



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(WAVERLEY)**

PROGRESS IN PRIORITY NEIGHBOURHOODS

16 DECEMBER 2011

KEY ISSUE

The Local Committee receives regular reports on activities in those communities in Waverley where it has agreed to give particular support and on data which is relevant to the targeting of this activity.

SUMMARY

The report provides an update on recently published data and on work in the established projects and describes new initiatives developed during the year. There is a stress on progress made in sustaining projects through collaboration with voluntary organisations.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Waverley) is asked to agree:

- (i) To note and endorse the progress made in the priority communities in Waverley.
- (ii) To continue to use the resources at its disposal to promote the development of stronger, more self-reliant communities in Waverley, especially those which it has identified as priorities.
- (iii) To use its influence where appropriate to advocate the needs of disadvantaged communities in Waverley.
- (iv) To note the implications of the data presented and consider any actions it might wish to take in response.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Committee receives annual reports on multi-agency work undertaken in Waverley to improve quality of life and opportunities in those neighbourhoods which experience the greatest disadvantage. The contribution to and investment of the County Council, including the Local Committee itself, in these joint activities has continued and is in some respects being enhanced. The local projects have always sought to collaborate with residents and with the voluntary sector more generally and this approach has become increasingly vital for their sustainability against the background of diminishing public sector resources. This activity is now set firmly in the context of the “Big Society”, the government’s model of a society in which individuals and communities have more power and responsibility and use it to create better neighbourhoods and local services (see www.communities.gov.uk).
- 1.2 As previously reported, the Surrey Strategic Partnership has identified a small number of “priority places” in Surrey in which it aims to focus significant joint action to achieve the regeneration of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Although, none of these areas fall within Waverley, partners locally have, through their creativity and commitment, continued to ensure the sustainability of the established projects and maintained their focus on prevention and the promotion of self-reliance.

2 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

- 2.1 The Local Committee has agreed that four communities in Waverley should be identified for particular support
- Sandy Hill (Farnham)
 - Ockford Ridge/Aaron’s Hill (Godalming)
 - The Chantry (Farnham)
 - Binscombe (Godalming)

In addition, as reported to the Committee in December 2010, a programme of activities has been initiated in the area of northern Wrecclesham in the vicinity of Weydon School and, to a more modest extent, in Roman Way, Farnham. It should be noted that the Safer Waverley Partnership has equally given priority to these neighbourhoods.

- 2.2 Evidence for the needs of these neighbourhoods is provided by the small area data contained in the Index of Multiple Deprivation for England (IMD), an updated version of which (for 2010) was released earlier in 2011. The data is presented through a network of sub-ward “Super Output Areas” (SOA), each containing a population in the region of 1500. An index is calculated for each of seven “domains” and these are then combined into a single overall IMD score. The “domains” are: Income; Employment; Health Deprivation and Disability; Education, Skills and Training; Barriers to Housing and Services; Crime; Living Environment. In addition, two separate indices are calculated, based on the uptake of certain benefits, to measure the proportion of children and older people in each SOA who are deemed to be suffering income deprivation.
- 2.3 The complete data-sets for IMD 2010 are available on-line at www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/researchandstatistics/statistics/subject/ind

[icesdeprivation](#)). For the purposes of this report, three short extracts containing key data are presented at **Annexes 1-3**. These set out the twenty most disadvantaged SOAs in Waverley for the overall Index (**Annex 1**), Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) (**Annex 2**) and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People (IDAOPI) (**Annex 3**). The tables contain the SOA reference number, the ward in which the SOA is located and a brief approximate description of the area covered, along with the score and rank within Waverley for the three editions of IMD: 2004, 2007 and 2010.

- 2.4 In interpreting the overall IMD data (**Annex 1**), it should be borne in mind that this gives prominence not only to deprivation as conventionally understood (e.g. low income, employment and educational attainment), but also rural isolation, which explains the high scores in parts of Bramley, Busbridge & Hascombe, Elstead & Thursley and Chiddingfold & Dunsfold. Nevertheless, the data amply justifies the Committee's continued support for its priority areas. On the other hand, IMD is sometimes a poor measure of progress and strength in communities: local surveys of satisfaction and quality of life in the Waverley priority areas, which have been reported to the Committee in the past, tend to show a uniform picture of improvement, as does the more qualitative feedback contained, for example, in the recent evaluation exercise at The Chantrys. IMD, by contrast, tends to measure factors which are often beyond exclusively local influence, e.g. income, employment opportunities, chronic ill health and historical levels of educational attainment in adults. The preventative agenda pursued by these projects is, of course, a long-term endeavour and it may be unreasonable to expect significant shifts in outcome over a 6-year period. It is also the case that, because IMD is based on relative positions on a national scale, those regions which have been significant beneficiaries of government investment in regeneration have often shown measurable improvement (e.g. London and parts of the North East and North West) while the South East has been correspondingly disadvantaged.
- 2.5 In terms of the data presented in **Annex 1** members will note that part of Cranleigh East has moved up the rankings to occupy sixth position. More detailed analysis suggests that, while measures of employment and health have shown a slight worsening, the situation is more likely to have been due to increased incidence of crime and disorder and road traffic accidents in the period on which the index is based. The Committee may also wish to note the presence of parts of Witley and Milford in this "Top 20" table, reflecting continuing, but moderate, levels of child poverty which are also illustrated in **Annex 2**.
- 2.6 **Annex 2** reinforces the messages drawn from **Annex 1** in supporting the focus of the Committee and partners in Waverley more generally on the neighbourhoods set out in 2.1. While there are slight shifts in scores and rankings across the successive versions of the index, the significant trend of increasing relative poverty in the Woolmer Hill/Critchmere area of Haslemere is to be noted.
- 2.7 **Annex 3** presents a slightly different picture, although the priority areas remain prominent. The Meadrow/Wey Court area of Farncombe continues to contain the most significant concentration of vulnerable older people. Attention is drawn to the increasing levels of poverty amongst older residents in some neighbourhoods which have not hitherto featured at this level in IMD results, particularly the Frith Hill and Tuesley Lane areas of Godalming. It is possible

that this trend is a reflection of the challenges faced by older residents with fixed incomes during a period of recession and price increases.

2.8 The Child Poverty Act 2010 requires local authorities and their partners to work together to tackle child poverty and its effects locally. In response the Cabinet agreed in March 2011 a “Preventing Poverty in Families Strategy” for Surrey, with the following objectives:

1. **Raising parental aspirations and skills:** Improve the economic position of Surrey’s families in poverty by raising parental aspirations and skills for employment, and supporting parents’ to provide for their children.
2. **Improving life chances:** Mitigate the negative impacts of child poverty by improving outcomes and life chances through effectively targeted preventative and early intervention approaches.
3. **Providing timely advice:** Ensure that families on low-incomes and those at risk of entering poverty have access to timely and effective financial advice before problems become entrenched.
4. **Agreeing local solutions:** Engage local partners and communities in developing local responses to child poverty within identified areas of deprivation

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/legcom/CouncilP.nsf/f5fb086c73d64f3000256954004aed25/a93132a74d2ec6b5802578570042dd6b?OpenDocument>

A Child Poverty Needs Assessment for Waverley has also been published:

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspublications.nsf/WebLookupFileResourcesByUNID/docid681D3D3C79AF741B80257865004F2D9A?openDocument>

This strategy offers a supportive framework for the work already under way in Waverley in the priority communities. In this connection the network of Children’s Centres in Waverley, which is now complete, plays an important role in promoting these objectives locally, especially in the targeted neighbourhoods. Centres have regard to the demographic profile of their catchment areas and seek to respond to the needs of those SOAs in greatest need. In addition, in order to enhance preventative activity, Waverley Borough Council, Children’s Services and other partners are beginning a collaborative project to jointly address the risks faced by the most vulnerable families in the borough. Finally, the Committee will note the complementary approach to addressing the risks faced by young people of unemployment, poor qualifications and susceptibility to criminal activity contained in the Local Prevention Framework covered elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

2.9 As reported in 2010 the continuing effects of the national economic situation may have a two-fold impact on the priority communities: challenges to public sector funding may result in a reduced level of support to projects while residents may face reduced employment opportunities and changes to the benefits system. It remains, therefore, a priority both to seek to sustain projects via the voluntary, faith and community sector, building on the existing foundations to further expand residents’ skills and confidence, and to ensure that mainstream services are appropriately adjusted and targeted to respond to local needs. All the projects described have benefited from the support of a dedicated community worker or equivalent who is able to

maximise funding opportunities, mentor community volunteers and coordinate activities, especially in the early stages.

3. INVOLVING RESIDENTS AND SUSTAINING PROJECTS

- 3.1 In working in the priority communities in Waverley, partners have always sought to consult openly with residents and involve them in delivering interventions and improvements. At the same time, in engaging creatively with services, it has been possible to add value in specific communities through a “Total Place” approach, e.g. via the continuing investment of the Highways service in the successful joint caretaking project at Sandy Hill and the development of the Neighbourhood Agreement at The Chantry.
- 3.2 This section sets out significant progress in the priority areas during 2011:
- The Committee has been made aware of the establishment of a Community Trust to take over the lease and management of the rebuilt Bungalow at Sandy Hill from the County Council. The Trust now has four Trustees drawn from the estate and the Bungalow continues to successfully expand its scope: during this year additional services have been introduced to offer advice on employment, health and finance-related matters. During the summer the Bungalow also hosted a craft project promoted by Farnham Maltings as part of its “Making Surrey” initiative in which many families became involved in developing new skills, the results being exhibited at the Maltings Craft Fair in October.
 - A food bank has been developed at St Mark’s, Godalming to offer emergency support to residents, particularly in the Ockford Ridge/Aarons Hill area.
 - A programme of community “clean up” sessions have been organised in the northern Wrecclesham estates by Waverley Borough Council’s Community Development Officer with the support of the County Council, the Safer Waverley Partnership and an increasing number of local organisations, including Farnham Town Council and Veolia. In addition to improving the physical appearance of these neighbourhoods, the initiative has successfully involved an encouraging number of residents and enabled consultation on local concerns to take place. The Wrecclesham Community Project continues, among other activities, to offer lifelong learning opportunities to local residents.
 - The progress of the project at The Chantry has recently been evaluated by residents and stakeholders: the continuing partnership with the Jubilee Church and the expanding role of the residents’ association are highly valued assets; there has been community involvement in the development of Waverley Borough Council’s plans to renew the play area on the estate. A comprehensive plan is being developed to sustain the regeneration of this neighbourhood and the short-term agenda for the estate includes activities to involve and better integrate the significant student population.
 - Farncombe and Binscombe Care has been established as a good neighbours’ scheme in this area, with initial support from Voluntary Action South West Surrey. The Community Street Team has made considerable progress in building on its successful work with young people in Farncombe/Binscombe to engage the wider community through the new Community Centre in St John’s Street, Farncombe.

- 3.3 The Waverley Communities, Health and Social Inclusion Group, previously an officer working-group of the former Waverley Strategic Partnership, continues to meet on a quarterly basis. The group brings together front-line and related workers from many statutory and voluntary organisations, to share information and best practice, understand developing approaches and pressures and agree, where appropriate, a joint approach to shared concerns. It should be noted, for example, that Citizens Advice Waverley is offering its services on site at Wrecclesham Community Centre, in Sandy Hill, Ockford Ridge/Aarons Hill and The Chantry and via Loseley Fields Children's Centre in Binscombe.
- 3.4 The role of elected members in providing appropriate support and leadership to priority communities has been significant. The Local Committee has invested in many specific projects in these neighbourhoods and the support of councillors as community leaders is highly valued and often pivotal in strengthening and shaping projects.

4. OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Local Committee has in the past provided considerable funding to the priority areas through the budgets delegated to it and is invited to continue this commitment.
- 4.2 A number of County Council services have likewise made significant commitments towards these areas and succeeded in embedding activities in their mainstream activities. The Community Partnerships Team has been active in co-ordinating and steering projects, in facilitating partnership working and in identifying sources of funding. The Committee may wish to endorse this activity and advocate its extension where possible, especially where value for money might be achieved by collaboration with partners.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 All of the projects in Waverley are based on the principle of engaging residents and involving them in setting and delivering on a local agenda. Three detailed "Planning for Real" exercises have been carried out and ongoing liaison with representative residents continues to take place. Elected members are also involved in discussions and in supporting projects.

6. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Relevant implications have been identified throughout the report. In relation to the benefits of preventative activities, the Committee is reminded of the return achieved by investment in young people in their early years. Furthermore, investment in, for example, lifelong learning can not only widen employment opportunities but empower residents to become involved in social enterprises which are able to take on responsibilities from statutory agencies, e.g. the development of the Bungalow Community Trust.

7. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The promotion of strong, cohesive and sustainable community life is based on an approach which supports vulnerable and less advantaged residents so that they can take opportunities for accessing employment and are able to take advantage of the benefits of living in Surrey. The approach also has regard to the needs of particular groups, e.g. ethnic minorities, older people and disabled residents.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Responding to community safety concerns tends to be a priority for residents and contributes to the promotion of stronger, more resilient communities, which in turn have increased confidence in resisting crime and anti-social behaviour. The Safer Waverley Partnership prioritises the neighbourhoods covered by this report as part of its preventative activities.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The report provides an update on work in Waverley to improve conditions and opportunities in those areas which the Committee has identified for action, and which take forward locally a number of the priorities adopted by the County Council. The County Council, other public sector agencies and, increasingly the voluntary and faith sector, are seeking to reduce inequalities and empower individuals and communities to develop local solutions to the problems which face them. The Committee is invited to note progress and endorse the continuation of this activity, providing support and advocacy where appropriate.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 The Community Partnerships Team will ensure that the Committee's views are heard in the development of policies within the County Council and by any relevant services.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Referenced in the text of the report.