

30<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2012

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**COMMUNITY ACTION: REVIEWING PROGRESS AND AGREEING NEXT STEPS**

**EDEN VALE AND THORNHILL PROJECT GROUP**

**1.0 Why has it come to Committee?**

1.1 The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the Eden Vale and Thornhill Project Groups Action Plan (2011/12), see **Annex 1**.

**2.0 Background**

2.1 In March 2011, both Sunderland East and West Area Committee's recognised that for a period, areas in Eden Vale (West) and Thornhill (East) have been experiencing difficulties ranging from ASB, a lack of co-ordinated youth provision, community tensions and a general unhappiness about the state of the environment. A number of good initiatives were being delivered by numerous organisations within the area, to tackle the problems, however it was recognised that they lacked co-ordination.

2.2 In May 2011, in order to move forward and maximise the impact of interventions and ensure clear prioritisation, a conference with key stakeholders involved in delivering services or interventions in the area was held. From this a draft cohesive action plan was produced.

2.3 In July 2011, both Area Committee's agreed the action plan, and nominated representatives from both Committee's to establish a new cross boundary working group, called 'Eden Vale and Thornhill Project Group'. The Project group would monitor the quality and effectiveness of the services and improvements made, reporting directly back to both Area Committee's.

**3.0 Work Plan Action 4: Youth Task Group**

3.1 In December 2011, the Project Group agreed that a Sub Youth Task Group would meet, consisting of elected members, youth providers and officers. An audit of commissioned youth provision was undertaken, along with what buildings and resources are located in the neighbourhoods.

3.2 In January 2012, the Sub Youth Task Group met to identify any duplications, resources needed and any potential risks based on the audit provided. After a discussion a youth programme was agreed. It was recognised that some buildings were not suitable to deliver activities from, it was felt the youth bus or elements of the XL youth villages may be considered as an option to fill any future gaps.

3.3 It was agreed to approach a local secondary school within the area to encourage them to become a member of the Project Group, in addition, to seeking their views on opening up the school on an evening and weekends.

3.4 Concerns were expressed on sessions currently being delivered mid week during a lunch time period, as the funding is due to expire in March 2012. Officers, the Youth Provider and the School are meeting to investigate options, which will be fed back into a future Project Group meeting.

#### **4.0 Work Plan Action 6: Environment Works**

4.1 A key problem identified by the Project Group is the raised pathway overlooking residential properties. This former mineral line, which is unlit, is a major gathering point for large groups of young people, which can result in disturbance and disorder for residents.

4.2 The Project Group has agreed that action to reduce the attraction of this area as a gathering point is a vital element to alleviating community tensions and improving the conditions for local residents.

4.3 To achieve this, the Project Group is asking West Sunderland Area Committee to agree the allocation of £42,000 from its Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), subject to full application, appraisal and consultation, on a capital project to lower the raised pathway. A decision is expected in February 2012.

#### **5.0 Work Plan Action 15: Communication Plan**

5.1 In October 2011, the Project Group acknowledged that a challenge in the area had been communication information across boundaries between key people delivering services. It was proposed to develop a suitable Communication Plan, which would set out:

- Purpose of the group
- Governance infrastructure, including roles and responsibilities
- Key people, including roles and responsibilities
- Methods of communication

5.2 The Plan should be seen to allow the Project Group to assess the most successful methods in engaging partners and residents throughout the life time of the Project Group. By delivering an effective approach to both external and internal communications, this plan will support the engagement work needed to ensure people and groups have a vested interest in contributing to developing a future of both neighbourhoods of Eden Vale and Thornhill. Further information is available in **Annex 2**.

5.3 Area Committee are being asked to endorse the Communication Plan.

#### **6.0 Recommendation(s)**

Committee is requested to:

- i) Note the progress updates provided in Annex 1.
- ii) To endorse the Communication Plan.

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Annex 1: Eden Vale and Thornhill Project Group: Action Plan  
Annex 2: Communication Plan