

Report to BSP Board

Title: **Tackling Disadvantage Partnership Programme**

Date: **23 September 2009**

Summary

1. This report updates BSP Board on progress with the *Tackling Disadvantage* Partnership Programme, the strategic approach to addressing the needs of those experiencing unfavourable conditions or circumstances within the county.

Recommendation

That BSP Board

| Agree the scope of the *Tackling Disadvantage* Partnership Programme

Background

2. Disadvantage can take many forms - an elderly widow in a remote rural village suffering from social isolation; a vulnerable adult with disabilities seeking employment or a young family with a low household income concerned about their children's educational attainment.
3. Disadvantage does not have a single cause. There are often complex and interacting circumstances which impact on individuals and families. Successfully tackling disadvantage cannot, therefore, be done in isolation, but must be partnership action in its widest sense if we are to tackle the multiple, enduring and, in some cases, worsening, disadvantage being experienced by some communities of interest and geography in Buckinghamshire.
4. Disadvantage has a tendency to cluster. Overlapping factors of deprivation can reinforce disadvantage and make it difficult for individuals and families to make the most of opportunities on offer in our county. The Tackling Disadvantage Programme seeks to empower those experiencing disadvantage to maximise their life chances and contribute to better personal outcomes.
5. Tackling disadvantage has been identified as a priority for partnership activity through the family of Buckinghamshire Sustainable Communities Strategies and the Buckinghamshire Local Area Agreement 2008 – 2011.
6. The refreshed county wide Sustainable Community Strategy comments that "*Tackling disadvantage is crucial if we are to achieve the outcomes set out in the strategy. Our approach must include targeted actions and ways of working which best address the inequalities experienced by different groups and communities*".

7. At this meeting, the Board will also receive feedback from Halo Works on a recently held consultation with seldom-heard groups during the development of the Sustainable Community Strategies. This feedback also informs the proposed approach to the Tackling Disadvantage workstream.
8. The Sustainable Community Strategy includes the commitment that “By 2026 – We have no communities in the lowest 30% of deprivation nationally.” At its July 2009 meeting, the BSP Board considered the Improvement Projects 09/10 as part of the BSP Annual Report, and endorsed the *Tackling Disadvantage* partnership programme as the vehicle to deliver this objective on behalf of the BSP.

The Tackling Disadvantage partnership programme

9. The purpose of the programme is:
 - to tackle some of the underlying causes of disadvantage to achieve an improvement in outcomes for residents, focussing our approach on those issues which can cause most damage to life chances and where conscious application of public policy can make the greatest difference; and
 - to develop a toolkit of effective techniques for tackling disadvantage from which elements can be selected as appropriate to meet the needs of a local area.
10. A county wide, multi-agency programme board has been set up to oversee delivery of the programme. The Programme Board has chosen to focus initially on geographic areas where disadvantage has clustered. It is anticipated that the work of the programme board will pilot a longer term strategic approach for partnership working in localities.
11. Communities of interest will be considered as part of Phase 2.
12. Three Phase 1 streams of work are currently underway:
 - (i) **The first *Tackling Disadvantage* area based pilot project**
13. A project board is progressing work in the first pilot area of Castlefield and Oakridge (in High Wycombe) and it is envisaged that learning from the first pilot will inform a neighbourhood management approach in successive project areas.
14. The commitment to a community led approach has underscored the Project Board’s focus on early community engagement. Community engagement activities are being developed with the twin aims of building on existing intelligence about community views to support the development of a community led plan and encouraging local community spirit.
15. Every effort is being made to ensure engagement is as inclusive and representative as possible and a wide-ranging, multi-faceted stakeholder engagement plan is being developed. Setting up a Residents’ Action Group to take the lead on initiatives within their area is being explored.

16. The project is aiming to deliver a mixture of short term deliverables and longer term changes around joined-up service delivery, maximising household income, raising levels of educational attainment and narrowing the gap between those experiencing the worst health and the rest of the population in Buckinghamshire.

(ii) Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service partnership data mapping

17. Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is leading on the partnership data mapping around tackling disadvantage. This work is centred on using selected datasets specific to deprivation in order to prioritise a number of neighbourhoods for the next stage of the partnership programme. The Vulnerable Localities Index which has been developed by the Fire Service is being used to combine, weight, and scan these datasets, and then is being combined with information taken from the Index of Multiple Deprivation and the ACORN profiling tool.
18. Work on drawing together partnership research information on the target area into a single profile is ongoing and will underpin the project.

(iii) Work on addressing childhood poverty

19. The Children and Young People's Trust has agreed to pilot their work on tackling childhood poverty in Oakridge and Castlefield. Children and Young People Trust representatives are working closely with the Tackling Disadvantage Pilot Delivery Team, particularly on the mapping of current service provision on the engagement with children and young people.

Conclusion

20. Progressing the multi-agency, partnership approach to tackling the multiple, enduring and, in some cases, worsening, inequalities in parts of Buckinghamshire is crucial if we are to achieve the outcomes set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.