

Working better together? Case study

Community profiling in
Derbyshire Partnership Forum



Cross cutting

Case study

April 2009

 **audit**
commission

Background

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- 1** Local strategic partnerships (LSPs) have a responsibility to bring together local services to deliver a shared vision for the area. But creating highly effective partnerships is difficult and LSPs must operate across a complex policy environment.
 - 2** The public sector 7S model has been used to interpret the findings from the LSP study. This model enables LSPs to understand how to bring a series of interdependent elements together to achieve their long-, medium- and shorter-term goals. The seven elements of the model are super-ordinate goals, three transformational elements and three transactional elements. The transformational elements are most important when policy problems are complex.
 - 3** An effective LSP needs to link both transformational and transactional activities to achieve its goals. The transformational elements of the model are staff and skills (including culture and leadership), style (identity and how the LSP comes across) and synergies (achieving better results collectively than working alone). The transactional elements are standards (frameworks for partnership working and quality standards), steering (using internal processes to drive change, for example through resource pooling) and systems (performance, resource and accountability).
- ### Long-term objectives
- 4** Derbyshire Partnership Forum (DPF) existed prior to LSPs and became the LSP for Derbyshire in 2000. Derbyshire's sustainable community strategy (SCS), 2006–2009 is focused on four cross-cutting priorities: tackling anti-social behaviour; reducing obesity; promoting positive activities for young people; and ensuring a clean and attractive environment. It has provided a framework for Derbyshire's local area agreement (LAA).

Transformational elements

Leadership and culture

- 5** The Partnership is chaired by the political leader of the County Council. The deputy leader is vice-chair. Politicians from the County and District Councils and representatives from other organisations chair the six thematic groups. Core team support is provided by County Council staff. Strong partnership commitment exists across all sectors at senior level.
- 6** Derbyshire has a partnership culture that pre-dates LSPs. Partners came together because they saw the benefits of collaborative and innovative working.

Meetings and joint working

- 7** A Derbyshire Partnership information pack helps partners to understand their role in the Partnership. The pack is complemented by a quarterly Partnership Matters newsletter to improve member communication.
- 8** As a multi-tier area, Derbyshire has established an LSP co-ordinators group. It meets quarterly to discuss LSP issues and share experiences. It ensures that the county and district LSPs produce SCS that add value to each other, avoid duplication and make the best use of resources. Next year an integrated county strategy will be developed.

The benefits of joint working

- 9** Derbyshire Partnership has an agreed access-to-services blueprint that includes:
 - the shared use of call centre facilities as the initial point of contact for council and other public services;
 - linked websites to increase the range and depth of services available online;
 - a network of 'face-to-face' service access points located in District Council front offices, libraries and other locations convenient for local people;
 - a network of local joint service centres that combine service access points with front-line services. The South Normanton Joint Service Centre is the first centre being developed. It will include a District Council-run contact point, library, children's centre, adult education centre, elderly day centre, GP surgery, opticians, dentist and gym; and
 - the provision of smart phones and tablet computers/PDAs to mobile workers from partner organisations. These provide access to the CRM system and information services offering local people broader access to services.

10 The Partnership has also levered resources to reduce anti-social behaviour. Using an initial Home Office pump priming grant of £147,000, the Derbyshire Partnership has improved perceptions of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage. As a result of working through the LSP, resources increased to £747,000, helped by monies from the Derbyshire and Derby Economic Partnership. The money has been spent on environmental clean-ups, and perceptions of anti-social behaviour have fallen by a minimum of 35 per cent across the county.

Transactional elements

Getting things done

- 11** Each of the DPF's six thematic groups is supported by a performance lead. A performance information group supports the Partnership.
- 12** Following Home Office funding cuts to safer communities, the Partnership Board took the decision to reduce Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund funding in its sustainable communities block and re-allocate it to deliver safer communities.

Common frameworks for collecting and sharing performance information

- 13** A partnership agreement was signed on 29 June 2007 to set standards for partners. The Partnership's governance structures were also reviewed during the development of the new Derbyshire LAA to ensure the Partnership is fit for purpose to deliver SCS and LAA priorities.
- 14** A common performance management system, accessible to all partner organisations, is used to performance-manage the SCS, Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2) and the LAA.
- 15** The Partnership has developed information-sharing protocols, adopted by all partner agencies, to break down barriers to effective working and to share information to help provide seamless services for local people.

Systems for understanding and influencing performance, resources and risks

- 16** Derbyshire uses community area profiles to identify key issues such as crime and health, highlight geographical differences between areas, and influence policy and resource decisions.
- 17** The County Council was commissioned by the Derbyshire Partnership to develop area profiles based on the ten Audit Commission quality of life themes. The ten local quality of life themes are: people and place; community cohesion and involvement; community safety; culture and leisure; economic well-being; education and life-long learning, environment; health and social well-being; housing; and transport and access.
- 18** The full profiles bring together more than one hundred pieces of information, including statistical and consultation data and performance information. The summary profile – or 'Quilt' – contains 33 key statistics. The full and summary profiles are available for Derbyshire's 42 community areas. Community areas have been defined to reflect communities in the underlying population. The resulting 42 areas vary in population size from 3,800 to over 30,000. Colour is used to broadly define 'good' and 'bad' levels of a statistic and three intervening ranks. Areas are ranked from 1 to 42.

19 The information available in the profiles has been displayed in a number of ways to provide both 'at-a-glance' and more detailed analysis. The profiles provide an evidence base that has informed discussion on the LAA priorities, indicators and targets.

20 Derbyshire has taken a partnership approach to the development of the LAA risk assessment.

Learning Points

Transformational learning

- Openness, trust and communication between partners are essential to success and take a long time to build.
- LSPs can help partners to lever additional resources to deliver complex local outcomes.
- LSPs can enable partners to work together on shared programmes to improve access to services.

Transactional learning

- Shared performance systems, information protocols and risk assessments help to break down barriers and achieve standards across the LSP.
- Community profiles provide an evidence base to inform LAA priorities and plan local delivery.

Questions for LSPs and their partners to consider

1. How well does your LSP recognise the importance of both transformational and transactional elements and their interdependence?
2. How well does your LSP take a layered approach to performance and resource management?
3. How well does the long-term SCS fit with the short-term focus of the LAA?
4. How has your LSP facilitated discussions about co-location and sharing of back office or frontline services?

Further information

Copies of the national report *Working Better Together? Managing local strategic partnerships* are available at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/lsp and www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk/lsp

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