

Leicestershire Together Key Work Areas

As well as monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Leicestershire Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement and producing an Annual Review document to assess progress against the targets; Leicestershire Together has a number of key work areas:

Performance Management

We are keen to make sure that we operate effectively, deliver practical outcomes on the ground and that we make a difference by working in partnership. We held our first Performance Management event in February 2004, which helped us to identify the areas that we need to focus upon - Learning & Development, Partner Engagement and Resources & Priorities. The action plan that has been developed includes proposals to:

- communicate key decisions better
- vary the structure and format of meetings
- provide more support for Board Members, including an induction pack
- appoint Board member "champions" of key themes and projects
- develop links, and share good practice with other LSPs
- agree priorities on an annual basis

Performance management will continue to underpin all of our work.

Partnership Mapping

Government guidance on Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) included a role in mapping partnerships that already exist in an LSP area, and identifying opportunities for streamlining both the number of partnerships and the way in which they work. We conducted a survey of more than 200 local partnerships in 2003 and much of this information is provided in the "Partnerships" section of this site. This section is currently being updated with a new survey of local partnerships planned for this year.

Last year it was agreed that all county-wide and sub-regional partnerships would be encouraged to assess themselves against the new Performance Management Framework developed by Leicestershire County Council for Leicestershire Together. The assessment was set up to assist partnerships at all levels in evaluating their structures, processes and ways of working. We are still encouraging partnerships to complete the self assessment process as it will help partnerships identify their key strengths and weaknesses and assist

in the development of action plans to address key issues. This process will also enable partnerships to consider whether the business of the partnership could be done in a more resource efficient way, perhaps by working more closely with or through another partnership. Each partnership will be given its own unique log-in username and password, enabling them to view their own summarised self-assessment report on the Leicestershire Together Website.

This process was piloted on the partnerships that are members of Leicestershire Together, including ENABLE, Leicestershire Rural Partnership, Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership for Leicestershire, the Cultural Strategy Forum and District LSP's. The performance management forms and supporting information are all available on the "Partnership Assessment" section on this site. Please contact [Sasha Ryan](#) for a username and password to begin the self assessment process.

Access to Services

'Leicestershire Together' is working with district-based Local Strategic Partnerships to co-ordinate improved arrangements for getting in touch with agencies across the county.

The public do not always know which agencies provide specific services and they often want to enquire about a number of services at the same time. They do not want to be passed from 'pillar to post'

Agencies like [Connexions](#), [Jobcentre Plus](#), the [County Council](#), [Leicestershire Police](#) and [District Councils](#) are implementing some better ways to access their own services. As members of Leicestershire Together they have agreed to co-operate to provide better joined up services in future.

The first stage is the development of joint service shops at Market Harborough, Hinckley, Braunstone, Glenfield and Ashby. These will open between June 2004 and April 2005.

Priorities for 2004/05

The Board identified two priority actions within the Community Strategy for 2004:

- 1) Young people - prepare a "State of Young People in Leicestershire" report, develop a website for young people, improve cross agency working concerning crime involving young people and enhance access to leisure opportunities.

"The Jitty" website (further details below) has been developed by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council with funding through LGOL. We are currently developing the content of the site and ensuring that there are clear links into similar sites and projects.

A review of evening bus services subsidised by the County Council will start in the Autumn, and this will include lessons learnt from the two

pilot projects, including how bus timetables can be adjusted to best meet the needs of young people. We will be further exploring with young service users the shared taxi model employed in the Harborough service and seeing whether this approach can help provide an improved level of access within the overall funding available.

There will be a youth section on the Leicester Shire On-Line Research Atlas, thereby providing a range of cross-organisational and up to date information about young people on a continuous basis. Organisations holding this information will meet shortly to discuss what information is available locally and what partners are willing to share.

- 2) Produce a strategic assessment of key service delivery issues across the county

Consultants M.E.L. have completed a detailed study of what prevents organisations and partnerships from delivering their services effectively in Summer 2004.

This took the form of interviews with representatives of service delivery organisations and partnerships around the county and was followed by a half-day workshop to explore key issues in detail. Key projects arising from the Assessment include:

- An audit and database of community facilities
- A recruitment and retention working group, focussing on the health and social care sectors
- An audit of community transport provision
- A strategy for engaging with traditionally excluded groups (see below)

Consultation

“Consultation fatigue” has become a real issue for local communities and service providers alike. Leicestershire Together is trying to co-ordinate activity in this area by encouraging partners from all sectors around the county to use the new consultation toolkit and database developed by Leicestershire County Council. The aim is to “join up” the consultation activities of as many organisations as possible and ensure that where possible, local people are consulted about different services at the same time.

The County Council is now recruiting new members to join its second Citizens' Panel (Leicestershire's Voice). The Council is particularly keen to encourage and support applications for panel membership from groups who have traditionally been under-represented, including people from black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities and young people. The initial

recruitment of the second citizens' panel will be completed by the end of the year.

See the '[have your say](#)' section on the Leicestershire County Council website for further information about the citizens' panel.

In 2004 Leicestershire Together, Leicestershire County Council and Leicestershire Constabulary purchased a hundred electronic voting handsets to make consultation events more interactive and fun. The handsets provide instant results to key questions, (think "Who wants to be a millionaire"). Whether you want to ask your audience open questions, multiple choice questions, or simply ask for a yes or no response, the handsets ensure that everyone has an opportunity to have their say. The handsets are free to use by partners of the purchasing organisations subject to availability, and have proven to be successful across a range of audiences, including staff, older people, young people, people with learning disabilities and people from minority ethnic communities.

For further information about the voting handsets, please contact [Chris Wright](#).

Funding Toolkit Project

The Leicestershire [Funding Toolkit](#) was launched in July 2006. The site provides advice and guidance on how to develop projects and succeed in securing the funding. The site is aimed at voluntary and community organisations across the County and in addition to advice provides a searchable database of funding sources that is kept up to date and is pretty comprehensive covering government, lottery and trust funding.

In the first two months after its launch the site has received 2,350 visits and 158 organisations registered as users.

The site is currently managed by Oliver Savage, until December 2006, when it will be handed to the Policy Team.

Building Community Cohesion

Since the disturbances in Northern English towns and cities in 2001, considerable focus and investment has been made on ways of ensuring that all members of a community feel that they are part of that community. As far as Leicestershire Together is concerned, an initial background review was undertaken to assess current activity and to offer suggestions about ways of building "community cohesion" across the county. The Leicestershire Together Board decided to focus initial attention on young people and a series of activities and work programmes (focusing on youth engagement, involvement and awareness) were implemented in Hinckley & Bosworth and Oadby & Wigston boroughs and in Bottesford (Melton).

Nevertheless, with community cohesion continuing to be a focus for national concern, the Black and Minority Ethnic Citizens' Jury provided a context for discussing issues at greater depth within the context of Leicester and Leicestershire. Actions relating to community cohesion are included in the Jury Action Plan. They include the need for multi-agency direction and action and consideration of ways to pro-actively look at cohesion issues and the inclusion of new communities.

Accordingly, a fresh approach to community cohesion is currently under review. There is a realisation within the Leicestershire Together team that further background research needs to be undertaken to improve understanding both of local communities and dynamics, the context and initiatives carried out under the Pathfinder programmes in both Charnwood and Leicester City, work undertaken in other areas of the country and also the changing national agenda. Proposals include the formation of a community cohesion 'network' for the county which would include key partners and community representation and the production of a community cohesion 'toolkit', which would aim to assist the process of 'mainstreaming' community cohesion principles and practices.

The review process will take on board activity and proposals from partner and other organisations, and we would be keen to hear people's views.

For further information, please contact [Sasha Ryan](#) or [Julian Harrison](#)

Leicestershire Access Centres Programme

The County Council, on behalf of Leicestershire Together, is managing the £3.5m Access Centre Programme which has attracted over £1.6m funding from the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership (LSEP). The programme aims to increase the number of access centres in the county which can deliver a range of services to communities. Research conducted during 2004 identified gaps in service provision across the County and highlighted the opportunities for investment in community facilities. The programme will promote social inclusion particularly within the counties most deprived communities, including those in rural areas. Each Access Centre facility will provide core services including basic skills training, IT training, childcare facilities, job/career guidance, structured outreach provision and public internet access. The aim of the programme is to develop up to ten physical access centres across the County building on existing community facilities or creating new ones. The capital projects include the refurbishment of existing buildings, extensions and new build projects. The following six Access Centres have now been completed.

- The Ibstock Family Access Centre project at Ibstock Community College
- Coalville Library and Access Centre
- The Broughton Astley Library and Access Centre

- The Mobile Childcare and Access Centre
- The Moira Youth and Community Centre in Loughborough
- The Melton Learning Hub

The following five Access Centres will be completed by the end of the three year programme.

- Mountsorrel Library and Access Centre
- Melton Access Centre
- Cobden Access and Children's Centre in Loughborough
- Bagworth Community Access Centre
- Skills Mission Access Centre in Oadby

The Catalyst Fund

'Leicestershire Together' worked alongside partners in 2004 to secure a significant level of funding from the Catalyst Fund. The Catalyst Fund is part of the European Objective 3 programme in the East Midlands and was set up to distribute small grants to local disadvantaged communities. The aim of the fund is to support projects that build social capital and improve the employability of those involved. It focuses on building capacity in local communities by setting up Community Panels, which themselves appraise and select small projects for funding.

Leicestershire has been awarded funding for 2 projects: -

- **Benefits to Business**

This innovative project is led by Leicestershire County Council and aims to encourage disabled people claiming incapacity benefits to start-up their own businesses. The project will focus on the most disadvantaged areas in Leicestershire. It will not only make a significant impact in developing local disabled people but will also have wider social benefits both in terms of making a positive contribution to the community and by providing positive case studies to other disabled people.

- **Positive Youth: A Catalyst (ESF) Programme for Young People in key wards within Charnwood**

This project is led by Charnwood Borough Council and aims to deliver a programme of activity to young people 16-25 year olds (and 13-16 yrs who have been excluded from school) living in disadvantaged communities in Charnwood. Activity will focus on the following areas:

1. Engagement of the hardest to reach and moving them on to positive destinations – by first focusing on developing the ‘individual’ and then helping them to move on to training or employment.
2. Development of life skills, basic literacy and numeracy using creative means to engage and support those young people who are currently disengaged / at risk of offending / already offenders

Reviewing the work of Community Development Workers

There are lots of people on the ground providing services to people living across the county who could be identified as "community development workers". We would like to harness the potential of these people, initially by identifying who they are and what they do. We will begin this process by collecting information from partners, including local authorities and the voluntary sector to include in a database that will be made available on this site later in 2005.

Visit the Jitty

The Jitty, a new website created especially for Young People, age 13 to 19, in Leicestershire, is now live. "The Jitty" aims to provide co-ordinated information, advice and support to enable users to make informed decisions at key points in their life.

The website was developed following consultation with young people, and the content is presented in a lively and accessible style, covering national issues such as bullying, exams and crime. The site also provides details about what is happening locally including events, entertainment and sport, and regularly runs competitions (the latest of which had an i-Pod shuffle as a prize). There is an editorial team of young people who update and manage the site, while there are numerous contributors from around Leicestershire who regularly submit work (film reviews, CD reviews, opinions on what is happening in national and international news etc).

Anyone aged between 13 and 19 is welcome to join the writers group, and there is a "Join Up" section on the website which gives details on how to become involved. If you don't want to write articles, you can still take part by signing up to the "Chat Forum" where you can talk to other young people from around Leicestershire.

Katy, who was a student at Guthlaxton College in Wigston and is now starting at University, said: "I would encourage young people to get involved and get their views across. It gives you an opportunity to write about any subject that affects youth."

You can visit the site at www.thejitty.com,

Citizens Juries

Two Citizens Juries were initially organised by the Leicestershire Rural Partnership. The first, held in 2001, focussed upon the needs of those living in rural areas and the second, in November 2002, looked at the aspirations of young people. Following the success of these juries, Leicestershire Together instigated two further juries in 2004/05.

The Citizens Jury for disabled people was held at Sibston Discovery Park on July 5th 2004. Thirteen jurors had the opportunity to question a range of witnesses, including the County Council lead member for Social Services, Director of Education and representatives from Job Centre Plus, Centrebus and the Learning and Skills Council. Providing information in the correct, accessible format for people with disabilities came out as a key issue in each of the sessions. A full report, including key recommendations, was published in September 2004 along with an Action Plan shortly after. As a result, the County Council has bought the Change Picture bank which addresses the principal concern over accessible information through the use of pictures. This is currently available to all County Council staff via the Intranet with training available through the Valuing People team, who are also working with the Health Sector to develop a specific health version. A recent review of the Action Plan has been undertaken which has sought additional input and commitment from partners to implement other key actions.

The Black and Minority Ethnic Citizens' Jury event was held at County Hall in November 2005. This followed an extensive consultation process involving many communities and local groups, with active assistance from the likes of Refugee Action and Age Concern Leicestershire and Rutland. As a result 18 jurors took part in the event. Care was taken to ensure that the Jury was broadly reflective not only of ethnic groupings, but also in relation to gender, age and faith amongst others. Following analysis of the consultation/engagement process, six broad areas were prioritised for consideration by the Jury at the event. These became the focus for the individual Jury sessions, as follows:

- Understanding Ethnic Diversity in Leicestershire
- Information, Advice and Guidance on Public Services
- Access to Key Identified Services for Black and Minority Ethnic People (focusing on Health, Housing and Transport)

- Community Cohesion
- Employment
- Active Citizenship (which looked at the involvement and inclusion of people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities and access to power and influence opportunities)

The event involved some very frank questioning and discussion. Predominant amongst the matters raised by Jury members and a particular focus for their attention and calls for action was the prevalence of discrimination (both institutional and otherwise), racist crime and behaviour, and issues relating to ethnicity, cultural sensitivity and access to particular services. Employment also focused on issues related to career progression, not simply initial access to jobs. Language issues and the need for effective and culturally sensitive communication/information was also a persistent thread throughout the two days. Recognition of disadvantage and exclusion also permeated the sessions, with questions posed regarding understanding of BME needs/issues and also whether there exists a genuine commitment to change the status quo.

The project consultants (ECOTEC) used both the event and the preceding consultation process, to produce a comprehensive Report which included broad recommendations based on the six themes. An Action Plan has now been drafted and widely circulated. The Action Plan attempts to address the key message from the Citizens' Jury, namely: that the content and approach to underpin race equality in the development of policy and services cannot be developed in isolation from an understanding of the experience of the BME communities in Leicestershire."(*Citizens' Jury Report: Executive Summary*).

For further information, contact: [Donna Mackay](#) (Citizens' Jury for Disabled People) or [Julian Harrison](#) (Black and Minority Ethnic Citizens' Jury)

Community Buildings Audit

Following a review of the County Council Services in 2004, an audit of community facilities within Leicestershire was recommended. This was to take stock of what facilities are available in Leicestershire communities, and to also develop a central resource to allow everyone to access this information. Leicestershire Together have worked with the Valuing People team to carry out the audit of Community Facilities and have collected information on over 500 venues across the county. The information includes details of what rooms are available to hire, opening hours, accessibility of the venues and contact details. It is anticipated that this will make it easier for people to make better use of these facilities.

This information will shortly be available on the internet for everyone to use, and will be in an accessible format.

For further information, please contact [Donna Mackay](#)

Community Information and Data Sharing

Sharing information about Leicestershire communities is key to the work of the LSP partners. In the past year, a working group (including representatives from the Leicester Partnership - City LSP) has produced a draft Strategy for Community Information and a draft Data Sharing Protocol. The LSORA has also been established to provide a single point of access to community information, and this is being piloted using the 2001 Census data.