Bewbush Festival Parade 2006
The purpose of the Community Development Strategy is to ensure that through effective co-ordination and co-operation the Council will strive to promote and facilitate a culture in which everything the Council seeks to achieve is responsive to and informed by the needs and priorities of its community.

Implementing the strategy will help to bind communities together so that people:
- Feel involved
- Feel engaged
- Have a sense of pride
- Recognise the role they can play in developing their community

In order for the Community Development Strategy to be effective we need:
- Officers to make connections between objectives set in the strategy and their own service objectives
- Member ‘buy-in’
- Coordination between service providers to ensure we can make the most of resources and development opportunities
How will the strategy contribute to what the Council is trying to achieve?

Corporate Plan
In implementing our Community Development Strategy we have the opportunity to effectively contribute 5 key objectives in the corporate plan:

- Enhanced performance management
- Meeting targets in the CPA Improvement Plan
- Providing timely information to the community
- Effective partnership working
- Influencing culture change within the organisation.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

Our peer review, which measured our improvements as a Council since our CPA rating of fair, suggested

- ‘…expressions of intent are yet to be translated into tangible actions and are yet to result in improvements for local people, notably the Council’s work on social inclusion…”.
- A perceived remoteness in some Councillors.
- That the Council needs to pay particular attention to addressing ‘softer’ issues.

The Community Development Strategy for Crawley will enable officers to

- Develop clear communication networks
- Galvanise partnership working to prioritise and practically address those key issues of social exclusion, community cohesion and community engagement at neighbourhood level.

Local Area Agreements

The Local Area Agreement for West Sussex has been finalised and will need to translate the 22 high level outcomes down to grass roots service delivery. West Sussex County Council are implementing engagement and development processes and we can link to these at a local level.

Outcomes 21 and 22 are central priorities for community development at neighbourhood level: we must have robust links in place through Crawley Together. We will also need to ensure that those grass roots workers making the most visible impact at neighbourhood level are engaged. The Crawley Together Partnership offers an ideal vehicle to ensure effective communication.

Crawley Together

The introduction of a Community Development Strategy for Crawley Borough Council will naturally have a knock-on effect for other local partners as priorities are set for development. It will encourage a more joined up approach to grass roots work, establishing clear programmes of work, and effective evaluation to inform future priority setting. Best practice observed in Beacon Council’s proves that mechanisms need to be developed within LSPs to ensure that strategic objectives translate to grass roots development and that grass roots knowledge really does influence strategic priorities for the town.

1Outcome 21: Cohesive and capable communities- strong communities with empowered people involved in local decision-making and influencing service delivery. Outcome 22: Improve the quality of life in the most disadvantages neighbourhoods.
Outcomes

Through the Community Development Strategy we will:

• Raise awareness of the need to include community development approaches in service provision

• Create a clearer set of priorities for community based development work

• Provide well coordinated and focused training to embed Community Development as a cross-cutting practice

• Increase recognition and engagement of officers with the Local Strategic Partnership and its objectives

• Give grass roots workers an opportunity to influence strategic priority setting

• Provide well organised joined up planning approaches to partnership working.

Langley Green Health Improvement Project participatory consultation
Community Development in Crawley - Establishing a Common Set of Priorities

To address issues of social exclusion through a coordinated partnership approach at neighbourhood level

To build trust and a sense of belonging at neighbourhood level and in Crawley as a town, by listening and responding to issues using a community development approach

To ensure that every service understands the value of the Community Development objective as a cross-cutting issue.

To support the development of the voluntary and community sector as equal partners in meeting local need for services and support

To develop and improve communication networks between partners working at community level to ensure a joined up approach to community development

Crawley as a Cohesive Community

(4)
Welcome to Crawley
- A Context

Setting The Scene

Although Crawley as a Town is less deprived than the national average it faces many challenges. There are major differences between neighbourhoods in terms of deprivation rankings. This coupled with a declining number of people involved with their communities has a real impact on how active or socially inclusive those communities are.

The population of approximately 100,000 is growing rapidly and has more children, young people and people in their late twenties and early thirties but smaller than the average population for England. The proportion of older people is also increasing. The population is ethnically and culturally diverse, with 11.5% belonging to ethnic groups other than white British. This is higher than average for England and well above the average for the South East.

Population density is one of the highest in West Sussex. Affordability of housing is a problem and whilst the homes that are available are generally of good quality, prices are high compared to average income. The availability of social housing is inadequate and homelessness is a significant problem in the Borough, particularly amongst young people. There is a high proportion of young, single parent families concentrated in a few areas.

Educational attainment is patchy across the town with a lower than average proportion of 16 year olds undertaking higher education. While the economy is buoyant, many jobs are in the low wage brackets and, due to the low educational attainment in some neighbourhoods, local people are sometimes not equipped with the skills and qualifications to take the better paid jobs. The general prosperity of the Borough is therefore not universally shared.

Fear of crime remains a significant factor for many people despite falling levels of recorded crime, and is a major factor in determining satisfaction with the area.

Crawley enjoys an excellent strategic location in the region, with good road and rail links and close proximity of Gatwick Airport. The town has a range of high quality facilities, particularly the number of parks and open spaces available for relaxation, and the wide choice of cultural and leisure activities. Many of these, such as The Hawth, K2 and Tilgate Park, are regional facilities, enjoyed not only by local people but also attracting large numbers of visitors from other parts of the South East.

Networks and Partnerships

Across Crawley, there are well established forums and networks of a thematic nature with a wide variety of focus, including sports, carers, parenting, older people, youth issues, disability and more. There are also a number of neighbourhood specific action groups, and local residents’ forums in Broadfield and Bewbush.

There is clear opportunity to tap into these existing forums and support the development of new thematic and geographically based groups to support improved communication across the town. This is an agenda that is shared at all levels
Crawley Together has representation from key partner organisations in the Town, and is coordinated through the Council's Corporate Policy Unit.

The Community Strategy has clearly defined objectives with a well organised structure to deliver. There is opportunity to improve LSP engagement mechanisms that involve officers working at service delivery level within the Council and partner agencies in strategic development. Community development has a key role to link the needs of grass roots communities into the strategic agenda of the LSP when agreeing priorities and delivery.

Opportunities for Development

Current Beacon Councils for Community Engagement demonstrate clear pathways of communication with the wider community. Although the wider membership of Crawley Together includes diverse representation, there is now an opportunity to review relevance of membership and links between members and the wider community of Crawley.

Crawley COMPACT

Over the past year, partner representatives from the statutory and voluntary and community sector have worked together to produce a COMPACT for Crawley. Following national guidance, and in consultation with voluntary and community sector organisations, the document has been developed and the draft was launched at the end of 2005. The key codes of practice for Funding, Volunteering, Community Groups, Black and Minority Ethnic Community Groups, and Consultation will provide clear guidance to representatives from all sectors when working in partnership.
Addressing the National Agenda

Key national drivers include

1. The Government Paper ‘Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity’ makes clear statements of expectation as to how communities should operate. There are clear community development objectives running through the whole document, with particular focus on effective community engagement and networking involving diverse community representatives including Councillors. Engagement includes capacity building to develop the community’s skills, knowledge, confidence, and perhaps most importantly, trust.

2. The Social Inclusion Agenda- In the Government Paper ‘Breaking the Cycle- taking stock of progress’ key issues of poverty and low income; unemployment; poor educational attainment; poor mental and physical health; family breakdown and poor parenting; poor housing and homelessness; discrimination; crime and living in a disadvantaged area are all highlighted. Crawley Together has developed its own strategy to address Social Exclusion. This has been considered and influenced the objective setting for the Community Development Strategy.

3. The Community Cohesion Agenda – The Government describes a cohesive community as one where:

   - There is common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
   - The diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued
   - Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
   - Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and in neighbourhoods.

Community Cohesion is the ultimate objective for the community and for those agencies that can influence the development of that community.

4. ChangeUp

   “…In June 2004 the Home Office published ChangeUp, the cross-government framework on capacity building and infrastructure in the Voluntary and Community Sector. Developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and in partnership with the sector, ChangeUp sets out a 10 year strategic framework for achieving the following aim: …that by 2014 the needs of front line Voluntary and Community Organisations will be met by support which is available nationwide, structured for maximum efficiency, offering excellent provision which is accessible to all while reflecting and promoting diversity, and is sustainably funded…”

ChangeUp partners locally including the Crawley Council for Voluntary Service, Crawley Ethnic Minority Partnership and CBC are working to secure greater investment in our local infrastructure organisations. We want to further develop the local support services for voluntary and community organisations.

Representatives at a meeting of Crawley Young Person’s Council
Support to Members and the Democratic Process

CPA highlighted opportunities for further developing processes that support Members to engage with their community. It is increasingly important that Members take a lead role in the engagement process at neighbourhood level. The development of the West Sussex County Council Local Committees with devolved decision making will mean it is important that Borough Councillors develop mechanisms to communicate the needs of their community. Officers involved in development across the Council are recognising the need to engage Members and develop clear pathways for two-way communication that will support this.

Some examples of community development work

*Community Services* - Key development takes place in teams operating across divisions including Community Development, Sports Development, Community Arts, and Amenity Services. High profile projects like ‘Let’s Face It’ provide reactive and proactive support to residents to improve their neighbourhoods, whilst the community development sports development, and community arts teams work on many projects across the town of both a reactive and planned nature, addressing key issues of social inclusion, community cohesion, health and well being and education.

*Environment and Housing* - The Tenants Participation Team has developed key engagement tools that enable ‘Crawley Homes’ tenants to steer development of services and to address issues at community level. Environmental Services work on a wide variety of programmes that influence community development, and support local community organisations.

*General* - Effective community engagement is a priority for the Council, and all directorates contribute in some way to this agenda. The Corporate Policy Unit is currently working with officers and Members to identify a clear way forward that will ensure that methods for community engagement add value to service development and customer focus.
Research amongst over 100 representatives including those from statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations, and ‘community active’ residents indicated that the most important focus should be to build trust and social capital by:-

- Working in partnership to solve problems that are important to the community
- Listening and responding to the community to develop community led priorities with them
- Working in partnership to address issues of community tension and to promote community cohesion
- Providing resources to people at local level including
  - Support to the voluntary and community sector especially in terms of developing sustainability
  - Development of effective community networks

68% of stakeholders wanted to work in partnership on Community Development issues.

From those responses received, we identified 46 development workers working in Crawley, representing a diverse range of agencies and organisations from all sectors.

Partners feel that the support they receive from development services in the Council is valuable, and particularly highlighted our ability to work effectively to develop partnership projects.

Comments showed a high demand for community development support both for neighbourhood level capacity building, and to support strategic and service development. With current resources, this puts pressure on the teams involved to prioritise one over the other but there is clear value in maintaining involvement in both areas.

Vision

By 2011 Crawley will be recognised as a place where partner organisations are working together cohesively with communities from grass roots level up, to take collective action to address the issues that most concern them.

Community Development across the Council, and with partner agencies, will be focused and well coordinated to contribute effectively to address the priorities most pertinent for Crawley as a town.

Children involved in consultation for development of the Broadfield Children’s Centre
Strategic Areas for Action

1

What?
To address issues of social exclusion through a coordinated partnership approach at neighbourhood level

How?
Implement the SIDE* Strategy, responding to the 10 priorities for addressing issues of social exclusion across the town.

CBC services to develop a prioritised programme of work to encourage residents from hard to reach communities to engage with services/facilities.

To respond to the needs of hard to reach groups in a flexible way, developing initial contacts/involvement from open dialogue

* Social Inclusion Diversity And Equalities Strategy

2

What?
To build capacity, trust and a sense of belonging at neighbourhood level and in Crawley as a town

How?
Develop a clear process for engagement with the community in each neighbourhood to identify their local needs, engage service providers appropriately, and develop local action plans reflective of key priorities across the town.

Develop a targeted responsive programme at neighbourhood level, to address issues of anti-social behaviour

Respond to issues of community tension in a timely and coordinated manner, involving partner agencies where appropriate

Work with residents to develop projects that are important to them and will contribute to the development of their neighbourhood

3

What?
To support the development of the voluntary and community sector as equal partners in meeting local need for services and support

How?
Coordinate effective funding support to Voluntary and Community Organisations through our ‘Community Grants’ programme including main grants (over £750) and small grants (up to £750).

Support the effective implementation of the Crawley COMPACT engaging all divisions in the Council to ensure that it remains a live document providing guidance on best practice

Support local voluntary infrastructure organisations to contribute effectively to the West Sussex ‘ChangeUp’ Programme

Contribute to the development of a Community Training Programme to support the development of projects at community level

Promote volunteering and increase support for local voluntary sector and community projects and organisations

Develop a partnership approach to drawing in external funding for Crawley and promote CBC’s online funding search tool ‘Crawley4Community’. 
Strategic Areas for Action

4

What?
To develop and improve communication networks for those working at community level, partners and residents to ensure a joined up approach to community development

How?
Introduce a Community Development Officers Network to ensure that development focus is coordinated across the Council.

Work With Partners
Develop opportunities to engage residents/community representatives for purposes of sharing information for and with the Council in a structured way - for example Street Champions or Community Network Facilitators.

Develop a clear programme of neighbourhood level engagement to monitor service standards and response to local development.

Develop a clear programme to support Councillors to engage effectively with residents and council officers to resolve local issues.

5

What?
To strengthen links and influence between what happens on the ground and priorities set at strategic level

How?
To regularly review the Local Strategic Partnership, and consider development of its structure to encourage more influence from grass roots level.

To consider the inclusion of a new Action Group in the LSP - People and Communities Action Group.

To ensure that officers in the Council respond to the priorities of and engage with the communities in which they work through resource effective processes.

6

What?
To ensure that every service understands the value of the Community Development process

How?
To develop a programme of training opportunities for officers engaging in Community Development work across the Council.

To introduce key training on planning, monitoring and evaluation in Community Development, using the recognised tool ABCD (Achieving Better Community Development).

To develop support for officers engaging in service planning, to ensure key Community Development objectives are reflected where appropriate.

Organise an annual Community Development Conference to introduce and promote the Council’s approach.
Measuring the Impact and effectiveness of the Community Development Strategy

It is envisaged that implementation of the Community Development Strategy would be monitored by the Community Development Team, with support from key divisions in the Council such as the Corporate Policy Unit and Learning and Development. There are some resource issues that will need to be addressed to ensure that implementation happens in a timely and appropriate manner.

Following the approval of the strategy, further work will take place with representative officers with development roles to coordinate a detailed action plan to meet specific and measurable targets against the key objectives.

Progress against the Community Development Strategy Action Plan will be monitored by a steering group, linked to the Community Development Officers Network. The Council’s Community Development Strategy Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the steering group.
More information about Crawley's Community Development Strategy is available from the Community Development Manager:

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This document is available in other formats on request. Please contact us if you would like a translation or copies in Braille. Large print or on audio tape or computer disc

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