

## Case Study - Urban II, Children's Fund Local Partnership and SureStart - Dartford

Dartford, whilst seemingly affluent at Borough level, has several pockets of deprivation.

Against this background Dartford Borough Council, in partnership with Kent County Council and Gravesham Borough Council sought European Union Urban II funding in 1999/2000. The successful bid included 10 neighbouring wards in Dartford and Gravesham suffering high levels of deprivation and bordering some of the major development sites in the area.

In 2001, Dartford and Gravesham received £1.2 million from the Children's Fund local partnership to be spent over three years in 11 priority wards based in Bean, Galley Hill, Swanscombe, Princes, Littlebrook & Joyce Green - and more recently Stone.

From this amount a Community Chest of £120,000 was set-aside for 2002/03 and 2003/04 for small "one off" projects under £5,000. During 2002/03, £50,000 was allocated to 30 projects.

SureStart - Dartford has been active in the area, since 2001, with mainstream funding of £2.26m over the next three years and revenue funding for 2003/04 of £300,000. Dartford Borough Council is both a key partner in the Children's Fund local partnership and the Accountable Body for SureStart.

The Council both promotes the Urban Fund to local community and voluntary groups, and accesses the fund for its own strategic regeneration aims. In January 2002, Dartford appointed a dedicated Regeneration Funding Officer who helps Council departments and community groups to develop bids.

SureStart - Dartford is working to the National SureStart objectives as well as building upon existing services, strengths of local parents, grandparents and other carers, ensuring equal access to SureStart services and linking SureStart services to older children's services in order to ensure lasting support.

Both the Children's Fund Local Partnership (D&GCFP) and SureStart Dartford have specific target groups - children aged 5-13 and their families and parents-to-be and families with children under four years old. Priorities include improving educational performance and school attendance as well as tackling youth crime and young victims of crime. The partnership's priorities also include health inequalities and issues of social exclusion.

The Urban II project has three priority themes:

- Achieving Social Inclusion
- Business, Infrastructure Development and Regeneration
- Community Access to Learning

These priorities focus on regenerating the area, physically, economically and socially so that residents can take advantage of the opportunities arising from the new developments.

Several significant projects are being developed under the Urban programme:

**Local Employment Initiative Feasibility Study** is supported by the Urban programme with matched contributions from all three local authorities and the Learning and Skills Council, Kent and Medway. Consultants are looking at the jobs that will flow from development. They will audit skills and the skills provision. By working with major stakeholders

(including developers), the study will produce practical projects to train local people in the jobs required now and in the future.

**Cisco Learning Project** provides low-cost/subsidised ICT training opportunities for disadvantaged/ excluded groups in the Swanscombe community. Developed in partnership with Cisco Systems and Leigh City Technology College it offers opportunities to gain nationally-recognised qualifications in ICT skills.

**Swanscombe Neighbourhood Renewal Study** centres on the major developments at Ebbsfleet, Eastern Quarry, and the Swanscombe Peninsula all of which have a major impact on the area. This report, completed in August 2003, draws on consultation with residents and stakeholders to reflect local priorities for regeneration, and identifies the key actions required to facilitate it. The model will be used to deliver improvements in other priority communities across Dartford and Gravesham.

**Gunn Road Environmental Improvements Scheme** - A landscaping and regeneration project based around building community capacity and encouraging community ownership in order to achieve sustainability. A successful project will provide a model for other estates and run-down residential areas in the Borough and further afield.

**The Children's Fund Local Partnership** has developed key projects including employment of a detached youth worker for the Littlebrook and Joyce Green wards; a service for families to access information on disability support and benefits; a music mentoring programme to bring children together; an environmental project looking at local areas; a peer mentoring programme in local schools; a junior school nurture group and an under 8's after-school group.

**SureStart-Dartford** has established regular contact with 500 of the 710 children in the priority areas. It regularly holds information / celebration events for children and families and has achieved a major change in the way health visiting services are offered. It has also been instrumental in setting up a multi-professional team in the community and establishing bases on the two estates.