



WARDS AFFECTED:

**AYLESTONE/EYRES MONSELL
NEW PARKS/WESTERN PARK**

CABINET

5 MARCH 2001

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 MARCH 2001

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITIES – PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The Council introduced pilot arrangements called “Resources for Communities” to operate in two areas of Leicester. The purpose of the initiative was to identify issues in those areas and how services could be more co-ordinated to produce improvements. This report outlines progress to date and raises issues that may be common to other areas.

This initiative by the Council came before the Government’s recent Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund being made available to the Council. The work so far on this initiative and further work will inform the consideration of how to really make a difference with the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and funding.

This report identifies specific improvements that can be made in the pilot areas and that bids will be made to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, where appropriate, and because of the success so far and further work necessary to work up improvement programmes it is proposed to extend the pilots for a further 6 months requiring funding of £40,000 to conclude March 2002.

Recommendations

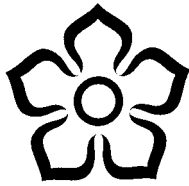
It is recommended that :

- (i) the proposed improvements for each of the pilot areas be supported, subject to finance being identified, where appropriate;
- (ii) the implications for other areas of Leicester of the “common” problems be clarified and considered for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding;
- (iii) the pilot continue for a further 6 months, subject to the bid for funding being considered and agreed from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

Financial Implications

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund will provide cash of £4m in 2001/02, £6m in 2002/03 and £8m in 2003/04 and the Local Strategic Partnership will determine the priority of bids. For next year because a Local Strategic Partnership has not yet been formed bids may be agreed by the Council in consultation with Partners.

A six month extension to the project would cost £40k and this could be met from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, subject to further consideration of the relative importance of the Bid compared with all other bids which are being invited for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding.



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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. REPORT

- 1.1 The Resources for Communities pilot scheme was established to encourage the better co-ordination of services in response to recognised community needs and aspirations in two areas of the City which are not benefiting from regeneration activities.
- 1.2 In the first few months much of the work of the Service Co-ordinators has centred on getting the initiative established and appropriately networked across the four wards. The following summaries the activities:
- a. Office spaces were identified next to the library on Dillon Road and at 51 The Exchange. One has been upgraded from an old library store to an office and community resource centre with minimal work and the other was unused office space in a converted maisonette. Both are now open. They each include a work and meeting space, and are available for use by community groups.
 - b. Contact on an on going basis has been established with the relevant Ward Councillors. Discussion has included what the project might aim to achieve, how Councillors perceive their area, what the burning issues are, what the more strategic implications might be and how Councillors and Neighbourhood Service Co-ordinators should work together.

- c. Regular contact has been made with relevant Council officers from service departments. The main purpose of this has been information sharing both in terms of perceptions and factual information. It is hoped that an increasing awareness of the different roles that officers in different functions play will enable thought to be given to how officers can begin to co-operate in their work.
- d. Discussions are on going with other service providers such as the police. This also has the purpose of sharing information and perceptions concerning the relevant communities. It has also enabled a greater understanding of the other service structures and cultures including their needs from the City Council. The project is building on the work of the local Crime and Disorder Partnerships and other relevant multi agency local for a. The Co-ordinators have helped to resolve and to troubleshoot on sticking points between the agencies.
- e. Listening to community groups and voluntary sector representatives in the relevant areas is a key focus of the project in its initial phase. This has highlighted the main interests and challenges facing these groups and helped to clarify some of the frustrations felt by these sectors in their relationship with the City Council and other service providers. It is also providing us with the beginnings of a community list for the relevant Wards.
- f. The first part of a longitudinal survey has been conducted across the four wards (*see appendix one for a summary of the headline findings*) to provide a marker for the level of 'citizen satisfaction' with their areas and the services they receive from across a range of agencies. The survey also provides information on local priorities. This can be linked to the less frequent citywide mori survey and will be repeated at the end of the project.
- g. The beginning of the project has coincided with a time of national government action and policy with regard to combating the increasing exclusion and poverty of some neighbourhoods. Learning and reflection has also taken place on how this agenda might be seen from the neighbourhoods of Leicester and using this project as part of Leicester's pathfinder in terms of 'revitalising neighbourhoods'.

2. NEW PARKS AND WESTERN PARK

2.1 Three key issues to come out of the pilot so far are: -

- a. The need for a more holistic response to young people. More attention needs to be given to play, leisure activities, family basic skills and behavior management alongside formal education.
- b. The need to close up geographical gaps in opportunities for leisure activities for all ages including those for play, community activities and informal learning so as to increase the social capital of the two wards.
- c. The need to increase the perception of safety amongst residents and those working in the area by a co-ordinated approach to community involvement, defensive measures, mediation techniques, environmental management and prevention of crime, accidents and ill health.

3. EYRES MONSELL AND AYLESTONE

3.1 The key issues to come out of the pilot so far are: -

- a. One of the main concerns to emerge from the pilot to date for both the Aylestone and Eyres Monsell wards has been the perceived lack of youth facilities and provision. Residents, service providers and respondents in the satisfaction survey have expressed concern about the limited provision for younger citizens in their areas and the subsequent effect this has had on what the youths do with their out of school time.

The findings have confirmed that for both areas, people want more facilities for children/kids and issues regarding vandalism, young people hanging around and more facilities for youth/ teenagers need to improve. There is a real concern about the lack of opportunities where children can play.

- b. Crime and the fear of crime and in particular car crime and burglary are affecting the quality of life for people in both areas. People are also concerned about vandalism and young people 'hanging around'.

Overall, the crime people fear most is burglary in both areas. Other crimes feared by local residents includes having their car broken into and something stolen, having their car damaged by vandals and being troubled by young people hanging around the street. Being mugged or robbed in the street is a serious concern and

significantly, overall in the two areas, the results of the survey reveal a third of women aged under 60 are afraid of being raped or sexually assaulted.

- c. Parking in the Aylestone ward, especially during cricket match days at Grace Road, is affecting the quality of life. There is considerable frustration amongst residents about the difficulties encountered during these times and widespread support for the introduction of measures to divert the problem.

4. LESSONS FROM THE PILOT

- 4.1 The work in terms of information gathering, relationship building and reflection has enabled the mapping out of the priority concerns of the areas in question, some likely short term action that might be taken and some strategic implications which will be shaped over the forthcoming months.
- 4.2 Priority concerns reflect the national PAT reports and include education, crime reduction, transport and constructive activities for young people. A strong emerging view across the communities is the need for service providers to be much more responsive and accessible, and co-operating across services and delivering them flexibly.
- 4.3 Gaps in Social and health services have been identified leading to the conclusion that they could co-operate to greater effect to ensure a smooth pattern of support for households where someone is experiencing mental ill health and that person's package of support are changing.
- 4.4 Some likely short-term actions include making facilities more welcoming, releasing time for further co-operation and joint working and relaxing some obstructive procedures.

5.0 ACTION PLAN

- 5.1 The lack of youth provision has already been identified as a major concern for residents in both the pilot areas. A priority aim of the project is to identify ways in which youth work can be developed for the two areas to improve the opportunities for younger people to use their time more constructively.

Neighbourhood Renewal Funding will be sought to support initiatives to help young people. We will work with the Education Department and Arts and Leisure Department and alongside the emerging Lifelong Learning Strategy to ensure this problem is tackled.

- 5.2. The Hinckley Road Local Policing Unit and the Police Office operating from 51 The Exchange could increase its accessibility by clarifying its opening times and developing a standard for responding to voicemail contacts. The office at The Exchange is also not very visible and not particularly well sign posted.

Options will be explored with the Police at both offices to look at opening times and the way it communicates this. A large sign at the front of both buildings would be a start with information sheets on reception desks at places like the local Neighbourhood Housing Office, Post Office and Tenants Association being utilised as well. A review of the way voicemail contacts are dealt with will be encouraged with a view to putting into place a consistent and easily understood system to ensure messages are returned.

- 5.3 There is widespread concern in Eyres Monsell about the lack of police officers patrolling the area. At present only two beat officers service the area on a limited basis and on the same shift pattern. As such both officers can be off duty at the same time.

Neighbourhood Renewal funding will be sought to finance policing and community safety initiatives looking at models including neighbourhood wardens/rangers in Eyres Monsell. The aim would primarily be to reduce crime but it would also reduce the fear of crime and have an environmental remit as well.

- 5.4 New Parks Library could help identify the reasons for truancy by young people who come to the library in school hours and therefore put in train the appropriate response with other schools, the education department and other agencies.

We will work with local schools and New Parks Library to adopt an effective referral system to explore how to tackle the causes of truancy and to reduce it.

- 5.5 Housing Offices in Eyres Monsell and New Parks are poorly perceived by sections of the community in terms of their front office service.

We will work with the Eyres Monsell and New Parks Neighbourhood Housing offices to make its facilities more welcoming by establishing a proper reception with a system to welcome people quickly, ensure that they are directed to the right service and informed the likely time the visit will take.

- 5.6 The Housing Department Central heating programme hopes to install heating into all homes where the tenant wants it but does not currently have it by 2003. To encourage as many tenants as possible to have central heating installed in their homes, the benefits of central heating should be widely publicised. Also some tenants who have arrears are still advised that they are ineligible for new central heating. Finally some older systems, particularly those found in bungalows on Eyres Monsell do not work efficiently.

We will work with the Housing Department to ensure better communication of policy changes throughout the front line services. Also, we will assist with better targeted publicity to ensure maximum take up of central heating. Finally we can help identify systems that may require up grading as in the case on Eyres Monsell and give the information to Technical Services. It may be possible to use NRF to provide heating in some cases.

- 5.7 Information about services and service providers does not filter out to local people very effectively in Eyres Monsell. Residents want better communications and information. For instance, many residents in Eyres Monsell and Aylestone do not know about the availability of locks, bolts and other security equipment from Lansdowne Community Centre and Eyres Monsell TA at cost price.

Neighbourhood Renewal funding will be sought to publish a monthly newsletter to distribute to all the households in Eyres Monsell. The newsletter will include crime and safety information, free advertisements for local self employed traders, benefits advice, consumer advice etc.

- 5.8 Parking in the Aylestone Ward, especially during cricket match days at Grace Road, has been a major cause for concern for many years.

The possibility of creating a residents' parking scheme near Grace Road will be explored. We will work closely with the Traffic Group Section of the City Council and local residents to put into place a scheme that eases the difficulties presently experienced.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The aim of the Resources for Communities pilot is to improve the delivery of public services to people who experience disadvantage. As such, it is anticipated it will be these citizens who will benefit from the pilot.

7. CONSULTATION

Ward Councillors, Community Groups and local residents were consulted to help formulate proposals in this report.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Leicester Neighbourhood Renewal Survey November 2000.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

10. SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The Resources for Communities Pilot is designed to enhance the social and thereby the environmental sustainability of the targeted areas by encouraging a holistic approach to the impact of services.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

The Police are a major partner in the Resources for Communities project and the reduction in crime and the fear crime is a targeted area of work by the Co-ordinators.

12. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The Human Rights Act is designed to protect the rights of the human person in the face of large, and particularly government, institutions. The Resources for Communities pilot has a parallel aim of enabling the City Council and other major service providers to be more responsive to the concerns of the communities they serve.

13. AUTHOR/OFFICER TO CONTACT

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Appendix 1

Neighbourhood Renewal – Well-Being Survey Summary Analysis. **Summary**

There are two important things to note about this survey:

- It was a survey of individual householders rather than groups already engaged with the City Council.
- It was not a large survey, 800 households were surveyed altogether (389 in each pilot area), randomly sampled, which is therefore indicative rather than watertight statistically.

COMMUNITY/NEIGHBOURHOOD

1. Address mobility.

The populations of all four wards are stable with people moving within the ward in a fair minority of cases. However an unusually large number of people have lived in Aylestone for two years or less (20%). This may reflect a large student population.

2. Satisfaction with the area.

The satisfaction levels for all wards reflect the MORI returns across Leicester. However interviewees in the New Parks estate thought it had 'got worse' in the last couple of years.

3. What residents like about the area.

Residents of New Parks, Aylestone and Eyres Monsell mostly liked the quiet and the nice friendly neighbours. However in Western Park having shops and the City Centre nearby were most mentioned.

4. Improvements needed.

The top five in order for each ward were:

Aylestone:	More facilities for children, Parking difficult/need residents parking, Litter, dirty, untidy, lack of shops locally, Lack of facilities/things to do
Eyres Monsell	Lack of shops locally, Litter, dirty, untidy, More police/patrols, More facilities for children, Parking difficult/need residents parking
New Parks:	More facilities for children, Houses in poor state of repair, Troublesome neighbours/type of people moving in, More facilities for youth/teenagers, Young people hanging around
Western Park	More police/patrols, Litter, dirty, untidy, More facilities for children, Traffic too fast/need speed humps, Vandalism

5. Community spirit.

This was not very different from the MORI returns for Leicester as a whole.

6. Issues of most concern.

Nowhere for children to play and **young people hanging about** were the issues of most concern across the four wards. An exception is Aylestone where parking is also a major concern.

Not far behind this in all four wards were vandalism, burglary, litter and rubbish, and car crime.

Of concern to particular wards are:

Aylestone	Dogs.
Eyres Monsell	Lack of local shops, Abandoned cars.
New Parks	Drug dealing, Housing in poor state of repair

7. Issues which affect the quality of life.

Across all four wards **crime**, **traffic** and **leisure facilities being too far away** were the most mentioned issues. Top issues for each ward were:

Eyres Monsell and New Parks	Crime
Western Park	Leisure facilities being too far away
Aylestone	Traffic

8. Desire to stay in the area.

One person in eight in New Parks/Western Park wishes to move because they 'dislike this area, want a better area' whereas this figure is one person in twenty in Aylestone/Eyres Monsell.

CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

1. Fear of crime

Fear of crime in New Parks/Western Park was similar to that expressed across Leicester in the MORI survey, although slightly higher for women. In Eyres Monsell and particularly Aylestone fear of crime was slightly lower.

2. Crimes of particular concern.

In common with the MORI survey for the city as a whole respondents in all four wards **fear burglary most**. This is followed by fears of being troubled by people hanging round in the streets, having one's car or something in it stolen and having one's car damaged by vandals.

Notably a third of women under 60 in Aylestone/Eyres Monsell feared rape or sexual assault in comparison with one in five in New Parks/Western Park.

3. Experience of crime.

The actual experience of crime in the last year is less in Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and New Parks than the experience reported in the MORI survey for Leicester as a whole. However experience of crime in Western Park is slightly higher.

The wards with the greatest experience of each category of crime are:

Aylestone	Sexual harassment or assault
Eyres Monsell	=Being attacked at home
New Parks	Disputes with neighbours involving threats or violence, Being robbed in the street, =Being attacked at home
Western Park	Car vandalised, Burglary, Violence on the streets, Other (i.e. other vandalism and abuse), Property vandalised

4. Crime prevention.

In all four wards help to make homes more secure (providing and fitting security equipment, locks and bolts) was suggested most as a useful strategy. However beyond that, responses varied between the wards with the next three most popular measures overall being; more facilities for young people, grants for people to buy crime prevention equipment and local people working closely with the police

SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES.

Residents were asked about their level of satisfaction with a number of local services. The results varied and we have compared them with the MORI survey of the whole city in 1998. In all four wards satisfaction with **play areas** was much worse than that expressed in the MORI survey.

Some other satisfaction levels were down across all four wards. These were:

Secondary schools (especially Eyres Monsell)
 Parks (especially amongst parents)
 Libraries (especially beyond New Parks Boulevard)
 Swimming pools and leisure centres (especially Western Park and Eyres Monsell)

Other specific areas where satisfaction is down are:

Adult Education in New Parks and Eyres Monsell
 Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Western Park
 Primary schools in New Parks

Satisfaction with refuse collection, street cleaning and street lighting maintained the high results of the MORI survey. However concern was expressed about the lighting of alleyways and open spaces.

Satisfaction with the maintenance of roads and pavements was up on the MORI figures. However those with an impairment or health problem were slightly less satisfied.

INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION

Answers to all of these questions reflected the MORI survey for the whole of Leicester. Older people were more satisfied with the level of information they received, more likely to contact a Councillor and much more likely to claim to have voted than were younger people. Council tenants were more cynical about Council responsiveness to their views and less interested in participation