

SELF RELIANCE IN MOLE VALLEY

MOLE VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE,
22 May 2002

KEY ISSUE:

The County Council's Corporate Plan for 2002/03 asks Local Committees to identify any local areas of disadvantage and develop action plans to address them. The Mole Valley Local Committee is asked to identify how it wishes to tackle this.

SUMMARY:

Surrey County Council's self reliance policy proposes an area-based approach to tackling deprivation by focusing on neighbourhoods that are multiply disadvantaged. Research undertaken when drawing up the Mole Valley Community Strategy has identified the most disadvantaged areas in the district as North Leatherhead, North Holmwood and Box Hill.

The draft Community Strategy currently prioritises partnership action in these areas. Some progress has been made in North Leatherhead, which is recognised by all agencies as having the most significant needs, but less is being done in the other two areas. The Committee will need to decide whether to tackle all three areas at the same time, or take a phased approach looking at each in turn.

There is at present no dedicated County Council budget for local self reliance projects. Mole Valley County councillors may want to consider whether they use part of their local funding allocation to support this work.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee should:

- (i) actively support the partnership in North Leatherhead this year, including a financial contribution provided it is matched by other partners
- (ii) initiate a more detailed investigation of the needs of North Holmwood and Box Hill during 2003/4.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 'Self reliance' means the same as the more commonly-used term 'social inclusion'. Surrey County Council's self reliance policy, adopted on 6 November 2000, proposes an area-based approach to tackling deprivation by focusing on neighbourhoods that are multiply disadvantaged. Its three aims are:
- to target help on disadvantaged individuals and communities so that they can become more self-reliant and enjoy a better quality of life
 - to work at long-term solutions which will break the dependency cycle
 - to work in partnership with other government organisations, the business community and the voluntary sector.
- 1.2 The issue of self reliance was subsequently discussed by the Executive on 7 January 2002, when it agreed initial funding for projects in North Guildford and Preston. The Executive also identified the nine most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Surrey, of which North Leatherhead is one.
- 1.3 The County Council's Corporate Plan for 2002/03 (Making Surrey a Better Place) states that we will enhance self reliance for disadvantaged groups by:
- continuing the North Guildford self reliance programme with a new children's centre
 - developing a new self-reliance programme in Preston
 - asking the other nine **Local Committees** to identify local areas of disadvantage and develop action plans to address these.
- 1.4 The Mole Valley Local Committee is asked to identify how it wishes to address this last action point.

2. THE CURRENT POSITION IN MOLE VALLEY

- 2.1 Research and consultation undertaken in 2000/01 prior to drawing up the Mole Valley Community Strategy has identified the most disadvantaged areas in the district (Appendix 1). They are North Leatherhead, North Holmwood and Box Hill. The draft Community Strategy currently prioritises partnership action in these areas (Appendix 2).
- 2.2 Some progress has been made in North Leatherhead, which is recognised by all agencies as having the most significant needs. A new multi-agency partnership including the County and District Councils and the Primary Care Trust was formed in 2001, and has raised some funds from these agencies towards the appointment a partnership co-ordinator. There is a flourishing playlink scheme which supports families with young children. Bids have been made for external funding to the ESF Global Grants fund. The nursery, infant and junior schools in the area have been exploring together how best to improve their services to local families. Basic skills teaching in the area is being promoted by the Community Learning Partnership. However the sum total of this activity, and the future resources required to sustain a revival of the area's fortunes, fall short of a co-ordinated neighbourhood renewal strategy. The key resource that will make such progress possible is the appointment of a high quality partnership co-ordinator to act as a champion for the area and to maximise inward investment in social, health and education regeneration initiatives.

- 2.3 While local agencies also recognise the needs of North Holmwood and have encouraged the formation of a local residents' group, there is at present no equivalent partnership of agencies.
- 2.4 There is less clarity about the nature of the needs in Box Hill, and no agency partnership exists here either.

3. RESOURCES FOR SELF RELIANCE

- 3.1 There is at present no dedicated County Council budget for local self reliance projects. Although the County Council has funded initial projects in north Guildford and Preston, the Executive made it clear on 7 January this year that it expects future self reliance projects to be funded from mainstream service budgets. Responsibility for progressing this work is being passed to Local Committees. Mole Valley County councillors may want to consider whether they use part of their local funding allocation to support this work.
- 3.2 Partner agencies who have shown a willingness to commit resources to promote social inclusion locally include Mole Valley District Council and the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey Primary Care Trust. Both have contributed to the salary costs of a partnership co-ordinator for North Leatherhead (the County Council has made a one-off contribution of £5,600). County and District Councils are currently planning a Public Service Agreement (PSA) with the government which could include a self reliance element. The government will pay us a premium if we can achieve robust new targets.
- 3.3 Other possible sources of funding for self reliance initiatives include the Learning and Skills Council ESF co-financing scheme, Global Grants (up to £8000 for community groups in specific disadvantaged areas, including North Leatherhead) and several national lottery funds overseen by SCC's Development Opportunities Team. Charitable trusts and businesses provide further possibilities.

4. OPTIONS FOR THE LOCAL COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The main areas of disadvantage within the district have been identified, so this part of the Corporate Plan target has already been met in Mole Valley. Within each of these areas a more detailed assessment of local needs is necessary, including a residents' consultation, before devising a detailed action plan. This should build on the first phase of the self reliance work in North Guildford, which involved extensive negotiations with community groups and frontline agency staff about 'what would make most difference'. This process is resource intensive, but ensures that subsequent action is firmly grounded and is supported by those people who are most crucial to its delivery.
- 4.2 The Committee will need to decide whether to tackle all three areas at the same time, or take a phased approach looking at each in turn. The former would require a great deal of the Community Support Team's time. It would also depend on the willingness of other SCC services and partners to engage with us on three different fronts at once.
- 4.3 A more realistic alternative would be to concentrate on promoting the partnership in North Leatherhead this year and then initiate a more detailed investigation of the needs of the other two areas during 2003/4. The draft Community Strategy proposes an action plan (Appendix 2) to achieve this.

5. RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee should:

- (i) actively support the partnership in North Leatherhead this year, including a financial contribution provided it is matched by other partners
- (ii) initiate a more detailed investigation of the needs of North Holmwood and Box Hill during 2003/4.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	SCC Self Reliance Policy 9/11/00 SCC Executive Report 7/1/02 Making Surrey a Better Place 2002/3 Towards a Shared Agenda for Mole Valley, 3/01
