

Report

5

Report to:	Clydesdale Area Committee
Date of Meeting:	23 March 2010
Report by:	Executive Director (Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Regeneration Services Activity in the Clydesdale Area Committee Area
----------	---

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ outline the wide range of ongoing activity by Regeneration Services in the Clydesdale Area Committee area

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted.

3. Background

3.1. Regeneration Services is one of four services within Enterprise Resources. It is a multifunctional, cross cutting service committed to the regeneration of local communities in South Lanarkshire. It aims to promote employment, social inclusion, physical development and sustainability through working in partnership with local communities, voluntary sector bodies, the private sector and other public sector partner organisations. It is responsible both for direct service delivery to businesses and residents as well as for services to other Council Resources. It consists of four teams whose remits are set out below.

3.2 *Community Regeneration and Rural Development* leads on area based approaches to tackling poverty and deprivation and promotion of rural development and tourism.

3.3 *Regeneration and Inclusion* contributes to relevant aspects of the Council's Single Outcome Agreement designing and implementing employability programmes for adults and young people and providing support for the community and voluntary sector. It also helps Council-wide services and partner agencies to attract funding from external sources, such as the European Union (EU) and Lottery, to help deliver priority projects and programmes.

3.4 *Property Development* carries out significant physical regeneration in towns and villages, implements commercial and industrial infrastructure projects and leads on derelict land reclamation and town centre management. It also manages the Council's capital receipt programme and negotiates acquisitions and disposals of heritable property.

3.5 *Business Support and Property Information* undertakes business development, manages the development and implementation of asset management strategies and

processes and is responsible for managing the Council's non-operational lease portfolio.

4. Regeneration Services – Key Areas of Activity

Community Regeneration and Rural Development

- 4.1 The focus for addressing disadvantage in South Lanarkshire has largely taken a geographical approach whilst also recognising that some key client groups are not always concentrated within specific communities. The Fairer Scotland Fund (FSF) was established by the Scottish Government in April 2008 with allocations of £10.210 million, £8.164 million and £6.117 million to South Lanarkshire for 2008-9, 2009-10, and 2010-11 respectively.
- 4.2 A programme of activity designed to strengthen approaches to tackling poverty in South Lanarkshire's most disadvantaged communities has been in place for three years. The programme is mainly targeted on people living within the worst 15% datazones in Scotland. South Lanarkshire has 52 datazones in this category of which only 5 are located within Clydesdale. The programme is nearing completion of its second year of delivery.
- 4.3 The key components of the programme consist of the following:-
- ◆ Transport Links
 - ◆ Accredited Community Based Adult Learning
 - ◆ Community Policing
 - ◆ Youth Diversion
 - ◆ Vulnerable Families
 - ◆ Raising Attainment and Early Intervention
 - ◆ Early Intervention – Education
 - ◆ Early Intervention – Child Health
 - ◆ Local Health Initiatives
 - ◆ Financial Inclusion
 - ◆ Employability
 - ◆ Programme Support
 - ◆ Capital Programme
- 4.4 As a direct consequence of the reduction in the number of datazones in South Lanarkshire the allocation of FSF resources has dropped significantly. With partners, a Tackling Poverty Improvement Plan has been developed, linked to the Single Outcome Agreement by which it is intended to track progress on a number of key interventions and targets.

Local Food and Drink

- 4.5 The Scottish Agricultural College has been commissioned to perform a study into local food and drink producers in the South Lanarkshire area with a view to increasing sales of local produce to local businesses and consumers. As part of this project, the "Eat guide to local food and drink" was produced and in June 2009, a local food and drink showcase was held for local traders to sample a selection of 24 local food and drink products. In October 2009, four South Lanarkshire businesses attended the successful BBC Good Food Show together with four from North Lanarkshire on a joint Lanarkshire stand.

The list of recommended actions from the study are being considered as possible future actions for food and drink sector development.

Tourism

4.6 The VisitLanarkshire tourism project is a pan Lanarkshire project to increase the awareness of Lanarkshire as a visitor destination and has operated for the last 5 years. Working together with North Lanarkshire Council, the tourism project achieved the following:

- The launch of the new Lanarkshire Tourism Action plan in November 2009. This tourism strategy for Lanarkshire runs to 2015 with a strategic target of 60% growth in visitor expenditure over the next 6 years
- A successful Autumn campaign 2009 to increase visits to the area in the shoulder months of September – October 2009. The campaign delivered 26,159 visitors to the vl.com website, 103,587 page views and 2,472 vouchers downloaded.
- Impressive PR results in conjunction with BIG Partnership with £329,152 press coverage generated at a cost of £25k.
- 50,000 Great Days Out attractions guides and 15,000 Events Guides in circulation
- Visitlanarkshire.com was relaunched in July 2009 and visits to the website are increasing on a monthly basis

A Spring 2010 campaign begins 8 March 2010 with radio, advertising and online activity.

Rural Strategy and Action Plans

- 4.7 The South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership (which also acts as the Local Action Group for the LEADER programme funding below) meets quarterly and supports the work of the Rural Task Force.
- 4.8 The Rural Strategy “Working Towards Sustainable Rural Communities“ is in place and the Partnership monitors progress of the 5 themed groups implementing related action plans. The actions plans were refreshed in Summer 2009 and the outcomes are currently being reviewed.

LEADER programme

- 4.9 Led by Regeneration Services one of the key activities over the past year has been to implement the £1.47M LEADER rural development grant programme which is part of the overall Scottish Rural Development Programme. This is one of the key funding mechanisms which can be aimed at improving the quality of life and economic prosperity in rural South Lanarkshire
- 4.10 The LEADER programme is delivered through a main fund for bigger, more strategic projects (14 approvals from 1 April 2009) and 5 individual LEADER schemes below, and all have progressed well during the year resulting in the overall programme being 63% committed and 14% spent to date.
- Rural Capital Grants Scheme provides capital investment aimed at rural businesses to help them grow and expand e.g. support provided to Valley International Park Travel Lodges.

- Developing Communities Fund is aimed at rural communities and capacity building projects e.g. support provided to local group in Strathaven on feasibility of playpark facilities.
- Rural Tourism Development scheme is aimed at developing the rural tourism product and community events e.g. the Biggar Little Festival
- Market Towns Initiative is aimed at creating sustainable community development trusts in each of the 4 rural market towns to facilitate projects important to the communities of Lanark, Carluke, Biggar and Strathaven.
- Rural Community Heritage Fund is aimed at projects which will conserve and promote natural, built and cultural heritage e.g. support provided to Forth Wallhangings Group matched to a Scottish Arts Council grant.

Regeneration and Inclusion

Community and Voluntary Sector

- 4.11 South Lanarkshire has had a fixed model for delivering support to the voluntary sector for a number of years. This has been done through three separate Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS): ALVO representing the rural area, CVSHEK representing Hamilton and East Kilbride and CREATE covering the Cambuslang/ Rutherglen area. Separately the volunteer development body SoLVE has operated to deliver specific services that grows and supports volunteering.
- 4.12 At a national level Scottish Government is seeking to rationalise support networks both for the voluntary sector and for volunteer development agencies. Scottish Government has termed this new approach as an 'Interface'. It is expected that a new organisation with this function will be fully geared up to deliver services effectively across South Lanarkshire, including Clydesdale, from April 2011.
- 4.13 Citizens Advice – The Council plays a significant role in supporting the Citizens Advice Bureaux. Clydesdale CAB provides information and advice services throughout the area. During the last financial year the Bureau dealt with 4930 enquiries and gained some £1.9 million for clients in compensation, benefits, and written off debt.
- 4.14 Credit Unions - Blantyre and South Lanarkshire Credit Union has been supported to extend its operations into the Clydesdale area with residents now able to access savings, low cost loan and insurance services. This has generated some 30 new members.
- 4.15 Community Health Initiatives - A successful programme of Health Improvement activities has been delivered by Healthy Valleys predominately in the Rigside, Lesmahagow & Douglas areas. The work undertaken is varied ranging from Youth issues around Health, Wellbeing & Substance Misuse across the spectrum to influencing Lifestyle choices for all age groups. Of particular note is the involvement of Community Volunteers who take on the responsibilities for ongoing delivery both within the targeted areas and beyond. During 2009, 207 volunteers contributed 1393 volunteering hours through the provision of support and training in aspects of Sexual Health, Mental Health, Healthy Eating, & Physical Activities.

Routes to Inclusion

4.16 The Council and its partners are committed to promoting employability and access to sustainable employment opportunities, particularly for targeted priority groups through the delivery of the Routes to Inclusion programme which currently runs from 2008-11. By utilising funds from the Council, Scottish Government, Jobcentre Plus, Europe and the Fairer Scotland Fund an ambitious and broad ranging delivery programme has been pursued. Current initiatives include:-

- Routes to Work South – providing opportunities in training, support and interventions to those furthest from the labour market.
- Future Jobs Fund – Jobcentre Plus programme to assist 18-24 year olds who have been unemployed for 6 months or more.
- More Choices, More Chances – support measures for young people aged 16-19 who are not in employment, training or education.
- Rebuilding Opportunities – programme for unemployed people seeking a career in the construction sector.
- Connect 2 – pre-employment training programme and care sector induction for vulnerable clients seeking a career in social care.
- Youthstart – provides support to young people who are homeless and living in supported accommodation to get into work, education or training.

4.17 Examples of progress this year include:-

Routes to Work South – in 2009/10 effective use of outreach has raised this service profile across Clydesdale area. To date, 321 people have been engaged with 32 entering a job and 42 moving into Further Education or training.

Future Jobs Fund – 26 people to date have successfully secured jobs.

Connect 2 - Between 2008 and 2010, 8 participants for the Clydesdale Area have been engaged on the highly successful Connect 2 programme.

Attracting External Funding

4.18 During 2008/2009 Regeneration Services undertook discussions with the managing authority of the ERDF Priority 4 programme and Scottish Government to make South Lanarkshire rural area eligible for funding. After positive feedback from the managing authority, ESEP Ltd., four applications were developed and submitted last October with a total grant value of £931,784. These applications included:-

- South Lanarkshire Rural Business Space submitted by Enterprise Resources for development of serviced business platforms in Biggar at the site of the former abattoir. The project cost being £831,642 with eligible costs of £678,471 and grant request of £231,638.
- St Brides Centre, Douglas submitted by Enterprise Resources on behalf of St Brides Community Group for the renovation and development of the building for business and community support. The project cost being £949,279 with eligible costs of £595,546 and grant request of £235,546.
- Biggar Corn Exchange submitted by Community Resources for the phase 2 development of the building to provide facilities and services for local businesses and the community. The project cost being £687,375 with eligible costs of £201,500 and grant request of £80,600.

- Clydesdale Community Workshop submitted by Clydesdale Community Initiative for the development of an integrated training learning and IT workshop near Lanark. The project cost being £960,000 with eligible costs of £960,000 and grant request of £384,000.

The final decision on these is expected to be announced in early April 2010.

- 4.19 Enterprise Resources working with external partner organisations has also submitted a £2M application for funding to the Heritage Lottery Funds Landscape Partnership scheme. This project will work with partners and land owners in the lower Clyde Valley from Lanark to Chatelherault and preserve, promote and enhance the natural heritage of the area including; improving access, interpretation, training, tree habitat and orchards.

Business Support and Property Information

- 4.20 Business support measures play a vital role in the Council's response to the economic downturn. These include:-

- Revising the Business Gateway Programme.
- Working with the Business Gateway and Chamber of Commerce and alongside the High St banks to ensure easier access to development finance.
- Hosting "Meet the Buyer" Events for companies involving purchasing officers from all Council Resources and partner agencies within Lanarkshire.
- Reconfiguring the Council's business support such as reducing interest rates and introducing short term repayment "holidays" in respect of the West of Scotland Loan Fund.
- Ensuring maximum uptake of the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme.
- Investigating how the Council's purchasing power can be used to support the local business community and help grow the local economy.
- Recently co-hosting the annual Lanarkshire Business Excellence Awards designed to celebrate the quality, diversity and success of local companies.

- 4.21 In the current financial year (April 2009 to February 2010), the Council's business support programmes have achieved the following results in the Clydesdale area:-

- West of Scotland Loan Fund – 48 jobs safeguarded with £587,435 additional sales.
- Lanarkshire Sustainable Business Programme – 20 businesses assisted, 70 jobs safeguarded/ created and £841,000 additional sales.
- Property Advice Service – 47 enquiries taken with 8 satisfied.
- Business Training Support – 8 businesses assisted, 40 trainees assisted, £440,000 additional sales achieved.
- Rural Capital Grant Scheme – 11 businesses assisted, £745,934 additional sales.

Property Transactions

- 4.22 A series of property transactions have been concluded and submitted in the Clydesdale Area as follows:-

- 12 disposals valued at £318,855
- 4 acquisitions valued at £26,000
- 21 leases valued at £151,546

Property Development

- 4.23 The Property Development team with Regeneration Services has continued to support partners with the promotion and implementation of important projects designed to enhance the attractiveness of the area as a place to work, live and do business. These projects included
- Carluke Business Centre – The completion of this £250,000 scheme allows the Council to provide up to 10 individual serviced office units in the heart of Carluke. The redevelopment of the former Jobcentre in Hamilton Street was carried out to help satisfy the proven need for good quality office accommodation at ground floor level within the rural area.
 - Lesmahagow Business Space – The Council is currently working on the refurbishment of the former Community Resources Land Services Depot at Langdykeside, in the heart of the village. This redundant property will receive almost £400,000 worth of investment in order to provide modern workspace suited to local companies who may have had to move out of the area in order to source suitable accommodation. The project will be complete in Summer 2010.
 - Lanark North Vennel Public Realm – Following the successful completion of the Lanark Streetscape Phase 1 project in 2005 the need for further improvement works at North Vennel was identified to provide a high quality hard landscaped area adjacent to the town centre whilst at the same time implementing improvements to car parking provision, rear servicing and improved pedestrian access from North Vennel to the High Street. These works were recently completed at a project cost of over £750,000.

Concluding Remarks

- 4.24 As can be seen, the work of Regeneration Services is comprehensive and makes a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement and the Council Plan, 'Connect'. This is also reflected in the development activity undertaken within the Clydesdale Area Committee area.

5.0 Employee Implications

- 5.1 There are no employee implications.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report with all activities being met from within existing budgets held by Enterprise Resources.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1 There are no other implications.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1 This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

- 8.1 Partners, local communities, service users, employers and local delivery organisations have been consulted in the design and development of the relevant components of Regeneration Services' projects and programmes.

Colin McDowall
Executive Director (Enterprise Resources)

10 March 2010

Link(s) to Council Objectives

- Tackling disadvantage and deprivation
- Supporting the local economy by providing the right conditions for growth, improving skills and employability

Previous References

- Relevant Enterprise Committee reports

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Simon Carey, Regeneration and Inclusion Manager

Ext: 3812 (Tel: 01698 453812)

E-mail: simon.carey@southlanarkshire.gov.uk