



# **Total Place in economic development & regeneration**

**February 2010**

**The Chief Economic Development Officers Society [CEDOS]** provides a forum for Heads of Economic Development in upper tier local authorities throughout England. Membership includes county, city and unitary Councils in non-metropolitan areas. The Society carries out research, develops and disseminates best practice, and publishes reports on key issues for economic development policy and practice. Through its collective expertise, it seeks to play its full part in helping to inform and shape national and regional policies and initiatives.

**The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport [ADEPT]** represents local authority Strategic Directors who manage some of the most pressing issues facing the UK today. The expertise of ADEPT members and their vision is fundamental in the handling of issues that affect all our lives. Operating at the strategic tier of local government they are responsible for crucial transport, waste management, environment, planning, energy and economic development issues. ADEPT membership is drawn from all four corners of the United Kingdom.

## **Introduction**

1. CEDOS and ADEPT welcome the Government's *Total Place* initiative and the intentions and principles set out in the recent report *Putting the Frontline First*. We strongly support the references in *Putting the Frontline First* to:

- letting local areas have more control over setting priorities and guiding resources;
- reducing burdens on the frontline with particular reference to reporting, inspection and assessment;
- reducing duplication and overlaps;
- more devolution of resources to local authorities and local delivery organisations;
- reducing the number of different funding streams;
- rationalising and reforming arm's-length bodies [ALBs]<sup>1</sup> to create a simpler, cheaper delivery structures, and improve the services ALBs are responsible for delivering.

2. We are pleased to have been invited to provide input to help inform the report to be issued alongside Budget 2010. This paper aims to do this not only by identifying some examples of *Total Place* approaches to economic development being planned and pursued but also of barriers that are impacting adversely on its effective delivery at local and sub-regional level.

3. So far, we have only been able to gather some of the evidence that may be available. Moreover, the examples of a *Total Place* approach to economic development are inevitably at an early stage. Thus, we see this paper as the start of a process of CEDOS and ADEPT in gathering evidence, putting forward ideas and spreading best practice and we look forward to working closely with the Government, the Local Government Association and others in the months ahead.

## **Potential for Total Place in economic development and regeneration**

4. A number of our member authorities are amongst the thirteen pilots announced in the 2009 Budget report. The themes chosen by the pilots cover in particular, areas such as children/young people's health and well-being, crime and reducing offending, health and social care, access to services, alcohol and drug abuse, and housing. Clearly, there are opportunities for a *Total Place* approach in other areas of activity and we believe there is considerable potential in economic development and regeneration.

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<sup>1</sup> As regards what the term ALB covers, we note that in answer to a Parliamentary question on 28 January, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury said the 752 bodies referred to in *Putting the Frontline First* include all bodies named in the Cabinet Office publication *Public Bodies 2008*. The Regional Development Agencies are listed in this publication and are presumably covered by the rationalising and reforming statement in *Putting the Frontline First*.

5. Economic development covers a broad and often complex field of activity, with national, regional, sub-regional and local layers and a large number of organisations and funding streams involved in its delivery. We believe there is scope for reducing duplication and overlaps and simplifying funding streams. Our research and that of the Local Government Association has shown that below the national level, the sub-region is the key economic layer and in this context, elected local authorities have a key role to play in place shaping and leading the partnerships necessary to deliver sustainable economic recovery in an efficient and value for money way. Progress is being made through Local Area Partnerships and Local and Multi-Area Agreements but more needs to be done to remove barriers, give local areas more control over setting priorities and guiding resources, and devolving resources to local authorities and local delivery vehicles.

### **Examples of *Total Place* approaches**

6. In this initial paper, we provide examples from Cornwall, Essex, Oxfordshire, Shropshire and Suffolk with others in the pipeline. We must emphasise that these are 'early stage' examples and over time we would hope to build these into full case studies.

### **Cornwall - Developing a *Total Place/Total Capital* approach**

7. *Local prioritisation and rationalising funding* - Cornwall Council is leading the development of the Local Investment Plan in Cornwall through the 'single conversation'. The Council is leading work to better integrate a coherent investment package across a number of different funding streams, including HCA funds (NAHP), Local Transport Funding, Council investment, the European Convergence Programme, RDA funding and, where applicable, private investment. As part of this process, the Council is working with local partners to undertake a robust prioritisation exercise. This is integrated with a Sustainable Community Strategy refresh as well as identifying transformational investments for the long-term future of the Cornish economy (such as the EcoTown within Cornwall). This work is aligned with the Comprehensive Area Assessment for Cornwall – in particular linking to areas identified for improvement. Under the auspices of the Local Strategic Partnership, a robust delivery structure is also being developed – particularly linking to the ability to commission activity through an improved arms length delivery approach.

8. *Reducing duplication/rationalising ALBs* - Cornwall Council is working with local partners to bring together its Urban Regeneration Company (CPRRegeneration) and Cornwall Development Company (the arms length economic development delivery body of the Council) into one company. A process has been agreed and is now being taken forward. This will result in improved delivery through a sharing of resource both financial and personnel as well as more obvious cost benefits. It will also result in a clearer means of communication for delivering economic development in Cornwall – particularly with the private sector.

## **Shropshire – Transforming services**

9. The new Shropshire Council is committed to reviewing and transforming services to make them more efficient and responsive to local communities. It recognises it cannot do this in isolation and is embracing a *Total Place* approach.

10. An example is leisure services, where the disparity between both the level and quality of service and the variety of service providers has been highlighted. The review aims to increase participation in physical activity to improve health and well-being. Traditionally this would have focused on how Shropshire Council does things but the scope of the review is deliberately broader. In line with the *Total Place* initiative, it involves working with a broad range of partners and other service providers to develop solutions against agreed outcomes.

## **Market Town Revitalisation**

11. Over a third of the county's population lives in market towns compared to a fifth of the population nationally. As well as Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Whitchurch, Bridgnorth and Ludlow, there is a network of smaller market towns and settlements, which are key service centres. Shropshire's market towns are key to a sustainable economic future and way of life for the county.

12. Market town regeneration is identified as a high priority by the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan. Whilst there has been significant past investment in some of the towns, the continuing impact of the recession has highlighted an urgent need for a revitalisation programme.

13. This provides Shropshire Council and its partners with the opportunity to review more holistically support to, and service delivery in, market towns and the Council has agreed to adopt a *Total Place* approach. It recognises that market town revitalisation will need to address a broad spectrum of issues, involving numerous council services, partner organisations and stakeholders. It sees it as an opportunity for a major transformation of service delivery, policy development and community empowerment.

14. Within the Council, it will explore the potential for a geographical approach to the management of activity across the range of service functions and policy responsibilities of the Council. This would deliberately but carefully challenge existing hierarchical structures, empowering local decision-making and flexibility. To be effective it would require integration of activity across all Shropshire Council directorates – both at the strategic level, and for teams based within the towns. It is an opportunity to challenge and break down organisational silos and to respond to the overall needs and circumstances of each individual town.

## **Essex – NEETS**

15. Working with young people who are classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) is a high priority of the Government and of Essex County Council. Within the county, Tendring District has the highest percentage of young people classified as NEET. At the end of November 2009, 13.8% of young people aged 16-18 were recorded as NEET (514 young people) as compared to 12.4% (496 young people) in November 2008.

16. Over the last few years a significant amount of funding, resources and time has been invested into reducing and preventing young people in Tendring from becoming NEET. While this investment has impacted positively on many young people, it has not translated into an overall reduction in the number of NEETs. In response to this, partners working in Tendring and across the county agreed to carry out a *Total Place* project to examine the reasons for this problem. The aims of the project are to:

- improve outcomes in terms of numbers of 16 -19 year olds in employment, training or education in Tendring and Essex;
- deepen and strengthen the relationships between partners;
- encourage local leaders to develop the commitment, understanding and skills needed to work outside the boundaries of their own organisations;
- identify options and priorities to redesign local service delivery;
- replicate a successful project methodology across the county;
- realise cash savings to one or more partners in the short, medium, and long term.

17. As a first step, interviews have been carried out with key stakeholders working in the district to gather evidence that can be used to identify potential reasons and develop hypotheses for the high level of young people who are NEET in Tendring and to suggest options for service redesign. The project will be developed further by:

- mapping total activity by partners, which supports young people who are NEET, including information about resources, volumes, performance, and relationships;
- testing the hypotheses drawn out from the interviews against: available data, research, best practice from around the country, and an extensive series of interviews with young people.

18. The evidence-gathering phase will be followed by analysis and service redesign with individual partners being asked to implement the transformation proposals.

## **Oxfordshire – Deprivation, regeneration and NEETS**

19. Oxfordshire County Council has been pursuing *Total Place* type approaches for some time, for example:

- social care/NHS pooling of resources for adult and disability services to maximise the benefits for customers and avoid inter-agency cost

shunting. This is amongst the most substantial pooled funding in England;

- joint strategy for waste management, which has yielded substantial savings and improved performance in terms of recycling and waste minimisation.

20. In terms of economic development and regeneration:

- *Reducing NEETs* - The Council would like to use the methodology to focus on reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training. There has been significant growth in this group over the past year as in many other areas. Initial work suggests that there is a lot of activity across partners but that it is not well aligned or joined up. Through the Oxfordshire Learning and Skills Partnership, they are hoping to undertake an 'audit' of current spend and activity in spring 2010, followed by identification of gaps and duplication and subsequently for all partners to align future work in accordance with a new overarching strategy. A significant barrier to undertaking this work is the current lack of available resource to support this project (project management and external facilitation/challenge). Because this is such a cross cutting issue (as is skills more generally) there is no single organisation that 'owns' the whole issue, therefore capacity to deliver the project is a problem.
- *Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation initiatives in Oxford/Banbury* – Here the aim is for multi-agency work to ensure that there is a joined up approach to early intervention in targeted areas where deprivation is most significant and deep rooted.
- *Closer to Communities work*, which focuses on Oxford City and 5 market towns. The aim is to work with the local communities to join up responses to development pressures and regeneration needs.

### **Suffolk – Applying *Total Place* principles to tackle worklessness**

21. Although unemployment in the county is lower than the average for the East of England, the County Council is aware of nearly 5,000 redundancies since October 2008. Moreover, Suffolk has a relatively high proportion of NEETs compared to the overall unemployment rate, whilst Jobcentre Plus [JCP] is keen to reduce the incapacity claimant rate in the county.

22. JCP, Suffolk County Council and the Princes Trust are developing a joint approach to tackling and reducing worklessness in Suffolk, by:

- identifying through their collective evidence base the most susceptible and intractable groups (NEETs, incapacity benefit, those in danger of redundancy, older people etc) and where they are located;

- focusing on prevention and identifying the most successful interventions to deal with the specific needs of these groups and help them into employment/self-employment.

23. Key activities include:

- developing a consistent set of data for all groups to track progress and measure success more effectively, e.g. better tracking of progress of young people who become NEETs through the school support system and JCP records. Currently data is collected in different ways once young people leave school and then reach age 18. The aim is to make data collection consistent across agencies;
- improving access to information, advice and training for those who are unemployed or are in danger of losing their jobs, primarily through use of the Council's LEAP (Learning and Enterprise Access Points) centres located in market towns and villages across Suffolk. At least four of the 27 centres are being used by JCP to deliver group sessions to Job Seekers Allowance customers. The possibility of JCP advisers operating out of all the centres is being explored;
- developing a programme with the Princes Trust to provide training to disadvantaged young people to set up their own business, supported by Business Link, University Campus Suffolk and enterprise agencies;
- evaluating current interventions to identify those, which are most effective and redeploying funding where appropriate.

24. Anticipated efficiencies/savings will include:

- evidence base: reduce duplication of systems; join up will enable easier and quicker identification of target groups;
- LEAPs: one-stop shops will reduce costs of premises and enable quicker and more comprehensive access for client groups;
- reduction in the number of claimants;
- rationalisation of public funding.

**Developing further examples/case studies**

25. We anticipate being able to add further case studies in due course, for example:

- Tees Valley is aiming to use a *Total Place* approach to developing its economic development and regeneration investment plans (including housing);
- The City of Derby is setting out to deliver efficiencies through co-location of services and rationalisation of property, which it sees as

a means of creating capital receipts and revenue savings that can help sustain a regeneration fund for the city;

- Cambridgeshire, where *Making Cambridgeshire Count* is a new initiative designed to transform partnership working and public services across the county. Economic development is included within the *Sharing Services* theme but discussions and proposals have not yet developed sufficiently to identify specific economic development or regeneration initiatives.

## **Barriers & burdens**

26. In our discussion and submissions, for example in relation to the Sub National Review of economic development and regeneration, the Lifting the Burdens Taskforce review of economic development and regeneration and Sir Michael Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, we have consistently reported on the barriers and burdens that are impeding progress in the effective delivery of economic development at local and sub-regional level, many of which are highlighted in *Putting the Frontline First* – including:

- too much filtering of funding through too many layers of bureaucracy that inhibits 'local solutions for local problems' and runs counter to the principles of localism and Local Area Agreements;
- too many staff resources taken up by time consuming and uncertain competitive and other bidding processes;
- the need to bring together a cocktail of funding from different agencies and programmes to achieve major regeneration schemes and having to 'jump through too many different hoops' to gain access to the different funding streams with different application processes, criteria and performance monitoring arrangements;
- too often, RDA and other externally funded programmes are output driven to match the funder's own targets at the expense of local/sub-regional outcomes that could be more worthwhile;
- decision-making on many strategic issues is too remote and may not take into account the special circumstances that apply in local areas;
- too much emphasis on meeting national priorities and targets in Local Area Agreements and not enough progress on securing real freedoms and flexibilities;
- the 'short-termism' of many Government and regional funding programmes with no real recognition that major regeneration programmes take a long time to take effect and deliver the desired outcomes - one of the dangers of a short-term focus is

disproportionate attention being given to quick wins/easy outputs, which can weaken the overall approach in the long term.

27. Two recent examples from Cornwall and Cumbria are given below.

28. **Cornwall Council** has identified two specific examples:

- 1) The difficulties associated with working in a pragmatic way with statutory regional agencies such as the Highways Agency and English Heritage. We have some specific and recent examples within Cornwall where a lack of active early engagement from these bodies has resulted in lengthy and costly delays to significant projects. We would like to see much earlier and open engagement from such bodies – and for their approach to be one of working in partnership rather than as an ‘enforcer’ of policy.
- 2) Our experience of the EcoTowns has again brought into sharp focus the lack of ‘joined-up’ thinking between Whitehall departments. Whilst the EcoTown initiative embodies the *Total place* approach, we have not felt the same ‘totality’ across Government.

29. **Cumbria County Council and its partners** have followed up the *Calling Cumbria* initiative<sup>2</sup> with a *Deep Dive* into worklessness, which examined service delivery from the point of view of the unemployed. The broad conclusions are well summed up in the bullet points in paragraph 1 above. The over-riding consensus which came out of the *Deep Dive* discussions was the need for local delivery partners to be able to respond to the distinct and specific needs of the client group and offer a personalised individual service based on a detailed understanding of the local community and the existing network of support agencies. This seems to be at variance with the approach increasingly being adopted by Government in awarding a limited number of national contracts to companies, which then deliver a standardised service across the region.

30. A related concern was the current emphasis on short term and constantly changing funding initiatives to tackle what are seen to be long-term, sometimes multi-generational issues of unemployment. The solution lies in sustained, intensive long-term interventions often based around the whole family but it is recognised that this appears expensive. The need to try and improve the coordination of the players and support schemes and reduce the complexities of the assistance, as identified in *Putting the Frontline First* was also raised.

### **Next steps**

31. We look forward to working closely with HM Treasury on *Total Place*. We are currently undertaking a joint project on future delivery models for economic development and regeneration and as part of this, we will continue to gather information covering examples of *Total Place*

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<sup>2</sup> For information on Counting/Calling Cumbria see [http://www.cumbriastrategicpartnership.org.uk/key\\_documents/CallingCumbria.asp](http://www.cumbriastrategicpartnership.org.uk/key_documents/CallingCumbria.asp).

approaches being planned and implemented and barriers and burdens that are impeding the efficient and effective delivery of economic development at sub national level.