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The Compendium Group: Coalville / Weston Heights
Regeneration Programme

The History of Coalville

The Coalville estate is situated in the Weston Coyney area of Stoke-on-Trent. The estate was originally built in 1954 by the National Coal Board to provide 406 homes for the mining community. The construction used two different processes, Wates & Cornish. The houses were built with an expected life of up to 15 years, more than 50 years ago.

The NCB offered these properties for sale in the early 1980's. Many were acquired by the existing residents. Those that remained were sold at auction in London to private investors.

The concrete used in the construction of these properties was subsequently found to be defective, rendering the properties 'unmortgageable'. Later in the 1980's means tested grants to meet the costs required to bring the properties to mortgageable standards were made available to owner occupiers. This led to approximately 150 being refurbished. The remaining properties, which have remained 'unmortgageable' have continued to appeal largely to private investors, many of whom have subsequently rented them out privately and invested little in the properties themselves.

Concerns were raised by residents in the 1990's over the estate's declining quality, image and housing market. This resulted in the formation of the Coalville Partnership. The Partnership originally comprised representatives of the Residents' Association, Riverside Housing Association, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffordshire Housing Association and William Davis Ltd, who carried out some early refurbishment on the estate. The Partnership has developed over time, and since the appointment of The Compendium Group Ltd in 2006 to carry out the regeneration, now comprises Coalville Residents' Association, Compendium, Riverside Housing Association, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Renew North Staffordshire (the Housing market renewal Pathfinder body for the area) & the Housing Corporation.

With the emergence of Housing Market Renewal funding, aimed at tackling housing market failure in the area, it became possible to regenerate the estate on a much larger scale than originally intended. Between 2006 and 2008 alone, North Staffordshire has been awarded £67.5 million pounds by Government for Housing Market Renewal. Coalville was identified at an early stage as a priority project within this initiative.

The Vision

The vision of renewal aims to transform the former coal miners' estate in three ways. The Coalville estate will be remodelled, renamed and restored to complement and enhance surrounding neighbourhoods and countryside, to become a place where its founding community are proud to live and where new families will want to settle.

Remodelled – Through the implementation of a masterplan, it will provide a mix of carefully designed private houses and bungalows to meet the changing needs of both the existing community and the wider housing market across a range of tenures. It will also provide quality public open space and amenities and blur the boundaries that isolate the estate from the adjoining countryside and the neighbouring private housing.

Renamed – In consultation with the community we would like to remove the stigma that has become associated with the Coalville name over the last decade or so and put to rest the image of a poor quality housing estate in decline. This would serve to celebrate the new identity of the area within the surrounding popular area of Caverswall and Weston Coyney.

Restored – The aim is to remove the blight of unmortgageable properties and provide a mix of affordable and desirable homes for rent and sale. Owner occupation will be increased; the confidence of the housing market will be restored both for existing and new owner occupiers; the future of the beacon status school will be safeguarded and an influx of new families to the area will be encouraged.

To achieve the master plan existing properties will have to be demolished and new homes constructed. New roads and infrastructure will also be developed to replace the existing which is in a poor state of repair. Within the estate there will also be open communal areas, sports amenities including a football pitch, and open playing areas. In addition it is envisaged that new local shopping facilities will be developed.

Method of Renewal

Poor quality housing and high levels of private landlord owned properties were highlighted as two main contributory factors of the economic and social deprivation of the estate. The purpose of regeneration was therefore to tackle these two issues by:

- Acquiring and demolishing private landlord owned property.
- Transforming the tenure mix from 70% rented and 30% owner occupied to 70% owner occupied and 30% rented.

The original housing mix was very limited, consisting almost entirely of semi-detached 3 bed-roomed houses, with a limited number of semi-detached 4 bed-

roomed houses. The re-development will now offer a larger housing mix including:

- 2 bed bungalows
- 2 bed houses
- 3 bed houses
- 4 bed houses

The re-development is a tenure blind scheme which incorporates a resident led pepper potted approach. The development meets eco homes very good standard and Compendium hopes to achieve a silver 'building for life' standard on completion. The regeneration process will take place in four phases. This approach was adopted to avoid disruption to residents and to keep decanting to a minimum.

Phase 1

Commenced January 2007 and should be completed March 2008

- 52 properties will be built in total
- 23 of those will be owned by Riverside Housing and offered for rent
- 4 will be owned by Riverside Housing and offered for shared ownership
- 13 will be retained for existing owner occupiers already on the estate
- 12 will be offered for open market sale

Phase 2

Due to commence October 2007 and should be completed January 2009

- 57 properties will be built in total
- 12 will be offered for rent
- 5 will be offered for shared ownership
- 11 will be retained for existing owner occupiers
- 27 will be offered for open market sale

Phase 3

Due to commence January 2009 and should be completed September 2010

- 89 properties will be built in total
- 13 will be offered for rent
- 5 will be offered for shared ownership
- 1 will be retained for an existing owner occupier
- 70 will be offered for open market sale

Phase 4

Due to commence September 2010 and should be completed June 2012

- 87 properties will be built in total
- 2 will be retained for existing owner occupiers

On completion of the scheme, Compendium would have demolished 255 properties and rebuilt 278 the remainder would have been refurbished. The total stock will increase from 406 to 429 units.

Partnership working

Neighbourhood management planning

Compendium and the Coalville Partnership work within the existing neighbourhood management framework as determined by Stoke City Council & Riverside Housing. This acts alongside a range of interventions and activities undertaken by public service providers in the areas of health; crime; employment; housing and education.

Contributions made by Compendium as part of the regeneration and development process in each of these service areas are developed and reported within the existing neighbourhood management framework. However there was also an additional requirement for the Coalville Partnership and Compendium to establish a local team to deliver the development project and to establish a local management structure, through which progress is reported and stakeholders consulted, including local residents and elected members. This partnership acts as an ongoing forum through which project delivery and progress is reported and communicated and by which local residents and businesses are kept fully informed. Membership of the 'partnership' includes:

- Compendium
- Riverside Housing Association
- Coalville Residents' Association
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council
- RENEW North Staffordshire
- Local Councillors

This structure ensures that the Compendium team involved in the delivery of the regeneration of Coalville has a forum of stakeholders at which progress is reported, issues discussed and information disseminated. It also ensures that local businesses, residents and agencies have an ongoing opportunity to be engaged in the regeneration process and help shape its development. As well as major physical interventions, other themes such as community development, economic development, neighbourhood management and public service delivery are themes for discussion and development through specific delivery groups.

Management and delivery groups involved in the delivery of the Coalville regeneration project comprise of the following:

- Coalville Partnership Board – Management group of representatives of each partner, responsible for overseeing the entire regeneration project.
- Master Planning Delivery Group – Tasked with Master Planning issues regarding the re-development. (Architects, Planning Officers, solicitors).
- Neighbourhood Management Delivery Group – Tasked with Neighbourhood Management issues such as anti-social behaviour and the ongoing maintenance of green open spaces and the estate on the whole.
- Community Development Delivery Group – Tasked with the development of facilities and projects that benefit and build the capacity of the community.

These focus groups would be responsible for steering specific projects that would aim to address priorities identified by the current Neighbourhood Management Policy and members of the Partnership Board.

Community Engagement

Proposals for radical transformation such as the remodelling of Coalville were always likely to involve disruption to the community and the loss of some occupied homes. The community have therefore been consulted and well informed regarding the proposals and the positive benefits of the regeneration. A communication strategy was also devised to ensure efficient communications with all existing residents.

Approach to community consultation, communication strategy

Good quality communication is vital to the success of the regeneration plans for the Coalville Estate. In fact, keeping the local community regularly and reliably informed is fundamental to the success of any major regeneration scheme. Effective communication is a two-way process, the Coalville Partnership must communicate information clearly to the whole community and other stakeholders, and also provide opportunities for them to express their views and directly influence the revival of their estate.

Aims of the strategy

Compendium's aim is to:

- Provide regular and clear communication with the whole community; to keep them informed about and involved in the regeneration of the estate;
- Establish clear and open channels of internal communication between Compendium and other stakeholders to encourage a climate of trust and cohesion and ensure that all relevant staff are kept appropriately informed about the estate and regeneration programme.

- Communicate clearly and regularly with other stakeholders, agencies and partners who have an interest in the success of the regeneration of Coalville;
- Promote the regeneration of Coalville and work to raise the profile and image of the estate.

Key principles

Compendium ensures that its communications adhere to the following principles:

- Openness and honesty: Compendium communicates as much (relevant) information as possible about the regeneration programme and the activities of the development team (with due regard for any commercial or privacy issues and the requirements of the Data Protection Act).
- Clarity: Compendium makes our communications clear and easily understandable. This includes using plain English and avoiding jargon. We will also translate material into other languages, or provide in large-type or on tape, on request.
- Timeliness: Compendium communicates information, decisions and activities to the community as soon as possible and appropriate, and provides up to date information on a regular basis to stakeholders.
- Respect: Compendium will be sensitive to issues of personal privacy and beliefs.
- Consistency of style: All printed material produced follows a Coalville Partnership / Compendium 'style/brand' agreed by Compendium and other stakeholders to ensure that all information relevant to the regeneration of Coalville is easily identifiable.

Key communication areas

Different methods of communication work better for different people, groups of people and types of information. This strategy covers three main areas of communication; who should be responsible for each area, who the target audience is, and what communication methods are most appropriate. The communication areas are consultation, internal communications and public relations.

Consultation

The priority for this aspect of our communications is to make sure that all members of the community and other stakeholders have access to all relevant information regarding the regeneration of their estate; and that they have the opportunities and mechanisms in place for communicating their views and issues back to us both formally and informally. Information is provided in a variety of ways; at various times and locations to enable maximum accessibility.

Residents and tenants are kept informed via the following means:

- Newsletters
- Website
- Patch volunteers (a designated resident whose role it is to communicate relevant information/developments to the rest of the community).
- Suitable access to the project team
- Home visits
- Questionnaires/surveys
- Community information/Open days
- Frequent strategic/direct delivery meetings
- Resident Association meetings

Similar methods of communication are used to ensure adequate partnership working with all stakeholders, local schools and service providers/businesses:

- Newsletters
- Website
- Press releases
- Frequent strategic/direct delivery meetings
- Staff liaison

As well as hard to reach groups:

- Newsletters
- Translated/large type newsletter text/audio equipment

Master Planning Consultation

Consultation with the local community during the Master Planning process requires particular consideration. The Coalville Partnership and Compendium do not regard community participation as a public relations exercise to win support for a preconceived outcome. Its purpose is to learn the requirements and aspirations of the community and ensure that these form the basis of the evolving master Plan. This leads to more appropriate and creative ideas than would be possible without residents' involvement. It also fosters increasing resident support and ownership of the masterplan.

By means of exhibitions, surveys and discussion exercises the Coalville Partnership has gained the confidence of the local community throughout the consultation process, which has served to avoid unnecessary disappointments, distrust and false starts.

The process

The Coalville Partnership and Compendium recognise that it is vital that there should be very clear commitments between the project team and architects as to the significance of resident input from the outset. The aspirations and limitations within which the process is operating must be stated and understood by all.

- Stage one (Feb / March 2004)

The Coalville Partnership and architects presented initial draft proposals for the community to view and make comments and suggestions on. This first draft Master Plan was shaped by information gathered through previous consultation exercises that had taken place over the preceding three years

- Stage two (March / April 2004)

The Coalville Partnership and architects presented a revised Master Plan which took account, as far as possible, of the views expressed and comments made on the first draft proposal. A copy of the original proposal was also available for comparison and a full list of all the comments / suggestions made on the feedback questionnaires during the first round of consultation, with an explanation of what had been done to address the point. Where no action had been taken or the issue raised was something that could not be addressed through the design and planning process, the reasons for this were also explained.

Both stages of the Master Planning consultation involved:

- Community Planning Open Days- at which all the relevant plans and information were on display
- Drop in surgeries - held over a number of days following the Open Day events
- A website www.coalville-vision.co.uk on which the plans could be viewed and on-line feedback forms completed.

Internal communications

The regeneration of Coalville requires key stakeholders to work in partnership. It is therefore essential that communication flows smoothly and regularly between organisations, their representatives and staff involved in the regeneration project. This communication takes the following form:

- Meetings for key stakeholders and the effective circulation of subsequent minutes
- Emails, updates and briefings between key stakeholders
- Project team meetings and briefings
- Newsletters
- Website

Members of the Partnership Board and leaders of the Delivery Teams are responsible for implementing this aspect of the strategy. There is day to day contact between the project team and staff and volunteers from the various partner agencies. Members of the Board and Delivery teams take responsibility

for ensuring that relevant members of their organisations are kept informed with project developments, decisions and progress as appropriate.

Public relations

This area of the strategy addresses how the partnership communicates with the wider public about the estate and the regeneration work being undertaken. Good public relations is fundamental to publicising the regeneration of the estate and the role of Compendium and other stakeholders to a wider public, influencing opinions and raising public perception of the estate as work to improve it progresses.

Communities place a great amount of trust in the local media as their coverage helps to shape local opinions and reflect concerns. Compendium therefore makes every endeavour to establish good relationships with key journalists by adopting a proactive approach to regular media briefings regarding key milestones. In order to ensure as much positive press coverage as possible and to minimise the number and impact of negative press coverage, regular press releases are sent to the local press and the local press are invited to public meetings.

Community Investment

As well as improving the housing market, the Coalville Partnership and the Compendium Group have also made a commitment to improving community facilities and developing community projects and activities. Consultation with residents regarding what community projects and facilities they would like to see on their estate began in March 2005. Residents' feedback was recorded at the Information Event that took place that year and a survey was distributed alongside the newsletter.

The response rate at the event was over fifty percent and a further seven residents returned survey forms through the newsletter. Through this process twenty-two residents offered to volunteer or assist with community activities. As a result of the consultation, a Coalville Residents' Association Working Group was established, which consisted of resident volunteers supported by the Community Development Officer (employed by the Coalville Partnership). Their aim is to develop potential community projects for the estate. So far the Community Development Officer and Residents' Association have achieved the following:

SAFE – Stoke Angling for Everyone

The Partnership's Community Development Officer and Stoke Angling for Everyone (SAFE) organised a 'Have a Go at Fishing' event for young people from the Coalville estate in May 2005. Twenty-three young people took part in

the activity. Interest was so high that the young people undertook a Basic Angling Skills Course provided by SAFE.

Coalville Community Education Centre

In 2001 the Local Education Authority donated a single story prefabricated building to the Residents' Association to use as their community centre. This is situated on Weston Coyney Infant School's land. Funding of £25,000 was obtained for the refurbishment of this building including equipment for a youth club (computers/arts and crafts/games consoles/table football etc...)

Youth Club – Kid-Zone

With support from the community development officer the Residents' Association established a youth club (Kid-Zone) in September 2005. The club is open to 8 to 16 year olds on a Tuesday and Wednesday night from 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

West Street Temporary Play Area

The Community Development Officer obtained funding for the provision of a temporary play area (a permanent recreational facility is included in the Master Plan but the development of this site is not expected until 2009 / 2010). Funding was provided from the following sources:

- Riverside Impact Fund: **£75,639.11**
- Renew North Staffordshire: **£5428.5**
- Coalville Residents' Association: £3000
- Coalville Residents Association via the Robbie Williams 'Give it Sum' Fund: £6140.55
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council AIT: **£5000**

Total Cost: £95,208.16

Dreamscheme

The Community Development Officer secured £20,000 from the Robbie Williams 'Give it Sum' Fund for the establishment of a Dreamscheme on the estate. The Dreamscheme is a young persons' initiative whereby members carry out community tasks such as litter picking and newsletter delivery in exchange for points which can later be exchanged for rewards such as trips to Alton Towers.

Closing the Gap – West Street Sports Academy

In partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and supported by the Coalville Partnership Office, the Residents' Association launched West Street Sports Academy. Every Saturday morning from 10.00am to 1.00pm a representative from Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Closing the Gap project and members of the Residents' Association hold various sporting activities on the pitch area of the play area for the local young people.

Internet Access

The Community Development Officer secured £400 funding from BT Community Connections Fund for the Residents' Association to have broadband internet access in the community centre.

Coalville Community Education Centre – Feasibility Study

Funding of £15,000 was obtained by the Community Development Officer on behalf of the Residents' Association for a feasibility study for the re-development of their community centre. The Community building currently in use is of wooden construction and although it provides a useful community facility it only has a short life expectancy and can not cater for all the needs of the community. The need for a more permanent structure is evident. Funds have therefore been secured to undertake a feasibility study which will advise how best to proceed with our intention to replace the existing community centre with a larger, more permanent structure that could accommodate the anticipated influx of new families and provide a wider variety of community activities and services. We propose to run a social enterprise from the site which will further assist with community cohesion, such as a nursery or toddlers group, the income from which will sustain the Centre in the future.

Detached Youth Work Project

The Community Development Officer secured £15,000 from the Riverside Impact Fund towards a detached youth work programme for the Coalville Estate. Two workers visit the estate twice a week to carry out outreach work with young people not yet accessing available services as well as those involved in anti-social behaviour.

Young Firefighters Scheme

The Community Development Officer has recently submitted a bid on behalf of the Residents' Association for a Young Firefighters Project for the young people on the estate. Three possible projects are proposed, one with year 8 and 9's from Moorside High School; one with pupils from Weston Coyney Junior School and another with remaining high school pupils who originally expressed an interest in the projects. All three projects should cost the Residents Association £2500.

First Aid Courses

First aid courses have been arranged to take place by the Community Development Officer and College in the Community. Classes run on a Monday morning and are open to all residents. Classes include both 'First Aid for Children' and 'First Aid for Adults'.

'Make it Happen' (Drama Club)

A drama club, organised by the Community Development Officer and representatives from Longton High School, is due to commence in September 2007. This club will give young people the opportunity to get involved in drama performances and learn how to use stage make-up and dress.

Card making and Craft for Kids

A craft class is held by the Residents' Association and Weston Coyney Infant School on a Monday evening. Activities such as card making, jewellery making and flower arranging are taught to the young people involved.

Coffee Morning

A coffee morning is run by the Residents' Association with support from the Community Development Officer. This takes place once a week for the adult residents of the estate.

Adult Craft Class

Craft classes take place on a weekly basis for adult residents. Activities such as card making, flower arranging, knitting and embroidery take place at these classes. The Residents' Association with support from the Community Development Officer, Weston Coyney Infant School and College in the Community are all involved in running this class.

'Playing for Success' (ICT / Apple Mac Club)

The Residents' Association, supported by the Community Development Officer, managed to secure £2000 funds from the local Area Implementation Team for a course called 'Playing for Success'. Playing for success is an ICT / Apple Mac project that is attended by young people aged between 10 and 16 and is taught by a representative of Stoke-on-Trent City Council from Britannia Football Stadium.

Stay and Play (Toddlers Group)

In partnership with Longton High School and with support from the Community Development Officer, the Residents Association will be facilitating a toddlers group from September 2007 to take place once a week at the community centre.

Bingo

The Residents' Association, supported by Weston Coyney Infant School and the Community Development Officer hold Bingo afternoons once a month at the community centre for the adult residents of the estate.