

“Whatever It Takes” – A Practical Approach to Neighbourhood Targeting

Introduction

In 2006, the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service piloted a new approach to tackling issues and engaging communities in disadvantaged communities with a targeted range of activities in the Lache ward of Chester district. Under the “Whatever It Takes” initiative, the Service provided outreach fire ‘stations’ as a base from which a range of agencies could operate – engaging with the community and delivering a variety of services, advice and support within the area. Over the course of five consecutive days, the Service in conjunction with a range of partner agencies:

- undertook Home Safety Assessments;
- carried out car clearance schemes;
- removed graffiti;
- provided welfare benefits advice;
- promoted employment opportunities;
- delivered health and smoking cessation programmes;
- engaged young people in RESPECT activities;
- raised awareness of the Deafness Support Network; and
- enhanced levels of policing through Police Community Support Officers.

The initiative was considered successful though a number of lessons were learned:

1. Local residents need to be involved in identifying local issues and taking ownership of these in the longer term to secure ongoing action.
2. The commitment and support of partners is vital, possibly best secured through Local Strategic Partnerships taking the lead.
3. Clear output / outcomes measures against which the success of the approach can be properly evaluated need to be set.
4. A ‘legacy’ from the initiative should remain in the community after the event.
5. Local elected Members need to be fully engaged from the outset.
6. Community development expertise within vulnerable communities needs to be harnessed.

Next Steps

The Service are committed to continue the “Whatever It Takes” initiative over the next twelve months through a further seven events (one in each Cheshire LSP area plus Warrington). However, it is felt that this approach should tie in more closely to the delivery of the Cheshire Local Area Agreement outcomes, particularly in relation to those intended to improve the quality of life for people living in the most

disadvantaged areas of the county, and as a result the community plans / neighbourhood renewal strategies of the LSPs.

The LAA identifies 23 Cheshire wards (see Appendix A) with Super Output Areas (SOAs) that fall within the top 20% nationally within the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004 for specific targeted activity. Congleton North, whilst not featuring in the top 20%, was also included as it features highly in four of the seven domains against which deprivation is measured. These include income, employment, health, housing, education, crime and access to services. The wards identified are likely to experience similar problems and have needs relating to a wide range of agencies , e.g. graffiti, litter, derelict vehicles, higher than average incidences of crime, high levels of unemployment, low income, poor housing, high incidences of anti-social behaviour, above average levels of exclusions, high level of accidental dwelling fires and arson, etc. This supports the idea of a planned programme of sustainable activity involving a wide range of agencies working together with the community to address these issues.

Conclusion

The approach adopted by the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service is a tangible and proven example of real partnership collaboration to improve outcomes for local people. The initiative will continue over the next twelve months though it is felt that the benefits could be enhanced if undertaken within a broader partnership context and connected the delivery of LAA outcomes.

Proposal

It is proposed that:

- (1) The Communities of Cheshire Partnership support the “Whatever It Takes” initiative as a mechanism for delivering LAA and Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes in disadvantaged communities over the next twelve months;
- (2) The Communities of Cheshire Partnership request that each of the six district Local Strategic Partnerships, within their next round of meetings, consider this report and individually endorse, promote and actively engage in rolling out the “Whatever It Takes” initiative locally;
- (3) As part of this process and supported by appropriate local research and intelligence, each of the six district Local Strategic Partnerships identify which ward within their area should be the focus of this targeted activity; and
- (4) A small ‘task and finish’ group of partners, with specialist support, be convened to oversee the planning, delivery and evaluation of the initiative in each area.

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GEOGRAPHICAL TARGETING OF ACTIVITY

Ward	Local authority area
• Central	Ellesmere Port & Neston
• Grange	Ellesmere Port & Neston
• Pooltown	Ellesmere Port & Neston
• Rivacre	Ellesmere Port & Neston
• Stanlow & Wolverham	Ellesmere Port & Neston
• Westminster	Ellesmere Port & Neston
• Blacon Hall	Chester
• Blacon Lodge	Chester
• Lache Park	Chester
• Northwich Castle	Vale Royal
• Northwich Witton	Vale Royal
• Winsford Over	Vale Royal
• Winsford Swanlow	Vale Royal
• Winsford Verdin	Vale Royal
• Winsford Wharton	Vale Royal
• Alexandra	Crewe and Nantwich
• Coppenhall	Crewe and Nantwich
• Delamere	Crewe and Nantwich
• Grosvenor	Crewe and Nantwich
• Maw Green	Crewe and Nantwich
• St Barnabas	Crewe and Nantwich
• Congleton North	Congleton
• Handforth	Macclesfield
• Macclesfield South	Macclesfield

N.B. The wards highlighted are the highest ranking in each area.