

Oxmoor is now a vibrant community where local people feel they can make a difference.

New Heart for Oxmoor won the award for community planning at the RTPI Planning Awards 2006.

Contact Details

Oxmoor:

www.warwickbusinessmanagement.com

Simon Smith, MRTPI Email: warwickbusiness@btconnect.com

Royal Town Planning Institute:

www.rtpi.org.uk

Email: practice@rtpi.org.uk

Consultation Institute:

www.consultationinstitute.org

Email: elizabeth@consultationinstitute.org

This case study supports RTPI GPN1: Guidelines on Effective Community Involvement and Consultation available at **www.rtpi.org.uk/item/325/23/5/3**

Additional case studies relating to community involvement are available from

www.rtpi.org.uk/item/325/23/5/3

www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

www.communityplanning.net

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Comments on all RTPI Good Practice Notes can be sent to **practice@rtpi.org.uk**

The Royal Town Planning Institute, 41 Botolph Lane, London EC3R 8DL

Tel: 020 7929 9494 Email: **online@rtpi.org.uk**



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mediation of space · making of place

Effective Community Involvement and Consultation Case Study 2 Oxmoor, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

**How to bring together all parts of a diverse
community and regenerate a social housing estate**

Key Learning Points

- 1 Holistic model of neighbourhood based regeneration
- 2 Leadership by elected members
- 3 Partnership working

This case study supports RTPI GPN1: Guidelines on Effective Community Involvement and Consultation. <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/593/23/5/3>

Background

Oxmoor (population 4,000) is an estate of 1,150 houses built in the 1960s/1970s. Designed as a working class area to rehouse Londoners. Weaknesses in physical and socio-economic planning led Oxmoor to become by 1999, the second most deprived estate in Cambridgeshire. The community was experiencing the reinforcement of an inter-generational cycle of deprivation. Local government and public sector agencies were systematically failing to address gaps between the service outcomes experienced by people on Oxmoor and the rest of the district and county. There was lack of capacity for community groups, public agencies and the private sector to work together to create sustainable solutions to this deprivation cycle.

Project Description

In 1997 Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council and the Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust joined forces with a group of energetic residents to create the Oxmoor Community Action Group (OCAG). Their aim was to promote the participation of residents in local decision making and community action for a better Oxmoor. Major parties involved in the project were OCAG and Huntingdon local strategic partnership (Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust and Luminus Group along with planning consultants, John Martin and Associates.)

This innovation in community governance led to a:

- Voice for local people;
- Stake in decision making;
- Role in services and community action.

Under the Single Regeneration Budget programme the two local authorities innovated their spatial planning by integrating physical, community, corporate and resource planning processes.



Oxmoor, Huntingdon

The Role of Community Involvement

- During 18 months of consultation, up to May 2000 requirements were established relating to age, gender, ethnic background and disability. 386 adults then participated in **doorstep interviews** to identify, without prompting local issues of concern;
- In March 2001 OCAG and its partners made a commitment to make Oxmoor a better place to live;
- During April/May 2001 local groups, schools and residents built a 42 sq m model of Oxmoor. Oxmoor Opportunities Partners organised a **Planning for Real®** event attended by 300 residents;
- In July 2001 first draft results showed the priorities for residents to be a safer place and better environment. Designs for a New Heart for Oxmoor, community land strategy and an estates agreement are started;
- In August 2001 the Planning for Real® results were distributed to all households;
- October 2001 **five events** were held for residents to look at designs, share ideas and get involved;
- During November/December 2002 an **extensive consultation** on the draft action plan (development proposals for health centre, re-development of Sapley Square to include new shops, community facilities and homes) was undertaken via a:
 - **Touring exhibition**;
 - **Discussion** with 9 community groups;
 - **Consultation leaflet**; and
 - **Questionnaire survey** of 2,000 households and 5,000 patients at the Acorn Community Health Centre;
- In January 2003 the action plan was adopted as interim planning guidance;
- Throughout 2006 a substantial **physical enhancement** of Oxmoor took place. This included a new neighbourhood centre, over 300 new family homes, a cleaner, safer and greener environment by designing safety into car parking areas etc. and a new community park;
- Recognisable benefits are residents **happiness** to live in Oxmoor and establish their own initiatives (e.g. Friends of Coneygear Park), greater **safety** with Luminus Group's street wardens (e.g. removal of abandoned cars cut from 28 to 2 days) and **greater efficiency** (e.g. access to primary health care transformed by the new health centre).