COMMUNITY SERVICES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22 APRIL 2008

UPDATE ON WHITE ROAD PROJECT

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture
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Summary
This report updates the Committee about lessons learnt from the White Road Project and progress made.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The White Road Neighbourhood Action Plan has been drawn up as an integral part of Medway’s programme of social regeneration. Medway Council’s Social Regeneration Strategy was adopted into the policy framework on 1 April 2008. It is closely aligned to Medway’s Regeneration Framework, which itself builds on the regeneration goals set out in the Medway Community Plan.

2. Background

2.1 The Committee considered a report on the White Road project at a previous meeting on 30 July 2007 giving the background to the issue as well as future plans for the area.

2.2 A representative from the Sunlight Development Trust was invited to explain the involvement of the Trust in consulting with local residents which had resulted in contact with about one in three local residents.

2.3 Ward Councillors expressed concern about the lack of tangible action taken in response to the priorities identified through the consultation exercises held in the October and November 2006.
2.4 The Committee discussed potential sources of funding for initiatives in the White Road area and officers were asked to ensure they liaised with Medway Community College as it took on-board the extended schools agenda.

2.5 The Committee requested that an update briefing was provided for them in September 2007 and this was circulated as requested. This highlighted the outcomes of the first White Road Forum meeting, held at Glencoe Junior School on 20 September 2007. A representative from Medway Community College is involved on this Forum and attended the meeting. This meeting agreed that the following actions should be progressed:

- Update White Road neighbourhood action plan with timescales
- Pursue the establishment of neighbourhood police office for White Road
- Erect alley-gates adjacent to White Road Community Centre
- Commence MATCH community training programme (funds secured from LSC), ensuring people from White Road can access its benefits
- Ascertain whether a role for the White Road Community Centre site is feasible in relation to proposed new healthy living services in Chatham.
- Deliver enhanced lighting at the Community Centre
- Involve and engage resident representatives in the White Road forum.

2.6 The Committee also requested that a further report was presented following a period time on the lessons learnt. This report is the follow up report.

3. **Update information**

3.1 At its second meeting on 5 December 2007, the White Road Forum approved the updated White Road Neighbourhood Action Plan (see Annex I), which included a set of timescales for each action, identifying the funding that would be sought to resource each one. This meeting was chaired by Councillor Mrs Chitty, Cabinet portfolio holder with responsibility for social regeneration and attended by a range of local partner organisations and also two of the local ward councillors - Councillor Paul Godwin and Councillor Julie Shaw.

3.2 The White Road Forum agreed that the following project actions presented in the Neighbourhood Action Plan should be short term priorities for delivery with the target date for completion being the end of June 2008:
• Launch of Community Notice Board
• Use free newspaper to promote local events and include news from White Road in the All Saints parish newsletter.
• Launch MATCH Community learning programme
• Draft SEEDA bid for funds including for the recruitment of a dedicated Community Worker for the White Road estate
• Review White Road community association and resident groupings and enable the establishment of a revived group.
• Launch Neighbourhood Police Office and set up regular police surgeries and possibility of a local publicity newsletter.
• Gating of two alleyways adjacent to the White Road Community Centre in order to deter anti-social behaviour there.
• Carry out two enforcement blitzes relating to parking, road tax, breaches of environmental law, refuse collection, use of dog bins, action against flytipping, nuisance vehicles and bikes – serving penalty notices.
• Review how law enforcement agencies can provide a more joined up response to local residents and implement.
• Achieve improvements to police and enforcement response rates.
• Publicise the PACT meetings in line with the new Neighbourhood Police Office and use one of those meetings to explain the role of the “Hate Crime” Unit.

3.3 The following progress has been made:

**Achievement of Neighbourhood Police Office** - Social Regeneration officers facilitated negotiations between Glencoe Junior School and Kent Police to establish a Neighbourhood Police Office for the White Road estate on site at the school. This has been achieved with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the local Police Constable making regular use of the site, although the Neighbourhood Police Office has not yet been formally launched.

EU funding secured by the Medway Council Social Regeneration service has enabled the refurbishment of office space at the school and improved security measures there necessary to provide a suitable location for Kent Police.

An official launch of the Neighbourhood Police Office is planned shortly and in addition dedicated publicity materials promoting the new office will be circulated to all residents living on the White Road estate. There will also be an article inserted into the community news section of Medway Matters. **This will include publicity for the future “PACT” meetings with Police on community safety issues in the area.**

**Alleyways gated adjacent to the White Road Community Centre** – Following a successful court order, these two alleyways have been gated as they had been persistently used for anti-social behaviour. The responsibility for keeping the alleyways locked now rests with the
Community Centre itself and the scheme has received support from local residents adjacent to the alleyways. This has enhanced security at the Community Centre, particularly with a pre-school nursery making use of the facilities during the day.

**Ongoing delivery of “MATCH” community learning programme** – Officers from the Medway Council Social Regeneration service worked with local voluntary sector organisations such as CVS Medway and All Saints Community Project to secure £89,000 of finances from the Learning & Skills Council to establish a new community learning programme. This is delivering vocational courses and vital foundation courses such as numeracy, literacy and ICT skills at community venues and community facilities, benefiting some of the most disadvantaged communities in Medway. All Saints Community Project has taken on a key role in ensuring that residents from the White Road estate are able to access these training programmes. They are working with local people to promote these courses informally by word of mouth to residents on the estate.

**Review of White Road Community Association and ongoing maintenance of White Road Community Centre** – Officers from Medway Council Social Regeneration service have been in touch informally with the White Road Community Association to assist them to review their structures and also to review management arrangements at the Community Centre. Updated arrangements are currently being drawn up with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the Community Association in attracting more services to make use of the Community Centre. These arrangements, once drawn up and agreed with the Community Association will be presented to representatives on the White Road Forum. Medway Council is also continuing to invest in the ongoing maintenance of the White Road Community Centre.

**Installation of Community Notice Board** – Action is underway in order to purchase and establish the community notice board on site at the Community Centre, financed by Council resources from the budget allocated to the White Road Community Centre.

**Bid in preparation for dedicated White Road Estate Neighbourhood Manager** – A bid for SEEDA finances is currently being drawn up to expand the remit of existing neighbourhood outreach services, which are working with local people to overcome barriers to employment and access jobs. The REIGNITE project has established a very successful employability outreach service in the adjacent All Saints neighbourhood and the new SEEDA bid aims to secure resources to appoint a dedicated Neighbourhood Manager for the White Road estate. The full draft bid to SEEDA will be drawn up by May 2008.
Bid in preparation for youth development initiatives in support of young people on the White Road estate – A bid for European funding is currently being prepared by Medway Council Social Regeneration officers working closely with the Sunlight Development Trust and partners from Greater Dunkerque Council in France. This will also involve Medway Youth Service. The intention is for these funds to support an array of new youth development activities benefiting young people. The White Road estate will be a target area. The bid deadline is 26 June 2008.

Forthcoming enforcement blitzes target the estate – A programme of enforcement will be carried out targeting the White Road estate, commencing in June 2008 and being repeated over the summer. This will tackle illegal parking, unpaid road tax and breaches of environmental law. The blitz will be a multi-agency partnership involving Medway Council, Kent Police and MHS Homes.

3.4 The next meeting of the White Road Forum to review further progress with delivery of these neighbourhood improvement actions is scheduled to take place in May 2008.

4 Financial implications

4.1 The Neighbourhood Police Office has been established thanks to an EU project called CHAMPION and a total of £16,484 has been spent on this, of which £6,594 has come from EU funds and £9,890 has come from Medway Council Social Regeneration budget.

4.2 The MATCH Community learning programme is funded entirely from monies from the Learning & Skills Council via their “Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities” programme. Medway Council Social Regeneration Service secured a total of £89,000 in partnership with CVS Medway and All Saints Community Project.

4.3 With the exception of the MATCH community-learning programme (which is entirely funded by external funding from the LSC), the other actions listed are all being financed through the Medway Council Social Regeneration budget and the Council’s Community Centres budget. This amounts to a total of £37,015.

4.4 Two bids for external funding to SEEDA and for EU funding respectively are now being prepared with the intention of drawing in sufficient financial resources to enable the appointment of a dedicated Neighbourhood Manager for the White Road estate over an initial three year period as well as resources for a dedicated youth development programme for the estate.
5. **Legal implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications related to this report. The White Road estate Neighbourhood Action Plan is an integral part of Medway’s social regeneration programme. Medway’s Social Regeneration Strategy has now been adopted as part of the local policy framework.

6. **Recommendations**

6.1 The Committee is asked to consider the progress made to date.

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**Background papers**

Overview and Scrutiny report 30 July 2007:  

Annex I - White Road Neighbourhood Action Plan