

## Decision Session - Executive Leader

6 July 2010

Report of the Director of City Strategy

### Evaluation of the Kingsway West Area Action Project (KWAAP)

#### Summary

1. The Kingsway Project has been a small multi-agency action learning project aimed at improving the index of Multiple Deprivation score in one small area. In order to assess the work, and learn lessons from it, York St. John University agreed to undertake an independent evaluation of the project.
2. This report sets out background information on the Kingsway West Action Project, provides key outcomes (including working in new areas) and informs the Executive Leader of the results of the evaluation and the lessons learned to roll out similar projects to other small areas.

#### Background

3. A report to the Council in 2008 provided detailed information on the Government collated statistics called the "Index of Multiple Deprivation" (IMD). It was found that:
  - **Overall York's levels of deprivation are decreasing** - The 2004 IMD ranked York Unitary Authority as 219 out of 354 local authorities (where 1 is the most deprived and 354 is the least deprived). In 2007 York is ranked at 242.
  - **The numbers of deprived areas in York are reducing** - In 2004 York had 11 SOA's (Super Output Areas) that were within the 20% most deprived in England. In 2007 York had a reduced figure of 8 SOA's within the 20% most deprived and one was within the 10% most deprived.
  - **One SOA remains particularly disadvantaged** - It is the same SOA (Kingsway West) within the 10% most deprived for 2004 and 2007.
4. It was decided that the Council could not ignore the above findings or delay action with further detailed analysis of the statistics. Therefore the City Council agreed to lead and manage a pilot multi-agency programme – involving the local residents associations - which will tackle deprivation in the Kingsway West area. The Council established a working group to develop and oversee actions in the area. This group is steadily growing as work develops and includes, amongst others:

Residents Associations  
Ward Councillors  
Police  
Future Prospects  
Primary Care Trust  
York Young People's Services  
JobCentre Plus  
Citizen's Advice Bureau  
Children's Centre  
Organisations representing the elderly  
Housing Associations  
Hotspots project

5. A report on the above was approved by the Council's Executive in September 2008 which resulted in a budget allocation of £32,300 to support the work in the Kingsway West area.
6. There is a strong weighting towards incomes and employment in the IMD and this is reflected in the actions taken to date, which include:
  - Providing information and advice on learning and work.
  - Delivering a benefits take-up campaign.
  - Youth activity and advisory projects.
  - "Altogether Better" health campaign.
  - "York on a Budget" booklet production and delivery.
  - Police support for local projects.
  - Residents' Association capacity training.
  - Credit Union facilities
  - Affordable Warmth Campaign
7. The pilot team was tasked to:
  - Assemble a working budget, with the aim of reducing deprivation in one area of the city.
  - Identify effective leadership roles to deliver actions and outcomes.
  - Develop and deliver proposals, which provide outcomes supporting existing strategies of partnership agencies.
  - Establish a template for a city-wide approach to tackling deprivation.
  - Suggest how partners' resources might be better used through a joint approach.
  - Develop interim success measures prior to the next IMD in 4 years time.
  - Develop a reporting mechanism for actions and results.
8. The project has already achieved some good outcomes in terms of projects started, numbers into training, numbers into work, amount of increased benefit take up etc. However, with the high numbers of older people on Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance, and the weighting put on

employment in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, it is probable that the area will not move out of the 10% worst in England in the short term.

9. Some of the headline statistics: -
  - From November 2008 to March 2010 (although the funding for this project finished in October 2009) – 204 individuals have contacted Future Prospects
  - From November 2008 to October 2009 approx. 700 households in the area were offered learning and work advice (and signposting to other agencies where appropriate).
  - 43 people have enrolled on courses; 1 has gone to do voluntary work and 12 found employment
  - Majority of people making contact were in the age range of 25 – 55
  - Most queries were around training and employment related support
10. Up until March 2010 over £57,000 in additional annual benefits has been realised for residents, more than the initial sum approved by the Executive to support this project. A new service is about to start, in partnership with the Cornlands Road Medical Practice, the Foxwood Residents' Association and Railway Housing Association to fund a benefits advice worker for 1 day per week in the medical practice.
11. In addition the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) saw a total of 371 clients from the Westfield area between April 2008 and April 2009. Most queries were around debt, benefits and housing and Westfield has the highest number of enquiries.
12. The affordable warmth “Hotspots” campaign has seen approximately half of their enquiries coming from the Westfield Ward due to the cross referral systems developed through the partnership working in the area.

## **Why an independent report?**

13. The importance of the evaluation of the project as part of its objective to improve the lives of residents in Kingsway West has been recognised. The Council did not want to rely on future IMD data alone in judging the impact of the Action Project. As IMD is based on data which can be a couple of years old at the point of the IMD report being published, City of York Council (CYC) staff considered it to be unlikely that the next IMD ratings would be based on data collected after the full period of the project implementation. Therefore, CYC approached York St John University (YSJU) for support with an independent evaluation process. The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at YSJU has a track record in service evaluation in health and social care settings and agreed to provide a research team to conduct an evaluation of the project. The evaluation process began in September 2009. The team of researchers were:

Professor Patrick Doherty, Chair of Rehabilitation.

Dr. Alison Laver-Fawcett, Deputy Director, Research Centre for Occupation and Mental Health.  
Emlyn Lucas, Research Assistant.

The researchers used four main methods of data collection:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Residents Survey
- Discussion with the Kingsway Area Residents' Association (KARA)
- An evaluation meeting with members of the Action Project Group

Details of the methodology can be found in the full report held at the Economic Development Unit.

## **Main findings of the report**

14. The reports executive summary states:

*“Overall feedback on the effectiveness of the Kingsway West Area Action Project in reducing levels of deprivation has been positive. KARA and the residents’ newsletter have been established and some initiatives, such as those run by Future Prospects, have been successful in bringing extra income and skills to the area. Community cohesion has also perceived to have been strengthened.*

*Multi agency co-operation was seen as a driving factor behind this success and organisations have been able to co-ordinate their efforts well through the monthly group meetings. There are still some agencies with whom the group would like to work more closely, such as Job Centre Plus and the Education Department.*

*In the eyes of some residents and stakeholders, Future Prospects has proven itself central to the project in its current form.*

*There are some concerns about the sustainability of the project, and whether the funding and resources for services, such as those provided by Future Prospects, will be available in future years. These concerns are magnified if an expansion of the project as a template for the rest of the city is realised, and stakeholders expressed the concern that the concentration of time and resources in such a small area would unlikely be able to replicated city-wide.*

*The Kingsway West Area Action Project has, according to many interviewees, demonstrated the value of small scale, flexible initiatives in addressing issues of deprivation. Whether it is something that can be feasibly transferred to a city-wide scale without changes, however, needs to be carefully considered. There may be greater value in focusing on those SOAs with the highest deprivation IMD rankings. Each project needs to focus on that specific area, and as populations vary across SOAs there cannot be an assumption that ‘one size will fit all’ when it comes to delivering initiatives and services to meet the needs of residents.”*

## Recommendations from the report

15. Eleven recommendations relating to the specific project are put forward and an additional four recommendations are suggested for future evaluation and research.

### *Project recommendations:*

**Recommendation 1:** KARA should be supported to continue as an active residents' association and be a key partner in any future community developments in the area. The development of residents' association in any other SOAs identified for similar projects will be important.

**Recommendation 2:** There is a need for further work to raise the profile of KWAAP and specific projects / initiatives within the community.

**Recommendation 3:** Avoid the use of terms 'deprived' and 'deprivation' in Communication with residents.

**Recommendation 4:** Engagement with residents from the outset of the project so they are empowered to define areas of need and prioritise issues and problem within their local community. Residents should then be supported to partner with agencies and service providers to identify potential initiatives or projects to address these priorities. This 'bottom up' approach to community development should help to ensure desired initiatives are put in place and increase the visibility of the project from day one.

**Recommendation 5:** Pre and post measures to be put in place for each Action Project initiated in further SOAs so that baseline data can be collected and outcome data then compared with baselines. These should be linked to agreed performance indicators.

**Recommendation 6:** Each service provider to negotiate the desired outcomes for each resident who engages in a specific project / initiative / service at the point of engagement and identify a means of recording / rating whether this outcome is then achieved.

**Recommendation 7:** Clearer matching of specific initiatives / projects to IMD areas of deprivation, particularly where an initiative / project might be aiming to address more than one aspect of deprivation.

**Recommendation 8:** Future Prospects has been central to the success of the project. They should be funded to continue working in the Kingsway West area with further evaluation of outcomes. It is recommended that initiatives delivered by Future Prospects should be a key component of projects delivered in other SOAs in York.

**Recommendation 9:** Base initiatives / services within the local community and ensure sufficient resources for high visibility, including door to door outreach work.

**Recommendation 10:** Seek further engagement with Job Centre Plus, the Education department and local GPs.

**Recommendation 11:** It is recommended that the local newsletter continues to be published. The timing of future newsletters will need to be carefully considered, it is recommended that they are only published when there is significant communication to be shared. Given the 5% response rate to the survey in this evaluation, it is recommended that further evaluation of the newsletter should be undertaken to ensure it is an effective reporting mechanism on progress to residents. As the second choice for communication was 'a letter from the council' (25% of survey sample), it is recommended that both the newsletter and a letter to each household are used in combination for key announcements / information.

***Evaluation and research recommendations:***

16. If the project is to be rolled out to other areas of York it is recommended that CYC engage with researchers and the local community to undertake a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach from the outset of any new project. Using PAR, residents would be engaged from the start of the project to identify and prioritise required initiatives and services to address deprivation in their area and then reflect on the success of the project at identified intervals throughout the project, recommending and driving changes as required.

One of the challenges of both the Action Project and the evaluation has been engaging fully with residents.

**Recommendation 12:** In future CYC fund input from a service user organisation in partnership with academic researchers to aid wider engagement in future evaluation.

**Recommendation 13:** When identifying required funding for future action projects to tackle levels of deprivation, CYC budget for a robust pre- and post test evaluation.

**Recommendation 14:** Future evaluation should start from the onset of the project so baseline data is collected. Evaluation should include both qualitative and quantitative measures, including standardised measures of quality of life, survey, focus groups and participatory video.

**Recommendation 15:** The development and evaluation of any future projects should use a Participatory Action Research approach with residents as equal partners in the endeavour.

## **Additional recommendations in relation to the development of future projects**

17. The above recommendations are important to the development of future projects. In addition a number of lessons have been learnt by the officers who developed and support the project. These are personal (and sometimes obvious) views but may be valid in supporting future work.
- Small is good! Working in a small geographical area of identified need leads to effective targeting of partnership support work. Not all areas are equal and diminishing resources should be put where they will do most good.
  - Community based work needs strong leadership and time commitment. This can be from Elected Members and/or officers. As regeneration partnership work is across organisations there is potential for a Local Strategic Partnership Board role. Whoever leads needs to have a good corporate understanding of the agencies which can contribute and have the skills and/or management position to get access to high level managers in partner organisations.
  - Collecting baseline information and consulting early with residents to gain their involvement is important but this should not be an excuse for inaction. It can run alongside early interventions which give a strong message that things will get done which in turn encourages involvement.
  - Actions create other actions, as they stimulate ideas and even sometimes embarrass other agencies to become more involved in the project (this has proved to be an effective tool in this particular project).
  - It is important to involve residents but do not expect them to be representative of the area, they are often not, therefore don't forget to use the partnerships professional understanding of the needs of the silent minority.
  - Quick early wins (e.g. benefit take-up, a physical improvement or learning and work advice) creates credibility amongst residents and "word-of-mouth" recommendations for services are more powerful than any number of leaflets and posters.
  - Successful community projects need a continual community presence (in this case Future Prospects) rather than occasional events.
  - Don't be frightened of failure of parts of the project and don't "flog a dead horse" if something is not working. Be as flexible as possible in delivery and learn quickly from mistakes. Therefore have service level agreements with providers which are not rigid and allow for experimentation.

- Not all agencies like to deliver at the sharp end, e.g. door knocking and working in people's homes. Understand this and make sure those agencies that do work out in the community know enough about the other services to signpost or preferably escort clients to those services.
- Find out what priorities other agencies have and the budgets that come with them. It may then be possible to marry projects together and enhance local services whilst encouraging better partnership working.
- Don't expect other parts of the Council to be as pro-active in the project as the partnership feel they should be. The Partnerships priorities might not be someone else's. In these instances (and sometimes with partners) it would be useful to have a corporate manager to mediate
  - i) should the service be provide at all, and if so,
  - ii) what the expected level of service should be.
- Small incremental improvements that can be sustained are often better than big one-off interventions.
- A small budget to commence projects is very useful but partners should be aware from the beginning that any project will only be sustainable if this type of work becomes part of their core programmes.

## **Follow-up work**

18. Whilst waiting for the York St. John University evaluation report, and in the spirit of an action learning project, the project has not stood still. The developments are detailed below.

## **Westfield area**

19. The Kingsway West area for the purpose of the original project contains one very small part of the Foxwood Estate (Herman Walk). Therefore the Foxwood Residents' Association were also involved from the commencement of the work. As the project developed the partners began to provide services for people from outside the immediate study area as "word-of-mouth" referral began amongst residents. It was agreed by partners that they would have an "open access" policy and therefore nobody was turned away from the advice provided.
20. The rest of the Foxwood Estate is one of the 7 SOA's in the city which is in the worst 20% in England in terms of the IMD. This led the Partnership to naturally extend the work from September 2009 into the whole of Foxwood. With a small amount of additional funding from the Ward Committees Future Prospects have extended their drop-in and door knocking service to both the Foxwood area and, with support from the Chapelfields Residents' Association, the Chapelfields Estate (another SOA in the worst 20% in England in terms of the IMD).



21. Therefore the Partnership group still meets once a month and now involves the Kingsway Area Residents' Association, the Foxwood Residents' Association and the Chapelfields Residents' Association. Apart from some short term funding from the Ward Committee there is no direct budget to continue work other than the core budgets of each of the partner organisations.

### **Clifton area**

22. Through the Yorkshire Forward "Response to Redundancy" funding for York an opportunity arose for the Learning City Partnership to head a bid for a multi-agency programme which will support unemployed people and facilitate job match opportunities and ongoing retention and workforce development support with local employers. This bid used the Foxwood template as a good practice example of how to target and engage those furthest from the labour market.

The bid document states:

*"The **Learning City Adult Learning & Skills Strategy 2007 – 2010** identified tackling worklessness and focusing on the most disadvantaged communities, as one of its five key strategic priorities.<sup>1</sup>*

*By working collectively with individuals in specific disadvantaged neighbourhoods, evidence shows that this will target the highest pockets of longer term unemployed, those on health related benefits, those who are inactive, those with lower level skills and groups of people who are most excluded or at risk of exclusion (i.e. those with mental health issues, learning difficulties/disabilities and from BME communities).*

***Learning from the Kingsway West project** in York, 2008-09 (led by City of York Council, Economic Development Unit), Learning City partners endorse a locality based multi-agency approach to connect workless people in deprived neighbourhoods of the city to sustainable employment opportunities, through enhanced outreach information, advice and guidance support.*

*This project will facilitate a tailored multi-agency programme of activities for the **Clifton Ward**, to engage with adults and move them back into learning and work. The Clifton neighbourhood has the 2nd, 4th & 12th most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) in York, and higher concentrations of the groups identified above.*

*This 'on the ground' support will allow a more focused approach to supporting those adults with multiple barriers to working, such as those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with mental health issues. It will enable proactive signposting to the plethora of programmes already available to*

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<sup>1</sup> Key strategic issues - Stimulating demand and value for learning; Tackling worklessness; Developing and renewing skills to facilitate economic growth; Increasing employer engagement in the skills agenda; Maintaining a balanced offer of adult learning for personal, social and community development

*support individuals return to work and where additional support and training is required, this project will help to fill these gaps.”*

23. In addition the Clifton based project aims to employ two Jobs Match Advisors as increasing employer engagement is seen as a developmental and crucial addition to the success of the project.

The bid states:

*“This programme will enable additional capacity required in the city to engage employers (particularly SMEs) in the ‘employment and skills’ agenda and the public funded ‘offer’, which was another of the five strategic priorities identified within the **Learning City York Adult Learning & Skills Strategy 2007-2010.***

*This additional capacity will help to better co-here and develop expert cross-referring between agencies in terms of job match opportunities. It should also help to address requests from employers to simplify the offer & provide a one point of contact under the ‘One City’ branding already developed by City of York Council to support employers through recession.”*

Again, learning from the Kingsway West Action Programme and its evaluation the Clifton Project has a number of agreed measurable targets and outcomes prior to engagement in the area.

- *2 new jobs created to support delivery of programme and 2 Continual Professional Development opportunities for existing staff*
- *250 adults supported*
- *75 adults referred into accredited training*
- *30 adults referred into non-accredited training and other programmes*
- *45 adults progress into volunteering*
- *200 employers engaged and referred into the public funded ‘skills and employment offer’*
- *40 job match outcomes for the city (across the 2 employer engagement / job match advisers) = 5:1 ratio and a case load of 40 adults (working with the learning & work adviser / other referrals from employability programmes in the city)*
- *A new Employer Diversity Advisory forum set up to support York employers*
- *A new Visitor Economy Employer Forum set up to support the recruitment and retention needs of employers in this sector*

24. Additional support to that in the bid is already in discussion. For example the CAB are already considering how they can dovetail a financial literacy programme into the project. Also a multi-agency Partnership Group will be formed to ensure lessons learnt from the Kingsway West Project will not be lost. The funding of this project is now under some doubt due to the budget cuts identified by the new government.

## **Future Prospects**

25. The evaluation report plays great emphasis on the role of Future Prospects in addressing economic inclusion at a community and neighbourhood level. It is important to take the recommendations into account through the preparation of a new business plan for Future Prospects. This will also need to take account of changing working relationships with other partners, particularly York College, and the constantly changing nature of external funding which is essential to deliver the objectives set for Future Prospects.

## **Consultation**

26. The contents of this report were discussed at the Kingsway West/Foxwood Action Group meeting on 23rd June and the partnership endorsed both the formal recommendations of the external evaluation and those listed in paragraph 17 of this report.
27. It is intended to take this report to the next available Local Strategic Partnership Board meeting for discussion on how the lessons learnt might be incorporated into other partnership work.

## **Options**

28. Ward level statistics often hide neighbourhood problems. The evaluation states that the basic principle of tackling IMD issues in a small area with partnership working is worthwhile. Members, with partner organisations, may wish to discuss if they want to continue and/or expand this approach to other areas.
29. Should Members decide to support a small area partnership approach they need to consider options for the delivery of the service. At present the Economic Development Unit (EDU) has led on the Kingsway West project and continues to have a significant management role as the Clifton project develops. As Future Prospects has been identified in the evaluation as the key component in delivering outcomes in relation to tackling deprivation, then it continues to make sense to have a significant EDU input.
30. However, it is understood that there are proposed changes to the role of Ward Committees and the way that these are serviced and managed through Neighbourhood Services. Perhaps this presents another option to be explored for the delivery of projects aimed at reducing deprivation.
31. Options should certainly be explored that support better cross directorate working as the evaluation highlights the difficulties of engaging some services within the council which would have enhanced outcomes for residents and partner organisations.

## Summary of key findings

32. Within the body of the report are the recommendations from the independent evaluation. From these a number of key recommendations can be highlighted.
- i. Targeting small areas of identified need is productive, but it needs corporate support and identified leadership to be effective. This encourages other partner organisations to engage and commit resources.
  - ii. Targeting areas of most need may reduce funding in other geographical areas and this approach needs to be reassessed by Members.
  - iii. Future Prospects has been identified as the key organisation in any community regeneration work. However this will need adequate funding at a time when external funding is reducing and forcing a review of the organisations structure and budget. This role needs to be considered in relation to the new business plan for Future Prospects which will be presented to Members in the next two months.
  - iv. One size does not fit all in terms of neighbourhood development and flexibility in delivering projects needs to be built into any programme.
  - v. Consideration needs to be given to developing a reporting and management system to all partner organisations. This will ensure that they can take some ownership of projects, work pro-actively, dedicate some budget to actions and use the outcomes to support the achievement of their own organisational goals and performance indicators.
  - vi. The findings of this report will be shared with the Council's Directorate of Communities and Neighbourhoods to inform their review of the delivery of street level services and area based working.

## Corporate Priorities

33. The Kingsway West Action Project, and its development into adjacent areas in the Westfield Ward, targets a number of corporate priorities,  
Healthy City  
Inclusive City  
Learning City  
Safer City  
Thriving City  
and supports the development of the Effective Organisation.

## Implications

34. This report has the following implications:

- **Financial:** There are no financial implications for the Council.
- **Human Resources (HR):** There are no HR implications for the Council.
- **Equalities:** There are no equalities implications for the Council.
- **Legal:** There are no legal implications for the Council.
- **Crime and Disorder:** There are no Crime and Disorder implications for the Council.
- **Information Technology (IT):** There are no IT implications for the Council.
- **Property:** There are no property implications for the Council.
- **Other:** Nil

## Risk Management

35. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no risks associated with this report.

## Recommendations

36. That the Executive Leader notes:

- (a) the contents of the report including the recommendations from the independent evaluation of the Kingsway West Area Action Project.
- (b) the key findings listed in the report under paragraph 32.

37. That the Executive Leader agrees that the findings of this evaluation report be:

- (a) used to inform future work targeting the regeneration of geographical areas of identified need.
- (b) shared with the Directorate of Communities and Neighbourhoods to inform their review of the delivery of street level services and area based working.
- (c) reported to the Local Strategic Partnership Board for information and to stimulate debate on partnership working in geographical areas of identified need.

38. Reason:

To share the major findings from the independently evaluated pilot action project in order to inform future work targeting the regeneration of geographical areas of identified need.

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Executive

Report Approved



Date 17 April 2010

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

There are no specialist officer implications.

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report.