

# **Worcestershire Areas of High Need Programme Review**

**June 2011**



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## Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report has been resourced via the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Programme via the assigned Place Adviser to Worcestershire Partnership (WP). Its purpose is to advise the WP on
- Progress of delivery
  - Prospects for success
  - Sustainability
  - Return on investment (ROI)
- There are 6 recommendations included on pages 18 - 21, below.
- 1.2 The AoHN initiative is an ambitious programme and in some areas will need time to embed. The lessons from previous such programmes would indicate that the level of funding assigned to each locality is fit for purpose to establish and sustain change, even taking into account the 20% cut brought on by pressure on public funding. This financial pressure has also led to appropriate demands to identify ROI coupled with local concern regarding future funding cuts.
- 1.3 The positive development being achieved across the projects exceeds the recommendations for improvement and sustainability within this review. In other words the 'cup is half full'. Progress is in line with previous area based initiatives, as are the barriers to further development and sustainability. Examples of positive achievement are outlined in paragraph 3.9 below.
- 1.4 Following individual and group consultation with AoHN co-ordinators, along with a development workshop, it was identified and agreed that an appropriate definition of sustainability was "***Changing the approach and practice in localities by mainstream providers***". A number of indicators of sustained change were also identified (see paragraph 4.2). Mainstream change is the prime means by which ROI would be realised. Some areas are also developing social investment organisations as a mechanism for sustained delivery.
- 1.5 Real and quantifiable ROI can be achieved through partners taking a multi-agency approach, with AoHN coordinators fulfilling a facilitative role. A clear local example is the Worcestershire Family Intervention Project in dealing with families with complex needs. The benefits will include savings through a customer centred coordinated approach, future savings through early intervention, and sustained impact through mainstream change.
- 1.6 Some initiatives are more developed than others, but there are several barriers to achieving ROI that need addressing in some, or all of the areas. These include
- Need for clarity of a coordinator's principle role as facilitators for local change and not simply running local projects.
  - The involvement and engagement of local district partnerships in a learning and development process that can track direction of travel towards desired outcomes.
  - The lack of clear and sustainable outcomes that will demonstrate a local culture change to achieve ROI.
  - A perceived loss of confidence between the WP and local initiatives.
  - The need to adopt an analytical process to share and replicate the good practice that is emerging via AoHN.

- 1.7 Even though mainstream change should be the common factor in all initiatives, the different approaches taken by each area should shape expectations. The two schemes building on previously established programmes (that is, in Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest) should be in a more established position to demonstrate mainstream change than the four programmes established via AoHN. There is some evidence in the newer initiatives of 'reverse mainstreaming', that is, services now being funded through AoHN that were previously paid for by other providers.
- 1.8 Irrespective of history and nature of approach, all programmes should be looking to demonstrate causal links between spend and desired outcomes in terms of rationale and the feasibility of their approach. Additionally all programmes should be looking to demonstrate ROI through influence of mainstream services, especially in terms of being a catalyst for positive change at a neighbourhood level. Strategic linkage to wider strategies (eg health and well being) is also essential for enabling partnership working and enabling influence.
- 1.9 Accordingly this report recommends the introduction of a Learning and Development process conducted by local district partnerships. This framework is based on previous neighbourhood programmes and is available separately. It will seek to analyse
- **Rationale:** feasibility of approach to justify spend
  - **Outcomes:** progress against desired long term achievements
  - **Process:** progress against enabling factors for locality working
  - **Sustainability:** impact on mainstream local delivery as a ROI
- 1.10 In order to enable ROI through mainstreaming, this report also recommends that the role of WP develops in relation to the local initiatives in terms of
- **Influence:** providing strategic influence to WP members' respective services to encourage local liaison managerially and operationally in the respective areas of high need
  - **Support:** following good practice from similar partnership initiatives in other localities, members of the WP 'adopt' areas as 'champions' to increase direct communication, support and challenge.
- 1.11 Evaluations relating to previous area-based initiatives highlight that really pertinent financial issues for local people can be put secondary to the cleaner, safer, greener agenda. This report recommends consideration of financially related issues such as debt, doorstep lenders, poverty, worklessness (especially amongst young people), etc. This report also encourages consideration of how health barriers to work (eg mental health) might be reduced through funding made available for health related issues. Clear links to the developing WP Financial Inclusion Strategy is also critical.

## Introduction

- 2.1 In the Autumn of 2008, the Worcestershire Partnership Management Group identified areas of multiple deprivation, mainly driven by low income, employment, education and skills and poor health and agreed a need for a partnership approach to tackling these issues in the areas of highest need. The purpose was to deliver positive outcomes for residents most in need via district Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).
- 2.2 £3 million reward grant funding allocated to district LSPs (£500,000 each over five years from March 2010). In April 2009, the AoHN Task Group established early proposals identifying the areas to focus on, along with the kind of activities that could be delivered. The WP was deliberately non-prescriptive about the approach taken by each district LSP. This was later cut by 20% due to public financial pressures.
- 2.3 This approach is evidence based via neighbourhood programmes rolled out on a national basis, and endorsed by research, such as stated by the Young Foundation

*“Neighbourhood management and other partnerships that bring together local people and mainstream service providers to agree on how to improve services have proved to be an effective way of tackling problems and reshaping how mainstream resources are directed to local needs.”*

- 2.4 The geographical areas and issues were identified as
- **Bromsgrove** – *focus on Charford and Sidemoor, some activity in a wider area: community engagement; formal/informal learning via Learning Ambassadors; Positive outcomes for health and employment.*
  - **Malvern Hills** – *Pickersleigh ward: physical environment; ‘liveability’ and crime and anti-social behaviour; worklessness and poor health; housing and job market; community empowerment.*
  - **Redditch** – *Winyates ward: capital investment – environmental and security enhancements; community engagement; neighbourhood development manager; urban Tracks and health improvement.*
  - **Worcester City** – *parts of Warndon, Gorse Hill and Rainbow Hill: neighbourhood coordinator; environmental cleanliness social enterprise scheme; tackling worklessness.*
  - **Wychavon** – *Bengeworth, Evesham North and South, plus rural wards of Badsey, Broadway and Wickhamford, Harvington and Norton: fuel poverty – advice and capital element; skills – budget management, life skills, volunteering; health improvement – alcohol, obesity and smoking.*
  - **Wyre Forest** – *Rifle Range & Horsefair (Kidderminster) and Walshes (Stourport): neighbourhood interventions, offering community development support and pump-priming; financial exclusion, including worklessness and fuel poverty; young advisors; basic skills training and development.*

- 2.5 Early proposals were shared with WP theme groups in summer 2009, which highlighted:
- the need for more engagement from the voluntary and community sector
  - that links to existing initiatives that could be built on or expanded
  - opportunities to deliver activity differently should be explored (for example avoiding duplication across the county)
  - proposals needed further development in response to feedback, especially with regard to having an evidenced based approach.
- 2.6 A development workshop was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 when plans were further enhanced, (*right issues, right people, right areas, right reasons?*). Further insights and advisory support was provided from members of the Shenstone Group, which particularly enabled greater communication and understanding of relative perspectives. Support was also provided via the national Local Improvement Programme (except to Wyre Forest, who declined the offer).
- 2.7 Emerging issues from that workshop, some of which are still outstanding and tackled within this report, included
- Developing an evidence based approach
  - Performance management via a Learning and Development Framework
  - Ongoing review and evaluation
  - Engagement of elected members
  - Community engagement
  - Embedding best practice in terms of process from other locality approaches.
- 2.8 The AoHN initiative is an ambitious programme, especially when put in the context of area-based initiatives previously funded via Communities and Local Government such as the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder programme, the Neighbourhood Element and Connecting Communities. Nonetheless, the lessons from those programmes would indicate that the level of funding assigned to each locality is fit for purpose to establish and sustain change, even taking into account the 20% cut brought on by pressure on public funding.
- 2.9 The positive development being achieved across the projects exceeds the recommendations for improvement and sustainability within this review. In other words the 'cup is half full'. Progress is in line with previous area based initiatives, as are the barriers to further development and sustainability. Examples of positive achievement are outlined in paragraph 3.9 below.
- 2.10 In terms of support, it also should be noted that the projects have received something in the region of 40 specific support days in various means via the NRCCE training and support programme and the national Local Improvement Adviser programme. Further generic support has been provided via the WMRIEP Place Adviser programme. This level of support equates well compared to the support given to previous government funded neighbourhood based programmes. Some areas have received more support than others in line with their own identified need or otherwise.

2.11 The **methodology** followed in the development of this report has been

- Agree time allowance with lead officers in WP and WMRIEP.
- Ongoing liaison with lead officers.
- Identify key issue via individual conversations with AOHN co-ordinators.
- Conduct guided interviews with local coordinators to identify priorities for spend, mainstream influence, future plans and good practice.
- Conduct workshop to enable discussion around emerging issues, and define 'sustainability' and the changes needed to achieve it.
- Documentary analysis (quarterly monitoring, provided plans and strategies).
- Consultation with NRCCE consultant.
- Production of report including findings and recommendations.
- Presentation of report to the WP, and clarification on identified issues.
- Inclusion of issues relating to Vestia work plan (for Wyre Forest).

2.12 This report has used the quarterly monitoring reports as a source of evidence, but not duplicated the evidence related to progress and barriers as included within them.

## Local area consultations

3.1 The summary feedback from the individual interviews demonstrates the variety of approach enabled through the flexibility given to local areas, and the potential for learning from the programme as a whole from a WP perspective.

3.2 *In broad terms, what has been your financial expenditure been spent on?*

- Capital
- Communication and marketing
- Projects
- Salaries
- Small grants pot, Quick wins, etc
- Theme priority focus
- Training

3.3 *Where can you see any added value in terms of resources and funding?*

- Bringing a sharper focus to key issues.
- Funding from partners invested (built on recognition of common outcomes).
- Insight from communities (surveys, consultation, engagement, influence, etc).
- Introducing mechanisms such as participatory budgeting.
- Matching time and resources from partners and volunteers.
- Meeting identified needs of communities (eg environment, grants pot, etc).

3.4 *Can you identify any culture or attitude changes that indicate that partners in areas of high need are operating differently as a result of your initiative?*

- Building strong ongoing working relationships between people.
- Increased sharing of information.
- Journey from competitive towards collaboration.
- Softening of attitudes that tend towards a silo mentality.

3.5 *What are your future expenditure plans and how will AoHN funding contribute to this?*

- Continuing commitments.
- Working with partners where there may be investment (eg Health, NEETs, etc).

3.6 *How do you see this initiative being sustained, if at all and what mechanisms have you got for doing that?*

- Accredited learning
- Agreed action plans built on evidence, consultation and engagement
- Arms length mechanisms for the council
- Development of Social Enterprises
- Formal bodies (eg Worcester Community Trust, EPIC, Vestia)
- Local community 'businesses'
- Practice change in the way providers work and interact with the community
- Volunteering, student placements

### 3.7 What kind of future support would be most valuable in terms of delivery or sustainability?

- Continued 'buy in' from partners
- Funding!!
- Policy change
- Training / working with people to change the habitual way of working

3.8 An 'appreciative inquiry' approach was used to identify good practice. The questions below are used to tease out stories of success – and also enable an analysis of why something was a success in order to enhance the possibility of it being replicated in another location. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the associated Learning and Development Framework.

3.9 This summary of success stories demonstrates the range of learning that is emerging across the areas, and value of seeing the AoHN in its widest perspective. Using a positive analytical process will enable coordinators to highlight many of the other positive achievement, and assist their fellow coordinators in replicating appropriate good practice.

- **Return on Investment:** The development of a new structure in *Bromsgrove* has enabled the re-building of a community hub following the demise of the previous structure. The keys to success included cross party political support, partnership brokering through strengthening relationships and the development of a funding strategy – without sustainability is not possible. The need to demonstrate social return on investment is recognised and being gathered. The accumulated wisdom of an advisory team was also vital. There were realistic expectations, but driven with passion.
- **Evidence based approach:** A "fit for life" project via a children's centre has been delivered to 11 families in *Malvern Hills* who have been difficult to engage with previously. Keys to success include using an evidence base to target families, a partnership approach using experts and enabling people to identify and achieve their own personal targets. Completion has led to raised confidence, increased knowledge and take up of local services and facilities, and a desire to offer peer support as well as impacting on a range of health and social issues.
- **Partnership working:** The development of some cookery books in the *Redditch* project has enabled a wide-ranging 'whole system' look at interlinked issues. Partners began to identify where they linked in, were willing to work together and recognised how complementary working brought added value. The key was enabling people to see the big picture via an inclusive approach. The end result will be greater than the production of a cookery book – it will be lessons learned in working together that opens people's eyes to future possibilities.
- **Relationship development:** An environmental programme leading to the planting of 20 trees and 700 bulbs in *Worcester City* engaged over 100 people. Reasons for success included the positive attitude of partners (especially the police and housing), the support from voluntary organisations, and the positive basis formed via the 'man in a van'. Working together in this way has developed relationships for future projects as well as impacting on issues that are caused by a chaotic environment (eg ASB, drug taking etc).

- **Community engagement:** The development of a community researched survey in *Wychavon*, achieved a 33% response rate. Researchers were trained by an expert consultancy (MEL Research), so that the capacity remains within the communities. The process was enabled by strong community and partner buy in and has led to an increase in confidence through the face to face interaction with partners and community members. The support of democratic structure at County, District and Parish level all significant.
- **Community led:** The development of a local park was driven by a local 'friends of' group, chaired by a committed resident in *Wyre Forest*. The keys to success included the recognition of the skills of a resident who would not initially appear the "chair" type. The initiative was developed by the community in a non-confrontational 'can do' manner – and is community owned and maintained. The confidence of residents has been raised through their achievement. The legacy is hopefully beyond the park via a toolkit and expertise to share.

- 3.10 The outcomes upon which the emerging success measures will be linked for each of the areas are as follows. Consideration should be given separately to the four newly formed projects (Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester City and Wychavon) compared with the two more established programmes (Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest).
- 3.11 The former group should be looking to demonstrate rationale and feasibility of approach in terms of value. Sustained outcomes at this stage of the programme are unlikely. However having clarity around the coordinator's role as a catalyst of positive change is essential to ensure a direction of travel that will give a return on investment.
- 3.12 The latter group need to be able to demonstrate the added value provided by AoHN, that is, what is being achieved that would not be possible without the additional funding. It's particularly important for the more established and wider funded programmes to be able to demonstrate a causal link between AoHN spend and mainstream change.
- 3.13 However, it is fair to say that all areas showed some concern over the issue of sustainability, hence their desire to investigate it. Consultation also identified the role of local coordinators ranges from managing substantial local enterprises to running relatively small local projects. The aspect that all have in common, that is being a catalyst for positive change locally, is not universally recognised and needs clarification.
- 3.14 All the initiatives have sought, appropriately, to expand their original outcomes (paragraph 2.4 above) in the light of emerging evidence and need. As identified below, Wyre Forest is in the process of developing revised outcomes, which have yet to be finalised from their January workshop.

3.15 **Bromsgrove** emerged from a previous initiative, learning lessons from that organisation's difficulties, including the development of a robust business plan in order to sustain activity through income generation via a social enterprise approach. It has recently secured a further contract to support people with mental health needs. Of particular value is The Trunk, which provides a community hub. The initiative is increasingly well positioned to deliver local services. The ongoing challenge will be to evidence change in mainstream providers to enable sustained change against its outcomes, alongside the development of a self-funding social enterprise.

- To reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour by the provision of diversionary youth activities for young people aged 12-19 years not engaged in mainstream provision.
- To reduce adult re-offending rates by running a programme of learning, support and community payback opportunities and projects.
- To reduce working age population who are in receipt of out of work benefits by providing a menu of learning, training, skills acquisition and work experience opportunities.
- To deliver a programme of support and learning opportunities for 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training [NEET]
- To improve the general health and wellbeing of adults by delivering a programme of activities focused upon stop smoking services, reducing alcohol related harm and increasing participation in sporting/ physical activities.
- Reducing obesity in school aged children by delivering a programme of healthy eating and physical activity focusing upon a whole family approach to weight management and healthy eating.

3.16 **Malvern Hills** is able to demonstrate clear development after establishing a management and delivery team in the last six months, following an initial delay to the start of the project. The NRCCE project has delivered training and development for community members as representatives and champions. Three of the outcomes below are, however, perception based which is notoriously difficult to quantify. It may be valuable to add in some specific measures that are relatively easy to track (for example participants in health related projects, number of volunteers and hours, etc).

- Improving liveability, tackle crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, improve the quality of the physical environment and provide adequate access to leisure facilities for younger people.
- Improve local public services to bring services closer to people and make them more personal.
- Transform neighbourhoods, reconnect residents with the housing and job markets wherever possible.
- Empower local people. Enable local people to get involved and have a say on issues affecting their local area so that people feel a real part of their community.

3.17 **Redditch** is developing a community hub approach in order to increase access to services. This entails a large capital spend. Good practice from other initiatives indicates that a physical legacy to a project aids sustainability. NRCCE support focused on mentoring support for the coordinator. The coordinator's approach is to draw in partners and to develop relationships. However, this is particularly challenging in a location demonstrating a high level of complex and

interrelated needs. Sustained impact and ROI will not be feasible without the commitment of local partners to deal with complex community issues together. SMART targets are being developed against a baseline, which will be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

- To reduce the perceptions of Anti-Social Behaviour in the area
- To improve the health and wellbeing of residents in the target area
- To improve the skills and confidence of local residents
- To increase wider community involvement/engagement/decision making and problem solving

3.18 **Worcester City** is looking to develop especially the latter two outcomes below. They have recognised that the predominately perception based outcomes need broadening by measuring success across the four theme strands within individual projects. NRCCE support provided mentoring, looking at wider community engagement. Despite the local popularity of the 'Man in a Van' project, it has yet to be funded through mainstream resources. Although it is now extending its remit in order to engage community members on a wider basis, the case could be made that it is creating reliance rather than enabling the community to be increasingly self-reliant. There is also a lack of clarity regarding which partnership (Worcester Alliance or Worcester Community Trust) is responsible for governance, and therefore the context in which the Learning and Development Framework is best utilised.

- Theme: Live Local – to improve (and sustain) local services for local people.
- Theme: Live Safe and Clean: to target the environmental issues that impact upon lives of the residents and where they live, such as anti social behaviour, fear of crime, litter and fly tipping.
- Theme: Live, Learn and Work: to increase participation in learning across all ages to help people to gain skills and qualifications, and to be 'job' ready.
- Theme: Live Healthy - to improve the health and well being of local people.

3.19 **Wycharvon** have taken a different approach by not having a designated geographical area (which can be an enabling factor for development), but focusing on need across a wider number of areas. However, there is opportunity to focus on families with complex needs. There has been extensive community consultation that now needs to be used to help shape service delivery both through the initiative and mainstream services. Working closely with both Rooftop Housing and Children's Centres will also enable a focus on families most in need and mitigate against the lack of a clearly defined single geographical area. Each of the following outcome measures has a range of targets associated with them.

- Improved skills and confidence
- Reduced fuel poverty (improved home energy efficiency)
- Improved health
- Overall success of the project in increasing community engagement and cohesion

3.20 **Wyre Forest** is the most established programme, succeeding the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder in Oldington and Foley Park. It is seeking to align outcomes for AoHN with those funded by other streams under the auspices of the Vestia Community Trust. The emerging Vestia work plan (2011-2013) identifies the work streams that AoHN funding is supporting, but as yet there are no specific measures identified in the last 2 quarterly returns. The project is seeking to work across 3 defined geographical areas, which is ambitious unless an economy of scale, or substantial matched funding is

identified. Management and administration costs are currently higher than any other project area and there is the need for greater clarity regarding the added value of AoHN. A workshop on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2011 listed the following as priorities for the team:

- Training and work (targeted at AoHN).
- Big Society (increase volunteering, possible asset transfer in AoHN, Friends of Parks Groups).
- Community Safety (local activity, neighbourhood watches & Community Payback benefiting priority communities).
- Continued support for facilitating partnership working in Walshes, Horsefair and Rifle Range.
- Sharing knowledge gained from Total Place Total Neighbourhood Pilot.
- Seeking additional grant to support ongoing work in AoHN and community safety/wellbeing.

Although the revision of outcomes across all the initiatives is appropriate, a number of outcomes relating to mainstreaming that formed a core part of the original Wyre Forest tender document still have relevance. Those are,

- Improved outcomes from mainstream funding
- Shaping service delivery to meet local needs
- Work with partners to deliver enhanced service to tackle financial inclusion that matches the needs of residents in areas of need
- Young advisors supporting community leaders and decision makers to shape services

## 'What do we mean by Sustainability'?

4.1 At the meeting of coordinators on the 15<sup>th</sup> February, the following three aspects of sustainability were considered:

- A. Changing approach and practice in localities by mainstream providers
- B. Developing a mechanism for ongoing support and delivery in the target areas
- C. Maintaining posts

It was acknowledged that the common purpose across all areas was aspect **A**. Aspect **C** was acknowledged but thought to be an inappropriate motivation, even though there are ongoing concerns for colleagues in some areas. Other areas have, and would develop mechanisms for delivery (aspect **B**). The capacity of those engaged to deliver the projects is limited, which is also a pointer towards aspect **A** as the most appropriate definition of sustainability.

4.2 Using an Appreciative Inquiry methodology, the co-ordinators highlighted the following aspects of success regarding sustainability.

- Broken families will be receiving individual support from other community members
- There will be appropriate and fit for purpose governance
- There will be access to specialist services as required
- All the coordinators have moved on
- The community are making informed choices
- There is a community led area board enabling the assets of the area to be enhanced
- There will be a community centre hub
- There are activities available for all the community
- The community will have a voice
- Equality and diversity is recognised and built upon
- There is joined up working between public services, social enterprises and other providers
- The fruits of labours are recognised and celebrated

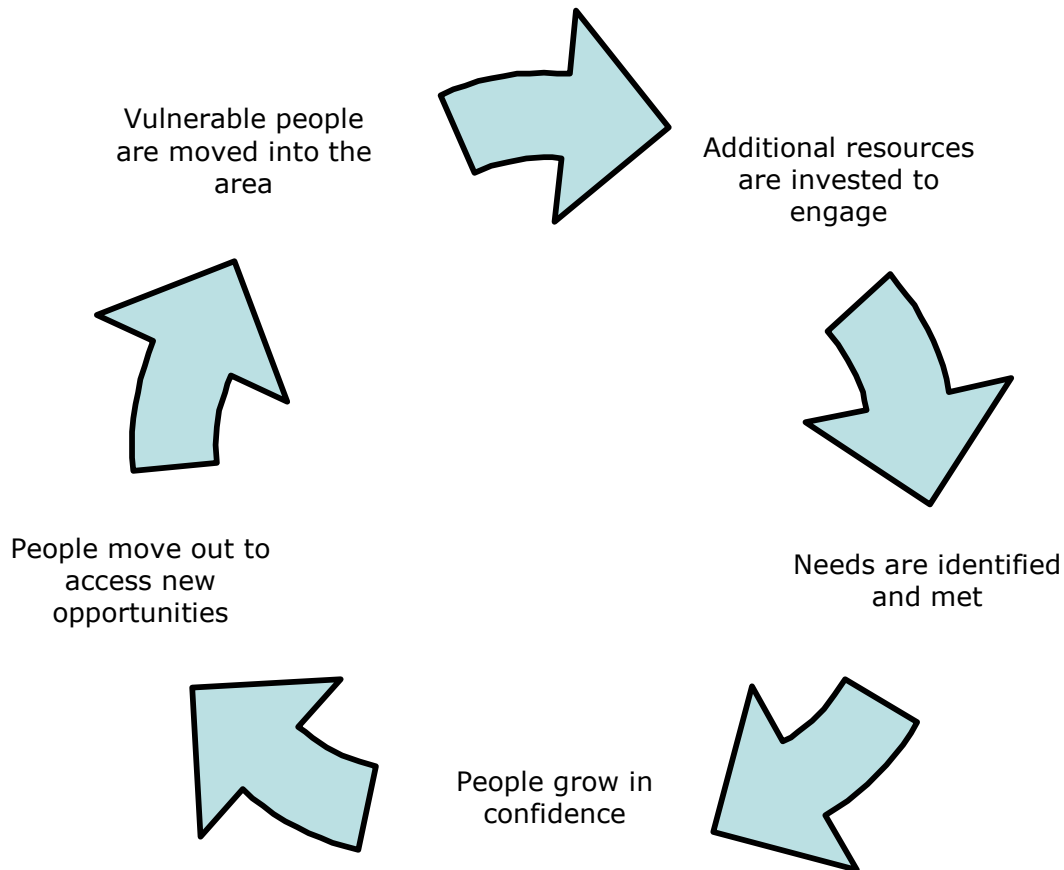
4.3 In the light of this exercise the co-ordinators identified the following changes as being necessary to achieve their vision. "Name small changes that would make the biggest difference to sustaining what we've started" (arranged alphabetically)

- Better communications
- Development of roles within the EPIC EAT group – potentially adding training and expansion of roles within the community.
- Ensuring ALL partners reflect the work of the AoHN when they are planning resources etc.
- Greater transparency
- Identification of key community residents to have a presence on decision making boards
- Implementation fee: partners need to contribute money / resources to AoHN multi-agency approach working
- More focus on a "joined up approach" in the AoHN with BDHT (Bromsgrove social housing provider) through the successful neighbourhoods working group

- Multi-agency approach: commitment from partners and communication from community to district and county LSPs
- Structure and representation between County and District LSPs

4.4 “What radical action could we take to sustain our vision?”

- The willingness of service providers to change approach and structure of existing services.
- County LSP enabling operational action in the AoHN – that is, making sure their staff liaise and approach delivery in alignment with AoHN.
- The cycle of need, which means a geographical area remains the same, is broken.



4.5 The coordinators also expressed the following, as their hopes regarding what will happen next. These are incorporated into the recommendations below.

- Build on the positives!
- Clarify communication with Worcestershire Partnership.
- Continue communication with partners, and sharing good practice.
- Further discussion and follow up of issues raised.
- More enabling / sharing activities informed by two-way communication.
- More sharing of experiences and resource of the coordinators.
- Regular informal joint working.
- Take issues back to the partnership.
- That any sustainability lessons are not lost or ignored by others, and that the sustainability of AoHN is shared by others.

**Findings and Recommendations**

## 5.1 The role of local coordinators

There is a lack of consistency, and sometimes clarity, surrounding the role of local coordinators. The AoHN investment in local areas is a very small percentage of overall public spend. Return on investment will be primarily enabled through the local initiatives acting as catalysts for positive change through increased partnership working to reduce duplication and enable the tackling of complex issues through multi-agency approaches. In order to fulfil their role as facilitators effectively, local coordinators need to be supported by their local partnership as well as the Worcestershire Partnership.

### Recommendation 1:

The facilitative role of coordinators is highlighted, and given strategic support from WP as identified below. Greater engagement with the local partnership will also enable mainstream influence and reduce the isolation of coordinators, which is apparent in some areas. The Learning and Development process, recommended below, will also enable further partnership working and ownership of local outcomes.

## 5.2 Learning and Development

Learning and Development within the context of the local partnership is essential for ROI and sustainability. This is currently absent as a process in all areas. Additionally, the responsibility for monitoring seems to lie solely with local officers rather than the wider local partnerships. Some areas report isolation from their local partnership, engagement with which is essential to influence and sustain mainstream change. The recommended Learning and Development Framework will identify growth regarding soft outcomes (that is, feasibility and good practice) alongside the hard outcomes (that is, achievements and mainstreaming). The framework can be adapted for local need as thought appropriate by the local partnership.

### Recommendation 2:

The sustainability of the AoHN projects will be enhanced by the use of the provided Learning and Development Framework. It is recommended that the framework be used by the local partnership on a six monthly basis (beginning September 2011) as a learning and development tool (following a workshop on usage). This framework seeks to capture

- The feasibility of approach (that is the rationale behind activity)
- Outcomes achieved
- The embedding of good practice in locality working
- Mainstream influence and change

This process also captures the short-listing criteria for the Health Strand funding, namely

- Link to targets
- Community support
- Local need
- Partnership organisation support
- Evidence of effectiveness

- Measurable outcomes
- Sustainability
- Value for money
- Focussed on 'health hotspot'

The framework also includes case studies relating to

- Childwall Valley (Liverpool) neighbourhood financial inclusion approach.
- The Worcestershire Family Intervention Project has sought to quantify the value of early intervention.
- The Walsall Area Managers have enabled simple solutions to complex problems through multi-agency working.
- Kings Norton Extended Services alignment with the Common Assessment Framework process.

### 5.3 Financial monitoring

The pressure on public finance is placing high demands on accountability for use of public funds, including the assigned funds for this initiative. There is currently a lack of clarity with regard to local spend, and the added value that the funding is realising. The requests for greater detail on spend in prone to raise fear amongst projects that further cuts may yet be applied<sup>1</sup>. However, the central issues are more in relation to confidence, communication and the need for greater accountability in a climate of increased pressure.

#### **Recommendation 3:**

The financial monitoring methodology is adapted to make sure that detailed spend and spending plans are fed back to the Worcestershire Partnership in order to maintain confidence in the value of this initiative. Additionally, capturing of added value through matched or aligned resources, alongside detailing possible savings for the public purse due to partnership working and early intervention, would increase confidence in the value of the local projects. Support from central research and intelligence would enable a common and comparable approach. Monitoring should include:

- detailed spend
- detailed spending plans
- added value via aligned resources and change of practice
- potential savings for the public purse due to increased partnership working and early intervention.

It is also recommended Improvement Plans from the Learning and Development process are used as a mechanism for reporting progress, especially with regard to rationale behind spend.

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<sup>1</sup> The WP on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2011 expressed clear commitment to the continued funding of this programme.

#### 5.4 Strategic Support from the Worcestershire Partnership

In order to encourage and sustain local change, strategic support is needed from the Worcestershire Partnership members. Increased links between the WP and local projects will also increase communication and confidence within the programme as a whole. This will particularly impact on sustainability as defined above “Changing approach and practice in localities by mainstream providers”, and be a means by which return on investment is realised through a more holistic approach to supporting vulnerable areas.

##### **Recommendation 4:**

In order to enable sustainability, this report recommends that the support to local initiatives can be effectively expressed through providing strategic **influence** to encourage local liaison managerially and operationally in the respective areas of high need, and providing **support** to individual areas through individual WP members ‘adopting’ an area in order to increase direct communication between the local project and the WP<sup>2</sup>. This builds on good practice from other locations with similar initiatives, as well as the previous links to the projects via the Shenstone Group.

#### 5.5 Excellent practice needs analysis and replication

The different projects each have a story to tell (see 3.9 above). These stories were developed using the methodology and analysis as detailed in the associated Learning and Development Framework. Although there is the opportunity to share stories within the context of the coordinators’ meeting, as well as via monitoring and reporting processes, there is a lack of analysis as to the critical factors behind the success in order to enable replication. Such analysis would also enable the wider Worcestershire Partnership aspect of this initiative to be appropriately recognised (ie a countywide initiative being delivered via local partners at a neighbourhood level).

##### **Recommendation 5:**

In order to enable analysis and replication of good practice, this report recommends that coordinators’ meetings give the opportunity to share positive stories using an ‘appreciative inquiry’ framework as in the associated Learning and Development Framework. This also captures the coordinators’ recognition of the value of an action learning approach. Consideration could then be given as to how lessons learnt can be replicated in other AoHN areas and across other neighbourhoods with Worcestershire. Coordinators also expressed the value of learning from practice outside of Worcestershire.

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<sup>2</sup> The WP on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2011 began the process of appointing champions to each area to increase support, communication and challenge.

## 5.6 Local financial need

There is a danger, as is highlighted in evaluations of previous local initiatives, that the pertinent financial issues for local people are put secondary to the cleaner, safer, greener agenda. The current economic climate demands a priority on financially related issues such as debt, doorstep lenders, poverty, worklessness (especially amongst young people), etc. Opportunity is also provided through the additional health strand resources to examine health related barriers that cause poverty. The May 2011 Worcestershire Family Intervention Project newsletter highlighted that for over 50% of its beneficiaries, mental health is an issue.

### **Recommendation 6:**

There is a re-examination of the outcomes for the areas (where appropriate) in order to support financial inclusive issues. Information is gathered with regard to other neighbourhood issues in order to replicate what's worked elsewhere. An example is included in the associated Learning and Development Framework, but there are other more local initiatives that could be investigated. The scope of the funding for the health strand is investigated with regard to links to financial exclusion. The implications of the developing WP Financial Inclusion Strategy need local assessment to identify mechanisms to enable delivery.

**Appendix: Coordinators' comments on draft findings (March 25th workshop).****Excellent practice needs rolling out**

- Agreed that there is value in the organic capture of good practice.
- Action Learning is more than the quarterly monitoring
- What can be learnt from other initiatives outside of Worcestershire? (*link to recommendation 3*)
- Does it need to be formal? (*no, but analytical?*)

**The process of area based working needs monitoring against critical success factors**

- Do we measure process (via community consultation?)?
- Success factors would include
  - Identifying the area of need
  - Developing partnerships – how and who
  - Community engagement

**Added value needs quantifying as part of developing a sustainable approach**

- How can the cost of non-intervention be estimated?
- Is there a standard way of calculating? We need a tool to use.
- Can central support be provided for this (*economy of scale*)?
- The difference between "Added value" and "value for money" needs to be recognised.
- What will change if waste is identified in the system?
- What will change if early intervention is demonstrated as cost effective?
- Central support re governance and structure to enable access to commissioning opportunities (eg Connections to Opportunities programme)
- A tool is needed to track soft outcomes (eg perception changes about ASB)
- Added value lies in
  - Volunteer resident engagement
  - Equipment lent out
  - Skills and confidence development
  - Partnership working

**There is a two-way lack of confidence over funding issues**

- There is a need to develop relationships between the Board and the projects
- Board members could use their strategic influence to enable change at a project level, and thus accelerate success
- Opportunity for AoHN coordinators to feedback, supporting the Policy Officer's role.
- There's a need to clarify communication and the reporting process with the Worcestershire Partnership, District LSPs and AoHN projects.
- There's the need to build in a two-way challenge to drive improvement
- The focus must be on outcomes

**Local need is changing in the current economic context**

- None of the groups recorded comments on this issue.