Appendix A

Community First Community PLAN in Soho and Victoria ward, Smethwick West

Points of Interest
- Children Centre
- Primary School
- Pupil Referral Unit
- Secondary School
- Special School

Ward Map - Soho & Victoria

Produced by Research Sandwell
March 2011
Appendix B

Community First Community PLAN in Soho and Victoria ward, Smethwick West Midlands

Section One

Background information on the ward

Neighbourhood Plans in the Soho and Victoria ward
Windmill Eye community and stakeholder consultations 2009 to 2011

The 'Windmill Eye' neighbourhood plan in 2010 set out a vision for the physical regeneration of almost the whole of the Soho and Victoria ward and a programme of continued community engagement and skills development.

Key Findings for the future development of the area based on stakeholder engagement include:

- Providing new housing
- Using the new Smethwick hospital as an anchor for improvement and change in the area
- Supporting ideas to support Victoria Park as a shared space for all sections of the community.
- Co-location of community facilities.
- Re-distribution of public open space to make it accessible and safe
- Investments in the Shopping centre at Cape Hill and creating better connections to the High Street
- Developing a planning policy context which includes the protection of the local building heritage.
Summary of challenges arising from the ward’s community profile

The national context for the levels of multiple deprivation in Soho and Victoria is that Sandwell is the 12th most deprived Local authority area in England.

The neighbourhood has a low proportion of people with qualifications and skills

The area has consistently high levels of unemployment

Crime and anti social behaviour are a challenge to turn round and create confidence and pride in the area

Key Recommendations from the Windmill Eye planning process

The neighbourhood plan should contribute to lowering levels of deprivation

Design and environmental improvements should aim to address issues of health as well as enhance safety and improve security in the area.

Key changes in the area since the Windmill Eye plan was produced

- The formation of Friends and Neighbours CIC was formally established in December 2011 following consultation with a range of community groups and organisations in the area.

- Friends and Neighbours is co-located at the ex neighbourhood office at Unett St. now renamed as ‘The Learning Works’ with space shared with organisations promoting employment opportunities at the new hospital and more broadly helping local residents into work.

- The SMBC ‘Out to Play’ building on Corbett Street in Smethwick has now been acquired for community use and the co-location of community groups supporting new communities in the Soho and Victoria Ward

- Barratts has been appointed as the contractors for the new homes building programme in the area and preparatory work has begun on the Messenger Road site in the ward.

- The establishment of the Smethwick Food Bank in Smethwick ward is benefiting local residents by alleviating the impact of growing worklessness and child poverty
• The setting up of local work clubs to support people into work with volunteer support

**Friends and Neighbours CIC complements the Windmill Eye Community regeneration infrastructure plan by**

• using the areas social capital to support the vulnerable through matching friends and neighbours community supporters with vulnerable residents

• building a sense of community and neighbourliness

• supporting local people to access new opportunities for employment, enterprise and training

• Improving the local physical infrastructure of the area.

• Valuing volunteer time and harnessing local skills which are seen as a community asset through the Friends and Neighbours initiative.

**Vulnerable people statistics in 2011 in the Soho and Victoria ward /Windmill Eye area**

• Soho and Victoria ward has the highest population in Sandwell according to the 2011 Census and has risen by 31.8% since 2001 to now stand at 15,042.

• Research Sandwell shows the ward has the highest indices of deprivation at 53.08% of the ward population (2010)

• New migrants

Soho and Victoria is the most ethnically diverse ward in Sandwell

One of the most vulnerable new groups living in the area is Romanians. 34.7% of Romanian new entrants live in Smethwick and are subject to extreme exploitation, poverty, and overcrowding. (Sandwell NHS Report on migrants living in Sandwell and their health needs (2012)

• The 2011 census shows the growth in numbers from African and Arab backgrounds living in Sandwell and this growth is evident in the Soho and Victoria ward. There has also been a growth in migrants from Latvia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Poland settling in the ward. (Migrant Health Document NHS Sandwell 2012)
Within the ward, the Cape Hill LSOA has the highest levels of deprivation in Sandwell. (Sandwell Trends 2010)

**In the Soho and Victoria ward there are:**

5% in receipt of Disabled Living Allowance

11% are over 65

32% are economically inactive

81% children are living in low income households within the ward (CHILD BENEFIT STATISTICS 2010) and in part of the ward; this percentage rises to part of the area having the most deprived children living in Sandwell. (Cape Hill LSOA)

Soho and Victoria ward has the highest rates of coronary heart disease deaths

It also has the highest perinatal mortality in the borough

**Linkages with SMBC Anti Poverty Strategy in Sandwell (2010-13)**

Its aspirations are:

- For residents to view their neighbourhoods as being positive places to live with strong social networks
- Route ways will have been developed which enable residents to develop skills and qualifications and take up work in key skill sector areas.
- Quality accessible and affordable services are in place which provide route ways into work and workforce progression for residents
- All Residents in Sandwell will enjoy a minimum income standard and there will be a reduction in child poverty.

**Section Two**

**Community First Information**

**Community First**

Community first is a national programme which encourages the 600 most deprived wards in England and Wales to apply for £80
million funding for community activities undertaken by voluntary groups and delivered by volunteers which match funds the Community First grants.

The grants are administered by the Community Development Foundation.

In Sandwell, 16 wards benefit from Community First funding.

Soho and Victoria has an added benefit in terms of support available through ASDA which is located in the ward.

Nationally ASDA is working with the Community Development Foundation to support the Community First programme in wards where the supermarket is located to raise further funds.

**Community Groups in the area of benefit for Community First funding include**

Soho and Victoria Friends and Neighbours CIC
ILEYS Community Association
AFSCS
Friends of Victoria Park
CAP Centre
DANSOM
Windmill Amateur boxing group
CARES
SPMA
CARELINK
Smethwick Heritage Centre
Beginagen
Raglan Road Christian Centre
Worth Unlimited
Smethwick Tenants and Residents group
Cape Community Day Care Centre
Community First Funding Panels

Each ward sets up a community panel to oversee the distribution of funds and encourage voluntary groups to apply. The panel members are residents in the area volunteering their time to support the area.

The funding allocation for the Soho and Victoria ward over four years from 2011 to 2015 is a total of £84,775.

The achievement of the panel to date has been to award £35,284 to voluntary organisations in the ward in Years One and Two.

In Year Three, the allocation is £21,219

In Year Four, it is £28,272

The panel

The Community First panel for the Soho and Victoria Ward is made up of the following members:

Councillor Roger Horton (Chair)
Councillor Darren Cooper
Councillor Mohammed Rauf
Aynols Reid (vice chair)
Delroy Thomas
Gareth Brown
Panel partner - Brushstrokes

The funding priorities in Years One and Two.
❖ PRIORITY ONE - Friends and Neighbours linked activities

❖ PRIORITY TWO - Helping people to engage and become more involved in their local communities through community events

❖ PRIORITY THREE - Providing activities for young people, children and families

Groups funded in Year One

African French Speaking Community Support
Cape Community Care Day Centre
Soho and Victoria Friends and Neighbours
ILEYS
Worth Unlimited
Brushstrokes
CARES

Groups Funded in Year Two

African French Speaking Community Support
ILEYS
Worth Unlimited
Soho and Victoria Friends and Neighbours CIC
Brushstrokes
Friends of Victoria Park
Smethwick Heritage Centre
Cape Community Care Day Centre
CARES
Worth Unlimited
The funding for both years was all allocated and demand outstripped the amount of funding available. Some applications have been deferred to May 2013 for further consideration.

All groups funded matched the Community First funds with volunteer time.

**Linkages to the Windmill Eye plan**

The funding allocated in the first two years reflected the priorities identified by the Community First panel, building on the neighbourhood vision for improving the area.

Funding was given to the *African French Speaking Community Support (AFSCS)* organisation and *Ileys, a Somali organisation supporting women*, encouraging the greater engagement of new communities from African backgrounds in community activities. They will also benefit from added community cohesion through the co-location of community groups to the Corbett St building, encouraging partnership working and sharing of resources.

Funding was allocated to *Soho and Victoria Friends and Neighbours* for training in bilingual skills, the setting up of the community facility on Corbett St and a programme to engage young supporters.

These initiatives contribute to improved access to services by local groups through co-location.

It supported a number of voluntary groups in recognising the language skills of their front line volunteers, contributed to their personal development and gave them confidence to advise and support the most vulnerable residents to access mainstream services.

*Worth Unlimited* has used Community First funding to support an innovative programme promoting the attainment and enjoyment of literacy of young people in the area and encouraging their participation in area projects.

The Community First panel has supported groups concerned with our physical assets in the ward through funding the *Friends of Victoria Park* and the *Smethwick Heritage Centre*. Both groups will be enabled to attract new users to enjoy these significant heritage landmarks in our area.

*Brushstrokes* funding has been aimed at the inclusion and involvement of newcomer groups through activities, community events and in the process of planning trips to encourage new
friendships to blossom and generate a climate where self help can flourish.

Two groups working with vulnerable groups, the elderly from the African Caribbean community and carers have been given funding to continue their social activities. These are CARES and Cape Community Day care Centre.

This review of funded groups indicates the benefit of Community First funding.

**Benefits**

1. **Volunteers**

Volunteers in the area have learnt new skills and increased social capital in the area. These skills include:

- Planning events and trips
- Training in bilingual skills
- Mentoring
- Storytelling
- Improved literacy skills
- Preparing funding applications
- Assessing funding applications

2. **Community first spending- wider benefits**

There is an alignment of how Community First funding priorities has impacted on significant strategies in the ward and residents consultations.

- The indicators of deprivation in the ward,
- The Sandwell wide anti poverty strategy and the
- The ideas for improvement voiced by residents and identified in the Windmill Eye consultations.
- The Community First funding is complementary to the legacy work of Windmill Eye.

This has been achieved through the anti poverty based initiative of Soho and Victoria Friends and Neighbours CIC .It has
supported the continued engagement of voluntary and community groups and residents making the area a more humane and caring place to live beyond the post Windmill Eye consultation period.

Section Three

**Community First - Community Plan 2013-15 for the Soho and Victoria ward.**

The Soho and Victoria ward Community Plan is an opportunity to review the existing priorities for the Soho and Victoria ward from the perspective of local groups and individual stakeholders in the area.

The Panel partner circulated a brief questionnaire to community groups with applications for funding to ask for views on the current priorities for Community First and any additions to the priorities which could be considered for inclusion in the priorities for 2013 to 2015.

The questionnaire was put on the Soho and Victoria Community First website.

Attendees from community organisations attending the launch event for Soho and Victoria Friends and Neighbours CIC in March 2013

**Consultation findings**

Community groups, residents and the local councillor responded to the questions. The groups who responded were

- Friends of Victoria Park
- Worth Unlimited
- CARES
- AFSCS
- DANSOM
- Brushstrokes
- The Learning works
- Health Exchange
Smethwick Youth Council

- There was an almost unanimous response to keeping the key priorities which were used to allocate funding in years one and two.

- There were some additional suggestions for funding. Some of these overlap with existing priorities

  The additional priorities were:
  - Health and Well being- three responses
  - Crime and anti social behaviour reduction(two responses)
  - Finding ways to engage people through activities, cooking, sharing food and gardening
  - Help for older people, reducing isolation – two responses
  - Up skilling young people for work, social enterprise and employment skills -3 responses
  - Learning English/ Finding employment
  - Supporting people with disabilities
  - Supporting local primary schools

The findings will be considered at the next panel meeting in May 2013 in planning future priorities.

Section Four

Additional Support and Information for community groups

The Community First website is found at
www.communityfirstbrushstrokes.btck.co.uk

The website gives details of funding priorities and the funding application process

Additional Support is available from

1. Rohit Mistry
   Manager
   Soho and Victoria Friends and Neighbours CIC
   The Learning Works
   Unett Street, Smethwick B66 3SY
   Tel 0121 569 7248/7246
   Email: rohit_mistry@sandwell.gov.uk

2. Teresa Clements-Panel Partner
   Brushstrokes, St Phillip’s Centre, Messenger Road, Smethwick B66 3DU
   Tel 0121 565 2234
   Email: teresa_brushstrokes@hotmail.co.uk

3. SCVO Sandwell Council for Voluntary organisations
   Call 0121 525 1127
   Email support@scvo.info
Appendix C

Many families from the African French community have been experiencing a sedentary life. Lack of income, cultural and language barriers have been spotted as preventing them from getting involved into community activities. Through a focus group activity, representing these families, our members have suggested to provide activities designed to break their isolation, engage them into some physical activities and promote their integration into local community. Therefore, the AFCS submitted a bid to Community First Fund in order to tackle the above issue. As a result, the funding received from the Community First Fund (£ 2,350.00) helped achieve the following activities:

1. Involvement of families and a Gospel Choir from the African French community into public events organised locally, such as: The Queen Diamond Jubilee organised in partnership with Brushstrokes (May 2011) and the summer event organised by Soho & Victoria Friends & Neighbours.
2. Young people indoor and outdoor football activities
3. Children Art and Crafts activities
4. Children and young people's entertainment at Drayton Manor
5. Children and young people's visit to Dudley Zoological Garden
6. Celebrating London Olympic Torch Relay

Many families have now gained confidence in getting involved into community event or activities. The project has also prompted more children to get involved into the activities we are delivering such as sports (football, Basketball, swimming), Home work club and dance.

We are so grateful to the Community Development Foundation and the Panel of community First/Soho & Victoria Ward for the financial support provided towards the activities highlighted above.

Jacques Matensi-kubanza

Chair
Appendix D

Community First Funding 2012

CARES is a registered charity that works with helps and supports unpaid family carers, we are based in the Soho and Victoria Ward but work with carers across the borough.

One of the services we offer at CARES is a Carer Support Service and through the project we arrange a programme of activities ranging from Carer Support Groups, Carer Cafés, Telephone Helpline service and outings.

The Carer Support Project received £525 of Community First Funding which enabled us to organise and support 3 outings for unpaid family carers attending our Carer Support Group in the Soho and Victoria Ward in Summer 2012

As a result of Community First Funding, the project was able to tackle social and emotional isolation, increase community activity, reduce levels of stress and improve the mental health of Carers living in Soho and Victoria Ward.

The project took 15 carers to visit Bridgnorth, Stratford upon Avon and Stourport. We had lunch and looked around the town’s shops and attractions. Carers told us they had a great time and said just having a short respite break made a huge difference to them as they felt relaxed enabling them to continue in their caring role feeling less stressed.

Carol Maloney Jewkes, a resident in Soho and Victoria Ward said “I went on all 3 trips with CARES, It was lovely to be picked up from home and taken out for the day, it was nice to stroll around the shops, have lunch and relax for a few hours”.
