



EFFORD BUILDING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

External Evaluation Summary Report



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on behalf of:
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INTRODUCTION

Background to the Efford Building Communities Initiative

The Efford Building Communities Initiative (BCI) is one of four South West Regional Development Agency (SWERDA) funded pilot programmes focusing on investment to reverse the decline of neighbourhood centres. The BCI has been delivered by Plymouth City Council's Neighbourhood Regeneration Team, in partnership with The Heart of Efford Community Partnership.

The BCI focuses on creating vibrant and sustainable communities that offer a range of facilities and services that cater for local needs. Efford was chosen as a pilot project because of the need to bring improvements to Torrridge Way, an area that has suffered from a lack of investment over the years within an area ranking high in social deprivation. In February 2008 Efford ranked 7th on Plymouth's Neighbourhood Index of Deprivation, taking into account issues relating to crime, education, housing, worklessness and health.

The BCI programme commenced in 2005, with funding ceasing in March 2010. Over the first three years the programme brought about major physical change to Torrridge Way.

In addition to the physical improvements, a community partnership was developed called The Heart of Efford Community Partnership (HECP). The HECP consists of local people, and representatives from agencies delivering services locally, such as the Vicar, Youth Service, DELL Children's Centre, local school, Lipson Community College and the local Ward Councillors. The aim of the partnership is to help deliver the BCI programme and maximise the engagement of local residents.

"Before the whole BCI project started the Efford community had been promised many things and nothing had ever been delivered, so they really didn't have any confidence in what the Council and other organisations had promised."



As part of the BCI programme, a Master Plan was commissioned in order to assess opportunities on Torrington Way and to help address both physical and social regeneration issues affecting the quality of life for local residents in Efford. This led to the development of the Efford BCI 'Forward Plan' aimed at delivering improvements to services and initiatives responding to local needs.

The Efford 'Forward Plan' was developed in response to the issues and needs highlighted in the Master Plan, and outlined potential activities that could be achieved through better use of existing services or resources, through BCI or other potential external funding sources, or through better joined up strategic and partnership work between agencies.

Crucially, the Forward Plan addressed the programme of work to be delivered over the period 2007-2010.

To help develop some of the themes of the Forward Plan, a number of strategic groups were established, around the key issues of youth, green spaces, health and skills development, involving a wide range of partners including local residents, Plymouth City Council, other voluntary and statutory agencies and local Councillors.

The remit of these groups was to deliver the outcomes of the Master Plan through:

- Understanding current service provision;
- Identifying gaps in provision;
- Developing actions to address needs; and
- Identifying/seeking resources.

“Change has happened and now local residents want more from the community. They want it clean, they want it tidy, they don't want illegal parking, they don't want rowdy behaviour, dog fouling, and broken glass. If you were to discuss broken glass with members of the community two years ago, they would look at you as though you had two heads.”



Funding

The total programme funding for the BCI initiative was £1.9m, of which the allocated spend for 2007 – 2010 was £976,336. This covered Neighbourhood Regeneration staffing costs, capital costs for the continuing physical improvements to Torridge Way, a small community chest, resources for community development, and the remainder to deliver initiatives in the Forward Plan (2007-2009).

The bulk of the remaining Forward Plan allocation was from the SWERDA, either through direct funding, or through the sale of assets due to SWERDA's initial investment in the programme (£840,000).





The role of the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Team, which is part of the Strategic Housing division of Plymouth City Council, has been responsible for the delivery of the Building Communities Initiative. The Neighbourhood Regeneration Team were able to fund a dedicated regeneration officer from 2005 - 2010 for the BCI and were able to support the regeneration process by:

- Delivering community action planning, designing, visioning and overall master planning processes;
- Negotiating with land owners to redevelop sites;
- Fostering local networks and developing multi agency partnerships; and
- Developing and delivering partnership initiatives to address core local issues.

These issues related to green spaces, young people, skills and health; raising awareness of Efford and BCI opportunities; and engaging and building the capacity of the local community.

“Efford, for the first time, is actually an up and coming estate.”

Objectives of Evaluation

The objectives of this evaluation commissioned by the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team were to:

- Assess the extent to which the BCI has met its outcomes;
- Assess the extent to which outcomes have been achieved and how the BCI has influenced service improvements and innovative responses to addressing needs; and
- Highlight projects and initiatives that have been developed as part of the BCI and to measure their impact on addressing identified needs.

The aim of the commission was to undertake a full evaluation covering all aspects of the BCI, including physical redevelopments, community capacity building, partnership working and partnership initiatives.

The above objectives were addressed through an integrated programme of action research, including:

- Three focus groups involving healthy living participants and young people;
- Interviews with 34 stakeholders;
- A self-completion survey of residents of Efford undertaken during the period October to December 2009, resulting in 210 completed questionnaires; and
- An on-line survey of young people that living in Efford and attending Lipson Community College, undertaken during IT classes in December 2009, with a total of 49 responses;
- Ten 'case study' face to face interviews with selected residents, undertaken in order to capture detailed feedback on their involvement and views of particular BCI initiatives;
- A stakeholder workshop held on 11 December 2009 at St Paul's Church to consider some of the emerging results of the evaluation, take on board feedback from a range of stakeholders in relation to these issues and explore the

implications of the evaluations findings for the future of HECP.

In order to gauge the overall views of survey respondents in relation to the Efford resident self-completion survey, the analysis contained in this report uses what is termed the 'net balance of change'. This simply involves adding the proportion of survey respondents that have expressed positive views about the changes that have taken place over the past three years and subtracting the proportion of residents that have expressed a negative view to arrive at a net balance of change. This provides a useful overall indicator on the extent to which Efford residents view the changes that have taken place in Efford in a negative or positive way.

The outcomes that the programme set out to achieve were refined over the development of the project in response to the Masterplan and further consultation work; but were based on the Forward Plan. Each of the ten outcome areas for the BCI programme forms the basis of each chapter of this Summary Report, as follows:

- Physical Development in Efford;
- Green Spaces;
- Youth;
- Health;
- Skills;
- Community Safety;
- Partnership working;
- HECP;
- Community engagement and cohesion; and
- Effective delivery and provision of services.

In addition, this report also seeks to draw out overall conclusions and future lessons.

This Summary Report provides a review of the main impacts of the BCI programme, which are outlined in more detail in the Main BCI Evaluation Report.



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT IN EFFORD

What was the issue?

Prior to the BCI Programme, Torridge Way, the central hub of Efford, was characterised by a lack of investment over a number of years, with a consequent decline in the physical environment of the 'Heart of Efford' and associated problems of anti-social behaviour and nuisance.

What did we do?

The main physical development activity is centred on Torridge Way in the so-called 'Heart of Efford'.

Over the first three years the programme brought about major physical change to Torridge Way, including the demolition of the Royal Marine pub, development of a new Extra Care housing scheme with a new community library facility, and a new St Paul's church, also with a community facility. The Extra Care Scheme consists of 41 new flats for independent living and a number of communal facilities for residents.

These three developments are inextricably linked because they involved a land swap deal involving Church of England, Plymouth City Council and The Aster Group¹.

What was the impact?

Although the physical redevelopment results are relatively straightforward, it did involve a complex set of negotiations and the redevelopment is perceived to have worked well for all the partners concerned.

It was felt that the BCI initiative helped to concentrate minds and meant that Plymouth City Council added funding into Efford to enable the redevelopment to take place. It does appear to be the case that this redevelopment would not have

taken place if it were not for the BCI initiative.

A resident survey undertaken in Efford in 2009 as part of this evaluation appears to indicate that residents believe that the quality of the buildings in Torridge Way have got better over the past three years as a result of these developments. 65% of residents believe that the quality of buildings in Torridge Way have got better over this period.

The main reason why about 13% of residents believe that the quality of the buildings in Torridge Way have got worse over the past three years appears to be to do with the state of repair of Paternoster House (left vacant for about one year) and to a lesser extent the fact that the former Royal Marine pub site has been left vacant since the demolition of the former pub about five years ago.

There appear to be divergent views on the current need for a community centre in Efford. Clearly the church, library and new school fulfil some of those community facility requirements. However, a number of stakeholders feel quite strongly that there is still a need for a one stop community hub in Efford.

One possibility to address this issue would appear to be the opportunity to consider community facilities for Efford as part of redevelopment proposals for the pub site.

“When those two sites (Paternoster House and the former Royal Marine pub site) are developed and when the new school is built, the whole of that end of Torridge Way will look and feel completely different.”

¹ The Aster Group operates through two Housing Associations locally – Ridgeway Community Housing Association and Sarsen Housing Association. Ridgeway provides supported housing and Sarsen is a general needs housing association.

GREEN SPACES

What was the issue?

Efford has a great deal of green and open spaces, however much of it is under-utilised, and therefore does not serve the needs of the community.

The opportunity to improve the local environment in conjunction with addressing other community issues, for example health and well being, skills development, lack of facilities for young people, community safety, road safety and community recreation, as well as the general appearance of the neighbourhood was identified.

The HECF and the Efford Youth Development Forum (EYDF) were both keen to make improvements to the local environment, and with the help of partners, improving green spaces and open spaces was seen as a way to encourage residents to become more active in their community and improve community cohesion, particularly between different age groups.

What did we do?

An objective mapping and assessment process was undertaken to highlight what needed to change in relation to green space in Efford. A plan for green space in Efford was produced in early 2008 and set out a range of actions that were needed for Efford, which were subsequently worked up into firm plans and proposals.

- **Efford Valley** - Extensive consultation was undertaken following on from the mapping exercise to try and understand what the community needed in relation to the Efford Valley before drawing up more detailed plans and commencing works. A Friends of the Valley group was established to bring local people together with Partners to develop and oversee the improvements to the Valley and to organise community involvement - which has included running 'Happy Valley Days' - successful and well attended community events promoting the valley. The main actions to improve Efford Valley have included lighting, thinning out the woodland, removal of dens, removal of fly-tipping and opening up views. A six month programme of works was agreed to be completed by the end of March 2010;
- **Fly tipping and dog fouling** - As a consequence of concerns expressed by residents through consultation as part of the BCI Programme, the City Council has put significant effort into the removal of rubbish, fly tipping and dog fouling in Efford;
- **Regeneration of the play parks** - stakeholders believe that some of the play parks have been transformed and attract different people to use the facilities this led to a range of new initiatives for new play areas, including the transformation of Yeo Close, Trefusis Park and Thames Garden play areas. Consultation undertaken by stakeholders revealed that play and recreation was seen by residents in Efford as a key issue;
- **Grotty Gardens Initiative** - Under a new tenancy agreement resulting from the work of the Green Spaces Strategy Group, there is an expectation that people will be responsible for the upkeep of their gardens and action will be taken against those tenants that do not conform to this new approach; and
- **Other specific achievements of the Green Space Strategy Group** - includes provision of community allotment space, links to food growing and public arts projects, accessing additional external funding, provision of volunteering opportunities through BCI funded work undertaken by the British Conservation Trust (BTCV) and the organisation of community clean up and celebration/engagement works.

“The area is so rich, but rich in the wrong types of green space.”

What was the impact?

A coordinated programme of activity is now underway, which ranges from a comprehensive set of proposals for Efford Valley and the regeneration of play areas, to action on fly tipping and associated 'community clean-ups'. Although the programme of works in Efford Valley had only just commenced at the time of the evaluation it is nevertheless perceived by stakeholders that the improvements have already led to an increase in local pride and community spirit.

In relation to resident views on proposals for improving Efford Valley, about 46% of respondents to the 2009 Efford residents' survey were aware of proposals for improving Efford Valley. In relation to:

- Perceptions of the impact of the proposals for improving Efford Valley, a net positive balance of change of 71% is recorded;
- The impact the proposals will have on how safe residents will feel, the analysis indicates a net positive balance of change of 52%;
- Future use of Efford Valley, the analysis indicates a net positive balance of change of 49%.

In relation to resident's views on local parks and play areas, the impact of current changes in terms of use were much less evident than likely future changes, based on responses to the 2009 Efford residents survey. In relation to:

- The current impact of changes to local parks and play areas in terms of residents' use of these facilities, a marginal net positive balance of change of 9% was recorded;
- The impact of proposed changes to local parks and play areas in relation to use in the future by residents, a net positive balance of change of 32% was recorded.



"I don't know whether I could turn round and say that the quality of life for a lot of people in Efford has been improved, but I know the quality of the area around them has improved."

YOUTH

What was the issue?

During the Master Plan consultation process, issues around young people were mentioned by the vast majority of respondents. The Master Plan highlighted the following issues:

- Youth space and facilities - it was felt that there was not enough leisure, sporting facilities and activity space within Efford and limited safe places for young people to 'hang out';
- Young people and safety – there was nowhere for young people to congregate without being asked to move on. Young people did not feel safe in some open spaces in Efford;
- Negative image/perception of young people - young people were subject to 'labelling'. There was a negative perception of young people from members of the community. Some young people felt they had experienced 'aggressive policing';
- Health of young people - young people suffered from 'poverty of ambition', impacting on behaviour and therefore health. Young people's use of alcohol, drugs and cigarettes, along with sexual health, was identified as a problem. There was limited community based parental support.

What did we do?

A range of actions took place as part of the BCI programme in response to the outcomes of consultation. This included:

- Funding secured to develop a multi-use games area and a youth shelter on the site of the Youth Centre, with plans for further facilities within redeveloped play areas and green spaces;
- Youth health initiatives including sports and fitness activities, a community allotment, cookery sessions, health promotion activities and a Role Model initiatives;

- Youth engagement in decision making through Headspace, Friends of the Valley, High View School Design Pod and HECP; and
- Measures to try and combat the negative perceptions of young people.

It appears that a number of agencies believe that boredom in young people provides the opportunity for them to get into trouble and that this should not be allowed to happen. The underpinning rationale behind the Youth Services programme of activities undertaken in Efford was to ensure that young people had an activity to go to every night of the week in Efford.

What was the impact?

There have undoubtedly been successful outcomes to the BCI programme as far as stakeholders involved in the Youth Strategy Group are concerned. New facilities (multi use games area and youth shelter) and a wide range of activities have been undertaken in response to needs and demands expressed by young people themselves.

There has generally been a high level of involvement from young people in Efford in the activities undertaken through BCI.

A total of 49 young people living in Efford responded to an on-line survey undertaken as part of this evaluation, out of a total of just over 400 Efford residents attending Lipson Community College. Based on these responses:

In relation to facilities and activities available to young people, significant positive improvements in all three indicators used were recorded by survey respondents, with a net positive balance of change of 16% recorded with respect to the facilities available locally for young Efford residents, a net positive balance of change of 15% with respect to use of local parks and play areas and a net positive balance of

change of 21% with respect to local activities available to young people in Efford;

In relation to community safety issues, on balance those young Efford residents completing the survey think are more likely to feel either a bit safer or a lot safer in the evening, or at night than was the case three years ago, with a net positive balance of change of 13%;

However, young people are more likely to think litter or fly tipping has got worse over the last three years, with a negative net balance of change of 27%, with little change evident in perceptions of the incidence of anti-social behaviour;

In relation to quality of life, a net positive balance of change of 23% was recorded with respect to young resident's satisfaction with their neighbourhood;

However, in relation to the perceptions others have of young people, on balance those young people surveyed do not think the perceptions that other residents have of young people has improved, but has actually got somewhat worse over the last three years. The analysis indicates a negative net balance of change of 13% in relation to this indicator.



“The situation when we first started working in Efford wasn’t very positive for young people at all.”



HEALTH

What was the issue?

Based on analysis of the Indices of Local Deprivation, residents of Efford were identified as having poor health, with the neighbourhood ranking 5 in terms of those neighbourhoods with the worst health statistics in Plymouth. The Plymouth Public Health Development Unit took the lead in analysing health needs in Efford, as part of the Master Planning process. The primary health issues raised were:

- Childhood obesity rates;
- Access to a range of fresh food locally;
- Access to recreation and sporting opportunities in the neighbourhood;
- Young people's health – particularly smoking, alcohol, mental health and sexual health;
- Gaps in Health Service provision and promotion, for example

chiropractic, complimentary health, healthy lifestyles, dentistry, bereavement support and family planning;

- Lack of information and support for victims of domestic violence;
- Access to information about existing services, support and advice and a lack of community space to promote services and provide support and advice sessions; and
- Need for ongoing, good quality, childcare.

What did we do?

As a result of the health needs assessment process, the BCI provided extra money for health initiatives, including:

- Encouraging people to use health services;
- Extra (preventative) health promotional work;

“It is a shame really because you are getting towards the end of the project just as they are starting to realise the benefits of having people like us within the area. It takes quite a long time to work a relationship up with people.”

- Healthy weight initiatives;
- Healthy eating initiatives;
- Extra fitness activities;
- Foot health clinics;
- Dental health workshops; and
- Work with partners to highlight healthy lifestyle messages.

What was the impact?

A Fitness Festival and associated consultation was successful in helping to launch a range of different fitness activities and exercise classes that sought to benefit the health of the residents of Efford through increased physical activity. The activities particularly targeted people that lead sedentary lifestyles and who previously did little exercise, by providing a range of accessible classes in local facilities. It is considered by stakeholders that these initiatives were successful overall and have led to significant levels of resident participation.

Although a lack of 'drop in' places made health promotion work more difficult, a wide range of health promotion activities have been undertaken in Efford as part of the BCI programme.

The health service is pleased with the response that they have received in Efford in relation to dental initiatives and believes that there is now a heightened awareness within the Efford community in relation to access to dental services, the importance of health and diet and brushing.

Involvement of the Podiatry Service within Efford in carrying out health promotion and health education has been less successful. The ability of the service to get involved with the community has been limited by a perceived lack of cooperation from GPs at the Efford Medical Centre, internal service issues and poor attendance at (relatively few) sessions that were run in Efford. However, the Podiatry Service indicated that they would be undertaking a programme of outreach work in Efford over the period September 2009 – March 2010.

Whilst it is notoriously difficult to measure public health outcomes, stakeholders perceive that the community has changed. One stakeholder commented:

In terms of residents views on changes in health and well being in Efford, very little change over the last three years in terms of overall health is recorded by the 2009 Efford residents survey. This outcome would be expected in relation to a relatively short period of intervention, but much larger positive net balances of change were recorded in relation to health awareness indicators. In relation to:

- Perceptions of changes to overall health, no real change was recorded with a marginal a net positive balance of change of 2%;
- How healthily residents eat and drink, a net positive balance of change of 36% is recorded; and
- The amount of physical activity residents do each week, a net positive balance of change of 26% is recorded.

“I do feel that there has been a cultural shift (from a health perspective)”

SKILLS

What was the issue?

The Master Planning process uncovered a number of key issues for local people in terms of accessing training and employment. Fundamental to this was the reported high incidence of basic skills needs, and the lack of appropriate learning opportunities to tackle this.

A need was identified for a wider variety of progression routes, covering essential skills, skills for life, social enterprise, accredited learning and employment support, in order to raise skills, confidence and aspirations. A need for more support around financial literacy, such as family budgeting, money management and debts were also identified as issues.

Support for young people disengaged with education was identified as a further priority.

In this context, it was acknowledged that alternative ways of delivering accredited learning needed to be sought.

What did we do?

Overall, the main priority of the Skills Strategy Group was described as “engagement at all levels regardless of age or ethnicity... It has just been trying to get the local people involved in whatever shape or form.”

A number of adult learning courses were provided in Efford as part of the BCI programme, including:

- Sky's the Limit courses (including jewellery making or family cookery);
- Family learning sessions (including Creating a comic strip, CV workshop and Digital camera workshop);
- Introduction to IT or other IT courses; and
- BCI funding was also allocated to the development of a community multi-media suite at the Youth Centre.

What was the impact?

Attendance at courses has been mixed, although a number have been quite successful, particularly the IT courses and some of the holiday programmes run at the library.

A number of other beneficial outcomes were also identified through interviews, including:

An increase in learner numbers (19+) in Efford;

Upskilling and increased confidence of those participating on courses;

Some progression achieved between the First Steps courses and other more substantive programmes; and

The breaking down of some barriers and perceptions of learning amongst some local adult residents.

Based on feedback from residents as part of the 2009 Efford residents' survey, opportunities to learn new skills in Efford have improved over the last three years. 43% of residents responding to the survey feel the opportunities available to learn new skills are either a little better or a lot better, compared with 1% who think that the opportunities available are either a little or a lot worse. This analysis indicates a net positive balance of change of 42%.

“We have got the seeds of a learning culture there now, or I feel we have, that wasn't there before. And it is keeping that watered to hopefully grow. I can't ever see us having a huge provision in Efford. But as long as we have a steady trickle and can progress learners on and can engage with them, that is the best we can hope for really.”



COMMUNITY SAFETY

What was the issue?

Prior to the BCI Programme, Efford was characterised by significant levels of anti-social behaviour, particular community safety issues in a number of localities and more serious crime problems, including those associated with Class A drugs.

What did we do?

A number of particular BCI initiatives that have had an impact on community safety issues were identified by the Neighbourhood Police Team as follows:

- Keep Efford Clean/Community Clean ups;
- Specific work to tackle broken glass;
- Grotty Gardens campaign;
- Speedway initiative to tackle stealing and abandoning of motorbikes;
- Trefusis Park improvements; and
- Demolition of an old toilet block behind Torridge Way.

A particular focus of ongoing improvements to Efford Valley has also been addressing community safety concerns.

A number of the programmes/activities undertaken as part of the BCI Programme have provided excellent mentors for a number of young people and a way of engaging with young people previously very difficult to engage with. The Neighbourhood Police Team believes that these initiatives have helped to reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour locally. Initiatives identified as particularly useful in this respect include:

- Headspace;
- Plymouth Raiders Role Model initiative; and the
- Young Women's Role Model initiative.

What was the impact?

There has been a significant reduction in overall crime and particularly the incidence of anti-social behaviour in Efford over the last two years.

The Neighbourhood Police Team report an overall reduction in reported crimes in Efford over the last two years of more than 40% and sharp reductions in the incidence of anti-social behaviour.

The Neighbourhood Police Team believe that a more coordinated approach, together with a range of activities targeted towards young people, of which BCI funded activities comprise an important element, lies behind the improvements in rates of crime and anti-social behaviour.

It was also pointed out that the nature of crime has changed in Efford away from more serious crime and much more of a focus on nuisance issues:

It is perceived that the BCI programme has made a major contribution to these improvements. However, the major concern raised by the Neighbourhood Police Team was the need to ensure activities targeted at young people that have been proved to be successful are sustained after BCI funding ceases in March 2010.

In relation to how residents perceptions of how different aspects of community safety have changed over the last three years, a significant positive net balance of change with respect to incidence of anti-social behaviour is evident. However, based on the 2009 Efford residents survey, with respect to other changes only marginal improvements are perceived. In relation to:

- Problems of anti-social behaviour, a net positive balance of change of 26% is recorded;

- How safe Efford residents feel in the evening or at night, a net positive balance of change of 8% is recorded; and
- Problems with litter and fly tipping, a net positive balance of change of 5% is recorded.

“We have seen a big change over the last couple of years. Efford used to have a bad reputation and this was probably justified with the things going on in different streets, such as Class A drug dealing...Complaints used to be quite serious complaints, but now it has moved down to things like litter, dog mess and things like this. That is people's genuine concerns now.”

HECP

What was the issue?

It was clear that prior to the BCI initiative Efford lacked a community group that could voice the concerns of Efford in a coherent way and many residents felt powerless to influence change in their neighbourhoods.

What did we do?

The Heart of Efford Community Partnership was established to help deliver the BCI Programme and maximise engagement of residents. It has become widely recognised as a viable community organisation representing the interests of Efford residents.

What was the impact?

A number of key successes of the HECP were identified by Committee members, including:

- Achieving the active participation of a number of residents, in some cases representing wider resident groups;
- Strengthening of local partnership working;
- Starting to change attitudes and aspirations of residents;
- Improved community cohesion; and
- Becoming a widely recognised as a viable community organisation.

However, a number of challenges and issues the HECP need to address were also identified. These included:

- Ensuring all local interests are represented;
- Increasing the profile of the HECP amongst residents;
- Overcoming barriers to greater resident involvement;
- The need to operate without the support of the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team;
- Improving communications with Efford residents; and

- The need for a higher profile within Plymouth.

There is widespread recognition of the critical role the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team has played in supporting the work of the HECP.

The particularly valuable role played by the designated officer from the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team was highlighted by a large number of those interviewed.

One of the aspects of support provided that was emphasised during interviews was the sensitive way in which this support has been delivered, by taking account of HECP views, rather than trying to control outcomes.

The extent of support provided is reflected in concerns expressed about the dependence upon the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team and implications of this for the future work of the HECP, although it is also acknowledged that steps have been taken by the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team to try and ensure future sustainability of the HECP.

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Team is also identified as having been critical to the success of the Strategy Groups, from initial establishment, ideas generation, organising, coordination and administration, through to project implementation.

Very few suggestions were made as to improvements that could be made in relation to the support the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team provided to either the Strategy Groups or the HECP.

“There was a tremendous amount of negativity. Since the HECP, with the work they have done linking with the community, it has improved tremendously.”



"We can't work in isolation – that's no good for young people and it's no good for the whole of the community."

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

What was the issue?

The Efford 'Forward Plan' outlined the need for better joined up strategic and partnership work between agencies.

What did we do?

To help develop some of the themes of the Forward Plan, a number of strategic groups were established, around the key issues of youth, green spaces, health and skills development, involving a wide range of partners including local residents, Plymouth City Council, other voluntary and statutory agencies and local Councillors.

What was the impact?

One of the major achievements of the BCI programme in Efford has been a transformation in the extent to which partnership working has increased, particularly as a result of the Strategy Groups established to support implementation of the BCI programme and the work of the Neighbourhood Police Team.

The Health Strategy Group was considered by all stakeholders interviewed to be a very action focussed group, which was very effective. It was felt that the group was very clear about what it was doing based on the health needs assessment and what they were trying to achieve in terms of outcomes.

Partnership working with other agencies in relation to health issues was also considered to be a very positive outcome from the BCI programme. It was considered by stakeholders that good working relationships had been developed in Efford over time and from that, an understanding and trust. It was also felt to be important to continue working in this way, which has led to a 'pooling of ideas and resources'. Partnership working with the schools has been particularly good with school halls used for exercise classes and other activities. It was commented:

"There has been a general increase in multi-agency working as a result of the health initiative."

The perception of all stakeholders interviewed is that the Youth Strategy Group worked really well with a good level of stakeholder involvement (including young people) and also good coordination with other agencies such as the Police.

There has been effective Strategy Group and partnership working involving the library service, police, Headspace, health service, schools, Lipson Community College, Youth Service and a range of providers such as Plymouth Argyle Community Trust and the YMCA.

It was felt that the BCI programme in Efford was a particularly good example of getting everybody involved through the various meetings that took place involving residents, including young people. This ensured that more effective communication took place and that the voice of young people was heard.

Perhaps understandably, there were some initial difficulties experienced in communication between agencies with a remit in relation to young people and partnership working generally. However, over time, through regular strategy meetings and communication, agencies have gone a long way to building good working relationships through a greater understanding of each other's roles.

A number of stakeholders commented that getting all agencies around the same table was one of the biggest positives and has been a crucial part of the approach adopted. In particular, it avoided duplication, everybody was clear about what each agency was involved in doing and it also meant that partners knew who to call in relation to a particular issue.

Overall, stakeholders felt that the Youth Strategy Group was very effective and several commented that this approach should be utilised within every area of the city.

A number of stakeholders have commented on the benefits from partnership working that have arisen from involvement in the Green Spaces Strategy Group and these contacts are seen as being really beneficial in terms of coordinating service provision to residents, particularly in terms of breaking down departmental barriers. Indeed the work of the Green Space Strategy Group provides a best practice model for more effective working by agencies at a neighbourhood level, which has also been endorsed by a range of stakeholders as a way of working that they would like to see more widely implemented across Plymouth.

Unlike some other Strategy Groups the Skills Strategy Group lacked the breadth of membership in terms of 'doers'. The Adult Education Service was identified as the only education partner attending, which was described as "a bit disappointing in that respect."

Although there were high expectations when the Skills Strategy Group first commenced, numbers attending meetings dwindled. This was identified as having a detrimental effect in terms of 'bouncing ideas' off a wider group and the development of strategies to tackle local skill issues.

However, particular benefits of increased partnership working were identified in relation to coordinating the engagement of adults, where far more work has been focussed on encouraging people to attend than was previously the case, as activities tended to be undertaken in isolation in the past.

In relation to community safety the Neighbourhood Police Team believe that a more coordinated approach, lies behind the improvements in rates of crime and anti-social behaviour. In relation to the fall in crime rates over the last two years the Neighbourhood Police Team commented:

"A large part of this is from multi-agency working"

One of the particularly beneficial outcomes cited that have, at least in part resulted from involvement in the BCI Programme, has been an increase in partnership working.

The Neighbourhood Police Team indicate that they have developed very close working relationships with Neighbourhood Regeneration Team, HECP and the Youth Service together with other local agencies, that was not the case prior to the BCI programme. In this respect it was commented:

"Representatives of local agencies are not just a name or a voice on the phone anymore."

It is perceived that this has led to much more effective multi agency working locally:

"You get to know people individually and understand what they can and can't deliver and what is a realistic time period to expect them to act within."

"If Plymouth City Council could get together and work like this there would be no issues really."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COHESION

What was the issue?

The Master Plan highlighted the need to raise levels of confidence and esteem of residents and also the need to engage particular groups of the community in productive activities.

It was also clear that prior to the BCI initiative Efford lacked a community group that could voice the concerns of Efford in a coherent way and many residents felt powerless to influence change in their neighbourhoods.

What did we do?

The Heart of Efford Community Partnership was established to help deliver the BCI Programme and maximise engagement of residents. It has become widely recognised as a viable community organisation representing the interests of Efford residents.

Wide ranging consultation and engagement methods have been used to inform the work of each of the four Strategy Groups. For example:

- A health needs assessment was undertaken in Efford at the outset of the BCI by a health impact assessment specialist and the Community Public Health Practitioner. An integrated process of consultation was undertaken with the community (across all age ranges) as part of this process. Other stakeholders such as GPs and schools were also part of the consultation;
- It is evident that there has been effective and wide ranging consultation carried out by the members of the Youth Strategy Group including work undertaken by young people themselves. Stakeholders believe that the effective involvement of young people has also been secured as part of BCI consultation and engagement processes, including the

involvement of young people in decision making. There has generally been a high level of involvement from young people in Efford in the activities undertaken through BCI;

- Effective community consultation has been undertaken through the Green Space Strategy Group at all stages of development and work planning, which has resulted in much greater community involvement in green space related activity. This has also led to the establishment of new community based fora (The Friends of Efford Valley) that has been successful in maintaining community involvement in green space activity. The 'Happy Valley Days' held have been widely regarded as particularly successful community events;
- The Neighbourhood Police Team also underline the beneficial impact in terms of reducing anti-social behaviour of particular BCI consultation initiatives that have actively engaged residents in trying to improve their neighbourhoods.

Use of art has been at the heart of many of the community consultation approaches, through the Arts Programme which has been a fundamental part of the BCI initiative.

Although termed an 'arts programme' the work of the artists concerned has really been about engaging people in Efford in order to raise questions, ideas, thinking and generally raising consciousness about the local community in Efford. In particular, in relation to their environment, their community and what they want their community to be. The Arts Programme appears to have been very effective in engaging residents in the process of regeneration.

What was the impact?

Based on responses from those residents responding to the 2009

Efford Resident Survey a significant positive net balance of change was recorded with respect to all community engagement and cohesion indicators measured:

- Efford residents think that they are now much more likely to be consulted about the changes to services or facilities in Efford, with a positive net balance of change of 50%;
- In relation to being able to influence decisions about the future of Efford the analysis indicates a net positive balance of change of 31%;
- In relation to getting involved in local activities the analysis indicates a net positive balance of change of 45%;
- In relation to the likelihood of working together with other local residents the analysis indicates a net positive balance of change of 41%;
- In relation to participation in volunteering a net positive balance of change of 27% is recorded;
- In relation to the number of people known locally a net positive balance of change of 40% is recorded; and
- In terms of perceptions of how well people from different backgrounds get on together a net positive balance of change of 28% is recorded.

"Efford has been the only area that I have been involved in where they have had this level of community involvement and this approach and I think without it they wouldn't have got to where they have got to."

Through a separate on-line survey, young Efford residents were asked whether they thought they would be more or less likely to:

- Be consulted about the changes to services or facilities in Efford?
- Be able to influence decisions about the future of Efford?
- Get involved in local activities?

On balance, those young Efford residents completing the survey think that they are now more likely to be consulted about the changes to services or facilities in Efford and also get involved in local activities, with positive net balances of change of 25% and 19% respectively.

However, the analysis points to little change in young people's perceptions of being able to influence decisions about the future of Efford.

Overall, the BCI has been successful in consulting and engaging with Efford residents, through a wide range of consultation methods. These have often been very innovative in nature. Taken together, the results of the resident's survey indicate that the BCI has been successful in bringing about a positive change in the attitudes of residents in relation to different aspects of engagement.

“I think it's a huge transformation from what there was before.”





EFFECTIVE DELIVERY AND PROVISION OF SERVICES

What was the issue?

Prior to the BCI Programme there was an identified lack of coordination of service provision across different Plymouth City Council Departments and with other service providers at a neighbourhood level in Efford. This was coupled with the need to tackle particular issues identified in relation to:

- Gaps in health provision and inadequate access to specific health related services and advice;
- Not enough leisure and sporting facilities;
- Activity space and activities for young people;
- Inadequate provision of learning opportunities for adults; and
- The need for increased service focus in relation to issues such as dog fouling, litter, and fly tipping, together with the need for a more coordinated service response to identified community safety and crime issues.

What did we do?

Four Strategy Groups were established comprising key service providers in each strategy area, residents and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team, as an integral aspect of the delivery of the BCI Programme to help coordinate and improve services in Efford in relation to health, skills, young people and green spaces.

What was the impact?

In relation to health issues BCI has enabled organisations to access funding in a way that would have been much more difficult in the absence of the initiative. Extra money for health related projects (e.g. healthy eating) has come in because of the BCI. Also, the BCI enabled a much greater degree of focus by the health service in Efford than would have been the case otherwise.

In relation to skills issues, the BCI has been responsible for helping to raise awareness of Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service (PACLS) in Efford, an expansion of where PACLS operates in Efford and has helped PACLS become more proactive and flexible in terms of provision in Efford. Significant improvements in the overall coordination of activities and responsiveness to needs is also identified as resulting from partnership working as part of the BCI programme.

The work and focus of activity provided by the Green Space Strategy Group has led to improvements in service delivery to Efford, with a disproportionate amount of attention being given to Efford from public service providers, as a result of coordinated lobbying for change by Efford residents.

Some new facilities have been put in place for young people and a wide range of activities have been undertaken in response to needs and demands expressed by young people themselves.

Based on the 2009 Efford residents survey, in relation to how different aspects of services and activities have changed over the last three years, a significant positive net balance of change in relation to all indicators was recorded by those residents responding to the survey. With respect to:

- The facilities available locally for Efford residents, a net positive balance of change of 32% was recorded;
- The activities available to Efford residents locally, a net positive balance of change of 34% was recorded; and
- In terms of changes in overall resident satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live, a net positive balance of change of 24% was recorded.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

It is clear that the BCI programme has led to a number of tangible improvements for residents within Efford. In relation to:

- Physical developments - it does appear to be the case that the considerable physical redevelopment of the 'Heart of Efford' that has taken place already, or is underway, would not have taken place if it were not for the BCI initiative;
- Green spaces - a coordinated programme of activity is now underway, which ranges from a comprehensive set of proposals for Efford Valley and the regeneration of green spaces/play areas, to action on fly tipping and associated 'community clean-ups';
- Young people - some new facilities have been put in place and a wide range of activities have been undertaken in response to needs and demands expressed by young people themselves;
- Health issues - a number of initiatives were successfully implemented, including health awareness raising with residents and partners, health promotional work, together with healthy eating and fitness activities. Outreach support was also successfully implemented in relation to dental health, although this was less successful in relation to podiatry services;
- Skills issues - although attendance at courses has been mixed, a number have been quite successful, with some evidence of wider benefits including increased adult learner numbers, an expansion of adult and community learning services locally and more awareness of learning provision amongst local adults; and
- Community safety - the Neighbourhood Police Team believe improved multi agency working in Efford has made a major contribution to improved crime and anti social behaviour rates, which at least in part is attributed to activities relating to the BCI programme.

Those residents that responded to a survey undertaken as part of this evaluation also indicated that on balance they thought improvements had occurred in Efford over the last three years in relation to a wide range of measures, including the quality of buildings on Torridge Way, health awareness indicators, opportunities to learn new skills, anti social behaviour, a range of measures relating to ability to get involved in local activities, influence decisions and community cohesion. There was also a significant net positive balance of opinion in relation to improvements underway in relation to Efford Valley and the regeneration of local play areas.

Young Efford residents responding to a bespoke on-line survey also, on balance, thought there had been improvements over the last three years in relation to facilities and activities for their particular age group, overall quality of life and how safe they felt, although not in relation to litter and the perceptions other residents have of young people.

It is clear that the Strategy Groups established and coordinated by the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team have resulted in highly effective and successful local partnership working. Indeed the work of the Green Space Strategy Group is identified as a best practice model for more effective working by agencies at a neighbourhood level, which has been endorsed by a range of stakeholders as a way of working that they would like to see more widely implemented across Plymouth. There are clearly wider lessons beyond Efford that can be learnt from these successes.

There is widespread recognition of the critical role the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team have played in supporting both the work of the HECF and the work of each Strategy Group, from initial establishment, ideas generation, organising and coordination and administration through to

project implementation. The model adopted of a designated officer from the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team with responsibility for Efford appears to have worked particularly well. This approach would appear to be a streamlined and cost effective way of achieving a very high level of coordination of different service providers at a neighbourhood level and significant gains in terms of improved service provision and levels of community engagement.

There have been a number of key successes identified in relation to the HECP, which was established to help deliver the BCI Programme and maximise engagement of residents. These include:

- Achieving the active participation of a number of residents;
- Strengthening of local partnership working;
- An impact on changing attitudes and aspirations of residents;
- Improved community cohesion; and
- Becoming a widely recognised as a viable community organisation.

However, it is also clear that there are a number of challenges and issues the HECP need to address if improvements that have been made within Efford are to be sustained in the future. These include:

- Ensuring all local interests are represented;
- Increasing the profile of the HECP amongst residents;
- Overcoming barriers to greater resident involvement;
- The need to operate without the support of the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team;
- Improving communications with Efford residents; and
- The need for a higher profile within Plymouth.

There are also clear challenges in relation to ensuring adequate resources are accessed in the future, in order to underpin continuing improvements within Efford. A number of concerns have been raised over the short term nature of the BCI programme, particularly in relation to initiatives aimed at young people. It is pointed out that programmes of activity will need to be sustained if beneficial outcomes achieved to date are to be maximised.

“I think the people in Efford have always been trying to get their area improved, but there has been nothing coming back from the Council...Now they have had quite a lot come back and the project (BCI) has been quite successful in meeting its aims.”





Efford Building Communities Initiative
Published by Plymouth City Council
Date: February 2010

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