

Appendix 1 – Examples of best practice

This appendix contains two examples of best commissioning practice from elsewhere in the country. The first highlights a partnership approach to delivering quality of life outcomes in a single district whilst the second describes an approach to delivering a range of outcomes for a number of councils using a social enterprise model.

1. Partnerships in North Dorset

North Dorset District Council's approach is based on a 'partnership of partnerships' – CPEND (Community Partnerships Executive for North Dorset) – which includes representation from four voluntary partnerships and members from all levels (county to parish).

CPEND's aim is to influence organisations, authorities and partners to use their best endeavours towards improving the quality of life for current and future generations living in North Dorset and its objectives include a specific commitment to making the most of community and voluntary groups and the use of commissioning principles.

Examples of their achievements over the last 5 years include:

- “The Exchange”, a £2.6M redevelopment of a major site in the centre of Sturminster Newton with a large and impressive community facility, health centre, supermarket and community offices. Run by volunteers, the centre has broken even in its first year of operation. It has taken on a full time manager and is attracting national performing arts to the area. It has transformed the town, generating more visits to the town and increased social activity.
- Newly refurbished public toilets have been transferred by the District to the Town Councils together with Town Orderlies and the District pays the Towns for keeping the town clean. North Dorset now has a multi skilled response to cutting grass, clearing litter, sweeping the streets, cleaning the toilets, removing graffiti, and the rapid removal of fly tipping. The overall look of the towns has improved hugely. The Town Councils now offer cleaning services to some of the parishes.
- In Gillingham the community partnership has taken over an old leisure centre building and is commissioning its own refurbishment to create a new leisure centre, community hub and community centre. The District has helped to train and develop expertise to do the business and project planning and has granted the partnership £4 million capital funding. The partnership has business plans to run the facility without District Council revenue funding.

According to North Dorset's Chief Executive “It was neither a smooth nor a swift journey. We have emerged with a far more resilient council and community, in a much stronger position to face the difficulties presented by the current national

budget deficit. North Dorset could not do this without our huge army of volunteers and what inspires us all is the sharing of success.”

Members may have encountered the approach taken by North Dorset as it formed the basis for case studies featured in SW Council events on the role of members in community empowerment.

Further information is available from

- <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=151868&filetype=pdf>
- <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/398134>

2. Leisure services in the south east

Greenwich Leisure is a social enterprise which exists for the benefit of the communities it serves. It currently manages 70 leisure centres within the M25 in partnership with 13 London boroughs.

Its aim is to ‘encourage community involvement and to promote healthy living. We work to increase levels of physical activity by delivering sport and health programmes that reach all sectors of the community’.

Its board of trustees includes representation from customers, councils and its workforce.

Greenwich Leisure is in the process of merging with Nexus, a similar social enterprise which operates leisure services in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

In the case of South Oxfordshire, its council commissioned GLL to manage its eight leisure centres from April 2009 to August 2014. At the time of award it recognised several strategic objectives / outcomes:

- providing value for money services
- providing equality of access
- maintaining low levels of fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- increasing access to a wide range of activities for young people

The council has recently reviewed the first year of provision against 11 Key Performance Targets reflecting the above objectives. The overall assessment was ‘good’ with some areas for improvement. The review has been considered by the council’s scrutiny committee with an opportunity for them to make any recommendations to the cabinet member for leisure.

Further information is available from <http://research.mla.gov.uk/case-studies/display-case-study.php?prnt=1&prjid=491> and <http://tinyurl.com/5vduyzm>.