

BASELINE ASSESSMENT FOR TAUNTON'S DEPRIVED NEIGHBOURHOODS

Taunton Deane Borough Council, supported by the Local Strategic Partnership, needs to establish a baseline position from which to develop local community strategies in two separate areas known as North Taunton and Taunton East. Both are Enterprise Areas.

Required Outcome

As yet there is no clear, comprehensive understanding of the needs, current issues, activities and committed resources for either neighbourhood. It is now considered necessary to draw these together to enable the neighbourhoods to move forward.

This desk-top baseline assessment will form the basis for a 'community strategy' for each neighbourhood. However, until all information is brought together it is unclear as to whether any further consultation and planning will be required to ensure communities and agencies have agreement and ownership of future plans.

Background

Taunton Deane Borough Council is committed to delivering a District-wide Community Strategy 2003-2005, and a suite of Local Area Community Strategies.

For the town of Taunton itself there has been debate as to whether the Vision for Taunton, a multi-agency 30 year vision for establishing the Town as a Principal Urban Area (PUA), can be considered to have community input and ownership. The Vision focuses on major land use and commercial and cultural developments in and around the Town centre. It does not include the wider residential and local centres. Whilst the development of the Vision did include public consultation it cannot be considered to have been a 'bottom up', community planning approach.

North Taunton covers the wards of Lyngford, Fairwater and Pyrland and Rowbarton.

There are approximately 16,900 residents living in the wards of the North Taunton area. The area is characterised by a higher than average percentage of one-person households. There are some marked contrasts between the demographic characteristics of the wards, particularly between Lyngford and Pyrland and Rowbarton and Fairwater. North Taunton is made up of twelve 'Super Output Areas' (SOA's). SOA's are smaller than wards and have been designed to highlight pockets of deprivation, previously hidden using ward level data. Seven of North Taunton's SOAs are in the top twenty most deprived in Taunton Deane. Lyngford North and Lyngford West are also amongst the top twenty most deprived SOA's across the County, and Lyngford North is the second most deprived SOA in Taunton Deane. Two

SOAs in Fairwater (Fairwater South and Fairwater East) are in the top five most deprived wards in Taunton Deane, and two SOA's within the Pyrland and Rowbarton ward are amongst the top ten most deprived SOA's across Taunton Deane (Pyrland and Rowbarton Central and Pyrland and Rowbarton South).

North Taunton Partnership, a multi-agency and community partnership was established in 1996 and is a legally constituted body with registered charitable status with the purpose of developing a regeneration programme for the area through the establishment of a vibrant community network of existing and new groups, improving communication within the community, creating an urban village hall and reforming the Priorswood Resource Centre as a shop front for the community network.

Taunton East covers mainly the two wards of Halcon, and Blackbrook and Holway.

2001 census data shows that the Taunton East area has about 12,700 residents. The area is characterised by a high percentage of social and council housing.

Each of the wards is split into four SOA's. Halcon North is the most deprived SOA across Taunton Deane and also across the county of Somerset, whilst Halcon West is the seventh most deprived ward across Somerset, and is ranked third across Taunton Deane.

Blackbrook and Holway is made up of a mixture of SOAs, with the North West SOA being ranked as the seventh most deprived in Taunton and in contrast the North East SOA experiencing relatively low levels of deprivation.

The area received SRB funds of £838,500 in the period from 1998/9 to 2003/04. At the end of this period Taunton East Development Trust was established, a company limited by guarantee with the purpose of working together with others to encourage pride in the community, through the provision of opportunities to develop self-esteem, confidence and skills through information, training motivation and enterprise.

General

Both neighbourhoods have been subject to numerous consultation exercises, community and agency regeneration programmes and projects, and injections of external and internal funding. Agencies are involved in both partnership and individual service delivery in the neighbourhoods. Both are Enterprise Areas.

Methodology

The following are considered to be the minimum necessary requirements in order to establish the current baseline position for each neighbourhood:

1. Data analysed from 2001 Census, health and social needs analysis, crime, housing, education figures etc
2. Collation and analysis of all consultation, strategies, plans, programmes and projects from 2002 onwards by:
 - Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership
 - Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
 - Taunton Deane Borough Council
 - Somerset County Council
 - Taunton Deane Primary Care Trust
 - Avon and Somerset Constabulary
 - SureStart Taunton Deane
 - Tone Leisure
 - Business Link
 - Learning and Skills Council
 - Connexions
 - Citizens Advice Bureau
 - Taunton Deane Council for Voluntary Services
 - North Taunton Partnership
 - Taunton East Development Trust
 - Taunton Vision Advisory Board
 - Any other relevant agencies and partnerships
3. Collation and analysis of secured funding and any bids for funding for 2005/6 onwards in each neighbourhood
4. Material should be presented separately for North Taunton and Taunton East
5. Information and data for each of the two neighbourhoods should be presented under the following themes:
 - Economy (businesses, business development, learning and skills, childcare provision, debt, welfare benefits etc)
 - Transport and Access (infrastructure, public transport provision, community transport, walking and cycling provision, access to services such as IT, information and advice centres and surgeries etc)
 - Crime (Policing, Police Community Support Officers, Community Safety, Neighbourhood Watch, Local Action Teams, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, fear of crime, anti-social behaviour etc)
 - Health (Health care provision through Doctors, Dentists, community health care, support for vulnerable people, mental and physical health and well-being, social and leisure provision, affordable housing, homelessness)
 - Environment (Parks and open space provision and facilities, street cleanliness, recycling, vandalism, graffiti, litter, dog fouling, air and noise pollution)

- Delivery (organisational structures, action plans, finance and other resources)

In order to ensure baseline information will be robust for 'community strategies' it will need to be interrogated along the following lines:

- Was consultation representative?
- Were 'hard to reach' groups consulted?
- Have the findings of consultation been applied i.e. 'you said – we did'?
- Is there evidence of community organisations, agencies and partnerships being aware of and understanding one another's activities and plans?
- Is there evidence of successful methods of communication within each neighbourhood and with and between agencies?
- Is there evidence of contradiction, duplication or gaps in service provision?
- Is there evidence that programmes and projects are meeting needs?
- Are plans aspirational or resourced?
- Is the Enterprise Area status understood and are opportunities being realised by agencies and community groups?

The final report will need to show that these questions have been asked, and answered with suggested recommendations.

The baseline assessment for each neighbourhood will belong to Taunton Deane Borough Council

Timescale

Project bids are required to be submitted by 30th April 2005.

The desired completion date for the project is 30th June 2005

Project supervision

The Council's key contact for letting and managing this research project is Cindy Robinson, Corporate Research and Consultation Manager, telephone (01823) 356588 or e-mail c.robinson@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Project bids

Written quotations are invited for this desk-top research project. They should include:

- Your methodology
- Names and contact details of your researcher(s)
- Timescale and breakdown of stages of the project
- Format for completed report e.g. hard and electronic versions, number of copies etc
- Costs
- References