

Cheltenham Stronger Communities Partnership Update from Community Development Conference held 24 April 2009

Background

The delegates at the conference were divided into workshop groups which reflected the 4 police inspector neighbourhood areas in Cheltenham:

- Town Centre
- Whaddon
- Leckhampton
- Hesters Way

The groups spent time identifying features, services and facilities in each INA along with gaps in provision. They then studied a map of their area, with the aim of identifying 3 or 4 natural neighbourhoods within it. They considered whether the police neighbourhood co-ordination group areas could be used as the basis for neighbourhood management, bearing in mind existing partnerships and parish councils. After this, the INA groups considered what structures and processes they would put in place for setting up a neighbourhood management group and whether there were existing structures which could be used and improved. The final activity was to discuss how case study issues would be tackled.

Lots of useful information came out of the workshops about each area, but this paper draws out some key points which relate to how the groups felt that neighbourhood management groups could best be identified and how they could work.

Summary of key points and neighbourhood management areas identified

Town Centre

Both groups identified 4 areas within the Town Centre INA:

- A – Fairview** (but including St Johns Avenue which police area does not)
- B – Lansdown** (but including Bayshill which police area does not)
- C – Town Centre** medieval core (but excluding the bits taken out as above)
- D – Lower High Street/ West End Partnership area** (This should be with the rest of the St Pauls area and one group included the section to St Johns Avenue along the High Street which is currently in town centre)

The key points were:

1. Don't create new structures use existing ones – it was generally agreed that using the existing neighbourhood police panels might be a good way forward.
2. Groups should be manageable in size – no more than 12. Core membership should be Police, GCC and CBC with a pool of 'Key Contacts' to draw on to support the work of the group.
3. There should be a clear system of information sharing protocol between organisations
4. Must have clear actions, not a talk shop
5. Use media to get info out to the community about the successes – use the 'where I live' section in the Echo
6. Identify community leaders / champions in each area to be involved.

Whaddon

3 or 4 communities were identified:

A – St Pauls (but the area covered by CWEP should be in one area either in this INA or Town Centre INA)

B – Pittville (one group suggested including the area between Albemarle Gate and Swindon Lane which is currently in Prestbury police area. The other group suggested including part of the police Fairview area and the Pittville side of Albert Road area)

The above communities are divided by Pittville Park and could be one area or two.

C – Prestbury

D – Whaddon & Oakley (one group moved the area west of Albert Road into the Pittville area)

A variety of services and facilities were identified in the area. Key points were:

1. Use and enhance the existing structures
2. Need to include decision makers both for resources that are present and those not present
3. Information sharing is key
4. Look at the big picture first before putting processes in place
5. Community mapping, analysis and consultation are key
6. Steering groups or forums to achieve common goals across service areas could be set up and sub groups.
7. An authority or committee is needed to act for and on behalf of the community
8. Oakley Regeneration Partnership and Prestbury Parish Council were identified as structures which could be built upon.
9. Establish community plans to find a common goal

Hesters Way

The groups identified the 4 police neighbourhood co-ordination group areas:

A - Swindon Village

B – Fiddlers Green and Springbank

C – Hesters Way

D – St Marks (inc Rowanfield)

Key points were:

1. A lot of existing services and facilities were identified.
2. Work with and link up existing partnerships, projects or parish councils
3. Identify the purpose, around a real community and ensure partners work to the same agenda and not to their own
4. Establish sub groups for communities of interest
5. Use an existing organisation
6. Take a localised and bottom up approach
7. Identify community champions and involve community in meetings
8. In building on existing structures, there needs to be:
 - a. A review of communication – Viewpoint magazine could be extended to include St Marks and St Peters.
 - b. Agreement of minimum standards to ensure a standardised approach
 - c. Joint neighbourhood meetings between police, highways, CBC, CBH

In tackling a particular case study, the Hesters Way Partnership was identified as the organisation to take the lead and Police INA meetings would be used.

Leckhampton

The 4 police areas were identified as the 4 best areas although one group suggested some amendments to the Charlton Kings area:

A – Hatherley and Benhall

B – Tivoli

C – Leckhampton

D – Charlton Kings (include the rest of Charlton Kings Parish Council area which is in Leckhampton police community. Add to the parish council's area so that it goes as far as Hales Road and move the area around Wessex Drive not in the parish council area into Prestbury)

Key points were:

1. Lack of knowledge of how to access services
2. Provision of activities for young and old (lack of input from PCT was raised)
3. The role of parish and community plans
4. Parish councils (with support) were seen as being at the core of the structure and it was suggested that they could chair 6 monthly meetings with the aim of setting the agenda for the next 6 months.
5. A small community management committee is needed to take the lead
6. Community engagement
7. Improved communication to partners

General points

1. Virtual and real community forums were suggested to provide greater opportunities for communities and local residents to engage and participate
2. Look to develop a town wide community stakeholder group – representing all of the town's communities
3. Produce and implement an information sharing protocol
4. There is no point setting up new structure where they already exist
5. Find lots of 'Claude's' (community champions)

Next steps

The proposal is as follows:

1. Hold a meeting with workshop facilitators and interested SCP members to discuss the preliminary suggestions and the desired outcomes from rolling out neighbourhood management.
2. If appropriate, begin discussion with those bodies identified that could take the lead about what support they would need.
3. Report back to SCP in July. Also send out a conference report ASAP.
4. Cllr Webster to report to CBC Cabinet in the autumn