
Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

5th March, 2008

Report of
Cllr Kevin Foster Cabinet Member (City Development)

Title
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – New Deal For Communities Partnership Board

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This reports sets out details of the work of New Deal for Communities Partnership Board over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Co-ordination notes the work done by the Partnership Board over the last 12 months to deliver the NDC programme.
- 2.2 Given the nature of the work of the board it is appropriate that the city council continues to nominate 2 elected members as its representatives.

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

- 3.1 New Deal for Communities (NDC) is a Government funded community-led initiative aimed at improving neglected and disadvantaged local communities. In April 2000 Central Government awarded the Coventry New Deal for Communities areas of Wood End, Henley Green, Manor Farm and Deedmore, £54 million.
- 3.2 Over the past seven years, local residents, NDC officers, communities and agencies have been working together to decide how this money will be best used to regenerate the area by creating real employment and training opportunities, better housing, a healthier quality of life, a safer community, a cleaner environment and improvements in educational achievement. This has included rebuilding both primary schools within the NDC to provide high quality learning environments.
- 3.3 The last twelve months have seen some major steps forward for the NDC project with the Masterplan contract being signed by all relevant parties and construction work starting on the new Leisure & Neighbourhood Centre. The Coventry NDC is the first in the country to get its masterplan signed and work is underway on the outline planning application to be submitted to the City Council in due course. The overall plan will see over £300m of regeneration work and large numbers of new homes for sale, as well as 1,000 homes for Whitefriars to rent.

- 3.4 The NDC is now entering what will be a very challenging phase of its existence. The scale of regeneration work to be done means many people will have to move homes and the decanting process will inevitably raise many issues. In addition the NDC structure has a limited lifespan of 10 years and after 2011 the projects it has supported must become sustainable both financially and socially. The Moat House Trust has been established as a successor body to the NDC and directors, of which Cllr Patton is one, have been appointed to it. This body will be independent of the city council and whilst contracts/funding arrangements may exist the Council will not have the direct role it has with the current NDC structure.
- 3.5 The NDC Partnership Board is the key decision making body in relation to the project and as such is very much in control of the future of the NDC project. The Board is comprised of local residents, public and private sector partners as well as the 2 City Council members. By convention the 2 city council representatives have been a member from Henley Ward (Cllr Patton), plus the relevant Cabinet Member (Cllr Foster). Each member of the board has one vote and can use it as they see fit. The resident members have a majority of one over all the other bodies combined to ensure that the project really is in the hands of local residents. Council officers may attend and speak at the board and can act as a substitute for members.
- 3.6 Local residents are kept up to date with the work of the NDC and its partners via a bi-monthly magazine called "Your Shout". The magazine contains articles on work done by NDC, seeks to quash rumours about it and interviews those people who are playing a part in determining the future for local people.
- 3.7 The City Council acts as the accountable body (guarantor) for the grant money and whilst not able to block items going through the board there are reserve powers should a decision be taken that would expose the project to unacceptable risk or where the financial viability of the project was jeopardised. Given the partnership spirit of the NDC project this power is very much of last resort and issues of concern have always been resolved amicably through the board's own process.
- 3.8 Given the council's role as effective guarantor for the project the NDC Delivery plan for each financial year needs to be approved by Cabinet. The plan for 2007-08 was approved by Cabinet on 19th June 2007.
- 3.9 Further information on the work of the NDC can be obtained from www.coventryndc.org.uk

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

- 4.1 The NDC Masterplan will deliver major regeneration and social benefits to the Wood End, Henley Green and Manor Farm areas of north east Coventry and as such contribute to a number of the City Council's strategic objectives. The most notable impact will be on the Council's fundamental aim to narrow the gap between the most wealthy parts of our city and those areas that have been traditionally disadvantaged.
- 4.2 As a member of the partnership board the council has a strong voice when key decisions are taken. In many cases partners and local residents wish to know that the council is behind their endeavours when making a commitment to a new project. Whilst the Council may only have 2 votes on the board its role as accountable body means that the views of its representatives are given significant weight. This weight is enhanced by the constructive, cross party approach that has been taken to the NDC project.

4.3 It is vital that after the NDC finishes its work and projects continue. If the Council did not provide the necessary support and guidance it is likely that a number of key projects would find it difficult to survive in the long term. The effect of NDC not sustaining itself is that in years to come the Council and its partners may again face the problems of social deprivation, lack of opportunity and crime that have for so long troubled this area. The City Council needs to take not just a passive monitoring stance to NDC, but ensure it takes a strong leading role to deliver what is the key social regeneration project for the whole city.

5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

5.1 Coventry City Council's representatives for this Partnership Board are Councillors Foster (from May 2007) and Patton and Councillor O'Neill until the period ending April 2007. During the period November 2006 and October 2007 inclusive 9 meetings were held, Councillor Foster attended 3 of the 4 meetings that he was entitled to attend, Councillor Patton attended 6 of the nine meetings and Councillor O'Neill attended 4 of the 5 meetings that he was entitled to attend.

5.1 Members of the Partnership Board receive no remuneration for their work.

List of background papers

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Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies