

NDC Partnership Progress Monitoring Form 2007

NDC Partnership	Date of Sign Off	Completing GO/NDC Officers	Authorising GO Officer (Grade 7 or above)
Islington – EC1 New Deal for Communities			

Summary

Summarise how your Partnership is progressing against the 2007/08 delivery plan? (500 words)

Eighty projects are being delivered using NDC grant this financial year. All applications and appraisals have been completed, and projects are making good progress in achieving their objectives and outputs. For example, the NDC has funded over 6,500 places in projects designed to improve attainment, 2,900 places in youth diversionary projects and 2,800 places in healthy lifestyle projects. Eighty five local people have gained employment thanks to NDC funded projects, and 42 businesses have been helped.

At the end of December 2007, 67% of the budget allocation for 2007/08 had been spent, and we are confident that our revised budget targets will be met. There is a risk of a capital under-spend but this is not serious, because we deliberately over-programmed and have set up additional links with partners for the final quarter. In addition to managing NDC grant and projects, the EC1 Delivery Team adds value through influencing and brokering, and this is acknowledged by the Board and stakeholders.

We continue to achieve our outcome targets and the small number of newly available indicators for 2007 show continued improvement. We have been particularly successful in achieving 'place' targets. Employment and education figures available this year have also shown steady progress. For example, 84% of local 16 year olds entered training or work-based learning in 2007 compared with 65% in 2003. The neighbourhood is now on a steadily improving trajectory in most respects. Importantly, strategic partners are now more engaged, and therefore willing to test new initiatives to address the remaining problems.

We have made good progress in delivering the Improvement Plan. Twelve of the 20 milestones had been achieved by December, with most of the remaining areas originally planned for achievement in quarter 4. There has been some slippage in achieving the succession milestones given the

complexity of local circumstances. We have engaged extra support, both through a Neighbourhood Renewal Adviser and independently through an external consultancy, which we believe will produce a more robust plan.

Areas of significant progress this year include: succession planning, partner engagement, performance management, organisational capacity, and research and policy work on the role of the local housing market. In the area of partner engagement, for example, we have strengthened relationships with the Local Strategic Partnership. This will allow us to work closely with the LSP in the delivery of the Local Area Agreement for the forthcoming CSR period, and to help embed the EC1 approach into LAA beginning in 2011/12.

There are very few current barriers to delivery that pose significant challenges. There is a good awareness of risks amongst the Board, Chief Executive and Senior Management Team. Looking forward, the risks associated with our work for the final three years of the programme include the complexity of succession planning, retention of staff, exit arrangements for revenue projects and delivery timetables for capital projects. Resources are being deployed to manage these risks, for example by strengthening project management arrangements, additional forward planning and the active intervention of senior NDC staff and Board members where necessary.

Achievements and Outcomes

What are the key achievements for 2007/08? (200 words)

- An improved profile and reputation with key stakeholders, including the local authority at councillor and officer level, partner agencies, the local community and voluntary sector, and central government. EC1 is increasingly recognised as a well managed and well governed organisation, thereby attracting greater interest and support.
- Improved media coverage, and reputation with the local community. There were 78 positive stories in the local press during 2007, compared with 70 in 2006. Negative coverage fell significantly from 60 articles in 2006 to 19 in 2007.
- Developing our influencing role and building new relationships with a range of organisations that can help the area, including the City of London, City Fringe Partnership, the LSP, housing providers, local

business (including the Chamber of Commerce), key local voluntary sector groups, and other community facilities (e.g. Children's Centres).

- The development of a set of clear legacies that will form the basis of our delivery and succession planning. There is new momentum behind some of our largest legacy projects such as the renewal of Finsbury Leisure Centre/Ironmonger Row Baths.
- Improved project and performance management arrangements. Eighty projects are being delivered this financial year, with effective quarterly output and budget monitoring in place. EC1 has achieved its best expenditure record to date.
- Embedding the new governance arrangements and effectively inducting a number of new resident and partner Board members.

Provide a commentary on how your Partnership is progressing against the following key themes? (200 words per theme)

Worklessness, skills, local economy etc.

The number of workless people has continued to fall gradually over the last year, helped by NDC funded projects. This year so far, EC1 projects have helped 85 local people into employment. Seventy people have received job training, and 97 people have been helped to gain accredited qualifications in 2007/08. We have also funded over 80 child care places.

An NDC funded outreach and referral project continues to connect households to a range of social and welfare services. In 2007, this worked with 39 partner providers, referring 524 local residents for further services.

The local economy is in good shape, with significant private sector investment reflecting increasing confidence in the area. EC1 funding has contributed to this, for example through improvements to public space and stimulating economic activity in the local street market. An ongoing challenge is connecting local residents with this growth due to a mismatch with skills, and this will be an important priority going forward.

Education

Annual statistics from CEA@Islington show a small improvement in primary school results and attendance rates, even in a context of increasing numbers of children on free school meals and for whom English is a second land language. For example, the absence rate in EC1 primary schools was 6.2 in 2006/7, compared with 7.2 in 2002/3. At the secondary level, A*-C rates at GCSE also continue to improve in local schools.

We invest heavily in local education services, funding 14 positions of teacher/teaching assistants in local schools. A recent independent evaluation highlighted the important role NDC-funded projects have played in helping schools to better involve parents in school life, to work in partnership across the area and to pilot ways of targeting support to children at most risk of failing. A new £12m combined primary schools and children centre is due to open in the Spring, which presents a valuable opportunity to create a flagship community-focussed school in the area.

Crime

Metropolitan Police year-on-year statistics show an overall decrease in crimes per 1000 population for the main ward in which EC1 NDC is based. We estimate the number of crimes fell by 16% between Dec 2006 and Dec 2007 (from 312 to 261 per 1000 resident population), further re-inforcing the overall picture of EC1 as a relatively low crime area. Our approach on crime focuses on working effectively with mainstream provides, such as the Safer Neighbourhoods Team and Multi-Agency Geographical Panel for Intervention (MAGPI). In addition, two major estate security schemes have been completed this year, and the largest remaining estate will receive door entry systems in early 2008.

Worries about crime and anti-social behaviour continue to be an important issue for residents, so we have invested in youth-related activity to help tackle this. NDC funding created 2,975 inclusion/ diversionary places for young people in the first three quarters of 2007/08. We also helped successfully launch a high-profile music centre for young people, and new mobile youth vehicles for outreach workers.

Health

There has been no new data for EC1 area health indicators this year, but we have continued to fund a range of healthy lifestyle projects that reach large numbers in the local population. Over 2,824 places have been provided on such projects, including a community sports coach, smoking cessation and sexual health services.

In addition, a consultation has been carried out with the council on the large-scale re-development of local leisure facilities. The EC1 Board has set a number of objectives for this project, including their greater use by local residents.

Housing & Physical Environment

The EC1 environment continues to improve, as a result of both private and public sector investment. Two major NDC-funded projects have won prestigious awards - the Old Street Promenade of Light and Spa Fields. This is being followed up with the further improvement of other streets and parks, including the preparation of 'whole estate frameworks' to guide further investment.

A number of large estates have received major works under the Decent Homes programme this year, and NDC funding is being used to complement this by ensuring that improved environmental and security features provide a 'decent place to live'. By the end of December 112 additional homes had improved security, with a total of 547 to be achieved this year. As a broader indicator of our success, we have been advised by the council that previously hard-to-let estates and blocks in EC1 have increased in popularity under the council's choice-based lettings system.

Achievement of the NDC's longer term objectives is affected by the high proportion of social housing in the area (67%) so the NDC has begun a programme of work to influence the future of housing provision in the area. There are a number of options available but, in particular, we are working to influence local lettings and planning policy through the forthcoming review of the council's housing strategy.

Community capacity, cohesion, empowerment etc.

No new statistics are available to assess the performance against outcome indicators in this area but output performance is above target – with 267 local people employed in voluntary work through NDC projects, and 166 voluntary groups supported. In addition to directly funded projects, the NDC community development team regular works with and supports 37 groups within the area in their work to increase their capacity.

As EC1 moves into the final phase, we are putting more effort into strengthening the local community and third sector as an important legacy, working closely with other funders. This includes more targeted support to local voluntary service providers (such as youth projects) and increasing the participation in local governance institutions (school governors, tenants associations and so on).

In 2007 EC1 NDC successfully organised and ran the first ever EC1 Pride in our People Awards. This gala event, in conjunction with the annual EC1 Summer Festival, helped the NDC to engage with hundreds of local residents and has precipitated the involvement of a growing number of community volunteers.

Other

Financial Management

Financial Year	Allocation	Commentary including ability to spend money in year
2007/08	£7,355,000 (post mid-year review)	We are confident that EC1 will meet the revised spend target of 7.355m due to effective programme management. In particular, we have deliberately over-programmed on capital to take account of potential slippage.
2008/09 (Provisional)	£7,816,808	We would prefer to move some revenue and capital provisionally allocated in 2008/9 to the final two years. This has been communicated to CLG through the recent exercise (8 Feb 2008)
2009/10 (Provisional)	£6,702,202	
2010/2011 (Provisional)	£5,643,172	

Governance

Are there currently any issues around Governance which needs to be brought to our attention which could impact on delivery? (200 words)

There are no significant risks related to governance. The current governance arrangements were put into place last year following a selection process for resident members, and provide a platform for stable delivery during the final years of the programme.

The board is made up of a resident chair, eight appointed resident members, six officer representatives of partner organisations, one councillor, one from the voluntary and community sector, and one from business. The resident chair of the board is an associate member of the LSP board.

The sub groups (liveability, life-opportunities, community development and

sustainability & succession) have all been working on the more specific details of work, leaving the board to concentrate on strategy and longer term planning. This will likely be reflected in them meeting less frequently in future.

The legal structure of the NDC remains that of an unincorporated body, and this will only be changed following any recommendations in the succession plan.

The delivery team is provided by a regeneration company, Renaisi, through a contract with the Accountable Body that is currently due to end in December 2008. This has potential risks for the stability of the staff team, and needs to be mitigated through early agreement of any new contract arrangements for the final years of the NDC, and aligning these decisions with the succession strategy. The Accountable Body (LBI) is having an internal staff re-structure, which will result in new responsible staff and arrangements.

Risk Management

**Are there currently any risks to delivery in 2007/08 and beyond and how are these being mitigated? Highlight the key risks.
(500 words)**

Risks are in respect of:

- Capital programme delivery
- Exit arrangements for revenue projects
- The complexity of succession planning
- Recruitment and retention of staff as the programme begins to wind down
- A potential change on the political leadership of the local authority in the final year of the programme

They are being mitigated as follows:

- Delivery of the capital programme is dependent on capacity and effective project management amongst partners, in particular the council and ALMO. The Board has made the key decisions on the allocation of the remaining budget, but there is still a significant amount to spend, given a pattern of greater revenue spending in earlier years of the programme. This is being managed through the clear project management roles, detailed forward planning and the active intervention of senior NDC staff and Board members where necessary.
- As the NDC funding reduces, there is a potential for the reputation of EC1 to be damaged and for positive work not be sustained. This is

mainly being managed by the way in NDC seeks funding bids for the final three years. We are now looking for applications with strong partner support and will only fund organisations that can demonstrate a clear plan for sustainability. We are also being clear with our Board and sub-groups about that they need to be responsible for explaining and supporting the inevitably difficult decisions in relation to funding.

- Delays or difficulties in agreeing a succession plan could create a lack of focus and direction to the work of the NDC during the final phase. This is being managed through clear project planning, and allocation of significant staff and financial resources. The Chief Executive is taking direct responsibility for high-level negotiations with key partners, and driving forward the plan. We have also sourced external expertise, both through a Neighbourhood Renewal Adviser and independently through consultancy support.
- Maintaining a stable and skilled team could be more difficult as remaining duration and funding for the EC1 project reduces. This is being managed through a process of forward planning and communication. A review of the staff structure will be completed in 2008, as there will inevitably be a reducing staff requirement towards the end of the programme. Our relationship with Renaisi provides a valuable opportunity to maintain the skills and knowledge of current staff, whilst enabling a transition to future roles (for example, through shared working). Finally, it will be important to maintain staff motivation and morale through open, clear and structured communication (e.g. staff away-days).
- A change in the political administration of the local authority could potentially disrupt plans for succession and mainstreaming. We are therefore keeping the opposition groups apprised of our plans, and seeking their views.

Succession planning

**What is the status of the Partnership in terms of succession planning including details on what is proposed and at what stage the NDC is currently at?
(200 words)**

A neighbourhood management vehicle will be constituted – at least in ‘shadow’ form - by the end of 2008/09. An emerging focus of activities and interventions include:

- Brokering service provider relationships to improve life opportunities (employment, skills, income)
- Community engagement
- Capacity building
- Raising funds for and profile of the neighbourhood
- Other activities that can generate income

Governance, legal and funding questions are being explored. In this context we are negotiating with a local parochial trust about the potential role(s) they could play in terms of funding, hosting and/or delivering neighbourhood management, linked to an NDC capital contribution to develop their community centre.

£1.7m has been allocated for the construction of a community facility at Three Corners/Spa Fields. This will be developed (subject to the results of an LSC in late April) as a facility for children, young people and adults managed by a community organisation. £50,000 of revenue grant will support this development during 2008/09.

Other succession opportunities being explored are in respect of:

- A Town Centre Management approach to the regeneration of Whitecross Street and surrounding area
- Expanded role for local TMOs
- The role of the new community-focussed school/children’s centre

Board members have been closely involved in succession planning. There have been two away-days to discuss options, and a Succession sub-group has been set up to oversee the process.

CLG Support

What are the top 5 things you require to assist delivery? How necessary are they for you? (short bullets)

- Finance – confirmation of allocations for the remaining three years of the programme, and the process for conducting mid-year reviews.
Crucial
- Assets and clawback. Guidance on managing final stages of the capital

funding, and ensuring assts can be fully transferred to local bodies.
Important.

- Succession policy context, including possible arrangements for endowments. Also, related guidance on the effective roles of the Accountable Body in succession and final stages of the programme.
- Winding-down delivery teams – e.g. formal guidance on redundancy arrangements.
- Neighbourhood management. Desirable
- Be an advocate for the NDC programme within the department and government generally, particularly in terms of highlighting the work that NDCs have done that is relevant to currently emerging policy, such as housing, public realm and community asset transfer.