



Eastbourne Strategic Partnership
working together

A Case Study

Partnership Works...

The Devonshire Project

In 2004, the Eastbourne Strategic Partnership (ESP) considered three geographical areas for priority research, each of which had been nominated for focus based on Indices of Multiple Deprivation Data (IMD). In 2005 the 'Devonshire Ward Area Profile' was published as a result of this initiative. This involved a large community consultation exercise together with a bringing together of factual data on the ward drawn from a number of different sources. The profile described considerable areas of deprivation and need.

The report led to the creation of the Devonshire Project, a coordinated strategy which involved key partners from the statutory sector together with other interested parties, most importantly the community itself. A Steering Committee was established and partner agencies developed and refined strategies to address the needs into their service plans. A dedicated Devonshire Neighbourhood Worker was appointed in June 2006.





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The Challenge

The Devonshire Ward of Eastbourne includes the town centre area, and in 2004, contained the top ten streets with the highest crime rates of the entire borough. These high crime rates, combined with worrying IMD data, prompted the ESP to commission targeted research of the area. The aim of the consultation was:

- To identify and understand existing service delivery needs in the area
- To help target and prioritise resources and services required in the area
- To assist in the development of these resources and services
- To identify and measure the capacity of current service providers

The consultation involved residents, front line staff, businesses, voluntary/faith/community organisations and stakeholders of the ESP.



The Action

The report was published in September 2005 and led to the creation of the Devonshire Project, a coordinated strategy which involved key partners from the statutory sector together with other interested parties, most importantly the community itself. A Steering Committee was established and partner agencies, including Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, the NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and Eastbourne Borough Council, developed and refined strategies to address the needs into their service plans. A dedicated Devonshire Neighbourhood Worker was appointed in June 2006.



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The Impact

In partnership with the Crime Reduction Partnership (a sub-group of the Local Strategic Partnership) Sussex Police implemented a number of strategies such as Operation Blitz, targeted at antisocial behaviour and criminal damage. Another highly effective strategy run for the first time in 2007 was Operation Synergy, in which Police and other partners got together to clean up the town and tackle crime and anti social behaviour. Over one week, untaxed cars were towed away, illegal workers were detained by immigration officers, arrests were made for drugs and theft offences, graffiti and litter was cleaned up, television licence dodgers were targeted and licensed premises were checked for drug usage.

Over half of the town's Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are in the Devonshire Ward and when poorly run can be a focus for crime and antisocial behaviour. Joint action by Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and the Council's Environmental Health Officers resulted in the closure of some problem premises such as the Cambridge Hotel. This resulted in a considerable improvement in the quality of life of nearby residents.





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Fortnightly Environmental Visual Audits in which Council staff and the Police jointly review an area to identify and remedy problems have been initiated as part of an Eastbourne wide development. Graffiti removal kits have been purchased and made available to residents.

There is a community priority to improve facilities and activities for young people and a range of activities have been undertaken. The Devonshire Neighbourhood Photography Walkabout was a joint project with young people from Charlie's Drop In, Compass Community Arts and The Devonshire Neighbourhood Initiative. It was highly successful and a follow up project was funded by Sussex Downs College. A third project was repeated at the Archery Youth Club. Twice weekly street soccer and basketball activities for 12-19 year olds have been introduced at the Archery Youth Club which also ran a street arts festival.

In addition to these activities a significant achievement was the opening of the Devonshire Children's Centre to provide support, advice and information on a whole range of issues for children under five and their families.

In response to the identified issues highlighted in the Devonshire Profile of substance misuse, transience and insecure housing that beset parts of the ward, NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald has developed a Homeless Health Service. This service provides regular primary health care at a day time clinic. The service also provides advice, information, advocacy and sign posting to other services. Devonshire has a high proportion of terraced properties and flats many of which are rented privately. Much of the housing stock does not meet the Government Decent Homes Standard. Eastbourne Homes, the arms length management organisation that manages the Council's housing stock, has secured funding to undertake a programme of updating social housing properties. It is intended to complete work to all traditionally constructed properties within the Ward by December 2010 and other types of construction by 2012.

Sussex Downs College is represented on the Steering Committee and through its activities to support young people "Not in Education, Employment or Training" (NEET). This has been addressing the needs of some Devonshire residents. The adult services part of the college has provided courses for young mothers at the Devonshire Children's Centre. It has also used this venue to provide first aid courses.

An Action Plan for 2008-2010 has now been developed following extensive consultation with the community. The community was consulted about what the 3 key priorities to bring improvements to Devonshire should be.



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Chair of the Devonshire Neighbourhood Action Plan Group, Adam Chugg said; "It was encouraging to see so many local people at the meeting to discuss the new Action Plan. The meeting provided a valuable opportunity for local residents and community groups in Devonshire to discuss the contents of the Neighbourhood Action Plan. The plan is based upon 3 priorities set by the local community for improving the quality of life in Devonshire, namely reducing crime, improving the physical environment and providing better facilities for young people. I have no doubt that the community in Devonshire will benefit from the joint work of everyone involved in the project."

The Action Plan therefore provides a means by which the community can become more involved in the process by looking for the outcomes and feeding back what works well, what has not been achieved and perhaps most importantly what other actions should be taken.

Lessons Learnt

- Important to have engagement in all areas in order to maintain enthusiasm and commitment from residents and partners.
- Clearly identify actions to partners and involve all partners in drawing up a neighbourhood action plan and maintain constant dialogue.
- Feedback regularly - e.g. hold quarterly steering group meetings and ensure at least annual feedback to the LSP via the Eastbourne Crime Reduction Partnership.
- Discuss any issues openly and try to solve by mutual agreement
- Be aware of the difficulties of transient communities, be proactive and flexible.
- Measure progress against an action plan, Place/Residents Satisfaction survey and crime statistics.
- Resident feedback is very important, hold regular meetings with the public and undertake an annual consultation with residents and partners.



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Organisations Involved

Eastbourne Borough Council
Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services (EAVS)
East Sussex County Council
Sussex Police
East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service
Eastbourne Homes
NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald
Eastbourne Strategic Partnership
Eastbourne Crime Reduction Partnership

Contact

David Kemp
Eastbourne Crime Reduction Partnership
Eastbourne Borough Council
Town Hall
Grove Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 4UG

01323 415346
david.kemp@eastbourne.gov.uk



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**Eastbourne Strategic
Partnership**

www.eastbourne.gov.uk

01323 415419

esp@eastbourne.gov.uk