

Executive Summary

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

- This Final Report provides the key findings from the Final Programme Evaluation of Braunstone New Deal for Communities (NDC).
- In late 2008, Braunstone Community Association (BCA) commissioned 'SURGE' (the Applied Research Centre in Sustainable Regeneration, Coventry University) to undertake the Final Evaluation of Braunstone NDC.
- The overall aim of the Final Programme Evaluation is to assess the NDC programme's delivery and identify lessons which might inform future interventions for Braunstone and beyond. 12 Priority Questions from the BCA Evaluation Steering Group have guided the evaluation.

METHOD: THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

- The phasing and tasks involved in the evaluation were guided by an Evaluation Framework working paper agreed with BCA throughout the duration of the evaluation.
- The key findings of this evaluation draw upon quantitative analyses of the programme performance and administrative data, and analyses of qualitative data from stakeholder interviews, case study project staff and consultation with residents and project users.

Overall Programme Performance

- Braunstone NDC has virtually spent its entire allocated budget of just over £49.5m – there have been no *significant* underspend or overspend issues regarding programme spending overall. Actual spending in each 'Theme' largely reflects the original approved spending plans. Around half of the budget has been spent on 10 major projects (primarily capital investment).
 - 75% of output targets have been exceeded or met by the programme (based on data available for 39 of the 42 output targets set), primarily by a small number of larger-spending projects. Around 57% of the 'outcome' targets set by the programme have been partially met, achieved or exceeded. Place-based outcomes targets have been more successfully achieved than people-based outcomes targets, as with other NDC programmes (CLG, 2008a).
 - Below are the most notable successes and challenges of the programme's overall performance.
-

Successes

- An approach providing a 'balance' of 'people-based' and 'place-based' interventions which have complemented each other in delivery (e.g. health and well-being initiatives).
- Improvements in confidence, attitude and outlook of residents who engaged with programme.
- Completion of capital projects via significant leverage with other partners (e.g. Leisure Centre, Health and Social Care Centre, BRITE Centre, the Grove youth house, Business Box and Braunstone Skills Centre)
- Improved social housing via the programme's influence and partnerships with social housing providers (Six Streets refurbishment; almost 98% of council homes now Decent Homes standard)
- Reductions in burglary and theft of/from property and a significant reduction in fear of crime
- A significant increase in (surveyed) residents stating: the NDC has improved Braunstone; they are more satisfied with living in Braunstone and; they feel part of the community.
- A range of interventions being sustained or mainstreamed by wider organisations in the City due to their effectiveness, and the development of the new NDC Successor Body – the Braunstone Foundation, through 'b-inspired'.

Challenges

- Braunstone Hall, considered a symbol of community vibrancy by residents, remains unused, despite many attempts to find feasible and sustainable tenants
 - The educational attainment gap between Braunstone secondary school pupils and Leicester City – improvements in GCSE results have taken place, but the gap between Braunstone and the City remains at 27%. However, this has also taken place in context of relatively poor performance in attainment at the level of the City, compared to the national average.
 - A tail-off in positive perceptions during 2006-08 on some issues raised in the MORI residents' survey, which is not necessarily replicated across the other NDC programme surveys (although there is recognition of 'diminishing rates of change' over time – see CLG, 2009a).
 - Concerns around litter and rubbish on the streets – perceptions of surveyed residents suggest this remains a significant issue as performance has hardly improved since 2002, as well as mixed survey results about wider resident engagement in community activities
-

Thematic Areas of the Programme

- Performance in each of the six key Themes of the NDC programme is outlined below.

Health and Well-Being

- Whilst all 'output' targets have been exceeded here, progress towards *outcome* targets is mixed (this is not uncommon to other NDCs – see Lawless, 2007). Progress has been poor with (e.g.) residents stating 'good health' and perceptions of access to GPs remains an issue. But progress has been positive regarding (e.g.) improvements in smoking cessation, satisfaction with GPs and health eating.
- Projects have also addressed health and well-being in an enjoyable and incremental style – looking at people's whole lifestyles, rather than through prescriptive, targeted approaches. In many cases, projects have built up the capacity of local residents, encouraging them to become mentors themselves or even employees. This improves project delivery as local people better understand the needs of other Braunstone residents.

Education and Family Learning

- All *output* targets here have been exceeded, but *outcome* targets have not been achieved – GCSE attainment for secondary school pupils remains 27% behind the Leicester average, though there has been investment in primary schools by the City Council, which has been influenced by the NDC programme and its activities. Braunstone lost its only secondary school a few years ago and this has somewhat hindered progress.
- Most initiatives have focused on educating children and families, given the educational attainment evidence. Elements of some of the mentoring and family support projects have been mainstreamed by the City Council and support has improved perceptions of education by those who had poor experiences of schooling, making educational support more accessible. Educational support has also been made available through vocational training and the new Skills Centre focuses on young people within Braunstone and beyond.

Employment and Enterprise

- The key *output* targets have been met here (e.g. access to training, jobs created and access to IAG) though not all – there has been re-profiling of targets to take account of more accurate data. *Outcome* targets have been partially achieved in some areas, particularly around increasing qualifications and business start-ups. The wider issue is one of tracking what has happened to residents receiving support and getting into employment or self-employment – something that would require huge resources and is a challenge for any NDC.
 -
-

- The programme has provided much-needed local capacity for employability and enterprise support (e.g. via Braunstone Working and the Business Box). The delivery model of key projects in this Theme have focused on building up the capacity and motivation of residents for the long-term, whilst providing support and supported signposting for more immediate concerns, such as benefits, literacy skills and even mental health. In this way, the projects have attempted to build up residents' resilience to changes in the economy and labour markets. The Braunstone Working project is now becoming a key part of Leicester's 'Multi-Access Centres' – one of which is being based in Braunstone.

Crime and Community Safety

- The majority of outputs have been exceeded and outcome targets around property crime have been met, such as burglary and vehicle crime, due to initiatives such as Safer Homes which improved security fittings. Better lighting was also accelerated through influence with the City Council. MORI data suggests that anti-social behaviour and fear of crime has been reduced.
- Projects such as Improved Policing (as noted in JRF, 2006) and other diversionary projects for young people have provided a reactive and preventative approach at the same time. Violent crime is increasing nationally and Leicester and Braunstone are no exception, however, the partnership working assisted by the NDC programme has brought the community and the Police together and increased trust. This has resulted in better *management* of incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour and this looks set to continue.

Housing and Environment

- The majority of outputs have been exceeded here, and most outcome targets have largely been met. Liveability indicators from a range of sources suggest a much higher level of satisfaction with Braunstone as an area than 10 years ago. More people are staying in Braunstone for longer periods and demand for social housing has increased enormously in Braunstone since 2000 (as with Leicester and nationally). Until recently, house price *trends* followed the city's trends.
 - The NDC programme has been innovative here as it has influenced, lobbied and worked with social housing providers to *accelerate* improvements whilst *minimising* NDC resources spent in this area. In 2005, around 63% of properties in Braunstone were socially rented (CRESR, 2005) above the average for all NDCs at 55% (ODPM, 2005). This could have been a major burden for the programme – for example, recent evidence from the NDC National Evaluation Team suggests that "*housing and the physical environment accounts for largest proportion of total expenditure across the programme as a whole*" (CLG, 2009a, p6). However, in Braunstone, around 12.5% of
-

the total budget has been spent on housing compared to 29% on average across all NDCs (CLG, 2009b). Yet satisfaction with the area is higher than the average for all NDCs according to MORI surveys, and almost 98% of council stock in the area is now 'Decent Homes' standard. Furthermore, a previously derelict area of former council stock has been refurbished and re-let by Leicester Housing Association.

Community Development and Youth Inclusion

- Almost all outputs have been achieved here, however, outcome targets were ambitious and some have only been partially achieved. Furthermore, wider engagement of the community has met with mixed results. It must be noted that whilst many residents engage at many different levels, strategic levels have faced difficulties in recruiting and retaining residents, due to the heavy burden of commitment required – this is not uncommon for many NDCs (see CLG, 2009c). However, delivery-level and grassroots activity have been more successful and assisted by grant-funding from the NDC programme.
- The Neighbourhood Support Team (formerly the Inclusion, Communications and Events team) have assisted the formation of the Neighbourhood Management Board (NMB) and the wider Residents' Network. The NMB is a collaborative forum of a core group of residents and key agencies where resident agendas are raised, discussed and often resolved via partnership working – something considered impossible 10 years ago. Projects such as Streetvibe and the Youth Forum have also engaged young people, though match-funding and change over time has been a challenge to maintain involvement.

Added Value

Braunstone's NDC programme has brought about a wide range of changes – many people believed such changes would not have taken place without the programme's existence:

- At the strategic level, Braunstone was enabled to have a new 'legitimacy' – it had resources and a focus which gave it leverage with other partners in the City, to get investment back into Braunstone after years of under-investment. This was hard-won, but over time the programme enabled its projects, staff and residents to become more intertwined with the wider institutional landscape of the City, opening up linkages and reducing Braunstone's isolation.
 - At delivery level, projects had resources and freedom to experiment with new ways of working which resulted in more effective services for residents. A number of such interventions were so effective that many elements of these delivery models have been sustained via new initiatives or
-

mainstreamed into City-wide policy and practice. Many delivery models have mediated residents' needs with the strategic aims of city-wide agencies to the benefit of all parties.

- At the level of the community, services are viewed as more responsive and appropriate to local needs. Access has increased, there is greater cohesion between people from different parts of Braunstone via joint-working, and the reputation of Braunstone has improved. Opportunities taken up by residents have increased residents' confidence, bolstered by the new facilities. A core group of local residents who are heavily involved in the programme have broadened their understanding of the complexities, challenges and successes of neighbourhood regeneration.

Lessons for Sustainability

- A range of lessons were suggested around 'doing it all again' including: clarification of how the funding could be spent; time for establishment, accountability and consultation; more flexibility of funding over the programme life; accuracy of data and evidence, and support for those involved in the strategic levels of the organisation.
 - The NDC Successor Body – the Braunstone Foundation, through 'b-inspired' - should continue to ensure Braunstone never again becomes isolated from the rest of the City, by maintaining links with city organisations and decision-makers, holding agencies to account, keeping them involved, influencing people and showcasing Braunstone's achievements.
 - The Braunstone Foundation, through 'b-inspired', should also make sure it truly represents the community's voice in Braunstone by ensuring that it interacts with the wider community, as well as key groups, at all levels.
-