

CROSS-BOUNDARY PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Further information from the Chief Economic Development Officers Society [CEDOS]

1. Working to make the local economy more successful is one of the key components of local government's 'place-shaping' role identified in Sir Michael Lyons interim report. So too is working with other bodies to respond to complex challenges. This underscores the importance of partnership working to local and sub-regional economic development. Because of the variety and complexity of local economic circumstances, joint working and partnership arrangements need to take place at a range of spatial levels, which can often overlap the boundaries of individual authorities.

2. It is important that Central Government avoids the temptation to be prescriptive and impose a one-size-fits-all approach to defining the appropriate spatial level for partnership working. This is best decided at a local level. The appropriate spatial levels will and should vary according to differing local and sub-regional circumstances. What *is* important is to focus on the characteristics that make for successful partnerships and the relationships and behaviours that underpin them. Key characteristics are vision, trust and leadership and in this context, the importance of elected local government's lead role in convening partners is referred to in Sir Michael's interim report.

Key features of successful partnerships

3. CEDOS in association with the Improvement and Development Agency [IDeA] has carried out some important work on identifying and evaluating the characteristics of successful economic development and regeneration partnerships¹. This identifies the following as particularly important:

Action focused

- Shared values and agreed long-term vision of what it wants to achieve
- Effective use of input and feedback from local community and businesses
- Makes a positive impact, adding value and ensuring it is not working in isolation

Efficient organisation

- Structure conducive to decision-making with members reflecting the views of the organisations they represent
- Resources matched to aims, objectives and plans
- Effective administrative support and communications

Inclusive approach

- Membership reflects the purpose of the partnership
- Ensures that all partners have the capacity to be fully engaged in the partnership
- Works democratically with accountability to stakeholders and decisions open to scrutiny

¹ *A Toolkit for Evaluating Economic Development & Regeneration Partnerships*. CEDOS/IDeA August 2003. To download a copy, go to the CEDOS web site at www.cedos.org and click on publications.

Commitment to learn & develop

- Learns from best practice, stakeholders and consultations
- Makes use of the range of skills and expertise of partnership members
- Adapts to a changing environment

Effective performance management

- Process includes clear milestones, outcomes, performance indicators and delivery dates
- Partners deliver what they have signed up to and share information to support planning and management
- Partners' resources used effectively to meet the aims of the partnership

4. Looking in more detail at organisational issues, key factors are leadership, coordination and support. In this context, local authorities have a particularly crucial role to play in ensuring that partnerships that aim to shape local economies are successful. In the non-metropolitan areas of England, the strategic authorities – the County Councils and Unitary Councils have a particularly important role both within local areas, for example in 2-tier areas, and across local authority boundaries generally:

- they have a mandate to promote economic development as a key part of their community leadership in promoting economic, social and environmental well-being;
- the linkages between their economic promotion activities and their other service functions, in particular land-use planning, transportation and education, mean they can take a wide ranging, joined up approach to economic development;
- they have the scope, the resources, and the specialist skills to tackle and take forward the big agendas;
- they have the strategic and corporate capacity to provide leadership and bring together and sustain the partnerships that are the pre-requisite of achieving and delivering successful economic development;
- as big players and good joiners, they have the influence to get other key players to the table and to use their resources to lever in match funding to maximise the ability to drive forward economic growth.

5. The CEDOS input to the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration, which was also made available to the team supporting the Lyons Inquiry provided the following examples of the key role of the County and strategic Unitary Councils in developing, facilitating and leading the partnerships that are the instruments of successful economic development and regeneration:

- Norfolk County Council - managing the 'Shaping the Future' economic partnership that brings together key people from the private, public and voluntary sectors to work together and share resources.
- Leicestershire County Council - driver in the creation of economic partnerships and actively involved in strategic county partnerships, in particular the LeicesterShire Economic Partnership, with Leicester City Council.

- Kent County Council and Medway Council – lead partners in the Kent & Medway Partnership Board and the county ‘Invest in Kent’ inward investment agency.
- Suffolk County Council - actively involved in more than 70 economic and social regeneration partnerships at European, national, regional and local levels including the lead role in the Suffolk Strategic Partnership and Suffolk Development Agency.
- Wiltshire County Council - lead roles include establishing and providing the secretariat for the Wiltshire Strategic Board, Wiltshire Market Town Partnership and Wiltshire Tourism.
- Cornwall County Council - provides the leadership and secretariat for the Cornwall Local Strategic Partnership and, through Cornwall Enterprise, the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum, which is recognised by the RDA, GOSW, the private sector and Districts as *the* sub regional partnership for economic development.
- Northamptonshire County Council - lead role in developing the Sub-Regional Economic Strategy and the formation of the county Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership.
- Lancashire County Council – key partner within the Lancashire Economic Partnership, Central Lancashire City Region, North West Skills Partnership, Neighbourhood and Community Partnerships, and working in partnership with Hyndburn, Burnley and Pendle, and Blackburn with Darwen to develop a combined LEGI bid involving five Local Authorities in East Lancashire.

6. The CEDOS input also included the following case study:

GLOUCESTERSHIRE FIRST

Gloucestershire County Council was a founder partner with the District Councils in the creation of the Gloucestershire Development Agency in 1994, which in 2001 was integrated into the ‘Gloucestershire First’ partnership. The County Council as strategic local authority partner provides substantial staffing and funding resources. Gloucestershire First is the key strategic economic partnership in the county, with broad representation from the public, private and voluntary sectors. It carries out a full range of economic services. It has been designated as the sub-regional partnership for Gloucestershire by the South West England Regional Development Agency and by the Gloucestershire Local Strategic Partnership to deliver a key “thriving local economy” part of its agenda.

4. CEDOS members have provided further information to assist the Lyons Inquiry and Sub-national Review teams. The following case studies from CEDOS members illustrate further the many examples of successful joint working and partnerships throughout the country.

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE – WORKING ACROSS ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES

Stoke on Trent is the economic driver of the North Staffs conurbation and it is clear that the fortunes and future of the sub region are linked with those of the city. There is a history over the years of informal partnership working, e.g. North Staffordshire Land Reclamation Strategy, North Staffordshire Integrated Economic Development Strategy, North Staffordshire Core Spatial Strategy which is now being developed through a number of ongoing North Staffordshire-wide initiatives: North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone, Renew [North Staffordshire housing pathfinder] that cut across administrative boundaries.

As part of this ongoing process there is agreement to establish a single North Staffordshire Regeneration Board by combining those of the Regeneration Zone and Renew and to bring together their key programmes relating to the city centre and the urban core under a Single Implementation Plan, which also includes those of the City Council and other agencies (Learning and Skills Council, British Waterways, universities). To underscore the physical regeneration of North Staffs the City Council is preparing jointly with Newcastle Borough Council a £15 million bid for LEGL funding aimed at developing an enterprise culture and upskilling the workforce to enable them to take advantage of the job opportunities so created. To formalise this process and the developing partnerships the City Council, with its partners, is also putting forward proposals for the creation of a North Staffordshire city region.

CORNWALL – SUPPORTING JOINT WORKING

A key to successful partnership working is often a local authority that has the capacity to provide the necessary leadership, coordination and support. Cornwall provides an example of this. Within 2 - tier Cornwall, a number of cross boundary services are provided by Cornwall Enterprise, the County Council's economic development organisation. Partnership, secretarial and project appraisal services are provided to District Councils for a variety of different funds and partnerships, including Neighbourhood Renewal Funds and Rural Renaissance. Cornwall Enterprise also assists District Councils with project development activity such as townscape heritage initiatives, as well as providing tourism marketing services to one District Council. Services have been provided by Cornwall Enterprise to Plymouth City Council (Neighbourhood Renewal Fund) and other local authorities within the UK [evaluation and development], as well as assistance to regions in New Member States on the use of EU Structural Funds.

LANCASHIRE – CROSS-BOUNDARY COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT

Lancashire County Council provides an example of a strategic local authority collaborating and providing support across boundaries:

- The County Council is the Accountable Body for The East Lancashire Housing Market Renewal Programme, ELEVATE, which spans four Districts of Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen, and all six Local Authorities are working collaboratively within the Lancashire Economic Partnership, Lancashire Economic Strategy Action Plan, on additional NWDA funded economic development projects and programmes of £17.4m.
- It is working collaboratively with Borough Councils in Burnley, Pendle and Hyndburn, and with Blackburn with Darwen Council to develop a joint Local Enterprise Growth Initiative bid across East Lancashire.
- The Leader of the County Council chairs the Lancashire Economic Partnership Forum.
- The County Council is a key contributor to the Central Lancashire City Region Development Planning process, which includes 10 out of 12 District Councils in Lancashire and the Unitary Boroughs of Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.
- It contributes significantly to, and services key sector development partnerships for both the Creative Industries and Tourism Sectors, including the whole County Council area and the Unitary Boroughs of Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.
- The County Council acts as the Accountable Body for the North and West Lancashire Business Support Action Plan for the NW Objective 2 programme 2000-06. A County Council Cabinet member chairs the partnership that oversees the implementation of the Action Plan. County Council Officers sit on the technical groups developing the new North West European Structural Fund programme for 2007-13 [representing the sub region].
- County Council Officers act as Chair of the Lancashire European Network [all local authorities plus partners] and Policy Manager for the North West Regional Assembly issues in the Lancashire sub region.

CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

The Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance (CWEA) was formed in September 2001 as a public and private sector partnership working on a wide range of economic issues throughout the Cheshire and Warrington Sub-region. Cheshire County Council was a major player in the establishment of this partnership with great assistance from Warrington BC, Chester City Council, the NWDA and the LSC. The County Council has currently seconded two members of staff to the partnership, who are paid for by CWEA. There is a Board of directors drawn from the private and public sectors, with the County Council, Warrington BC and all the District Councils having one director each. There are also directors from the Cheshire and Warrington Tourism Board, Cheshire and Warrington Chambers of Commerce, Business Link, LSC and Chester University. Private sector directors are drawn from a range of small and large companies from a variety of sectors.

CWEA co-ordinates economic development strategy and co-ordinated the production of "Investing In Success" the Sub-regional economic strategy and £300M Action Plan for Cheshire and Warrington. The CWEA is the mechanism whereby the sub-region presents a united voice to the region in particular the NWDA and was able to shape the Regional Economic Strategy, Manchester City Regional development plan and the Liverpool City Regional development plan. The CWEA obtains the majority of its funding from the NWDA, about £0.5M a year This covers staff costs and a small capacity fund to facilitate preparatory work on major schemes. All Local Authorities pay an annual subscription with the County Council putting in the lion's share.

The delivery model employed is that CWEA has a small staff, with projects delivered through the wider partnership by the most appropriate partner e.g. e.g. Deeside Hub by Chester City Council, Warrington Crossroads by Warrington BC, Enterprise Generator by Cheshire County Council jointly with Business Link, Weaver Valley Regional Park by the County Council, Crewe Gateway by Cheshire County Council and Crewe and Nantwich BC jointly. Cheshire County Council employs the sub-regional research team [50% funded by CWEA] and Key Account Managers on behalf of the CWEA and leads on Inward Investment on behalf of the CWEA.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN DURHAM TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The County Durham Economic Partnership [CDEP] was established in 1994 and continues to bring together all relevant stakeholders within the County to work together to secure the economic well being of the County. Since it was first established its role and function has greatly increased. The Partnership is now recognized as the Sub Regional Partnership by the Regional Development Agency One NorthEast and has responsibility for devolved Single Programme funding. More recently CDEP has become one of the lead Partnerships in the County Durham Strategic Partnership. The Partnership's overall aims are set out in the County Durham Economic Strategy (2002-2007) to:

- create high quality employment;
- generate wealth within the local community;
- develop an enterprise culture;
- strengthen and diversify the local economy;
- exploit the potential of the knowledge economy.

The County Durham Area Tourism Partnership has recently been set up in order to provide a strategic lead for tourism in the County. The group is a mix of public and private sector representatives and has financial support from one North East, Durham County Council and district authorities. The formation of this group represents a good example of how the County can work both horizontally – with key partners in the County and vertically with One NorthEast.

Partnership accord with Job Centre Plus In recognition of County Durham's challenging labour market picture, Durham County Council has developed a partnership accord with Job Centre Plus aimed at increasing employment rates [especially in disadvantaged areas and among disadvantaged groups] and encouraging social inclusion through the use of innovative and flexible approaches and collaborative working at a local level. The accord, which was signed in March 2006, seeks to support the original Partnership Accord between the Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus and the Local Government Association signed in May 2003.

The West Durham Rural Pathfinder [WDRP] proposal was put forward by the County Durham Economic Partnership represented by Durham County Council, Teesdale District Council, Wear Valley District Council, Business Link and Durham Rural Community Council and accepted by DEFRA as the pathfinder for the North East. The current WDRP Steering Group has a much broad representation and in addition to the original proposers now includes the relevant Local Strategic Partnerships, Development agencies, Natural England and others. The CDEP Secretariat has taken a key role in carrying forward the WDRP and Durham County Council has agreed to act as the accountable body for the funding, which accrues to Pathfinder status. More recently, Durham County Council has taken a lead role in development of an Overview Group for the Pathfinder, comprising the key stakeholders [3 local authorities, GO-NE, One NorthEast and the CDEP] to give the WDRP stronger strategic guidance.

NORTHUMBERLAND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Northumberland has a good track record of partnership working over many years. The County only has a population of around 300,000 but has a clear identity as one of the North East's four sub regions. There is recognition that many of the individual partners do not have the scale of resources to fulfil specialist functions and administer complex funding programmes, and that joint working is vital if Northumberland is to 'punch above its weight' and have a strong influence on wider policies and resource allocation.

The County Council took the lead in establishing the Northumberland Strategic Partnership [NSP] in the late 1990s. Its main roles are to:

- encourage collaboration to secure the economic, social and environmental well being of the communities of Northumberland;
- facilitate the preparation and implementation of a countywide Community Strategy;
- act as the strategic sub-regional partnership for Northumberland in the context of the Regional Economic Strategy;
- secure and manage strategic external funding;
- influence the distribution of NSP partners' mainstream resources;
- lobby or present a common voice for Northumberland;
- improve the integration of partner strategies/plans, mainstream programmes, resources and actions;
- support the development of LSPs in the six District areas of Northumberland.

NSP is now independently constituted, with the County Council acting as accountable body. As well as playing a full role in the management of the NSP through membership of the Board, Executive and specialist groups, the County Council leads key areas of partnership working. Council officers chair the Business and Enterprise Sector Board, the Rural Group, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, and the Removing Barriers to Work Partnership. The Council's Regeneration Division also provides the secretariat for some of these joint initiatives.

One NorthEast's decision to give sub regional partnerships responsibility for administering a substantial part of the Single Programme has been welcomed in Northumberland. The NSP has proved highly effective in delivering outputs and outcomes. The independent evaluation of the SRB programmes administered by the NSP from 1999-2006 found that original output targets were achieved and, in many cases, substantially exceeded. The programmes also levered in far more public and private sector investment than was initially expected. The evaluation found many good projects - "well managed, well led and tailored to local needs and circumstances".

The County Council and the NSP have developed the concept of 'Natural Communities' as a mechanism for better joining up public services and better engaging residents in influencing local decision making. 3 'Characteristic Communities' and 25 'Belonging Communities' have been identified in consultation with local people, and work is progressing to tailor service delivery to the appropriate spatial level within the County as a key feature of the implementation of the Northumberland Local Area Agreement.

CSW: THE WINNING TECHNOLOGY

CSW: The Winning Technology is a working partnership, which brings together the local authorities of Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire in order to maximise the synergistic opportunities that the sub-region presents for potential investors looking for a premier location in the UK.

The sub-region has more than 1 million population and can offer a unique mix of established skills, R&D excellence and access to markets. Working together under the Winning Technology brand exploits these existing industry strengths and promotes emerging opportunities primarily in three key sectors – ICT, Motorsport and Medical Technologies.

The partnership also works extremely well with the private sector. When a local automotive company made 50 of their staff redundant, CSW worked closely with them to share knowledge of the sub regional motorsport cluster and details of potential employment opportunities in the sector. This joint working contributed to all employees finding alternative work within the motorsport industry.

WARWICKSHIRE INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

Warwickshire Investment Partnership [WIP] was set up in 1998 to respond to inward investment enquiries from all over the world and expansion enquiries from thriving local companies. The Partnership provides companies with all the information they need for a successful relocation / expansion. The range of services is provided free of charge and are completely confidential.

The Partnership is led by Warwickshire County Council and is a working arrangement between the Economic Development functions of WCC, the five District & Borough Councils and other government agencies. This includes agencies such as Advantage West Midlands, Job Centre Plus, CSWP Ltd and the Learning & Skills Council.

Partners work closely together to make sure that timely and relevant information is available for it's clients. Close working is particular evident between the County and District council's. Effective communication prevents duplication of effort and results in clients receiving an efficient and effective service. Partners work towards achieving a common goal.

Over the past 8 years the Partnership has handled 6309 enquiries, resulting in 425 investments and assisted in creating 6732 new jobs and helped safeguard 4433 jobs for the County.

CROSS – BOUNDARY WORKING IN THE SOUTH WEST

Protected landscapes – economic as well as environmental initiatives

Many landscape features cross administrative boundaries. For Devon, this includes the World Heritage Sites of the Jurassic Coast, Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape, Exmoor National Park and the Blackdown Hills and Tamar Valley Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Effective management of economic as well as environmental initiatives in such areas needs close co-operation between local authorities and with a range of agencies, business groups and community bodies. Since Devon has a greater proportion of protected landscape than any other county, the County Council has established strong experience in this field.

Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site or ‘Jurassic Coast’ is England’s first natural world Heritage Site. From Exmouth in East Devon to Old Harry Rocks in Purbeck, Dorset, the site covers 185 million years of Earth History; a time when dinosaurs were the dominant creatures on the land and large marine reptiles swam in the seas. The site was inscribed in December 2001 following a submission prepared by Dorset County Council and endorsed by Devon County Council; The Management Plan sets out the policies and the arrangements for co-ordinating the effort of all the different interests who have responsibilities for the site. It aims to secure positive benefits for the community and economy from the visitor and educational potential that the Site offers. Work to implement the plan is jointly funded by Devon and Dorset County Councils. Through the efforts of the partnership, the Jurassic Coast is becoming a well-established brand and the two County Councils, with public and community partners are currently pursuing an agenda to establish four major gateway visitor centres along the coast – just one element of the Framework for Action, which forms the detailed implementation plan for the Site.

Following in the footsteps of the Jurassic Coast, the **Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape** became a World Heritage Site in July 2006, in recognition of its cultural importance on a global scale. The designation affords further opportunities for two-county co-operation, economic benefit and regeneration.

The **Blackdown Hills AONB** covers 6 local authorities and is the only LEADER+ scheme in the country to coincide with an AONB. This has given particular opportunities to integrate the Sustainable Development Fund with the promotion of local products in order to support the local economy. This provides an attractive model for future EU funding combined with grass roots engagement.

CROSS – BOUNDARY WORKING IN THE SOUTH WEST

Business support and marketing

Financial support for businesses

Economies of scale in business support are being achieved across Devon and Cornwall and the rest of the South West region through initiatives such as the **South West Investment Group**. For 10 years, SWIG has been the main organisation delivering gap funding to businesses in the far south west, with support from the County Councils. The focus is on providing risk capital to businesses through loans of up to £100k, a comprehensive business support programme, money advice and brokerage services and greater targeting of social enterprises. It has established a reputation for a solid financial basis and track record of sound delivery. This is now leveraging in further growth and expansion to cover a wider geographical area.

Overseas marketing

Devon and Cornwall Overseas Marketing (DACOM) is now 13 years old and represents the joint overseas marketing initiative on behalf of the counties of Devon and Cornwall. The project has benefited from European Regional Development Funding and is now being sustained by the core partners.

The most recently completed phase of DACOM which ended 30th September 2006 exceeded its targets, which included generating £2.4m in new sales and safeguarding £10.4m of sales; in terms of profile, press coverage valued at over 15m Euros was achieved in overseas media.

The sharing of both human, financial and asset resources across the two counties has worked exceptionally well providing an excellent foundation from which to foster further long-term cross-border working at both strategic and operational level.

MERSEY DEE ALLIANCE

Background

In 1998 Council Members from Chester, Cheshire, Ellesmere Port and Wirral saw the *necessity* to promote and coordinate closer working in important key areas of economic development and regeneration. They wanted to work together, effectively, not duplicate or leave any gaps. And so the alliance was born. It was called 'The Strategic Alliance' then, and its name was changed to The Mersey Dee Alliance [MDA] four years ago to indicate more closely the geography covered by the organisation.

Soon after its inception, membership was extended to a wide range of other organisations to broaden views, consultation and expertise. The membership now includes, among others, representation from regional government, the voluntary sector, churches, skills and training organisations, business advisory organisations, health authorities and the private sector.

In 2002 partners from the MDA successfully bid for funding from the North West Development Agency. BESS, (the Business Enterprise Support Scheme) was created in September of that year and awarded funds of £980,000 from the NWDA; this gave the Mersey Dee Alliance real punch. It allowed it to deliver highly effective projects on the ground, in vital areas that it wanted to address, with programmes delivered across the Cheshire/Merseyside boundary in skills, training, regeneration and transport.

Achievements

All the BESS projects are performing well and targets are being met and exceeded to the approval of the NWDA external auditors. Areas of particular success include high volume up-skilling in areas of severe deprivation in Ellesmere Port, Chester and Wirral. The 'Workwise' transport initiative has received national recognition in its access to work projects, which extend from the north Wirral peninsular down to Deeside. Strategically, the MDA is fast becoming *the* leading organisation in pioneering vital cross-border. The programme's activity now covers joint working with the North Wales Local Authorities.

The Role of Cheshire County Council

Cheshire County Council is clearly recognised as a 'founding father' and principal architect of the MDA. It has always had strong officer and member support and budgets have been dedicated to maintain this position even during cut backs. A County Councillor is the current chair of the MDA and County Council officers chair two of the three key task groups and the influential BESS partnership Board. Additionally the Council often steps out beyond members' financial obligations and funds projects independently in to make things happen. It ensures that its policies, [and where they can be] the policies of partners compliment and add value to the policies of the MDA, which in turn supports local, sub-regional, regional and where applicable, national priorities.

CREWE BUSINESS PARK: SUCCESSFUL 2 - TIER JOINT WORKING

Background:

- The Park was developed in 1986 as a partnership between Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council and Cheshire County Council in response to the global shift away from heavy industry to high technology and service sector.
- The local authorities pooled their land resources to establish Crewe Business Park, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council donated farm land and Cheshire County Council donated playing fields.
- The Authorities pooled their land and invested money in infrastructure for the site prior to marketing.
- The 67 acre site carries B1 planning allocation with a stringent design brief concerning density and landscaping.
- The land is sold on a 125 year lease with a premium paid up front the receipt is then split 50/50 between the two Authorities.
- 2323 jobs have now been created on the park most in the knowledge economy.

Maintenance:

- The Authorities undertake the day to day to day to day management of the park.
- The site is now well established and lines of responsibility for maintenance are recognised. Maintenance of landscaped areas and handling of wildlife conservation interests are considered at quarterly meetings.

Awards:

- The park has developed through the years as an eco-friendly business park and received awards for commitment to the environment and more recently the park was one of only two business parks in the UK to receive the prestigious Millennium Marque Award for environmental excellence.
- The Park has also received a Business Commitment to the Environment Award and received international recognition as one of Europe's best eco-business parks at a United Nations conference in Germany.