

Strengthening Communities and Involving People – Neighbourhoods and Community Development

Partnership Working with Council Departments

Partnership working is crucial to the success of community development work and many initiatives within neighbourhoods. A huge amount of partnership working takes place with many committed and active partners including not only the council but also third sector organisations, other public sector bodies such as Sussex Police and the universities and many local businesses. The community development approach always seeks to identify key partners and maintains and improves good communications and relationships. Taking this approach ensures that resident's priorities are progressed and action is taken. Issues are resolved quickly and resident's satisfaction with services is increased.

1. Achievements

In the first 6 months of this year 281 service providers have been involved in 'open community events'. In 2008/09:

- 1,290 contacts were made to community development workers from service providers
- 1,351 referrals were made to service providers
- 137 joint events were held with service providers

2. Case Studies

Below are some case studies showing how community development work is working in partnership with the different council departments:

2.1 *Adult Social Care and Housing*

2.1a **Housing Strategy** – Community development managers are working with the Turning the Tide project team around how existing neighbourhood structures and processes can best fit with and work alongside structures that this new initiative will bring. This input has ensured that existing groups and activities will be integrated with new structures. This means that both services providers and residents will not have an extra layer of meetings to attend and it will add real benefit to existing work on the ground.

2.1b **Housing Management** – Community Participation Officers (CPOs) and Community Development Workers (CDWs) often work in partnership around supporting Tenants Associations, especially where they have not been functioning for many years. Residents felt that Wickhurst Estate in Portslade had become run down and neglected

and they expressed a need for support in getting more activities locally and improving their living environment. The CPO and CDW formed a partnership to work together to address this.

The CDW worked hard on engaging residents to support change and on improving relationships. In partnership with the CPO an 'Estate Clean Up Day' was organised with the aim of consulting residents and forming an Action Plan to address their needs.

The CPO linked residents in with the Area Housing Panel, which led to successfully applying for funding from the Estates Development Budget. They also supported the formal process of making sure the group was constituted to Housing standards.

The CDW has supported the group to apply for PCT funding for some group running costs, an outing and a Christmas Party. She also liaised with Portslade Village Centre Play team who held weekly youth sessions at Wickhurst throughout the summer. The group are also supported to produce a regular newsletter and to access appropriate training. Several residents from this estate are now active in wider community activity. The CDW and CPO have agreed different roles to support the group consistent with their roles in the community.

2.2 *Environment*

2.2a **Active for Life** – Partnership work between the Active for Life and community development worker in Hollingbury has been very successful and mutually beneficial. The new Active for Life worker for the area was inducted into the community structures by the CDW, which has meant that this worker has been able to step into the area and be productive immediately. Both workers work with community groups in the area: the Active for Life worker takes forward group's work that is exercise focussed, supporting people to be more active, while the CDW develops groups in terms of representation and day to day operations. Both workers provide support to find funding. CDW input means that the Active for Life service is responsive to local need and the worker can engage with a great number of residents and workers.

2.2b **Park Rangers** – The Hangleton & Knoll Project's Knoll based CDWs supported 7 local residents to form the Friends of Knoll Park committee, and to constitute this group as a sub-group of the Knoll Community Association. The CDW's role has been to support the group to identify its' aims and objectives, to consult with the wider community about current plans and future developments for the park, and to organise a number of community activities using the parks

facilities. The introduction of the Park Ranger scheme has enhanced communication with BHCC Parks Department, and the Ranger has brought specialised skills to the group which has enabled the delivery of a number of successful work days in the park.

2.3 *Culture and Enterprise*

2.3a **Libraries** – Plans for a larger Coldean library and flats meant a taller building which the community objected to. A partnership between BHCC Libraries and Hanover Housing was formed which was later joined by the CDW for the area. The CDW provided advice and guidance to the Library staff ensuring that existing groups were involved and that activities to involve residents built on their planned events. Existing groups included the Residents Association, the Local Action Team, the Festival Group and the Youth Group. The Libraries staff set up a steering group which included residents who were strongly opposed to the development to ensure that their concerns were addressed as sensitively as possible. The Steering Group oversaw the process to carry out consultation about possible uses for the building and the hours and services available. The CDW provided support to the local groups to assist their engagement in the process. The community now has a well used library which is seen by all as a community resource. Issues with anti social behaviour have stopped and a number of community activities now take place within the library.

“We have done and are continuing to do a range of community engagement work working closely with the community development partners and have found their knowledge, support, expertise and guidance invaluable. This has been reflected in our and their involvement in a range of community meetings, communications and consultation work” (Libraries Manager statement.)

2.4 *Children and Young People's Trust*

2.4a **Youth Service** - Partnership work with the Play Services Team and the Playbus has been exceptional in Hollingbury. The CDW acted as an advocate for the needs of the community that had been gathered through a general neighbourhood survey and through working within the community over several months. The Play Services team listened to the issues around children and young people, took them on board and took immediate action. The CDW advised on simple things that were vital to the success of the Playbus, for example on a location that would attract people to come out of their flats. Despite this being an area where it is traditionally hard to

involve and engage people, 50 plus children attended each Playbus session. Nothing else has been as effective as the Playbus at getting people and their children involved.

2.4b Extended Schools - "I am very impressed with the way that the CDW is forging relationships across Coldean and the rest of the cluster. This can only enhance integrated delivery and ensure that residents are able to determine what happens in their locality" (CYPT Officer).

2.5 *Strategy and Governance*

2.5a The Communities Team – Community Development managers meet every 6 weeks with the Communities Team and other neighbourhood CD providers in the city to highlight neighbourhood priorities and agree how these can be taken forward at a strategic level.