

**The Community
Strategy
For
South Derbyshire**

2005 - 2010

WHAT IS IT?

Welcome to the first Community Strategy for South Derbyshire, a plan that is designed to help improve the economy, environment and quality of life throughout the district.

The strategy concentrates on the issues that the people of the district have identified as being important to them and it has been written by the South Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership.

The Partnership was set up in October 2003. It consists of a forum that meets twice each year and which all residents and any organisation with an interest in South Derbyshire are welcome to attend.

The day-to-day work of the Partnership is carried out by a board whose members are:

South Derbyshire District Council
South Derbyshire Council for Voluntary Services
South Derbyshire Citizens Advice Bureau
Southern Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce
Derbyshire Association of Local Councils
Derbyshire County Council
Derbyshire Constabulary
Derbyshire Connexions
Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire Primary Care Trust
Derbyshire Learning Partnership
Derbyshire Rural Community Council
Churches Together
Environment Agency
Etete Ltd
Nottingham East Midlands Airport
Old Post Regeneration Association Ltd.
People Express
Sharpe's Pottery and Heritage Trust
The National Forest Company
Toyota UK
Trident Housing Association

The Partnership is required by Central Government to produce the Community Strategy and we see it as a valuable tool for making life in South Derbyshire even better. The Partnership has helped local communities identify issues that are important to them and it will help to make changes in these areas.

The strategy also sets the main priorities for the public sector organisations such as police, social services, the District Council and the Primary Care Trust working in South Derbyshire to concentrate on. It covers all aspects of life in the district including crime, health, education and work and we look forward to working together with our communities to make them the best possible.

How Did We Get Here?

The Partnership has a vision for South Derbyshire over the next five years. This vision is: "Working together for a better South Derbyshire"

To help deliver this vision, the strategy focuses on six broad themes, reflecting the concerns raised by the communities of South Derbyshire.

The themes are:

Creating Opportunities for All
Safe Communities
Healthy Communities
A Vibrant Economy
A Sustainable Environment
Lifelong Learning and Culture

The themes were first discussed at a Local Strategic Partnership Forum in 2003 attended by over 70 people and with representatives from 27 partner organisations. A wide range of topics for possible inclusion in the Community Strategy was discussed and from these a list of key issues was drawn up.

Information from surveys and other strategies relevant to South Derbyshire was also used to identify the main topics that could be addressed by the Strategy. Of particular importance was the Derbyshire Community Strategy that has tackling crime, improving our health and our environment as its key aims.

Using all of this information a list of six themes was drawn up and theme groups were formed to take responsibility for each of them.

Before the groups could decide on what their priorities should be, extensive research was carried out among residents, the Partner organisations and organisations with an interest in the district.

The consultation process included presentations to Area Meetings, parish liaison meetings and partner organisations, a display of a draft strategy on the Internet and a questionnaire canvass of the Citizens' Panel

The responses from all of the consultation exercises went back to the theme groups for consideration and inclusion in their priorities and action plans.

Information about each of these is what the Community Strategy contains.

For each theme, the strategy summarises the challenges that each presents, identifies the priorities set and suggests what will change as a result of the strategy.

There are lots of issues that the partners will continue to deal with outside of the Community Strategy. The actions and outcomes described here are ones where the partners can achieve better results by working together or tackling challenges in new ways.

Throughout the lifetime of the Strategy we will continue to involve all of our communities in choices about services and priorities and by working in this way we are confident we will achieve a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.

The Area

South Derbyshire is a largely rural district, with two main towns and a host of villages and hamlets surrounded by heart of England countryside.

It covers an area of approximately 34,000 hectares (340 sq km) and has a population of 85,400 (Office for National Statistics 2003 Mid Year Estimates).

To its north, the district is bounded by the city of Derby and to the north west stretches towards Ashbourne and the Peak District. The town of Burton upon Trent in East Staffordshire sits to the west where the Rivers Trent and Dove create the county boundary. On its eastern side South Derbyshire extends from the River Derwent to the east of Derby, south along the Trent and then along the Leicestershire border. The southern boundary is shared with the counties of Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Staffordshire.

The main population and employment centre of the district is Swadlincote, with other sizable locations being Melbourne and the villages of Hilton, Hatton, Repton and Willington.

For many years Swadlincote was important for mining and pottery manufacture due to its location on the South Derbyshire Coalfield. In the later part of the 20th Century these industries declined dramatically. But the fortunes of the area were turned around by successful working partnerships.

South Derbyshire is the fastest growing district in the county and one of the fastest growing areas nationally. In recent years new development has taken place in Swadlincote and Hilton. This growth puts pressure on all services.

In recent times like most places house prices have seen significant increases. This can make it difficult for some residents to find affordable homes within their local communities.

There is good access to regional road links with the A50 and A38 each running through the district. Public transport links to rural areas, however, are limited. Many residents rely on cars for getting around and with many of them traveling out of the district to work this creates issues connected with transport and its effects on the environment.

One third of The National Forest is in South Derbyshire. The dramatically changing landscape is bringing economic, environmental and social benefits through the creation of woodland sites and attractions for local people and visitors alike.

South Derbyshire is a low crime area, with levels of domestic burglary, vehicle crime and violent crime below county, regional and national levels. Since its formation in 2002, the Safer South Derbyshire Partnership has helped keep levels of crime low and is widely recognised as an exemplary crime reduction partnership.

There is a history of successful partnership working in South Derbyshire and the LSP intends to continue this tradition. The involvement of the people who live and work here has played a very important part in these successes, and the same will be true of the Community Strategy.

By using your concerns as its driving force, we hope you will join us in making it work.

Creating Opportunities for All

The aim of the Community Strategy is to deliver
"Fairer, more inclusive and self-reliant communities."

Where We Are

The equality agenda is concerned with making sure people are treated fairly in employment and in the provision of services. It is illegal to discriminate because of gender, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, family status, gender orientation and the law is being extended to cover age, religious beliefs and certain forms of ill health such as cancer.

According to the 2001 Census, 3% of South Derbyshire's population is from ethnic minority communities, making it the highest in Derbyshire outside of Derby. This census also showed that 5% of the district's population are permanently sick or disabled. At present almost 5,000 people receive Council Tax Benefit.

The Challenges

For this theme group they include:

Providing more support so that communities can be involved in the delivery of services they need – the continual decline of essential services such as Post Offices, banks and rural shops is creating access problems.

Being more inclusive in everything we do – agencies working in South Derbyshire do not have a co-ordinated approach to equality issues. How we engage with disadvantaged and Hard to Reach Groups is important.

Understanding our community needs by identifying gaps in services that we provide – this is not helped at the moment by a lack of good quality information about the effect these issues have on the lives of local people and their communities.

Meeting the needs of homeless (and potentially homeless) families and individuals in the district – in 2004 the average stay in bed and breakfast accommodation was four weeks and in hostel accommodation was nine weeks.

Priorities

- Improving communication, consultation and involvement with local people to provide better services
- Improving social exclusion by providing fair and equal access to all services for everybody

What will Change by 2010?

Some of the things you might see as a result of this group's work include:

- Social activities that celebrate the variation in South Derbyshire's communities.
- Improvements to the lines of communication.
- Information kiosks being provided at different locations in the district.
- The organisation of events to provide communities with information and ask them their opinions.
- A newsletter telling you about the work of the Local Strategic Partnership.
- Greater availability of community facilities

- More help with public transport.
- Reductions in the length of time in hostel accommodation.

As a result, we will create fairer, more inclusive communities.

Safe Communities

The aim of the Community Strategy is to make
“A safer South Derbyshire in which to live, work and visit.”

Where We Are

South Derbyshire is a low crime area and crime is still falling. This is recognised as being a result of the Safer South Derbyshire Partnership members working together. They

concentrate on six priorities – house burglary, car crime, violent crime, anti social behaviour, substance misuse and the fear of crime.

In a recent survey of South Derbyshire residents a low level of crime was ranked as the most important factor in making the area a good place to live.

The Challenges

For this theme group they include:

Preventing substance misuse – evidence shows that drugs and alcohol fuel anti-social behaviour and can also have an effect on other crime such as burglary and theft. People dependent on drugs and/or alcohol need support, as do their families.

Making our roads even safer – on average there are 300 accidents a year on South Derbyshire's roads and 62% of the district's residents believe speed is a key factor in causing accidents.

Dealing with anti-social behaviour at the local level – this is important in affecting how people feel about their area. In 2004 some 290 vehicles were abandoned, 1300 complaints of noise were made and criminal damage accounted for nearly a quarter (22%) of all recorded crime. These kinds of things contribute to making the area feel worse than it really is.

Supporting communities at risk of flooding – many of South Derbyshire's settlements have grown up on the floodplains of major rivers including the Trent and Dove.

Priorities

- Tackling the causes and the effects of anti-social behaviour through partnership working and involving communities.
- Reducing the fear of crime.

What will Change by 2010?

Some of the things you might see as a result of this group's work include:

- More facilities and activities to engage young people and keep them from getting involved in anti social behaviour.
- An increased number of Neighbourhood Watch groups.
- Neighbourhood wardens on our streets to respond quickly to incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- Promotion campaigns to help people understand and deal with fear of crime
- More advice and support services for drug/alcohol abusers and their families.
- Improved road safety and a reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads
- A reduction in, and the minimisation of, the risk of flooding.

As a result, we will make South Derbyshire an even safer place to live, work and visit.

Healthy Communities

The aim of the Community Strategy is to deliver “Healthier and supportive communities.”

Where We Are

There is some evidence that parts of the district have lower life expectancy than other areas and the incidence of coronary heart disease in men is above average. The District’s relatively high number of teenage pregnancies is beginning to decline but this reduction needs to be sustained.

Over the next five years planned new housing developments will increase pressure on local health services.

In a recent survey of South Derbyshire residents health services were ranked as the second most important factor in making the area a good place to live.

The Challenges

For this theme group they include:

Providing accurate and easy to find information on health and health services – the Government is encouraging people to take responsibility for their own health but at the moment in South Derbyshire there is a lack of information about services like stopping smoking and weight loss that could help.

Making sure there is support for vulnerable people when and where it is needed – it has been recognised that there is a shortage of support for vulnerable parents and families.

Making sure homes are weather tight and have modern facilities – it is recognised that environmental factors such as housing affect health and present estimates suggest that over 2,000 homes in the district do not meet these basic standards.

Providing good quality services available to everyone – planned new housing developments for South Derbyshire will add to pressure on services available.

Priorities

- Better access and opportunities for everyone to improve their health and well being
- Better support to vulnerable people and families to improve their health and well being'

What will Change by 2010?

Some of the things you might see as a result of this group's work include:

- Better information about health and health services available locally.
- Improved housing conditions across the district
- Better support for individuals and families to prevent people having to go into hospital.
- Better support for vulnerable groups such as children at risk and victims of domestic abuse.
- An increase in drugs and alcohol abuse services
- Improved information and support regarding sexual health and associated services
- More smoke-free environments in public and private places.
- Improved information and more opportunities for people to pursue healthier lifestyles.

As a result, we will create healthier and supportive communities in South Derbyshire.

A Vibrant Economy

The aim of the Community Strategy is to deliver

“Better jobs and prospects for local people and businesses.”

Where We Are

There are over 2,000 businesses in South Derbyshire with three quarters having between one and five employees and ten having more than 250. There are about 50,000 people of working age and as businesses in the area employ half this number a high percentage of the population travel out of the district to work.

Unemployment is lower than the regional and national levels, standing at 1.3%.

The Challenges

For this theme group they include:

Expanding the number and types of jobs available in South Derbyshire – the existing businesses are involved in agriculture, construction, public administration and health, car assembly and repairs, retail, catering/hospitality and architecture and engineering.

Promoting the area as a tourist destination – a study carried out in 2002 showed that 1.8 million visitors are attracted to the district each year, spending around £61m and employing 1800 people.

Making the most of the job opportunities offered by The National Forest – already it has created employment, especially at new visitor attractions.

Making sure the workforce has the skills to meet the opportunities provided by developing businesses.

Doing more to revitalise the physical environment and to attract and encourage new investment in the area.

Priorities

- Understanding and developing the local business community.
- Encouraging inward investment and doing business in South Derbyshire

What will Change by 2010?

Some of the things you might see as a result of this group's work include:

- The setting up of working groups and networks relating to particular business types.
- Creation of a support package involving a range of organisations, for growing businesses and those coming into the area.
- More research into what skills businesses need now and may need in the future.
- More promotion of South Derbyshire as a visitor destination and as a district that has plenty to offer companies considering coming into the area.
- More people employed in forest-related businesses.

As a result, we will create better jobs and prospects for the people and businesses of South Derbyshire.

A Sustainable Environment

The aim of the Community Strategy is to deliver

“A cleaner, greener and high quality environment.”

Where We Are

Sustainable development is about achieving a better quality of life for everyone now and for generations to come. It's important, therefore, to protect our environment and to use our natural resources wisely.

South Derbyshire has a mixture of urban and rural areas, established settlements and new developments, attractive landscapes and areas in need of regeneration. There are 22 Conservation Areas and 6 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designated within the District.

Official records show that air and water quality in the district are good. Since 1991, 7,800 new homes have been built. Of the 600 that were finished in 2003/4, 68% were on sites that had previously been developed.

The Challenges

For this theme group they include:

Pursuing a greater range of transport options – several trunk roads pass through South Derbyshire and car ownership rates are higher than is the case nationally.

Providing more affordable homes in rural areas.

Recognising the importance of the environment to economic and social well being – in a recent survey South Derbyshire residents put road and pavement repairs, clean streets, low levels of traffic congestion, public transport and affordable decent housing in their list of the top ten most important things that needed improving.

Doing more to reduce, recycle and reuse waste - in 2004 residents threw out 37,800 tonnes of household rubbish of which around 21% was recycled or used to make compost.

Priorities

- Improving our environment by working together.
- Reducing waste and improving our public spaces.

What will Change by 2010?

Some of the things you might see as a result of this group's work include:

- An increase in the number of ways you can reduce the amount you put in the bin.
- Improvements to cycle and walking routes in South Derbyshire.
- Action to cut litter and fly tipping and the removal of graffiti.
- The inclusion of green spaces when new developments are planned.
- The setting up of an Environmental Forum for South Derbyshire.
- Action on Affordable Homes

As a result, we will provide South Derbyshire with a cleaner, greener and high quality environment.

Lifelong Learning and Culture

The aim of the Community Strategy is to deliver

“More opportunities for local people to take part in learning and cultural activities.”

Where We Are

The Derbyshire Single Education Plan is working to improve the level of qualifications gained and increase the number of people taking part in training in South Derbyshire.

South Derbyshire Sport has been set up as a forum for voluntary sports clubs and groups and a few meetings of the South Derbyshire Cultural Forum involving arts groups have been held.

South Derbyshire residents put “activities for teenagers” third in their list of the ten most important things that needed improving in the district. Many of the district’s recreation and leisure facilities such as play equipment and leisure centres need money spending on them.

The Challenges

For this theme group they include:

A more co-ordinated approach to lifelong learning throughout the District.

Improving educational attainment across all age groups.

Increasing and improving the facilities available for sports, arts, culture and play – surveys have suggested that residents are more likely to take part in activities close to where they live.

Improving the district’s network of footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways – visiting the countryside and heritage sites are important activities for local people

Getting more people to take part in learning, particularly groups that at the moment are not getting involved – surveys have indicated that educational activities for older people are a priority for residents.

Priorities

- Improved access and choices for learning and skills development
- Increasing the number and range of leisure, arts and heritage opportunities

What will Change by 2010

Some of the things you might see as a result of this group’s work include:

- Training of childcare workers to enable more to be provided for people taking part in training.
- The promotion of adult learning programmes to older people.
- Employers providing courses to develop the basic skills of their staff.
- Development of major cultural (sport, arts, tourism, countryside) projects.
- Use of existing buildings to deliver more educational and training sessions.

As a result, there will be more opportunities for local people to take part in learning and cultural activities.