

COMMUNITY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JANUARY 2008

SOCIAL REGENERATION STRATEGY

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1 Purpose of item

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Members a full draft of Medway's Social Regeneration Strategy, setting its strategic context and outlining in appendix 1 to the strategy the social regeneration programme envisaged. The Strategy has been appended to the report for Members of the Committee. It is currently open to a period of public consultation, which has been extended to conclude on 30 January 2008. The document is also available at the following web address:
<http://www.medway.gov.uk/index/council/socialregenerationandeuropeanaffairs.htm>
- 1.2 The draft Strategy builds on Medway's initial phase of social regeneration of around 50 local community projects, worth over £4 million over the period 2004-2007, of which £3.8 million has been externally funded.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members to comment on the draft Strategy and provide feedback as part of the public consultation, which has been extended to conclude on 30 January 2008.
- 2.2 Members to review the preparatory measures that are essential to enable the practical delivery of the Social Regeneration Strategy, as set out in section 4.2 of this report.

3 Background

- 3.1 At the Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 27 June 2006, Members endorsed the commencement of work on the development of a draft Social Regeneration Strategy, which set out clear strategic priorities for a future sustained programme of social regeneration.
- 3.2 This report was originally scheduled on the Committee agenda of 30 October 2007 in advance of the public consultation period, but was subsequently postponed until this meeting.

The Preparation of the Social Regeneration Strategy

- 3.3 A working group involving representatives from Medway Council, Medway Renaissance, South East England Development Agency and two local voluntary and community sector representatives (CVS Medway and Hubco Ltd) was convened in order to oversee the drawing up of the draft Social Regeneration Strategy and to provide feedback, guidance and direction.
- 3.4 From January 2007 to June 2007, GhG Consultancy Ltd was commissioned to carry out an extensive amount of data research and interviews with community organisations and stakeholders across Medway in preparation for the Strategy. This has provided the framework for the first full draft, drawn up over the summer period.

Social Regeneration – A Strategic Priority for Medway

- 3.5 The definition of social regeneration is as follows: “When the regeneration process harnesses tangible quality of life improvements for the direct benefit of local communities”.
- 3.6 Medway Council has set six strategic priorities for the next three years, one of which is “Everyone benefiting from the area’s regeneration”.
- 3.7 The proposed overarching vision for Medway’s Social Regeneration Strategy responds directly to this strategic priority: “A City of Culture, Learning, Tourism and Enterprise where all constituent communities are able to enjoy the benefits of the regeneration programme”.

Medway’s Initial Programme of Social Regeneration

- 3.8 Medway’s initial programme of social regeneration has delivered and continues to deliver a range of quality of life improvements in target neighbourhoods, including the following:
- The design and establishment of two new community open spaces in the All Saints and Twydall areas.
 - A programme of housing renovation targeting the poorest quality housing stock.
 - A programme of business environment improvements.
 - Ongoing delivery of 25 community skills training programmes, offering access to training and qualifications at community venues in the heart of neighbourhoods, benefiting over 400 local people.
 - Ongoing delivery of employment support outreach services to over 400 local people in the heart of target neighbourhoods, working with local people to overcome barriers to employment.
 - Ongoing delivery of a programme of training, work placements and career development benefiting over 500 older workers.

- The establishment of five new neighbourhood partnerships serving local communities in five target areas, led by neighbourhood managers. These have created a number of new local services including breakfast clubs and after-school clubs for children, youth clubs and social events for the local community.
- The establishment of a dedicated community learning centre with computer training suite in the All Saints area.
- The delivery of 15 fly-tipping clearance programmes and alley-gating, benefiting communities in target neighbourhoods.
- The establishment of two new local community centres in All Saints and two new local residents associations in Strood South and Brook-Lines.
- Delivery of a programme of road safety and traffic management improvements.

3.9 Funding from a variety of sources is contributing to the delivery of this first phase of Social Regeneration over the period 2004-2007, as set out in the table below:

FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT SECURED
Medway Council	£245,000
European Regional Development Fund	£136,000
European Social Fund	£1,011,000
SEEDA	£783,750
Single Regeneration Budget	£77,000
UK Government direct	£1,457,000
Church Urban Fund	£20,000
Diocese of Rochester	£22,000
Kent Fire & Rescue Service	£28,000
Community Safety Partnership	£26,000
Section 106 contributions	£150,000
Learning & Skills Council	£88,840
TOTAL	£4,044,590

The draft of Medway's Social Regeneration Strategy

3.10 The Executive Summary sets out the following three overall strategic aims for further social regeneration programmes in Medway:

- To create a cohesive and inclusive community.
- To improve access to employment opportunities for all people in Medway.
- To ensure all physical improvements are accessible to everyone.

3.11 The strategic aims are further explored in Section 5 of the Strategy. It provides a comprehensive framework overview for Medway's future programme of social regeneration such as how, in practical terms, existing communities should benefit from the regeneration of Medway by way of quality of life improvements and greater access to employment opportunities.

- 3.12 Quality of life improvement needs are particularly apparent amongst communities that reside in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Medway. Medway has 29 neighbourhoods that count amongst the most disadvantaged 25% nationally. In addition these needs are also very clear amongst sections of the community that tend to have greater difficulties in accessing local services and employment, such as young people, black and ethnic minority communities and older workers. The Social Regeneration Strategy recognises all these groups as strategic priorities, which underpin the social regeneration programme. This is described in more detail in the Strategy's Executive Summary.
- 3.13 The crucial importance of both Medway's future incoming communities and Medway's existing communities benefiting from regeneration is reflected in the strategy. The Executive Summary includes as a third strategic priority the need for "Everyone in Medway" to benefit from the regeneration programme. This recognises the importance of ensuring that community infrastructure and services are enhanced to meet the increased demand to be brought about by the influx of new communities who will take up new housing. At the same time this also recognises that existing communities must also gain tangible quality of life benefits from the regeneration programme if they are to share ownership of the vision for Medway.
- 3.14 Sections 3 and 4 of the Strategy concentrate on providing the rationale for Medway's Social Regeneration Strategy. Section 3 highlights the key contribution that social regeneration can make in enabling all existing communities to access the benefits of the regeneration programme. This includes partnership working with the voluntary and community sector to assist local people to overcome barriers to employment and increase skills levels. This also recognises the need for greater access to community services in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and physical improvements to the existing urban fabric, particularly in areas adjacent to the waterfront zones.
- 3.15 Section 4 provides the strategic context from a statistical point of view by presenting the challenges for Medway's workforce and the local economy.
- 3.16 Section 6 of the strategy provides an explanation as to how Medway's social regeneration programme should be resourced. In particular there is recognition of the changing context against which regional development agency resources will be allocated in the future. This underlines the importance of priorities and actions arising from the Social Regeneration Strategy being an integral part of the future Local Area Agreement.
- 3.17 Furthermore, capital finances via the Government's Sustainable Communities programme should have a key role to play in bringing about tangible improvements to the urban environment of existing communities. This particularly applies to disadvantaged neighbourhoods, a number of which are situated in close proximity to waterfront regeneration zones. These are affected by some adverse urban environmental conditions.

- 3.18 The Action Plan framework in Appendix 1 presents a list of indicative thematic actions for social regeneration, which correlate directly with the strategic objectives presented in Section 5 of the strategy. The themes correspond to specific project actions and neighbourhood improvement priorities already identified in Neighbourhood Action Plans, based on the views of local residents from target neighbourhoods expressed at 25 “Community Futures” Workshops.

4. Options / The Way Forward

- 4.1 In order to build on the successes and achievements of this first phase of social regeneration and to establish an operational programme over the medium to long term, in tandem with the delivery of physical and economic regeneration, it is imperative that the following preparatory measures are undertaken:

- Finalise and launch Medway’s Social Regeneration Strategy as an integral part of the local policy framework and Medway’s programme of regeneration.
- Incorporate social regeneration priority actions into the new Local Area Agreement for Medway.
- Negotiate a further round of resources from the Regional Development Agency in support of social regeneration interventions.
- Mainstream social regeneration actions as priorities for delivery by statutory service providers in Medway.
- Allocate resources from mainstream budgets to prioritise the delivery of social regeneration project actions, “bending” in existing resources to enable delivery.
- Galvanise the voluntary and community sector in Medway to play their part in the finalisation and delivery of Medway’s social regeneration strategy, empowering the new VOICE partnership consortium and enabling delivery of other capacity building measures. (A new Voluntary Sector Development Strategy will expand on this).
- Ensure that resources for physical regeneration from the Government’s sustainable communities programme benefit not only the waterfront regeneration zones but also adjacent disadvantaged neighbourhoods where the quality of life of existing communities is adversely affected by incidents of urban decay. This will enable existing communities to gain directly from the tangible physical benefits of Medway’s regeneration.
- Make use of regional and national financial resources to lever in European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund from the new European Union programming period 2007-2013. Such resources can contribute to the delivery of measures for social inclusion, economic inclusion and physical improvement.

4.2 The Launch of Medway’s Social Regeneration Strategy - Timetable

15 November 2007 – 30 January 2008: Public Consultation Period

19 February 2008: Approval of post consultation version sought from Cabinet

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications as regards the finalisation of this strategy, other than the costs of staging public consultation meetings. A sum of £14,700 was invested in the preparatory work for the development of the Social Regeneration Strategy and this was carried out by a company called GhG Consultancy Ltd and involved interviews with a range of different local stakeholder organisations and gathering datasets to underpin the rationale for the strategy as well as pulling together the initial draft. Of this sum, £5,000 was contributed by SEEDA Area Investment Framework direct delivery funds and a further £7,500 was contributed from Medway Renaissance, thanks to some EU funds secured from the Interreg IIIB programme. The Medway Council allocation was drawn from last year's budget 2006-2007.
- 5.2 Section 6 of the Strategy provides an explanation as to the various mechanisms through which Medway's social regeneration programme should be resourced financially. It seems clear that the resources to deliver the Strategic Aims set out in the Social Regeneration Strategy should emanate primarily from the following:

- Regional Development Agency resources in conjunction with the Local Area Agreement (LAA)
- Sustainable Communities Plan resources via the UK government department now known as "Communities and Local Government"
- Resources from Medway Council and other local stakeholders drawn in from mainstream funds bent in through the LAA and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) process.
- European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund – these funding streams will normally be levered in when matched against domestic funding resources such as the above.
- Section 106 developer contributions

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 There are no direct legal or contractual implications of this strategy at this stage.

7. Background papers

- 7.1 Draft Social Regeneration Strategy

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