

**STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK-  
BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects**

<b>Project Name: Local Initiatives for the East End (LIFE) Project</b>	<b>Project Manager: Helen Hindmarch</b>
<b>Project Start Date: Formally established in July 2004 Official Launch November 2004</b>	<b>BNG Funding: £691,432 allocated £516,679 claimed (to December 2005)</b>

**Background:**

Introduction

The LIFE (Local Initiatives for the East End) project was developed in partnership with Bridging NewcastleGateshead and Northumbria Police. The project began in January 2004 under the name 'Building Community Confidence in the Outer East'. The project was established in July 2004 and officially launched in November 2004.

The aim of the project is to increase community confidence. The project is an integrated approach to developing an intelligence led problem solving team to co-ordinate work with communities, partners and other initiatives to increase housing and community confidence.

The purpose of the project as outlined in the project submission form was as follows:

- *To build confidence in both regeneration and reception areas to ensure housing confidence is maintained and where possible increased.*
- *To increase confidence by the business community that results in increased investment.*
- *To link with other initiatives i.e. CCTV, Street Wardens, Concierge and Walker Riverside Security Project. This will maximize the results achieved by co-ordination of resources and joint targeting of problems.*
- *To ensure that crime and environmental factors that undermine housing market confidence are anticipated and addressed through a co-ordinated series of integrated interventions utilising the Multi-Agency Problem Solving (MAPS) framework.*
- *To build and maintain an intelligence gathering network through the community to support targeting of pro-active operations.*
- *To establish and thereafter maintain effective communication links to all sections of the community to engage their involvement and support in developing a long term, stable and improving picture of confidence in the area as a place to live.*
- *By using approaches to address all three aspects of the Problem Analysis triangle of Victim, Offender and Location through an enhanced problem solving approach, tied into a co-ordinated communication strategy to ensure communities are kept informed of progress and successes.*

The three complimentary strands of activity outlined in the project submission form were:

1. To improve communication between the communities affected with the Police and other agencies, and ensure an effective feedback mechanism is provided to build confidence in the agencies ability to impact on problems. By having an increased capacity to receive and analyse intelligence from the community, combined with a greater operational capability involving police and other agencies, communities will quickly reap the rewards of raising concerns and passing information. This in itself will encourage more information.

## STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects

2. A high profile dedicated team of Community Beat Officers (CBMs), working out of a Council property, in the heart of the clearance area, providing a clear commitment to drive down crime, fear of crime, anti-social behaviour which are recognized as factors that severely undermine housing market confidence. They will also provide the necessary extra capacity to deal with information arising out of (1) above.
3. Proactive identification of vulnerable residents, providing practical support through target hardening and community support and cohesion activities. This will involve both the nuts and bolts of crime reduction and also community based activities to increase cohesion in an area in which people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds live.

The outcome was stated as being "improved community cohesion and a subsequent increase in Housing Market confidence as the areas subject to these interventions are recognized as desirable places in which to live."

BNG funding (revenue of £665,385 for 2004/05 and 2005/06) was set out to be used for:

- 1 project coordinator;
- 4 community beat managers (police officers), over and above normal police establishment;
- 1 researcher;
- 1 communications officer;
- A target hardening programme to target harden 600 properties and give detailed security advice to 3,000 households;
- Consultation, information and feedback with residents.

### BNG Strategic Context

The project submission form stated that:

*'Newcastle East Area Command recognizes the need to support communities and has re-focused existing resources to support the Housing Market Renewal Areas. There is much evidence to link declining standards of housing with rising crime and disorder levels and as part of strategy to deal with this, Northumbria Police and Newcastle City Council are working very closely together to address community concerns. The key is increased community confidence. In practical terms, this means building community links with both the patrolling police officers and street wardens, as well as increasing the geographic responsibility for those investigating serious crime, as a way of developing an increased intelligence base. This intervention underpins, and will enable the majority of Outer East HMR interventions to have maximum impact, in particular it will enable sensitive and cohesive site assembly, clearance and redevelopment in Walker Riverside and Byker. The proposed neighbourhood management programme of neighbourhood services and the HMR interventions 'Maintaining Walker Riverside During Transition' will be directly supported by and informed by this project.'*

### BNG's Strategic Context

In the September 2004, BNG's Prospectus *creating places where more people want to live*, the objectives and outcomes for the East were to:

## STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects

### **Strengthen and stabilise the housing market**

- *Reduction in vacancies*
- *Reduction in properties in low demand*
- *Reduction in disparity between local and regional house prices*

### **Promote and provide a wider choice of quality housing for all**

- *Increase in home ownership*
- *Increase in number of new completions*
- *Increase in number of accessible homes*
- *Increase in quality of social housing*
- *Increase in quality of private rented housing*
- *Increase in quality of owner occupied housing*

### **Foster distinctive attractive neighbourhoods**

- *Increase in neighbourhood satisfaction*
- *Increase in community cohesion*
- *Improved neighbourhood perception*
- *Improved resident confidence*
- *Population increase*

### **Manage and improve the assets of the neighbourhood.**

- *Increased housing and economic development*
- *Increase in urban green spaces*
- *Improved cleanliness*
- *Reduced crime*
- *Improved educational attainment*
- *Increase in local employment*
- *Increase in number of businesses*
- *Reduction in child poverty*
- *Improved life expectancy*
- *Improved access to services*

The LIFE project would appear to fit well with the objectives of *fostering distinctive attractive communities* and *managing and improving the assets of the neighbourhood*. The project also contributes to the achievement of the BNG Vision outlined in 2004;

*'Our vision is that by 2018, the housing market in NewcastleGateshead will be revitalised, strong and stable, fully integrated with the renaissance of the region. The changing needs and aspirations of local people will shape the development of liveable communities, where residents will benefit from increased housing opportunity and choice in lively, cohesive neighbourhoods that provide the best quality of life in a healthy, safe and sustainable environment.'*<sup>1</sup>

BNG Scheme Update 2005, sets out three strategic objectives:

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<sup>1</sup> BNG Prospectus, September 2004,  
<http://www.bridgingng.org.uk/publications/Pathfinder%20Prospectus%20Sept%2004.pdf>

## STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects

### *Strategic objective 1*

To enable more people to enter and sustain home ownership, reflecting housing aspirations, and to help reduce concentrations of worklessness

### *Strategic objective 2*

To provide an improved choice of good quality, well designed homes through new development and investment in sustainable homes, whilst replacing obsolete housing

### *Strategic objective 3*

Work with partners to improve neighbourhoods and provide a good quality of life, and place.

In terms of Walker Riverside the proposed interventions and outcomes are:

Making Walker Riverside a location of choice for new residents and existing households by increasing the range and diversity of affordable housing tenures. The interventions that will achieve this are:

- *Regeneration of the Walker Road allotments and Cambrian estate;*
- *The creation of a high quality Western Gateway to improve first impressions of the area and expectations of visitors to Walker Riverside;*
- *Conversion of Walker Road into an attractive boulevard stretching towards the Cambrian estate in the east;*
- *Design of new housing to lifetime homes and high design standards;*
- *The development of a stronger local centre at the junction of Walker Road and St. Anthony's Road;*
- *Clear links from the riverside to encourage linkage between riverside paths and cycle ways and the area;*
- *A design code and regeneration strategy for the area;*
- *Improvements to Walker Park;*
- *Investment by the ALMO.*

In terms of the proposed interventions and outcomes in Byker and Ouseburn:

Provide the opportunity to build on the work already undertaken by BNG on projects such as the Byker Design Competition and Feasibility Studies in the area. It will also make a significant impact on the area's housing market and improve outside perceptions of the area. The interventions that will achieve this are:

- *The implementation of an ambitious and innovative Urban Design Competition for South Byker Estate & St Lawrence Square;*
- *Strategic acquisitions, key worker accommodation, site development, environmental works, and marketing of the Lower Ouseburn Valley;*
- *Development of the Byker Buildings site;*
- *Interventions in private sector properties at Byker Old Town;*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://ww1.northumbria.police.uk/ePolicing/web/wms.nsf/AllContentDocs/CRD000626?OpenDocument>

## STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects

- *Delivery of the feasibility study at Dunn Terrace.*

### National Policy, Targets and Outputs

Of the core indicators set by ODPM for the Pathfinder Initiatives, there are few direct linkages to the work of the LIFE project. The ODPM outputs focus on the physical regeneration of the area through building, demolition and acquisition. The LIFE project could be said to contribute indirectly to the following core indicators:

**B60** *Total no. of households receiving additional management interventions during year.*

**B70** *Total no. homes directly benefiting from each type of physical (but non-housing) works on land and built environment during year.*

The presence of the CBMs funded as part of LIFE has helped deter vandalism and damage to unoccupied homes and newly built show homes in the area.

Given the change in focus of BNG towards capital projects and the change in outcomes to reflect this, it is difficult to justify BNG funding the project in the future. Notwithstanding this, the project has been very successful in the view of all of those consulted, however there is a feeling that other partners should have picked up the project, or at least certain elements of the work.

### Respect Agenda

The LIFE project and the work carried out to date has supported various areas highlighted within the Respect Agenda:

Respect Agenda	LIFE project contribution
Working together on the neighbourhood renewal and anti-social behaviour agendas, highlighting respect for others and respect for the community	Through various community events such as the Bonfire. The work the probation service undertook at 'The Greens'.
Encouraging respect for public servants and services including teachers and schools, health and emergency services and the police	Working closely with the community to strengthen the relationship with the Police, PCSOs and Wardens.
Supporting neighbourhood policing, police reform and alcohol and violent crime strategies	Worked to support the drinking bans in certain areas.
Ensuring the culture of respect extends to everyone, young and old alike	Worked specifically with young people and elderly people.
Helping communities to set and own standards of behaviour in their neighbourhoods	No direct link
Supporting parents and guardians to build their skills and accept responsibility for the impact that the behaviour of their children has on others	No direct link

ODPM's Fact Sheet 7 on Crime and Neighbourhood Renewal recognises that deprived areas often face higher than average crime rates. A number of key issues are set out:

## STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects

1. People living in deprived areas, particularly older people, can feel imprisoned in their own homes, while younger generations may be more susceptible to involvement in drugs, burglary or vandalism and other forms of ASB.

***The LIFE project has specifically worked with vulnerable older people through the target hardening work. Work has been developed by the LIFE project around young people, such as their instrumental involvement in the Youth Bus project.***

2. Crime affects the economy too.....high crime rates discourage people from setting up new businesses and hamper existing ones.

***The LIFE project has developed the use of ChequeWatch and SmartWater in the area, both of which seek to support local business.***

3. The government is encouraging neighbourhood and street warden programmes...working at the grassroots with police and other to deter crime.

***The LIFE project was the main liaison between the police and the wardens, through the weekly meetings with the wardens and member of the LIFE team. The project keeps a database of information received from the wardens as well as other partners.***

The Home Office target is to reduce burglary by 25%. The fact sheet goes on to state that "reducing crime, particularly domestic burglary, is a starting point for renewing neighbourhoods. *The LIFE project has worked to target harden homes to make them more difficult to break in to and reassure residents, which should contribute to the target.*

Fact Sheet 6 on Neighbourhood Management states that neighbourhood management "will focus on many of the situations that have got out of hand at neighbourhood level – young people with nothing to do, crime hotspots, litter, neglect and abandoned vehicles, ASB, lack of shops and transport."

*The LIFE project has worked with the ethos of neighbourhood management throughout in terms of working with communities and local service providers.*

The LIFE project supports a number of National Police-related objectives such as:

- *The modernisation of the police force and focus on neighbourhood policing, through improving the accessibility for residents, supporting community policing, engaging in public consultation and engaging in partnership working.*
- *Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, in particular the prevention of crime and consideration of crime and disorder reduction.*

### Policy Action Team (PAT) Report 4- Neighbourhood Management

Much of the neighbourhood element of the neighbourhood management strategy requires changes at national, regional and local levels. Action at neighbourhood level has major advantages in that it can:

- 1) identify with precision the nature and scale of problems**

## STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects

The problems of poor neighbourhoods can only be understood by gathering softer 'local intelligence', the tacit knowledge only available from residents and those working in the locality. This involves both neighbourhood-level data and consultation with residents and local service providers;

### **2) Ensure solutions are sufficiently fine-tuned to be effective**

Solutions need to be tailored to the particular problems of a neighbourhood. The example of crime is instructive. It is important to know what the local crime problems are, when and where they occur, who the victims and likely perpetrators are, and whether there is linkage to other problems (e.g. educational underachievement). It is only then that an effective tailored neighbourhood response can be designed;

#### Policy Action Team (PAT) Report 7- Unpopular Housing

Crime and anti-social behaviour is an important characteristic of unpopular housing. Boarded up properties attract crime and vandalism. This forces out long-term residents, leads to more abandoned houses and increases the sense of decay. The cycle continues, destabilising the area.

Authorities must tackle security problems in order to restore the popularity of a neighbourhood and attract back a mix of owners and tenants. Some help is now at hand. The new Crime and Disorder Act includes measures such as anti-social behaviour orders. Under the Crime and Disorder Partnerships, the local authority, Chief Police Officer and other parties must produce a strategy for reducing crime and disorder in their area.

Strategies for prevention and early action are needed, if we are to stop incidents spiralling out of control. Neighbourhood management, combined with intensive housing management, can have a major impact on crime and anti-social behaviour. We endorse this approach.

Report also states the links with:

- *[Recommendation 9] PAT 8 on Anti-Social Behaviour and PAT 4 on Neighbourhood Management should consider the specific problems of anti-social behaviour in low demand areas. This includes looking at organised criminal activity to force residents to leave their properties, and how to deal with crime in areas of abandonment;*
- *[Recommendation 10] The intensive housing management services recommended by PAT 5 and PAT 6, in particular the use of concierges and neighbourhood wardens, should be considered by local authorities in their strategies to tackle low demand, especially where crime and anti-social behaviour is a factor.*

#### Local Policy, Targets and Outputs

The Newcastle Plan 2004-7 incorporates a strategic objective to create a safer Newcastle by working with partners and communities to identify, design and implement local solutions to local community safety concern.

Operational Objectives	Performance indicators and targets	Actions
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**STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK-  
BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects**

Reduce burglary	Reduce burglary to dwellings by 4% by 31st March 2005	To install 1,000 monitored domestic burglar alarms to "repeat victims" and vulnerable people by 31st March 2005
Reduce anti-social behaviour	Reduce anti-social behaviour by 4% by 31st March 2005	To develop 3 youth diversionary projects (2x 8-13yrs old) (1x 13-18yrs old) to include contact with 600 young people by 31st March 2005 Develop an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for the Newcastle Community Safety Partnership by 31st March 2005
Improve community confidence	The number of residents who fear personal attack outdoors by 31st March 2005 reduce to 21%	Renew 3,500 street lights by 31st March 2005. Develop a strategy for marketing and communication by 31st March 2005 Develop a strategy to reduce fear of crime by 31st March 2005

***The LIFE project has directly contributed to all three of the operational objectives shown in the table above through the target hardening of over 1,300 homes, the development of the Youth Bus and working to improve community confidence its three target areas.***

The Plan also outlines specific Neighbourhood Renewal Targets for community safety are as follows:

Indicator	Target	Baseline	Data from
Proportion of residents who feel very or fairly safe outside in Newcastle a) after dark b) daytime	Reduce the gap by 20% by 2007	a- NR29.4% City 35.5% b- NR 73.5% city 81.1%	NCC residents survey
Class A drug arrests	Reduce gap by 20% by 2007	LNRS 17 City 14	Police / TWRI
Proportion of residents who think anti-social behaviour is a problem in their area: a) noisy neighbours b) vandalism, graffiti etc. c) people using or dealing drugs	Reduce gap by 20% by 2007	a)LNRS 28.1% City 19.7% b) LNRS 66.5% city 49.6% c) LNRS 67.4% City 43.3%	NCC residents survey 2004

***Much of the work carried out by the project has centred on improving people's perception of safety in the area. The surveys conducted have all included questions on feelings of safety. The LIFE project through its involvement in the development of the youth bus and contacts with other organisations have worked on ASB in the three wards.***

Newcastle's Housing Strategy has a number of strategic objectives one of which, HO2, fits closely with the activities and achievements of the LIFE project.

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Operational Objectives</b>
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## STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects

<p>Ensure homes and housing services in sustainable neighbourhoods where people want to live and work: Ensuring housing vision and delivery promotes crosscutting policy aims</p>	<p>Ensure well-managed, safe and secure homes: See also housing contribution to Community Safety and to Neighbourhood Management themes</p>
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The project also provides a contribution to the Newcastle Area Command Plan (Northumbria Police), in particular objectives to reduce crime. The plan highlighted the major challenge of reducing the amount of criminal damage which is widespread and often a result of anti-social behaviour.

The Plan also outlines a commitment to focus on two other areas namely burglaries to homes and violent crime. The Plan stresses the importance of continuing co-ordinated crime prevention initiatives that involve all relevant partners and the community.

On a localized level each Community Inspector has a sector plan that focuses on reducing the crimes particular to their area; allowing them and their partners to have a structured focus on local concerns.

Type of Crime	Target
Total crime	Reduce offences by 5%
Violent crime	Reduce offences by 8%
Burglary to homes	Reduce offences by 8%
Vehicle crime	Reduce offences by 3%

The project provides support to the achievement of these local crime reduction targets.

### Project Operation

The project was based at Clifford Street Police Station in Byker with target areas of were Byker, Walker and Daisy Hill.

In January 2004, the acting project co-ordinator and researcher were in place and undertook specific training and began liaison with partners. The Community Beat Managers (CBMs) were allocated in April 2004 and by June 2004 all project staff had been recruited and the Community Beat Officers (CBOs) had commenced duty.

The target hardening work was undertaken in a number of stages:

1. *Phone call or referral to the LIFE project*
2. *LIFE to assess the work needed to be undertaken*
3. *Referral form filled in*
4. *LIFE project to contact the sub contractor and organise date and time for work to be carried out with beneficiary. Or LIFE project/CBMs to fit equipment where appropriate.*
5. *Work completed*

## STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects

6. *Questionnaire completed by beneficiary on work carried out and more general issues in the area.*
7. *Issues on questionnaire followed up where possible*
8. *Follow up call and questionnaire nine months after the work was completed.*

Police Officers visited homes in the three areas and offered crime prevention advice, carried out security surveys and arranged for free security devices to be installed. Residents were being offered a variety of security devices including window and door locks, spy holes, door chains, shed alarms and bars. These were provided and installed free of charge. The project was able to meet people in their own homes and suggest appropriate target hardening measures that could be undertaken and discuss ways in which to improve the security of the properties.

The LIFE Project established links with a number of agencies and organisations including

- *Asylum Seekers Unit;*
- *Computer Gym;*
- *Domestic Violence Forum;*
- *Domestic Violence Liaison Officer;*
- *Drug support workers;*
- *Envirocall;*
- *Fire Service;*
- *Mental health workers;*
- *Play and Youth Service;*
- *Probation Service;*
- *Rapid Response;*
- *Schools;*
- *Shields Road traders;*
- *Trading Standards;*
- *Victim Support; and*
- *YOT.*

Over the lifetime of the project, the LIFE team were involved in a number of meetings including:

- *Attendance at Walker, Walkergate and Byker MAPS meetings;*
- *LNRS Community Safety theme workshop;*
- *Community Safety Event in Walker Library;*
- *Race Awareness schools events;*
- *Raby Cross Fun Day;*
- *Asylum Seekers Event;*
- *Police Community Surgery;*
- *Walker Park Community day;*
- *Older persons event;*
- *Ward committee meetings; and*
- *Crime and Community Safety Networking Event.*

The project staff received a number of training sessions such as:

- *GIS - researcher and project co-ordinator;*
- *CBMs – crime prevention surveys, new CCTV van; and*

**STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK-  
BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects**

- *Crime Prevention/Target Hardening training from the Crime Prevention Officer.*

The table below gives details of the main projects the LIFE team were involved in:

Name	Brief Description	LIFE Involvement
<b><i>Launch</i></b>	Introduce the project to partner agencies in the community as well as voluntary and statutory sectors	All aspects
<b><i>The Greens</i></b>	A working party was formed to address burglaries on the greens (an elderly persons complex) through environmental and security measures.	The Life Project assisted in forming the group, supplying chimes as a temporary measure and obtained quotes from Help the Aged.
<b><i>Older Persons Event</i></b>	Around a quarter of all residents in the East End are over 60 years old, the project held an event that focused on the needs and services available the over 60s in the east end. Around 90 older people attended the event.	LIFE planned, organised and delivered the event.
<b><i>Bonfire Event</i></b>	Due to high levels of disorder in 2004 especially around Hexham Avenue and the withdrawal of an organised display. The event was attended by around 4,000 to 5,000 residents. There was a 89% reduction of incidents on Bonfire Night compared with 2004.	The LIFE project established a working party to provide an organised display in November 2005, took minutes at meeting, undertook marketing, liaison with organisations, finding funding and provided additional support on the night.
<b><i>Youth Bus</i></b>	Youth disorder is high in the outer east. A group was formed to address the issue. It was felt a mobile facility would be beneficial and taken to the hot spot areas. It is hoped the bus will be trailed in the east end but will be used across Newcastle.	LIFE was instrumental in bring the bus to the east end, looking for funding and providing administration for the meetings.
<b><i>Cheque Watch</i></b>	A pilot scheme was developed on Shields Road by the community beat manager team. The scheme requires shoppers paying with cheques to provide a signature and thumb print to verify the cheque.	The funding and publicity was arranged by the LIFE team.
<b><i>SmartWater</i></b>	As part of the approach to reduce burglary in the area, SmartWater was introduced in the east end and has since been rolled out city-wide. SmartWater is a forensic coding system which protects homes and personal possessions. The product is applied to belongings and can be seen under UV light .  "Newcastle's SmartWater project is making life even harder for criminals. It will link the offender to the crime and give magistrates and juries powerful forensic evidence on which to judge cases. SmartWater has a 100% court	A member of the LIFE team was aware of the scheme and initiated its development in the east end.

**STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK-  
BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects**

	conviction rate and has so far been responsible for over 400 UK convictions. Anyone convicted of burglary or handling stolen goods could face up to 14 years in prison." <sup>2</sup>	
<b><i>Bottle in a Fridge</i></b>	Custom bottle placed in fridge with sticker on fridge and door. The bottle contains important information such as medical requirements, next of kin and a photo, so should the ambulance, police or fire brigade be called, they can access the information from the fridge.	The LIFE project developed the use of bottle in the fridge across the east end.
<b><i>Magpie Watch</i></b>	Followed on from SmartWater and ensure any potential handlers of stolen goods were aware of SmartWater.	

**Results:**

The project was set annual targets of:

- *Securing 600 properties*
- *Advising residents of 3,000 homes on security and safety*

LIFE Outputs (as of February 2006)

<b>Output</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2*</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>BNG Outputs</b>				
Homes advised	3,210	3,000	6,000	+210
Homes secured	647 (326 lights)	762 (473 lights)	1,200	+209
<b>Other Outputs</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Total</b>
Homes SmartWatered	0	1,426	n/a	1,426
Bottle in a Fridge Issued	199	319	n/a	518
Smoke Alarms	187		n/a	187
Sign posting	17	160	n/a	177
Questionnaires	214	342	n/a	556
9 Month Questionnaires	47	8	n/a	55
Partner Agency Questionnaires	35	15	n/a	50
Street Warden Report	303	362	n/a	665
Have Your Say Leaflet		103	n/a	103

*Source: LIFE Project*

The project has overachieved in terms of the two targets set by BNG, with 210 more homes advised than the 6,000 target and 209 more homes secured than the 1,200 target. The project has also achieved a number of other targets shown in the table above, all of which contribute to the aims of the project.

## **STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects**

The project has also contributed significantly to a number of other projects and events in partnership with other agencies, in many cases the LIFE Project has been the instigator of a number of these new projects. These other initiatives included:

- *Working party on the Greens*
- *Older Person Event*
- *Bonfire Event*
- *Youth Bus*
- *Cheque Watch*
- *Smartwater*
- *Magpie Watch*
- *Drinking ban in Walker*
- *Information on Mini Motorbikes*
- *Community payback/probation*
- *Police Surgeries at Thomas Gaughan Community Centre.*

One of the main successes of the project, according to those consulted, has been the number of agencies that have come together to implement initiatives such as the youth bus and bonfire event. The multi agency approach enabled initiatives requested by the community or other partners to be taken forward in a coordinated and productive way, in some cases refreshing partnership that may have gone stale or not been used to their fullest extent.

The project has been instrumental in developing links between local statutory bodies, especially the police, and local residents through the target hardening measures, community events suggestion boxes and police community meetings. Hence, the project has been able to react to community needs as well as gather softer intelligence which has been passed on to the organisation most able to deal with the issue. For example environmental issues the LIFE project has been made aware of have been passed to the rapid response team, or homes without smoke alarms have been referred to the fire service. The fact that the police officers have in some cases installed security devices in homes has helped develop links between the police and community, enabling them to access.

Concern has been voiced that the end of the project after just two years, would lead to the loss of some valuable information both in terms of the database the project has holding warden, police and community information and the driving force the project has been reacting to community need.

Much of the project's work has been focused on reducing the fear of crime, which has not fallen in line with the reduction in actual crime in the area. LIFE has seen an important part of its work to be encouraging people to feel more positively about the area that they live in as well as promote a positive image of the area externally. One of the key strengths of the projects has been its promotion. Having a dedicated communications officer has led to the development of a recognizable brand and a number of press and media releases.

The project submission focused on the target hardening element of the project, however through the staff team, and in particular the project manager, the project has responded to best practice and community needs, to instigate initiatives far beyond those stated in the original project appraisal.

## STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects

### Community benefits

Those consulted offered a range of benefits to the local community of the LIFE project such as:

- *Target hardening work;*
- *SmartWater;*
- *Improving feelings of safety;*
- *Provision of a dedicated office to feedback local concerns and chase up action;*
- *Increased reporting to LIFE for individuals that may not approach the police;*
- *Support to over 100 elderly people;*
- *Provision of alarms to local residents.*
- *Hosting events such as Bonfire, Carol Service, Older People's Event.*

### **A coherent project and its management:**

The project staff have been commended by all of those consulted with many commenting on the professional approach and 'can do' attitude of the project team. The structure of the project in terms of its close working with the PSCOs, Wardens and Police officers is felt to have been particularly successful. Some have commented that previous work and linkages with the Police in regeneration initiatives had been hampered by changes in police staff. While the community police team staff have changed throughout the lifetime of the LIFE project, the LIFE core team staff have stayed the same and offered continuity for the community and other agencies.

The recruitment of a dedicated communications officer has enabled proactive and professional marketing of the project, which has acknowledged BNG within all its promotional literature, with the exception of the SmartWater promotion<sup>3</sup>. The area teams supported by the LIFE project have published more press releases than other similar teams elsewhere in Newcastle, and total of 35 on the Northumbria Police Website and 25 releases to local media. The Project has been featured on BBC Radio Newcastle, BBC Radio 4 and Daisy Hill Radio as well as on BBC Look North and North East Tonight, Tyne Tees.

BNG, other than having a representative on the project steering groups and initially offering promotional advice, have had little to do with the management of the project or offered a great amount of support, other than funding.

The day to day management of the project has very much been left to the project coordinator which has given the project a good deal of freedom and flexibility, which partners have seen as key to its success. There has been concern expressed that its wide remit has left it unable to find its niche area which has proved to be a difficulty in terms of finding further funding.

### **Resources, financial management and administration:**

<sup>3</sup> This was at the request of BNG.

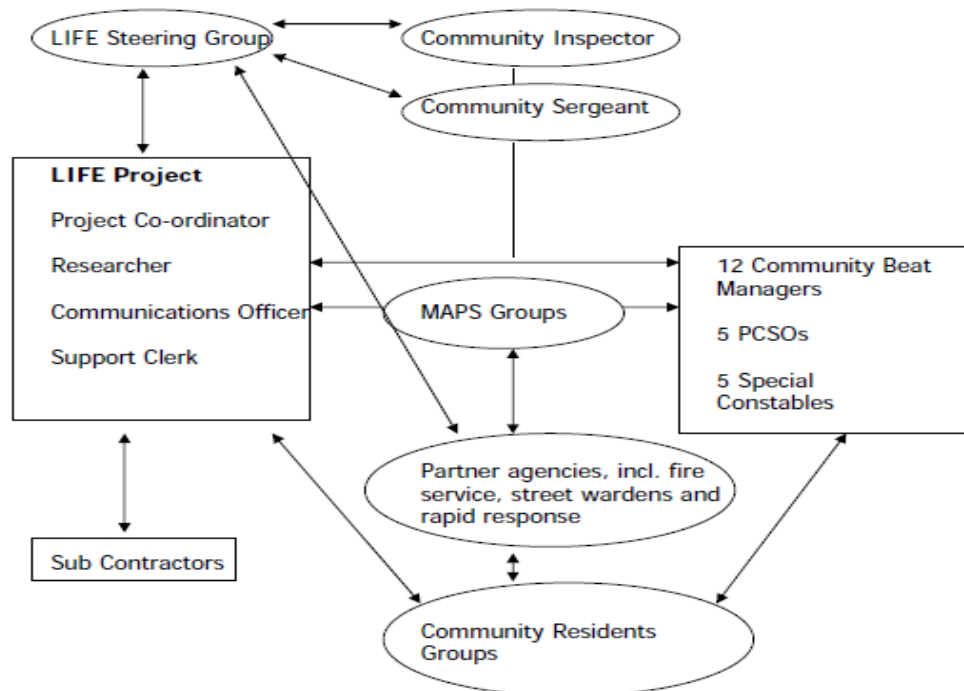
## STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects

Many of those consulted have commented on the uniqueness of the project and its creativity as well as the real impact it has had on the ground. The project was well resourced in terms of staff and funding, but did work with other agencies to pull in other funding for specific initiatives such as the bonfire and youth bus. The project has provided an effective link between the Community Wardens and Police given the weekly briefings by a LIFE team member and the Wardens. The project also took on the administration role for many of the multi agency meetings.

The value for money is difficult to assess given the unique nature of the work carried out by the project. Steps have been taken to ensure value for money in terms of the contract work carried out to target harden homes, with quotes gathered from contractors and the work on the Greens carried out by Help the Aged rather than the council which was more cost effective.

The project was overseen by a steering group with representation from Newcastle City Council Regeneration Directorate, Your Homes Newcastle, BNG, ward steward, community support manager and the Outer East Community Police Team (see details below).

### *Structure of the Outer East Policing Team*



### **Working with communities:**

The project has been very proactive in terms of engaging with the community and working with specific communities such as the older person event, the youth bus and links with asylum seekers in the area. Suggestion boxes were put in place in order for the community to feedback information and highlight any issues. The project has ensured that feedback has been made as easy as possible, with a dedicated telephone line, questionnaires and workers able to meet people in their homes to obtain feedback. One of the LIFE team is able to sign and has developed links with deaf people within the three target wards.

All those who benefited from target hardening were asked to assess the work that had been carried out and

## **STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects**

were then contacted nine months after the work to give their opinions again. Questionnaires were used in a variety of ways including a stakeholder questionnaire for partners to feedback their opinions.

Partners consulted as part of the evaluation also mentioned the positive feedback they had received from residents and the results the projects had had in terms of a reduction in crime. One of the most often cited examples of this was the work carried out at 'The Greens', a complex of housing for older people at Monkchester, Kingston and Welbeck Greens. There had been a number of similar break ins within the complex (18 over 11 months, as apposed to six in neighbouring streets) which had been highlighted by a number of agencies and elected members as a real concern. Through multi agency working, the Greens were provided with: door and window chimes; perimeter fencing and lighting; secured doors and windows; and the Probation Service carried out landscaping of the area under the Community Punishment Scheme. Since the improvements were made, there have been no further break-ins in the complex.

The LIFE project has been instrumental in the development of a Youth Bus within the area which arose from resident feedback on the lack of youth facilities within the wards.

### **Working with other organisations / key agencies:**

Central to the effectiveness of the LIFE project has been proactive networking and the development of strong partnership links. Many of those consulted mentioned the importance the LIFE project had played in bringing key agencies together and the proactive stance taken by the project in terms of taking things forward.

There has been mentioned of the LIFE project reinvigorating some link between agencies being effective is bringing a large number of key agencies around the table and using that to get very effective results.

There has been interest in the LIFE project and its ethos from a number of other police stations and other police authorities. Internal inspections have been carried out by a Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable. External interest in the project in terms of inspections or research has come from:

- *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC);*
- *Charter Mark;*
- *Home Office;*
- *LSE; and*
- *MA Student from Teesside University.*

There has been real disappointment expressed by those consulted that the project is to end. Many have expressed concern that a project that they have seen to be very successful and still had more to do in the area.

### **Learning, improvement and forward planning:**

#### Summary

The project has been unable to find continuation funding. The ability to find funding was hindered by the fact the project was not made aware that BNG funding was not an option until relatively late which was said to be too late to access some funding. The project has attempted to find further funding.



## **STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK- BNG Neighbourhood Management Projects**

One of the reasons given for the fact that the project has not secured further funding has been the fact that it does cover a wide remit, which has perhaps hindered its ability to find a niche and secure core funding.

Many of those spoken to were able to see the value of the work that the LIFE project has carried out as well as how this should fit in with what they thought the objectives of BNG should be. However given the need to provide a tighter, evidence-based fit between the BNG revenue funding and the achievement of BNG objectives it is hard to directly relate the project back to core BNG outputs.

### Strengths of the project/areas where it worked well

- *Engagement of partners*
- *Consultation with the community, with young people and older people specifically consulted*
- *The staff team have been enthusiastic, commitment and proactive in their work*
- *Number of high profile events and initiatives taken forward that would probably not have been without the involvement of LIFE*
- *The branding and promotion of the project*
- *The development of relationships between the police, community and other agencies*
- *The intelligence gathered*
- *The feeling of security offered to those benefiting from the target hardening*
- *The broad remit of the project has allowed it to be proactive and flexible in its approach*

### Weaknesses of the project/possible improvements

- *The broad remit of the work undertaken underneath the LIFE banner has made it difficult to find future funding*
- *The change of police staff within the community beat teams (this is a characteristic of police work, with staff moving elsewhere and difficult to avoid)*
- *Inability to find future funding has meant the end of the project.*

The LIFE Project has become an important part of multi agency work in the East End and been the driving force and instigator of a number of initiatives which have benefited the community in a wide range of ways. The main issue for the project has been securing future funding, with the change in the focus of BNG's objectives, the LIFE project does not directly relate back to BNG's new objectives. The weak linkages with BNG's core indicators and impact on BNG's core objectives has made it difficult to present a robust case for further BNG funding.

This is not to say the project has not been successful, as those consulted have unanimously expressed their concern that the project is coming to an end and the gap that will be left behind will prove difficult to fill. Some have commented on, as they see it, the important 'softer' side to the regenerating of communities that the LIFE project was involved in and the new BNG approach does not fully encompass.

The staff team have been commended by all of those consulted, with many adding it is a real shame that the project is coming to an end.