



Towards a Culture of Active Participation

A New Approach to Sustainable Environmental Improvement

Liveability Scheme
Statement of Interest



Great Yarmouth
Borough Council

Welcome to Great Yarmouth:

A Deprived Place

"We have been awed by the scale of problems you face and impressed by your determination to address them successfully"

SOLACE Peer Challenge Team, April 2003

The Borough area of Great Yarmouth contains wards of deprivation so severe that it ranks fifth worst amongst English local authorities on the intensity measures within the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000. Six out of the ten most deprived wards in Norfolk are in Great Yarmouth and around two thirds of the Borough's wards are within the worst 15% across England.

Great Yarmouth's Regent Ward is most deprived of these, ranking 8th nationally in the Indices of Deprivation.

Building on Current Progress

Resulting from this nationally recognised problem of deprivation, Great Yarmouth Borough Council has already invested improved effort toward formulating regeneration schemes and service delivery changes to target problems of deprivation and to begin the regeneration of a local environment that has suffered decades of structural decline. New initiatives are formulated through the efforts and support of the Boroughwide Environmental Forum, which is part of a fully accredited Local Strategic Partnership, in line with the Borough's overarching 2020 Vision for a cleaner, more attractive, safer environment, and have regard to the ambitions of the recently published Neighborhood Renewal Strategy. All current efforts of the Borough Council toward environmental regeneration aim to involve stakeholder communities and key partners, fostering civic pride and local ownership.

Thus much of the detailed work required to prepare a full proposal from Great Yarmouth Borough Council to pilot the Liveability Fund Scheme has already been completed, and there are a wide range of schemes currently formulated which would significantly enhance this application.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council has recently undergone a rigorous CPA process, which at first indication reflects both the challenges facing the Borough and a recognition that it is beginning to effectively move forward. It is envisaged that a full proposal would make use of the invaluable insight this process has delivered.

Environmental Rangers:

A Key Role

The Council has long realised that its role must extend well beyond its statutory functions and services. The immense challenges of regenerating Great Yarmouth require clarity of vision, strength of purpose and leadership capable of mobilising all stakeholders and key providers across the community.

Improving the quality of liveability / public space services in Great Yarmouth must have specific regard to demonstrable need, and reflects the requirements and wishes of residents of the Borough.

To this end a temporary team of two NRF funded Environmental Rangers are currently in place. They act not only as the eyes and ears of the Council in relation to environmental problems, but also actively seek the improvement of local environments through education & guidance, and enforcement activities. Their current role identifies where Council services need to concentrate their efforts to make a real visible difference. They have a primary link into parks & public spaces throughout the Borough, and indeed into all the aspects on the list in Annex A of the Liveability Fund guidance.

Their role is not just relevant to the Borough Council, but in particular to the residents and stakeholders in the Regent Policing Priority Area, which is our most deprived ward. To the community at large, including schools, the police, voluntary groups and resident associations, the Environmental Rangers are the most visible frontline staff the Council currently have, an assertion borne out by the rocketing demand for their services since they were launched in 2002. Extra funding would add focus and three year's stability to the Environmental Ranger initiative, which is currently threatened due to time limited NRF funding.

Liveability funding would allow the Borough Council to specifically task each member of the Ranger Team with different responsibilities: education & community network building, proactive enforcement and reporting of problems throughout the Borough, rather than the current holistic approach favoured by funding limitations.

Additional responsibilities for an enhanced Ranger team, including playground safety, bus stop, cycle lane and pedestrian route cleanliness would significantly enhance their visible impact upon the cleanliness of the Borough.



Meeting Community Needs:

Planning for Real

The Council would take the following approach to formulating a proposal to pilot the liveability Scheme. The proposal would principally aim to recognise and promote the importance of the great many public open spaces throughout the Borough which currently exist and which have deteriorated, reducing their Amenity value. The scheme will focus on wide ranging improvements to existing areas throughout the Borough which will be sustainable, rather than aim to build one or two new facilities, thus limiting our impact area. Great Yarmouth contains much within it that can be rescued. This is our duty for maximum environmental improvement Boroughwide.

Expand Capacity and Survey Need

Secure and expand the current Environmental Ranger team of three beyond the end of their current NRF funding in March 2004, and use them to survey the amenity value of parks and public open spaces using pre-defined criteria, and also places around businesses to which the public have access, across our compact Borough area. The inclusion of space around businesses within the remit of the proposal would help influence a multiplier effect, fulfilling the aims and objectives of our boroughwide Regeneration Strategy.

Agree Need with Community Groups

Over 3 years, determine minimum of 50 community action projects from 'Planning for Real' consultation exercises with groups targeted by the enhanced Environmental Rangers team, now specifically tasked with community consultation imperatives. These will address needs perceived from the initial survey and also what organised and developed community groups themselves feel they need. 2001's Best Value Review of Great Yarmouth Borough Council involved 'roadshow' events throughout the Borough, to ask residents what they felt they needed from their Local Authority. An overwhelming majority, although they agreed with important and necessary economic regeneration initiatives with regard to tourism and industry in the town centre, felt most that local areas of degraded land which were a constant disappointment to them, represented the most pressing liveability issues in the Borough.

Design for Sustainability

Design in sustainable methods for communities to take ownership of improvements resulting from agreed capital investments in green parks, open spaces etc which have occurred. It is envisaged that Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES) will be instrumental in this, and there is considerable scope for the creation of sustainable community enterprises to maintain the physical improvements achieved. Preliminary consultation with NWES, as well as organised residents associations and voluntary groups willing to assume ownership and maintenance responsibility for local public spaces is ongoing.

Invest Capital

Upon identification and agreement of need for improvement, any Capital investment arising from this process would therefore be specifically focused to community need, with comparative regard to need perceived by the Borough Council's baseline survey, undertaken by the Environmental Rangers.



Sustainable Progress:

Community Ownership

An important thrust of the Environmental Ranger initiative is to link research and education related to environmental stewardship to communities. This is being organised around the Local Strategic Partnership and ties in with the aims of recently published Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

Partnership with 50 community groups will enable communities to make land use, community planning, and environmental management decisions that bring them closer to a sustainable future. These co-operative extension programmes will join in the development and delivery of the Liveability Programme. The overarching aim of the liveability project would be to provide education and training for local sustainable development champions identified through the scheme, before and during the capital investment phase in each group area. This would be with a view to establishing community enterprise schemes, in partnership with Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services. We seek to learn from and coalesce other related efforts around the Borough, including those of the Seafront Regeneration Partnership, Town Centre Partnership and Crime Reduction Partnership.

Measuring Progress

Wide ranging indicators would be employed to measure the success and performance of each chosen community group. These will include social and economic indicators as well as environmental, to not only measure physical improvements over time in the quality of the local environment, but also having regard to other key factors which will indicate sustainability, some of which could be drawn from the economic, social and neighbourhood renewal strategies.

From their experience of coordinating community programmes throughout the Borough, the Environmental Ranger team will provide the mediation between community and local authority to ensure prompt and accurate reporting of agreed indicators.



For further information concerning this statement, contact

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