

**PROGRESSING THE
NEIGHBOURHOOD AGENDA**

IN

**NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

AWAY DAY REPORT

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On behalf of N.E.D.D.C.
June 2006*

PROGRESSING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AGENDA IN NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AWAY DAY REPORT

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to outline the issues and considerations for the implementation of the Government's Neighbourhood Agenda in NEDDC.

2. Background

- 2.1 An Away Day was set up for elected members in May 2006, (**Appendix 1**). Expert inputs were provided by Professor Gerry Stoker, from the Institute of Political and Economic governance at the University of Manchester, Dr Steve Rogers, INLOGOV, University of Birmingham and Mark Edgell, IDeA.
- 2.2 The importance of the Neighbourhood agenda has been accepted. This paper sets out some of the issues raised during the Away Day as NEDDC starts to formulate its responses and actions in developing the Neighbourhood Agenda.

3. The County Response to Neighbourhood Arrangements

- 3.1 Within the County there is a certain amount of frustration about the way in which Neighbourhood Partnerships are working. There is considerable variation with some working more successfully than others. Some districts are yet to develop Neighbourhood forums or partnerships e.g. Bolsover and Erewash.
- 3.2 At a recent County - wide Chief Executive's meeting a number of features¹ were identified in those that are working successfully:
- Local issues are noted and acted upon.
 - Reports are given about the action that is taken to address issues of immediate neighbourhood concern.
 - The partnerships have a practical focus which leads to greater engagement on wider agendas – Neighbourhoods and communities need to see tangible and effective local results for them to want to participate in such forums.
- 3.3 By contrast those that were seen as less effective which were predominately 'talking shops' with little focus on action.
- 3.4 In addition to this it is recognised that the County Council can only support a certain number of groups. The resource implications of a proliferation of Neighbourhood Partnerships, however these constituencies are defined, are yet to be identified.

¹ It may be a useful exercise to develop these ideas by researching and analysing experience from elsewhere of successful Neighbourhood level working in order to develop a model framework developing the thinking and for implementing arrangements within NEDDC.

4.0 **Issues**

4.1 The discussion highlighted a number of issues:

National

- As Gershon pushes us towards economies of scale derived from the joining together of back office functions how will this be reconciled with smaller neighbourhood arrangements to facilitate local choice?
- Where does the E – Government transformational agenda fit?
- What will be the impact of the Lyons review?
- Will this policy approach transcend local government to other agencies e.g. the police who are currently moving into larger governance arrangements?
- How will rules be relaxed to assist with neighbourhood working (e.g. planning, that constrict participation of local members in key decisions)

County-Wide

- How do we operate within a three tier system?
- What will be the County's contribution to developing the Neighbourhood Agenda?

Elected Members

- What will be the role of the elected member? If ward members are to be empowered what are the implications? What is the extent of this empowerment?
- How will we support the role of Ward Councillors.
 - Support systems, staff, ICT.
 - Capacity building.
 - Focus, mechanisms, definition of roles.
- Do Elected Members need to stop 'guarding' their current role?

Officers

- Officers need to understand the neighbourhood Agenda and be party to its unfolding in NEDDC

Neighbourhoods and Communities

- Do communities define neighbourhoods? Does the Council define communities and neighbourhoods?
- How can Neighbourhoods and communities connect to the decisions that need to be made?
- How might competing interests in 'community calls for action be reconciled?

- How can more local choice at neighbourhood level be reconciled with efficiencies? How will the local specification of the work that Neighbourhoods want – efficiency and choice?
- How can governance systems at whatever level cope with both standardisation and variation?
- Postcode lottery vs. post code choice?
- What will be the role of the Parish Councils?
- What will be the role of Executive Councillors under any new arrangements that emerge? What will be the role of ward councillors? If they are more empowered – how will this manifest itself and what are the implications for political management arrangements?
- What is a Neighbourhood? What is a community? Who defines these? How can they be administered?
- Local specification of the work that Neighbourhoods want – efficiency and choice?
- What is the local appetite for Neighbourhood arrangements?
- How empowered are citizens – how empowered do we want them to be?
- How can we use empowerment mechanisms to build capacity?
 - ICT.
 - Access to qwangos.
 - Influence.
 - Helping citizens to understand the structures so that they are more empowered to influence and assess.
- Divided communities located in the same geographical area e.g. the outstanding local tensions from the Miners' strike – whose neighbourhood – how can these be managed?

NEDDC – Organisational

- Is NEDDC fit for purpose to take on this agenda?
- What kind of organisation will we be?
 - Development of community leadership role.
 - Service provision, democratic hub – where are we?
- How can we ensuring that Officers are familiar with the agenda?
 - Member/Officer relationships.
- Identity issues - communities or Council.

- Would there be any benefit to signing up to the Reputation project –Risk-taking on raising profile.
- Brand Image.
- Can we identify outcomes for NEDDC?

Partners

- How will we work with other agencies on jointly agreed and shared priorities:
 - Understanding the priorities/pressures of our partners – joint action.
 - What is their change agenda?

Mechanisms and Governance

- How are existing Neighbourhoods working,(or not working)? Are Neighbourhood Partnerships the most appropriate mechanisms or structures?
- Getting the NPs to work more effectively – use this to shape/inform the corporate strategy and budget choices. Or is there an alternative. . . ?
- What are the current District/Parish liaison processes and mechanisms? What should they be under the Neighbourhood Agenda?
- How will representations from Parish/Neighbourhood Partnerships and Partners be managed?
- Equity and fairness in the distribution of devolved neighbourhood budgets?
- How can we get the local governance machinery to respond in a way that is comprehensible to the public.
- How can parochialism be avoided?
- Who will manage the resource tensions arising from ‘community calls for action?’
- Will all neighbourhoods have equal capacity to engage in this agenda?
- How can both flexibility and accountability be addressed?

Research, Knowledge transfer and capacity building

- Neighbourhoods and communities – we need to ensure that we gather and disseminate knowledge about effective practice.
- How can we share best practice across agencies and within the District/Parishes?
- What will be the programme and process for developing the capacity of neighbourhoods and communities, elected representatives and officers?

5. The NEDDC Approach – Taking the Neighbourhood Agenda Forward

- 5.1 NEDDC is going through extensive change, (see the representational diagrams at **Appendix 2**). Diagrams 4 and 5 illustrate the Council's change of role from direct service provider to the Council's community leadership role and the implementation of the Neighbourhood Agenda by 2008.
- 5.2 These changes lead to an examination of the role, function and purpose of the Council within the context of the Neighbourhood Agenda.
- 5.3 A programme of work now being developed to progress the neighbourhood Agenda at NEDDC.



**WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S
NEIGHBOURHOOD AGENDA FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES?**

**A WORKSHOP FOR EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND THE CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM OF
NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

24 MAY 2006

WINDING WHEEL (FUNCTION ROOM)

This workshop has been organised to allow Members of the Executive and the Corporate Management Team to explore the implications of the Neighbourhood Agenda for North East Derbyshire District Council. Three speakers will be offering their perspectives and analysis on the Neighbourhood Agenda. The session will conclude with the opportunity for the Executive to consider the implications for North East Derbyshire District Council.

Professor Gerry Stoker – University of Manchester

Gerry Stoker is Professor of Political Science in the School of Social Sciences, the University of Manchester. He is also co-director of the Institute for Political and Economic Governance at the University of Manchester. He has authored or edited over 20 books and published over 70 refereed articles or chapters in books.

Professor Stoker's main research interests are in governance, democratic politics, local and regional governance, urban politics, public participation and public service reform. In April 2002 Gerry Stoker was appointed Director of the Government-funded five-year evaluation on the new constitutional and ethical arrangements that the 2000 Act established in English local government (see www.elgnce.org.uk). In January 2004 he started on work governance and democratic politics associated with a four year ESRC Professorial Fellowship. In November 2004 Professor Stoker was awarded the UK's Political Studies Association's Prize for 'Making a Difference' for his work on governance.

Professor Stoker was the founding Chair of the New Local Government Network, the think tank of the year in 2004, and remains involved as a trustee. Through NLGN he is associated with the launch of a debate about the need for a new localism in the construction of democratic governance. Professor Stoker has provided advice to various parts of UK government and is also an expert advisor to the Council of Europe on local government and participation issues.

Steve Rogers – University of Birmingham

Steve is a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) – which is part of the School of Public Policy at the University of Birmingham. His main activities involve research, postgraduate education and management development and training.

He has been closely involved with the development of the community leadership, part of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda, having led the evaluation of the initial Community Planning Pilot Projects in England and then the Scottish Community Planning Pathfinder Projects. He has carried out research for the LGA and IDeA on Local Strategic Partnerships. He has advised and carried out research, consultancy and training for a number of English local authorities on various aspects of community leadership and strategic management. He has also undertaken research in Scotland exploring the relationship between health improvement and community planning.

His current research projects also relate to the community leadership role of local government. He is co-leader of the ODPM-sponsored project evaluating the take-up and implementation of the Power of Wellbeing (due to complete in early 2007) and is a member of the team that has carried out the evaluation of Community Planning for the Welsh Assembly Government.

He was also a member of the team that drafted the report commissioned by the Audit Commission and IDeA entitled 'Fitness for Purpose – strategic choice at the local level.' (IDeA 2005). The report is intended to assist councils in taking the tough strategic decisions that will help make them 'fit for purpose' in serving their communities.

Mark Edgell – IDeA

Mark is an IDeA Regional Associate, leading for the Agency in the East Midlands.

After working in retail management, Mark became an economist advising Ministers on issues including the graduate labour market and UK skills supply and demand.

He has extensive experience of local government, having previously been an elected Member for over a decade and the Leader of a Metropolitan Council.

Mark has previously been a member of, amongst others, the National Executive Committee of his Trade Union, The Committee of the Regions, The Regional Board of Business in the Environment and the Vice Chair of a Metropolitan County Passenger Transport Authority. He is a Director of Magna, a Science Adventure Centre.

Mark has a first degree in economics and geography and a masters in public sector economics.



PROGRAMME

- 9.15** Arrive – Refreshments and Registration
- 9.30** Welcome and Introductions
- Why are we here? Scene setting and workshop outline, James Gravenor, Chief Executive
- 9.45** Perspective One – What’s all this about a neighbourhoods?
A critical analysis of the Neighbourhood Agenda - ***Professor Gerry Stoker***
- 10.30** Perspective Two - Are we fit for purpose? ***Steve Rogers***
- 11.00** Perspective Three - A view from the IDeA – ***Mark Edgell***
- 11.30** Break – Refreshments and opportunity to consider questions for the panel
- 11.45** Panel Question Time - ***chaired by Steve Rogers***
- 12.30** Lunch
- 1.00 pm** Plenary Session and group discussion chaired by the Chief Executive
- How might this thinking influence our Corporate Strategy?
- What are the emerging themes?
- What are the implications for NEDDC?
- 2.00 pm** Finish



EXECUTIVE AWAY DAY
24 MAY 2006
WINDING WHEEL, CHESTERFIELD

ATTENDANCE LIST

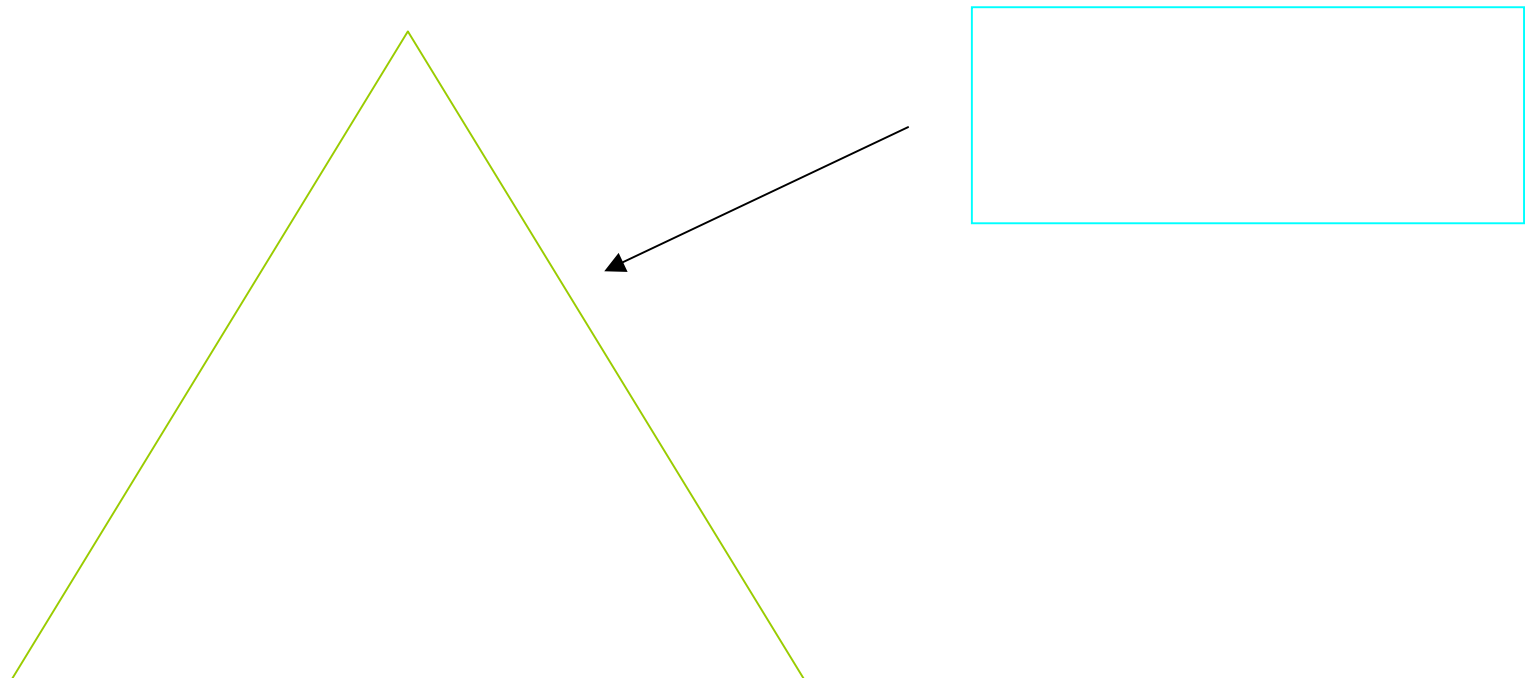
OFFICERS	MEMBERS
James Gravenor Chief Executive	Councillor Graham Baxter – Leader
Mike Goodwin Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)	Councillor Mrs Betty Hill – Deputy Leader
Suzanne Barlow Deputy Chief Executive (Services)	Councillor Geoff Butler Councillor Derek Cotterill Councillor Jack Dargue Councillor Patrick Kerry Councillor Graham Pass Councillor Colin Robinson Councillor Mrs Sheila Taylor
Paul Crowson Head of Strategic Support	Councillor William Pickford – Opposition Member

PORTFOLIOS	MEMBERS
Community Safety and Health (including Anti-Social Behaviour, Health, PCTs and Leisure)	Councillor Geoff Butler supported by Councillor Graham Baxter
Building a Better Council (inc. IT, E-Government, HR and Training)	Councillor Graham Baxter supported by Councillors Graham Pass and Jack Dargue
Economy/Finance (including employability and regeneration)	Councillor Patrick Kerry supported by Councillor Derek Cotterill
Housing (including adaptations, affordable housing and Decent Homes)	Councillor Mrs Betty Hill supported by Councillor Mrs Sheila Taylor
Environment (including sustainable waste management and Clean and Green Agenda 21)	Councillor Colin Robinson Supported by Councillor Graham Baxter

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE PROJECTIONS FOR N.E.D.D.C. – THE NEXT 5 YEARS

Where did we come from?

NEDDC up until September 2005



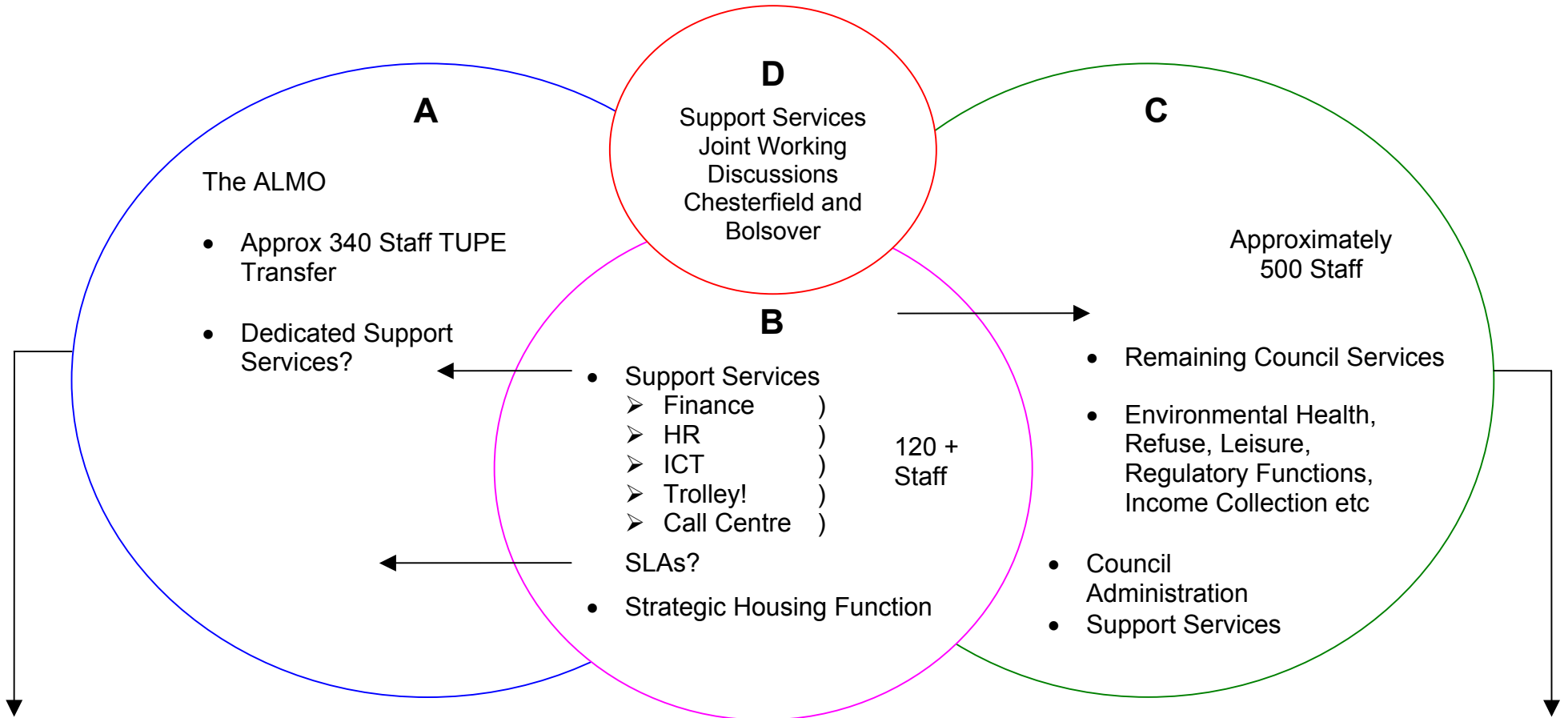
ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE PROJECTIONS FOR N.E.D.D.C. – THE NEXT 5 YEARS

September 2005



31 October 2006

Where are we going?



- ALMO ACTIONS TO DATE**
- ALMO Project Team Meetings
 - Support Services involved to varying degrees
 - Additional external support

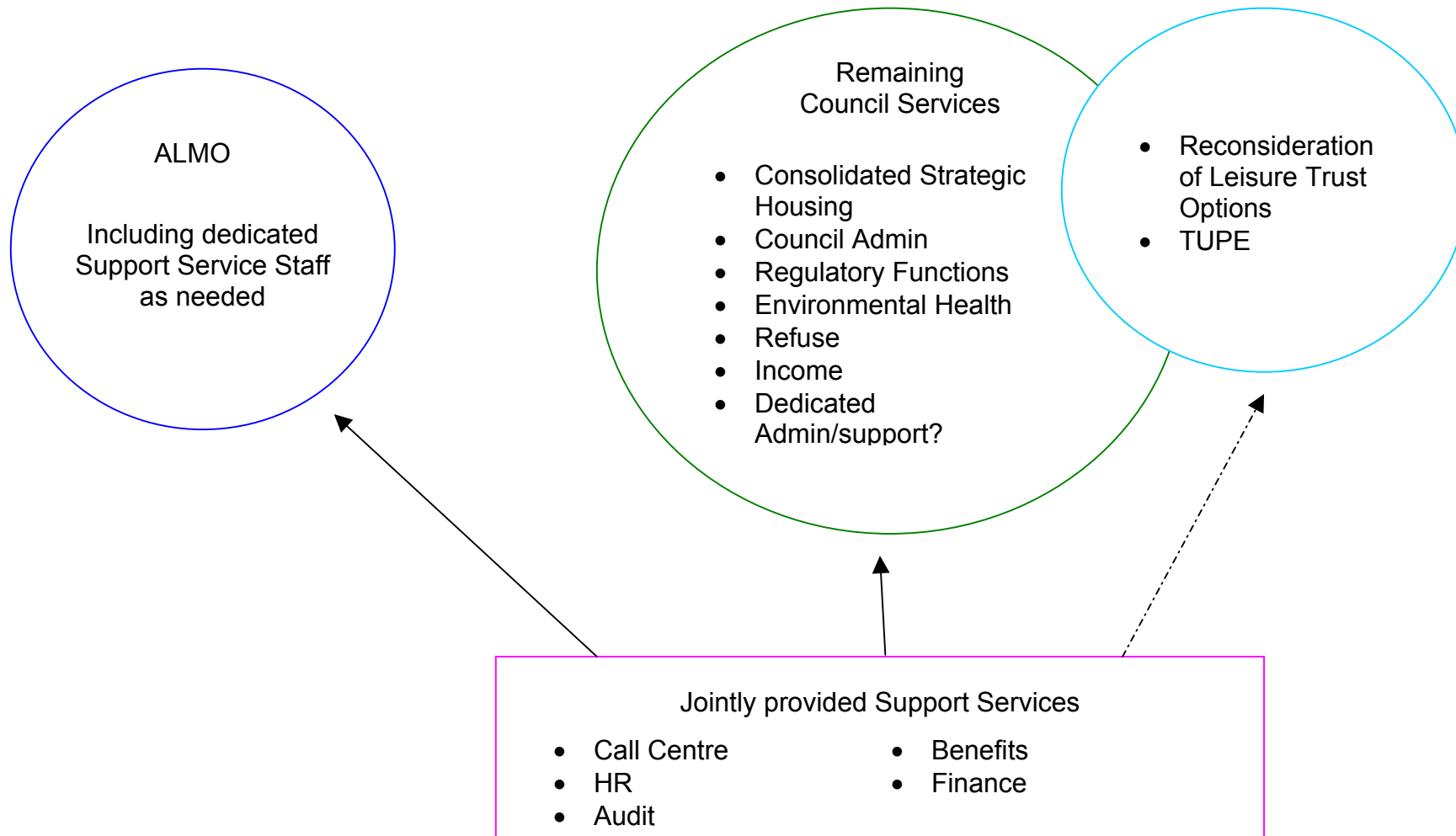
- Deputy Chief Executive has strategic housing function (2 May 2006)
- Support Services Project Team needed pulling the linkages together
- SLAs

- New medium term financial strat and HR Strategy needed etc
- What will support services look like post ALMO?
- Implications of Joint Working?
- Two key phases -Pre Joint Working post joint working

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE PROJECTIONS FOR N.E.D.D.C. – THE NEXT 5 YEARS

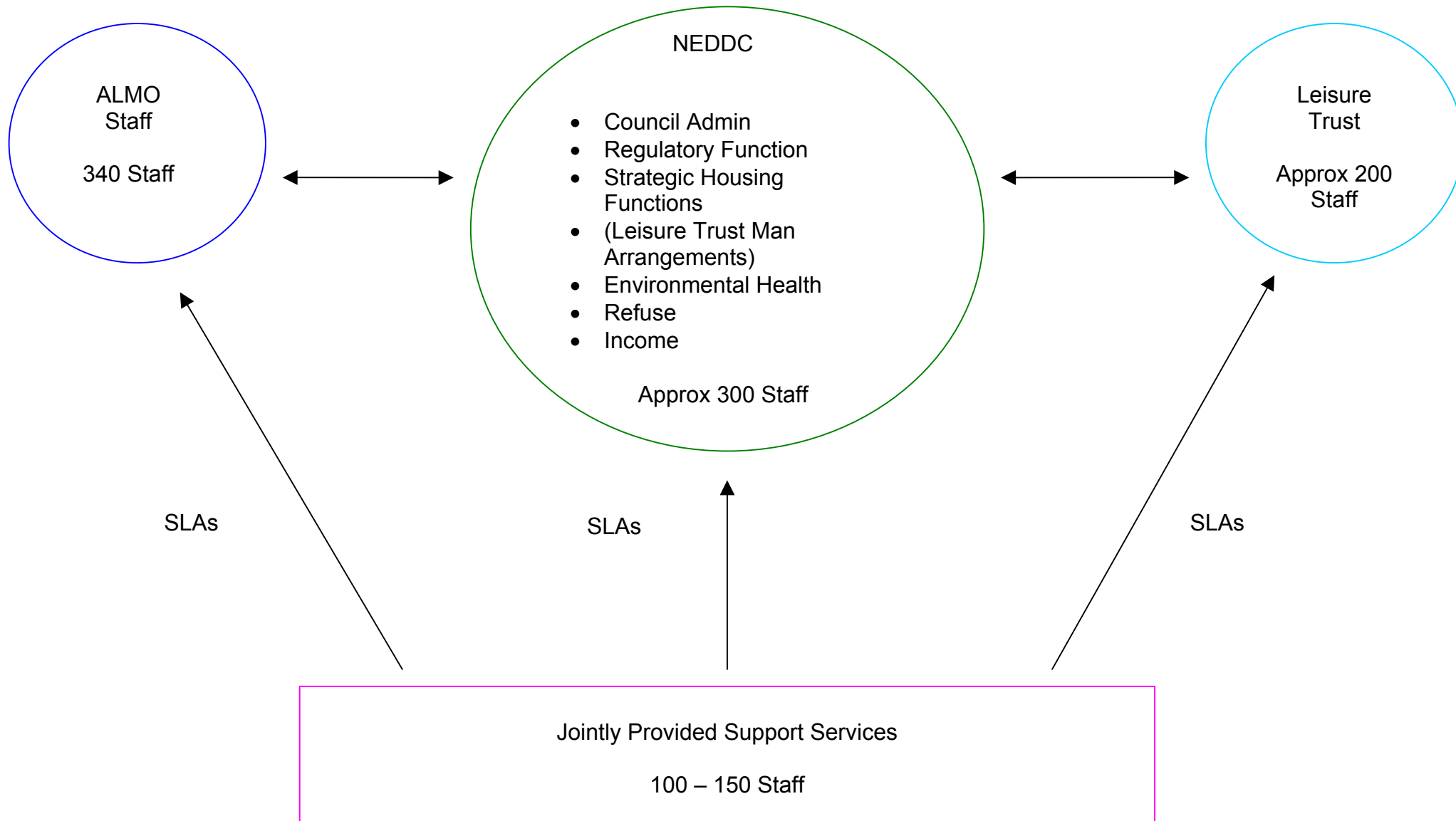
Where are we in the medium term?

31 October 2006 → December 2007



ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE PROJECTIONS FOR N.E.D.D.C. – THE NEXT 5 YEARS

The longer term 2008+



ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE PROJECTIONS FOR N.E.D.D.C. – THE NEXT 5 YEARS

The Longer Term 2008 – 2010

