

re'new



Middleton Regeneration Partnership Board work review 2010/11

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January 2011

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1. Introduction

The work to date in Middleton has been delivering continuing and real improvements by bringing together the efforts of local community organisations, ward councillors, area management and the various key service agencies serving the locality.

2. Background

re'new was commissioned to further develop a comprehensive approach to partnership development and community engagement in Middleton. Building on work already in place in the area, re'new has helped to;

- co-ordinate **local responses** to the key issues of concern to residents around, crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental conditions
- combine **better direction** of service agency resources with actions and activities
- deliver activities and actions intended to **raise levels of community engagement, participation, community pride and confidence.**
- Promote the **strengths of Middleton** as a community through **active publicity and marketing in the media.**

This report describes the achievements to date.

3. Summary of key achievements (see full report attached)

- Creation of the **'Middleton Community Network'** – a model for local people to be engaged in local activities in a way that suits them.
- Successful development of the Middleton Regeneration Partnership Board (MRPB) including the introduction of both **Community and Tenant Board representatives.**
- Developed the **confidence of local people** through enabling them to participate in local activities and the work of the MRPB, and boosting residents confidence in their community.
- **Middleton Bright Ideas** – A very successful project which demonstrated how local communities can **influence** the way that local budgets can be spent and allocated.
- Developing the governance, **skills and confidence of community members** involved with the Middleton Community Group in partnership with Aire Valley Homes and Leeds Ahead and funded by the Area Committee.
- Development of **Community Action projects**, including a volunteer planting day, and the production of a **'Proud to be Middleton'** community calendar and **Community Banners.**
- Christmas events funded jointly by the Area Committee, ASDA and Sainsbury's including a **community Christmas tree and carol concert** in partnership with local schools.
- Setting **SMART outcomes** agreed by the **partnership** to be targeted in the locality during 2011 and beyond (priorities plan attached).
- **Attracting sponsorship and donations** from both ASDA, Sainsbury's and other agencies to support community engagement activity.



4. Acknowledgments

re'new's work in Middleton is valued within the community and this is reflected in feedback from some of its board members:

"The partnership has allowed me to build links with other individuals overseeing work in the Middleton area to work together to jointly develop pieces of work that has had a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals living in the local community. Over the recent year links made through the regeneration board has resulted in a local work programme to promote the key change 4 life messages locally and a work programme that has aimed to improve the emotional health and well-being of the local community. Personally the regeneration board has been valuable in order to obtain information about the local area and work planned by others over the coming months"

Joanne Davies, NHS Leeds

"MRP has provided a structure and focus that enables actions to be delivered"

"I think the benefits of the board are that it brings key agencies together for the benefit of the whole community.

By working together I have gained an insight into the roles and responsibilities of other partners. I am better equipped in knowing who to contact if I have a family or other professional seeking help or advice.

Joanne Hainsworth, Middleton Extended Services

By stepping out of our silos and having shared goals, the joined up work that we all do promotes better community cohesion and ultimately happier residents.

Gerry Shevlin, Leeds Community Safety Partnership

5. The main activities (summarised on page1) and achievements of re'new's work during the current year include:

- Continued development of the Middleton Regeneration Partnership Board (MRPB) including the introduction of both **community and tenant Board representatives** and closer working with Leisure and Health services in the area.
- **Publicising the work of the Partnership** through traders, newsletters, websites and by attending other events in order to promote our activities, including the production of posters that have been developed to show community work to date.
- Continued development of the **Partnership website** as a means for giving up to date information to agencies and the local community about what is going on in Middleton.
- Development of **community action projects**, including a **volunteer day**, where local residents were involved in shaping a community planting project and planning the future maintenance of the area by residents. Also the production of a '**Proud to be Middleton' community calendar**.
- Middleton now has a committed group of 6 **volunteers**, including 3 young people. Work to link these volunteers into a wider volunteer programme is to be developed in 2011/12
- **Refreshing** the priorities of the Middleton Regeneration Partnership for 2010/11. This will inform the way forward for the Partnership for 2011/12.
- Developing a **focused and manageable set of SMART outcomes** agreed by the partnership locally, to be targeted during 2011 and beyond, along with monitoring success and achievements quarterly.
- **Strengthening the Partnership** and attracting new committed members, like Leisure Services and local community representatives
- **Attracting sponsorship and donations** from ASDA, Sainsbury's and other agencies to support community engagement activity, for example ASDA (Banners and Community Calendar project) and Sainsbury's (Christmas and summer events)
- **Conclusion of the banners project** – a contribution to raising involvement, aspirations and a sense of community pride. This project was developed in conjunction with the local community and ASDA to promote community pride.



6. Ongoing projects 2011/2012

- **Development of a Traders Forum.** This work is in its early stages, although discussions have taken place with Traders in the area about the potential of having a trader's forum, which will support both the community group and the MRPB.
- Creating a '**Middleton Community Network**' to enable local people to become involved in a way that suits them and to receive information about what is happening locally through a variety of means including email, text, through the website or by attending a community group meeting in the area in which they live. Then to promote it within the community and to agencies working in Middleton. Some 40 members have signed up to the network (a breakdown on profiles is available). The network is still under development and needs further developmental work in 2011, in terms of widening its membership through various sources, and making links to other activities such as participatory budgeting.
- **Participatory Budgeting** – building upon the existing model in Middleton to increase opportunities for local communities to be engaged in local decision making on how budgets are spent locally.
- **Middleton Gala**, 2011 will see the first Gala in Middleton, with the aim of making this event a community led project in the future.
- Increase the number of **volunteers** willing to partake in local community initiatives
- Exploring the scope for a **community business/enterprise** to undertake environmental maintenance; this will link in with the work of the new Enterprise Centre during 2011/12.



7. Joint Initiatives started 2010/11

- Working with Aire Valley Homes (AVH) to develop an **environmental improvement programme** for the Sissons Road area in Middleton, which will be closely linked to an **Intensive Housing Support package** developed by re'new (Archway) and AVH. It is hoped that this intensive programme will be rolled out across the whole community in a phased approach to tackling some of the issues of concern to the local community.

- Christmas events including a **community Christmas tree and carol concert** in partnership with local schools with financial Support from ASDA. Over 100 people including 80 young people (working with Extended Services) from three local primary schools attended this event which demonstrated a **real sense of pride in the community** from residents.
- **Developing the governance, skills and confidence of community members** involved with the Middleton Community Group. In conjunction with Area Committee funded business support from Leeds Ahead, the Middleton Community Group are beginning to develop their skills and confidence in order to fully participate in the work of the MRPB. There is also a community representative working with us at Board level. Training is provided by Aire Valley Homes (AVH) as identified by the group. Governance of the group is managed by AVH and will continue to be managed this way.

- **Middleton Bright Ideas** – this very successful project led by Area Management, demonstrated how local communities can influence the way that local budgets can be spent and allocated. This is a **key area** for further development in the light of locality working, **strengthening local leadership and maximising the use of local intelligence** in the neighbourhood.



- **Supporting, encouraging and facilitating joint service approaches;** for example in Health, Extended Services, Youth activities (The Hub), and Middleton Leisure Centre.

8. Number of people involved and engaged

There are approximately 1,534 people living in 581 households within the Middleton Regeneration boundary who have had the opportunity to be engaged in various activities over the past year. The population of the area is predominantly white British, although there has been a change to this profile over the past couple of years resulting in an increase of the number of non-white British residents getting involved in activities and groups in the area.

At recent events such as the Bright Ideas event and Christmas concerts **over 100 local community members were engaged in local activities**, demonstrating an increase in community pride and confidence in the area as a whole.

However, when people are asked to give details (names, addresses etc) and asked to become part of a more 'formal' community network, much smaller numbers were found to be willing to participate. (See details provided of numbers 'signed' up to the network to date). Work to develop the network started in late October 2010 and is one of the main areas for development in 2011/12.

Middleton Community Group has also seen a significant increase in both the numbers of people regularly attending their forum meetings, as well as an increase in interest in becoming formal members of the group/committee. There are now regularly over 30 people in attendance at each meeting. Intensive support packages are being developed to increase confidence and improve the capacity of the committee to take a lead role within the community.

9. Publicity and marketing

Appropriate and timely publicity material has been produced during the project, copies of which are attached for information. Attendance at other events has been a key part of this work in order to raise the profile of our work in the area. Newsletters have also been important as a way to get information out into the community as well information posted to the website. A community calendar was produced with the theme of 'proud to be Middleton' whereby a collection of pictures taken at various Middleton events were collated to produce a collage of images to demonstrate community pride and community confidence in Middleton.

10. Issues faced and how they were overcome

Resources – The lack of inward investment, both capital and revenue to support project activities has impacted upon the speed at which some projects have been developed. Having forged good working relationships with various agencies and private businesses, we have been able to overcome some of these issues by seeking and receiving donations and sponsorship in monetary value, as well as in officer time and materials for events.

Stalling of the housing market and the credit crunch – This has affected the speed at which the Affordable Housing plan for Middleton can be developed. Through refreshing the housing market assessment for the area, and exploring alternative methods for dealing with the situation to maximise opportunities to maintain capital investment in our housing stock, it is hoped this can be overcome over the coming year.

Middleton's reputation – There has been negative publicity about Middleton in that past especially in the press. Producing positive news stories in the media and on our website and locally in shops etc has contributed to an overall increase in community pride in Middleton and its neighbouring communities. Developing local community-based projects, like the community banners, also creates a feeling of pride and belonging to the community and others around it.

Instability on Sissons Road – As a result of the economic and housing market downturn and the withdrawal of funding to demolish the properties on Sissons Road, various social issues in the area were becoming a cause for concern. Local people were disappointed with the area and the way it looked in particular the

environment and green spaces. By working closely with Aire Valley Homes, a project was put together to tackle the environmental issues that people were concerned about, and to offer an intensive package of housing support for issues such as debt, repairs, benefit take up etc. The overall aim of this is to improve living conditions for those people living in an area with a long-term plan of demolition and increase stability.

Community Engagement – Over the past 4 years there has been an increase in the numbers of people becoming actively engaged in the work of the Partnership. To avoid losing the momentum, confidence and willingness of local people we need to continue to build upon this approach in 2011/12 with further encouragement for local people to engage in local activities and budget setting.