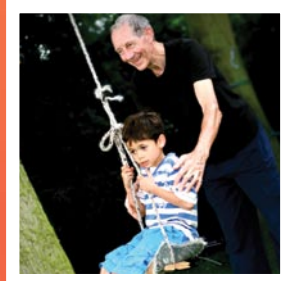


# Helping all ages to age well

Adult Social Services Department  
Children and Younger Adults Department  
Derbyshire County Council





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## Foreword

The project work successfully undertaken to inform this strategy has proven that the case for Derbyshire to have a strategic approach to developing intergenerational practice is a compelling one. This strategy sets out our approach and will guide the development of intergenerational practice across the county over the coming years.

It is our belief that intergenerational work, with its emphasis on the contribution that people are able and can make for themselves, challenges the negative way that the young and old are often seen and see each other. It not only enables the young and old to become increasingly active participants in their communities, it builds the contact and understanding that is the foundation of real respect. It is able to bridge the generation gap.

Derbyshire, by adopting a strategic approach to intergenerational work, has set a standard for the rest of England and it is hoped that this document and our achievements to date will inspire not just the people of Derbyshire but also the rest of the country.

Our young people are the future of Derbyshire but our older residents, through their experience and wisdom, can help to anchor them in the present. Intergenerational practice is a powerful and practical means to bring this about. As such, we commend this strategy and its accompanying resource pack to you.

**Councillor Dave Allen**

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services

**Councillor Anne Western**

Cabinet Member for Children's Services



## 1.0 Introduction

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities, which promote greater understanding and respect between generations, and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.

When Derbyshire County Council took the decision to develop an intergenerational strategy, it decided that this should be dynamic, rooted in the experiences and input of all the generations and capable of developing and growing over time. This document and the accompanying resource

pack reflect this commitment to produce a practical approach to intergenerational work that people of all ages and backgrounds can use to develop their own, local projects.

Over the past eighteen months the Council has been promoting intergenerational projects through schools and older peoples' groups throughout the County with the Derbyshire Intergenerational Strategy Project (DIgS). The aim of these projects has been to span the generation gap through meaningful, enjoyable activities that have a positive outcome. These projects have then been evaluated and written up in the resource pack as practical guides that people can learn from and use in their own communities.

'I was walking across a deserted car park very early on a dark morning. A youth was coming towards me and I felt my stomach tighten. Then I thought, don't be silly. So I called out, 'Morning.' He called back, 'Morning, Gran!'

Quote from older person



## 2.0 Aim and Objectives

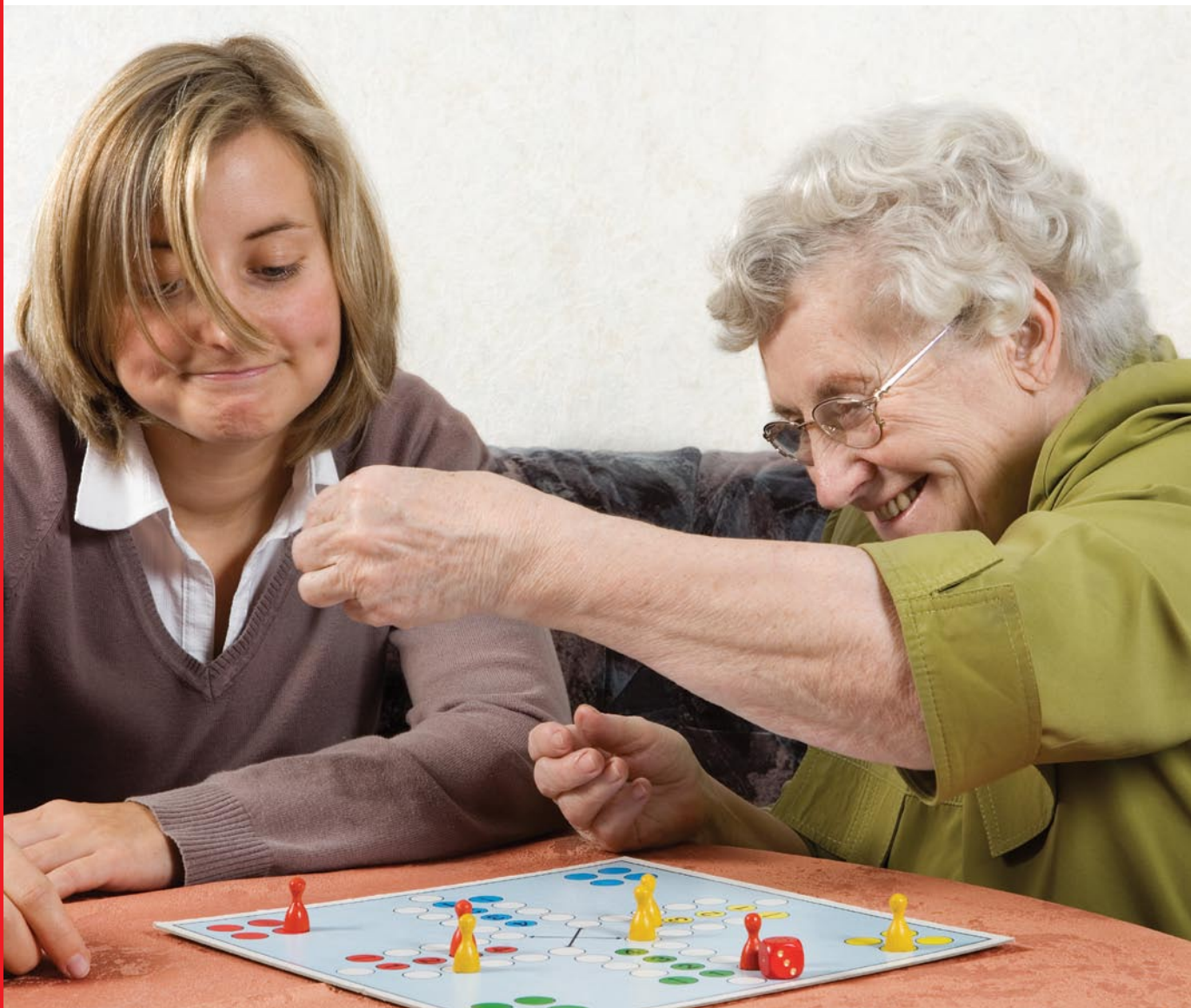
### 2.1 Aim

#### **The aim of the Derbyshire**

**Intergenerational Strategy is to bring young and older people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities, which promote greater understanding and respect between generations, and contribute to building more cohesive communities.**

### 2.2 Objectives

- To launch and implement the Derbyshire Intergenerational Strategy.
- To embed intergenerational work as a key 'well-being' activity of the County Council.
- To develop and promote intergenerational work and its benefits.
- To promote the benefits of intergenerational work in reducing fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- To use intergenerational work to contribute to the development of more socially cohesive communities where the generations communicate with respect and better understand each other.





## 3.0 National Context

The generations have become progressively disconnected from each other at an individual, family and community level due to a number of circumstances that has meant that the natural relationship between them has been affected. These disconnections include smaller families, increased geographical distance between family members, divorce and single parent households, and the different expectations of working women.

Alongside these changing family patterns has been the development of age-segregated activities and living arrangements, which have further distanced the old and young from each other. This has been exacerbated by the way that policies and services are normally developed around target groups or issues that are disjointed and, in some cases, even discriminatory.

The aim of intergenerational work is to find ways to develop and strengthen these relationships and consequently become an agent for social change with benefits to the whole of society. The middle generation has an important part to play in enabling and supporting this intergenerational exchange to take place.

There are many indicators that national government and society in general are increasingly receptive to an intergenerational approach, which seeks to be an agent for social change. Examples include:

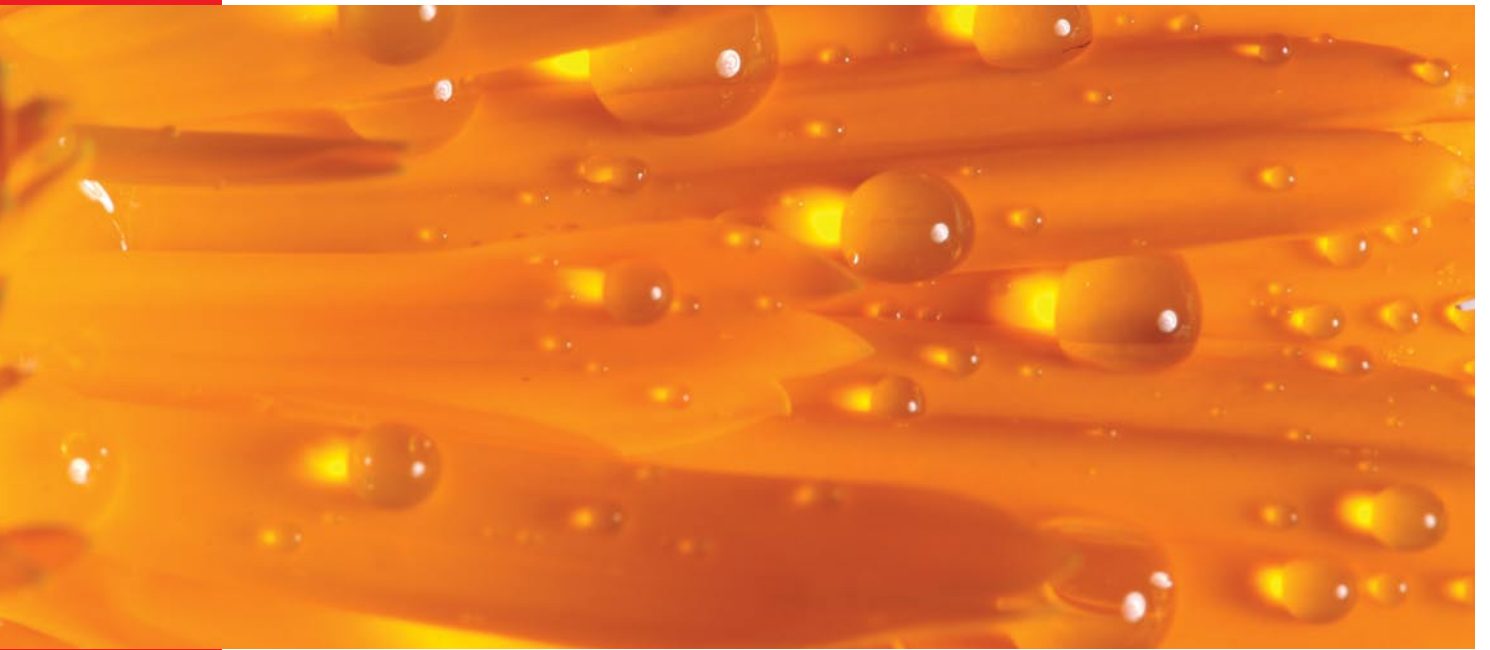
- Citizenship being introduced into the school curriculum to develop social responsibility in young people.
- The negative impact of social exclusion is

‘This project has altered my opinion of children. I had a very poor view of the youth of today but it’s done some good working with these young people. They are lovely children.’

Quote from older person

recognised and social inclusion is being promoted with resources to support action.

- Law and order reforms demonstrate the need for people to live in safer communities.
- A changing approach to governance is attempting to bring lay people into the decision-making processes of organisations in order to influence and shape the directions of services to best fit their needs.
- Planning for and responding to the demographic change of our ageing society, as exemplified in the Wales Strategy for Older People and ‘Opportunity Age’, England’s strategy for ageing.
- The recognition that the quality of the communities that people live in, and the nature of the status and respect they enjoy within those communities, has a major impact on the individual and societies overall health and well-being.



### 3.1 The Intergenerational Relationship

The intergenerational relationship is significant for a number of reasons:

- It recognises that everyone has the capacity as human beings to learn and grow throughout the whole of the life span.
- It breaks down the structures in society which perpetuate the fact that chronological age, at both ends of the life span, often excludes people from mainstream activities; in addition the young and old are not seen as contributing to the economy and are therefore commonly described in terms such as ‘burden’.
- It promotes a sense of social responsibility as a citizen because older people are able to support and nurture the young, whilst the young recognise that older people can become frail and need care as they age. This social responsibility promotes communities that support and value all of its members in a culture of respect and mutual understanding.
- It sees the young and old as active, participating members of their community

contributing to the overall well-being of those around them, creating more cohesive and healthy communities.

- It acknowledges every human being’s need for reciprocity, giving back something to others, at a time when the opportunities for this to occur within families have diminished.
- It demonstrates the mutual benefit that each group gains from the exchange and breaks down the barriers of perceived power between them.
- It creates a synergy, which strengthens and supports the young and old and so enables them to make changes, which can benefit everyone.

### 3.2 The Intergenerational Approach

For older people there are imperatives for them to be safe, to have a voice that is heard and responded to and to be valued for the contribution they can make to their community. This was brought out clearly in the recent joint Cabinet Office and Treasury Report ‘The Future Role of



‘Because we’d discussed how other people saw us (young people) I started to think about how I appeared to older people. I made a point of saying ‘Hello’ and smiling.’

Quote from younger person

the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration; Interim Report’ (December, 2006). This states that Government needs to explore how volunteering can boost social cohesion by linking different generations of volunteers. The report ‘Active Participation Across the Generations’ commissioned as part of the evidence for the Third Sector Review stated:

‘...the documentation and evaluation undertaken to date illustrate that Intergenerational Practice does have a significant impact on participants and their attitudes to each other. It expands the practice of community development to become more inclusive and positively challenge ageism. It creates valuable roles for people as volunteers, activists and citizens. It provides a mechanism for people to connect across the generations to build better mutual respect and understanding.’

There is now an increasing recognition of the importance of looking at the issues of safer, healthier communities through an

intergenerational focus, for the following reasons:

- Older people are recognised as having a valuable role in society by serving youth in a way that the middle generation cannot.
- They can receive service from youth, which recognises the responsibility of others to support elders when the process of ageing requires care.
- It fills the need of the older generation to nurture the young and to pass on their experience of life to the benefit of future generations.
- It develops an understanding amongst the generations of what it is like to be old and seeks to dispel the myths and fears.
- It leads to greater respect for older people and recognises their contribution in striving towards a better society.
- It removes the fears and prejudices that older people have of the young and builds on a safer and more civilised society for all.
- It allows ageing to be recognised as a continuum throughout life with different phases and transitions, which are all of equal value.

If the potential of intergenerational activity to respond to our changing society and act as an agent of social change is to be effective, certain conditions must be met. If not, there is a danger that intergenerational exchanges may instead reinforce and perpetuate the very issues they are seeking to avoid. These conditions have been designed in to the Derbyshire Intergenerational Strategy (DIgS) programme from its inception.

## 4.0 Derbyshire Context

Derbyshire County Council is one of the leading authorities in England both for the quality of its services and the way it strives to involve its citizens in decision-making. In 2006, the Council again secured the top rating of 4 stars from the Audit Commission under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime and was judged to be improving well. Some of the social and policy reasons for Derbyshire to develop an intergenerational strategy have already been stated, but there is also a strong motivation to use intergenerational approaches to underpin other key policies and commitments that are aimed at improving life for local people.

The Local Government Act (2000) places a duty on all local authorities to produce a community strategy that will help improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area. The Derbyshire Sustainable Community Strategy (2006-2009) is the key strategy which guides the work of local councils, other public bodies and private and voluntary sector organisations across the county. The strategy, developed by the Derbyshire Partnership Forum, encourages partners to work towards common overarching goals under the following four themes:

- Safer and Stronger Communities.
- Children and Young People.

- Sustainable Communities.
- Healthier Communities and Older People.

And for 2006–2009 focuses on four key priorities:

- Engaging young people in positive activities.
- Reducing anti-social behaviour.
- Tackling obesity.
- Ensuring a clean and attractive environment.

The emphasis on healthy communities is reiterated in the Local Area Agreement (LAA), 'Working together for a better Derbyshire' (2005–2008). The Safer Stronger Communities Block sets out a powerful vision of the type of communities that Derbyshire is seeking to develop. Stronger communities are ones where people are engaged and empowered. They are characterised by people:

- Being aware of what is happening in their community.
- Feeling they have the ability to effect change in their community by participating in community and voluntary groups.
- Feeling they have ownership of their area, of having a sense of responsibility towards their neighbours and neighbourhoods.
- Valuing relationships across the generations.

'I expected older people to be 'mardy' but they weren't. They were very friendly and gave us tips. We've changed our minds about them.'

Quote from younger person

The Block also highlights the need to tackle the negative impact on people's health and well-being of the fear of crime.

In the Children and Young People's Block the LAA emphasises the need for children and young people being seen as a resource to be nurtured and not to be seen in policy terms of difficulty. It goes on to recognise the value that the voluntary and community sector brings to the experience of children and young people and its potential for capacity building. In effect, this describes the opportunity for reciprocal relationships between the young and old to their and their community's mutual benefit.

This approach is strongly supported by the outcomes of the Russell Commission (2005), which place a responsibility on local authorities to proactively promote the engagement of more young people in volunteering and community action.

The Healthier Communities and Older People's Block, continues this approach, stressing the importance of seeing older people as an asset and not as a burden and acknowledging the need to provide older people with opportunities to be active and socially included.

## 4.1 Every Child Matters

Derbyshire has also developed its services for children and young people within the context of the White Paper, 'Every Child Matters' (2005). This states five key outcomes for children and young people that the authority will be assessed against for the effectiveness of its provision. These outcomes are that every child should have the support they need to:

- Be healthy.
- Stay safe.

- Enjoy and achieve.
- Make a positive contribution.
- Achieve economic well-being.

Behind these key outcomes are a set of more detailed expectations, which include that children and young people are encouraged to take part in and to initiate voluntary activities to support the community and the environment. Again this places stress on children and young people's potential as positive contributors to our society.

## 4.2 Derbyshire Youth Service

The aim of the Youth Service is to contribute to the personal and social development and economic well-being of young people by means that include:

- Develop skills to relate effectively to others and to be effective members of the groups in which they live and work.
- Develop a responsibility towards and sympathetic concern for other people especially those who are disadvantaged.
- Develop confidence and an ability to express their own reasoned opinions.
- Develop an awareness of their feelings, attitudes and values of themselves and others.

Fundamental to the achievement of the above will be the need for positive opportunities to interact with, learn alongside and with people from other generations. As such, the development of intergenerational practice fits well as one means of supporting the realisation of these aspirations.



## 5.0 Development and Implementation of Intergenerational Practice

There are considered to be three principal types of intergenerational practice.

- Where older people share their experience and expertise with younger people.
- Where children and young people share their experience and expertise with older people.
- Where young people and older people work together on a project of mutual interest.

### 5.1 Good Practice

- Intergenerational programmes need to be designed specifically and intentionally. They should not be accidental or add-ons.
- They need to be carefully planned and understood by everyone involved in the process.
- The role of the middle generation should be recognised as facilitating and enabling the process to occur, so it leads to the empowerment of both groups.
- The programmes need to be ongoing, not seen as isolated incidents but integral to the community or organisation.

- They need to show a positive impact on both generations so both receive mutual benefit and value.
- The bringing together of the groups needs to demonstrate an improvement in the quality of life for them both and from that, an improvement in the quality of life for all.

### 5.2 Evaluation

- Intergenerational programmes need to be evaluated to find out whether they were successful, whether they produced the intended outcomes, and what lessons can be learned.
- An important part of intergenerational work is to strive for sustainability so that benefits derived from working together on projects can be maintained and lead to continued improvements in local communities.
- Evaluation should inform a wider agenda which looks at the fundamental social and age related issues that are affected by intergenerational exchange, as well as the dynamic process that is part of the development of intergenerational relationships.



## 6.0 Developmental Intergenerational Work

Intergenerational projects that informed the development of this strategy included:

- Four book groups that have brought the opportunity to read and discuss books into residential homes, a sheltered housing complex and a community venue. Group members were aged thirteen to sixteen and sixty to eighty-five years of age.
- Four gardening projects with group members aged five to sixteen years and fifty to eighty-plus years have resulted in an allotment, a wildlife garden and two sensory gardens.
- A digital photography project which will run until September 2007 when a book, depicting village life through photographs, will be launched.
- A writing and drama project which culminated in a drama performance. The issues informing the performance were common to both age groups and resulted in 'What's the Difference', scripted by writers from one school and people from the immediate area and performed by younger people from another school and older people from a local amateur dramatics group. A DVD of the performance to be used as a teaching aid has been included in the companion Resource Pack to this strategy.

### 6.1 Sustainability

Gratifyingly, some of the aforementioned intergenerational groups have continued to meet after the initial project has been completed. Ongoing projects include,

an oral history project, an IT group and a book group (set up by the Swadlincote 50+ Forum). The sustainability of certain projects clearly demonstrates the efficacy of the intergenerational approach.

### 6.2 Outcomes

All the intergenerational projects delivered made a positive contribution to the lives of participants. For the children and young people involved, this is particularly true for achieving and enjoying learning. In the case of the gardening projects, the projects also led to group members adopting a healthier lifestyle with an activity that is accessible to all, not only those with sporting ability. The projects have also encouraged more flexibility in learning and the timetabling of the school day.

For older people, projects have led to greater community involvement and they have become involved in the day-to-day life of local schools and have felt valued as individuals irrespective of their age. All the projects generated a more positive image of children and young people and older people.

The children and young people had their own set of desired outcomes and identified these as being, encouraged to express their own views more frequently; to have fun at the same time as learning; changing the perceptions of older people in relation to the young; not being seen as a threat. Evaluation of the projects indicates that these priorities were successfully addressed.

## 6.3 Feedback from Intergenerational Project Participants

**Quote from older person:** I was walking across a deserted car park very early on a dark morning. A youth was coming towards me and I felt my stomach tighten. Then I thought, don't be silly. So I called out, 'Morning.' He called back, 'Morning, Gran!

**Quote from older person:** This project has altered my opinion of children. I had a very poor view of the youth of today but it's done some good working with these young people. They are lovely children.

**Quote from younger person:** I expected older people to be 'mardy' but they weren't. They were very friendly and gave us tips. We've changed our minds about them.

**Quote from younger person:** Because we'd discussed how other people saw us (young people) I started to think about how I appeared to older people. I made a point of saying 'Hello' and smiling.

**Quote from older person:** I didn't know there were young people like this around today.

**Quote from younger person:** I thought all old people were boring but they're not, are they?

**Quote from older person:** I walked home from the Book Group with a lilt in my step. I'd spent a lovely hour-and-a-half talking about books with some smashing children. They were lovely.

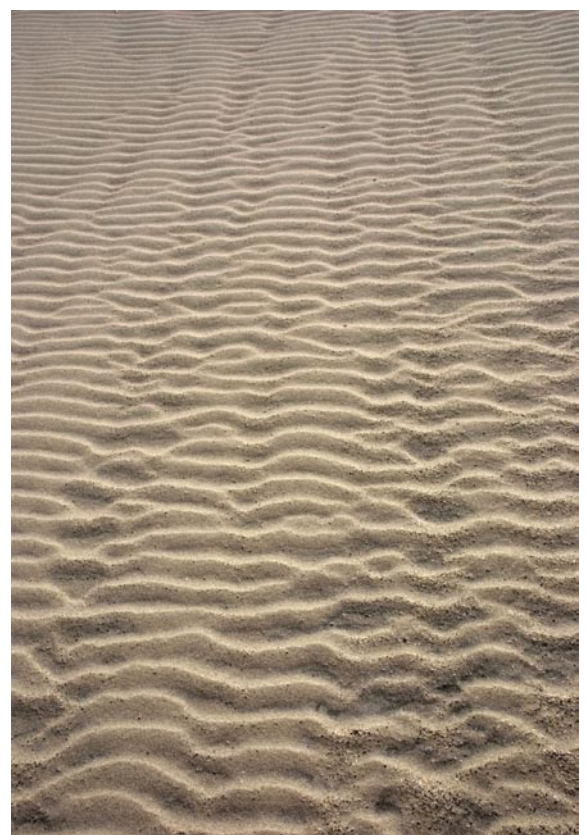
**Quote from older person:** My wife and I were out shopping when one of the children from the gardening group saw me and called out. I was pleased she'd remembered my name. My wife said, 'You're popular today!

## 7.0 Conclusion

### Intergenerational practice works!

The Council is committed to a vision of the future where our citizens, irrespective of age feel they are valued, contributing members of their communities. Through intergenerational work, we will challenge the stereotypes that can divide the generations and build neighbourhoods where people feel safe, confident and respected whatever their age.

This document demonstrates our commitment to this vision. The accompanying resource pack and ongoing support we will invest in intergenerational work, demonstrate our desire to achieve this vision and make Derbyshire a county in which all ages can age well.



# Bridging the Gap





Derbyshire Intergenerational Strategy