

ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

December 2009 to September 2010

1 Purpose

To update Board on progress towards achieving HFI's Community Engagement Strategy.

2 Background

2.1 With the responsibility for managing over 30,000 homes across the borough, HFI recognises that it has a role in supporting the community that goes beyond the provision of housing management and repairs services.

2.2 Islington is one of the most deprived boroughs in the country with significant issues such as child poverty, worklessness and low educational attainment. We are also aware that our residents may suffer disproportionately from the recession and will work wherever possible to lessen the impact of this.

2.3 To be successful in tackling such issues, HFI recognises that it is vital to work and liaise with key local players and is an active participant in the Islington Strategic Partnership, a group that brings together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors in Islington with a view to improving the quality of life for local people.

Feedback from surveys has demonstrated that our tenants appreciate the role we have played in supporting community engagement activities.

2.4 This report will provide feedback on our activities since December 2009 and will seek to underline areas of good practice and challenge. It will also give details on our extensive youth engagement programme and the continued delivery of the successful Arsenal Positive Futures partnership.

2.5 Barbara Coventry has taken over as the Board champion for community engagement. Barbara meets with the Director of Performance & Service Development, Simon Kwong, and the Head of Service Development, Simon James, quarterly to monitor progress against HFI's community engagement strategy and action plan.

3 Building a stronger community

3.1 HFI recognises the importance of locally based events as a means of encouraging community cohesion and once again in 2009/10, HFI held eight summer fun days for residents living within each of the four area housing office areas. Activities include free barbeque, face painting, bouncy castle,

Appendix 1

massages, health advice, financial advice, employment and training advice. There was also a chance to feedback on HFI services and learn about HFI and services delivered by other local organisations, partners and businesses.

3.2 HFI has provided funding for TRAs to deliver community activities. Some of these activities have included educational trips for children, estate fundays and trips to the seaside for residents. The following have been some of the activities taking place in 2010:

- Popham / Cummings estate - the Big Lunch event
- Bemerton Estate - funding for face painters at community event
- New Orleans estate - coach trip for residents
- Dover Court Estate - support for summer project of sports and activities for children.

From April 09 to September 10 HFI has supported 31 TRA-led community engagement initiatives.

3.3 Following its success in 2009, Hollins, McCall and Daren TRA are again leading on the Islington's Got Talent event. This is a borough-wide talent show with audition hopefuls coming from all of HFI's housing areas. The TRA lead and organiser of the event won an Islington Council Award and was shortlisted for a National Housing Federation Award. Auditions were held in September with the final to be held on November 20th. The event for 2010 has had a significant financial contribution from Kier.

3.4 Free events were run for the community at the St Luke's Community Centre, New River Green and the Harvist Estate in partnership with London Fire Brigade, Metropolitan Police and LBI Green Living Centre. The event gave local residents the opportunity of free home fire and environmental checks plus information on HFI services, including out-of-hours ASB team.

3.5 HFI is committed to running four surgeries per annum both for the elderly and BME communities. These will take place in the autumn of 2010 to inform the 2011/12 business plan and the TSA standard consultation.

3.6 In March 2010, HFI subscribed to the GRANTfinder and GRANTnet services. These web-based resources provide users with the opportunity to view and search for any funding opportunities that may exist and which they are eligible for. As well as being a useful resource for HFI itself, we have also provided several TRAs and other community groups with access, as there are a number of funds that many groups in Islington should be eligible to apply for in order to fund community projects and events.

3.7 The following are likely to be challenges in the following year:

- Given the environment of declining public expenditure, it is vital that we encourage more residents to obtain funding from the Grantfinder service
- Maintaining our commitment to fund residents for arranging their own events.

4 Community Centres

4.1 All of HFI's community centres are now DDA compliant.

4.2 We have prioritised the following areas this year:

- Walter Sickert and Westbourne community centres now have their own development workers, employed by HFI. This resource has resulted in a large increase in the centres' usage and the provision of many targeted community activities, such as healthy cooking and dancing for the over 50s
- Aubert Court community centre has received extensive refurbishment
- Many community centres benefited from legacy works contributed by decent homes contractors.

4.3 Islington Council are currently considering the future framework within which the borough's community centres may work. HFI's challenges include:

- Community centres built around social housing provision remain an under utilised resource in the borough and HFI will need to consider ways of encouraging greater use of these facilities.
- Expanding the usage of the centres for such things as healthy living initiatives, jobs and training projects and youth activities and rehearsal space.
- Using community centres as meeting and training spaces for HFI staff.

5 Neighbourhood Arrangements

5.1 Since October 2007, HFI has been acting as the lead agency in the delivery of neighbourhood arrangements in the Finsbury Park area. The programme was originally called 'neighbourhood management' and is one of nine in the borough, funded through the Islington Strategic Partnership (ISP).

5.2 Neighbourhood Arrangements was originally intended to run until March 2010 but a continuation of funding has been agreed until March 2011.

5.3 Neighbourhood Arrangements in Islington targets the most deprived areas of the borough and aims to improve delivery of core services to ensure that our most vulnerable and excluded residents are not adversely affected by where they live. The Finsbury Park neighbourhood steering group is chaired by the Cllr Phil Kelly and currently meets every six weeks. The membership includes LBI Environment & Regeneration, Circle 33 and Family Mosaic housing associations, local TRAs, Tollington Community Association, ward Councillors, FinFuture and police Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

5.4 Outlined below is an update on progress against the action plan to date.

- 'Finsbury Park Connect' remains the primary project for Finsbury Park neighbourhood arrangements, established in the area from April 2009.

Appendix 1

Based on the successful model developed in the south of the borough by EC1 New Deal, Connect is an outreach and referral service targeting those hardest to reach groups that are not accessing available mainstream services. Connect Advisors go 'door knocking' to meet and talk with residents and make referrals to a broad range of services that can provide help, support and advice around employment and training, welfare benefits, childcare, housing, health, debt and much more. The Connect Advisors have access to more than 50 partner agencies to make referrals.

The neighbourhood steering group provided funding for the first year of the programme for one Connect Advisor post. From April 2010 this was extended for a further year in Finsbury Park through a combination of funding from the ISP Reward Grant and the Richard Cloudsley Foundation. The funding covered a second Connect Advisor post working from a larger office in Durham Road Community Rooms, on the Andover Estate. Finsbury Park Connect continues to work in close partnership with the neighbourhood coordinator and steering group, with Connect providing regular progress reports and updates.

Between April 2009 and March 2010, 174 new clients were registered with Finsbury Park Connect and 287 referrals were made to partner agencies.

The additional staffing resource has already seen an increase in referral rate in the first quarter 2010/11, with 81 new clients seen and 146 referrals made on behalf of Finsbury Park residents.

- The steering group has recruited a Community Link Worker post on a part-time basis for six months from September 2010, based at Durham Road community rooms. The Community Link Worker will be responsible for encouraging greater community engagement and social cohesion in the area, working closely with residents, voluntary and community groups to address community needs and ensure high levels of community involvement, participation and empowerment.
- The Richard Cloudsley Foundation funded 'Finsbury Park Advice Project', providing, impartial and confidential advice for anyone living in the Finsbury Park area is now up and running at a number of local venues. The Islington Law Centre provides advice on welfare rights, debt and housing.
- Health & well being continues to be a key theme for neighbourhood arrangements. The neighbourhood coordinator worked with Andover Youth & Community Trust to develop a successful funding bid to Cripplegate for £10k. The funding is being used to deliver a programme of locally based exercise, healthy eating and weight loss courses with a range of delivery partners including Community Kitchens. An accompanying health and well being event developed in partnership with Circle 33 and Activate London took place in February 2010 and a similar event will take place at the Andover community centre on 16 October 2010.
- A jobs and training fair developed in partnership with FinFuture and the Finsbury Park Business Forum took place at FinSpace on 17/11/09, as

Appendix 1

part of a series of events to mark Business Enterprise Week. More than 100 people attended the event and stall holder outcomes included 16 residents registering for LBI Islington Working services, one enrolment for the Personal Best programme and NHS

- 5.5 Should funding for neighbourhood arrangements discontinue in March 2011, HFI will continue to work pro-actively in tackling the problems that exist in this deprived area.

6 Partnership with Groundwork

- 6.1 HFI continue to work with Groundwork and residents to set up a number communal gardens on estates, partly using LBI's Edible Islington fund (gardens with a focus on food growing). Gardens have so far been set up on 13 HFI estates.
- 6.2 In 2008/9, HFI commissioned Groundwork to carry out a "vacant lot" project on two HFI estates. This continues to progress and aims to engage residents in utilising vacant or unused sites on their estates and work with them to plant vegetable gardens on hard-standing land using large plant bags. Sites have been developed on Holly Park and Walter Sickert estates and new projects are starting on Harvist and Hollins, McCall, Daren estates.
- 6.3 Groundwork and HFI continue to work in partnership to overhaul many underused estate areas and transform them into play areas, gardens and sports facilities. A number of new play areas have recently opened on HFI estates, largely funded by Play Builder grants.
- 6.4 HFI also supported Groundwork's 'Energy Doctor in the Home' project. Its purpose was to help residents save money by encouraging more sustainable behaviour on the home-front. 626 visits were carried out between October 2009 and June 2010 of which 54% were in HFI properties. The type of actions included the fitting of radiator panels, draught excluders, power downs, miracle taps and energy meters.

7 Jobs and Training

- 7.1 In this financial year we have reduced the amount of spending on training in the line with reductions in our budget. However, we are looking at ways of supporting jobs and training opportunities without necessarily committing funding.
- 7.2 Examples of this are:
- At no cost, we are working with Arsenal's catering contractors, Delaware, to offer job opportunities for younger residents. Delaware also have contracts in Wembley and other stadiums in London. We have arranged 'employability sessions' where coaching is given to young people on how to conduct oneself at an interview. A full open day is to be held in October where youngsters will be interviewed by Delaware staff and have the opportunity to be employed 'on the spot'.

Appendix 1

- HFI has increased the amount of work placements for jobless residents and have provided two placements for Choice in Hackney, a charity that mentors people with disabilities into work.
- We have continued to support “Finsbury Park Connect” or “Help on your doorstep” a project that contacts people who have fallen out of the mainstream and assists them on a path back towards employment.
- We have funded industry-accredited security training to 12 more residents.

8 Youth Engagement

8.1 Regular meetings are held with youth engagement providers to discuss programme delivery. Programmes are located in areas where there may not have been youth provision before or there is an increase in ASB activity.

8.2 Arsenal Positive Futures

The partnership work with Arsenal Football Club is now in its sixth year. Since its inception, Arsenal Positive Futures have brought a range of opportunities for young people on HFI estates including-football, after-school co-educational, excursions, off-estate curriculum activities, mentoring, career and work opportunities. In 2008 the service received national recognition when it won a prestigious Chartered Institute of Housing award. The users of the service come from a diverse range of backgrounds and we have sought to consult them on our services. For instance, inter estate matches supervised by Arsenal coaches have been set up as a result of feedback from young people.

Following the securing of Premier League funding by Arsenal, HFI is now working in partnership with a view to providing a whole range of additional sporting opportunities (judo, table tennis, hockey, basketball) for 11 and 12 year olds at Community Centres and HFI venues.

Estate	Weekly sessions	April-Sept attendances	Types of activities
Tollington (Andover)	3 (3)	721	Football Double Club
McCall & Hollins House	2	159	PF Football only
Harvist	2 (1)	391	Football Double Club
Highbury Quadrant	2 (1)	72	Football Double Club
Finsbury	2 (1)	231	Football Double Club
Crouch Hall Court	1	93	PF Football only
King Square	2 (1)	280	Football Double Club
Girdlestone	1 (1)	159	Football Double Club
Baxter/Mitchison	1	54	PF Football only

These figures show the number of youngsters attending sessions. In six areas we also provide “double club facilities” with a view to supporting young people educationally. 293 children have signed up to attend and there were 159 attendances last year.

Appendix 1

8.3 Arsenal Charitable Trust recently granted HFI £40,000 towards the provision of two new on-estate astro-turf pitches at McCall and Hollins House and King Square estate. Arsenal in the Community department has also offered a further £15,000 towards the refurbishment of the playground at King Square estate.

8.4 This partnership has also attracted additional match-funding from the club that has enabled HFI –managed young people to be able to take advantage of appropriate supervised sports and educational excursions, specifically designed to develop self-confidence and build key life-long skills.

8.5 HFI in partnership with Arsenal in the Community and Montem Primary School embarked upon a new ‘pilot’ estates-based venture on 9th September 2010 with a view to engaging local school children aged 8-11 through supervised and structured physical exercises, including football, as part of the school’s daily curriculum. Immediate feedback from participating children, their teachers, Montem School and AFC colleagues are positive. The majority of the children being engaged come from backgrounds where regular and healthy exercise is not taken. The plan is to roll-out this partnership initiative to other schools located near HFI-managed estates.

8.6 All Change arts project

All Change has been contracted by HFI to deliver on-estates arts projects with young people within 3 HFI Area Housing Offices. There are five pre-set targeted geographical areas, with a total of nine estates being engaged during the 09/10 financial year (*including King Square, Highbury Quadrant, Parkview, Andover, Harvist, Girdlestone, Mayville, Kerridge Court*).

The Fast Forward project was delivered in partnership with Sadler’s Wells. Taster sessions followed by Workshops led by professional dance, music, creative writing, film and digital artists taking place across each of the areas leading up to a performance at Sadler’s Wells on 8 March 2010.

This follows the success of last years “Snapshot” project when 400 people attended an event that celebrated the work that young people had produced.

8.7 Access to Sport

During 2009-10 the Homes for Islington, Sports Activities for Everyone Programme (S.A.F.E) involved over 1096 young people in a variety of sporting activities including coaching, competitions and holiday sports programmes throughout Islington.

Key Outcomes and successes:

- *1096 young people participated in the programme’s sports activities*
- *101 girls and young women participated*
45 week-long holiday programmes delivered (10-25 hours per week)
- *39 inter estate/ community tournaments organised in a variety of sports competitions and festivals including football basketball, table tennis and cricket*

Appendix 1

- *17 Weekly sessions were delivered for young people at Bemerton, New River Green, Mayville, Six Acres, Elthorne and Girdlestone Estate as well as a range of other venues*
- *150 young people have 'progressed' to club sessions as a result of the programme.*

Sports on offer included:

Football, Cricket, Multi Skills, Tennis, Basketball, Netball, Badminton, Table Tennis, Street Dance, Roller Skating, Volleyball, Handball, Rugby (touch), Wheelchair Basketball, Athletics, Skiing and Snowboarding.

Competitions: Summer 7s Football Competition, Girls Football Competition, Islington Community Football Cup, Kick it Out Cup, Islington Heats Basketball, Wheelchair Basketball, Islington Community Games (Badminton, Table Tennis, Netball, Athletics and Tennis).

Programmes were delivered at:

Six Acres Estate, Andover Estate, Elthorne Estate, New River Green Estate, Mayville Estate, Bemerton Estate and Girdlestone Estate & Sobell leisure Centre, Market Road, Whittington Park, Rosebowl, Islington Arts and Media School.