



Scrutiny Committee - 15 December 2010

Area Based Initiative - Rushden Hayden

Summary

This report looks at progress and achievements made with the Area Based Initiative taking place in Rushden Hayden. Members are invited to comment on the approaches taken and identify particular lessons that will inform how we tackle community development in the future.

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1 - Map of the Rushden Hayden ABI project area

Appendix 2 - Rushden Hayden ABI Action Plan

1. Background

- 1.1 Area Based Initiatives (ABI) are 3-year community development projects taking place in East Northamptonshire's most deprived areas. They focus on working directly with local people to help them improve their neighbourhoods and build capacity so they are able to tackle issues in the future.
- 1.2 The first ABI was in the Rushden Pemberton ward and completed in December 2008. At its meeting 17 September 2007, the Policy and Resources Committee approved an extension to the ABI programme (minute 137 refers). ABIs are presently taking place in Irthlingborough John Pyel and Rushden Hayden.
- 1.3 At its meeting 2 April 2008 (minute 392 refers), the Scrutiny Committee considered what had been learnt from the Pemberton ABI with officers and representatives of partner organisations including Groundwork, police, housing associations and the town councils. This has supported the approaches taken in the two current ABIs.
- 1.4 This report focuses on the progress and achievements of the Rushden Hayden ABI, and will be supported by a presentation at the meeting. A report will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee looking at the progress and achievements of the Irthlingborough John Pyel ABI at a later date.
- 1.5 At this stage there are no plans for further ABIs after the current two come to an end in late 2011. However discussions will be needed on the future direction of our community development activities and the learning from the ABI projects will inform these discussions.

2 Outline of progress with the Rushden Hayden ABI

- 2.1 Throughout the first year (2009) various practical and family orientated events such as tidy up days, were held so people could understand the opportunities the ABI offered. These events were part of a theme called 'Love your Neighbourhood', which encouraged people to say what they valued and the areas they felt needed improving.
- 2.2 Local residents were also asked a number of questions through a doorstep survey in September 2009. The questions focused on issues including how safe they felt in the area, whether they felt people from different backgrounds get on well with each other and whether they would be willing to be involved in the ABI. This information provided the baseline so improvement could be measured over the life of the project. The methodology used was developed through the Pemberton ABI, whereby teams from

the partner organisations visited each house in the project area and completed the questionnaires with the residents. It has been found to be the most effective way of capturing information rather than relying on people to return the questionnaires.

2.3 Five priorities emerged that local people wanted the ABI to tackle over years 2 and 3: -

- Improve Trafford Park
- Improve the way the area looks
- Provide more activities for young people
- Reduce anti-social behaviour in the area
- Improve roads and parking

2.4 The Hayden ABI is co-ordinated by a management group made up of representatives of the partner organisations including Rushden Town Council, Northamptonshire Police, Groundwork, housing associations and includes the district ward members. A detailed action plan (appendix 2 refers) is in place and owned by the partners. The management group has a monthly meeting and the emphasis is on implementation. One key thing learnt from undertaking the first ABI, is that strong commitment from partner organisations is key to overall success. Many of the partners involved in the Pemberton ABI remain involved in the Hayden project.

3 What has been achieved so far?

3.1 Responding to the five priorities (section 2.3 above), partners have been working with local residents on a series of projects. These are set out below detailing progress and achievements.

3.1.1 **Improve Trafford Park.** Local people said that the play facilities needed improving and equipment providing for a wider age range of young people. There was a risk that providing new equipment without addressing some of the anti-social behaviour (ASB) problems in the park, might lead to it being vandalised. Partners worked with local people, tackling the ASB issue through detached youth work and also carried out improvements to the park itself. By 'pooling' resources partners had the perimeter fences to the park painted by Community Payback and improvements made to the park entrances as well. A group of young people came together to support applications for funding to improve the play facilities and this has now been secured.

3.1.2 **Improve the way the area looks - Oval Crescent Garage Site.** One of the housing associations had difficulty in letting the garage units so offered the site for a community project. A working group of partners and local people consulted neighbouring residents, who wanted to see allotments or a garden. The site was secured with perimeter fencing but a knotweed infestation has prevented the ground from being disturbed. The idea of using old skips donated by a local company emerged. These were treated and painted by local residents and then planted up at a community planting day in three themes: wildlife, vegetables and fruit. This project is being run through the new Residents' Association Hayden FLAG and combined with the Trafford Park project has been awarded an 'Improving your Patch' award. Furthermore in the 2010 survey, there was an increase in satisfaction with the environmental improvements over the 2009 results, which is believed to be attributable to the work in the park and at Oval Crescent.

3.1.3 **Improve the way the area looks – Hayden FLAG.** For the first Love Your Neighbourhood event held during the summer 2009 local people were asked what they "loved" and "hated" about their area and if they would like to be involved in community activities. A group of people came together to organise events for later in 2009 and by May 2010 a core group of 15 people regularly attended meetings to plan and organise a programme of events in 2010. Hayden FLAG (Facilitating Local Action Group) became a Residents' Association and has a core committee who have now been trained in first aid, food hygiene, committee skills, risk assessments, poster design, running workshops and publicising/promoting themselves. Some 20

volunteers help out at their events. Their mission is to “Provide entertaining activities that all local residents, young and old can get involved in” The first event they held this year was the “World Cup Party” with over 500 people in attendance and then a “Love your Park” Sports Day in July. They have recently held a Table Top Sale and a Christmas Quiz. They have their own website www.haydenflag.org and a Facebook page which shows details of all their work. The committee is made up of mums, dads, local businesses, grandparents of the area and they all live in the area of concentration. This has the distinct advantage that they are well supported at their events by friends and neighbours and the residents feel truly represented by the committee.

- 3.1.4 **Provide more activities for young people: Charity Shop** - A councillor suggested that young people be given the opportunity to run a shop in Rushden High Street like “The Apprentice”. Groundwork took the lead on running the shop with young people with other partners contributing to this and a shop unit was acquired rent free for a period from July to October. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds were selected to run the shop, which opened twice a week. They were marked on time keeping, presentation, customer service and were asked to nominate a local charity to which the proceeds would go. A presentation in November, which local councillors and partners attended, demonstrated how the young people had benefitted from the project and what a difference it had made to them: increased confidence, increased skills and employability. One girl has got herself another volunteering opportunity at another charity shop in the High Street on Saturdays.
- 3.1.5 **Provide more activities for young people: School Gardening Club** - Before the start of the ABI, information from the NHS Trust said that Rushden Hayden Ward had the lowest rate of fruit and vegetable consumption in East Northamptonshire. To encourage volunteering and encourage healthy eating a gardening club was set up at Newton Road School for the summer term 2010. Approximately 15 children learnt how to plant and grow vegetables in their school garden with parent volunteers coming along to help. This has resulted in new volunteers helping the school and FLAG.
- 3.1.6 **Reduce anti-social behaviour in the area: Neighbourhood Watch** – The survey results in 2009 showed more people felt safe when outside in the area than those in 2010. This could be attributable to a particular incidence of anti-social behaviour in the winter of 2009/10. A particular family at the centre of the issue was removed from the area in spring 2010, however by the time of the 2010 survey it is believed that the issues were fresh in residents’ minds. Indeed comments from the survey say “it is much better since they moved”, Residents surveyed in 2010 were asked if they would like to either run or join a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. From this two meetings were set up and three new schemes have been set up in the area in November 2010. These are being run by local residents and will be supported by Hayden FLAG and Neighbourhood Watch in their publicity.
- 3.2 Comparisons between the results of the 2009 and 2010 surveys will be included in the presentation to the meeting. The results will support Hayden FLAG and the ABI Management Group in planning and prioritising future work and activities.

4 Community development and the Big Society agenda

- 4.1 Implementing the ABIs will influence the Council’s approach to the Big Society agenda. Big Society will see a radical shift of power from central government to the very local level. Local people, neighbourhoods and communities will have more power and responsibility and will be able to use it to create better services and outcomes. Through Big Society more emphasis will be given to what local people can do for themselves and for others.
- 4.2 Big Society will give local people new rights:
- The right to buy – helping communities to save local facilities and services threatened with closure

- The right to challenge – giving communities the right to bid to take over state run services
- The right to build – allowing communities to decide where to build new homes, shops, businesses and facilities where they want them and where they are needed.

4.3 The ABIs demonstrate many of the principles of Big Society. Local people have been encouraged to identify what matters most in their area and work together to tackle these issues. Taking the Hayden ABI as an example, local people are making things happen in their neighbourhood through organisations like Hayden FLAG.

5 Recommendations

Members are recommended to note the progress and achievements with the Hayden ABI and comment on how this might inform the Council's future approaches to community development and the Big Society agenda.

Implications:	
Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy	
Good Quality of Life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good Reputation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Good Value for Money	<input type="checkbox"/> High Quality Service Delivery <input type="checkbox"/>
Effective Partnership Working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong Community Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of our Customers and Communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	
Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval <input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial	There are no financial implications at this stage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There will be financial implications – see paragraph <input type="checkbox"/>
	There is provision within existing budget <input type="checkbox"/>
	Decisions may give rise to additional expenditure at a later date <input type="checkbox"/>
	Decisions may have potential for income generation <input type="checkbox"/>
Risk Management	An assessment has been carried out and there are no material risks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Material risks exist and these are recorded at Risk Register Reference - inherent risk score - <input type="checkbox"/> residual risk score - <input type="checkbox"/>
Staff	There are no additional staffing implications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Additional staff will be required – see paragraph <input type="checkbox"/>
Equalities and Human Rights	There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph <input type="checkbox"/>
Legal	Power: Local Government Act 2000
	Other considerations:
Background Papers:	
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Date: 3 December 2010	
CFO	MO
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