

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND

The Safer and Stronger Communities funding that has been approved for Copeland is made up of 2 streams of funding these being the Neighbourhood Element and the Safer Cleaner and Greener element (the detail of the Cleaner Safer and Greener programme has been approved by the Executive in February 2006).

The key aspects of the Cleaner Safer and Greener Fund aims to focus funding on the following areas:

- Less litter and rubbish on the streets
- Fewer abandoned vehicles
- More Green Flag award winning parks
- Better performance on environmental services
- Better quality neighbourhoods
- Improved satisfaction with parks and open spaces
- Improved satisfaction with neighbourhoods in which people live

This paper is intended to identify to members a common geographical boundary, which supports both initiatives and clearly identifies where resources will be targeted.

Establishing the boundary has been made in regard to the explicit guidance determined by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, detailed below are abstracts from the guidance, which aims to support implementation of the initiative on the Ground.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ELEMENT

The overarching National outcome of the Neighbourhood element is *to improve the quality of life for people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and ensure service providers are more responsive to neighbourhood needs and improve their delivery.*

The emphasis is on disadvantaged neighbourhoods rather than disadvantaged wards as this is the new criteria for targeting resources.

Evidence and experience now indicates that there are certain key building blocks that should be put in place quickly to stabilise deprived neighbourhoods and lay the foundations in which other interventions have a better prospect of success. This includes taking practical measures to:

- a) **Improve liveability**, encompassing crime; fear of crime; anti-social behaviour;

physical environmental quality; housing management; basic leisure provision for young people;

- b) **Tackle poor public services** to reduce educational underachievement, worklessness, poor health, teenage conceptions and offending;
- c) **Transform neighbourhoods** through reconnecting them with housing and job markets where this is possible;
- d) **Empower local people**, which is important in enabling local people to get involved and have a say in local decisions, and foster community cohesion;

From 1 April 2006, new ODPM funding for community empowerment, neighbourhood management and neighbourhood wardens – previously programmes subject to their own ring-fenced funding – will be merged into a single funding stream and allocated to areas, which include the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These areas have been identified using Index of Multiple Deprivation data (IMD) to pinpoint pockets of severe deprivation *. This funding will be known as the 'Neighbourhood Element' of the SSCF. This guidance explains ways in which the Neighbourhood Element can be used to achieve the SSCF/LAA priority outcome for disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

***(In Copeland the area that has triggered the funding being targeted within Copeland is the Super Output area of Sandwith which is in the top 3% of IMD)**

Identification of the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Element

Government Offices will be able to advise the local boundary of the SOA. Local partners will then need to decide whether to adopt a strategy for the SOA, or a wider geographical area. It will be for partners to propose the boundaries that includes the designated SOA though GOs will have to be satisfied that a suitable area has been selected.

In deciding on boundaries, partners should:

- bear in mind that the experience of neighbourhood management pathfinders is that a population of roughly 10,000 is workable. This is large enough to facilitate effective co-ordination of service delivery but small enough to remain responsive to the needs and priorities of communities;
(The population identified in the attached map is 13,713 and is recognised as deliverable within the guidance of the ODPM .)

- aim to get a balance between focusing on the greatest deprivation and addressing problems in recognisable neighbourhoods that local people can relate to;
(The South Whitehaven Partnership area has been the focus for regeneration activity over the last 6 years in recognition of its needs and issues. It is logical to continue supporting this area as it adjoins the area of Sandwith as the main trigger area for the Neighbourhood Element and it is essential that any direct improvements need to be seen within this area)
- look to ensure shared geographical boundaries and joining up with other existing initiatives that are contributing towards neighbourhood renewal objectives for the area;
(The Cleaner/Safer and Greener boundary includes the additional area of Hensingham and has identified that residents from Harbour may access some of the initiative in the South Whitehaven area as they are designed to assist communities in addressing environmental and safer community issues, statistics show that these areas also suffer from issues of this nature. It is logical for the Neighbourhood Element to mirror the Hensingham area as there are issues regarding Liveability, access to Public services, transforming neighbourhoods. Harbour does not suffer to the same degree with these issues it is therefore proposed that Neighbourhood Element funding is targeted at only a portion of the Corkickle area and that the rest of Harbour be supported through a dedicated Neighbourhood Manager for the whole area. The Housing Market Renewal Investment proposed for the Town Centre will also address some of the housing/community issues)
- take into account what is practical and sensible, eg in cases where neighbourhood management and wardens activity is already being delivered (which may include having neighbourhoods larger than 10,000 or delineating a sub-area within an existing relatively large neighbourhood renewal area where this makes sense and fits with existing arrangements);
- in areas with large numbers of SOAs, a decision may have to be taken on where to concentrate efforts rather than spread over all the SOAs;
(Harbour does not suffer to the same degree with Neighbourhood Element issues and already has significant resources targeting public services which relate to environment/policing/leisure etc it is therefore proposed that Safer Stronger Communities funding is only targeted at a portion of the Corkickle area and also have additional support through a dedicated Neighbourhood Manager for the whole area.)
- remember that ward level data is generally easier to obtain than data for a neighbourhood that straddles more than one ward;

(The geographical boundaries are linked as close as possible to super output areas in order to make data collation more efficient)

- consider the value of reflecting known community boundaries which are more likely to motivate people to get involved;
(The Communities of Kells/Greenbank/WoodhouseMirehouse and Hensingham are the main community boundaries based around the Social Housing Estates and are stronger defined communities)
- bear in mind the issue of community cohesion. Targeting resources at a specific area, particularly one that has a predominance of one ethnic group, needs to be communicated with surrounding communities to ensure that tension is not created.

RECOMMENDATION

In light of the parameters identified by the ODPM it is recognised that the existing geographical boundary of the South Whitehaven Partnership focussed activity on the neighbourhoods, which experience the greatest issues within the context of the Neighbourhood Element and Cleaner Safer and Greener Funding. The discussion whether to extend the area has to be based on statistical data which currently identifies additional issues within the Hensingham area that would benefit from the Neighbourhood Element and Cleaner Safer and Greener funding in addressing liveability and access to public services and would also enable greater impact to be made with limited resources.

The Harbour ward does not have the same dynamics as the previously mentioned areas as there is a predominant mix of private sector housing and business within the area and only pockets of social housing.

Access to public services are not as severe as most services (Leisure/employment advice/health/GPs/financial/police presence) are located close to Whitehaven town centre or within easy reach through effective public transport and the main employers within Whitehaven are also located within the town centre.

It is also recognised that a significant amount of public resources in regard to the environmental image of the town are already directed into the Harbour ward.

However the Harbour area does experience issues relating to crime/disorder, which need to be addressed and it is felt that the portion of the Corkickle area in addition to the Neighbourhood Manager having a role to oversee the Harbour area would ensure better coordination of the public services on the ground to assist in combating these issues it is also acknowledged that the proposals for Housing Market Renewal activity in the town centre will aid in supporting community development.

It is therefore recommended that in order to provide a consistency in how the Neighbourhood Element and Cleaner Safer and Greener funding is

administered, **this is a requirement from Government**, the common geographical boundary as identified on plan A be adopted although resources would be targeted for both funding streams predominantly around the key neighbourhoods of Kells/Woodhouse/Greenbank/Mirehouse/Hensingham as previously identified (excluding the majority of Harbour in regard to funding resources but having overall management fed through the Neighbourhood Manager to coordinate public service activity on the ground)