



Site Visits

Liverpool Learning Exchange Seminar 17th March 2009

On the morning of 17th March, there will be an opportunity to visit the projects and discuss the initiatives with members of staff involved. The Alt Valley Neighbourhood Manager (Geoff Jackson) will be present and he will be able to provide an overview of the area and its challenges and opportunities. At the time of writing, Geoff is seeking support from other partners such as Merseyside Police who we hope will be able to give their perspective on the area.

Background to Alt Valley

There are 5 neighbourhood management areas in Liverpool, Alt Valley is in the North of the city. It has a population of 90,000 and covers wards of Croxteth, Clubmoor, County, Warbreck, Fazakerley and Norris Green. There are significant pockets of deprivation and poverty across the neighbourhood. This is illustrated through issues such as:

- High levels of illiteracy and innumeracy
- Worklessness and chaotic lifestyles
- Antisocial behaviour
- Poor health (often related to lifestyles)
- Substandard housing
- Areas of dereliction
- Presence of gangs who have access to guns and knives in parts of the area

A great deal of progress has been made and work is ongoing to address these issues. This has been developed through a strong ethos of partnership working involving public sector agencies, businesses and a growing community/voluntary sector. The area has also benefited from significant public funding through initiatives such as Objective 1. Examples of positive improvements include:

- New primary and secondary schools (with the potential for further development through the building schools for the future programme)
- New business park and infrastructure improvements to established industrial areas
- Improved community facilities
- Housing stock transfer and development of refurbishment programmes
- Housing redevelopment

The case studies illustrate how community and public organisations are responding to the challenges in the area

Integrated Work and Training Centre

This is a new facility on Stonebridge Business Park. The unit has been acquired by the Neighbourhood Services Partnership (NSP) – a local social enterprise. The intention is to provide alternative education for young people who may have been excluded from school and would struggle to engage with main stream education.

The partnership has a strong track record in developing initiatives to address local training and employment needs. For example, in recent years, NSP has established a further educational facility (Croxteth Communiversity) and a vocational training centre for 13 – 19 year olds (Alt Valley Skills Centre). Initially NSP was reliant on grant assistance but is now competing successfully for procurement contracts.

The new facility will provide training in a range of construction skills for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Some of these may have been associated with gangs or are at risk of being involved in gangs. As indicated above many will not have the discipline to attend and remain within other public or community provision. The programme will provide opportunities to gain qualifications and practical work experience. Some of this experience will be through the construction contracts being secured by the social enterprise schemes.

Making WAVES (Witness and Victim Encouragement and Support)

Witness intimidation can have devastating effects on the physical and psychological well being of victims and their families. It can also prevent individuals from reporting crime and cause people to retract once they are involved in the criminal justice process. To reduce witness intimidation and encourage victims and witnesses to report crime and give evidence, the Making WAVES project has been set up in Alt Valley. This project aims to bring all the relevant agencies together to support intimidated victims and witnesses and reduce crime and intimidation in the area. The full extent of this problem became apparent following the murder of Rhys Jones in 2007. As a result, community representatives and major agencies felt something needed to be done to address this problem and ensure perpetrators were brought to justice. The initiative was developed by Cobalt Housing who are a major landlord in the Croxteth area. It is also supported by the City Council, Merseyside Police and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. Both the police and fire service have seconded officers to Cobalt to work on the initiative. Its ongoing development will allow witnesses to provide evidence without fear of reprisals.