

Blakelaw and Cowgate Coordination Project Evaluation

Final Report

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**Sustainable Cities
Research Institute**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In 2003, the Blakelaw and Cowgate Coordination Project was established in response to a recognised need to coordinate local community services across two sites in North West Newcastle.
2. The Coordination Project is set within the Community Facilities Support section at Newcastle City Council. Three staff members deliver the Coordination Project across the two facilities, with additional support coming onboard into the second year of its operation. The staff consist of one Neighbourhood Facility Development Officer (in post since April 2004) and two Community Support Workers (in post since August 2004 and May 2004).
3. In order to investigate the success of the Coordination Project in meeting its aims and objectives to date, an independent evaluation has been carried out by Sustainable Cities research Institute.
4. The Coordination Project aims to:
 - Develop and implement support mechanisms, community capacity building measures, and effective partnerships in order to meet community aspirations regarding service delivery and activities.
 - Build upon and apply a committed partnership approach at both area and neighbourhood levels
 - Enable and empower communities to develop through change in relation to service delivery style and approach, and to give input regarding activities delivered at neighbourhood level.
5. Funding has been allocated to the Coordination Project until end March 2006. Up until this point, the Coordination Project will have received £77,584 of revenue funding from Single Regeneration Budget 6 'Preparing for Change' and £76,225 through funding from Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to support the positions of Development Officer and Community Support Workers.
6. The project has eleven SRB outputs and six NRF outputs. It is evident from the output figures that the Coordination Project is over-achieving in a number of areas, including: Number of people using improved cultural facilities, Number of voluntary groups supported, Number of individuals employed in voluntary work, Number of residents accessing training opportunities, Number of volunteer hours, Number of training/development sessions (all SRB) and Number of volunteers retained (NRF).
7. The Coordination Project has supported both facilities to achieve a great deal in a short space of time and has established good grounds on which each management structure can develop their facility. The Coordination Project consistently overachieves with regard to its funding outputs, reflecting the overall success of the facilities, project and funded posts
8. Data from interview, Rapid Appraisal and Participatory Appraisal provides evidence suggesting that, although it has been a difficult task to undertake, the Coordination Project has:

- Supported the development and delivery of each facility and overall their users are happy with the services they access.
 - Increased opportunities to work across Blakelaw and Cowgate, with slow but steady progress being made with regard to encouraging the communities to cross historical boundaries.
9. Participatory Appraisal data suggests children and young people are more open to accessing activities at both facilities regardless of where they live. Sharing volunteers across community cafes has also been particularly successful in tackling this area boundary.
10. One of the purposes of the evaluation is to establish options for the future of the project after current SRB and NRF funding runs out in March 2006. Five options were suggested:
- i. The Project dissipates entirely; no staff are employed to maintain coordination. It becomes the responsibility of the community and service providers to run the facilities, with minimal support from the Community Facilities Support section of Newcastle City Council;
 - ii. Bridging funding is sought for a phased withdrawal of support. Included in this is training and capacity building for community members to eventually run the facilities.
 - iii. Funding is sought to employ a coordinator and staff to carry on the work of the project, but at a reduced level.
 - iv. Both facilities are supported by the Community Facilities Support section of Newcastle City Council from a detached setting (not based at the facilities) a staff member at the level of the Development Officer will provide service level support and another staff member at the level of the Community Support Workers will provide operational support.
 - v. The facilities are absorbed into their parent facility and maintain minimal contact with each other to coordinate and complement services

1 Introduction

In 2003, the Blakelaw and Cowgate Coordination Project was established in response to a recognised need to coordinate local community services across two sites in North West Newcastle. The project contributes to Newcastle City Council's Neighbourhood Strategy, which intends to address residents' priorities for improvements to local neighbourhoods, strengthened communities and community participation. The Blakelaw and Cowgate Coordination Project supported the development of Montagu CFSS and Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre.

The intention of Montagu CFSS is to address the concerns of pupils, families and the wider community through the development and delivery of rapid response services provided by a multi-disciplinary team. A wide range of organisations deliver services from the school itself as well as Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre, both of which are part of a management network of community based services.

The Coordination Project aims to:

- Develop and implement support mechanisms, community capacity building measures, and effective partnerships in order to meet community aspirations regarding service delivery and activities.
- Build upon and apply a committed partnership approach at both area and neighbourhood levels
- Enable and empower communities to develop through change in relation to service delivery style and approach, and to give input regarding activities delivered at neighbourhood level.

The research team were commissioned to *measure* and *assess* the *effectiveness* of the Montagu CFSS and Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre Coordination Project. In conducting this research, the findings will feedback to project beneficiaries (the local community), relevant policy makers and strategists, and funding bodies in terms of its impact and the development of a forward plan for the future of the project. This report outlines the findings of the evaluation, which was carried out by Sustainable Cities Research Institute at Northumbria University.

1.1 Research Aims

This evaluation has been commissioned to *measure* and *assess* the *effectiveness* of the Montagu Full Service School and Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre Coordination Project.

The evaluation has two main aims:

- 1) To measure and assess the effectiveness of the project, its impact on the local community in terms of the services delivered, the management committee and staff, and in particular the project's reception by community members.

Issues of particular interest include the extent to which the project has:

- Offered Value for Money
- Had an impact upon the local community and met overall neighbourhood need
- Influenced policy makers and strategists
- Linked into and provided added value/benefit for other local community projects in the area, such as community, voluntary and statutory partners
- Had an impact upon individual quality of life, particularly with regard to capacity building opportunities
- Effective management processes, systems and structures, including its partnership approach to develop and deliver services
- Addressed social and geographical barriers across the areas of Cowgate and Blakelaw

- 2) To make recommendations regarding the future of the project, thereby informing its succession strategy.

Potential issues for consideration included:

- Staffing
- Coordination
- Development
- Management
- Funding

1.2 Research Methods

To achieve the evaluation aims and objectives, the research team engaged with a variety of stakeholders and beneficiaries, including:

- Members of the management group/committee at both facilities
- Local community members (using the project activities/services etc)
- Various partner organisations responsible for delivering services via the project
- Relevant funders (Single Regeneration Budget 6 Preparing for Change and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund)
- Relevant strategy and policy makers

1.2.1 Documentary Analysis

Detailed analysis of materials relating to Montagu CFSS and Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre Project enabled a full assessment of the project's background, context, progress and development to date. Documentary analysis also informed the remainder of the evaluation process.

Documents analysed included:

- Original application details for funding
- Relevant strategy and policy papers i.e. Every Child Matters Green Paper and Next Steps, the Children Bill 2004, DfES's Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners, Education and Libraries Extended Schools Guidance.
- Project files, records and monitoring data
- Minutes from relevant meetings e.g. management committee, steering group
- Local area research i.e. findings from initial community consultation process
- Information in relation to community involvement in the development of the project
- Secondary research i.e. study of similar projects, such as full service schools or 'joined up' approaches to neighbourhood improvements, to identify and share good practice.

1.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Comprehensive, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 10 key stakeholders, representing the following organisations/groups:

- Montagu Blakelaw Coordination Project
- Montagu CFSS Management Group
- Montagu CFSS governing body
- Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre Management Committee
- Cowgate Community Forum

- Education and Libraries Directorate
- Sure Start (Cowgate and Blakelaw)
- Healthworks North West
- Family, Health and Community Project

Each interview schedule was specifically designed to address each area of interest. Generally, however, in order to assess the effectiveness of the Coordination Project, topics for discussion included: project background, achieving project aims, management structures and processes, partnership working and communications, community need and involvement, impact of the project, successes and challenges, contribution to policy and strategy, sustainability, and value for money.

1.2.3 Telephone /Email Interviews

Due to time and budget restrictions preventing the research team from undertaking face-to-face interviews, 7 stakeholders were interviewed by telephone or via email communications, including representatives from:

- Newcastle City Council (for North West area)
- Community Facilities Support section, Newcastle City Council
- Single Regeneration Budget: Preparing for Change
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
- Education and Libraries Directorate

This method of data collection yielded good quality data from those stakeholders who were unable to participate in face-to-face interviews.

1.2.4 Focus Group

The initial tender brief requested the evaluators undertake research with teaching staff employed at Montagu CFSS and one other non-participating school. However, once the evaluation process began, the client felt this would not be appropriate given the time and budget available. There were no other opportunities available to address this through alternative methods of data collection.

The evaluators undertook a focus group with 4 Community Workers (2 Assistant Community Support Officers and 2 Community Support Workers) in order to discuss the Coordination Project with frontline staff. One of the Community Support Officers had taken on this role when the original Community Support Officer was required to cover a different area; both these Officers were present in order to discuss the Project in its entirety.

The role of Community Support Officer differs from that of Community Support Worker; the Officer provides direct advice and support to the management groups with regards to policies and procedures, building management, and addressing training needs. Further, the two Community Support Workers are employed within

the Coordination Project, while the Officers work within Leisure Facilities, Neighbourhood Services.

In conducting a focus group, Community Support Workers were given the opportunity to take time away from their respective facilities to discuss and reflect on their experiences, how the facilities differ, how the communities have benefited from the services offered, and where improvements might be made.

1.2.5 Participatory Appraisal

Participatory appraisal (PA) is a community-based approach to consultation designed to seek the views of local people in a visually stimulating and non-threatening way. Through PA, local people as experts within their own communities, can explore and share their experiences of local conditions, make decisions and act to implement change within their community. PA uses flexible visual aids, such as simple maps, charts and diagrams to support people to offer their views in an interactive way. As a fully facilitated process, this method enables participants of all ages and abilities to contribute to the research.

It was envisaged that 3 PA events would be held in order to engage with local users of the project, whereby PA sessions would be organised at the two sites at a time when project users were in attendance, but this has not been possible due to a number of factors e.g. availability of groups, appropriate space to use, appropriateness of data collection tool etc. The research team did, however, engage with young users of the facilities using Participatory Appraisal tools, which was more appropriate for encouraging their full participation. In total 16 young people contributed to the research process, 8 attending the Young Achiever's Project at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre and 8 attending the Friend Ship event at Montagu CFSS.

1.2.6 Rapid Appraisal

The intention was to engage with users of the services offered within the facilities using Participatory Appraisal tools, but this has not been possible due to a number of factors e.g. availability of groups, appropriate space to use, appropriateness of data collection tool etc. Instead, the research team delivered a short Rapid Appraisal questionnaire; RA questionnaires were administered in Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre and Montagu CFSS during times when both facilities were delivering services to community members. This is a quick way in which to gather as much information as possible in a short space of time, gleaning qualitative information similar in depth to that of a semi-structured interview.

The benefit of this approach was that the research team were able to engage with a larger number of users in a short space of time than anticipated with Participatory Appraisal. The research team believe there may have been more scope for greater participation in the research process had they been able to use Participatory Appraisal tools with all service users.

The research team delivered Rapid Appraisal questionnaires on 4 occasions across the two sites at Blakelaw and Cowgate yielding the following numbers:

- Blakelaw – 22: 19 users, 2 volunteers, 1 service staff
- Cowgate – 11: 9 users, 2 volunteers

2 Coordination Project Profile

2.1 Background

Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre and Montagu CFSS have been developed as part of the overall programme for strategic development of community buildings within the North West area, with an awareness of provision in Cowgate and Blakelaw and the need to enhance and complement one another. They are two new projects and form part of the overall Neighbourhood Strategy for Newcastle in addressing residents' priorities for improvement to local neighbourhoods, strengthening communities and community participation.

2.1.1 Geographical Area

Cowgate - Montagu CFSS

Montagu CFSS is based in Cowgate, which forms a small part of the Kenton ward, with Ponteland Road as its western and southern boundary. With a population of about 3,400 and 1,009 households, Cowgate is a multi-tenure estate; previously only offering Local Authority rented property, a Private Sector Landlords Initiative (funded by the North West Partnership) was developed in response to the change in tenancy.

The Kenton ward has an unemployment rate of 5.7%, higher than the city average of 4.5%, with pockets of high multi-generational unemployment, poverty and low educational attainment. Although Cowgate resides within Kenton ward, this ward is relatively affluent in comparison with the areas surrounding Cowgate itself.

Blakelaw - Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre

The Neighbourhood Centre is based in the Blakelaw ward which is the fourth largest ward in the City with a population of 11,912, and 5,003 occupied households. Blakelaw has an employment rate of 5.2% which is higher than the city average of 4.5%. Young people account for a third of resident population in Blakelaw; 3,900 residents are aged over 50 and 300 pensioners living alone. Ill health is an issue, with 24.3% of the local population having a long-term illness and 13.9% in poor health (2001 Census).

2.1.2 Provision Prior to Project

Prior to the new facilities being built, there were two community 'huts' available in Cowgate and Blakelaw. In Cowgate, 'Betty's Hut' was a portacabin and in Blakelaw the 'Red Hut' comprised of three portacabins. Many of the service providers in Cowgate had been based in adapted council houses, which were not fit for purpose.

The Blakelaw Community Centre Campaign Group first formed in October 2000 and was comprised of representatives from community groups based within the Blakelaw area; this group became an integral part of the New Blakelaw Community

Association. Blakelaw's Red Hut, managed by New Blakelaw Community Association for 30 years, was described as having '*served the community very well*'; generally used by older people for bingo sessions, it had become unsafe, unsuitable for children and had asbestos problems.

Cowgate has received extensive community development over the past 10 years, mainly through doorstep provision of services to pocketed areas and groups and also work has been carried out around the regeneration of the infrastructure. Blakelaw, conversely, was described as receiving little in the way of development work and locally based service provision was limited due to lack of suitable premises

2.1.3 Relevant Policy and Strategy

The Coordination Project contributes to overarching strategies and developing policy currently operating within Newcastle citywide, including the Service Asset Management Plan and the Investment Plan for Community Buildings.

At a citywide level, a Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP) for the Community Facilities Support Service was produced in March 2004, with recommendations for consolidation of all community building assets within Community Facilities Services, establishment of strategic management arrangements, moving away from 'doorstep' to 'neighbourhood' provision, and development of principles to govern reinvestment in facilities. In approving the SAMP recommendations, a policy framework was established for the development of an Investment Plan for Community Buildings at an area and citywide level.

Community facilities reflecting the strategic vision above were described as sharing the following key features:

- based on community needs and aspirations
- high degree of community and voluntary input
- high degree of partnership working
- recognise the City Council as just one of a range of partners
- commitment to principles of equality & diversity
- continuation and expansion of community based services
- recognised as a focus for community based service delivery
- provision of flexible space
- on site staff
- core revenue support

Executive, 19th January 2005. Investment Plan for Community Buildings

Both neighbourhood facilities complement the strategic vision set out in Newcastle City Council's 'Investment Plan for Community Buildings', which is:

- To create a network of high quality, well located, properly maintained and easily accessible buildings

- That community buildings will be seen as a focal point for the delivery of services to the local community by statutory, voluntary and community organisations working in partnership
- That local people (with support of professional staff) will play a significant role and involve other stakeholders in the management and development of these venues
- That projects are sustainable via robust business plans that are agreed and committed to by all relevant parties.

The two community based projects also form part of Citywide Regeneration Strategies in that they support in addressing the needs of those most disadvantaged and who are experiencing local changes. They also form part of the overall Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in addressing residents' priorities for improvement to local neighbourhoods, strengthening communities and promoting community participation.

Additionally Montagu CFSS was made a national pathfinder project by Local Government Association (LGA) and the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) due to the significant links to these citywide regeneration initiatives.

Montagu CFSS was a visionary project in establishing the concept of Full Service Schools before government decided on Full Service Schools as an initiative.

The Government fully supports the concept of Full Service Schools and recognises the positive impact that they have on the attendance, behaviours and attainment of pupils, parents and the wider community.

The Government and the Department for Education, and Skills (DfES) have made a clear commitment to the creation of full service and extended schools. This is set out in Every Child Matters: The Next Steps, DfES: Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners, 2004 and the Children Bill, 2004. The Children Bill 2004 refers to full service or extended schools as a prime source in achieving key outcomes of Every Child Matters, Green Paper, 2003: Being Healthy; Staying Safe; Enjoying and Achieving; Making a Positive Contribution to Community and Society and Economic Well being.

2.1.4 Previous Research and Consultation

Community involvement and leadership was fundamental to the development of the facilities in Blakelaw and Cowgate; the main elements of this included:

- Active development of the Blakelaw Project by the Blakelaw Community Centre Campaign Group, which was comprised of representatives from most key community groups in Blakelaw). The Group merged and became part of New Blakelaw Community Association (NBCA).
- Input of and consultation with Cowgate Community Forum (CCF) regarding the development of Montagu CFSS. CCF is representative of groups across Cowgate and Montagu, with reps from CCF sitting on Montagu CFSS Management Group
- Questionnaires and surveys were delivered across Cowgate and Blakelaw
- Meetings with then potential service providers
- Public meetings and information sessions
- Circulation of leaflets and newsletters
- Regular progress meetings with NBCA, Working Partners, CCF and Newcastle

'Preparing for Change' SRB6 Standard Appraisal Form Year 2003-2004

Findings from the above elements demonstrated a lack of community-based activities across both Blakelaw and Cowgate. The consultation period concluded there was a 'need for effective and new community facilities was evidenced in all research'.

In addition to this, North West Partnership funded a feasibility study exploring the need for new community facilities in the area; in doing so, this:

- Ensured children/ young people had the opportunity to contribute to debate
- Ensured needs of particular groups were considered in new builds
- Ensured both users and non-users were informed about programmes of activities/services
- Demonstrated the inclusiveness of appropriate management structures to local people, service providers and funders.

Consultation with all partners resulted in the conclusion that paid staff support was necessary to enable the projects to develop and build capacity of local people involved in the facilities.

2.1.5 Projects and Activities

There are a number of projects and activities offered at Montagu CFSS and Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre; some are run at both facilities and others separately at each facility, depending on the communities needs.

Joint projects and activities run at both facilities:

1. *Arts and Music Projects*

In conjunction with Arts and Culture partners including:

- Blakelaw Young Peoples Arts and Music Project
- Cowgate FM Radio Broadcast
- Cowgate Co-music project in conjunction with Play and Youth Service

2. *Celebration Events at Montagu and Blakelaw*

3. *Community Café initiative and Social Enterprise*

Volunteering opportunities linked to social enterprise and community businesses. Cross working with Cowgate and Blakelaw Community Cafés.

4. *Cowgate and Blakelaw Credit Unions*

At Cowgate and Blakelaw

5. *Cowgate and Blakelaw Youth Sessions*

Delivered with Play and Youth Service at both facilities

6. *Cowgate and Blakelaw Jobs Fairs*

7. *Cowgate and Blakelaw Young Achievers Programme*

8. *Health and Physical Activity Programme*

In conjunction with Montagu School and Healthworks North West to promote the importance of physical activity and delivery of multi sport and physical activity clubs. Also includes development of Blakelaw Walkers group and Exercise Clubs

9. *Montagu Food Growing Initiative*

The development of Cowgate and Blakelaw Fruit and Vegetable Schemes in conjunction with the Good Food Project and community groups

10. *Northern Learning Trust (formerly Newcastle Literacy Trust)*

11. *Surestart Cowgate and Blakelaw*

This includes Montagu Baby Social

12. *The Good Food Project*

Including Cowgate and Blakelaw Fit Kids Project, Kids Café Projects, Healthy Tuck Shop, Parents Healthy Eating and Using the training kitchen within the school.

Projects and activities offered at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre:

1. *Adult with Learning Disability Group*

2. *Beat the Clock Club for over 50's*

3. *Bingo Sessions*

4. *Community ICT provision and IT training*

5. In conjunction with Education and Libraries, SRB6, Lifelong Learning Unit`

6. *History / Friendship Group*

7. *Mother and Toddler provision*

8. *Pensioners Club*

9. *Soft play Sessions*

Projects and activities offered at Montagu CFSS:

1. *Asylum Seeker Event*
2. *Community ICT provision in Montagu Community Café area.*
3. *Cowgate Family Health & Community Project Youth Panel*
4. Including Rave Girls sessions
5. *NHS No Smoking Project*
6. *Parent Partnership One stop shop provision*
7. Including development of services for children with specific needs
8. *Parent Participation Group*

This involves meetings and get-togethers for parents and carers of children with disabilities.
9. *Teachers Integration Programme*
10. *Young Peoples Awareness Events*

2.2 Staffing

Originally, three staff members delivered the Coordination Project across the two facilities, with additional support coming onboard into the second year of its operation.

The staff consisted of one Neighbourhood Facility Development Officer (in post since April 2004) and two Community Support Workers (in post since August 2004 and May 2004).

The team of workers are employed by the Community Facilities Support Section of Newcastle City Council's Neighbourhood Services Directorate until March 2006; collectively they aim to:

- Develop and implement a framework of support mechanisms, community capacity building measures and effective partnerships to allow community aspirations regarding service delivery and activities to be met
- Build upon and enforce a committed partnership approach at an area and neighbourhood level
- Allow communities to evolve through change regarding the style and approached relating to service delivery and have input to activities delivered at neighbourhood level.

2.2.1 Development Officer

The Development Officer, funded by SRB6 Preparing for Change monies, was responsible for coordinating and developing Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre and Montagu CFSS. Working with management structures at both facilities, to develop

and deliver services within the neighbourhood, key tasks of the Development Officer included:

- Co-ordination and implementation of community, voluntary and statutory services across the area via the two strategically placed facilities
- Continue to develop capacity building measures within all stages of service delivery including identification of need, development and delivery
- Develop mechanisms to provide opportunities for further development of community organisations related to capital projects including operational management, business planning, programming of activities and participation and involvement in the shaping of services.

2.2.2 Community Support Workers

The two Community Support Workers, funded by NRF, worked on day-to day management of the two facilities, one Worker at the Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre and the other at the Neighbourhood Facility at Montagu Full Service School. They additionally give support in the capacity building of appropriate voluntary organisations involved in the management and running of the facilities, co-ordinate training requirements and access appropriate resources to allow the groups to develop, with the aim of effectively managing the neighbourhood facilities independently.

To summarise, their tasks include:

- Operational Support - to provide day to day support regarding the operational aspects of building management including implementation of appropriate systems, project monitoring and evaluation attached to funding milestones as well as supporting in the overall evaluation of service delivery impact
- Community Capacity – co-ordination of management group requirements regarding development, training and volunteering opportunities and ensuring that accurate guidance and support is obtained
- Participation and Involvement – the support to individuals *and* groups in accessing appropriate service and activities and the co-ordination of ‘user’ activity and aspirations.
- Development of a Joint Working Plan – organise meetings/workshops between groups, take the findings from these and implement them into the Joint working Plan.
- Support the role of the Development Officer and overall teamwork.

2.2.3 Additional staff

Due to the complex nature of the two facilities and the Coordination Project, alongside a heavy workload, a part time administrator was employed within the Project itself to offer additional support where needed and was based at Montagu CFSS.

A Project Development Officer from Community Facilities Support section was also available, although not within the staffing of the Coordination Project itself, to provide

support and development within the neighbourhood facilities, and to ensure a range of services were offered to those in need.

Overall key staff from the Community Facilities Support section provided valuable support to the project.

2.3 Management and Partners

The Coordination Project is set within the Community Facilities Support section at Newcastle City Council. The Project Development Worker manages the Coordination Project, line managing the Community Support Workers, Part-time Administrator, Good Food Assistant, and volunteers in each community café, reporting directly to the Principal Community Facilities Support Officer.

There are a great number of organisations working together to ensure that a complementary and co-ordinated delivery of service can be provided from the two facilities focussing on the area as a whole. The following organisations offer neighbourhood level services through the two facilities:

- Arts and Culture
- Education and Libraries
- Environmental Services
- Family Health and Community Project
- Family learning
- Healthworks North West
- Job centre plus
- Leisure Services provide support to deliver the projects.
- Lifelong learning units
- Local Councillors surgery's
- Moneywise
- Neighbourhood services: street wardens and rapid response
- Newcastle Food Growing initiative
- Newcastle nutrition
- Northern Learning Trust
- Play and Youth Service
- Primary Care Trust (PCT)
- Sure Start
- Workfinder

2.3.1 Montagu CFSS (CFSS)

Montagu CFSS is a National Pathfinder project. The neighbourhood facility attached to CFSS was completed in April 2004 and meant Montagu School became the first full service primary school to be established in Newcastle.

The management structures were predominantly comprised of professional partners, alongside Cowgate Community Forum and affiliated community and voluntary groups. A steering group was set up initially, with representatives from governing bodies, community and various officers including partners which sit in an advisory capacity. The steering group became the management group for Montagu CFSS is

governed by a memorandum of understanding. Montagu CFSS has a regular Facility Partner meeting whereby those partners delivering services/activities at Montagu CFSS meet to discuss issues around the facility generally, how to develop links and joint working. Beneath this, there are a number of working theme groups, to which various partners contribute.

2.3.2 Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre

In November 2004, the Neighbourhood Centre addition to the library was complete, with its management structure based around a well-established, traditional and constituted community association already in Blakelaw.

The Neighbourhood Centre is a building based partnership between New Blakelaw Community Association, and Education and Libraries Directorate. The design of the Centre is a single use community building with one communal entrance where both community and library staff have separate reception desks but work together on a daily basis.

New Blakelaw Community Association manages the community element of the building. The management structure includes a management committee, with working theme groups comprising various partners to address particular areas of provision, which then feed into programming development groups.

2.4 Funding

Funding has been allocated to the Coordination Project until end March 2006. Up until this point, the Coordination Project will have received £77,584 of revenue funding from Single Regeneration Budget 6 'Preparing for Change' and £76,225 through funding from Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to support the positions of Development Officer and Community Support Workers.

Apart from this funding there has been no financial support offered from key partner organisations.

2.4.1 Single Regeneration Budget

SRB programme 'Preparing for Change' aims to bring about long term citywide regeneration in Newcastle. Projects supported by Preparing for Change monies intend to tackle social exclusion and provide support to communities during a period of change occurring due to implementation of regeneration programmes. Key aims of the Preparing for Change funds particularly pertinent to Cowgate and Blakelaw include: supporting people to get involved in shaping the future of their area, and tackling decline in areas which have not had access to regeneration money previously (this applied to Blakelaw in particular).

The Coordination Project obtained funding from SRB Preparing for Change to support the role of Development Worker. Total funds for the duration of the Development Worker's contract were £77584 (2004-2005 £38698, 2005-2006 £38886).

2.4.2 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund enables the most deprived local authorities in England to improve services therefore narrow the gap between deprived areas and the rest of the country. The Government set targets for improved outcomes in public services, which meant local authorities were being judged in their performance in the areas they were achieving the least, as opposed to the national average. The targets were further refined to ensure that, at a local level, service providers (e.g. police, schools) focused even more so on key challenges of neighbourhood renewal.

NRF monies were secured for the two Community Support Workers. Total funds for the duration of their contracts were £76,225 (2004-2005 £35,093, 2005-2006 £41,132).

3 Objectives and Achievements

3.1 Objectives

The Coordination Project has its own specific operational objectives at an area level designed to address an overall strategic objective, yet it also contributes to overarching strategies and developing policy currently operating within Newcastle citywide, including the Service Asset Management Plan and the Investment Plan for Community Buildings.

The Coordination Project intended to fulfil the following overall objectives:

- To develop and implement support mechanisms, community capacity building measures, and effective partnerships in order to meet community aspirations regarding service delivery and activities
- To build upon and apply a committed partnership approach at both area and neighbourhood levels
- To enable and empower communities to develop through change in relation to service delivery style and approach and to give input regarding activities delivered at neighbourhood level.

On fulfilling the general aims stated above, the Coordination Project also anticipated meeting strategic and operational objectives; original funding applications identified the following strategic objective for the Coordination Project and neighbourhood facilities:

- To address social exclusion and to enhance opportunities for disadvantaged residents through the community support strategic theme of the Preparing for Change Programme,

And the following operational objectives:

1. To develop strategic neighbourhood facilities which compliment the overall regeneration activity of the area and the City.
2. To provide welcoming facilities which will be accessible to children, parents, and the extended family.
3. To provide varied and broad based programmes of activity.
4. To focus on specific themes according to lack of current provision e.g. educational achievement, child development and young people, employment and training, basic skills and literacy improvement, social activity and personal wellbeing, crime, health, housing and the environment.
5. To support the effort to tackle social and geographical barriers within the area and individual neighbourhoods.
6. To work with partners to meet the needs of the people through service delivery
7. To instil pride and a sense of community ownership in buildings facilities
8. To engage in and encourage participation by all groups and community individuals throughout design, build and service delivery stages
9. To provide volunteering, training, development and job opportunities for people and to continuously support community capacity building measures.

3.1 Outputs

The Project Development Officer records and reports outputs to the Project Officer (Neighbourhood Services Directorate) on a quarterly basis, enabling monitoring returns to be completed. This information is also discussed with the management groups.

Outputs and milestones were initially set by the project in conjunction with SRB/Preparing for Change. When NRF began investing in the project in Quarter 4 of 2005/2006, it was agreed that the SRB outputs and milestones could be double counted for NRF, as the two organisations had similar requirements.

The figures in the table below are based on end of year SRB/Preparing for Change monitoring returns for 2004/2005, and QMRs for Quarters 1, 2 and 3 (up to the end of December 2005) for 2005/2006. At the time of writing Quarter 4 was still underway.

SRB/Preparing for Change outputs

Output description	2004/05		2005/06		Lifetime	
	Fore- cast	Actual	Fore- cast	Actual (Q1, 2 & 3)	Fore- cast	Actual
1A (i) Number of jobs created	3	3	0	0	3	3
1A (ii) Number of jobs safeguarded	0	0	3	3	3	3
7A (ii) Number of local people given access to new cultural (sport) facilities	16,100	16,100	0	0	16,100	16,100
7B (ii) Number of people using improved cultural facilities	2,500	19,191	2,750	17,759	5,250	36,950
8A (i) Number of voluntary groups supported	2	9	0	2	2	11
8A (ii) Number of community groups supported	20	21	6	3	26	24
8C Number of individuals employed in voluntary work	25	29	5	11	30	40
20 Number of residents accessing training opportunities	25	39	5	3	30	42
33 Number of volunteer hours	600	2,117	720	10,085	1,320	12,202
48 Number of evaluations completed	0	0	1	0*	1	0*
60 Number of training/development sessions	5	10	6	12	11	22

* = Output 48 will be fully achieved on the completion of this evaluation

The figures in the table below are based on NRF QMRs for Quarters 1, 2 and 3 (up to the end of December 2005) for 2005/2006. At the time of writing Quarter 4 was still underway.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund outputs

Output description	Lifetime (2005/06)	
	Forecast	Actual (Q1, 2 & 3)
25 Number of voluntary organisations supported	2	2
26 Number of community groups supported	5	5
28 Number of volunteers retained	8	12
29 Number of capacity building initiatives carried out	9	9
39 Number of events organised	6	7
40 Number of participants completing staff training and organisation development	40	41

The project achieved all of its 2004/2005 milestones on schedule. These were:

- Opening of Montagu CFSS;
- Appointment of Development Officer;
- Appointment of Community Support Workers (Montagu and Blakelaw);
- Opening of Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre;
- Progress report to the Preparing for Change Board.

2005/2006 milestones included:

- The official openings of Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre and Montagu CFSS (both achieved on schedule);
- Review of 2004/2005 (achieved one month behind schedule)
- Joint work programme developed (achieved one month behind schedule)
- Project evaluation (target date 30 September 2005; to be completed by 28 February 2006)
- Funding strategy developed for 2005/2006 (target date 31st October 2005)
- Final report and succession to the Preparing for Change Board (end of Feb 06)
- Funding Strategy, end of Feb 2006

It is evident from the output figures that the Coordination Project is over-achieving in a number of areas, including: Number of people using improved cultural facilities, Number of voluntary groups supported, Number of individuals employed in voluntary work, Number of residents accessing training opportunities, Number of volunteer hours, Number of training/development sessions (all SRB) and Number of volunteers retained (NRF).

SRB outputs are fixed therefore if over-achieving one year, surplus can only be carried over to the following year with special agreement; if this has not been agreed, then it may be possible some of this year's outputs may not be achieved e.g. 8A(ii). However, there remains another 2 months in which to achieve this output so it is possible this will not be an issue.

Reasons for slippage in milestones are clear; for example the Joint Work Programme was delayed by one month in order to develop further workshops to support its production.

Initially, the Project had issues around monitoring systems, which were described as typical for most funded projects. This was tackled and overcome through attendance at training designed to support accurate completion of monitoring forms. There were also concerns regarding the reliability of data submitted to the Development Officer by other organisations operating within the Coordination Project; again, this was tackled with the support of SRB in an attempt to maintain a uniform system of recording and monitoring data.

There were added complications of basing a neighbourhood facility within a Full Service School, with some disagreement around the setting of forecast outputs. Additionally it was felt that over-reliance upon Community Support Workers has led to the Community Support Workers being unable to fulfil some of their allocated tasks, such as recording information for milestones.

3.2 Achievements

This section will specifically highlight areas in which the Coordination Project has met its overall objectives (as outlined on page 17), highlight the Project's achievements, and discuss all findings (from all data sources) in detail within appropriate sections.

Overall, the Coordination Project has achieved its objectives as follows:

- To support the establishment of two newly built neighbourhood facilities both with management structures and processes
- The two neighbourhood facilities operate across the North-West area in partnership with community members and managed by partners. There is strong local involvement in both the management and development of the facilities.
- They deliver appropriate services that meet the needs of local people, encouraging communities to work together.
- The development of both facilities has been community-led from the onset, harnessing community capacity and aiming to meet their aspirations

Data from interview, Rapid Appraisal and Participatory Appraisal provides evidence suggesting that, although it has been a difficult task to undertake, the Coordination Project has:

- Supported the development and delivery of each facility and overall their users are happy with the services they access.
- Increased opportunities to work across Blakelaw and Cowgate, with slow but steady progress being made with regard to encouraging the communities to cross historical boundaries.

Participatory Appraisal data suggests children and young people are more open to accessing activities at both facilities regardless of where they live. Sharing volunteers across community cafes has also been particularly successful in tackling this area boundary.

The Coordination Project consistently overachieves with regard to its funding outputs, reflecting the overall success of the facilities, project and funded posts. The Coordination Project has supported both facilities to achieve a great deal in a short space of time and has established good grounds on which each management structure can develop their facility.

In relation to the aims stated in the evaluation tender, consideration will be given to the following areas, including positive examples offered by interviewees and Rapid Appraisal/Participatory Appraisal participants.

- Meeting community aspirations
- A committed partnership approach
- Enabling and empowering communities

This section will now discuss the key achievements (correct at the time the research was undertaken): the established management structures and processes of the two neighbourhood facilities; partnership working and communications; volunteering and community capacity building.

3.2.1 Management Structures and Processes

The findings discussed below are based upon minutes from each facility management meetings (Montagu: Nov 2004-Nov 2005; Blakelaw: Dec 2004-Sept 2005) and interview data involving relevant stakeholders. Further exploration of management processes would necessitate an extended evaluation whereby the research team would attend a number of management meetings over a period of time in order to assess the structures and processes in place, how they operate and how effective they are. The data collected for analysis is adequate, however, to enable a discussion of:

- Members' commitment to a partnership approach
- The extent to which members felt management of each facility was effective
- How issues are discussed and challenged
- Suggested changes to structures and processes.

The Coordination Project supports each management structure at both facilities. Due to the history of each facility's development and the nature of the services and activities they offer the community, there are different management structures, processes and membership in place. Each facility will be discussed separately, with an element of comparison for the purpose of sharing good practice between facilities.

3.2.1.1 Montagu CFSS - Management Business

The management group at Montagu CFSS is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding, with the intention to evolve into an independent voluntary organisation. The Memorandum is between Newcastle City Council, the Governing Body of Montagu Primary School, the Cowgate and Blakelaw Local Surestart Partnership, the Newcastle Primary Care Trust, Cowgate Community Forum, Montagu Community Forum and Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre community Association.

A steering group was set up as the management and comprises of:

- Four representatives from the school governing body including the Head teacher, a parent governor, a staff governor and the Chair of Governors community;
- Four representatives from the Service providers including Sure Start Partnership, Save the Children, Primary Care Trust and the Newcastle Literacy Trust;
- Four representatives from the Community Forums including two from Cowgate Community Forum, one from Montagu Community Forum and one from Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre Community Association

The Memorandum states that the Steering group shall meet no less than every six weeks. The main roles and responsibilities of the management are to realise the aims and objectives of the facility; establish a policy framework for managing staffing and operating the facility, the management of the facility and the finance of the facility. The Memorandum states that the management will prepare a progress report on the anniversary of the agreement, to be considered at a public meeting.

Membership and Attendance

Attendance at management group meetings has steadily increased over the period of November 2004 to November 2005; from July 2005 in particular attendance has stabilised at 14-15 people attending with 3-4 sending apologies. Contents of minutes would suggest this steady increase has been partly attributed to the Chair highlighting the importance of attendance (for example, minutes from April 2005) to various partners.

There are seats for four community representatives. Currently two workers from Cowgate Community Forum attend the management group as community representatives; of the 13 meetings for which there are minutes, at least one community representative attended 12 of these and 3 out of 13 were attended by both representatives. Concern was raised regarding the appropriateness of the two representatives and the degree to which they represent the community while they are in a position of paid employment in Cowgate Community Forum. Current community representatives might support other community members to attend alongside them; this would increase community representation and provide an opportunity for capacity building for the relevant community member(s).

A representative from Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre attended 4 of the 13 meetings; due to the nature of the Coordination Project and its purpose in supporting the delivery of area-based services, it would be advisable for a representative from Blakelaw to attend every management group meeting at Montagu CFSS to keep up to date with their activities, offer opinion where appropriate, and maintain open communications with Montagu CFSS at management level.

The research team also noted there were only a small number of occasions where community representatives were recorded as contributing to the management group discussions; this could be for a variety of reasons but should be explored in order to support 'community voice' to be appropriately represented.

There were some concerns regarding the formal nature of management group meetings that it appeared to have a business-like, 'City Council' format, which may not be conducive to the 'open house' arrangement where all are welcome to attend, particularly with regard to encouraging other community members to attend. The position of Chair should also anticipate attendance at management group meetings, ensuring all members are fairly represented and have the opportunity to contribute, supporting the intended open and welcoming nature of management meetings.

Representatives from the Young People's Panel attended the management group meeting in June 2005, in response to a request placed in April's management meeting. Previously young people had no direct representation on the management group, which would have been valuable as children and young people comprise a

large proportion of the intended beneficiaries of Montagu CFSS. The management group showed commitment to engaging young people in discussions around governance of the facility and requested the Young People's Panel submit some ideas regarding how they could be included in such discussions. A commitment to young people's participation in governance of the facility will be a valuable asset to the development of programming and provision within Montagu CFSS, encouraging community involvement and ensuring the needs of the community are met.

Governance

Governance is a recurring theme for discussion at management meetings, with the management establishing a governance subgroup dedicated to exploring management structures appropriate for Montagu CFSS and developing a new management arrangement.

The earliest recorded in-depth discussion of this development in governance is detailed in minutes from the management group meeting in January 2005; initial plans to develop new management structures were clearly outlined and tasks designated to appropriate management/staff members. It also included undertaking consultation with partners and users of the facility regarding their aspirations for the facility and services offered. Management members also established a working group/subgroup would be set up to evaluate feedback from users and partners, and examine options available for future governance arrangements. The subgroup would then be responsible for developing the preferred model. Consulting with partners and users ensures those who will operate within the facility and benefit from its services are included in the first instance in influencing the future direction of the facility.

Alongside this, it was proposed a group development plan should be drawn up to address the management group's progression to an independent organisation. The Development Officer was identified to support this development plan, addressing development and training needs as necessary.

As agreed in January 2005, updates in governance were discussed at the February management meeting, with the decision to hold an away day, with the support of an external facilitator to help the management group to identify its objectives. Contributions to this discussion were made by a number of people, with responsibility for tasks being shared amongst appropriate members. The Development Officer agreed her role to support and develop measures for the new management group to reach its full capacity.

By March 2005, all facility partners had contributed to governance discussions – it is not recorded how users' views were gathered or feedback, yet their contribution to such discussions are key to facility development. Again reference was made to establishing a governance subgroup, although membership was not discussed until May 2005, when it was recorded that the Chair, Coordination Project Development Officer, Community Coordinator, Project Development Officer, Sure Start representative, community representative from Cowgate Community Forum, and Healthworks' Coordinator would be part of the sub-group.

Unfortunately the first meeting of the governance subgroup was cancelled in response to the excessive costing of a consultant to facilitate and support the

process. This appeared to be a serious setback, although the away day would still go ahead. The meeting for the governance subgroup was not recorded as being rescheduled, although in July's management meeting it appears the subgroup had met to discuss the away day agenda.

The away day was an opportunity to obtain accurate feedback to bring back to the management group with a set of actions for a development plan and agreement about the mechanism and support required. The away day was successful, with good attendance and a better level of understanding, yet there was concern regarding the volume of work involved in restructuring management and governance arrangements. To tackle the action points agreed at the away day, subgroups were set up to deal with '*interim evaluation*', '*governance*', '*governance structure*', '*training and support needs*', and '*financial support needs*', with an Advisor in place for the governance subgroup.

Decisions around the future governance of Montagu CFSS suffered a setback in November when the proposal for governance with the school governing body as the accountable body was deemed inappropriate as the school was a full service facility offering a great deal in addition to schooling itself and it did not have the capacity to take this responsibility on, particularly in light of the school being placed in '*special measures*' following an Ofsted inspection.

There were some suggestions regarding which partner would play a part in the running of the building once the Coordination Project is over. Cowgate Community Forum (CCF) has charitable status in its own right, has a track record of obtaining funding, with paid workers and an established volunteer base. Due to the nature of the facility and its overall purpose, having a community forum running the front desk may be conducive to encouraging community ownership of the facility itself; however, it would be crucial to the development of the facility that an overall partnership approach be embraced in its operation.

Accommodation

It is evident from management group minutes and interview data that there have been ongoing issues with the facility as a new build and how the management group have responded. Facility partners felt the facility was not built as it had been described. Ongoing issues which have dominated the management meetings and not be resolved include:

- *Multiple entrances*: inappropriate for the purpose of the building, making a feeling of cohesion and partnership difficult to achieve. Reports on the number of entrances available to users varied between 3 and 5. Having separate entrances for particular services/activities reinforced the very notion the facility intended to remedy, that services operate independently of one another and users are confined to that service alone.
- *Size of rooms*: interview data suggests there was some confusion regarding allocation of rooms to facility partners when the building first opened. Some partner organisations were not happy with the accommodation in which they operated, bringing this to the attention of the management group (discussed below).

- *Layout of facility:* some facility partners disliked the addition of a nursery to the facility, creating an exclusive aspect, which is not conducive to meeting community needs or the notion of community ownership. Further, this addition meant access to the school itself would necessitate leaving the community building, going outdoors and re-entering the school. Also, because of the need for security and maintaining the safety of children and young people whilst using the building, the majority of doors require a key fob to open. This in itself is not an issue but the layout of the building is such that some areas/spaces can only be accessed through 3-4 locked doors.
- *Rental costs:* original charges for rent were based upon what they were willing to pay/their ability to pay as opposed to an objective rent per square metre. This is being revisited by management group.

The issue of unsuitable accommodation (the room being too small for the number of staff) has been an ongoing issue for one facility partner. This partner was unhappy with the response to requests for improved accommodation based upon the original agreement to trial existing accommodation; once trialled, the partner requested a larger space during management meeting proceedings, but this was then misrepresented to other facility partners outside of the management group, which caused tension among partners. At the time of interview and subsequent minutes from management meetings, this issue was unresolved, although the facility partner had agreed to continue to reside within the facility building itself. Time lapsed between the original request for improved accommodation and a decision to act upon this was approximately 6 months, and although during this time the issue was discussed on numerous occasions within management meetings, this is a significant length of time for a partner to operate from inappropriate accommodation. Overall the facility partner was unhappy with the way in which other partners responded during negotiations for suitable accommodation.

The Community Café

There has been some concern regarding the operation of the community café. The Good Food Project did have a Coordinator working within the facility, with the partner responsible for running the café, but there were some disagreements around what food would be made available for sale, in particular that it would conform to a healthy eating lifestyle. It is difficult to comment upon the situation with the Good Food Coordinator as the research team did not have the opportunity to interview her or to clarify the situation with the Development Officer. There have been some recommendations for an increased partnership approach to the running of the café, with those partners specialising in a theme (i.e. health) being able to influence menus, method of cooking for example. Although there is a Good Food subgroup, the management group should oversee this process to ensure each partner is supported in decision-making, perhaps making it a regular agenda item.

Results of OfSTED inspection

There were recurring issues regarding the LEA's involvement with the neighbourhood facility, including their lack of attendance at the management group, not contributing to the finances of the overall facility), and the impact of the *Teacher Integration Programme*. Towards the end of evaluation data collection, it became evident there were issues within the school itself which, beyond the control of the neighbourhood

facility, were having a direct impact upon its development and management. The school was placed in 'special measures', the report highlighting leadership as a major issue. At this time, it is understood the school has now focused attention on the immediate situation and concentrated on responding to the actions advised by the OfSTED Inspection Team as oppose to the Neighbourhood Facility.

Although this is a concern, particularly at a time when the Coordination Project is coming to an end and the facility needs support, it may also provide an opportunity, once the school has responded to the measures put in place, to create a new and exciting relationship with the school itself and its restructured management – an arrangement of mutual support and development. Additionally the appointment of a new chair indicates the continuation of the long term commitment of the school to the neighbourhood facility. The neighbourhood facility itself may be a particular asset to the school as it was highlighted in OfSTED's inspection report as a positive addition to Montagu CFSS:

'The school makes good use of the Full Service provision facilities to extend children's learning experiences... The school makes good use of the Full Service provision to extend care and guidance of children. (Montagu CFSS Inspection Report, November 2005, OfSTED)

Expiration of Coordination Project

Overall, there has been limited direct discussion recorded in management meeting minutes regarding the expiration of Development Officer and Community Support Worker posts in March 2006, and the actions required to put into place regarding buildings management; ongoing discussion has focused on future governance of Montagu CFSS, which addresses management of the facility at a higher level, this has however meant there hasn't been room for discussion of other issues on the agenda.

The Development Officer met with facility partners in November to discuss management of the community building and this has addressed some of the immediate issues around the transition to working without the Coordination Project;

- Established rent structures were producing an imbalance and would have to be amended, which may mean increases in rent payments for some organisations based upon a charge per square metre;
- Family Health and Community project, Sure Start and Healthworks, Cowgate Community Forum agree to provide support for the operational day to day running of the building
- Services available will be split into themes and a Partner would lead on one theme

The Development Officer arranged for partners to attend a building management awareness session in order to support their transition to taking on responsibility for the facility. This advance preparation for the Coordination Project's expiration is appropriate and well directed; one concern may be there is not enough time for facility partners to train for their responsibilities and allocate tasks within organisations prior to March 2006. Further, although it is stated in minutes that

partners and users who undertake building management will require careful planning and development work, it is unclear how this will be tackled, under whose direction and within what timescale.

It has been noted that recent budget work has alerted the management to the fact that the project staff will not be working on the project post March 2006. The team on the ground have been discussing the exit of the project since April 2004, however found it difficult to attract the managements' attention to this priority during meetings, as management level priorities were different. The management meetings have been described as a mechanism for '*professional guidance*' as opposed to '*taking control*' of the facility.

A Summary of Successes of Montagu CFSS:

(Please see pages 10-12 for a list of projects and activities run at Montagu CFSS)

- The neighbourhood facility was highlighted in OfSTED's inspection report as a positive addition to Montagu CFSS
- The Community Café, run entirely by volunteers and the Cowgate Community Forum.
- Representatives from the Young People's Panel attended the management group meeting; a commitment to young people's participation in governance of the facility will be a valuable asset to the development of programming and provision within Montagu CFSS, encouraging community involvement and ensuring the needs of the community are met.
- Partners were to attend a building management awareness session in order to support their transition to taking on responsibility for the facility.
- A governance subgroup was established dedicated to exploring management structures appropriate for Montagu CFSS and developing a new management arrangement.
- An 'away day' which was held, to help the management group to identify its objectives, was successful, with good attendance and a better level of understanding. This was an opportunity to obtain accurate feedback to bring back to the management group with a set of actions for a development plan and agreement about the mechanism and support required. The Development Officer agreed her role to support and develop measures for the new management group to reach its full capacity.

3.2.1.2 Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre – Management Business

The management structure for Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre is based on Blakelaw Community Association. Operating as a constituted community association already in Blakelaw prior to the new facility being built, membership was established.

The constitution states that the main objects of the Association are to firstly promote the benefit of Blakelaw inhabitants and the neighbourhood together with inhabitants, local authorities, voluntary and other organisations, to advance education and

provide facilities for recreation and leisure to improve the inhabitant's conditions of life. Secondly to establish, maintain and manage a community centre and thirdly to promote charitable purposes.

The management structure includes a management committee, with working theme groups comprising various partners to address particular areas of provision, which then feed into programming development groups.

Membership and Attendance

Attendance at management committee meetings is stable, with minutes recording numbers attending at approximately 8 – 11 each meeting. Two new members joined the committee in March 2005. Also in attendance, although not as members of the committee, are the Development Officer and Community Support Worker from the Coordination Project, and a Community Support Officer (Leisure Services).

Membership of Blakelaw's management committee differs to that of Montagu CFSS, being entirely composed of community members who offer their time voluntarily. The minutes show attendance by the Development Officer is valuable as she contributes regularly and shares a large amount of important information with other members, ensuring they remain aware of all matters arising.

Although the Chair of Blakelaw's management committee has been recorded as attending Montagu CFSS's management group meetings, there is no representative from Montagu CFSS attending Blakelaw's management meetings. It is unclear as to the reason for this, but it could be of benefit to coordination of services and recognition of opportunities if a Montagu representative did sit in attendance at the management committee meetings. If a community representative from Cowgate attended Blakelaw, this would contribute to breaking down of barriers, ensure communications were maintained and offer mutual support when similar experiences occur, which is particularly important as one of the volunteers at Blakelaw is from the community of Cowgate.

A representative from the Education and Libraries Directorate, the Area Manager of libraries, attends the management meetings. The research team recognise this as useful as interview and PA data suggests activities/services delivered within the facility can impact upon the library and vice versa. It does provide an opportunity to discuss potential joint activities, maintaining awareness of what each aspect of the facility offers their community.

The facility could also benefit from extending its management membership to include male members and young people. In doing so, the committee would ensure they are engaging these communities in developing appropriate services/activities and contributing to a sense of community ownership of the building and its services. Members of the management committee were acutely aware of the need to recruit younger people; this was recognised during an interview and discussed in relation to recruiting more volunteers in the whole, as well as encouraging them to join the committee.

Governance

Based upon the data gathered thus far, there is not a management structure in place post-Coordination Project. The earliest recorded mention of the cessation of the Coordination Project is in July 2005, where it recognised the Development Officer and Community Support Worker will be leaving, and that appropriate funds may need to be found to support any further posts. The final minute's available record that a meeting will be organised for end of September 2005 to discuss important handover tasks.

Their governance structures may also be affected by the current staffing review being undertaken within Leisure Facilities; there may be some support for the Neighbourhood Centre through staff employed to implement the Investment Plan for Community Buildings.

New Blakelaw Community Association are a constituted group, the lease will still be held by the local authority once the project funding ends, therefore the Local Authority predominantly hold the responsibility. However because the management group are made up of a constituted group, they do still hold some of the responsibility.

Good Practice for the Reception

Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre offers activities outside of normal working hours and therefore requires someone to be available to staff the reception desk. This is often raised as an issue by the Community Support Worker who requests a volunteer to cover the hours needed when activities are running between 5pm and 9pm; this could be made the responsibility of one of the management committee, particularly as the Coordination Project, thus the role of Community Support Worker, is coming to an end. Also, it is noted that it is often the same people who volunteer to cover reception out of hours; perhaps a rota of reception responsibilities may be established.

As recorded in management meeting minutes, there have been two occasions where some facility users have not been made to feel welcome within the community building. When an official complaint was made, the Development Officer dealt with this appropriately, asking the management members who work on reception to maintain an open and friendly manner to all entering the building, and be aware of any new groups attending the facility. The second incident involved a Healthworks group using the community café; a negative comment was made to this group and, again, the Development Officer dealt with the situation, ensuring the management committee members were aware that the facility operated within an equal opportunities policy, whereby all people are welcome at the facility.

Participatory Appraisal data also suggested some of the young people attending sessions at the facility do not always feel they are welcome to be there; this must be addressed in order to encourage the notion of community ownership within the facility and for its users. In response to incidents like this, it could be useful for some of the management committee members to attend a refresher course on equal opportunities and feedback to the remaining committee in order to ensure those

using the facility are able to do so with ease. However, it should be noted that Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre has had a range of successful events for children and young people, and there are a number of thriving activities for this user group (e.g. Young Achievers, Soft Play sessions, Art and Music project). The incidents discussed are isolated and, on the whole, the management committee are committed to engaging all community members to access the facility.

Community Café

Initially the community café was a problem for the facility; it was not running effectively and was open only certain days due to shortage of volunteers with food hygiene certificates. In response to these difficulties, it was agreed a café subgroup would be set up although this was not felt to be a success. Consideration was given to the idea of letting the space as a franchise although this was not possible due to their contract with Newcastle City Council. There was an issue around the ability of the volunteers to effectively cover the hours the café was opened and suggestions were put forward to reduce opening hours or recruit volunteers through CSV.

Discussions around the community café were ongoing for approximately 4 months and there was little change to the difficulties arising. Cowgate Community Forum volunteers had run the café for a week in June 2005 and it was felt this was a success. When the café subgroup was set up initially, it may have been useful to invite a volunteer from Montagu CFSS's community café to join in order to support Blakelaw's café during its period of development; sharing practice in that way could have been advantageous for both community cafes. The Development Officer suggested a visit to Thomas Gaughan's neighbourhood facility in order to see how social enterprises operate there to explore if that was an option for their café; the outcome of this visit is unclear as it was not discussed at the following management meeting.

Interview data shows the community café is now an integral part of the neighbourhood facility, well used and enjoyed by its customers.

Mini bus provision

The mini bus and its associated responsibilities are often discussed during management meetings. This mini bus is shared with Blaydon rugby club. In January 2005, it was suggested a mini bus subgroup was established to manage its running, finances, repairs and bookings; at the following meeting this subgroup had not met and the situation remained static throughout March also. It had been suggested the mini bus could raise funds if used for advertising purpose, but it is unclear how this proposal transpired. The Community Support Worker and Community Support Officer agreed to set up a booking system for the mini bus and also to organise some publicity to raise community awareness regarding its availability; this may have been an action to have been carried out by committee members themselves.

In May 2005, the running of the mini bus is still in question; it seems the booking system has not been put in place as there are complaints records are not kept regarding who is hiring it and where it is. The earlier idea of a mini bus subgroup should come into effect in order to tackle these problems but there has been no further mention of this group being established. One of the management members

took responsibility for organising a bank account for the mini bus, although it is unclear if this occurred. In the following month of July 2005, income from mini bus hire is still not being recorded separately; it is unclear who should be responsible for undertaking, nor is this task allocated to any member during the meeting. Due to the mini bus running at a loss, a decision is made to increase charges on bingo and anyone using the bus to travel to bingo.

It is not clear if increasing charges in this way has an effect upon the mini bus finances as it is not recorded in minutes and was not discussed during interview. If a subgroup was established for the mini bus, this may address the difficulties with recording bookings and maintaining finances. It could also have taken on responsibility for earning money through advertising on the bus itself, which was suggested in an earlier meeting but did not appear to be followed up.

Autonomy

Unlike the management group at Montagu CFSS, which is made up of various partners with a particular role and responsibility with the facility, Blakelaw's management committee is made up of volunteers alone who, until the point of the new build, had not experienced partnership working nor run a neighbourhood facility the size of the building on offer. This inevitably meant they required a greater level of support from the Development Officer of the Coordination Project. It is evident the support and development offered was effective and well placed; however, it may have been more beneficial to the management committee to have taken on more of the responsibilities involved in running the facility and coordinating activities earlier on in the life of the Coordination Project, leaving the committee members well prepared for the loss of both Development and Community Support Workers. Evidence from management minutes and interview data suggests a longer period of training and responsibility around running the facility would have been welcomed.

Relocation of Sure Start Cowgate and Blakelaw

Concern was expressed regarding the recent move of Sure Start to a permanent base at Thomas Walling School (which is in close vicinity to Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre). Some interviewees were worried this may mean an end to Sure Start renting space and running their activities from the Neighbourhood Centre. Facility users also expressed their frustration as some activities came to an end while Sure Start moved buildings and when those activities were started up again, they would be held at Thomas Walling, not Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre, which deterred some users from accessing the activities once more. At the time of interview, these concerns, in particular Sure Start relocating all services to Thomas Walling and offering none at Blakelaw, had not been discussed between the management committee and Sure Start. The Community Support Worker at Blakelaw confirmed the Parent and Toddler Group would stop and not restart, but the facility were aiming to establish their own parent and toddler group as a section of the community association.

A Summary of Successes of Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre:

(Please see pages 10-12 for a list of projects and activities run at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre)

- Blakelaw Management Committee is composed entirely of community members who offer their time voluntarily. This helps to reduce running costs and facilitates sustainability.
- Blakelaw Management Committee have received valuable support and development from the Coordination Project staff which was effective and well placed
- Attendance by the Development Officer at management meetings is valuable as she contributes regularly and shares a large amount of important information with other members, ensuring they remain aware of all matters arising.
- The community café, run entirely by volunteers, is now an integral part of the neighbourhood facility, well used and enjoyed by its customers. Additionally Cowgate Community Forum volunteers had run the café for a week in June 2005 and it was felt this was a success.
- Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre has run a range of successful events for children and young people, and there are a number of thriving activities for this user group (e.g. Young Achievers, Soft Play sessions, Art and Music project).
- A representative from the Education and Libraries Directorate, the Area Manager of libraries, attends the management meetings, this is useful as it provides an opportunity to discuss potential joint activities, maintaining awareness of what each aspect of the facility offers their community.

3.2.2 Partnership Working and Communications

The Coordination project has been integral to the development of a partnership approach to services. Interviewees discussed various modes of partnership working, these will add to the projects and activities jointly run at both facilities, which are listed on pages 10 to 12 of this report.

3.2.2.1 Professionals

Assumptions that particular partner organisations would contribute to and deliver certain types of service/activity were proven to the contrary.

Montagu CFSS

There are examples of strong partnership working; the Jobs Fair (there have been two, both held at Montagu CFSS) involving non-typical organisations and organised through the MAPS (Multi Agency Problem Solving) and VEET (Volunteering, Education, Employment and Training) group; Sure Start Cowgate and Blakelaw (aimed at families with children 0-4) took the lead with these events, which focused

on employment, education and training, with Workfinder and Cowgate Community Forum. Numerous comments were made regarding the success of these Jobs Fairs, in particular the way in which partners worked together with a sense of purpose to organise and deliver an excellent event.

There were issues raised around partnership working and this seems to be a main problem which has hindered the progression of the project. The Interview data uncovered tensions among facility partners within Montagu CFSS (those with their base in the facility itself), which were having an impact upon service development and delivery, and had the potential to affect future partnership working if they were not addressed. It was felt some partners had a greater degree of control over proceedings in the facility than was appropriate and this had been, on occasion, to the detriment of the quality of service offered to the community. Recommendations to address this issue might include revisiting the agreements made when facility partners began to deliver from the facility to ensure all partners are behaving in accordance with such agreements; an away day to encourage communications and opportunities to undertake joint initiatives; mediation offered from the management group to discuss sensitive issues based around working relationships.

Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre

At Blakelaw, the library and the neighbourhood facility are on the whole happy with their joint facility, and cited the added benefits of working in this way, in particular that users of the library become involved in the community activities and vice versa.

MAPS Group (Multi Agency Problem Solving)

Some interviewees discussed the MAPS meetings (which are themed to include environment, crime and community safety, children and young people, and health) in a very positive light, believing they were useful for maintaining working relationships across organisations as well as the areas of Cowgate and Blakelaw. Yet, there was an issue around one of the MAPS groups, which had included Cowgate and Blakelaw, when it was requested this should be split to create one group for each area. It was felt this was not conducive to the concept of the Coordination Project and the development of services for the two facilities.

However, the purpose of the MAPS group should be highlighted; these were set up by councillors with ward coordinators as a mechanism for consulting with local people around particular themes/issues local people identified, these issues are then fed back to the Local Authority. They were never intended to be a Planning group.

3.2.2.2 Professionals and Communities

The volunteer base contributing their time in various roles at both facilities, whether as members of management or working in the community café is described as key to the success of the Coordination Project and the future of both facilities

Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre

The relationship between New Blakelaw Community Association and library services is a unique partnership and has proved to be very successful; library services are now considering duplicating this project across the city and joining up services with

community based services from multi-functional buildings. The working theme groups operating at Blakelaw, which are the Older People Working Theme Group and the Children and Young People Working Theme Group, were described as successful, involving both professionals and community members working together. There was some concern regarding an over-reliance upon the Development Officer and Community Support Worker to maintain professional relationships with the management committee at Blakelaw; it is important the management committee recognise they need to establish direct relationships with professionals delivering services in their facility in preparation for the expiry of the Coordination Project.

Montagu CFSS

There were a number of comments raised around appropriate community representation within Montagu CFSS; the community representatives sitting on the management group are residents in Cowgate, therefore they are community members, yet they are also paid employees of Cowgate Community Forum. Some interviewees felt these representatives should represent Cowgate Community Forum, but there should also be volunteers from the community in addition to this. It is important to encourage other volunteers of Cowgate Community Forum and other partner organisations to attend management group meetings, alongside the existing representatives if necessary, in order to ensure the wider community voice is heard; in doing this, it would contribute to building volunteer capacity.

There were also concerns regarding the '*representativeness*' of Cowgate Community Forum; this may have been due to a lack of knowledge regarding the forum activity, which could be addressed by ensuring partners are aware how Cowgate Community Forum get input from and feedback to the wider community.

3.2.2.3 Communities

Overall, the progress made in breaking down barriers between Blakelaw and Cowgate, although slow, was a major achievement for the Coordination Project and the communities. Although there are significant differences in the facilities and the communities which they serve, the similarities they share have supported their coming together; both communities are proud of their achievement regarding the good quality neighbourhood facility they campaigned for, including their drive to meet community needs and aspirations.

Cowgate Community Forum had established links with Blakelaw Network prior to the Coordination Project, which may have supported further engagement post-new build. Both Cowgate Community Forum and New Blakelaw Community Association said they share information together effectively and this will continue to build in the future. One proposal was for a community bus to operate between the two facilities in order to further encourage those in each community to share facilities across the area. It is clear that the Coordination Project has enabled a dialogue to open between the main community organisations in each area, and with the support the Project staff offered, this has laid the foundations for ongoing communications in order to develop services in response to community need. It is recommended that there should be something in place which supports this exchange of ideas and practice however, to ensure dialogue is maintained; this could be included in plans for governance structures,

with representatives from each facility attending the others' management meetings for example.

Originally it had been envisaged that residents in each area would attend both facilities based upon the services/activities they wished to access; it was agreed that this had not happened as yet, but there has been much success with sharing volunteers through the community café, and it is possible this will encourage further participation of the communities in each facility. This was supported by rapid appraisal findings; although a minority of respondents at each facility had used both facilities, through working as a volunteer for projects currently being run at both facilities, for example, the Good Food Project, members of the community who had only accessed one of the facilities suggested that they would consider using the other facility if there was an activity, service or training event that they were interested in attending. Also, Participatory Appraisal data suggest children are less bound by the historical barriers between Blakelaw and Cowgate, saying they have accessed both sites for various reasons (the library was a particular draw at Blakelaw) and are happy to do so; one of the barriers they described as preventing them from doing so was being allowed to travel across to the facility not in their immediate area.

There was some discussion around duplication of services/activities across both facilities; for some this was an issue, which they felt encouraged users to access their closest facility only, yet others felt this was not a negative aspect of service delivery. The case for delivering similar services at both facilities is that it is the users, not the service, which makes it what it is, that is essentially different depending upon who is attending and their requirements of that service. Ultimately, it is about meeting community needs and offering services that people want; for example, Newcastle Literacy Trust deliver activities at both sites, but they do so based on the individual needs of clients.

One interviewee felt political divisions between Blakelaw and Cowgate had more influence upon the potential for area-based services than may have been anticipated; in attempting to break down barriers between the communities, it was felt this did not only involve overcoming the physical boundary of Ponteland Road, but also political separateness of ward boundaries.

A Summary of Successful Partnership Working:

(Please see pages 11-13 for a full list of activities run jointly at both facilities)

Communities

- Progress has been made in breaking down barriers between Blakelaw and Cowgate, although slow, this is a major achievement for the Coordination Project and the communities.
- Cowgate Community Forum and New Blakelaw Community Association said they share information together effectively and this will continue to build in the future.
- Members of the community who had only accessed one of the facilities suggested that they would consider using the other facility if there was an activity, service or training event that they were interested in attending
- The Coordination Project aims to meet community needs and offer services that people want, for instance, Newcastle Literacy Trust deliver activities at both sites, but they do so based on the individual needs of the clients.
- Children are less bound by the historical barriers between Blakelaw and Cowgate, saying they have accessed both facilities for various reasons (the library was a particular draw at Blakelaw) and are happy to do so
- There has been much success with sharing volunteers at both facilities through the community café
- The Coordination Project has enabled a dialogue to open between the main community organisations in each area, and with the support the Project staff offered, this has laid the foundations for ongoing communications in order to develop services in response to community need.

Professionals and Communities

- The working theme groups operating at Blakelaw: the Older People Working Theme Group and the Children and Young People Working Theme Group, were described as successful, involving both professionals and community members working together
- The relationship between New Blakelaw Community Association and library services is a unique partnership and has proved to be very successful; library services are now considering duplicating this project across the city and joining up services with community based services from multi-functional buildings.

Professionals

- An example of strong partnership working is the Jobs Fair, there have been two, both held at Montagu CFSS, involving non-typical organisations and organised through the MAPS (Multi Agency Problem Solving) and VEET (Volunteering, Education, Employment and Training) group; Sure Start Cowgate and Blakelaw (aimed at families with children 0-4) took the lead with these events, which focused on employment, education and training, with Workfinder and Cowgate Community Forum.
- At Blakelaw, the library and the neighbourhood facility cited the added benefits of working in a joint facility, in particular that users of the library become involved in the community activities and vice versa.

3.2.3 Volunteering and Community Capacity Building

The Co-ordination Project has supported volunteering opportunities and encouraged training and capacity building of local people and volunteers at both facilities.

Presented below is information from the Cowgate and Blakelaw Coordination Project Review (August 2005); the project review is compiled by the Development Officer outlines the development of community capacity and successful capacity building measures:

- The Project has worked closely with New Blakelaw Community Association and Cowgate Community Forum, supporting them to address training needs and co-ordinating volunteering opportunities within the facilities.
- The Project has encouraged local people to be involved in identifying community need and bringing this to the forefront when developing new activities and projects
- The Project has developed joint working and training plans across the area of Cowgate and Blakelaw, encouraging residents from both areas to come together; develop capacity and share knowledge, skills and resources.
- Both community organisations have successfully secured funding to host a Young Achievers project, with help and support from the Project
- Cowgate Community Forum have been supported in developing a robust volunteer framework which allows local people to actively be involved in volunteering opportunities throughout a range of activities and services.

Examples of successful community capacity measures:

- Community Surveys and consultation
- Working theme groups and project partner groups
- Training and development in building management (business planning, governance, systems and procedures, Risk Assessment, Health and Safety)
- Personal development (confidence building, team building, IT training, accredited training in community work)
- Volunteering Framework and opportunities – with local residents and volunteer agencies i.e. CSV
- Social Enterprise opportunities

Cowgate and Blakelaw Co-ordination Project, Project review, August 2005

The findings of the evaluation confirmed those detailed in the Project Review in August 2005. Since the Review was written, the community café at Blakelaw has strengthened with the ongoing support of a volunteer from Cowgate community café.

As stated above, the Cowgate Community Forum has supported local people to be come actively involved in volunteering opportunities, throughout a range of activities

and services. The most evident of these are the community café, fruit and veg. initiatives, the Good Food Project and the Young Achievers programme.

The forum provides capacity building support and training to volunteers and the community, findings confirmed benefits of this included improving peoples confidence and self esteem. Training offered by the forum includes Counselling, domestic violence, minutes of meetings, child protection, assertiveness, confidence building and mental health training.

Overall, New Blakelaw Community Association and Cowgate Community Forum seem very happy with training offered to them via the Coordination Project, although they may have benefited from more in the area of buildings management in order to prepare them for taking over the running and management of the two facilities once funding for the project runs out.

Rapid Appraisal respondents identified a number of benefits of the facilities stating that they offered many more activities and services than previous provision, provided a place to socialise and meet new people (the community café), which in turn contributed to capacity building and in particular to building self confidence and to improving skills. Additionally volunteers expressed an advantage of their role as *'feeling like I've helped people in the community'*

At Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre, activities, services and training accessed by the respondents included: the Credit Union, the Community Café, Bingo, the Local history group, an Exercise Group, Soft Play, the Christmas Lunch, the Library and Health and Hygiene Training.

At Montagu CFSS activities, services and training accessed by the respondents included: the Credit Union, the Community Café, the Fruit and Veg. Scheme, the Young Achievers Group, Christmas Crafts, Mental Health Training, Self harm Awareness Training, Child Protection training, Food Hygiene Training, First Aid training, Computer training, confidence and assertiveness training and Fire Safety Training

The Young Achievers group (who contributed to the research process through PA) at Blakelaw enjoyed the opportunity to access this group when other provision is limited or there are no available spaces. The group suggested benefits of Blakelaw Neighbourhood centre, these included: dancing, singing, teamwork, appreciate group leader, make new friends, good clubs, good trips, learn new things, have fun, Fit Kids, Young Achievers. The Young Achievers Programme encourages young people to develop there own initiatives through out a pilot project which is focused on enhancing social and personal skills. In both facilities, it would seem that there are issues around lack of provision for young people. The Family Health project based at Montagu CFSS is currently working with children and young people to address this issue. At the time of this research they were developing a Youth Forum for young people living in the area; Cowgate and Blakelaw, this will be similar to a consultation and used as a mechanism for young people to raise any issues they feel important.

3.3 Project Staffing

The Coordination Project has 3 full time staff and one part time administrative post. Within the facilities, there is supplementary support for development and delivery; this is provided by additional staff and volunteers. These roles shall be discussed in terms of their influence upon the Coordination Project, challenges and achievements, joint working, and overall contribution to the facilities.

3.3.1 Role of Development Officer

The Development Officer post intended to coordinate and implement community, voluntary and statutory services across the two facilities, to develop community capacity building measures, develop appropriate structures of working amongst partners, support communications and liaise with service providers to offer a programme of activities across the area. Overall, responses around the role of the Development Officer have been positive, particularly in establishing working relationships with community partners and developing groups/activities to meet community needs.

There was some confusion expressed and differing understandings around the stated purpose of this role, with some partners feeling expectations of the Coordination Project and the role of Development Officer differed, and this influenced the extent to which they felt it was fulfilling specifications. Some interviewees believed the Development Officer was specifically designated to coordinate overall activities across both facilities, including a hands-on role within management structures, with less emphasis on community development tasks; others felt her role had adapted in response to the reality of the Project in practice; the need for extra support in developing and running the facilities, and the time required to do so, initially took precedence over the overall coordination activity.

During discussion around this role, some interviewees commented it was almost impossible to fulfil the specification of Development Officer; as this venture was unique, this could not have been anticipated and has provided a good opportunity to develop this role should a similar venture occur in the future. Once the Project began and it became clear how complex the proposition was, there was some re-evaluation of what could be achieved within the two years of the Project's life. The support of a Project Development Officer (Community Facilities Support) in 2005 was described as particularly beneficial to the strategic development of the two facilities, such as bringing subgroups together which have linkages or accountability.

There were suggestions that ideally the Project would have had two Development Officers, one based at each facility, with coordination of facilities occurring through such posts. Those involved in the day-to-day operation of the facilities felt this would have been particularly useful while establishing initial management structures and coordinating facility partners when the facilities first opened. Those partners at Montagu CFSS expressed this more often, where it was perceived the Development Officer had a preference for working at Blakelaw, it is clear there was some frustration around the perceived preference for attending Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre and this may have created tension between partners across the facilities. The

division of time of the Development Officer was affected by a number of factors including; the sheer workload at both buildings; the delay of the capital build project at Blakelaw and the community support workers starting after the start of the project due to a delay in the release of funding for these posts.

The role of Development Officer was described as key to '*pulling people together*' and '*getting the job done*'; this was felt most keenly at Blakelaw where it the role of Development Officer is perceived as central to management and development of the facility itself. At Montagu CFSS, the role of Development Officer was important in establishing and developing subgroups in order to tackle issues, alongside meeting community need by addressing gaps in provision and supporting the organisation of joint events e.g. Job's Fair. There were some recommendations for an enhanced role for the Development Officer in servicing Facility Partners and influencing management structures at Montagu CFSS.

3.3.2 Role of Community Support Worker

These roles were crucial to the daily operation of the facilities and ongoing support for volunteers. The role of Community Support Worker involved provision of day-to-day support around operational aspects of building management, including project monitoring and evaluation around project milestones, coordination of management group requirements around development needs, and support for groups to access appropriate services. The Community Support Workers fulfilled their key tasks, but did have to cope with a heavy workload and responsibility for much of the facility activity on a daily basis; as this venture was unique, with two new builds, it had not been anticipated that issues around buildings management would be so substantial and require such levels of attention. Building management has been an arduous task for both Community Support Workers, who had to learn this as the project progressed but has gradually eased as responsibilities are shared amongst volunteers and additionally a caretaker was appointed at Montagu CFSS in July 2005 on a part time basis. This could have been less costly if a caretaker had been appointed at both facilities on a part time basis at the start of the project.

Where development work was necessary, although not a requirement in the job specification, it was felt that the role should have been filled by someone with experience in community development in order to have the greatest impact upon the group as they are established; nevertheless, interview and Rapid Appraisal suggests both posts have provided excellent support and guidance when needed. There were some instances where the role of Community Support Worker could have benefited from a greater level of support; this relates to the need to have a Development Officer available at both facilities full time, to support the Community Support Worker and deal with problems as they arise. Due to the difference in set up at each facility, each Community Support Worker dealt with different issues and required support in distinct ways.

Both Community Support Workers undertook various training and development during their post, the Community Support worker at Montagu CFSS accessed the following training:

- Risk Assessment training
- Difficult situations and Personal Safety

- Fire Safety
- Nominated persons First Aid Licensing – in relation to the new Licensing laws
- Equality and Diversity training
- POPs training (for procurement)
- Child Protection
- Microsoft Publisher
- Appraisal training

The Community Support worker at Blakelaw neighbourhood Centre accessed the following training:

- Risk Assessment
- First Aid including Children and babies First Aid
- Fire Safety
- Microsoft Excel
- Time management
- Customer service
- Telephone handling
- Assertiveness
- Working in your community NVQ level 2 including Equality and Diversity training

Interview data and minutes from management meetings relating to Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre demonstrate a high level of dependency upon both the Community Support Worker and The Development Officer; the management committee and volunteers have undertaken a period of shadowing, prior to the staff review, as it was recognised that staff will be leaving in March and this will be useful to learn the skills required to operate the facility on a daily basis. There are concerns reported around coping with such responsibilities once the Coordination Project is complete, which suggest preparation for this transition should have begun sooner.

3.3.3 Role of Additional Staff

A part time Administrative Assistant was employed at Montagu CFSS to take on some of the administrative tasks that the Community Support Worker had originally undertaken. Whilst this was particularly beneficial to the Community Support Worker, again it may have also been advisable to invite a volunteer to 'shadow' the admin assistant in order to prepare for the expiration of the Coordination Project.

A Project Development Officer from Community Facilities Support section began to provide support and development within the neighbourhood facilities, and to ensure a range of services were offered to those in need. This additional support was valuable and offered an external, overall viewpoint of the facilities, helping to develop issues for the future, such as governance.

3.3.4 Role of Volunteers

Volunteers at both Cowgate and Blakelaw are crucial to the operation of the facilities. At Blakelaw, the management committee is comprised entirely of volunteers from the local community, whilst at Cowgate, Cowgate Community Forum are responsible for the community café and provision of capacity building opportunities for the local community. Cowgate and Blakelaw have a joint working plan in relation to volunteering.

Furthermore, the Development Officer has developed a range of volunteering opportunities with CSV who send volunteers to work at both facilities. These volunteers have been beneficial in supporting the development of the Community Café at Blakelaw and have worked on reception, and on the food growing scheme. They also undertake all the grounds maintenance work at Montagu Community Full Service School.

3.4 Value for Money

This project appears to have provided good value for money to date. However, it is quite difficult to measure value for money in this case. As research participants have highlighted, if the outputs of the project such as number of users of the facilities, number of activities taking place at each facility, number of groups visiting the facilities, number of hours both facilities are open, etc are calculated to provide a cost per user, this would be a very low cost as compared to a sports centre for example.

Research participants highlighted that the cost of running a neighbourhood facility may be quite high but for this project this is outweighed by the high quality of service the project has provided and the impact of this on the community, contributing to improving their standard of life and helping local people *'move on'*. Using this reckoning, the project has provided significant value for money.

The move from doorstep provision to neighbourhood provision and having all partners based at each facility, sharing responsibilities and space, has enabled the Project to reach more people in the area with less effort. Additionally at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre, costs are lower because Library Services share the cost of the building.

The project staff were thought to be doing *'one and a half' jobs* working with local people and encouraging them to become actively involved. Additionally volunteers are carrying out a part of the Project workload and helping to reduce running costs of both facilities.

There was previously no community development in the area, and now there is as a consequence of the Coordination project identifying gaps in provision and setting up new services/groups in the area. Examples include Sure Start, Health Works and Arts and Culture.

3.5 Opportunities

Some of the opportunities that research participants felt the project could make use of are highlighted below:

- i. Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) being based in Montagu CFSS
- ii. Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre may be able to build on their relationship with the library and a suggestion for the library to take on the role of receptionist.
- iii. The Parish Council to take on the front desk at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre
- iv. Healthworks' North West recommendation to set Montagu CFSS up as a Healthy Living Centre
- v. Opportunity for Blakelaw and Montagu to work together with Children's Centres; these centres could provide a mechanism through which people from different settings can come together to address one aspect (i.e. children and families). This would bring in people who were connected but not integrated.

3.6 Sustainability

The concepts of both facilities connected with appropriate partners is more likely to be sustainable and more likely to be able to make an impact on the local area. Engaging volunteers to work on the project also helps to reduce running costs, increases local ownership, and facilitates sustainability.

The project has improved the opportunities for coordination of partners and services, however without this mechanism there is a concern that this coordination will fail to continue. Therefore to ensure the work of the project can be carried on without the support that the project has provided, a phased withdrawal of support is recommended.

To enable clarity of purpose a robust plan of action developed and agreed by all partners will greatly enhance and inform future strategy. By developing the action plan in a coordinated manner with the existing partners, continued commitment to build on the successes of the project is increased. It is important to place local people at the heart of future planning to ensure their continued engagement.

3.7 Barriers and Challenges

The following barriers to the success of the project were identified by research respondents during the evaluation:

- i. Building Management issues – the practicalities of running two facilities and with only three members of staff it has been difficult to avoid being overwhelmed by the day to day issues of building management and the associated business planning relevant to keep the facilities sustainable.
- ii. At Montagu CFSS, to manage the facility more effectively, as a unit, need one way in and out; furthermore, the facility could be managed in a more cost effective way with only ONE reception.

- iii. Problems with Montagu school being in special measures. There was a lack of adequate leadership prior to this and now the school is pulling away to concentrate on improvements (however the new chair hired indicates a future commitment to the project)
- iv. The library opening times; the library is only open on a part time basis at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre
- v. Partnership working is new to a lot of people, and getting council workers, voluntary organisations and local people to speak/work together has been difficult, and at some times hindered project progress
- vi. The management groups of both facilities not taking a lead in running both of the facilities. Both management groups need a longer period of time to develop their capacity to be able to take on the responsibility of managing both facilities
- vii. The Project currently resides within statutory sector, whereas the majority of other SRB funded projects operate within the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). It was felt that this statutory sector status was a hindrance to the development of the Project particularly in relation to the engagement of local people

Furthermore this was an issue with regards to the availability of funding; it was highlighted that this Project can not access the same type/volume of funding available to VCS projects, in order to move into VCS, it was suggested that each facility needs to build a track record of accessing funds and effectively managing monies

- viii. There is history of regeneration monies being '*pumped*' into the area; this consequently has a negative impact when now seeking funding
- ix. Some participants felt that some community members have a difficulty in '*letting go of the past*'
- x. The Primary Care Trust is a key partner, but there was a suggestion that they seem to be working separately, with no holistic approach.
- xi. It was suggested that some of the services that should be based in the facilities are not because there is no capacity for them, for example, social services.
- xii. A difficulty highlighted at Montagu CFSS is the governance issue; very valuable organisations working together and all with a different agenda – delivering very different services
- xiii. Individual organisations not realising how valuable it is to work together to make collective decisions.

4 Recommendations for the Future

One of the purposes of the evaluation is to explore options for the future of the project after current funding runs out in March 2006. Building on the previous section which described the views of research participants about the project, this section considers future options and makes recommendations under a series of headings.

4.1 Options Appraisal

4.1.1 Option One

The Project dissipates entirely, no staff are employed to maintain coordination. It becomes the responsibility of the community and service providers to run the facilities, with minimal support from the Community Facilities Support section of Newcastle City Council.

4.1.2 Option Two

Bridging funding is sought for a phased withdrawal of support. Included in this is training and capacity building for community members to eventually run the facilities.

4.1.3 Option Three

Funding is sought to employ a coordinator and staff to carry on the work of the project, but at a reduced level.

4.1.4 Option Four

Both facilities are supported by the Community Facilities Support section of Newcastle City Council from a detached setting (not based at the facilities) a staff member at the level of the Development Officer will provide service level support and another staff member at the level of the Community Support Workers will provide operational support.

4.1.5 Option Five

The facilities are absorbed into their parent facility and maintain minimal contact with each other to coordinate and complement services

4.2 Other Recommendations

4.2.1 Future management structures

For the management of Montagu CFSS the following suggestions were made by research participants:

- i. Need to demonstrate commitment to working together in partnership to resolve issues, which must include the school
- ii. Facility partner meetings to be incorporated in with management group
- iii. Representation from frontline staff at management meetings
- iv. More parental representation on management group
- v. Need an overall Coordinator to oversee all services/activities/joint working etc

- vi. Need to work on attitudes towards volunteers, which can be negative, and acknowledge the value and level of work they undertake

For the management of Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre the following suggestions were made by research participants:

- i. Management committee members need to establish how they will govern the facility once the Coordination Project is complete e.g. task allocation
- ii. As a charitable organisation, management committee could seek monies to support a post like the Community Support Worker
- iii. Involve a greater variety of people in management and subgroups in order to run the facility effectively, especially males and young people.

4.2.2 Other Recommendations for the Management Structures

- i. Due to the nature of the Coordination Project and its purpose in supporting the delivery of area-based services, it would be advisable for a representative from Blakelaw to attend every management group meeting at Montagu CFSS to keep up to date with their activities, offer opinion where appropriate, and maintain open communications with Montagu CFSS at management level.
- ii. A community representative from Montagu CFSS should sit in attendance at the Blakelaw management committee meetings to contribute to the breaking down of barriers, ensure communications were maintained and offer mutual support when similar experiences occur, additionally this would be a benefit to coordination of services and recognition of opportunities.
- iii. Current community representatives support other community members to attend the management meetings alongside them; this would increase community representation and provide an opportunity for capacity building for the relevant community member(s).
- iv. The Chair should ensure all members are fairly represented and have the opportunity to contribute, supporting the intended open and welcoming nature of the management meetings, especially community representatives, to encourage community input into management processes.
- v. The Chairs of both management groups need to attend each others management meetings.
- vi. The management groups need to take on more responsibility in running the facilities and coordinate activities to prepare for the loss of both Development and Community Support Workers; this may involve a period of training prior to the end of project funding.

4.2.3 Funding Possibilities

- i. A suggestion was made to access money via the city council as a statutory funding pot so that the project continues and they can re-evaluate as to where

they need to be in a years time, and if the facility is ready to move into the VCS or not

- ii. Both facilities need to build up a history and track record of accessing funds and managing monies then they can think about moving into the VCS
- iii. Both facilities could further generate money from activities and from use of the building and space available for hire.
- iv. It was suggested that the Blakelaw Management Committee might have enough money to at least contribute or pay towards the salary of a front desk worker (a receptionist).
- v. Government Office has stated future NRF funding will be allocated to address the floor targets that reflect weak performance. If part of the project falls into any of the priority areas then it may be eligible for this...

4.2.4 Partnership working

- i. To improve partnership working at Montagu CFSS, a suggestion was made for the facility to revisit the agreements that they made when facility partners began to deliver from the facility, this will ensure that partners are acting in accordance with such agreements. The agreements will need to be revised in the light of whichever option the project adopts for the future and this will be a good opportunity to re-establish and strengthen relationships.
- ii. More proactive joint working; organisations looking strategically at how they can overcome difficulties and income generate; this means working together more to jointly develop initiatives.
- iii. To ensure dialogue is maintained between organisations and service providers there should be something in place which supports this exchange of ideas and practice; this could be included in plans for governance structures, with representatives from each facility attending the others' management meetings for example.

4.2.5 Staff

- i. To review the roles and responsibilities of project staff for the duration of the project to ensure they are undertaking appropriate tasks in relation to their role.

4.2.6 Code of Conduct

To encourage an open and friendly attitude to all entering the facilities and to ensure community representatives have the opportunity to contribute to management meetings, a Code of Conduct could be adopted. The main aim of this would be to govern relationships between community representatives, project partners, management members and other agencies involved in both facilities. The Code would cover Principles of Public Life, Equal Opportunities, Behaviours, Roles and

Responsibilities, Conflict of Interest and Breaches of Code. It would include conduct on 'respect, manners, good behaviour and common sense' contributing to ensuring stable relationships are maintained between all involved in the facilities.

5 Conclusion

This evaluation report has discussed the way in which the Coordination Project was developed and has reviewed its objectives which include the establishment of two neighbourhood facilities with management structures and processes, partnership working involving community members and encouraging a community led approach and a coordinated delivery of appropriate services to the neighbourhood.

The overall message that has come out of the evaluation is that the Coordination Project has produced a lot of hard work which if sustained, could continue and build on the work already undertaken.

A number of recommendations for the future of the project have been explored including the options for the project post funding and for the future of the management structures, partnership working and funding possibilities.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this evaluation by giving information or sharing their experience and views about the two neighbourhood facilities and the Coordination project

References

Department for Education and Skills (2004) Department for Education and Skills: Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners

Department for Education and Skills (2004) Every Child Matters: The Next Steps

Newcastle City Council Executive (2005) Investment Plan for Community buildings

Appendix 1

5.1 Community Response

The research team had envisaged they would be able to consult with a greater number of community members and had devised the original methodology to reflect this. However, due to a number of constraints including time/cost and availability of participants to contribute, a smaller number of community members were engaged in the research. Aside from this, the research team were still able to address the stated aims of the evaluation, in particular the impact of the Project upon individuals' quality of life.

The research team were successful in getting a good age range and gender mix of participants engaged. Although unable to claim representative findings, the data presented here is valid and demonstrates the opinion of various users of both facilities, which contributes to the overall findings of the evaluation and the impact of the Coordination Project itself.

5.1.1 Rapid Appraisal Findings

A short Rapid Appraisal questionnaire was used to ask users of the two facilities a number of questions including what services, activities or training that they access at the facilities, how often they visit the facilities, how they found out about the facilities, if they would use both facilities, benefits of using the facilities, additional services, training or activities the facilities offer, services, training or activities they would like the facilities to offer that they don't already.

Respondents at *Montagu CFSS* including 9 users and 2 volunteers

Cowgate – 11: 9 users, 2 volunteers

Age	Number
10-20	1
20-30	1
30-40	7
40-50	1
50-60	1
Total	11

Respondents at *Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre* including 18 users, 2 volunteers and 2 service staff

Blakelaw – 22: 19 users, 2 volunteers, 1 service staff

Age	Number
10-20	1
20-30	1
30-40	5
40-50	2
50-60	3
Over 60	11
Total	22

Attendance at the Facilities

The respondents were asked to comment on how often they visited the facilities; the results are for each facility represented below in table form

Respondents at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre

Attendance	No of People
Once a week	9
Twice a week	7
Three times a week	3
Every Day	1
No response	2
Total	22

Respondents at Montagu CFSS

Attendance	No of People
Once a week	1
Twice a week	1
Three times a week	7
Every Day	1
No response	1
Total	11

Reasons for visiting the facilities

Some of the respondents were volunteers for Cowgate Community Forum, the Credit Union, the Community Café, the Breakfast Club, and the Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.

The respondents at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre stated it was useful to have the library and neighbourhood facility 'under the same roof.'

The respondents stated they accessed the following services, activities or training within the Neighbourhood Centre:

- Credit Union
- Coffee morning within the Library
- Tenants and Residents Association meetings
- Visiting the Café
- Bingo
- Local History Group
- Exercise Group
- Christmas Lunch
- Soft Play
- Library
- Health and hygiene training

The respondents at Montagu CFSS stated that they accessed the following services, activities or training within the facility:

- Credit Union
- Community Café
- Food and Veg. Scheme
- Young Achievers Group
- Christmas Crafts
- Mental health training
- Self harm awareness training
- Child protection training
- Food hygiene training
- First aid training
- Computer training
- Confidence building
- Assertiveness training
- Fire Safety training

Awareness of the Facilities

The respondents were asked to comment on how they found out about each of the facilities.

The various ways that the respondents at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre had found out about Centre were as follows:

- Word of Mouth – snowball effect
- Live in the area
- Used the library
- Attended the Red Hut before this
- Involved from the start
- Involved with the library for years
- Through Sure Start
- Knew someone who worked there
- Through friends

The various ways that the respondents Montagu CFSS had found out about the facility were as follows:

- Through local people
- Through friends/family members working there
- Leaflets
- Word of mouth

Coordination between the Facilities

Respondents at each facility were asked if they had used the other facility and if not, would they consider accessing services there.

Some of the respondents at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre had been to Montagu CFSS; this was for Workfinder, Sure Start and fresh fruit sales. The majority of the respondents said that they hadn't used the facility at Montagu CFSS but didn't feel that they would in the future because they felt they had everything that they needed at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre. A minority of people responded that they would go across to Montagu CFSS if there were something on there that they wanted to do.

Again, some of the respondents at Montagu CFSS had used the Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre but as a consequence of their work as a volunteer, for meetings or to help with the activities, i.e. the Good Food Project, kids café. Again some of the respondents said that they hadn't been to Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre; those who hadn't, had mixed views about whether they would go across to Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre, some saying they would and others who wouldn't.

Benefits of Using the Facilities

The respondents were asked to comment on what they gained from accessing the facilities.

Respondents at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre listed the following benefits:

- To socialise and for the companionship'
- 'When you live on your own it makes a difference to come here'
- 'Builds up my spirits'
- Use the Community café
- A savings account - through the credit union
- Helps to improve skills and learn new techniques
- To use the rooms for meetings (credit union)
- 'My daughter learns here'

Respondents at Montagu CFSS listed the following benefits:

- To use the Community café
- As a volunteer here, I feel like I've helped people in the community
- Making friends – 'not feeling depressed'
- Builds confidence
- To Socialise

Additional Services

The respondents were asked to comment on whether they felt the facilities offered additional services, training or activities now that they were there.

A minority of the respondents at Montagu CFSS thought that the facility didn't offer anything new now it was there; however the majority of the respondents stated that the facility did offer additional services, training or activities, these included:

- The community café
- More courses available
- More people to make friends/socialise with
- The Young Achievers Group
- Development of an anti-bullying policy.
- Family Health and Community Centre
- 'Everything is extra, we had nothing before'

Respondents at Montagu CFSS were asked if there were any other services, training or activities they would like the facility to offer, most were happy with the facility and what it offered, others made the following suggestions:

- More support for parents with children who have ADHD and have medication worries
- A warm welcome
- Activities for young boys – Young Achievers Group is for both sexes

A minority of respondents at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre felt that the Red Hut offered the same as the Centre does now. The majority of the respondents felt that the facility did offer additional services/activities now that it is here compared to the Red Hut, these included:

- The computer within the library
- The Community Café
- Toddler facilities
- A range of activities including line dancing
- A Minibus
- Weight watchers
- Soft play.

Respondents at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre were asked if there are any other services, activities or training that they would like the facility to offer, again most of the respondents were happy with the facility and what it offered, others made the following suggestions:

- More accessible activities for adults caring for children
- Dancing Sessions – were in place but because of a low interest had to be cancelled
- Exercise Classes – were in place but numbers dropped and these had to be cancelled
- Different activities in the library mainly for children
- The Ma's and Pa's group (this is being moved to Thomas Walling) - 'would like to attend this on a different day'
- More activities for younger children
- More volunteers for the Community Café – 'the volunteers have come on leaps and bounds'

5.1.2 Participatory Appraisal Findings

The research team used Participatory Appraisal (PA) tools to engage with young people at both facilities. Data collected using this method is not subject to analysis,

being presented as it was recorded. The following information is taken from two sessions using various PA tools (including H-form, mapping and spidergrams); the research team attended the Young Achiever's session at Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre and the Friend Ship event at Montagu CFSS. Both sessions attracted young people aged 7-9 years. The majority of participants scribed their own contributions. A total of 16 young people participated.

Using an H-form, participants were asked to categorise

- 'Bad things' about the Neighbourhood Centre/Montagu CFSS, that is things they did not like or sought to change
- 'Good things' about the Neighbourhood Centre/Montagu CFSS, that is things they particularly liked/enjoyed at the facilities
- Give the facility a rating out of 10
- Suggestions for changes to the facilities or how they might alter existing activities etc.

Where necessary, additional notes of explanation have been offered (in italics) where participants contributed through discussion alongside scribed notes and spelling has been corrected for ease of reading. Numbers included in brackets demonstrate the number of participants recording the same comment.

i. Blakelaw Neighbourhood Centre (Young Achievers group)

'Bad things'

- Not allowed in *[main hall]* when in clubs – have to wait outside
- Big little centre but big go on little computers *[adults using PCs for children, but not allowed vice versa]*
- Bad behaviour in library
- Library not open all the time *[open during school hours, not when kids have free time]*
- People shout in library
- Bullying in library *[pick on you when you're reading]*
- Too bare in hall *[decoration of hall]*
- Big people push you off the computers *[public PCs available for all, dominated by adults]*
- Not allowed to be children *[children not allowed on computers – told they're not for children, not allowed to spend time in entrance area etc]*
- Judo and karate sessions adults only
- Not allowed in computers
- Not many clubs *[for children]*

'Good things'

- Dancing (2)
- Singing
- Teamwork
- Activities
- Break time
- Appreciate Gary *[group leader]* and friends
- Good clubs
- Fit Kids (3)
- Cookery (3)

- Young Achievers (3)
- Friendly people
- Got different clubs
- Good trips
- Have fun
- Fun and games
- Make new friends
- Nice to get to know more people
- Like it (2)
- Gary is funny
- Gary is cool
- Get to do plays and do games
- Learn new things

Rating (1-10)

8 (2)

7 (4)

6 (2)

Changes

- More pictures that you can draw [*to decorate the main hall*]
- More colour in the hall
- Make it more colourful
- Allowed in the hall before clubs start
- Cost of clubs [*50p for cookery club*]
- Length of time for clubs [*would like it to be longer*]
- Longer [*sessions*]
- Use half of the hall for trampolining
- Have a big activity room and in it you could have rollerblade parties
- More games
- Judo club
- Karate club for kids
- Gymnastics

ii. Montagu CFSS (Friend Ship event)

'Bad things'

- No bad things
- Not allowed to bring your own food in, like sweets or pop
- Not enough clubs for girls

'Good things'

- Get to do fun stuff, like painting
- It's big
- You get food
- Cooking group
- Football coaches come in the Summer
- Get to go on trips – Lightwater Valley
- Sure Start is good – give you things, like free pens and colouring books
- Fruit
- Knitting and sewing classes

- Make new friends
- Soft play in here
- Tuesday – games (*sports, dance or drama*)
- How to keep fit and healthy
- Healthy food
- Breakfast club
- Basketball club
- Football club
- Lots of different activities
- Painting
- Allowed to use the community hall for school sessions

Rating [*not all participants rated the facility*]

7
8
9

Changes

- Cricket
- More football
- Don't want to pay to get in (*pay £1 now*)
- More sports – football, basketball, baseball, cricket
- Arts and crafts club available
- Design and technology
- Football club (*for girls*)

Notes: arising during discussion with participants during PA sessions

- Not all from immediate area – include Blakelaw, Fenham, and Newbiggin Hall.
- One participant, living in Blakelaw, used to go to gymnastics at Cowgate, but there were too many people attending so had to leave.
- Children found out about Young Achievers through post and invited by the group's Development Worker
- Two participants attending this group in Blakelaw also go to trampolining at Cowgate (but both live outside of Blakelaw and Cowgate)
- One participant at Montagu CFSS had been to Blakelaw library; another said they wouldn't be allowed to go there; another said they would go.
- One participant visited Blakelaw library with their parents but was unsure they would be allowed to go alone for clubs there