

## **Northwich & Rural North Area Partnership Board**

### **Annual Report April 2010 – March 2011**

#### **What is this report for?**

To summarise what the Area Partnership Board has achieved this year.

#### **What is the Area Partnership Board there for?**

In establishing the Area Partnership Boards (APB) the Local Strategic Partnership defined a set of core terms of reference for the APB, which in brief were to;

1. Develop local priorities for the area
2. Develop area action plans
3. Develop and deliver localised projects and initiatives
4. Respond to local priorities and improve outcomes for communities
5. Shape service delivery to meet the needs of residents
6. Commission services to meet priorities through aligned budgets – *a pilot scheme is being developed in Ellesmere Port*
7. Performance manage the Local Area Agreement targets and National Indicators – *The new Coalition Government removed these indicators in June 2010.*

#### **How did we do?**

1. Develop local priorities for the area
  - The APB has published a profile of the area which gives headline statistics. This can be found on the West Cheshire Together website [http://www.westcheshiretogether.org.uk/area\\_partnership\\_boards/northwich\\_and\\_rural\\_north\\_apb.aspx](http://www.westcheshiretogether.org.uk/area_partnership_boards/northwich_and_rural_north_apb.aspx)
  - The APB has set up five sub-groups whose responsibility is to use the statistics to develop the priorities however these priorities are over-arching for the whole area. The sub-groups are; Health & Well-being; Economy & Education / skills; Environment & Transport; Marketing, Communications & Engagement; Community Safety
  - Health & Well-being – the group is focusing on five priorities; reduce unnecessary A+E attendances; reduce teenage pregnancy focusing on Weaverham; improve people's lifestyles; reduce deaths from heart disease and strokes; reduce admissions for diabetes. Initial actions include; promoting the Choose Well campaign which is now listed on the N&RN website, supporting the development of a teenage pregnancy mobile phone app, ensuring the Teenage Pregnancy strategy recognises issues in the APB area
  - Economy and Education – the group is focusing on reducing unemployment; reducing the number of people who claim benefits; helping people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET); improving skills and educational attainment. Initial actions include investigating options for a local labour market agreement and employment charter, looking at Gadbrook vacancies and matching skills training for the local area

- Marketing, Communications & Engagement – the group is in the process of producing a community engagement plan which will be a practical guide for the APB, Town & Parish Councils and voluntary groups on the best ways to inform, consult and engage with residents. The group is also collating a calendar of events in the area and identifying one main event per month that agencies/organisations will collectively attend in an attempt to reduce duplication
  - Community Safety – generally crime is low in the N&RN area however the group have been targeting specific issues such as drunkenness on the Town Centre, produced a set of key safety messages leading up to Christmas to help people stay safe, held a multi-agency ‘Impact Week’ in Greenbank which has resulted in young people volunteering to clean up the train station and undertake planting and anti-social behaviour incidents have fallen.
  - Environment & Transport – this group is yet to meet.
  - Rudheath & Witton Together Neighbourhood – Interim Board constitution ratified and endorsed. Community representatives implemented in line with approved community groups. Community Network meeting established in preparation for Community Board replacement of the Interim Board. Community representatives training programme created and implemented. Youth Task Group and Dane Valley Task Groups implemented the latter creating spin-off activities such as the neighborhood Conservation Group and the Vicarage Walk embankment environmental improvements. The second Big Fun day was successful with over 700 local people attending. This event also commenced the Big Lottery consultation roll-out being managed by Groundwork.
2. Develop an area action plan
- Once all the sub-groups have decided on the main priorities the area action plan will be published. Parish/Town Councils will be asked to comment on the priorities and also asked to submit localised priorities for the APB to consider adding them to the action plan where appropriate. Several Parish/Town Councils have already produced a Parish or Town plan that has identified local priorities.
3. Develop and deliver localised projects and initiatives
- The APB used some of its funding to help deliver and support local projects such as;
    - Grozone – this project is run by Groundwork in the Witton area and gives local residents the opportunity to grow their produce and undertake environmental activities. As a result Grozone is now open 3 days per week and 15-20 people of different ages attend each session
    - Weaverham Community Centre ran a number of activities for children aged 5-13 years old over the Easter holiday period. As a result the community centre are now putting on extra activities.
    - Funding an intergenerational I.T. project where 4 year 11 pupils of Rudheath High School have been teaching older people how to use computers and gain access to the internet. As a result 3 older people who took part in this project gained an Open College Level 1 qualification
    - In Frodsham the first Volunteer Fair was organised and run by the APB and Voluntary Action Vale Royal. This gave local voluntary groups the opportunity to inform people what they do and as a result xx new volunteers were recruited by the groups. Attendees commented *“enjoyed the event and met some delightful people”, “it was a huge success”*

- A 'Big Skate' event was organised in Rudheath and sponsored by the APB. Over 250 residents took advantage to have a go at skating including the Mayor who thought the Big Skate *"was a great success, everyone loved it"*
- 4. Respond to local priorities and improve outcomes for communities
  - In the Rudheath and Witton area a 'neighbourhood management' project has been set up supported by the APB and Neighbourhood Manager. The Neighbourhood area has been sub-divided into 11 areas where 3 community groups have already been set up and 14 resident reps recruited.
  - Although the APB allocated funding to local groups it has decided that they should focus on the identified priorities;
    - the APB has funded a training programme called 'Christopher Winter' which trains teachers in being able to discuss pregnancy matters with pupils. This initiative was chosen as teenage pregnancy has steadily risen in the Weaverham area. By June 2011 all schools in the Northwich & Rural North area will have received this training. The EIP Co-ordinator said *"it was fantastic news to receive APB funding"*
    - the APB provided financial support to Vale Royal Women's Aid who support victims and families of domestic abuse which continues to be an issue in the area, during the first few months of 2011 there have been 5 local families given support
    - in Rudheath and Witton the APB is supporting residents to become community reps by providing training on how Government works, how to conduct consultation and 14 reps have undertaken the training and in May the reps will begin to ask residents about their issues for the area with the aim of working with the Parish Council to produce a Parish/Neighbourhood plan. The community reps comments include; *"it's an absolute joy to be part of this group"*, *"brilliant idea"*
- 5. Shape service delivery to meet the needs of residents
  - The APB funded and worked in partnership with Voluntary Action Vale Royal to run a BIG drop-in event where residents could obtain information on financial support services. 35 agencies were on hand to talk to over 100 residents who attended
  - The APB is working in partnership with Weaver Square Town Centre Management and has funded the purchase of additional gazebos and tables, these gazebos will be used to increase events within the town centre and encourage more people in to the town centre but also organisations will use the stalls so residents have easy access to service information
  - Local Councillors in Frodsham & Helsby held the first Participatory Budgeting event for the N&RN APB where local groups voted for other participating groups on the best community project. Three £1,000 awards were made to; Castle Park Arts Centre, Frodsham Sea Scouts and Frodsham Scout Group. Local groups commented *"we're over the moon with getting money"*, *"it was a positive initiative"*, *"it's great"*
  - A new Area Manager and Partnership Support Officer were appointed after the jobs had been vacant for several months. The Support Officer was able to gain full-time work after being employed in the Neighbourhood area via the Future Jobs Fund initiative
  - A new N&RN website was launched  
[http://talkingwestcheshire.org/talking\\_northwich\\_and\\_rural\\_no.aspx](http://talkingwestcheshire.org/talking_northwich_and_rural_no.aspx)

## **Community Forums**

The current engagement mechanism for the Council focuses on the 15 Community Forums based in unitary ward boundaries which were introduced across the Borough in 2009.

In Northwich & Rural North the APB held Community Forums on a quarterly basis and a total of 12 Forums were organized supported by the Community Engagement Officer. Residents had the opportunity to hear what was happening in their area and to engage and ask questions to local Councillors. Comments regarding the Forums included;

*“thanks for inviting us – really useful”, “thought the forum was fantastic”, “very informative”*

At the last round of Forums in January 2011 the APB adopted a new style for the pre-meeting part of the forum called a ‘Market Place’, this style included a drop in session comprising of local partner representatives where residents could raise issues with local services on an informal basis and was a great success;

*“the market place is tremendous”, “invaluable info”, “very helpful in promoting waste reduction scheme”*

Average attendance at the Forums was around 35, the highest recorded number for a single Forum exceeded 100 residents which was in Frodsham.

## **You Said, We Did**

At each Community Forum residents had the opportunity to ask questions and receive responses on the night or were contacted later with a response from the appropriate agency. A total of 60 questions were captured;

25% related to community safety and Policing and the common theme was road safety especially speeding traffic and parking

18% related to Waste & Recycling and the common theme was residents wanting more information about the proposed new waste collection service

15 related to Highways and the common theme was road repairs.

## **Financial overview**

The APB was allocated £30,000 for 2010-11 and also had £10,000 brought forward from 2009-10. The table below highlights how the APB has spent its funding;

| <b>Organisation</b>         | <b>Project Title</b>                  | <b>Amount</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Groundwork Cheshire         | Grozone                               | 6,000         |
| Ice Magic Ice Rinks         | Rudheath project                      | 5,000         |
| Vol. Action Vale Royal      | Intergen IT project                   | 1,500         |
| Weaver Square               | Gazebo's                              | 3,000         |
| Vol. Action Vale Royal      | Big Drop-in                           | 367.80        |
| Little Leigh Parish         | Grit Bin                              | 150           |
| Vale Royal Womens Aid       | Domestic Violence volunteers training | 5,000         |
| DAN Arts                    | Community Engagement                  | 2,500         |
| Weaverham Community Centre  | Half-term activities                  | 2,500         |
| Christopher Winter Project  | CWP for TP                            | 10,000        |
| APB                         | Visioning day                         | 1,561         |
| Voluntary Action Vale Royal | Community Engagement                  | 2,433         |

#### **What does the next year hold for the APB?**

- During 2011-12 there will be some minor changes to the boundary for the APB and Community Forums due to new electoral ward areas
- The APB will finalise its priorities and actions for the Area Action Plan
- Create better links with the Town and Parish Councils with a view of encouraging the production of Town/Parish Plans that will inform the Area Action Plan
- To roll our good practice from the Our Place initiative in Ellesmere Port
- To support the Neighbourhood area in transferring co-ordination from a partners board to a community led board

APB Decision:

The APB is asked to agree the contents of the annual report.