

**Finance, Management and
Regeneration Improvement and
Scrutiny Committee**

**Review of
Place-Shaping in Derbyshire**

September 2009

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1. Executive Summary

The Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of Derbyshire County Council (2007) identified place-shaping as an area for improvement, highlighting the need for developments in political engagement and community cohesion. The CPA report also drew attention to the need to support Elected Members and the Authority to develop the focus and knowledge which would facilitate confident and creative leadership, ensuring long term plans are in place to address community needs whilst demonstrating clear political direction and leadership.

A significant amount of work has been undertaken since the assessment was carried out; this review aims to capture this, clarify the Derbyshire experience and identify areas for further development.

The objectives of this review include to:

- Define place-shaping and assess how this is being carried out in Derbyshire;
- Clarify the role and involvement of members in place-shaping and its development;
- Identify links to community leadership;
- Identify cross-cutting links; and
- Identifying areas for further development.

What has emerged from conducting this review is that there are varying levels of understanding and experience of place-shaping throughout the Authority. There is also a degree of confusion about what this means for Derbyshire and how we can reconcile a national agenda that is at times inconsistent, with implementing place-shaping on a daily basis and ensuring that the need of our communities are being met. This is not just an issue for some Officers but for Elected Members and crucially may affect the effectiveness of their community leadership role. Nationally only 39%¹ of people feel that they could influence decisions in their local areas and reaching the 61% of people who perceive they have no opportunity to influence will have a considerable effect on the ability of the Authority and its Members to effectively place-shape.

Place-Shaping Working Group

The place-shaping working group of the Resources Improvement and Scrutiny Committee comprised of Cllrs Gillott (Chair), Booth, Riggott, and Baldry. Following the Local Government elections in June 2009

¹ Citizenship Survey 2008

there were a number of changes to the membership and political make-up of the Council. The Resources Improvement and Scrutiny Committee was re-named as the Finance, Management and Regeneration Improvement and Scrutiny Committee. The Place-Shaping working group was subsequently reformed with the following members Cllrs Blake (Chairman), MacDoanld (Vice-Chairman), Wharmby, Bradford, Western and Gillott.

2. Introduction

In 2004 Sir Michael Lyons was commissioned by the then Chancellor and Deputy Prime Minister to consider local government taxation and the funding of local services. As the Inquiry progressed it identified the need to widen its context to include the debate about the type of country we would like to live in and how the voice and power of the individual, community and government is balanced. In 2005 the remit of the Inquiry was formally extended to consider the future role and function of local government as well as its funding, reflecting the desire for the Inquiry to have a wider context.

It was from the consideration of this wider context that the notion of 'place-shaping' emerged, defined by the Inquiry as:

"The creative use of powers and influence to promote the general wellbeing of a community and its citizens".²

Place-shaping is seen as the responsibility of local government and all local partners in the public, voluntary and business sectors. It is about creating attractive, prosperous, vibrant, safe and strong communities where people want to live, work and do business, providing the opportunity to promote democracy and policy development at a local level rather than being centrally imposed.

The Lyons Inquiry stressed the importance of local government considering how it can work with residents of its communities to develop and deliver high-quality public services, meeting the needs and preferences of local people, with the place-shaping role being a primary activity and objective.

The 2006 Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper also reinforced this message with the focus on giving local people and communities more influence and power to improve their lives, delivering better services through a rebalancing of the relationship between central government, local government and local people.

Derbyshire

Derbyshire is a diverse county which covers an area of over 255,071 hectares and supports a population of around 754,000, of whom 100,455 live in the major urban centre of Chesterfield. The remainder of the county is made up of smaller towns and villages, predominately concentrated down the eastern and north western edges of the county. A sparsely populated central core includes a major part of the Peak

² Sir Michael Lyons – Lyons Inquiry into Local Government

District National Park Authority. Compared to the national picture, more people in Derbyshire live in rural areas or on the edge of a town and less people live in urban areas.

The county has a higher than average percentage of people of pensionable age with 16.7% over the age of 65. Over the next 10 years the number of people of pensionable age is set to increase by 8.2% more than three times the national average increase of 2.4%³.

Only 1.5%⁴ of the population of Derbyshire classify themselves as being from an ethnic minority background which is below both the regional and national average.

The 2007 Indices of Deprivation classified both Bolsover and Chesterfield as being in the top 25% of most multiple deprived districts in the country. In arriving at this conclusion the Indices consider 7 domains of deprivation:

1. Income
2. Employment
3. Health and Disability
4. Educations, skills and training
5. Barriers to housing and services
6. Living environment
7. Crime

Place-shaping challenges for Derbyshire County Council and its partners include:

- The need to understand and respond to the diverse needs of urban and rural areas of the county including geographical and social isolation;
- Development and implementation of strategies to deal with rural and urban deprivation;
- Managing the potential implications for service delivery resulting from a significant increase in the number of older people living in the county;
- Responding to the needs of a small number of ethnic minority populations that may find themselves socially isolated.

³ 2001 Census

⁴ 2001 Census

3. How is Place-Shaping carried out by Derbyshire County Council?

There is a degree of confusion surrounding the term of place-shaping and this is open to multiple interpretations. However place-shaping permeates all areas of the Authority's work and is at the heart of what it does, embodying the Lyon's Inquiry definition that it should seek to promote the 'well-being of a community and its citizens'. A dedicated place-shaping strategy does not exist. However place-shaping in Derbyshire is carried out on two levels; the strategic level (leading and creating a vision for Derbyshire) and the local level (in individual communities). The Review believes that adopting a separate place-shaping strategy would not lead to any significant improvements in service delivery or outcomes; however, benefit may be gained from communicating effectively internally and externally the extent of the work that is being carried out.

The Sustainable Communities Strategy is the principle delivery mechanism the Authority uses to place-shape, and has been developed after extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders, considering the Government's 5 principles of sustainable development:

1. Living within environmental limits;
2. Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
3. Achieving a sustainable economy;
4. Promoting good governance;
5. Using sound science responsibly.⁵

3.1 Derbyshire's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)

The Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on every local authority to work with its partners to produce a Sustainable Communities Strategy for each area and to promote the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of communities.

Derbyshire's Sustainable Communities Strategy seeks to provide clarity at the highest level, establishing what the Authority and its partners want to achieve and detailing how these objectives will be met. In Derbyshire this strategy establishes the joint priorities to be implemented by the Derbyshire Partnership Forum through the delivery of the Local Area Agreement. This strategy brings organisations together to work and address the highlighted issues. It also adds value by avoiding duplication of effort, maximises resources and expertise, and requires significant discussion with the communities involved

⁵ UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy

aiming to improve the experiences of those who live, work or visit the county.

For the Authority when communicating its aspirations it is crucial that the common misunderstanding of the term sustainability is addressed; sustainability is not purely an environmental issue and concerns social and economic considerations as well.

The strategy is split into five themes which mirror those in the Local Area Agreement:

1. Safer Communities
2. Children and Young People
3. Health and Wellbeing
4. Culture
5. Sustainable Communities.

A key consideration when developing this strategy has been identifying and addressing areas with greatest need and where significant improvements can be generated. In a climate of finite resources there will always be areas that are not included, and as a result effective identification of priorities is crucial. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to reduce the number of thematic priorities, focussing on objectives that can make a real difference to communities.

In developing the strategy the following has been considered in relation to each of the five priority themes:

- **What local people have told us** – detailing the main consultation findings between September 08 and February 09.
- **Where are we now?** - Provides key facts about Derbyshire including consultation findings, research and performance data, telling us what Derbyshire is like and what challenges are faced.
- **Where do we want to be?** – Identifies the partnership priorities and the changes local people should expect to see as a result of this strategy.
- **How will we get there?** – Details the activities to be undertaken (including the people and places that may need to be targeted to reduce inequalities).
- **Who is responsible?** – How the work will be taken forward and by whom.
- **How will we know that our activities have had the desired effect?** – Information about performance management arrangements and lists the main plans and strategies which have both informed this strategy and which will help to deliver the vision.

The Sustainable Communities Strategy is in effect the 'plan of plans' and communicates the attitudes and desires of the Council Leader, Chief Executive and the Derbyshire Partnership Forum, as well as determining the way in which the Authority promotes and improves the well-being of its communities. The strategy is in effect the 'golden thread' running through all Council strategies and plans. The strategy delivers its priorities in a variety of ways; through the Local Area Agreement, individual organisations' existing plans and activities, by groups and partnerships working across the county and by local people making positive changes in their lives.

It is important to embed sustainable development principles throughout the organisation, providing a clear definition and links to place-shaping. Considerable work has been undertaken here with directorate's delivery plans falling out of the Council Plan and the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Each Strategic Director sits on the Derbyshire Partnership Forum Executive and has a central role to play, influencing the direction of the partnership and how place-shaping is delivered in Derbyshire. The effectiveness of the Sustainable Communities Strategy links to the community leadership agenda with the expectation that the Authority and Elected Members are capable, adequately skilled and resourced to carry out this role, having a positive impact on the development of their communities.

Members and the Sustainable Communities Strategy

To increase the involvement of Members in the development of the revised Sustainable Communities Strategy each scrutiny committee received a briefing on the strategy in the autumn of 2008. Members were also invited to participate in a stakeholder event on 12 November 2008 designed to identify the key priorities for inclusion in the revised strategy.

There is a need for better communication of the opportunities for Members to become involved in the development and review of this strategy. Members also need to demonstrate willingness and a commitment to participate in any development and review work, as this strategy can have a significant impact on the experiences of their constituents and their ability to act as a community leader.

Recommendation 1: That the Finance, Management and Regeneration Improvement and Scrutiny Committee receive regular updates on the development of the Sustainable Communities and other key place-shaping strategies.

3.2 Council Plan

The Council Plan follows the principles laid down in the Sustainable Communities Strategy and states the vision, goals and values for the Council. It outlines the services the Council is committed to maintaining and sets out improvement priorities for the period covered by the Plan. The Council Plan communicates the Authority's ambitions and key objectives to all the organisation's stakeholders, members of the public, service users, businesses, councillors, staff, partners and auditors.

The Plan outlines how it will contribute to the achievement of Local Area Agreement targets and shapes how the Authority manages and improves its financial, personnel, property and information technology resources in order to achieve its ambitions. It also details the Council's commitment to achieving equality and diversity through the Equality Standard for Local Government. The Plan is delivered through each directorate's Service Plan and is supported by underpinning team and individual staff plans.

3.3 Derbyshire Partnership Forum

The Derbyshire Partnership Forum (DPF) is the countywide Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) responsible for developing the Derbyshire Community Strategy. The Forum comprises of a number of public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations who through their involvement in the Partnership have been working closely together to improve the quality of life of those who live and work in Derbyshire.

The Partnership was established in 2000 with the aim of identifying common objectives and working together on a wide range of issues to enable services across the county to be improved, meeting the needs of local people. The Derbyshire Partnership Board which provides accountable leadership and strategic direction to the group meets at least four times per year, with meetings timed to enable the Board to report to the Partnership Forum.

The Derbyshire Partnership Forum have drawn up a Local Area Agreement (LAA) with central government, which sets out a three year action plan (08-11) for Derbyshire partners to deliver improvements, reflecting local priorities identified in the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Ambitions here are based upon a shared understanding of local needs and of the of the social, economic and environmental issues facing the county and its communities.

To allow it to meet its LAA improvement targets the Derbyshire Partnership Forum coordinates its work through 6 thematic boards:

- Safer Communities Board;
- Culture Board;
- Sustainable Communities Board;
- Health and Well Being Partnership Board;
- Children and Young People's Trust Board; and
- Transformational Partnership Board.

Each thematic board has a Chair and a Lead Accountable Officer charged with developing more detailed operational arrangements, including capacity building for the Partnership.

The Partnership Forum provides a good arena for information sharing, presentations and network. However, as a result of its size it does not lend itself to detailed discussion, and this takes place at the thematic board level. Careful consideration is given to the 'politics' that emerge within any large scale partnership; the size, scope and financial power of the County Council can be perceived by some involved in the Partnership as tipping the balance of power and influence towards one organisation.

The Derbyshire Partnership Forum has become the strategic driver through the Local Area Agreement for place-shaping in the county.

3.4 Governance of the Derbyshire Partnership Forum (DPF)

Derbyshire Partnership Board (DPB)

The role of the Board is to provide accountable leadership and strategic direction for the Derbyshire Partnership Forum, influencing the development of the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to enable key priorities to be delivered. The Board comprises of:

- Chair of Derbyshire Partnership Forum;
- Nominated Chairs of the six thematic boards;
- Chair Primary Care Trust;
- Chair Police Authority;
- Chair of the Fire and Rescue Service;
- 4 seats drawn from public, private and voluntary sectors, with at least one place for the VCS and 1 place from the private sector;
- A representative from Government Office for the East Midlands as an observer.

The Board is responsible for securing ownership of the Partnership's work programme and delivering the vision for Derbyshire as outlined in

the Sustainable Communities Strategy. As a non-statutory body, the DPF Board cannot make decisions on behalf of partner organisations. All target setting and consequent financial commissioning or contractual commitments proposed by the DPF Board or any of the thematic partnerships, must be formalised through the relevant local authority or through one of the other LSP partners. Derbyshire County Council has a considerable stake in ensuring the performance of Board as the upper tier authority is the accountable body that provides the driving force in establishing the partnership and its rate of performance.

Derbyshire Partnership Executive

The role of the DPF Executive, made up of Lead Accountable Officers (Derbyshire County Council Strategic Directors) and other key partners is to advise and guide the Board on matters of strategic importance in relation to the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Derbyshire LAA. It is also responsible for ensuring any issues arising from the thematic partnerships, particularly those of a cross-cutting nature are identified, considered and addressed. The current Partnership Executive is particularly strong in terms of experience, knowledge, ability to influence at the highest of levels, cutting across each thematic board. It is these skills that will have a direct impact on the success of the Partnership Forum and on the delivery of the LAA and Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Full details of the Governance Arrangements for the Derbyshire Partnership Forum, Board and Executive are available on Derbyshire County Council's website.

The Partnership Forum and Board have now achieved a degree of structural maturity which will positively impact upon its ability to achieve its stated objectives. The effective working relationships that have been developed here are not just between key individuals but between organisations; this degree of resilience will support any changes in personnel, allowing the momentum that has already been achieved to continue.

As a key strategic driver for place-shaping in Derbyshire the Partnership Forum presents non-executive Members with limited opportunities to participate in and influence the direction the Forum takes. This can leave Members feeling disconnected from this process, inhibiting their community leadership role. Members possess considerable community based knowledge which if accessed would make a significant contribution to the development of the work of the partnership ensuring its continued relevance to the county's communities. It is essential for the Executive to ensure that the voice of back-bench members is heard.

3.5 The Local Area Agreement

(188 outcome focussed national indicators (refreshed Spring 09) from which 35 nationally agreed and 2 locally agreed indicators have been chosen to make up the Derbyshire Local Area Agreement).

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) sets out the priorities for the county. It is agreed between central government and a local area (the Local Authority and Local Strategic Partnership) as well as other key partners at a local level. The LAA functions as the delivery mechanisms for the priorities identified by the Derbyshire Partnership Form through the Sustainable Communities Strategy and are designed to support and shape the development of an area, providing a strong focus for commitment and action by partners and a clear set of shared objectives to be achieved.

The intention (from central government) in establishing the LAA was to simplify some elements of central funding, help join up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for local solutions to local issues. The LAA was conceived as a vehicle by which decision making could be devolved to local areas and moved away from a 'Whitehall knows best' philosophy, thus reducing bureaucracy.

The ideas behind these agreements are to:

- Recognise that 'one size does not fit all' and local services should reflect what local people want;
- Give more flexibility to local authorities and other public sector organisations to decide the way they deliver services for local people;
- Make local authorities and other public services more accountable to local people;
- Reduce red-tape and improve value for money; and,
- Enable local people to get more involved in decisions about local services.

As the work of the Derbyshire Partnership Forum and Local Area Agreement progresses it will become increasingly important to demonstrate to partners, stakeholders and the community that value is being added and positive change is being achieved. This will become easier to monitor as the quality and quantity of performance information in relation to the LAA becomes more readily available. However, there have been a number of delays in establishing baseline performance

information centrally which has prevented local authorities and partnerships from effectively assessing the performance of the LAA. Ensuring Derbyshire's LAA performs well will also allow the Partnership to access a LAA Performance Reward Grant, the maximum which could be achieved is £4,599,836.

To support this process a Scrutiny Liaison Group has been established to consider scrutiny of the LAA. Membership of this group is drawn from the county, boroughs and district councils and is made up of both scrutiny Officers and Members. The Group has developed terms of reference to which they work and LAA scrutiny protocols which establish the approach to be taken when engaging in any joint scrutiny activity. This process is currently being administered by Derbyshire County Council and the Group is chaired by Derbyshire County Councillor George Wharmby.

3.6 Performance Management

The development of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) performance measure seeks to assess the prospects for a local area and the quality of life for local people. The CAA will no longer just assess past performance as with the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), but will be forward looking considering how well local priorities express community needs, aspirations and prospects for improvement. Four themes will run through the assessment, sustainability, inequality, vulnerable people and value for money; themes which closely align to the place-shaping agenda.

The Comprehensive Area Assessment has the potential to develop into a significant 'place-shaping' driver as a result of the emphasis on achieving outcomes for local communities, reflecting what matters for local people, especially the vulnerable. Significantly CAA no longer focuses on a single organisation and will be assessing how well public services work together and contribute to improving outcomes. Assessment will also include local as well as national priorities.

3.7 The Place Survey

The Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities emphasised the need for a focus on improving outcomes for local people and places, rather than on processes, institutions and inputs. It acknowledged that no single organisation can achieve success in the complex issues of improving public health, reducing poverty, tackling crime or creating sustainable economic development. The White Paper identified that the challenges are too complex and the needs often too local for all solutions to be imposed from the centre.

Central to the Survey is the importance of capturing local peoples' views, experiences and perceptions, so that the solutions for an area can reflect local views and preferences. It is also vital to track people's changing perceptions, as a way of determining whether interventions made in an area result in the right outcomes for local people – i.e. do people feel happier, healthier, and safer? The Place Survey is designed as a means of achieving this.

The Place Survey will supply the data by which a number of national indicators will be measured. The national indicators will measure how well Governments' priorities, as set out in the Comprehensive Spending Review, are being delivered by local government and local government partnerships over the next three years, with indicators being common to all areas allowing a degree of benchmarking to take place.

The results of the first Place Survey (sent to 5,000 households in Derbyshire at the end 2008 beginning of 2009) were published in June 2009 and can be accessed by going to <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/placesurvey2008>

3.8 Total Place

This initiative is designed to identify how local public agencies can better work together to deliver frontline services more efficiently, creating value for money as well as better local services tailored to local needs.

Total Place arose out of an earlier project in Cumbria which analysed how public money from national, regional and local public sector organisations came together in one place and how local public, private and voluntary sector organisations could work more closely together on issues such as worklessness and climate change.

The objectives of Total Place are to map the flow of public spending in local areas and make links between services, identifying where public money can be spent more effectively. Total Place is part of Sir Michael Bichard's work on the Operational Efficiency Programme which has 5 core strands (back office operations and IT, collaborative procurement, asset management and sales, property, local incentives and empowerment) looking at the scope for efficiency savings across the public sector.

There are 13 areas piloting the Total Place programme which is backed by £5m in Government funding.

Each pilot area will map public spending and consider individual themes:

- Birmingham (Unitary): Alcohol and drug abuse; learning disabilities; young people leaving care and health.
- Bradford (Metropolitan): Offender management.
- Coventry (Metropolitan): To be confirmed.
- Croydon (London Borough): Children's' Services
- Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth (Costal Town MAA): Elderly population.
- Durham (Unitary): Housing and Regeneration.
- Leicester and Leicestershire (County/ MAA): Alcohol and drug use.
- Lewisham (Inner London): Reducing violent offending; education and training for 14-19 year olds; PCT/Council integration.
- Luton and Central Bedfordshire (Unitary): To be confirmed.
- Kent (Two Tier/County): Kent Gateway and multi-channel access; single asset management strategy; Mending Margate.
- Greater Manchester (City Region): To be confirmed.
- South Tyneside, Gateshead and Sunderland (Metropolitan): teenage pregnancy; health inequality; safer communities.
- Worcestershire (County): Deprived families.

Interim findings from the 13 pilot areas are expected to be ready by the pre-Budget report (planned for early October 09), when it is expected that a mapping of public spending in each of the 13 areas will have been completed as well as more detailed analysis on the above specific themes. As with any initiative that requires a degree of collaboration there is the risk of creating an environment that may lead to territorial

arguments and issues in co-operation between different agencies, potentially undermining the objectives and effectiveness of this initiative.

Recommendation 2: That the Finance Risk Sub-Group of the Finance, Management and Regeneration Improvement and Scrutiny Committee further consider the Total Place agenda and its potential for creating greater efficiencies.

3.9 Summary

It is clear that considerable amounts of place-shaping are undertaken in Derbyshire, with the Sustainable Communities Strategy/LAA as the central delivery mechanism for the Authority and its partners in the Derbyshire Partnership Forum. Due to the scope and cross cutting nature of place-shaping, coordination of activity primarily through the DPF's thematic boards should mitigate any conflict or duplication of activity. Enhanced communication around the Sustainable Communities Strategy and its development will address any confusion that may still exist here and will contribute to a consistency of message and understanding. The Total Place initiative highlights the potential that can arise out of further development of partnerships and collaborative working; however there is the ever present challenge of reconciling the objectives, aspirations, actions and budgets of individual organisations with the funding of collectively stated objectives and goals.

It is important to recognise the contribution that can be made by elected members to the work of the Partnership Forum and its thematic boards, providing Members with the opportunity to shape the development of strategies that will impact on their communities. The flow of communication in relation to the work undertaken by the Forum and its Boards needs to be more effective, keeping all Members informed of activities and strategies that impact on their communities and provide them with a channel to feed in their community knowledge and experience. Members also need to demonstrate willingness and a commitment to greater involvement, acknowledging the benefits which can be generated by increasing their effectiveness as community leaders. Members are democratically elected community representatives and more opportunities for involvement will enhance the existing governance arrangements, providing greater validity to the work of the Partnership.

4. Members and their Role in Place-Shaping

The role of a Member is and always has been one of community leadership. Elected Members are a figurehead and role models for their communities shaping them on a daily basis, in numerous ways, and often without realising they are place-shaping. However, more can be done to develop and support them in their role as identified in the 2007 CPA Report.

A recent report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁶ concluded that many Councillors feel distanced from the decision making process in their Councils, experiences which continue in relation to the operation of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The report states that Councillors felt their access and ability to influence the strategic direction of the LSP was severely limited. This situation is supported by anecdotal evidence from Derbyshire County Council Members, some of whom feel they have little opportunity to influence here and are disconnected from this process.

The report identified a number of areas for change with particular emphasis given to the need for Members to be accurately informed about local issues. This would enable them to influence strategic decisions and priorities, assess how local priorities and intelligence can be fully reflected in service planning and spending, combined with being empowered to engage with their communities, demonstrating their ability to take action on local issues.

The recently published Citizenship Survey (08/09) reported that 76% of people feel they strongly belong to their neighbourhood with 81% of those surveyed being satisfied with their local area as a place to live; older people are more likely to be satisfied with their area than younger people. However, the survey was less positive in relation to people feeling that their voices are being heard at a local level, with only 39% of respondents feeling able to influence decisions in their local areas and only 38% of people engaged in some form of civic participation such as contacting their local councillor, attending a public meeting or signing a petition at least once in the past year.

The 2009 Place Survey has highlighted that only 13% of people have been involved in decisions that affect their local area in the past 12 months. Crucially it also identified that 23.7% would like to be more involved. The cumulative effects of individuals and their Elected Members feeling distanced and unable to influence the decision making processes in their areas could potentially have a damaging effect on the

⁶ Ward councillors and community leadership: a future perspective – Joseph Rowntree Foundation

ability to place-shape and promote community well-being and local democracy.

Dedicated Officer Support for Members

The calls on Members' time are considerable, with them carrying out their role with the aid of limited secretarial support. As a result Members can and do spend a large proportion of their time resolving 'minor' complaints from their constituents. These interactions are valuable to Members and provide an opportunity to engage with the community. However, to allow Members to become effective community leaders the provision of additional support (not secretarial/administrative) may now be appropriate. Consideration will need to be given to ensuring:

- No additional bureaucracy is created;
- Political independence is maintained;
- That the provision of additional support for Members does not distance them from their constituents and the communities they represent;
- Any additional support is funded appropriately, recognising the challenging economic times;
- Ensuring flexibility and adaptability of support, reflecting the ever changing nature of the work of Members, increasing/decreasing caseloads and the development of knowledge and expertise.

Recommendation 3: Investigate the feasibility of providing Members with additional officer support.

In the interim period it will be beneficial for each department to identify an individual to act as a first point of contact for members, signposting their enquiries to the appropriate person.

Recommendation 4: Each directorate to identify a first point of contact for Members enquiries.

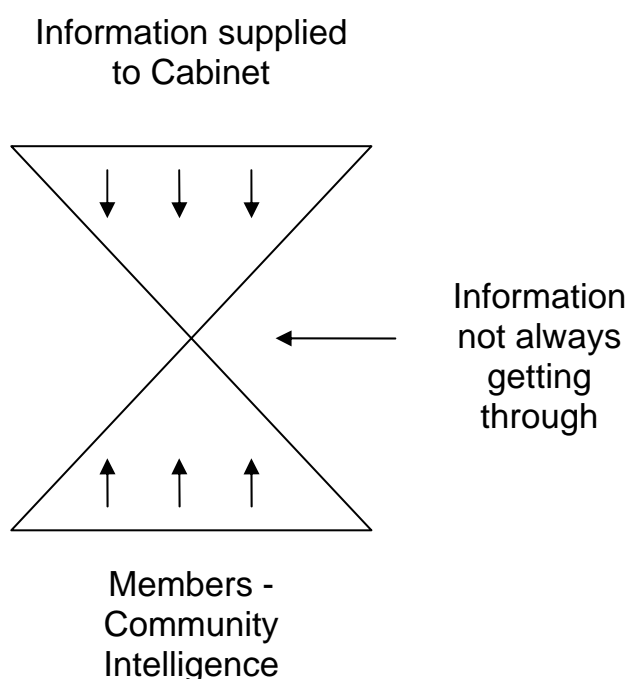
Community Leadership Fund

The Authority supports Members through the Community Leadership Programme which allocates £4,200 pa to be spent on initiatives of their choosing in their local areas. Members of the Review consider this a powerful tool to allow them to place-shape in their communities and would like the feasibility of increasing the level of funds available to be explored, with the proviso that any additional funds directed towards this programme do not come out of reserves.

Recommendation 5: Consider increasing the level of resources allocated to the Community Leadership Programme.

Communication of Information to Members

There exists a wealth of information that can support Members in their place-shaping and community leadership roles; however this needs to be clearly sign posted and easily accessible, with the disaggregation of Authority based information into constituent/neighbourhood levels and disseminated to Members in a relevant and timely manner. The Cabinet structure of the Authority lends itself to a great wealth of information being held by a small number of Members. This structure has been described as a funnel where great amounts of information is funnelled in but only small amounts are filtered down to non-executive Members. Consideration also needs to be given to the amount of local intelligence/community information that non-executive Members hold; is this funnelling upwards to support Cabinet Members in making informed decisions?



This process needs to be supported by Authority Officers communicating more effectively with both non-executive and Cabinet Members. Members should be kept informed of any major initiatives/activities impacting on their communities (both by officers and the executive) i.e. when roads in their areas are going to be closed for resurfacing. There is a need for non-executive Members to feel engaged in strategic partnership working and the partnership based decision making process, recognising the complexities of multi-agency working, the communication challenges that this presents and the impact that it can have on place leadership. Non-executive Members also need to be given access to better quality intelligence about the work of the Authority, service performance and local issues.

The Policy and Research Team as part of this review have produced for each Member a 'community profile' which details key indicators describing the quality of life in each local area. Each profile is colour coded to illustrate rankings, with the average Derbyshire position also highlighted. All factors included in the profiles are ones that can potentially be influenced and improved by the actions of Members, the Authority and its partners. Details of activities being undertaken to solve areas of weakness as identified in the profiles will help Members engage and communicate with the communities from a position of knowledge and understanding. Further development of community profiles will be undertaken in the coming months.

Recommendation 6: Community Profiles to be produced for each Elected Member and re-issued when updated information becomes available.

Member Development

In assessing Members' effectiveness as place-shapers consideration will also need to be given to the creation of a Member Training and Development Plan. In December 2003 a Scrutiny Review of Member Training and Development was conducted. The Review identified that the Authority had no formal policy in respect of Member training and development, making a number of recommendations including, the creation of individual development reviews, and identification of key competencies as well as the development of a Member training and development plan. Little has happened since this review and it is apparent that this issue needs to be driven by a nominated Officer and 'Lead Member' from all parties to allow development to take place.

The production of a role description for Elected Members, detailing the minimum requirements of the position (including the functions of the role and expected standards) and a competency framework would introduce clarity and transparency, aiding the public in understanding what Members do and how they can have a positive impact on their communities. Both role descriptions and a competency framework are currently being developed and will inform the creation of any training and development plans.

The creation of training and development plans for Members will need to take into account the local challenges they face such as dealing with conflict, community engagement, equalities and cohesion issues, all of which have a direct impact on their ability to shape and lead a community. Member involvement in the design of these programmes will ensure their appropriateness. Benefit may be gained by the creation

of a cross party Member Development Working Group to oversee the creation and implementation of a Member Development Strategy

Recommendation 7: The 03 Review into Member Training and Development to be revisited taking into account the changing role and responsibilities of membership, culminating in the establishment of a structured training and development plan.

Recommendation 8: A Cross Party Member Development Working Group be formed (including appropriate Officers) to oversee the development and implementation of a Member Development Strategy.

Recommendation 9: Role descriptions to be produced for Members, detailing responsibilities, skills and competencies required.

The foundation for any enhancement in provision of training and development should be an effective and comprehensive induction programme. It is widely acknowledged that there is considerable scope for improvement in the quality of induction currently delivered to new Members of the Authority. Following the Local Government election in June 2009 it is now timely for a review of provision to take place, allowing any recommendations to be acted upon prior to the next County Council elections in 2013.

Recommendation 10: A comprehensive review of Elected Member Induction is undertaken by the Finance, Management and Regeneration Improvement and Scrutiny Committee.

5. Conclusion

Derbyshire County Council, while not attaching the term 'place-shaping' to any of its strategies and initiatives, embodies the principles of this agenda in all areas of its business. 'The creative use of powers to influence and promote the general wellbeing of a community and its citizens'⁷ is at the heart of what the Council does; the scope and impact of this can not be underestimated. The key drivers as previously highlighted are the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and the work of the local strategic partnership - the Derbyshire Partnership Forum. Strong clear leadership from Chief Officers and Members will support the organisation and the community in 'making sense' of this complex policy environment.

The work and scope for impact of the Derbyshire Partnership Forum is considerable. Not only does the opportunity exist for creating economies of scale and increased efficiencies from partnership working, but embedding collaboration in partner organisations has the potential to elicit dramatic and sustainable improvements to the well-being of all of Derbyshire's communities. It will be essential to monitor the performance and progress of the Partnership Forum as it develops and matures, ensuring that there are sufficient resources allocated to support this development; these resources do not need to be financial, and can be placing the right people, with the right skills and ability in positions where they can contribute and influence. It will be important to ensure the size and scope of the Partnership does not inhibit creativity, positive developments of services and communities. Creating a channel for non-executive Members to feed into this body will enhance the democratic accountability of the Partnership and its Boards; this will need to be underpinned with the collective confidence to address any of these failings.

The Partnership will need to ensure there is clarity of understanding and consistency of application of place-shaping, as much, if not all of the work is cross-cutting between Authority directorates and partner agencies. A key challenge here will be working with partners who are at a different stage of the place-shaping journey or with those that have not bought into the place-shaping agenda.

To support Members in executing their role as community leaders it is essential that they are kept informed of the direction being taken by the Partnership Forum, thematic boards and have the opportunity to communicate the needs of their communities into this arena. There also needs to be an honest assessment of delivery, if improvements are not

⁷ Sir Michael Lyons – Lyons Inquiry into Local Government

being made, why and what actions are planned to rectify this. The roll out of 'Total Place' will further intensify the need for collaboration and the issue of the achievement of collective efficiencies will need to be considered by both the Partnership and its Boards.

The Authority needs to ensure that Elected Members are presented with greater opportunities to get involved, challenge and influence the direction of the Authority and exercise their role as community leaders. Officers will need to be open to working with Members who are better skilled and fully engaged with their community leadership role, as well as confident in handing some power to communities to shape and influence their own localities.

Place-shaping and the development of sustainable communities is long-term activity which may take several generations to have an effect; the power of a collective set of shared cultural, social, economic and historical experiences can not be underestimate, nor easily 'washed away'. Some communities in Derbyshire are still referred to as 'pit villages' even though there has been no mining activity in Derbyshire for the last 15 years, with numerous initiatives being undertaken to address the scars that are still present in these communities.

6. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That the Finance, Management and Regeneration Improvement and Scrutiny Committee receive regular updates on the development of the Sustainable Communities and other key place-shaping strategies.

Recommendation 2: That the Finance Risk Sub-Group of the Finance, Management and Regeneration Improvement and Scrutiny Committee further consider the Total Place agenda and its potential for creating greater efficiencies.

Recommendation 3: Investigate the feasibility of providing Members with additional officer support.

Recommendation 4: Each directorate to identify a first point of contact for Members enquiries

Recommendation 5: Consider increasing the level of resources allocated to the Community Leadership Programme.

Recommendation 6: Community Profiles to be produced for each Elected Member and re-issued when updated information becomes available.

Recommendation 7: The 03 Scrutiny Review into Member Training and Development to be revisited taking into account the changing role and responsibilities of membership, culminating in the establishment of a structured training and development plan.

Recommendation 8: A Cross Party Member Development Working Group be formed (including appropriate Officers) to oversee the development and implementation of a Member Development Strategy.

Recommendation 9: Role descriptions to be produced for Members, detailing responsibilities, skills and competencies required.

Recommendation 10: A comprehensive review of Elected Member Induction is undertaken by the Finance, Management and Regeneration Improvement and Scrutiny Committee.

7. Place-Shaping Review Action Plan

Recommendations		What action has taken place?	Lead Officer	Timescale to report back to I & S Committee
1.	That the Finance, Management and Regeneration Improvement and Scrutiny Committee receive regular updates on the development of the Sustainable Communities and other key place-shaping strategies.		David Lowe – Strategic Director for Policy and Community Safety	Annual update unless new initiatives emerge
2	That the Finance Risk Sub-Group of the Finance, Management and Regeneration Improvement and Scrutiny Committee further consider the Total Place agenda and its potential for creating greater efficiencies.		Ratna Taylor – Improvement and Scrutiny Officer	Ongoing with an annual report to the FMR - I&S committee
3	Investigate the feasibility of providing Members with additional officer support.		Ratna Taylor – Improvement and Scrutiny Officer	Report to FMR I & S Committee 27 January 2010
4	Each directorate to identify a first point of contact for Members enquiries		Ratna Taylor – Improvement and Scrutiny Officer and	Contacts to committee 25 November 2009

			Lynda Straker Members Communication and Information Officer	
5	Consider increasing the level of resources allocated to the Community Leadership Programme.		David Lowe – Strategic Director for Policy and Community Safety	April 2010
6	Community Profiles to be produced for each Member and re-issued when updated information becomes available.		Sarah Eaton – Head of Policy, Research and Scrutiny	Ongoing
7	The 03 Scrutiny Review into Member Training and Development to be revisited taking into account the changing role and responsibilities of membership, culminating in the establishment of a structured training and development plan.		Toni Compai Director of Human Resources and Steve Smith Principle Training Officer	Report to FMR I&S Committee 27 January
8	A cross party Member Development Working group to be formed (including the appropriate Officers) to oversee the development and implementation of a Member Development Strategy.		Toni Compai Director of Human	Report to FMR I&S Committee 27 January

9	Role descriptions to be produced for Members, detailing role, responsibilities, skills and competencies		Toni Compai Director of Human Resources , Steve Smith Principle Training Officer and Ratna Taylor – Improvement and Scrutiny Officer	Report to FMR I&S Committee 27 January
10	A comprehensive review of Elected Member Induction is undertaken by the Finance, Management and Regeneration Improvement and Scrutiny Committee.		Ratna Taylor – Improvement and Scrutiny Officer	Report to FMR I&S Committee 24 March 2010