

Notes of the scrutiny of the Area and Neighbourhood Agenda at the special meeting of the Community Regeneration Commission held on 27 February 2006.

Jonathan Guest made introductory comments. Sharon Squires then gave a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the slides is attached.

1. Ms Squires said the intention was to bring the public sector closer to local communities. A strong commitment had already been shown by a number of agencies. For example, the neighbourhood policing teams had been put into place and Derby BCU is a Path Finder force in respect neighbourhood policing.
2. On the roll out beginning in priority neighbourhoods, this was because the NRF funds were the only additional resource available.
3. Ms Squires noted, from her professional background, that so often she was involved in implementing decisions already taken by the Home Office or by Government Office for the East Midlands. The Area & Neighbourhood Agenda was different in that it is being home grown. Phase 1 involves the building up of decision making processes in local areas. It did raise the question of what is meant by the term "community leadership" when used by ODPM in relation to councillors' roles.
4. Although the term area management was used in the presentation and associated report it was not known what it would look like and the pattern may not be uniform. The question is: What is the best way to engage with the different communities? The presentation outlined the composition of neighbourhood teams.
5. One key strand of the Area & Neighbourhood Agenda is reintroducing the concept that the community has to take responsibility, so specialist enforcement officers will be introduced to invoke criminal sanctions for anti-social behaviour. It is possible that the Community Safety Partnership might be rebadged as a 'Stronger & Safer Communities Partnership'.
6. Councillor Bayliss said the Area & Neighbourhood Agenda is about a different way of working. It was about getting closer to people as both citizens and consumers – about how services work 'on the street'. This is just the start of the process and those involved would 'learn by doing'. He wanted the people to set the agenda, rather than the other way round as is traditional.
7. There would be a roll out across the city. All areas will have an area planning team. Neighbourhood Teams were to start in Areas 2 and 3 because of the financial resources they can attract. But it was also about turning existing budgets to deliver services better.
8. Councillor Latham said that the presentation was nearly all jargon. She had a concern about the funding of the initiative – how much would it cost? With Area Panel 1 less than half of the geographical area and of the councillors would be involved because there was not the external

funding for the remainder of the Area. How would that division be dealt with for that Area and across the wider city?

9. Mr Guest said that no additional mainstream funding was involved. There was of course already base budget funding for the Area and Neighbourhood Unit. However, Safer and Stronger Communities funding though NRF was specifically for this type of initiative. The ODPM's preference was for it to only be applied to one area within a local authority. In Derby, past work made the Council believe it was capable of spreading the resources more thinly – hence two Panel Areas – but it had to be deprived communities to meet the criteria. The five neighbourhoods had appeared naturally and it was right to deal with the 'worst first'.
10. Mr Guest added that maybe not all the resources would prove necessary in the chosen areas and as the initiative gets smarter it could be rolled out elsewhere. The initial locations could be viewed as a pilot for adoption elsewhere, in the light of experience.
11. Councillor Bayliss added that except for the Safer and Stronger Communities, SSC, monies there was no more money to spend on the Area & Neighbourhood Agenda. It was about working smarter and getting closer to communities within existing budgets.
12. The SSC funds comprised £1.6m revenue plus £970k capital, a total of £2.65m.
13. Councillor P Berry referred to the composition of the neighbourhood teams. Young people or their organisation's representatives were not on the list and he felt it was essential their contribution was made. Ms Squires said she agreed. Her presentation needed to include more on children and young people.
14. Councillor E Berry said she thought the overall proposals were exciting but that she had some concerns. The Local Area Agreement, LAA, had been finalised and she was not clear that sufficient account had been taken of lessons had been learnt from NRF, SRB and Objective 2. One practical example was that little things like the cleaning up of graffiti made a great difference to local peoples' perception of the safety of their neighbourhood. She was concerned that other wards would suffer if lessons have not been learnt from previous experience and insufficient was in the LAA about this.
15. Cllr E Berry was concerned that no briefing had been provided to Area Panel 1 councillors about the Youth Service pilot that is happening. It was essential to keep informed the community leaders we have already got.
16. Mr Guest said that Area & Neighbourhood working would not take any resources away from the other wards that are not within the initial five patches. Mainstream funding would stay the same everywhere. The target neighbourhoods would benefit from the new external funds. So resource levels would not be worse in other wards but will be better in the target wards. Cllr Bayliss added that member briefings hadn't taken place yet but at the moment the emphasis had been on moving the agenda

forward quickly. He would take on board her points.

17. Councillor Carr said residents in wards question what their council tax is being spent on. While he understands that these are external funds it was difficult to get others to understand that. There should be an indicative timetable for rolling out Area & Neighbourhood working. Councillor Bayliss said it was difficult to be definitive; it could take three to five years to roll out properly. He said that it was not a matter of spending more; it was about spending effectively and giving local people the opportunity to choose/prioritise services. Using local knowledge, it could save money: instead of spending money on surveys about where crossings should be installed, more crossings could actually be installed. Mr Guest added that Area & Neighbourhood working does need some resources to be continued and rolled out and this had been made clear to GOEM.
18. Councillor Redfern said she thought that those members who have been involved with Derwent New Deal for Communities were slightly ahead of the game. Looking back, some projects funded in the earlier stages probably shouldn't have been. There had been some cases of schemes being hijacked as "their own project" [= pet project but without wider community backing]. There was also the experience of people's interest tailing off – some individuals had got burnt out and others had to be engaged to replace them. It was important that experience already gained did not go to waste but was used to avoid pit falls in Area & Neighbourhood working
19. Ms Squires said Councillor Redfern's point and her own one about community leadership were essentially the same. Area & Neighbourhood working was about doing what we do differently rather than chasing the money. It was about creating sustainability – 'we'll learn from NDC!'
20. Councillor Care said that the ethos of Area & Neighbourhood working was excellent. It could be an effective way of getting bottom up community involvement. She had a number of concerns over implementation. Councillor Care queried the impact on Normanton. The area had benefited from substantial resources over the years and is now to be given extra. She thought people would still seek more. Giving additional funds through this initiative would just notch up expectations further. The suburbs were being ignored. She cited people moving from areas like Normanton to a detached house in the suburbs but losing their community support mechanisms. The expenditure in the inner city over the years sometimes reminded her of applying sticking plasters but not getting to the root of the problem. We should be looking at sustainability in the long term. It could be about fundamental issues like having the right homes in the right places – requiring 20 to 30 years to achieve change. She wished the Area & Neighbourhood initiative good luck but said it was important not to raise expectations further. The 'quick wins' that were being sought may not deliver in the long term.
21. Councillor Bayliss said that residents of Normanton often aspire to live in Allestree or Littleover. He then commented that when people on a street do get involved in tackling crime and disorder, their perception of the success achieved in the reduction in incidences is even greater than the

reality.

22. Councillor Winter said there was a need to re-educate people so they learn how to pull together within the community where they currently live. The benefits are: Making people feel proud of their environment.
23. Ms Squires said that what is now being taken forward had originally been badged by the Home Office as 'civic renewal'. Locally we need to make clear that where individuals abdicate responsibility they will take the consequences. The Area & Neighbourhood Agenda is about social responsibility as well as empowerment. Communities are as good as the people who live in them. Good neighbourhood forums are when participants feel they understand what is going on in the area – that is not necessarily about meetings, it can be giving people a place to go and have a voice.
24. Mr Guest said the initiative is part of a bigger picture. Nationally there are 'a million and one' initiatives around sustainable communities. In Derby we are choosing to make a small start around a few services. It links to the 'cleaner, greener' agenda and hopefully can expand into bigger things. It might be 20 to 30 years to fully achieve the whole initiative.
25. Councillor Bayliss said it was about the agencies doing the things people want. We need mechanisms to know what the local issues are.
26. Councillor Travis said that if the Council is looking to the pilots to provide the answers, then two contrasting areas would be more useful so that the Council could learn from both opportunities.
27. Councillor Bayliss said that the reason for selecting the areas that had been was to access the funding available; it would be desirable to add in a timetable for roll out. It had been too early in the process to do so already.
28. Councillor Allen referred to deprived people living in 'leafy suburbs'. A lone parent with a couple of children could be isolated. Lacking access to the additional resources in the inner city meant a deprived family in a 'leafy area' was really deprived. He asked whether there had been an audit of what services go to which areas?
29. Ms Squires said that area management teams will be exciting for the whole city and be using with the levels of resources that go in now. She wanted to get area profiles and cited how Lesley Whitney had recently given a description of a part of Derby that showed she knew about that area. The five pilot areas had been obvious but Derby had improving neighbourhoods; there are also other areas with needs that require identifying. It was possible that there could be working with local elected members outside the priority neighbourhoods.
30. Councillor Bayliss said that at the moment, the need was to make the initiative manageable. He referred to the Poverty Profile. There are 13 deprived neighbourhoods – 12 covered by NRF plus the Derwent New Deal area. Of these 13 only 6 were initially being looked at.

31. Councillor Hird said the Area & Neighbourhood Agenda was laudable. However, the experience has been that schemes get set up and get taken down again but always in the same areas. Nothing was left for anywhere else in the city. In her ward, Mickleover, our roads never seem shabby enough to be considered for works to be done on them, that our graffiti is not naughty enough and that the pot holes were not deep enough. It was not easy to get things done. She found herself thinking that the Area & Neighbourhood Agenda “will not involve me ever”.
32. Councillor Bayliss said that devolving decisions to people involved tough choices. Do you fill in a pot hole or put in a crossing? The Council needed to have an adult conversation with its citizens – resources are inevitably finite.
33. Mr Guest said the heart of the matter was using mainstream funding better – he had no doubt that needed to happen. He said that a dedicated neighbourhood manager for everywhere could not be afforded – but maybe an existing person from an agency could fill the role in some places. A lot would be learned in the first one to two years which would help elsewhere.
34. Councillor Blanksby said he was delighted that the government was giving funding for the most deprived parts of the city. He referred to various social malaises that the Area & Neighbourhood Agenda would address: graffiti, vandalism, litter, underage sales, drug misuse and anti-social behaviour. He referred to the Commission’s 2003 review: Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment, which had recommended all these things. The response had been that there were not the people able to deliver a lot of the recommendations. He was pleased that people would now be in place to deliver on those quality of life issues.
35. Councillor Blanksby said that the presentation and report did not demonstrate how communities would be empowered – there was a democratic deficit. He said the ratio of elected representatives to residents in France was 1:200, in Germany 1:250 but in the UK it was over 1:2000. For Derby wards it could be around 1:3000. The Area & Neighbourhood report and presentation had referred to what he felt were QUANGOs. There had been no mention of who would be on the boards or how they would be accountable to the people. He believed that decision takers should be elected so therefore also removable. The Derby structures should not be filled with agency employees.
36. Councillor Bayliss said ‘we’ll do our best’.
37. Councillor Latham referred to Ms Squires’ earlier point that it did not need an Area & Neighbourhood Agenda initiative for local members to engage with their communities through neighbourhood structures. Councillor Latham said that could not work in practice: who would hire the rooms or service the meetings?
38. Ms Squires said there were links to local strategic partnerships. She predicted that over the next year there would be a debate about councillors’ roles as community leaders and the resources available to

carry out that role, it was as part of the agenda on local governance. She said 'no one else can be community leaders' because they alone had the mandate of election. This linked to partnership working between the Council and other bodies as the role of the council develops.

39. Mr Cowlshaw said it was wrong to say there was no money going into other areas of the city but it was true that pilot area funds can't be used outside the deprived areas. He believed that development and some widening out would occur in months rather than years. Derby's local initiative was part of a national agenda and he believed that opportunities will emerge.
40. Councillor Travis said she would prefer references to 'deprived people' rather than deprived neighbourhoods or areas. There are deprived individuals or families in affluent areas who get overlooked by the focus on geographical designation.
41. Councillor Allen agreed with Cllr Travis and said that it was like saying that someone who lives in a deprived area they can't be well off. It was the case that affluent individuals do live in areas like Derwent and Normanton. He felt that the initial pilot should include deprived areas plus one of the 'leafy areas', with no external resources, to see how Area & Neighbourhood working would operate where there are only the current mainstream resources to manage with
42. Councillor Bayliss said that there should also be the involvement of the private sector.
43. Mr Guest said the experience of the pilots would be used as a template to avoid learning curves elsewhere when rolled out.
44. Mr Guest added that it was important to register that much mainstream council funding goes toward responding to the deprivation experienced by people and by communities. The Area & Neighbourhood Agenda was starting with a small collection of services that people find have a substantial impact on their lives.
45. The other members of the Council left the meeting and the remaining members of the Commission then discussed how to deal with the evidence.

Resolved –

- a) to consider at the scheduled meeting on 21 March 2006,
 - i. the forming of conclusions and recommendations in light of the evidence given tonight and
 - ii. how the Commission can continue to be engaged in the development of the Agenda,
- b) to raise with Councillor Bayliss at that meeting the appropriateness of the term 'empowerment' of the community in light of concerns that it is

receipt of services that the Agenda will improve rather than residents' control of those services and

- c) to request that examples of up-to-date poverty profiles be provided to Commission members.