

Report to: Regeneration Service Delivery Scrutiny Committee
Date: 25th June 2007
Report of: Report of Head of Regeneration and Partnerships
Subject: Regeneration and Partnerships Unit Performance Report
Ward: All

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide information on the performance of the Regeneration and Partnerships Unit and to update the Committee upon the forthcoming staffing review of the service.

2.0 Consultation

2.1 Consultation has taken place with the staff of the Regeneration and Partnerships Unit, the Executive Member for Regeneration and the Director of Regeneration and Development.

3.0 Background

3.1 A draft staffing review report that outlines the proposed changes to the unit that aligns with the mid term financial plan (until 2010) has been prepared and is currently out to consultation. Reference to the review has been made previously and it is referred to throughout this report. The report is to be presented on the 19th June to Working Executive after being considered previously by the Service Delivery Scrutiny Panel in January 2007, the Joint Scrutiny Management Board, the joint trade unions, the Executive Members for Regeneration and Resources and Management Team. Extensive consultation has been undertaken with all members of staff.

3.2 The Regeneration and Partnerships Unit operates at the centre of the Districts regeneration activity and is fundamental to the District Councils activities in bringing forward change through partnership activity. It engages with many internal services and external partners to ensure that new and innovative ways of addressing local issues can be brought forward. The unit delivers against the following corporate and locally agreed priorities;

Quality services for our people

A sustainable job for everyone

Clean, tidy communities

Better transport

Sustainable communities.

Facilitating and coordinating the regeneration of the District the unit plays a significant role in developing and progressing the Sustainable Communities agenda throughout East Durham, acting as a central point in liaison with partners in bringing forward appropriate actions for making improvements across East Durham. In particular:

- It leads in the co-ordination of major infrastructure projects delivered through partnerships (Town Centre Regeneration, Road Infrastructure, Environmental

/ Open Space schemes, colliery reclamation, housing developments and land and building redevelopment)

- It leads on developing and implementing innovative interventions and programmes to address local problems (Neighbourhood Pathfinder, Neighbourhood Renewal, Safer Stronger Communities Fund etc)
- It assess future funding requirements for the regeneration of the district
- It supports inclusiveness, engagement and involvement through the development and implementation of Community based partnerships and forums including the Community Network and the development of the East Durham Community Development Trust.
- It supports the co-ordination of Community Enterprise throughout the District.
- It is acting as a lead contact in the progression of the Durham Housing Coalfields Initiative for the District
- It leads on lobbying and promoting opportunities to address economic, housing and transport issues across the District

4.0 Position Statement & Options Appraisal

Current work programmes for each section of the unit are outlined below and progress, achievements and non - achievements are highlighted in appendix 1 in relation to these:

4.1 Major Projects

The service has continued to manage and facilitate large infrastructure, investment and development projects (East Durham Link Road, Hawthorn Business Park, Seaham St John's Square, Seaham / Murton Colliery sites, the GREAT initiative and North Dock feasibility studies and first phase development etc.). The service undertakes the lead role for the Council in relation to the Peterlee master planning process and is now at a point where the second phase of work is nearing completion.

The Unit has also facilitated work to complete economic appraisals for Dawdon, Horden and Easington Colliery as part of the Durham Coalfield Housing Initiative. Easington Colliery and Dawdon have been identified as early priorities for the first 3 years of the Durham Coalfield Housing Initiative and draft funding programmes are being developed for consideration in the Autumn that will help inform public consultation.

The unit has led on the recent enquiry to establish a "Media Village" on the strategic reserve site south of Seaham

4.2 Funding and Programmes

The unit has continued the management and administration of regeneration funds (Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Single Regeneration Budget, and assisted in the coordination and preparation of Lottery Funding / community grants). The successful delivery of the Governments Liveability Pilot has been recognised both regionally and nationally as best practice. The £12.893M NRF allocation made to the District has been successfully

allocated for the 2006-08 period and monitoring of progress is underway. NRF expenditure balanced to within 0.5% of budget for the financial year 06-07. Qualitative performance will be determined through the Annual Review of the LSP undertaken from Government Office North East.

The team has established systems for managing Safer Stronger Communities Fund a fund that brings together funding under the umbrella of the Local Area Agreement. Currently funding for the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, The Neighbourhood Element in North Peterlee, The Community Empowerment Network and Building Safer Communities has been included in this programme that will encompass other funding in future.

Work on developing and monitoring European programmes is now all undertaken by Government Office however support to local projects is still offered throughout the team

Work is ongoing with the major projects team to maximise single programme funding for major projects developing in the district. This work will inform future capital needs for the district. This work is continuing and will help inform the draft Regeneration Statement for East Durham and the draft sub regional economic strategy for County Durham.

4.3 Neighbourhood Management

The arrangement to extend the office base (Horden Social Welfare) has been continued until such time as suitable new premises are established in both designated areas of benefit.

Following a competition in local schools the former water works site (Paradise Lane, Easington Colliery) is to be brought back into use as the "Healthworks". Redevelopment work started on site during May and is scheduled for completion in October 2007. This partnership-based project includes significant private sector (Northumbrian Water) investment as well as support from the PCT, Police, Council, LSP and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder. The Easington/Horden Pathfinder sub-team will co-locate alongside other partner bodies on completion. The involvement of the Voluntary/Community Sector is now under discussion.

The Council's Housing Services Unit is progressing the matter of sustaining the learning and best practise established by the Empty Property intervention across the District. Following the Police and Council roll - out of the Police Community Support Officer (PCSOs) and Graffiti Removal Service respectively, the Smoking Cessation intervention is the latest to be mainstreamed by the PCT. As previously reported numerous smaller scale service improvement interventions and/or capital schemes continue to be conceived and implemented.

Following a tendering exercise the contract for delivering a Board Development Programme to the interim management Board of the North Peterlee Neighbourhood Element Partnership was let to the Oasis School of Human Relations and is now being implemented.

To date efforts to establish a temporary office base in 'North Peterlee' have not come to fruition. However, the location of the North Peterlee team within

new-build premises is on schedule. The lead partner, (East Durham Community Development Trust), is currently evaluating tenders whilst the build time is estimated at twenty-two weeks.

During this reporting period the North Peterlee Pathfinder has sought to generate interest locally in terms of visible activity. As a result of partnership agreements and collaborative arrangements with service providers, Graffiti Removal, Street Warden 'Head-cams' and Police Head-cam interventions have already been commenced whilst a variety of Respect activities have been supported. Numerous other small scale service improvements and/or capital schemes have also served as 'quick wins'.

In partnership with the East Durham and Derwentside LSPs, the Easington/Horden, North Peterlee and Stanley Pathfinders have collaboratively developed a Performance Management Framework enabling neighbourhood and local partnerships to report on their performance to the Safer Stronger Communities (SSC) 'block' of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) so that their respective contributions towards LAA outcomes can be measured. The three Pathfinders are also exploring the scope for further collaborative working in other areas of their work.

In partnership with SSC and LAA partners, extensive survey work has recently been undertaken and shall be reflected in the Delivery Plan for both partnerships that is currently under preparation.

The joint 'Neighbourhood Programmes Team', currently has one vacancy, the former Operations Manager left in May 2007. The post was reviewed in conjunction with evolving Council and Government priorities to take account of the need for more effective community engagement and the need to link some of the 'softer' community involvement and capacity building activities to the 'harder' target and indicator driven Local Area Agreement process. A Community Engagement Manager will be appointed during June/July 2007 in accordance with District Council recruitment and selection procedures. Easington/Horden and North Peterlee Board members will play an active role within this process.

4.4.1 Community Development

Within the draft service review (currently out to consultation) it is proposed that the function of community development will become further integrated into the activity of the Regeneration and Partnerships Unit. It is envisaged that the proposed changes will enable a greater flow of information with regard to community issues into regeneration processes. This will include shaping the work of major developments, informing innovative schemes such as the Neighborhood Pathfinders and Liveability initiatives such as Pride in Easington as well as ensuring that the priorities of external funding are influenced by community priorities.

Conversely, the dissemination of information of regeneration activities, performance and proposals will potentially become more effective. By increasing the effectiveness of this dialogue it is hoped that a greater understanding can be achieved between the Community Network and subsequently the new Community Development Trust and the LSP, the Council and its constituency, officers, councilors and members of the public

at the local level in relation to forthcoming regeneration work. The policy emphasis upon community engagement needs to be balanced with the statutory political processes, the need to engage meaningfully with communities, and the direction of wider regeneration priorities.

4.1 Policy, Promotion & Planning

Additionally, work has been undertaken to support emerging regeneration policy for the benefit of the District this has included the formulation and contribution to reports relating to; the Northern Way, the Regional Spatial Strategy, Local Transport Plan, Local Public Service Agreements, Local Area Agreements, Safer Stronger Communities Fund, European Funding Issues post 2006 and progressing the balancing housing markets agenda within a sub regional context and Coalfield Communities Campaign issues. This has resulted in the requirement to establish a regeneration statement for the District towards which the Unit is leading on in terms of its content and coordination.

Due to the changing management arrangements relating to East Durham Homes, project based work such as finalising the Parkside Housing Scheme and the developing work programme of the Coalfield Housing Market Renewal Areas have also had a significant impact upon the work of the unit.

The facilitation of visits and presentations regarding the District has continued to be undertaken, including Investors and Developers, Commission for Rural England, English Partnerships, the Princes Foundation, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Local Government Information Unit, the Regional Development Agency, the Regional Housing Board and the National Association of Councillors and continues to raise the profile of the opportunities and problems of the district. More recently visits have been facilitated for the CPA Inspection Tour, the Lord Lieutenant of County Durham, new District Councillors and Durham and Wearside Common Purpose training programme.

The Unit continues to be requested to facilitate regional and national workshops in relation to the use and management of external funding. This was due to a recommendation by the Audit Commission in response to their findings within the CPA process. The Unit has also been requested to present good practise in relation to community engagement by the LGIU (Quality Towns and Parish Councils), the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and at the 3rd National Liveability Conference (ODPM).

The Audit Commission Regeneration Inspections in County Durham in 2006/2007 heavily involved members of the unit. Staff were involved in preparing for the inspections that were undertaken in early 2007 with final reports expected in June / July 2007.

The unit has achieved the requirement to achieve Priority Service Outcome GG02 as part of the E government agenda. This will enhance community accessibility to information and opportunities via the internet. The pages for the community link page are now live within the District Councils website and further development of the content within the pages is planned. This work has tied into the CRM Kiosk development across the district.

Finally it should be recognised that the unit's service plan has not as yet been fully reviewed. This will be forthcoming upon adoption of the new format for service delivery plans and confirmation of and agreement of the staffing review. It is anticipated that this will be completed in 2007 with development work programmed to review the existing plan that covered the period 2003-2006.

As a result of policy and funding changes as well as an increasing emphasis on community engagement and involvement the work content of the unit in the medium term is likely to change focus as described in section 4.4 of the report. This has brought forward the requirement to undertake a review of the functions of the unit and has been incorporated with the medium term financial planning exercise the Council has undertaken. Future reports will therefore reflect this change in content.

5.0 Implications

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications other than those outlined in the appendix

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications

Policy Implications

There are no policy implications.

Risk Implications

A risk assessment has been completed and the necessary actions required to effectively manage the identified risks have been implemented.

Communications

There are no Communications implications

6.0 Corporate Implications

Corporate Plan and Priorities

The report outlines the teams activities and achievements in line with Corporate and Community Planning. The attached Report outlines how the service will function if the forthcoming review is agreed.

Equality and Diversity

The report has no additional implications for Equality and Diversity, although the Unit has completed a departmental self-assessment in relation to the quality standard for local government.

E- Government

The report outlines some work being undertaken by the unit towards achieving the IEG Priority Service Outcome GG02. (See 4.11)

Procurement

There are no procurement implications

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 That members note the contents of the report, and the positive progress made by the unit.

Background Papers/Documents referred to

1. Unit Evidence Files
2. Risk assessment matrix.