

<b>Partnership Name: Teesdale Partnership</b>	
<b>Lead Member: Cllr M Walton</b>	<b>Lead Officer: Neil Stokell/Rachel Bowles</b>
<b>Corporate Plan Priority: All</b>	
<b>Dates covered by the report: up to June 2008</b>	
<p><b>Progress Report</b></p> <p><b>REVIEW OF YEAR 2007 – 8</b></p>	
<p>The past year has been a one of intense activity around the new Sustainable Community Strategy as well as changes in personnel at the centre of this. At the same time, the Partnership has also been involved in some quite significant projects that will have an impact on the lives of people in Teesdale.</p>	
<p>The changes in personnel saw the departure of our Chair Liz Esnouf to be replaced by Simon Owens. Simon is a member of the Teesdale Community Network and brings with him a change of perspective to the Partnership. Also, Angela Harris (LSP Manager) and Pauline Forsyth (Administrator) left during the year to be replaced by Colin Carter and Maggie Wilson respectively.</p>	
<p><b>Sustainable Community Strategy</b></p> <p>This year has seen a total rewrite of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). This process enabled a better fit with the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) as the spatial element of the SCS, the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) and also to set out priorities for Teesdale leading into Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). We engaged a set of consultants and worked with our thematic group leads to come up with an evidenced set of objectives that were put out for public consultation. This initial round of consultations took place over the summer period and consisted of four events – Barnard Castle (mid-week market day), Middleton in Teesdale (afternoon), Evenwood (evening) and Barnard Castle</p>	

(Saturday). At each of these events a focus group was conducted in an attempt to explore issues more deeply. Following on from this we produced several drafts before reaching the final draft late last year. A sustainability appraisal was undertaken by Teesdale District Council to ensure the 'sustainability' of the SCS. Following a final round of consultation, we have tonight launched Teesdale Partnerships SCS.

### **Local Area Agreement**

We have been involved in the process of producing the new Local Area Agreement for 2008-11 (LAA) in County Durham. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill made Local Area Agreements a statutory requirement with the responsibility falling on the County Council to prepare. Whilst the LAA only intends to capture the key issues of immediate concern across the county that can be tackled in the prescribed timescale, nevertheless we wished to attempt to attach some of our more pressing issues into this programme. An intensive programme of workshops on this commenced in July of last year that has continued since then, with plenty of work in between the workshops to prepare for the next stage. The third draft of this document was submitted to GO-NE at the end of March and the emerging priorities are being negotiated with them in order to sign off the document in June 2008. An outcomes framework was developed to aid the process that started with the vision, considered strategic outcomes underpinned by contributory outcomes. A set of indicators – derived from the national indicator set and aligned with the national indicator set – will help to assess how the LAA is performing. Detailed delivery plans will be developed by the partnership over the coming months.

### **Barnard Castle Vision**

The Barnard Castle Vision (BCV) started to gather pace after the initial work the previous year with the recruitment of an independent chair and programme staff to drive it forward. Whilst the Teesdale Partnership has not been at the forefront of this project we have nevertheless been involved in the deliberations of its board to ensure that the priorities that we have determined are reflected within the work of the BCV. Much work has been done since the launch of the Barnard Castle Vision to begin some of the practical work relating to delivering the Vision, the Economic Strategy and the projects outlined in the Retail Distinctiveness Study. While the Vision and the Retail Distinctiveness Study clearly highlight Barnard Castle

as the focus for strategic investment, the Economic Strategy covers the whole of Teesdale; all three projects need to be viewed as parts of one larger development programme.

### **NEXT STEPS/CHALLENGES**

**Implementation Phase 2 (October 2008 – March 2011)** – The Business Case for future funding has been approved by the Durham Economic Partnership and One North East. The content of the Business Case and the projects to be delivered look to address the recommendations of the Phase 1 Site Appraisals, Streetscape, Transport & Access and Broadband studies as well as including an element of project support.

It is planned that capital work will begin in 2009 on at least one of the proposed development sites, likely to be The Witham Hall.

The Business Case gives a project total of £2,767,700 and the Single Programme grant of £2,210,500 has been confirmed. There is a current preliminary expenditure grant to cover delivery support, feasibility studies and the Shaw Bank masterplan of £206,900.

The major challenges/issues facing the Vision over the next couple of years are all very much inter linked and include; LGR and its uncertainties, the need to confirm the current delivery model and the need to secure funding from sources other than Single Programme. Delivery of the Broadband work, a pivotal project for the Vision, is awaiting resolution of state aid queries at ONE.

The Vision partnership is an informal partnership and therefore Teesdale District Council has historically acted as accountable body for the project and will continue to do so for Phase 2; however with LGR imminent and some funders unable to fund Local Authorities directly the future delivery mechanisms have been high on the board's agenda. A Community Interest Company has been set up for appropriate projects.

### **Funding**

We had some involvement in the West Durham Rural Pathfinder that was aimed at helping us to learn new ways or try different methods of engaging with the public. To this end they part-funded the work that was done over the summer months both with the general public at the consultation events and also the thematic leads to enable the Sustainable Community Strategy process to get under way. We were also part of the 'Quiet Voices, Big Noise' project along with Durham Rural Community Council (DRCC) and 2D that was looking at ways of community involvement through the Parish planning process. The Parish planning process produced some additional parish plans – Gainford & Langton, Egglestone Abbey & Brignall and Staindrop. These Parish plans set out to give their communities a voice as well as to provide written evidence as to what they both needed and also aspired to for their parishes and villages. This information should also be helpful in contributing to the refreshes of the Sustainable Community Strategy in future. However, the community engagement aspect of it

was not so successful in delivering additional community voices to the LSP as had originally been hoped for but did provide some food for thought as to what we wanted from our community engagement as well as how we might achieve this. It would appear that people can and will be motivated towards participating in a process that is aimed at producing something tangible that benefits their immediate living/working environment. However, strategic bodies such as the Teesdale Partnership tend to find it much harder to recruit and retain people to participate in their business – possibly owing to the nature of the more intangible products that it generates. The learning gained from these projects will be useful in future to develop further ways of engaging with the public in our future work.

Following a successful Expression of Interest for New Leader funding, as part of the new Rural Development Programme for England programme, the partnership of Teesdale & Wear Valley LSPs, in conjunction with North Pennines AONB succeeded in securing a 5 year funding package for rural communities, to be delivered through a 'grass roots' community development approach. Investments are made by newly formed local LEADER action groups (LAGs) in the designated areas – broad-based groups made up of the public sector, local businesses, land managers, local voluntary groups, and local residents. LAGs have already produced Local Development Strategies and will work in partnership to develop rural areas.

Earlier this year a meeting was held to explore the prospect of Teesdale accessing part of the £350,000 which is available from Single Programme to assist economic inclusion activity. This amount is per year, over three years. The criteria for accessing the fund is that the money must be aimed at projects that fit the Regional Employment Framework which is mainly aimed at getting people on benefits back into the workplace. The monies are available to Teesdale, Wear Valley and Sedgefield Districts and must be matched with input from other funding. Wear Valley and Sedgefield will be accessing over £14 million of Working Neighbourhood Funding (WNF) during the next three years. Wear Valley and Sedgefield said that they were not averse to providing the match from WNF for the Single Programme funding, therefore removing the need for Teesdale to find 'match' from its own resources. The Project Implementation Plan was written and forwarded to the County Durham Economic Partnership. The Plan was also considered by the Learning and Skills Working Group on 13 March. Sedgefield Borough Council has agreed to act as lead organisation / accountable

body.

### **Thematic groups**

All of the groups have spent the past year working on their parts of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This means that they have focused mainly on development and not on delivery. The newer groups such as the Leisure & Culture group and the Local Children's Board have recently formed so are not in a position to have achieved much in this period.

The Environment group held a very successful event around the topic of Climate Change at Bishop Auckland town Hall. The Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership has funded a number of initiatives in response to local requests including target hardening vulnerable properties, diversionary activities for young people, purchasing dog fouling bins and paying for the removal of graffiti in Barnard Castle.

