End, Galley Common

- 2.4 Maps will be available at the Committee meeting.

How?

- 2.5 A Business Link retail adviser will work with County officers as part of a steering group to deliver the programme. The retail adviser will work directly with local retailers to identify needs and develop a package of business support measures. At the same time, subject to funding being confirmed, an environmental improvement programme for each area will be drawn up, which will include the establishment of a shop front improvement programme.

Timescale

- 2.6 The business support programme will start in October 2005 and subject to capital funding being confirmed for environmental improvements, these could start in January 2005.

Funding

- 2.7 Under the Strategic Business Support Package, Business Link will contribute approximately £75,000 to cover the business support element of the programme. WCC has submitted a capital bid to AWM for RZ funding for a total of £100,000 for spend this financial year (and a total of £300,000 in the next two years), decision expected November 2005. This will assist with shop front and

environmental improvements. Retailers will be required to contribute at least 50% towards shop front and security measures under the improvement programme.

- 2.8 A similar programme is being considered in Coventry and the two programmes will be linked where this can add benefit for business and residents within the RZ.

Conclusion

- 2.9 Members are asked to endorse the development of a business support programme for the 8 pilot neighbourhood areas, and to note that, subject to approval of the capital bid to AWM, a complementary programme of environmental works will be implemented

PART THREE: The Voluntary Sector Consortium

3. Background

- 3.1 The feasibility work for the Voluntary Sector Consortium (VSC) Resource Centre began in 1999. The proposal arose from several voluntary groups coming together to address issues of existing accommodation being inadequate and the need for modern facilities which could be shared and thereby help reduce overheads, leading to improved service delivery.
- 3.2 Members may recall that in 2002 the County Council gave approval for a 125 year lease to be granted to the VSC at a peppercorn rent, to enable the development of a new building, on land owned by WCC and NBBC at the junction of Queens Roads and Roanne Ringway. NBBC has made a similar contribution of its land.
- 3.3 The VSC is a registered Company Limited by Guarantee and also a charity, made up of 14 partners (listed in **Appendix A**). These groups provide support and services to over 28,000 individuals and 1,000 organisations across the Borough. WCC is represented on the VSC Board by Councillor Robert Hicks.
- 3.4 Of the 14 partner organisations, 2 are currently in WCC property, 5 in NBBC property and the remaining 7 in private/other premises. Four of the Partners receive core funding from WCC and 6 have Service Level Agreement (SLAs) with other departments, primarily Social Services. NBBC similarly fund and support several of the Partner organisations in a variety of ways.

Update

- 3.5 Planning permission was granted in May 2002 for a four storey landmark building, designed to be environmentally sustainable and including electricity generation from photovoltaic cells and a wind turbine.
- 3.6 The construction cost is estimated at £2.4 million. AWM funded the bulk of the original feasibility work, with Area Committee also making a contribution. AWM capital was sought for the construction last year, but the project was turned

down as not having sufficient strategic fit. The VSC are currently redefining the project outputs to ensure they meet AWM's requirements for new jobs and new business space. The project is included within the RZ Implementation Plan (ZIP 4). Alternative sources of grant funding are currently being explored, along with loan options as shown below:-

Statutory bodies	£600k-£800k
Grant making trusts	£400k- £450k
Environmental bodies/landfill tax	£200k-£250k
Big Lottery	£300k-£500k
Loan	£500k-£500k
TOTAL:	£2m-£2.5m

- 3.7 The original business plan was updated in 2004 and shows that the project would break even and become financially sustainable from revenue income, even if the VSC took on a half million pound loan. Currently further work is being done to examine the feasibility of establishing a trading arm to the VSC , comprising social enterprises to generate further income and demonstrate long term financial sustainability. Services which could be provided include a management service organisation- offering a range of back room facilities eg fax, photocopier, payroll service, cleaning services, a security service and training courses. All profits would be ploughed back into the VSC.
- 3.8 Members will be aware that in the last few years, as part of the developing community cohesion and sustainable communities agendas, national policy objectives have become even more focussed on the need to work with the voluntary and community sectors to meet the needs of people in the community. Meanwhile there is also a growing recognition of the contribution community and social enterprises make to the local economy, at national, regional and local level.
- 3.9 Earlier this year research undertaken by the two local authorities and Coventry and Warwickshire Cooperative Development Agency concluded, amongst other things, that the space needs of community and social enterprises across the Borough could be met both from existing neighbourhood provision and from the proposed VSC building. In addition, the VSC building could provide a range of much needed new services to this sector, including virtual incubation facilities (post, email, administration and meeting room facilities that enterprises could drop in and use 24/7), shared 'back room facilities', as well as providing a hub to coordinate support to community and social enterprises.

Key Issues

- 3.10 Clearly WCC has already contributed significantly to this project, in the form of land with a 125 year lease. Officers have also continued to support the project and to help identify new funding opportunities. Overall, however, the project has stalled as it has been unable to secure a significant external grant towards build costs, which would have helped lever in the remaining funding required.

- 3.11 Several new funding options, as outlined above, are now being pursued. However, the Trust has decided that if the project has not secured funding to enable construction to commence by summer 2006 (the existing planning permission expires in Nov 2006), then the project will not proceed.
- 3.12 The project is at a crucial stage and the outcome of the following will decide whether the project is in reality going to happen:-
- (i) Firstly the redefining of project outputs to ensure the Centre can generate the level of new jobs and business space that external funders require.
 - (ii) The review of the funding strategy and feasibility of establishing social enterprises to secure long term financial sustainability.
 - (iii) Thirdly, a look at how similar projects nationally are being developed and whether there are other ways in which the two Local Authorities can assist the VSC to make the project happen.
- 3.13 Cabinet has recently considered a report (8.9.05) on how WCC works with the voluntary and community sector. The report updated Cabinet on the development of a strategy to guide the Council's working relationships with the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- 3.14 In the light of Cabinet's resolution to agree a series of recommendations for reviewing working arrangements with the sector and to consider the policy in relation to requiring efficiency savings on grants to voluntary and community sector organisations, it is recommended that a detailed report on how WCC could further assist delivery of the VSC building, be brought back to both Area Committee in November and Cabinet in December.

Conclusion

- 3.15 The VSC project suffered a major set back when AWM capital funding was not confirmed last year. Since then WCC and Partners have been working with the Trust to help move the project forward. Members are asked to give their continued support and to receive a detailed report on new funding options at their next meeting in November.

JOHN DEEGAN
Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy
Shire Hall
Warwick

15th September 2005

**Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee –
28th September 2005**

**Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone:
Key Project Updates**

List of Voluntary Sector Consortium Partners

Advice Rights
Age Concern Warwickshire
Christians Together in Nuneaton
Citizens Advice Bureau (Bedworth CAB)
Disablement Information & Advice Line (DIAL)
George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust
Guidepost Carers' Support Service
Nuneaton Credit Union
Nuneaton Women's Multicultural Resource Centre
Nuneaton and Bedworth Council for Voluntary Service
Nuneaton and Bedworth Neighbourhood Watch Association
Sycamore Tree Christian Counselling Service
Warwickshire Association for the Blind
Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service (WWRAS)

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC)
Warwickshire County Council (WCC)

Supported by: Advantage West Midlands (AWM)
Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership

**Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee –
28th September 2005**

**Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone:
Key Project Updates**

List of Voluntary Sector Consortium Partners

Advice Rights
Age Concern Warwickshire
Christians Together in Nuneaton
Citizens Advice Bureau (Bedworth CAB)
Disablement Information & Advice Line (DIAL)
George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust
Guidepost Carers' Support Service
Nuneaton Credit Union
Nuneaton Women's Multicultural Resource Centre
Nuneaton and Bedworth Council for Voluntary Service
Nuneaton and Bedworth Neighbourhood Watch Association
Sycamore Tree Christian Counselling Service
Warwickshire Association for the Blind
Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service (WWRAS)

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC)
Warwickshire County Council (WCC)

Supported by: Advantage West Midlands (AWM)
Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership