

Executive Summary

Of

Norris Green Community Research Project

Undertaken by
a group of local residents of Norris Green
and
Navarro Training & Consultancy

On behalf of Norris Green Reference Group

November 2006

Acknowledgements

Navarro Training & Consultancy (NTC) would like to thank the local residents (Gillian Cannon, Samantha McArdle, Jackie Colleran, Patricia McGrath, Sharon Lee and Jacqueline Brady) who undertook the door to door survey work and who assisted in facilitating the feedback sessions and workshop.

Norris Green has been in the news lately for all the wrong reasons but the research project has demonstrated the talent and dedication that lies within the area. The local residents had not previously undertaken any training in market research and when we met them for the first time were apprehensive about knocking on doors. The local residents also provided additional insights, knowledge and experience of the area that have contributed to the shaping of the survey questions, the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report.

NTC would also like to thank the Norris Green Reference Group for their support in particular Ann Stein for arranging venues and supporting the project, Pauline Thornley and Rhona Parker for helping to get local people involved and Pat Davey of Sure Start for raising awareness of the research with local residents who are registered with Sure Start.

Introduction

This is a summary of research carried out by Navarro Training & Consultancy and a group of local residents of Norris Green Liverpool. The research was commissioned by Norris Green Reference Group (who are a group of people who work and live in the Norris Green area) with funding from the John Moores Foundation.

The report provides information on the results of a community survey of 406 local residents of Norris Green along with the findings from two feedback sessions, a workshop and meetings held with local residents, community representatives and representatives from public and voluntary sector agencies¹ who provide services within the area.

The aim of the research was to discover what a cross section of local residents of Norris Green:

- Liked and disliked about living in the area
- What they thought would improve the area
- Community facilities and services they knew of and accessed
- What they thought were the barriers to community involvement for them and what would help to become more involved

Profile of Norris Green

Norris Green lies to the North-East of Liverpool and comprises of a housing estate which was built in the 1920's. The area suffers from the typically high deprivation factors like many other areas of Liverpool including defective housing, unemployment and low income levels.

¹ The term agencies is used throughout the report and refers to public sector and community/voluntary sector organisations that either provide services or community facilities

Findings of the Research

- Half of the people we spoke to had lived in Norris Green for over 20 years
- The most frequently given positive answer as to why people liked living in Norris Green was that their friends or family lived nearby. However more respondents stated that there was nothing in particular they liked about living in Norris Green.
- Gangs on the street was the most frequently given dislike of living in Norris Green, followed by crime. One in five stated that there was nothing they disliked about living in Norris Green.
- Cleaning up the area, more recreational facilities and improving housing were the three most commonly given answers as to how to improve the area of Norris Green.
- Social clubs and sport centres were the most frequently identified areas to socialise in Norris Green. Two in five stated there were no facilities to socialise in, in the area.
- One in six stated that social clubs could be used to socialise with friends in Norris Green. Over half stated that there were no facilities available.
- A sports centre and the park or fields were the most commonly identified places where Norris Green residents could play or watch sports. Half of the respondents stated that there was nowhere they could partake in these activities.
- The Library and Ellergreen Community Centre were the most frequently given responses to where residents could go on learning courses. Again over half of respondents did not believe there were any facilities for this.
- One in ten of the respondents believed that Ellergreen Community Centre had the facilities to offer training courses in Norris Green. Two in three respondents stated that there were no facilities for this purpose in Norris Green
- Four in nine respondents stated that they could visit the doctor or GP for advice on health issues in Norris Green.
- Four in ten respondents stated that the Citizens Advice Bureau was a facility to get Citizens advice from in Norris Green

- Four in five respondents stated that there were no facilities in Norris Green to engage in Community events.
- Four in five respondents stated that there were no facilities in Norris Green to talk to the local councillor.
- One in three respondents named Cobalt Housing Association offices as a place to talk to your local housing association in Norris Green.
- Nine in ten stated that there were no facilities in Norris Green to attend a police forum.
- Seventeen in twenty respondents stated that there were no facilities in Norris Green to attend tenants and residents association meetings.
- Nine in ten respondents stated that there were no facilities in Norris Green where your opinions could be heard.
- Family activities and playing and watching sports were the two activities of most interest to the Norris Green residents
- Three in ten respondents stated that there was nowhere in Norris Green to pursue the activities that interested them.
- Three in ten respondents had got involved in activities in Norris Green.
- Of those who had got involved in Norris Green activities, one in four had organised or helped to organise the activities.
- Two in three of the respondents had got involved in the activities because it was of personal interest to them
- A lack of knowledge of events taking place, as well as not knowing how to get involved were the most frequent given answers as to why respondents had not got involved in activities before.
- Those who stated they did not have enough time to get involved stated that they could be most likely encouraged by door to door canvassing.

Conclusions

The majority of people who participated in the survey, feedback sessions and workshop expressed views that lead to a conclusion that community spirit is low, which on the one hand is often a natural viewpoint as people often express the view that community spirit was better ten, twenty or forty years ago no matter what area they live in.

However the current situation in Norris Green i.e. gangs and shootings have according to people attending the feedback sessions and workshops had an affect on the community spirit. On a positive note the evidence within the survey points to a stable community with little transience which is a prerequisite for creating community spirit and ownership within the area. Representatives from agencies and community and voluntary sector groups suggested that the area needs initiatives that are going to raise its image to tackle the current negativity.

The linkage to family and friends by people in the area is what local people valued the most about living in the area. However this was contrasted with their main dislikes about living in the area which concerned community safety.

Respondents stated that the environment of the area was the one thing above all else that needed to be improved, commonly translated as "clean the area up". According to research commissioned by the Alt Valley Partnership children and young people have very similar concerns to adults about their area.

Respondents in the survey said that they did not know of services or where to access them within the area. This is not to say that those services did not exist in the area and a viewpoint from those attending the workshop from agencies was that there appears to be no less facilities and services for people in Norris Green compared with other similar areas of Liverpool.

There is a need to identify specific services that are targeted to meet the requirements of particular sections of the community and to strengthen and sustain the existing community facilities.

There appears to be no forum for paid workers from agencies and community/voluntary sector groups to meet as a way of ensuring that information and good practice is shared among agencies and co-operative working is enhanced.

Agencies participating in the workshop acknowledge that traditional forms of communication (leaflets, newsletters, flyers) to gain the involvement of local people have had limited success in the past.

Respondents in the survey specified that the barriers for them to getting more involved in community activities were lack of knowledge of facilities and events taking place and also a lack of knowledge of how to get involved. Apathy was

also suggested as a reason for non-participation given in the feedback sessions and workshop. This is contrasted with the finding from the survey that nearly one third of respondents said they had participated in some form of community activity.

The respondents in the survey stated that knocking on their door was the most likely way of getting people involved in community activity and events. The view of the agencies and community groups attending the workshop was that they haven't got the resources to do this at present. However there were suggestions that a joint approach to producing a newspaper, re-starting a project called "Alt FM" that was successful in gaining a cross section of community involvement and exploring how to get more people access to the internet should be considered.

There appears to be an absence of community development workers in the area who operate on a generic basis i.e. not contained to working on issues relating to a single issue such as health or housing. This absence could lead to a silo approach to working as community development workers only focus on issues related to their specific duties.

Recommendations

A) Recommendations for Norris Green Reference Group

1. The Reference Group explores how it can publicise the findings of the research and takes lead responsibility for distributing and sharing the findings at forums and meetings with agencies and community/voluntary sector groups in the area.
2. The Reference Group identify appropriate agencies that can provide leadership and take responsibility for ensuring that individual recommendations are undertaken.
3. The Reference Group establishes a timetable for periodically reviewing the progress of the recommendations and evaluating their impact.
4. The Reference Group consider how it can widen its membership to provide a forum for paid workers and community activists in the Norris Green and act as a vehicle for sharing information and good practice.

B) Recommendations to be promoted by the Reference Group with public sector agencies and community/voluntary sector organisations in the Norris Green area

1. Agencies and community/voluntary sector organisations resource and facilitate an annual community awards ceremony as a mechanism for promoting the image of Norris Green and to enable groups and agencies to celebrate the work they do.
2. Agencies and community/voluntary groups explore how they can resource existing and develop new inter-generational work between people within the area.
3. Agencies and community/voluntary sector organisations establish a cross agency working group to review the communications practice between agencies and to explore alternative ways that will compliment or replace existing practices of communicating information to local people.
4. Agencies and community/voluntary sector organisations explore the feasibility (including the feasibility of an existing agency undertaking the task) of establishing a community enterprise with a remit to knock on local people's doors to provide information on community activities, events and undertake consultations. Revenue could be provided for the enterprise from agencies that do not have the staffing resources to undertake such exercises.
5. Agencies and community/voluntary sector organisations consider mechanisms for example, forums for how local people and in particular children and young people can air their views on a consistent basis.

6. Agencies should review their community involvement activities to assess the number of “out of office hours” community involvement activity they undertake with a view to increasing or re-allocating resources as appropriate

7. Agencies and community/voluntary groups should explore whether there are sufficient community facilities/activities available for young people in particular the 5-13yr age group and how they can resource existing provision within the community.

8. Agencies give consideration to jointly funding and/or attaining external funding for the establishment of a Community Development Co-ordinator post that will assist the Reference group and agencies in fulfilling the aforementioned recommendations and seek to co-ordinate community activity and communication within Norris Green in the future

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