



## **Comprehensive Area Assessment**

### **Shropshire's Self Evaluation**

**June 2009**

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## **Executive Summary**

Our vision is “to improve significantly the quality of life for Shropshire people by working together”.

### **Shropshire’s challenges**

Shropshire is a wonderful place to live. It is a large, diverse, predominantly rural inland county within the West Midlands region, bordered by Wales and the North West. With a population of 290,900, and only 0.91 people per hectare, the county is one of the most sparsely populated in England. Hidden within a very attractive landscape are pockets of deprivation, isolation and factors which affect individual and community resilience. **Ensuring equality to access to services provides a challenge for partners.**

### **Shropshire’s people**

Our unique and historic environment makes Shropshire a desirable place to live. 64% live in urban areas in Shropshire’s county and market towns. 36% of the population live in rural areas. This population is distributed widely and sparsely across a large geographical area, with many small settlements. This makes delivering services effectively and efficiently more difficult. Whilst Shropshire is a relatively affluent area and ranked as the 116<sup>th</sup> most deprived county of 149 county/unitary areas, four of England’s 32,482 Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOAs) within the electoral wards of Harlescott, Meole Brace and Monkmoor in Shrewsbury and Castle, Oswestry fall within the most deprived 5<sup>th</sup>. The highest concentrations of deprivation are visible in the more concentrated urban wards, and although the index of multiple deprivation (IMD 2004) is an important measure and tool to identify service priorities and resources, there are pockets of deprivation across the county.

Just 1.2% of Shropshire’s population identified themselves as being from black, mixed or other minority ethnic groups in the 2001 Census, compared to 11.3% regionally. We know that the picture is fluid and whilst the area saw an increase in international migrants in 2004-2005, notably from Eastern Europe, there has been a net loss of 180 international migrants by 2007.

### **Health inequalities**

Shropshire’s population is generally healthy, but there are pockets of inequality where people die prematurely or whose quality of life is impaired by poor health. Life expectancy is significantly higher for men in Shropshire’s least deprived areas than men in the most deprived.

Preventing drug substance and alcohol misuse, particularly amongst young people, remains a priority.

**Reducing rates of premature mortality is a major long term issue and addressing the causes and effects cuts across responsibilities for all partner agencies.**

### **Older people**

The population has grown by 8.2% since 1991 to 2007 (+22,200 people) mainly through inward migration. We have an ageing population. 48% of residents are aged 45 and over compared to 40.8% nationally. The percentage of those above retirement age in Shropshire is 23.4%.

**A major challenge for all partners will be to address the consequences of people living longer with long-term conditions such as dementia.**

### **Younger people**

Every child matters and should be safe, secure, confident and be able to achieve their full potential. A relatively large number of Shropshire's young people leave the area to work and study.

Despite Shropshire's excellent education provision, 13% of people live within the 20% most skills-deprived areas nationally. The skills gap needs to be narrowed if wage levels are to rise. Young people who leave the area to work and study contribute to the increase in the ageing population.

**Improved access to higher education is essential to meet people's aspirations and improve the attractiveness of the area to younger people and employers.**

### **Sustainable development and communities**

The county has several market towns: only four of these have a population of over 10,000 (2001 Census). Shrewsbury, the county town, has been identified as a sub-regional growth point in the Regional Spatial Strategy and will see significant development over the coming years. Within the regional context the tension will be between protecting Shropshire's natural and historic built environment, whilst achieving the development required by a thriving and prosperous community.

**Communities need to be empowered to express their needs and aspirations, their vision of how their county and market towns will be in 20 years time, and involved in delivering the vision.**

- **Climate change**

Evidence gathered through the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) suggests that in the past 10 years Shropshire has experienced 38 severe/extreme weather episodes that are likely to have cost the council alone in excess of £8million.

**Partners need to take a leadership role in addressing the impact of climate change.**

- **Housing**

In line with the national trend house prices in Shropshire rose over the last few years and, combined with Shropshire's low wages, it has become more difficult for people to access home ownership. At the beginning of 2008 the highest house prices were £34,834 higher than the national average. Based upon the average local wage in Bridgnorth, a two income household needed to earn £52,897 to buy an entry level property. Although house prices in the county fell by 8.4% in 2008 in comparison to a fall of 13.9% in the region, waiting lists for social housing illustrate that supply fails to meet demand.

**Despite falling prices affordability remains a challenge.**

### **Economic prosperity**

Employment rates in Shropshire are marginally higher than the region (59.3% compared to 57.92%) and of these 16.7% are self employed, which is higher than average. However, low wage levels are an issue with median gross weekly earnings for full time employees at £410.3 – just 85.5% of the national and 91.4% of the regional averages. Headline Gross Value Added (GVA) measures productivity, and despite an increase of £477 between 2005 and 2006 to £13,686 per head (compared to £16,303 across the region), we still lag behind. The UK GVA 2006 was £19,430.

### **Low wage levels present a challenge.**

The degree to which the current economic recession will have a lasting impact on Shropshire is uncertain. The Partnership, and in particular the Business Board and council are closely monitoring the situation. A snapshot:

- Bankruptcy rates are increasing – the number of debtors bankruptcy petitions issued in Shropshire between October and December 2008 stood at 88, which is 47% higher than over the same quarter in 2007.
- The number of businesses operating in Shropshire fell by 2.6% during the last quarter (October 2008 to January 2009). This compares with a very slight decrease of 0.1% in the number of West

Midlands businesses. Nationally, the number of businesses in operation rose very marginally in the last quarter (+0.3%).

- The number of JSA claimants in Shropshire has been rising since June 2008, with the claimant count now standing at 4,139 (January 2009). The claimant count rate has risen by 72.2% since June 2008, and this sharp increase compares unfavourably with a rise of 48.4% in the West Midlands and an increase of 53.6% in the UK.
- The number of unfilled job vacancies fell to 664 in Shropshire in January 2009. This represents a 45% reduction over the same period in 2008.
- This presents a real challenge for people who are being supported into employment and training.

**The partners must act to mitigate the impact on people whose circumstances are affected by the economy, and to support businesses and high quality job opportunities in the area.**

### **Feeling safe**

Good health, housing, education, jobs and prospects and our unique local environment are very important in Shropshire, but communities have many requirements and need to adapt to change, creating places where people want to live now and in the future. People's perceptions of how safe and healthy they feel and the quality of their local environment, have an impact on how satisfied they are in their neighbourhood. Shropshire is generally a low crime area and crime levels have been falling for the past three years.

In 2008 Shropshire residents said the most important factor for them in what makes this a good place to live is the level of crime. Local crime and disorder issues are generally about low level anti-social behaviour, alcohol misuse and acquisitive crime. However, a small number of prolific offenders can have on a big impact on crime statistics for the area. The perception of the prevalence of crime was relatively high compared to actual recorded crime.

**More needs to be done to ensure that people feel safe, confident and enjoy their local area. We need to continue to tackle crime and disorder and minimise the impact of alcohol misuse.**

## **Conclusion**

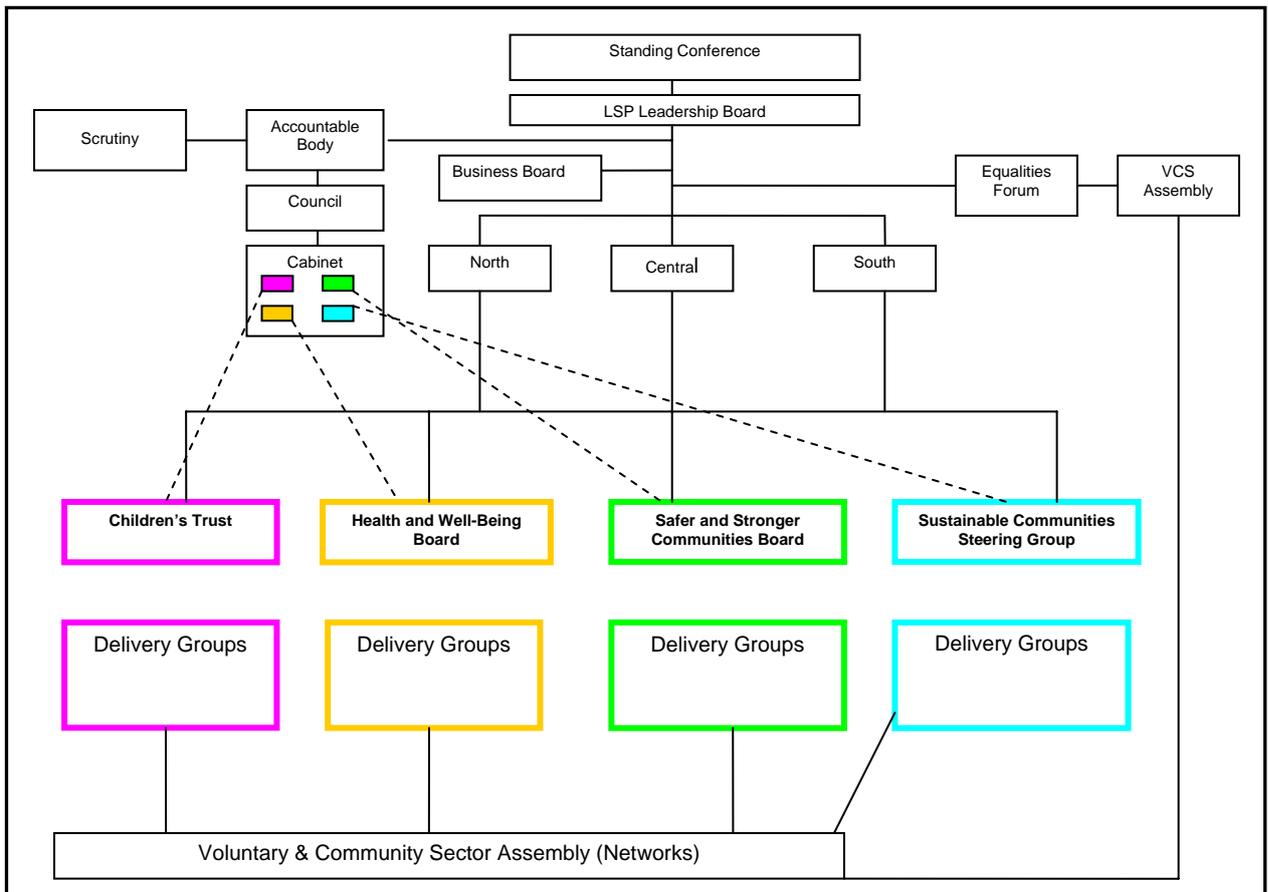
This section summarises the evidence based on major cross cutting, long term social and demographic issues facing the area. The challenges set out above are drawn from the Shropshire 2008 Community Strategy Evidence Base (see key findings on pages 22 to 32) and represent real issues facing local people. These cannot be tackled by individual agencies but instead through smarter partnership working. A Sustainable Community Strategy taking us to 2020 is currently being developed which will outline the long-term issues for improvement.

## Section 1 Shropshire Partnership – an overview.

### 1.1 Shropshire Partnership

- Shropshire has a national reputation for delivery through partnership. The Audit Commission regards the Shropshire Partnership as a “model of good practice” (*Shropshire County Council Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2006-07*).
- Shropshire Partnership’s vision is to “Improve significantly the quality of life for Shropshire People by working together” (*Sustainable Community Strategy 2006 – 2010*).
- During 2008, the Shropshire Partnership changed in response to challenges laid down in “Strong and Prosperous Communities” (*Local Government White Paper 2007*). The new Leadership Board is more inclusive, with a clearer focus on joint service development at strategic and area level, and with a sharper focus on leadership and external influence. The Vice-Chair of the Leadership Board is the Leader of Shropshire Council.
- Three new area partnerships have been established in the Northern, Southern and Central areas of the county that will assist the Partnership in delivering the priorities in the Local Area Agreement and recognising the differences that exist across a county as large as Shropshire. Equalities Forum and Voluntary Sector Assembly representation on the Area Partnership will provide the necessary links to ensure that priorities are built into Area Partnership delivery plans. The new partnerships bring together Shropshire divisions of the following organisations: police, health service, fire service, local businesses and the voluntary and community sector, together with the new unitary Shropshire Council (represented by local division councillors). The council has established Community Working Teams in each area to further enhance local partnership working arrangements through better communication and closer working with communities, and giving support to local committees to enable better outcomes for local people.
- The four partnership delivery blocks covering Children and Young People, Health and Well-Being, Safer and Stronger Communities and Sustainable Communities focus on delivery of the Local Area Agreement (LAA).
- Diagram A shows the Shropshire Partnership structure and its relationship to Shropshire Council.

**Diagram A**



- The LAA Progress Summary Report of Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) in January 2009, states that “performance management arrangements are strong and regular reports are produced for the Partnership’s Leadership Board and the Theme Groups which report to it”. Performance Management focuses on achievements, outcomes and exception reporting.
- The refresh of the LAA 2008-2011 has recently been signed off by GOWM, acknowledging that targets are realistic and stretching. All LAA outcomes have delivery plans which are focussed not simply on the achievement of national indicator targets agreed with GOWM, but on achieving more strategic improvements for local people. Delivery plans are signed off initially by the four Blocks, then at Leadership Board, and then reviewed every 6 months. An LAA Risk Management Forum meets annually to review the associated risks and identify the top 5 which are then closely monitored and will form part of the quarterly performance report to the Leadership Board. Data quality arrangements are robust, and partners have provided the partnership with a data quality letter of assurance.

- Shropshire's strong partnership approach to managing risk is demonstrated below in an example describing the proactive way that the Local Resilience Forum ensures its readiness for emergency situations.

### **Pandemic Flu**

Existing structures are in place at operational, tactical and strategic levels (known as bronze, silver and gold) to provide the mechanism for coordinating partners responses to incidents in a consistent and appropriate manner (e.g. media management, communications, distribution centres and temporary accommodation).

Commitment to the Pandemic Flu plan was demonstrated when senior managers and staff from every partner organisation attended an all-day exercise (February 2009) to test the plan. Key agencies from Shropshire worked together as a team to handle a simulated flu outbreak and to ensure the delivery of services for the public, particularly for vulnerable people.

The group comprises the following organisations: the Shropshire Partnership: Shropshire County PCT; Shropshire & Telford Hospitals NHS Trust, Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt NHS Trust; South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust; Telford & Wrekin PCT; Shropshire Council; Telford and Wrekin Council; Shropshire Partners in Care; Shropshire Doctors; West Mercia Police; Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service; and Shropshire & Staffordshire Health Protection Unit.

This approach makes Shropshire very well placed to respond to a pandemic flu situation if required to at any time.

- The Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base (*Second Draft, January 2009*) is an important, comprehensive source document with significant contribution by all core partners which provides quantitative and qualitative analysis of Shropshire's issues. A summary of the latest key findings is provided in section 2.2 below.
- The Partnership has formed a core group of research and information analysts to regularly review and update the evidence base. This has been used during the LAA refresh process and is an essential document to aid the development of the new Sustainable Community Strategy during 2009. The Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base complements the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which was developed by the Joint Commissioning team across the council and PCT and used to set LAA and World Class Commissioning targets.

- Another important recent source of information for the Shropshire Partnership is the results of the Place Survey 2008. These show that people think that the most important things which make an area a good place to live are: low crime levels, quality health services and affordable housing. The following areas are seen as those which most need improving in Shropshire: activities for teenagers; road and pavement repairs; decent, affordable housing; and public transport. Details are analysed in section 2.2 and section 3 below.

## 1.2 Shropshire's Sustainable Community Strategy

The current [Community Strategy 2006 - 2010](#) sets out the strategic vision for Shropshire. It is prepared by the Shropshire Partnership, involving communities and stakeholders in articulating Shropshire's vision, priorities and aspirations. These are currently:

### Children and Young People

- Every child and young person matters – we want to ensure young people are well-educated and fulfilled to give them a great start in life. We also want to enable young people to have a say in their future.

### Health and Well-Being

- Create active and healthier communities and reduce health inequality.
- Improve services and opportunities for older people.

### Safer and Stronger Communities

- Make the best of culture and leisure opportunities and support the voluntary sector.
- Reduce crime and the perception of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.
- Promote equal opportunities for everyone.

### Sustainable Communities (Economy, Environment, Transport, Housing)

- Build a strong and diverse economy with jobs for a skilled and competitive workforce.
- Preserve and enhance Shropshire's natural environment and heritage.

- Improve access to services, support, places, transport and facilities across the county.
- Meet housing need through help, advice and affordable housing.
- A single Local Development Framework (LDF) 2009 – 2029 for Shropshire is progressing which will be a significant tool for addressing many of the area's key priorities. The Sustainable Community Strategy should be at the heart of an LDF and therefore a full review of the Strategy is underway during 2009 to ensure fitness for purpose within the LDF context. In addition, the development of the Strategy will be closely aligned with the new council's corporate planning arrangements.
- Shropshire's LAA has been refreshed (2008 – 2011) in the light of the key findings identified through the Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base and informed by community engagement and consultation. The key outcomes are now:
  - Further reducing the number of vulnerable young people who are not in education, employment or training;
  - Increasing the stability of looked-after children's placements;
  - Reducing the risks of loss of independence and preventing people needing to enter care services;
  - Ensuring that vulnerable people have access to appropriate accommodation, tenancy and personal support to enable independence
  - Improving well-being, social inclusion and choice, and enabling independence of vulnerable people including those with Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Mental Health needs;
  - Reduced harmful effects of alcohol;
  - Supporting increased participation and healthy lifestyle choices of Shropshire people;
  - Improved community cohesion;
  - Improved economic impact within communities;
  - Reduced re-offending;

- Improved waste management;
- Improved growth and sustainability of enterprises and businesses;
- Availability of affordable housing;
- Improved access to jobs and services;
- Improved safety for people using Shropshire's roads and a reduction in the economic impact of traffic accidents;
- Improved street and environmental cleanliness;
- Developing low carbon communities;
- Vulnerable people receiving benefit helped into work;
- Reducing obesity among primary school-age children.

## SECTION 2

### Understanding local needs and translation into local priorities.

#### 2.1 Our arrangements for community engagement and gathering local intelligence.

The Shropshire Partnership makes extensive use of both quantitative and qualitative information about the needs of local people collected through active community and residents' participation and consultation. These findings and intelligence drawn from a wide range of sources and documents form an overall picture of local need in the Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base. Some key examples of the way we engage residents and share information to capture aspirations and inform the development of priorities and partnership delivery plans are outlined below:

- **Shropshire Partnership Standing Conference**

The Standing Conference meets up to 3 times per year and acts as a reference group to the LSP. It comprises a wide range of partners - all partners who are active in the Delivery Blocks and various forums (Area Partnerships, VCS Assembly, Equalities Forum, Parish and Town Councils).

At least once per year it has the opportunity to meet and challenge members of the Leadership Board. In addition it has a joint conference with the council.

- **Citizens Panel**

The Shropshire Partnership Citizens' Panel was established in March 2008 via Ipsos MORI to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date source of information about expressed needs, aspirations and the perceptions of local people. The panel comprises a demographically representative sample of approximately 2,000 people from across the county. Partners agree questions for inclusion in surveys: for example, in September 2008 it was agreed that the majority of the questions would be health-related to meet the Shropshire Primary Care Trust's requirements for their health care strategy.

Focus groups and further work to explore issues raised in surveys are routinely carried out as appropriate. For instance feedback from the September 2008 survey gave poor ratings on local jobs and training opportunities. These were an area for concern and warned of greater underlying problems. This feedback was the catalyst for the production of a report and action plan on employment, training and worklessness to combat issues identified.

- **Consultation portal**

A new consultation portal has been set up to provide a quick and easy way for partners to co-ordinate consultation activity across the county.

The portal is developing and will enable a consistent approach to consultation, the avoidance of duplication and to help prevent any feeling of consultation 'overload' among residents. The portal will help to identify where further qualitative work is required to fully understand local issues to ensure planned improvement activities deliver better outcomes.

- **Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Assembly**

The Assembly aims to capture and strengthen the voice and influence of Shropshire's many voluntary and community sector organisations, and to enable the sector to play a full part in the development and delivery of Shropshire's LAA. The LSP supported the establishment of the VCS Assembly and the council funded its development. There are 8 fully operating Forum of Interest/networks, such as the Disability Forum and the Community Transport Forum, with representatives sitting on the Assembly Board.

VCS involvement in the LAA has improved through the representational work undertaken by VCS Assembly Board members. One example includes the action being taken to address worklessness (see page 70).

- **LSP Equalities Forum**

The Shropshire Partnership Equalities Forum is made up of partners and stakeholders whose purpose is to represent the views of Shropshire's diverse communities. The Forum is used as a representative body for consulting on developing plans and strategies and it also runs an awards scheme. The Forum aims to:

- Combat hate crime and racism in Shropshire (See case study relating to Hate Crime initiative in section 3.3).
- Support initiatives to raise awareness of equality.
- Build capacity of smaller groups serving the BME and other equality communities.
- Support local events and activity to celebrate equality and diversity.

A Task and Finish Group was established through the Forum to research the needs of migrant workers and new emerging communities in Shropshire. Examples of good practice were sought and informed the action plan. For instance, a Welcome to Shropshire Pack is being developed to help to ensure support for migrant workers and new emerging communities have access to all services in Shropshire.

The Forum has an awards scheme where small grants are available to local communities, small voluntary organisations or established groups serving communities in Shropshire.

Of the 47 grants awarded totalling over £35,000 since 2006, one example of a good outcome is through the Shrewsbury Action Against Racism project described below.

### **Shrewsbury Action Against Racism**

Shrewsbury Action Against Racism received a grant of £2,800 towards the cost of holding the Cultural Diversity Day and the Rock Against Racism gig.

Over 2,000 people attended the day which brought together people from different cultures, giving them an opportunity to network with other cultures in an informative and light-hearted way.

One of the key outcomes from the event was the fact that more people were aware of services and support that are available around racial issues in Shrewsbury and the surrounding area.

The event celebrated cultural diversity and promoted the anti-racism message, and was captured by local children through a visual diary of the day.

- **The Shropshire Business Board**  
Comprising ten business leaders and a number of representatives from business support organisations, the Board provides private sector-led advice to partners on economic development matters, to ensure business views are taken into account when developing policy. This had led to the development of a private sector-led Business Plan being adopted as council economic policy in January 2009.
- **Local Committees**  
Local Committees have been set up across the county following successful pilots in 11 areas. Local councillors from parish, town and Shropshire Council sit on the committees and have equal voting rights. Local people and stakeholders provide input and information to help inform their decisions. The committees give residents the chance to voice their views, and to discuss their opinions with their councillors in a local setting. Local issues highlighted at meetings should be captured and used consistently to inform the decision-making process at area partnership level and subsequently at county partnership level as appropriate. The committee's are allocated a budget to help support community activities, and improve services. The budget for each LC is based on the area's population and has been rural proofed. Local community groups can 'bid' for this money and the committee decides how the money should be spent in that local area.

## Local committees: making a difference

### Action:

Whitchurch and Prees was one of the first pilot Local Committees in Shropshire and have been running for over a year. Local residents have used the local committee to push ahead with projects which form part of their Prees Parish Plan. One outcome of this has been an adventure and toddler playground on the parish's Manor House Lane recreation ground.

Parish Councillor John Patrick explained: "There is a real lack of facilities for young people in the area, and at the same time there has been an increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour. We have spent the past two years successfully raising £35,000 to build these facilities for our young people, however we still need to raise an additional £30,000 after a RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) inspection recommended a new access and car parking for the playground. We have managed to get £10,000 towards this from the local area committee and are looking at other sources to raise the rest."

### Action:

West Felton Flexors Club provides support to older people with mobility difficulties. Weekly classes help members meet new people and improve balance and co-ordination through 'extend exercises' to music.

Treasurer Lesley Firth attended a local joint committee meeting to gain funding for a new sound system and seating pads. She explained: "Many of our members were having problems hearing the instructor but now we have a portable sound system that the teacher can move around with. Seating pads are also in the pipeline which will be handy for seated exercise and make everyone more comfortable."

Another project successfully tackled the high number of HGVs using the village to get to the outlying Prees Industrial Estate. Many drivers were directed through the village by satellite navigation systems, causing heavy traffic and congestion. The local committee arranged for a traffic survey, new signage and a leaflet campaign targeting businesses and drivers. Mr Patrick said "Our local committee has been successful, as not only have they been able to address issues important to the community, they are also well staffed, in that councillors and officials who attend are able to identify the right people to move things forward and get results."

- **Police and Communities Together (PACT)**  
West Mercia Constabulary introduced their PACT arrangements in 2007. Findings show that meetings where PACT has been incorporated into the LC agenda have been the most successful. As a result it has been adopted as best practice and will feature in the roll out of all 28 LCs.
- **Engaging children and young people**  
The Shropshire Children's Trust (SCT) has adopted the national Hear by Right standards of engagement for children and young people as the basis for planning and developing this area of work. The target of 50% of SCT partners achieving Hear by Rights Position 2 has been

achieved. In addition, there is also a comprehensive participation strategy, adopted by all the partners. This is translated into practice with young people regularly attending SCT meetings, and is mirrored at the Shropshire Partnership where two young people have full voting rights at the Leadership Board. The work of the Participation Team supported the increase in the numbers of young people voting at the last elections for Shropshire's members of the UK Youth Parliament (see below). The Participation Team were particularly proud of their work to ensure the needs of children with disabilities are addressed. They spent some time helping plan how the commissioning of services for leisure time activities should be designed to best meet their needs. In future the participation of young people will be further developed through the introduction of area use groups.

### **Youth Parliament**

A record number of young people turned out to vote for Shropshire's new Members of Youth Parliament (MYP). More than 12,000 votes were cast between 7 – 23 January 2009 which is the biggest turn-out since MYP elections were held in Shropshire in 1999 and a huge increase on the 4,545 votes cast last year.

Young people, aged 11 to 18, have been voted for their MYPs at schools, colleges, Connexions offices and education centres throughout Shropshire. The MYPs represent young people locally, regionally and nationally for 12 months. They have a key role in ensuring that young people's views are heard and influence policies on a range of issues that affect them. The MYPs are very active in helping the council to decide its priorities and scrutinise its work.

The TellUs3 2008 survey shows that significantly more young people in Shropshire have given their views to a youth council parliament than nationally and these young people feel that their views are heard. The results show 12% of young people in Shropshire gave their views to a youth council or youth parliament compared to 7% nationally and 9% had been to a meeting outside of school about making things better in their local area compared to 6% nationally.

As a result of consulting children and young people, parents, carers and professionals for the production of the multi-agency strategic plan for Children and Young People's Services, a number of issues were addressed and adopted into the plan, for example:

**Be Healthy** - young people stated that "More advice about not using drugs" was required: from this, the CYPP targeted to increase the percentage of validated Healthy Schools which has risen to above 95%, i.e. 161 out of 167 schools and increase drug and alcohol awareness, the TellUs3 survey reported that the information and advice provided about smoking, drugs and alcohol is now rated more highly in Shropshire than nationally.

The voice of people with special needs is actively sought through a variety of ways, including the Shropshire Parent and Carers Council. It gives parents and carers a voice to express their needs, and enables partners to design services around these needs. This has been successful in involving parents and carers in the development of the RESPECT policy for Shropshire Council which has now been rolled out across all partner organisations involved in delivering services to children with disabilities.

- **Vulnerable Localities Index**

In order to develop an understanding of communities within Shropshire, a Vulnerable Localities Index was developed for the county based on research by the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, University College London. It brings together IMD information, crime figures and young people's achievements, amongst other things, and is primarily a tool for the identification and measurement of potential vulnerable communities as part of a problem-solving approach to crime reduction. It enables targeted and coordinated responses to be developed by partners for a more cost-effective response, and is a prime source of information for the Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment. Monthly meetings at area level will identify emerging issues through real time local information, enabling timely intelligence based responses to combat local issues.

## **2.2 How we translate intelligence into local priorities and evaluate success**

- The following examples drawn from Strategic Assessments and incorporated into the Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base demonstrate how we use data and intelligence.

- **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)**

This identifies existing and future needs of local communities in relation to Health and Adult and Children's Services; mapping existing services and the pattern of usage, and includes an analysis to enable the prioritisation of services and identifies commissioning requirements. It was partially informed by consultation with user groups and locality-based public consultation, and was central to the development of World Class Commissioning at local levels in Shropshire.

The JSNA will inform the annual refresh of the LAA as well as partners' business planning. Two examples of the JSNA informing strategic partnership priorities include the choice of outcomes and priorities in LAA Health and Well-Being Block, and the Shropshire Children and Young People's Plan.

A Supporting People Needs Assessment was commissioned at the same time to ensure that the needs of vulnerable people are understood and inform service development.

- **Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment 2009**  
 The assessment actively informed the priorities within the 3-year Community Safety Plan. A multi-agency approach to bring together available data including public feedback from PACT meetings; the West Mercia Crime and Safety Survey; and pilot Local Committee meetings have assisted the Safer Stronger Communities Board in identifying the major issues within Shropshire and the allocation of resources and prioritisation of activities. It supports the partnership in identifying priority locations for multi-agency interventions where it can make the most impact on reducing crime levels in vulnerable communities.
- **Shropshire Children's Trust (SCT) – Shropshire Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)**  
 The priorities identified in the CYPP have been agreed with partners, children and young people, their parents and carers through various consultation mechanisms. They are the most significant areas requiring improvement and focus on the areas where collaboration of the SCT partners offers the greatest added value. There are 9 service priorities and 2 development priorities aimed at increasing the capacity of the SCT. These will improve its performance in delivering better outcomes for children and young people in Shropshire. They are regularly monitored to ensure progress is made and targets achieved. A Children and Young People's Plan refresh is currently taking place, to be finalised in June 2009.
- **Strategic Housing Assessment 2008**  
 The West Housing Market Area Executive (collaborative working arrangement covering Shropshire and Herefordshire) commissioned a Strategic Housing Assessment to identify the extent of housing need across the area. This provides valuable statistics and allows analytical advice on housing needs to individual parish level.

A separate Gypsy and Travellers Needs Assessment covering Shropshire, Powys, Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire was conducted to explore ways in which effective support can be provided across the region in a co-ordinated manner.
- **Joint Core Strategy for Shropshire**  
 The Core Strategy will be the principal planning document in the Shropshire-wide Local Development Framework (LDF). A key role of the Core Strategy is to turn the Sustainable Community Strategy's strategic vision into policy that guides and shapes development over 15 - 20 years after the plan's adoption. The Core Strategy will act as the spatial vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy covering a wide range of policies and programmes.

Both strategies are focussed on a common set of issues derived from analysis of shared data and spatial trends (the Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy LAA Evidence Base and the LDF Annual Monitoring Report), national goals, regional policies and strategies, and local priorities in the Community Strategy agreed by the Local Strategic Partnership. The Core Strategy sets out how these issues relate to the characteristics of Shropshire and the strategy, policies and proposals of the Core Strategy will seek to address these issues.

This cross-influence has successfully taken place through:

- A shared evidence base and analysis (including Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base, LDF Annual Monitoring Reports)
  - Shared appraisal techniques such as Sustainability Appraisal
  - Proactive engagement of stakeholder partners, citizens and businesses (Core Strategy consultations, LSP Standing Conferences)
  - Aligned timetables and joint consultation (Core Strategy consultation stages scheduled alongside key stages in Sustainable Community Strategy production in 2009).
- Findings arising from these assessments, other documents (e.g. draft [Shropshire Council's Corporate Plan](#)), public consultation and intelligence are brought together and analysed in the Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base to ensure that it remains a valid and useful source of information to inform the strategic partnership planning processes, such as the refresh of the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 and to support funding bids. It has also been disaggregated to Northern, Central and Southern level and used by the developing Area Partnerships to determine priorities for delivery at local level.
  - The latest key findings derived from the Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base are set out on the following pages. They include a high level 'SWOT' analysis to clearly identify the key issues for the area. They are summarised in the Executive Summary, which introduces this document. Expressed as themes and recognising the need to look across the LAA delivery blocks it sets out the priority challenges for the Partnership. (Text highlighted in blue indicates findings from Place Survey 2008 which have not yet been formally released by CLG/ Audit Commission).

## SWOT Analysis for Shropshire

	Key Finding	Date of data	S	W	O	T	Improvement Area (Section 3)
			Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat / Challenge	
<b>Shropshire's Population</b>	Shropshire has a population of 290,900. With only 0.91 persons per hectare, the county is one of the most sparsely populated in England.	2001					Access
	Shropshire has strong links with the West Midlands and particularly with Telford & Wrekin.	2008					Economic prosperity
	Shropshire has a unique natural and historic environment. About one third of the county is upland and almost 81,000 hectares of the south Shropshire hills are designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.	2008					Access
	The southern and western parts of the county are generally more remote and self-contained, and have been identified as part of the West Midlands Rural Regeneration Zone with strong links to Herefordshire and parts of Worcestershire.	2008					Access
	Shrewsbury is the county town and has the status of sub-regional centre in the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), and is developing a Growth Point Strategy. In the emerging RSS, Shrewsbury is defined as a "settlement of significant development".	2001					Economic Prosperity
	Shropshire has a wealth of leisure and culture facilities and hosts a number of major shows and festivals, attracting many thousands of visitors from far and wide.	2008					Economic Prosperity
	Overall satisfaction with the local area is high – 87.4% (NI 5) and has shown an improvement since 2006/07.	2008/09					Sustainable Development & Communities
	The county has a higher than average proportion of residents aged 45 or over (48.0%) compared to the national average (40.8%). The percentage of those above retirement age in Shropshire is 23.4%.	2007					Older People

	Key Finding	Date of data	S	W	O	T	Improvement Area (Section 3)	
			Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat / Challenge		
Shropshire's Population	The number of people in the 16 - 29 age range is falling by more than the national average. The age group accounts for 14.6% of the population.	2007					Younger People	
	1.2% of the population identified themselves as being from black, mixed or other minority ethnic groups. Shrewsbury is identified as having the most diverse population.	2001					Sustainable Development & Communities	
	The working age population of Shropshire has grown by 4.8% (7,800 people) from 1991 to 2007.	2007					Economic Prosperity	
Children & Young People	Between 2001 and 2007 the population of 0-15 year olds fell by 3.3% in Shropshire.	2008/09					Younger People	
	The standard of achievement in Shropshire schools is high. In particular, GSCE results for 2008 are exceptionally good: year-on-year comparisons for percentage of pupils achieving 5+A*-C including English and Maths have improved (54.4% from 52.9%). Shropshire is above the national average for achievement at Key Stage 4.	2008						Younger People
	An estimated 13% of children aged under 16 within Shropshire live in families on low incomes. This is significantly lower than the England average of 21.0%. (In the north area, 14% of the population under 16 are classed as income deprived. This is slightly higher than the Shropshire average of 13%).	2007						Younger People
	High levels of alcohol consumption in young people. The number of young people in Shropshire aged between 11 to 15 years who drink at least once a week is significantly higher than the national average.  Less young people (17%) than nationally (25%) reported that they have never had an alcoholic drink and more (39%) than nationally (35%) have never been drunk. (TellUs3).	2008						Younger People

	Key Finding	Date of data	S	W	O	T	Improvement Area (Section 3)
			Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat / Challenge	
Children & Young People	Children and young people in Shropshire are significantly more likely to die from accidents than the national figure, and males are more likely to die from accidents than females. 89% of deaths from accidents in the 0-24 years old range are attributable to road traffic accidents.	2007/08					Younger People
	Overall, teenage pregnancy rates are low (31.7%) compared to the national average (41.7%). However, data for 2001-2003 identifies areas in central Oswestry, and Market Drayton and north Shrewsbury as areas where levels of teenage pregnancy are significantly higher than the England average.	2007					Younger People
	Childhood obesity levels (11.2% for reception year) are below the national average (9.6%).	2008					Health Inequalities
	Activities for teenagers is seen as the most important area in need of improving (48%). This is in line with previous surveys and national trends.	2008/09					Younger People
	Perception of teenagers hanging around on the streets being a problem in Shropshire has fallen by 19 percentage points since 2006/07.	2008/09					Feeling Safe
	A higher proportion of young people in Shropshire (73.7%) than nationally (69.5%) or regionally (69.7%) have reported participation in positive activities (NI110).	2008					Younger People
	The economic downturn is one of the key factors for a decline in performance (5.2% in 2008 against 4.2% in 2007) for NEETs – Not in Education Employment or Training, even though Shropshire is best performing council from West Midlands region.	2007/08					Younger People
	Long-term stability of placements was an under-performing area, but prioritisation of this area and implementation of the action plan achieved an improvement from 61.4% in 2007/08 to 66.7% in 2008/09.	2008/09					Younger People

	Key Finding	Date of data	S	W	O	T	Improvement Area (Section 3)
			Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat / Challenge	
Children & Young People	Attendance of parents (107) to the Triple P positive parenting programme was above the target (54), with more agencies (26) than planned (18) delivering the sessions. High levels of satisfaction with the programme (82%) were given.	2007/08					Sustainable Development & Communities
	A significantly higher proportion of young people (than nationally) reported feeling very safe around the local area 33% (28%), on public transport 28% (23%), and going to and from school 54% (49%). (TellUs 3).	2008					Feeling Safe
	Significantly more young people (25%) than nationally (23%) report eating 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables each day. 41% report doing more than 30 minutes of sport or other active things on 6-7 days of the last 7 days, which is significantly better than nationally (36%). (TellUs 3).	2008					Health Inequalities
Health and Well-Being	The proportion of residents describing their health as good or very good is 76.9% (NI119).	2008/09					Health Inequalities
	50,800 (18%) of residents reported having a long-term limiting illness in 2001; this is similar to national averages.	2001					Health Inequalities
	Measures of health deprivation show that 2% of Shropshire's residents live in areas which are identified in the 20% most deprived (areas) nationally. (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 – Health).	2007					Health Inequalities
	Rates of smoking in adults are significantly higher for people who live within the most deprived fifth of areas in Shropshire, compared to those who live within the least deprived quintiles.	2008					Health Inequalities

	Key Finding	Date of data	S	W	O	T	Improvement Area (Section 3)
			Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat / Challenge	
Health and Well-Being	Inequalities in life expectancy for people dying of smoking-related diseases between those living in the most and least deprived areas in Shropshire.	2008					Health Inequalities
	Shropshire also has higher than national rates of months of life lost from alcohol amongst men and women, with a 62% increase in hospital admissions relating to alcohol over the last 4 years.	2008/09					Health Inequalities
	Over 11% of the population provide unpaid care for a family member or a friend, with 2% providing over 50 hours per week. This is higher than regional and national averages.	2008					Health Inequalities
	Older people say they able to get the services and support they need to continue to live at home for as long as they want to in their local area – at 33.6%, Shropshire appears to be rated higher than other councils where data is known (30%) (NI139).	2008/09					Older People
	22.1% of people in Shropshire take part in the minimum recommended level of sport and active recreation. Women, people with disabilities and those living in rural Shropshire are even less likely to take part.	2008					Health Inequalities
	The groups that experience an admission to hospital due to accidents are more likely to be male than female, people in the 75 years and over age group, and people living in the most deprived 5th of areas in Shropshire.	2008					Health Inequalities
	Higher vaccination coverage than the national average.	2008					Health Inequalities
	Inequalities in life expectancy for men between those living in the most and least deprived areas in Shropshire.	2009					Health Inequalities
	Highest prevalence of dementia in the West Midlands.	2008					Older People

	Key Finding	Date of data	S	W	O	T	Improvement Area (Section 3)
			Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat / Challenge	
Safer and Stronger Communities	83% of people say that they feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together in the area. improving from 65% in 2006/07. This compares well with other councils where data is known, and is the same result for all sections of the community.	2008					Sustainable Development & Communities
	Shropshire is a low crime area and has had a falling volume of crime over the last few years.	2008					Feeling Safe
	The level of crime in an area is cited as the most important issue in making an area a good place to live. Those citing the level of crime as most in need of improvement has fallen by seven percentage points since 2006/07.	2008					Feeling Safe
	More residents consider all areas of anti-social behaviour not to be a problem than a problem.	2008					Feeling Safe
	Increased confidence about reporting hate crime in Shropshire through the introduction of a multi-agency protocol has seen a rise in the reporting of incidents.	2008 /09					Feeling Safe
	Vulnerability to the dangers of fire: Government data indicates that there are 37,000 homes which are 'well above' average risk from fire and a further 8,054 which are 'above' average risk within Shropshire (Fire Service Emergency cover toolkit).	2001					Feeling Safe
	The annual West Mercia Fear of Crime Survey indicates that the vast majority of Shropshire residents who responded to the survey felt very safe in their neighbourhood after dark.	2008					Feeling Safe
	Analysis of the home location of offenders of alcohol-related crime shows that 19% of alcohol-related offenders live in the south of the county, 34% live in the central area and 36% live in the north. Offenders of alcohol related crime are more likely to live in the most deprived quintile of areas in Shropshire.	2008					Feeling Safe
	Anti-social behaviour due to drunkenness in the evenings by both adults and young people are two of the county's top three problems. Areas that were identified as having the greatest problems were in the town centres of Oswestry and Shrewsbury.	2008					Feeling Safe

	Key Finding	Date of data	S	W	O	T	Improvement Area (Section 3)
			Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat / Challenge	
Sustainable Communities (Economy, Environment, Transport, Housing)	Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in 2008 are £410.30, which is just 85.5% of England and Wales' median average and 91.4% of the regional average.	2007					Economic Prosperity
	In May 2008 there were 14,520 people claiming work-related benefits in Shropshire, 8.5% of the working age population. Two-thirds (66.6%) of benefit claimants claim Incapacity benefit followed by 16.3% claiming Job Seekers Allowance.	2008					Economic Prosperity
	The county is reliant on a few large key employers – predominantly the public and service sector.	2008					Economic Prosperity
	In Shropshire, a higher proportion of people work at home (13.4%), which reflects the attractive rural context and entrepreneurial spirit in the county. Economic growth is often as a result of indigenous company expansion rather than high levels of inward investment.	2001					Economic Prosperity
	The overall economic activity rates for those aged 16+ in Shropshire are marginally lower than regional and national averages.	2007					Economic Prosperity
	It is estimated that approx 13,431 or 8% of the working age population (18-64) are disadvantaged due to their inability to participate in the job market in Shropshire (employment deprivation).	2007					Economic Prosperity
	Shropshire's headline Gross Value Added is low compared to much of the West Midlands.	2007					Economic Prosperity
	During 2006, Shropshire had a lower level of VAT registrations (7.8%) than the West Midlands (9.0%) and the UK (9.3%).	2007					Economic Prosperity
	Business survival rates are positive. Business closure rates are lower in Shropshire (5.6%) than in the West Midlands (7.2%) and the UK (7.3%) amongst VAT-registered businesses.	2006					Economic Prosperity

	Key Finding	Date of data	S	W	O	T	Improvement Area (Section 3)
			Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat / Challenge	
Sustainable Communities (Economy, Environment, Transport, Housing)	Shropshire has a significantly higher proportion of all pensioner households (26.4%) than regional and national averages.	2007					Sustainable Development & Communities
	The average price of houses in Shropshire is higher than the national average.	2008					Sustainable Development & Communities
	In 2001, there were 15,955 households accommodated in social housing in Shropshire. This represented 14% of all households in the county, significantly lower than nationally and regionally.	2001					Access
	Affordable Housing emerges as a key area of focus, with the highest proportion of residents recording it as both important and in need of improvement.	2008/09					Sustainable Development & Communities
	In 2001, 3.5% of the population travelled to work by public transport. This is compared to 10.5% in the West Midlands and 14.9% in England.	2001					Access
	On average Shropshire residents travelled 15.88km to work, and almost a third (32.9%) travelled 10km or over to work.	2001					Access
	Improvement in public transport is an increasing priority for people. (From 7 <sup>th</sup> place in 2003/04 to 3 <sup>rd</sup> in 2008/09).	2008/09					Access
	Shropshire has experienced 38 severe/extreme weather episodes during the 10 year period 1998 – 2008.	2009					Sustainable Development & Communities
	The county is ranked as being the 106 <sup>th</sup> deprived county out of 149 county and unitary councils (1 <sup>st</sup> being the most deprived and 149 <sup>th</sup> being the least).	2007					Sustainable Development & Communities
	By contrast, 2% of the county's population live in the most deprived 5 <sup>th</sup> of areas nationally. 13% live in the least deprived 5 <sup>th</sup> .	2007					Sustainable Development & Communities

- The key findings have formed the basis of the themes which represent the priority challenges in Shropshire, discussed in further detail in section 3.6. They have been tested across existing partnership delivery plans (such as the LAA delivery plans) in order to ensure that the key challenges for Shropshire are being addressed and positive outcomes are being delivered. In some cases it may be necessary to strengthen existing delivery plans and in other cases to develop improvement plans to address new challenges and to strengthen the way in which the Partnership works.
- **Evaluating and communicating the work of the Partnership**  
The annual Pride of Shropshire Awards is designed to celebrate the very best of what goes on in Shropshire. They are also an effective way of evaluating and promoting the work of the partnership and give local people a better understanding of the issues and priorities for the area.

The awards, a joint venture between the Shropshire Star, Mullers and the Shropshire Partnership, are designed to highlight the achievements of the many people who are unsung heroes, or who work quietly behind the scenes but make a real difference to the success and well-being of Shropshire. Awards are categorised to reflect the themes of the Shropshire Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement and are open to nominations from all sections of local communities. Award categories included: courage, young entrepreneur, learner, greenest family, neighbour, volunteer, healthy star, carer, community project and overall award winner.

#### **Pride of Shropshire Award Winner**

Meole's Got Talent, residents from Meole Estate, Shrewsbury, were awarded top prize at the Pride of Shropshire Awards 2008 ceremony.

The project features singing workshops and a concert in the local church hall. It now involves dozens of youngsters, and has an increasing membership as more young people become involved.

The idea for the project came about to help to tackle concerns expressed by residents and local businesses about anti-social behaviour in the local area. As a result of the project there is an increased sense of pride and confidence in the neighbourhood, a demonstrable reduction in the incidents of anti-social behaviour, and a greater self confidence and self esteem among the participants themselves.

### 2.3 **Strategic improvement planning relating to partnership capacity**

“Community consultation and partner engagement are excellent” (*Shropshire County Council Annual Letter 2006-07*). However, to strengthen our approach further in line with the new duty to involve and to better meet the challenges identified for the area, Shropshire partners are committed to building and strengthening the way the Shropshire Partnership works through:

- Developing an integrated partnership approach to community engagement and involvement.

This is an integral part of the new Partnership Co-ordinators role. For example, ensuring that the consultation database is fully utilised and establishing a forward plan for the Citizen Panel linked to improvement plans for the wider partnership. Outcomes will be evident to local people who should not feel overburdened by consultation from partner organisations.

- Smarter use of intelligence from customer services systems across the partnership and local intelligence from Local Committees and Area Partnerships.

The partnership needs to share information effectively and adopt a structured approach to ensuring that information from grass roots communities is fed into the service planning process in a timely manner. This includes customer services CRM data and local intelligence from LCs and Area Partnerships. An example of good practice is the Crime Data Reports on a monthly basis to the Safer Stronger Partnerships Performance Group. This informs partner actions to tackle the issues identified.

- Strengthening scrutiny arrangements of the LAA in line with the new overview and scrutiny powers.

Shropshire Council’s Strategic Overview and Scrutiny arrangements will incorporate scrutiny of the selection and delivery of the LAA targets and partner engagement.

- Adopting a consistent and robust evaluation framework to ensure that partnership innovation projects are appropriately assessed in terms of impact and outcomes.

Quarterly performance management activities undertaken by the 4 blocks will include a qualitative case study approach, where appropriate, to illustrate outcomes for communities and individuals. There is good practice currently in the Health and Well-Being Block which can be used to develop a standard approach.

- Defining the core messages that need to be communicated to Shropshire's communities.

Each block will look at its key message to the public to support achievement of key priorities, e.g. Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership Board to develop a communication plan to reassure communities about actions being taken to reduce crime and disorder, and to reinforce the messages that Shropshire is a low crime area.

- Establishing a localised approach to performance data collection and reporting on key local priorities where appropriate.

Performance management arrangements will be strengthened to clearly articulate the difference that Area Partnerships are making to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

- Develop an approach to measuring value for money e.g. savings from the public purse generated through partnership action. This ties into the principles behind the Sustainable Communities Act.

Partners need to clearly identify the costs of current service delivery and then the reduction of costs resulting from partnership intervention.

- Improving the quality of the Local Strategic Partnerships decision-making processes.

There is a need to formalise the inclusion of the block chairs within the Leadership Board context. In addition, the delivery structure will be reviewed in the light of the new Sustainable Community Strategy.

## SECTION 3

### The delivery of improvements and outcomes in Shropshire.

#### 3.1 Overview

The key priority outcomes for Shropshire are found in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011. They have been developed using local intelligence provided by the Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base and through a robust process of consultation and engagement with stakeholders, partners and residents. This ensures a commitment by the Shropshire partners to focus resources on key issues thereby delivering better outcomes for Shropshire people. The Local Area Agreement 2008-11 is currently delivered through the Shropshire Partnership delivery blocks and supported by the Area Partnerships.

Overall satisfaction ratings with the local area have risen to 87.4% in 2008, which compares very favourably with other Local Authority ratings (where data is known). This demonstrates that progress has been made against outcomes that local people consider to be important to Shropshire as a place to live.

The Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) 2006/09 had 11 outcomes measured through 29 performance indicators. The outcomes identified for LPSA stretch targets have not only achieved excellent value for money, but more importantly have delivered service improvements with partners over and above what could have been achieved during the 3-year period had the LPSA not been in place.

Using pump priming grant and LPSA1 Performance Reward Grant (PRG) £1,892k was invested in these priority outcomes. The forecast for delivery of the targets at Quarter 4 2008/09 is that 21 indicators will achieve target; 3 will be partially met; and 4 will not achieve target. Overall this means that we forecast to receive £5,601k in PRG, with the potential to achieve a further £889k. Monies allocated back to the Shropshire Partnership of c£800k per annum from 2008/2009 will be allocated by each delivery block to support delivery of key priorities.

Detailed below are examples of the added value for local communities, measured through the difference between what has actually been achieved (or forecasted) and what would have been achieved without the agreement:

<b>LPSA Targets 2006 – 2009</b>	<b>Added value (the difference this has made to the community)</b>
LPSA01i Number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System.	229 less young people entered the youth justice system in Shropshire (see case study on youth offending section 3.2).
LPSA01ii % of young offenders who re-offend in 24 months.	20 less young offenders in Shropshire re-offended within 24 months.

<b>LPSA Targets 2006 – 2009</b>	<b>Added value</b> (the difference this has made to the community)
LPSA01iii Number of LAC with final warning or convictions as at September 2009.	Five less 'Looked After Children' received final warning or convictions.
LPSA02i % of children in deprived areas achieving level 6 or more in Foundation Stage PSED.	43 more children achieving Level 6 or more.
LPSA02ii % in deprived areas achieving level 6 or more in Foundation Stage CLL.	44 more children achieving Level 6 or more.
LPSA03i Number of occupied bed days for people aged 75 years or more due to falls.	8,422 less bed days required to care for 75 years or more due to falls (see case study on delayed discharges section 3.3).
LPSA04i Number of adults/carers taking up Direct payments for more than 6 months.	488 more adults/carers taking up direct payments for more than 6 months (see case study on Direct Payments section 3.3).
LPSA04iia Number of people claiming Attendance Allowance.	2,340 more people claiming Attendance Allowance (see case study on joint benefits working section 3.3).
LPSA04iic Number of people claiming Disability Living Allowance.	1,420 more people claiming Disability Living Allowance (see case study on joint benefits working section 3.3).
LPSA04iid Number of people claiming Carer's Allowance.	2,280 more people claiming Carers Allowance (see case study on joint benefits working section 3.3).
LPSA04iie Number of people claiming housing and council tax benefit.	1,229 more people claiming council tax benefit & housing benefit (see case study on joint benefits working section 3.3).
LPSA05ia Number of schools achieving National Healthy Schools status.	61 more schools achieving National Healthy Schools status (see case study on Shropshire Healthy Eating Award section 3.3).
LPSA06i Number of domestic violence incidents reported.	703 more incidents of domestic violence reported (see case study on Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference section 3.4).
LPSA06ii % domestic violence incidents detected (sanctioned).	323 more incidents of domestic violence detected (see case study on Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference section 3.4).
LPSA07i % change in No. new businesses still trading versus. All England position.	9 more new businesses in the first year and 13 more in the second year are still trading when measured against an all England position.

<b>LPSA Targets 2006 – 2009</b>	<b>Added value (the difference this has made to the community)</b>
LPSA08ia Number of households aged 16-24 eligible for homelessness assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.	140 less households who are eligible for homelessness assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.
LPSA08ib Number of households aged 16-24 approaching their local authority and resolving homelessness situation.	114 more households approaching their local authority and resolving homelessness situation.
LPSA08ic % of 16-24 year olds in receipt of Supporting People services moving on in a planned way.	15 more 16-24 year olds in receipt of Supporting People services moving in a planned way.
LPSA08ii Number of new, affordable dwellings achieved through the planning system.	62 more new affordable dwellings achieved through the planning system to date (target runs to 2011) (see case study Rocks Green, Ludford section 3.5).
LPSA09ia % 16-74 year olds able to access a key employment destination in less than 45 minutes by public transport.	5,093 more people able to access a key employment destination in less than 45 minutes by public transport.
LPSA09ib % 16-74 year olds (receiving Job Seekers Allowance) able to access a key employment destination in less than 45 minutes.	150 more people receiving Job Seekers Allowance able to access a key employment destination in less than 45 minutes by public transport.
LPSA09iia % rural households able to access town centre by demand responsive or public transport.	15,809 more rural households able to access their town centre (see case study rural transport strategy section 3.5).
LPSA09iib % rural households without a car able to access a town centre by demand or public transport.	1,075 more rural households without car able to access their town centre (see case study rural transport strategy section 3.5).
LPSA10i % reduction in CO <sup>2</sup> emissions from 3 communities of place.	2,897 less tonnes of CO <sup>2</sup> emitted (see case study low carbon communities section 3.5).
LPSA11i Number of people killed or seriously injured in accidents on local roads.	198 less people killed or seriously injured in accidents (see case study safer bike campaign section 3.5).

- The Shropshire LAA 2008-2011 has identified 19 outcomes and uses 32 indicators (and the additional 16 mandatory DCFS indicators) to monitor and manage progress. After the first year of the LAA (2008/09), of the 25 non-mandatory measures that can be reported against targets set, 18 indicators (72%) are performing on or above the targets agreed.

- Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) benchmarking data shows that out of 28 current LAA indicators that can be benchmarked nationally, 22 (79%) are in the top or second quartile, highlighting strong first year performance.
- 75% of children and young people thought that the place they live in was a good place to live (*TellUs3 2008*).
- 75.8% of Shropshire's residents say that they have been treated with respect and consideration by their local public services. (*Place Survey 2008*). The following case study demonstrates this in practice.

#### **Albrighton Flood Alleviation Scheme**

An approach taken by the council, Severn Trent and a contractor to minimise the impact of major construction work has resulted in a community so satisfied that the council held a party attended by nearly 200 local residents. The time taken to complete the work was significantly reduced. The project took top award at the 2009 UK Society for Trenchless Technology (UKSTT) awards ceremony with the Project Engineer taking the award for UKSTT' Young Engineer of the Year.

The work, to alleviate severe flooding, was carried out over an 18 month period with the scale of the work meaning that there could be significant disruption on the community. Recognising this, Shropshire Council provided a dedicated site liaison manager to provide a link to the community. This enabled Severn Trent and the contractor to better understand the needs of the community during the period of work. It resulted in an approach being taken which although was significantly more expensive, minimised the impact on the community for example, a drop-in site office was provided for the public, disruption to the flow of traffic was minimised, and traders were consulted over proposed work over the Christmas period.

Outlined below, sitting under each of the Partnership delivery blocks, are examples of key achievements with case studies to illustrate the difference they have made to the people of Shropshire.

### **3.2 Children and Young People**

- There has been a reduction in the numbers of looked after children having three or more placements in a year from 16% (2006/07) to 8.3% (2008/09). However, there has been a national risk identified over the recruitment and retention of foster carers and LAC social workers.

### **Placement stability for looked after children**

An action plan to support increased placement availability, enhanced foster care skills and procedural support has delivered improvements to the level of support provided to looked after children.

As a result of support a 15 year old girl, L is happy with her carers, is achieving well in school, has a positive outlook on life and is happy to go to college.

After a number of placement breakdowns, L was placed with her current carers. A placement consolidation meeting was convened and a co-ordinated support package was put in place, and regularly monitored through monthly Core Groups.

- More looked after children in Shropshire had their immunisation (93%) and annual health assessments (91%) than both nationally (82% and 86% respectively) and regionally (West Midlands averages were 73% and 81% respectively).
- There is a lower rate of teenage pregnancies in Shropshire (31.7 per 1000) than in the West Midlands (47.4 per 1000) or nationally (41.7 per 1000). Shropshire has experienced a small decrease in rates of teenage pregnancies in 2007 compared with a slight increase nationally and for the region.

### **CHAT**

There has been a national recognition for CHAT (Confidential Help and Advice for Teens); it is a free and confidential service for young people, aged 11 to 19 years and currently includes services in secondary schools, GP practices who display the CHAT logo and some Youth Service buildings and Connexions offices. CHAT provides help and advice on a wide range of holistic health and social issues e.g. emotional well-being, healthy eating, drug and alcohol advice, smoking cessation, sexual health and lifestyle advice. Consultation with young people and professionals identified a need to CHAT offers young people increased access to confidential advice relating to health (including sexual health) via multi – agency teams through schools.

It is one strand of an approach to meet the national target of halving the number of teenage pregnancies by 2010 through a multi-agency commitment across Shropshire to provide young people with the skills, confidence and information to make very important life choices. Parents can also access support by attending a “Speakeasy” course which aims to provide parents and carers with the confidence and skills to talk to their children about relationships and sexual health.

Monitoring data collected in 2006/07 showed that: 315 CHAT sessions were held; 5,920 recorded visits; 490 one-to-one consultations; with 52 referrals made to outside agencies delivered by 48 professionals.

- 98% (161) of schools have achieved 'National Healthy School' status, which supports the aim to reduce levels of childhood obesity (healthy eating and physical activity), provides Personal, Social and Health Education including Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) and Drug Education, and contributes to children's emotional health and well-being. This is 61 more schools than would have been achieved without the LPSA agreement,
- There has been a significantly lower re-offending rate (42%) than expected without the LPSA agreement in a particular cohort of young offenders (2006). This notable success is alongside a significant (229) reduction in the number of first time entrants (only 1058 in three years) to the youth justice system. This includes an additional 5 less looked after children with warnings or convictions (reduced from 15 in 2006 and 19 in 2007 to 7 in 2008).

The strong partnership approach targets resources to young people most at risk and need, rather than the type of offence.

### **Youth offending**

Concerns were raised by a Community Support Officer about a 15 year old male (R) who had been permanently excluded from school due to his association with pro-criminal peers, alcohol issues, anti-social behaviour, shoplifting and absconding from home.

The Youth Inclusion Support Project worker contributed to the Team around the child (TAC) following which an assessment was carried out and an intervention plan drawn up. This involvement included a referral to the Youth Offending Service Parenting Programme as well as one-to-one sessions on alcohol awareness, peer influence awareness and anger management. In addition, a letter in support of a house move was provided to try and address the problem of overcrowding. As a result R is now attending a pupil referral unit, has a paper round and attends a boxing club. R no longer absconds from home and there have been no further incidents involving the police.

In addition to this targeted risk-based approach, the Youth Offending Service works with Shropshire Council and other parties to deliver a range of preventative services, within the multi-agency team structure, to those people most at risk of offending.

- Activities for teenagers is seen as the most important area in need of improving by residents in the area. There is a range of innovative work underway through partners and Children and Young People's Services working together. TellUs3 showed that 16% of young people compared to 14% nationally thought the activities and things to do in their area were fairly poor. The TellUs3 survey showed that 48% of young people in Shropshire thought that better activities for children and young people would make their area a better place to live. 50% of young people in Shropshire also stated that better parks and play areas would make their area a better place to live. Large-scale investment is now being put in place to provide 22 new play areas across the area, accessible to all.

### **Myplace**

The exciting Myplace project is part of the Youth Support Service's drive to continue to improve Shropshire's Youth Offer. The Youth Support Service has brought together youth officers and Connexions staff into an integrated team which has seen an increase in the number of young people accessing services. Additional resources have seen a rapid expansion in the building programme - not only in the market towns but also in some rural villages.

Developed as a result of extensive consultation with young people, providers and stakeholders, the project will provide a single location where young people can access a range of support services from a range of organisations and improve the range of things to do and places to go for young people.

The programme will see a new youth facility opened in the centre of Shrewsbury and the re-building of the existing facility in Oswestry.

Teenspace Shrewsbury and Teenspace Oswestry will have a range of activities on offer from music to skateboarding, alongside a comprehensive range of support services which will make it easier for young people to access support where and when they want it.

Targeted outcomes include:

- Providing positive activities and getting young people to access them
- Reducing the NEET rate
- Specific health related targets (reduced teenage pregnancy, alcohol and substance misuse)
- Increasing participation in the arts
- Reducing youth offending and anti-social behaviour
- Reducing homelessness

### **Shawbury Multi-Agency Group**

A typical example of partnership working in the provision of diversionary activities is the Shawbury Multi-Agency Group. The group has representation from Shropshire Council – Youth Service, Library Service, Community Working and Shropshire Partnership; Shawbury Village Hall Committee; West Mercia Constabulary; RAF Shawbury; Shawbury Parish Council; St. Mary's CE Primary School; and Shawbury Primary School.

The Multi-Agency Group has been involved in a number of diversionary activities in Shawbury village. These include: a media project run by the Hive; the development of a children's play area and purchase and construction of an updated Youth Pod, for which funding was found by Shawbury Action Group (a residents group) through a number of sources, such as West Mercia Constabulary and the parish council; the set-up of junior youth club, supported by Shropshire Council's Youth Service; and sporting activities provided and run by RAF Shawbury. In addition, the then local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership provided funding for a youth bus to visit the village and provided a significant proportion of the funding for a skate ramp for the northern area of Shropshire, which has been used in Shawbury village.

- Ensuring that all children have the best chance in life underpins much of the work of the Children’s Trust and the Shropshire Partnership. The following three case studies show how the partners are working towards this aim to address cross cutting-issues through enhancing the capacity and skills of the workforce and volunteers, better signposting for families to support and information services, and improved coordination of partners’ services.

### **ARTEMIS – Workforce Induction Programme (CWIP)**

ARTEMIS is designed to increase organisational and partnership capacity and is based on the Children’s Workforce Development Council’s 7 induction standards as an introduction to the “Every Child Matters” outcomes. It is designed to track an individual’s progress through the programme and gather information on the successful completion of the induction programme for the Shropshire Children’s workforce. Artemis CWIP will provide a mechanism for enabling learners from partner agencies to join together for the introduction of and completion of Artemis CWIP. Some of the benefits from this joined up approach to the training will be:

- An understanding of integrated working and the interdependency of the diverse range of roles in the children’s workforce;
- It will enable learners their own and each individual’s value and contribution;
- It will contextualise people’s role within the wider workforce.

It will prove valuable to the following example posts:

- School crossing patrol;
- Sports coaches;
- School lunchtime supervisors;
- Volunteer drivers.

Artemis has been designed to improve the connectivity and communication between agencies. A pilot implementation plan has been developed to:

- Provide a better understanding of staff roles and responsibilities;
- Improve the sharing of information across sectors and disciplines;
- Close the gaps in the safeguarding net.

## Targeted mental health in schools

This project has built on the existing good working partnerships between Shropshire Council, schools and the PCT and has been developed to:

- Improve attendance and attainment for children and young people through targeted intervention;
- Increase staff knowledge and understanding of pupils' emotional health and well-being and give staff the confidence to deal with pupils with such issues;
- Give staff the confidence and skills to seek appropriate support through children and young people's services, health and other partner services.
- Decrease the level of stress amongst staff.

The following case study is an example of the difference that this project has made to an individual:

A 5 year old boy joined the reception class in the second term. He and his mother had been in a domestically abusive home environment and had come to the school from a refuge. When he joined the school, he was very aggressive with other children and school staff members and his mum kept him from school, because she found the problems he was causing, difficult to deal with.

Through using PASS (Pupils' Attitudes to Self in School) data, the school was able to identify that he had negative scores for: 'feelings about school'; 'perceived learning capability'; 'preparedness for learning' and 'attitudes to teachers'.

As a result the boy was placed in a class where the teaching assistant is a learning mentor, and they have built a successful relationship with his mum who now trusts the school. Through the Shropshire Information Sharing and Assessment process the school consulted with his mum, who agreed to completion of a Common Assessment Framework and has accepted support from the Multi-Agency Team.

The learning mentor is using the art and creative therapy techniques learned through TaMHS professional development with the primary mental health worker.

The boy's attendance at school is now good and though he can still be aggressive, and his behaviour has impacted on his progress in learning, the art and creative therapy techniques are supporting him in the classroom and helping him to express how he is feeling in a more constructive manner.

The school with the support of the TaMHS primary mental health worker and the Multi-Agency Team have a positive outlook in that the boy is being managed well in school and they are clear about knowing where they are going, what the next steps are, what specialist support is involved and how they can build on this in the school setting.

The head said, "being able to talk hypothetically to the primary mental health worker before mum agreed to a CAF was a huge help in the beginning".

### **Shropshire Family Information Service (FIS)**

The father in a local family died unexpectedly and the mother was struggling to cope with her own grief, the grief of her 2 children (aged 3 and 6 years) and the financial implications of losing the main wage earner. The eldest child's behaviour was beginning to become challenging and he was reluctant to go to school. The mother asked for help from the Family Information Service and received:

- Contacts of family counselling organisations for individuals and families.
- Details of lone parenting organisations and lists of local holiday clubs.
- List of solicitors in local area offering free consultations and funding organisations who would help with the cost of the childcare and short breaks for families in need.
- Sign-posting to the Citizen's Advice Bureau for information and advice on financial matters and benefits, Job Centre Plus, lone parent advisor for benefit information and tax credit calculation, library officer for children's books dealing with bereavement.
- Information on Shropshire Play Bus and Project Linus UK.

The information provided and services accessed helped to meet and improve the family's social, emotional and economic well-being and meet the children's learning and development needs. The family were able to keep the family home and are more financially stable as a result of advice received on benefits and guidance provided by the Citizen's Advice Bureau. The 6 year old regularly attended a local holiday club, which following a call by FIS was funded by Oswestry Lions Club.

The 3 year old attended a childminder for occasional short sessions funded by Oswestry Sure Start Children's Centre, who also funded a summer day trip for the family. These activities gave the children the opportunity to interact with other children of a similar age, and the mother the time to attend appointments and space to deal with her own grief.

The family were able to go on a holiday in the summer, funded by the Mother's Union. This provided an opportunity for them to have fun and enjoyment as a family, away from the family home.

They received counselling at Hope House in Oswestry. The mother became stronger emotionally and as a result was able to work with the school to address the educational and behavioural needs of her child. The child is also now enjoying and achieving at school.

Both children were able to borrow children's story books from Oswestry Library which helped to explain bereavement and emotions and received a Project Linus quilt. By seeing the positive effect that these had on her own children, the mother donated some material to the project for more quilts to be made for local children, helping the family to make their own positive contribution.

### 3.3 Health and Well-Being

- Increase in take up of benefits by 21% to £2.58million through improved access to benefits support and advice. The difference the LPSA made was shown across all types of benefits e.g. 1,229 more people claiming housing and council tax benefits and 2,340 people claiming attendance allowance.

#### **Joint benefits working**

Established in 2004, to address the acknowledged low take-up of benefits in rural areas and the loss of Shropshire Social Security offices, the Joint Benefit partnership has made advice service more widely available to people and avoided duplication of effort. In 2005, Shropshire County Council signed up to benefit uptake targets under LPSA, which would see an increase in benefits for older people and the vulnerable.

Initially set up in the Bridgnorth area, the partnership has extended to cover the entire county and includes the council, the local pension service, a voluntary sector agency and importantly, Shropshire Job Centre Plus. The joint team has been instrumental in promoting the successful take-up, particularly with benefits for carers and in recognition of disability, all traditionally under-claimed.

Of notable practice was the use of pharmacies to increase the take-up of Attendance Allowance as a way into claiming pension credit. The partnership recognises the trusted position that pharmacists hold in the community and work with them on take-up campaigns to ensure that Shropshire people claim the benefits that they are entitled to. Future plans include helping those who cannot work to claim what they are entitled to, and playing our part in helping those who can work to do so, and to make the transition from benefits to work as trouble free as possible.

- The number of accidental fires occurring fell by 14.15% in 2008/09, coupled with a reduction in the number of primary fires per 1,000 population of 8.75%. Periods of recession are traditionally accompanied by higher incidents of fires, but there is still an expectation that stretched targets will be achieved, which aim for an overall reduction of 12.46% (from 224.91 fires per 100,000 population to 196.75 by 2011).

#### **Accidental fires**

The 2008/09 saw a reduction from 650 fires to 558 (against a target of 612) through the combined efforts of the partnership.

Despite many years of preventative work, the number of fires occurring in the county remained too high, and in particular the number of fire deaths and casualties. Inclusion in the Shropshire LAA has refocused efforts to improve in this area.

Recognising the invaluable contribution partners can bring our strategy is based upon a multi-agency approach. For example;

- Carers from “Help the Aged” conduct risk assessments on the homes of older people and where necessary fit smoke detectors on our behalf.
- The Sensory Impairment Team purchase and supply specialist fire detection equipment for the hard of hearing.
- All partners act as our eyes and ears and signpost where they identify individuals at risk from fire.
- During the period April 2008 till March 2009, a total of 4,681 home fire risk assessments have been undertaken, and 5,706 smoke detectors fitted in the homes of those most at risk from fire.

- Over 170 local caterers have taken part in the Healthy Eating Awards, leading to benefits for over 4,000 people across Shropshire.

### **Shropshire Healthy Eating Award**

Shropshire’s Healthy Eating Award (SHEA) is a joint council and public health initiative rewarding healthier catering and food hygiene practice and increasing access for local people to healthier food choices. It contributes to reducing inequalities by targeting commercial and public sector premises serving areas of high health need

Separate awards have been developed for early years’ providers, schools, commercial caterers and adult care providers. Award criteria include: compliance with current food hygiene regulations including training; promotion and provision of healthier food choices; compliance with smoke-free requirements; and breastfeeding-friendly policy.

In April 2006, Local Area Agreement funding enabled a dedicated SHEA Coordinator to work alongside local environmental health practitioners to support healthy eating and tackle health inequalities.

Since then, SHEA has witnessed more than 170 local caterers on-board, over 4,000 people benefiting from the award and a local commitment to continue the good work.

## **Food for Life Partnership Award**

Project led by the Soil Association and funded by a Big Lottery Grant, and included Garden Organic, Focus on Food and the Health Education Trust. The aim of the project was to improve the quality of school food and food education in schools.

The criteria included providing at least 75% of dishes which are freshly-prepared, as well as menus meeting targets for the use of local food, organic food and fair trade items. Meat, poultry and eggs used in the service production must also conform to welfare standards such as Freedom Foods and Red Tractor.

There were three levels of award for school caterers and schools to work towards: bronze, silver and gold. Shropshire was awarded the Food for Life Silver award in September 2008, for all primary schools within the county - the first council caterer to achieve this level.

To meet other aspects of the criteria, additional products had to be sourced, for example: local cheese from Whitchurch; free range eggs from farms within Shropshire; fish products which complied with the MSC standards; and meat products which could demonstrate the required animal welfare standards. Alternatives also had to be sourced for products containing potentially harmful additives.

The Government Nutritional Standards came into force in September 2008. Hence, the menu in primary schools as of September 2008 met both the Nutritional Standards and the Food for Life Standards.

Two primary schools in Shropshire have achieved the silver level for the school. As well as meeting the catering requirements of the criteria, schools must also demonstrate their commitment to growing clubs, cookery clubs and food education as part of the curriculum.

One of those schools, St Peter's CE Primary School in Wem, was awarded the Soil Association 'School of the Year' in recognition of the progress they have made during the year.

- Based on unaudited data, Shropshire is in the PWC benchmarking club top quartile for NI139 with 33.6% of older people saying that they are supported to live at home for as long as they want to, however the target for 2008/09 was not achieved. A new 'signposting' initiative has been introduced, designed to support delivery of this outcome.

## **Signposting project**

Shropshire residents over the age of 65 have better access to services, designed to help them remain in their own homes, following the recent launch of this signposting initiative. Partners recognised the opportunity to provide more effective preventative services for Shropshire people by developing a single hub to which agency referrals could be made and coordinated from.

This approach is aimed at safeguarding a vulnerable person by identifying and assessing risks, and ensuring that the risks are dealt with directly or by the appropriate agency.

Referrals are received from a wide range of providers e.g. housing providers, police Community Support Officers, and are managed and, if necessary, redirected by a co-ordinator. Examples of the range of services that can be accessed include:

- home fire safety checks (including fitting smoke detectors)
- benefits advice
- home security/crime prevention advice and assistance (including fitting of door and window locks, security chains, peep holes)
- advice on falls prevention
- advice and support for carers.

Example of how this works in practice are set out below:

- A council officer visited a lady with dementia following concerns raised by her family. This resulted in a referral to the Fire and Rescue Service ensuring that a full fire risk assessment was carried out and smoke alarms fitted.

The scheme fits well with the National Transformation in Adult Social Care Agenda and enables partner organisations to access a wide range of services for people they meet in an efficient manner, saving time and resources.

Partners work together on the governance and in the delivery of the project, and following evaluation it is expected that the service will be extended to all age groups. An evaluation of the outcomes of the project will take place in September 2009.

- Two gentleman both 85, one with dementia and the other the carer, were referred by the Fire and Rescue Service to the Community Council for Shropshire Carers service to assess carer support requirements, West Mercia Police to conduct a home security check, the Joint Benefits Service to ensure that all benefits entitlements were taken up, the Falls service for a home safety assessment, and their home was also fitted with fire alarms following a full fire risk assessment.

- The number of people supported to continue in their carers' role has risen, with 1,066 more adults/carers taking up direct payments since 2007, exceeding the target by a significant margin (LPSA4i).

### **Direct payments**

Feedback from consultation with carers showed that a small amount of money to spend where they felt would provide the most benefit for them and the person that they care for, would help them to continue in their care role.

As a result of this feedback, over 150 carers direct payments were awarded between October 2008 and the end of March 2009 following the introduction of the carer's direct payment during 2008/09. The direct payments have been put towards a range of uses; examples include carers using the money to help fund a holiday, purchase a new oven, and purchasing additional care for carer relief. Carers can access up to £300 as a one-off payment following a Carers Assessment of their needs.

Success stories include:

- Mrs J cares for her husband. She suffers from arthritis and had difficulty using her old oven. She received a carer's direct payment of £195.69 to fund a combination oven to replace her old oven. She is now using her combination oven on the work surface without putting her health at risk, helping to reduce her back pain and prevent accidents through not having to bend and lift hot oven trays and food.
- A carer who supports a service user but does not live with him has used the carers' direct payment of £122 to fund a landline telephone; this has enabled the service user to be in contact with the carer for emergencies in case there are issues with mobile phone reception. This grant has given both the carer and the service user control over the situation and an alternative reliable choice.
- A carer who cares for her mother on a daily basis relies on her car to transport her mother to and from hospital, and GP appointments. She has used the carers' direct payment of £150 to fund the servicing of the car. The car had not been serviced for 6 years and was at risk of mechanical breakdown. The carers grant has given the carer the spending power to have the service done, and enable her to continue supporting her mother and reduce stress within the caring role.

Carers are supported to continue in their caring role by a range of partners, including Crossroads and the Community Council for Shropshire, through the provision of a range of support services including the completion of carers assessments, identification of opportunities to apply for carers direct payments, as well as providing carers support services.

- The number of delayed discharges from the acute hospitals (per 100,000 population aged 65+) has decreased from 26 on 31 March 2008 to 7 on 22 March 2009.

### **Reducing delayed discharges from hospital**

Shropshire Council, Shropshire County Primary Care Trust and Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust have worked in partnership to develop and manage an effective winter plan to keep delayed discharges of care from acute and community hospitals to a minimum. The direct impact of the actions can be seen in the reduction in the number of delays.

The improved performance has been brought around through daily communication between partners and through investment in purchasing additional independent sector step down beds. The value of the direct and regular communication can never be underestimated.

- Pilot sites are expected to recruit up to 100 obese women from disadvantaged communities, 50 who are pregnant and 50 who are postnatal, to promote and encourage healthy lifestyles. The programme also contributes to the Local Area Agreement target on reducing childhood obesity in reception-age children.

### **Pregnancy, birth and beyond healthy weight service**

This is a health improvement service targeted at obese mothers from disadvantaged communities. Advisers provide one-to-one or group support to promote lifestyle changes to benefit the infant, mother and the family as a whole. It aims to:

- Minimise excessive weight gain during pregnancy
- Support weight loss post-pregnancy
- Prevent the development of obesity in infants (up to 24 months)
- Reducing health inequalities.

The pilot project is being delivered in partnership with the children's centres services, and involve key stakeholders such as health-visiting services and maternity services.

- People's satisfaction is high with GP's and their local hospital at 85% and 71% respectively. (*Place Survey 2008*)

### 3.4 Safer and Stronger Communities

- 88.8% of residents over 65 expressed their satisfaction with their local area and their home (*Place Survey 2008*).
- 83% of people say that they feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together in the area. This compares well with other councils and is the same result for all sections of the community (*Place Survey 2008*).

#### **Hate crime**

People feel more confident about reporting hate crime in Shropshire following the introduction of a multi-agency protocol to address hate crime. It has helped to build better relationships with our BME people and communities, and has led to more people believing that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.

Feedback to the Shropshire Partnership Equalities Forum clearly showed that people were not comfortable reporting their experiences directly to the police. They wanted a more localised approach with reporting sites where they felt safe and comfortable, and where trust and rapport had been built over time.

The launch of the initiative saw an initial surge in reports (200 incidents in 2006/07). Reporting has been steadily increasing, with 150 incidents reported from March 2008 to March 2009.

There are numerous examples of activities that have taken place across the county, e.g. teachers and pupils have worked together to place hate crime awareness firmly on the curriculum.

Amongst those who have most keenly felt the difference are adults with learning difficulties at the Abbots Wood centre in Shrewsbury. They have recently produced their own very striking hate crime poster showing a brick being thrown through a window. Their comments include "it's good to have a contact other than the police", and, "I'm glad to see hate crime against people with disabilities is being addressed".

The new protocol addresses all hatred crimes, not just race-related crimes, and has become a vital tool, allowing de-personalised data to be shared quickly, presenting accurate representative figures for hate crime and non-crime related incidents in Shropshire. It has also precipitated more consistent monitoring and reporting, which has supported the delivery of diversity targets within the Local Area Agreement.

- Offenders under probation supervision in employment at the end of their order or licence (NI 144) has over-achieved target continuously for the year, 42.1% versus 40% target. However, this has shown a downward trend in performance since quarter 2.

- We continue to aim to reduce the rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol-related harm (NI 39) and have achieved the target for 2008/09, i.e. 1, 200 in line with the previous year against an expected national increase.

#### **Accident and emergency alcohol project**

The first year of this project has seen 17% (1,309) of those screened showing positive for alcohol. Of these, 210 patients were referred to the Alcohol Liaison Specialist for a brief intervention, with a further 75 from this group referred on for counselling and support.

In addition through this project, a number of working practices have been altered to ensure that people presenting to A&E with alcohol related injuries have access to support.

The project was developed through the Children's Trust as part of a project to reduce alcohol-related harm. Specifically aimed at providing brief intervention and referral to treatment services for young people admitted to A&E through the misuse of alcohol. The identification of link nurses in a number of wards, together with poster campaigns, mean that the project is recognised throughout the hospital and has resulted in a number of adult patients admitted to hospital receiving a brief intervention and/or access to counselling and ongoing support.

- Residents are positive that all people are treated fairly by local public services, however, there is recognition that there is a need to narrow the gap in perception among different communities on being treated with respect by local public services (e.g. between over 65 years and 18-34 year olds, and those who live in owned versus social rented accommodation).
- Residents feel positive about local public services making the area safer, with overall perceptions of levels of crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) – including drunken and rowdy behaviour, and drug dealing falling. However younger residents and those living in social rented accommodation are more likely to perceive ASB as problematic rather than older people and owner occupiers.

- Serious acquisitive crime (e.g. domestic burglary, theft from motor vehicles) is 208 less than anticipated i.e. 2,275 incidents taking place than the target of 2,492. Emerging trends, however, suggest that theft from motor vehicles is on the rise in the north and south of the county. Crime statistics are reported monthly to enable timely and appropriate responses to emerging issues and potential hotspots.

### **Serious acquisitive crime**

Based on the success of a multi agency approach to intensive intervention with local prolific and priority offenders, the police, probation and other partners are now looking at extending integrated offender management to a wider group of offenders in Shropshire, including those who are released from short term prison sentences who are not subject to any statutory supervision on release.

One current success story is M, a 24 year old from Shrewsbury, who is an identified prolific and priority offender and when he was last sentenced he was assessed as having an 89% probability of reconviction within two years. His offending could clearly be related to a significant 'spike' in the police crime figures for domestic burglaries. Previous sentences and interventions had had little impact on his behaviour.

Once he was designated as a PPO, police, probation and other partners worked together to agree an individual management plan tailored to his particular issues and level of risk. He recognised that he was under close scrutiny under the 'catch and convict' strand of the PPO scheme and agreed to an intensive plan designed to resettle and rehabilitate him. For the first time in his career he engaged well with the services on offer. This included substance misuse testing and treatment, and he has shown real motivation and commitment to reduce and manage his alcohol abuse. He completed a 12-week programme with the ACCLAIM project which provided him with intensive support and mentoring. He has enrolled and is attending a number of courses provided at local colleges, and participated in a local woodland management project. In order to improve his employment opportunities he has been assisted to complete a CV and given very practical assistance to attend job interviews. Throughout this 12-month period his progress has been closely managed by a multi agency panel, and there is evidence of sustained commitment towards a much more prosocial set of aspirations which include full time employment and his own home. He remains well-motivated and has not re-offended.

- 703 more domestic violence incidents reported, and 323 more domestic violence incidents detected, over the period of the LPSA. The multi-agency approach used to tackle domestic violence is seen as national best practice.

### **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

The case of a young couple from the Bridgnorth area was brought to MARAC, a victim and child focussed meeting comprising up to 15 different agencies. The meeting considers high-risk cases of domestic abuse referred by the police or other agencies. The couple were known to the police, with violent offending, drug misuse and criminal offending recorded against both. The couple, when not involved in violent domestic disputes with each other, were causing significant anti-social behaviour to the community in which they lived. The information-sharing phase of the conference revealed that the male party was, by his violent actions, breaching his probation licence, and there was evidence that the female party was involved in a criminal offence and that the RSL was in the process of evicting the couple from the house.

A multi-agency action plan was completed that ultimately led to a number of positive / invasive actions. The outcome of this intervention has seen the couple separate and move on with their lives.

The conference enables information-sharing that identifies the risks posed to the victims and children affected by domestic abuse. Each case concludes with a formulated multi-agency action plan to reduce / remove the risk to those concerned.

- 32% of people in Shropshire say that they participate in regular volunteering. The national Citizenship Survey 2007/8 had an average of 27%. (*Place Survey 2008*)

### **Shropshire Outdoors project**

This growing project is aimed at encouraging vulnerable young people to participate in green physical activities. It is delivered in partnership by Shropshire Council, Shropshire County PCT and Shropshire Wildlife Trust, with support from Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales.

The project was facilitated by the Shropshire Outdoors Project Officer who worked with a privately-owned establishment, comprising a further education unit and adult centre, for young people with learning difficulties (Loppington House), disabilities and associated behavioural problems and Shropshire Council countryside staff. Project users were offered the opportunity to get involved in wildlife surveys and practical conservation work.

The growing confidence of the group has seen them explore more of the Shropshire countryside. Other organisations have become involved, such as Ifton Opportunities in St. Martins, which offer community based day services for adults with learning disabilities.

Staff and project users have also set up a project steering group which has helped to make the group self-supporting and strengthened links between the different organisations taking part.

Outcomes of the project go beyond the mental and physical health benefits of 'green exercise'. Support staff have noticed how project beneficiaries use a greater degree of co-ordination, balance and decision-making.

- 62% of Year 8 and Year 10 pupils in Shropshire (61% nationally) report that they give their time to help a charity, a local voluntary group, a neighbour or someone else in their local area. (*TellUs 3 survey*).

### **vTalent Year – volunteering scheme**

This scheme gives 15 young people the opportunity to spend one year in full time volunteering within Children and Young People's Services. It is one of only a very few schemes to meet the criteria for funding from 'v' to run a volunteering organisation for 16 - 25 year olds, and is part of a national programme which provides an allowance of up to £100 per week for each volunteer as well as providing training, based on the needs of the placement.

The aim of this programme, which was developed with Members of the Shropshire Youth Parliament, is to improve the youth offer, to provide positive opportunities by giving opportunities to volunteer, and to reduce the NEET rate. In addition to these expected outcomes there are considerable benefits to the volunteer, by giving them an opportunity to sample an area that they may wish to pursue as a career and access to free training.

### 3.5 Sustainable Communities

- Affordable housing is important to local people and needs improving (*Place survey 2008*). There is a proven correlation between people living in decent homes and their overall health and well being. This priority issue is picked up through the LAA and, although the supply of ready to develop housing sites has met its target for 2008/09, the numbers of net additional homes delivered has been affected by the impact of the economic downturn.

The average house price in Shropshire is almost £160,000 (February 2009) which is 3.9% higher than the national average. House prices have fallen by, on average, 11.9% between February 2008 and February 2009, but at a slower rate than the national average of 16.9%. The Shropshire Partnership recognises that the key driver for improving the delivery of affordable housing is Shropshire Council and registered social landlords. This will be addressed through the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

Housing tenants will have more say about where they live, now that the council, together with a number of the registered social housing associations are adopting a common allocation policy across the county for Choice Based Lettings for tenants in rented accommodation. Not only does this make people happier about the communities they live in, but it reduces the number of requests from tenants to move to different areas.

#### **Rocks Green, Ludford.**

Delivery of an additional 91 affordable homes in the south of Shropshire was enabled through the joint cooperation of the landowner, the planning authority, Homes and Communities Agency and the relevant town and parish councils.

The scheme, recognised regionally as good practice in delivery of rural affordable housing, was developed at Rocks Green near Ludlow under local planning policy now being considered for adoption by Shropshire Council, and is one of the largest rural exception sites in the country. It comprises a mix of both rented and shared ownership properties using biomass district heating and an innovative traffic management system to enhance pedestrian safety.

Development land was released by the landowner at well below market value for the area, and the scheme received funding and support from South Shropshire District Council, Shropshire County Council via the RETHINK ENERGY project, and the Homes and Communities Agency.

The success of the campaign was highlighted as part of Justice Seen Justice Done, a Home Office campaign to raise the profile of the good work carried out by police officers and CSOs.

- Road safety education, targeted at young people, has contributed to a 13.7% reduction in killed or seriously injured people in road traffic accidents.

### **Safer Bike Campaign**

A partnership campaign to reduce the number of fatal collisions around Bridgnorth, particularly those involving motorbikes, resulted in a reduction in road traffic deaths. The campaign followed local residents highlighting, at Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings, speeding traffic as their single most important issue. Complaints related to anti-social riding, noise and excessive speed, particularly on routes from the West Midlands to popular bike meets at Worfield and Quatford.

In 2007 there were 10 fatalities on the roads in the Bridgnorth area, with half of them being motorcyclists. After the campaign there were no fatal collisions in the area at all, in any vehicle type.

The campaign involved the use of a staged photograph of a collision scene which featured on all literature, and new Biker Beware Signs were placed on major arterial routes by the Bridgnorth Community Safety Partnership. The number of enforcement sites also increased in the area. In addition, the police, fire service, councillors and the community safety officer made random visits to bike meets to engage riders and hand out advice and promotional material.

- Residents are positive about local public services making the area 'cleaner and greener' which is linked to significant improvements in street and environmental cleanliness.
- The amount of household waste sent for recycling or composting continues to increase and overachieve against challenging LAA targets. Performance has improved from 43.44% in 2007/08 to 47.7% in 2008/09. This puts Shropshire in the top quartile of Price Waterhouse Coopers benchmarking authorities.

- The introduction of a new responsive countywide service providing a flexible passenger service to over 97% over rural residents helped support achievement of the LPSA stretch target which aimed to increase the number of rural households able to access demand-responsive transport or public transport.

### **Rural Transport Strategy for Shropshire**

Accessibility to market town on two or more days per week has increased from 57% to 97%.

The new rural transport network includes more frequent inter-urban bus services, a demand-responsive Shropshire Link two-day per week service across all rural areas, and improved integration between these two types of services and with community transport services. Working with bus operators has improved the frequency and quality of inter-urban services which connect all of the major towns in Shropshire.

Interchange facilities are important for passenger comfort and convenience and further improvements have been introduced in partnership with parish and town councils who are responsible for the maintenance of bus shelters.

The new rural transport network includes some area specific services such as the Shropshire Hills Shuttle which provides sustainable access to a significant proportion of Shropshire's AONB. These services have been developed and are funded in partnership with the National Trust, Natural England and the AONB.

Shropshire's bus-based services are integrated with local and national rail services through 16 main rail stations. Improvements to the rail services and interchange facilities have been introduced in partnership with rail operators, community rail partnerships and network rail. For example Wrexham, Shropshire and Marylebone Railway now run direct services to London, and many stations have been fitted with CCTV.

A good public transport network also needs to be affordable, and Shropshire Council has worked with Age Concern and others to ensure a comprehensive coverage for Concessionary Fare pass holders by allowing journeys on community transport to qualify and by providing pre 0930 hours travel.

- It is estimated that the low carbon communities' project has resulted in the avoidance of at least 200 tonnes of CO2 and £50,000 in energy costs to businesses per annum.

### **Low Carbon Communities**

Over 100 small businesses in Shropshire have received technical assistance regarding the implementation of sustainable energy measures in their premises during the Low Carbon Communities for Business Project. The achievements of this project and the benefits are highlighted and promoted in a handbook which provides a summary of the low carbon communities project and gives businesses ideas on reducing carbon emissions

For example, Cleobury Café – the new Cleobury Café installed over 20 low energy lightbulbs, saving an estimated £250 and 1.5tCO2 per year.

Harvest Wholefoods – a business audit on the premises of this Bishop's Castle retailer found that, as well as using more efficient lighting, the shop would benefit from significant cost savings through replacing its oil-fired heating system with a wood pellet stove. The total cost of installation was around £9,000, of which a 50% grant was received through the LCCB project, and has provided savings of 6.5 tonnes of CO2 and £400 per year.

## **3.6 Strategic improvement planning for delivery of local priorities**

- Drawing on the key findings from the Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base, the Executive Summary which introduces this document highlights the major long term social, environmental and economic challenges facing the area. This section looks more closely at these challenges and identifies how the Shropshire Partnership plans to tackle them. Arrangements are in hand to allocate rewards from the LPSA 2006-2009 to the Blocks to support further innovation and improvement against priority outcomes.

### **Health inequalities**

- Greater focus on preventative measures to reduce the stress on acute services and care.

LAA 2008-2011 priority area – Reducing the risks of loss of independence and preventing people needing to enter care services (LAA 04).

There are currently a number of actions in the LAA delivery plan to address this Issue. A partnership review will take place to explore whether the actions are sufficient and appropriate or need to be strengthened.

- Promoting healthy lifestyles.

LAA 2008-2011 priority areas – Supporting increased participation and healthy lifestyle choices for Shropshire people (LAA08) and Reducing obesity in primary school age children (LAA22)

A multi agency strategy for childhood obesity is in the final stages of development and will focus upon: maternal weight gain; breastfeeding and healthy weaning; promoting healthy settings for children in their daily lives; development of care and weight maintenance pathways.

A Social Marketing pilot project based on physical activity will commence in July 2009 with the aim of establishing a framework that can be applied and adapted to suit different audiences and behaviours. Social Marketing is described as “marketing that improves people’s lives.” It aims to changing behaviour and choices and is used alongside other approaches and techniques, such as public health and health promotion, to achieve sustained positive impacts on the behaviour of individuals and groups.

The learning from the activity will have cross-cutting benefits for the LAA, and should also be helpful in taking forward other activities involved in the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy such as smoking cessation and tackling alcohol misuse, as well as individual partner projects.

- Inequalities in life expectancy for men between those living in the most and least deprived areas in Shropshire.

As the lead agency, the Shropshire Primary Care Trust, has identified the above issue through the JSNA and will deliver improvements through its World Class Commissioning framework.

Cross cutting work around Social Marketing will build understanding of behaviours and influence service development of partner agencies.

- Reducing the incidents of harm to young people through alcohol and substance misuse.

LAA 2008-2011 priority area – Reduced harmful effects of alcohol (LAA13)

There are currently a number of actions in the LAA delivery plan to address the issue of the impact of alcohol abuse; however there are

few references to actions surrounding young people. The Alcohol Strategy was adopted by the Shropshire Partnership in September 2008 and focuses more strongly on the impact of alcohol misuse on young people, particularly around hot spot areas in the county.

### **Older people**

- Address multiple issues around Shropshire's aging population e.g. dementia.

LAA 2008-11 priority areas – Reducing the risks of loss of independence and preventing people needing to enter care services (LAA 04) and Improving the wellbeing, social inclusion and choice and enabling independence of vulnerable people including those with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health needs (LAA06).

There is a significant focus in the LAA Delivery Plans in the Health and Wellbeing block to address the implications of the increasing ageing population in Shropshire. Improvements to delivery in partnership have been highlighted in section 3.3 through the Signposting and Direct Payment projects.

Further suggestions have been made during the process of Self Evaluation by partners to improve links between those in need and the support services which include: a central referral system, including better engagement with GP's and health workers; single assessment forms; and enhancing the role of visiting officers.

### **Younger people**

- Reducing the number of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET).

LAA 2008-11 – Further reducing the number of vulnerable young people who are not in education, employment or training (LAA01).

Shropshire is performing well when compared against national trends. However, a combination of the late arrival and delivery of Learning and Skills Council funded NEET and Entry 2 Employment provision and the economic downturn has had a significant impact on the figures meaning that targets set in the LAA are unlikely to be achieved. Action plans have been developed to address local issues. Partner organisations have engaged in looking at options to reduce the NEET cohort, including refocusing on a multi agency approach, a more intensive job search programme for young people seeking work, a reinvestment in single issue target groups, a review of the Partnership Agreement with Jon Centre Plus. There are

further activities supporting delivery including the VProgramme, teenage parents programme and Life Skill provision in Ludlow.

- Improving activities for teenagers

LAA 2008-11 – Supporting increased participation and healthy lifestyle choices of Shropshire people (LAA08)

There are currently a number of actions in the LAA delivery plan to improve the Cultural Youth Offer. Further improvements will be achieved through the developing Shropshire Children's Trust draft Children and Young People's Plan, including through the Extended Schools Programme and the development of a positive activities action plan.

The developing Cultural Strategy for Shropshire has consulted proactively with young people to ensure that their views inform decisions around development of facilities and services in the future.

- Narrowing the gap in educational attainment in some areas

The draft Children and Young People's Plan sets out to improve educational attainment amongst disadvantaged children with the main areas of delivery falling to Shropshire Council as the lead agency.

### **Sustainable development and communities**

- Ensure people feel more informed about public services and show them how they can get involved in decision making and make complaints.

Following a number of pilots, 28 Local Committees have been introduced across the area as an additional way for local people to make their views known about the services in their area. The Local Committees are continuing to evolve to ensure that they effectively engage their communities.

Extensive proactive consultation with partners, stakeholders and the public surrounding the emerging Local Development Framework is continuing. Local people are given the opportunity to give their views in a variety of settings such as through public meetings, website, and libraries.

Shropshire Partnerships' improvement plans around its approach to community engagement and involvement will enhance the ways that people can get involved in the future. These plans include a Community Engagement Strategy for Shropshire and improved feedback to the public about how their views have shaped public services.

## Climate Change

- Address the impact of climate change.

LAA 2008-11 priority area – Developing low carbon communities (LAA20)

A Local Climate Impacts Profile for Shropshire is in development by Shropshire Council (as the Lead Agency). It will include measures to respond to extreme weather events and recognises that Shropshire is likely to become more vulnerable due to climate change. The developing action plan covers responses to flash flooding, river flooding, heat waves, and snow and general changes to climate.

Managing waste is another important component for addressing the impact of climate change. Examples of actions in place or planned where waste management supports reducing the impact of climate change include:

- Shropshire's waste contract requires the contractor to reduce year on year the quantities of green house gases resultant from waste and its management.
- Waste Reduction Action Partnership for 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign. The aim is to reduce by 1,495 tonnes the amount of food wasted in 2009/10.
- Introduction of kerbside collection of plastic bottle collections, commencing with a trial in the north of the county.
- Low Carbon Forum led by Marches Energy & Shropshire Community Recycling Ltd providing small grants to increase recycling.

## Housing

- Affordable housing including the numbers of net additional homes delivered and the provision of housing advice for vulnerable people.

LAA 2008-11 priority area – Availability of affordable housing (LAA16).

A number of initiatives are currently being progressed in Shropshire to help to bring forward affordable housing in the county.

Plans are in place to improve delivery of additional affordable homes through a review of affordable housing policy (to be agreed in June 2009), monthly meetings with Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and a complete sites review with all housings associations and Community Land Trusts. Reappraisal of stalled private development

sites (Section 106 sites) across the county is taking place as part of the commitment to ensuring consistent policy is applied that supports delivery of additional affordable homes.

In the Oswestry area, Shropshire Council is working with partner registered social landlords (RSLs), parish councils and landowners to identify and bring forward sites for the development of affordable housing under rural 'exceptions' policy. The aim is that planning permission will be secured on suitable sites so that they can then be passed on to the RSLs as 'development ready' schemes.

Funding is being committed to enable additional affordable housing provision on open market housing schemes. In Shrewsbury, Shropshire Council, the HCA, RSLs and private housing developers are working together on the Growth Point programme.

High level discussions are also underway with the HCA seeking to release significant HCA funds to support of affordable housing schemes across the county, as well as negotiations to revise the Average Grant Level to reflect the rural nature of the county given the implications for providing the required infrastructure for developing rural housing schemes.

Shropshire is heavily involved with the national project review and is in the process of setting up robust mechanisms for consulting and influencing regional structures to ensure a consistent approach to informing national policy guidance on innovative housing solutions.

### **Economic Prosperity**

- Improve access to higher education.

A bid for a new higher education centre will be submitted in June 2009 by a partnership of the county's colleges, local universities and public partners. It would bring additional higher education and advanced skills development courses, such as apprenticeships, Shropshire. The courses offered would be customised to match Shropshire business needs and delivered locally and flexibly to suit employers and working people as well as full time students. If the bid proves unsuccessful there are plans to implement a hub and spoke model to improve access to higher education facilities across the county.

- Raising the median earnings of employees in the area.

LAA 2008-2011 priority area – Improved growth and sustainability of enterprises and businesses (LAA15).

There are currently a number of actions in the LAA delivery plan to address this issue.

Shropshire Council has considered its response to the economic recession in a paper to full Council which included a briefing note on support for employment and skills from a range of agencies. Council agreed to set up a new Recession Committee to oversee work to tackle the impact of the economic downturn. The economic development service and sector support team will work with the Shropshire Business Board to engage the private sector on addressing skills shortages and increasing take up of graduates. Another role that the Shropshire Business Board will undertake is to produce and monitor the Economic Strategy. The action plan will include support to small firms in the knowledge intensive and high growth sectors with employment growth potential.

Further suggestions have been made during the process of self evaluation by partners including:

- Driving employment into growth sector areas of food and drink, environmental technologies and creative industries through working more closely in partnership
  - Increasing take up of apprenticeships across the partnership agencies linking to 14 – 19 diploma
  - Improvements in broadband connectivity across the county
- Tackling worklessness by getting people off long term benefits and back into work.

LAA 2008-2011 priority area – Vulnerable people receiving benefits helped back to work (LAA 21).

Shropshire Partnership has established a Worklessness Action Group which includes representatives from the Children's Trust and Safer and Stronger and Health and Well-Being blocks. The Group are working together on topics listed below:

- Complexity of getting people onto the best course/route for them. Requires a simple signposting/route map that all partners can use to identify options and opportunities.
- Lack of direct link between the 'soft' and 'hard' interventions to get people back into work e.g. between the other interventions identified in the mapping and the into work stage.
- GP awareness needs to be raised in relation to not signing people off on long-term sick and referring them to the appropriate service to support them in continuing in employment.

- Addressing a lack of awareness about permitted work amongst partners. Partners need to understand the opportunities so that they can appropriately advise service users e.g. can be up to 16 hours a week for 52 weeks but needs a GP note identifying that the work being done does not contravene the eligibility for their incapacity benefit.
- RSLs/Supporting People – establish the work being carried out to support workless households.
- Substance misuse – lack of structured day-care. Lack of carers focussed services including carers' assessments and services for substance misuse carers.
- Potential to recruit a Health Trainer for prison settings and proposals for the introduction of back to work roadshows in prisons.
- Promote Local Employment Partnerships to local businesses. Co-ordinate approaches to employers to reduce duplication.

Outcomes from this work are expected to include improved access to information and greater clarity on the types of support and intervention that are available to help people into work, and how they link together.

A main focus of the Worklessness Group presently is the implementation of Neighbourhood Employment Skills Plans (NESP). These are intended to focus on addressing worklessness at a ward level. In consultation with a wide range of partners and local delivery agents NESPs have been produced for five wards in Shropshire identified as being in the top 20% most deprived nationally (Harlescott Grange, Sundorne, Oswestry Castle, Meole Brace and Ludlow Henley), along with a generic report which identifies issues and approaches to tackle rural worklessness.

A £65,000 pilot project is underway, funded through the Regional Efficiency & Improvement Partnership via the LSP, to address the issues raised in the NESPs. Further funding to enable the project to be rolled out further may be available from Advantage West Midlands through their proposed £12.5m funding programme (working title 'Connections to Opportunities') aimed at addressing the issue of economic exclusion and worklessness to meet the challenge of the West Midlands output gap.

## Feeling safe

- More people feel that Shropshire is a safe place to live but there is still a gap between the perception of crime and the actual recorded crime.

There has been much good work by partners to address this issue in the past which is reflected in an increase in the number of people feeling safe. However more work needs to be done to reduce the gap in perception of crime further still. For example, there is a gap between younger residents and those living in social rented accommodation perceptions of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and those of older people and owner occupiers.

The partnership will work on plans to develop a consistent approach to community safety diversionary activities to reduce incidents of ASB including the impact of alcohol abuse

Other areas for development in partnership are:

- Profiling communities to enable a Social Marketing pilot to be developed
- Co-delivery of services e.g. police Community Support Officers integrated into youth support teams
- More pooling of resources and funding by partners
- Improved joined up planning of activities between partners
- Support increased capacity of VCS to support delivery

As set out in section 2.3, there is a need to better communicate key messages to our communities through the work of the Partnership. To this end, each Block will look at its key messages to the public to support achievement of key priorities e.g. Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership Board will look to develop a communication plan to reassure communities about actions being taken to reduce crime and disorder and to reinforce the messages that Shropshire is a low crime area.

- Safeguarding vulnerable children and adults.

Safeguarding has been highlighted both nationally and locally for key partners as this issue impacts on every area of work and partnership arrangements including the voluntary, community and business sectors.

During the self evaluation process suggested actions by partners to explore further include: a joint conference on safeguarding; developing a proactive approach across all agencies; map functions

and outcomes across the Shropshire Partnership to mainstream good practice; ensure that all appropriate partners are engaged and accountable.

In response to a recent Advice and Assistance report for Supporting People, Shropshire Council has established a cross council task and finish group to identify gaps with regard to safeguarding practice and will provide recommendations. As part of this there will be an audit undertaken as set out in Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 in relation to safeguarding standards and a separate audit relating to adults.

### **Access to quality public services**

- Shropshire's geography, demographics and infrastructure all impact on people's ability to access public services.

Shropshire Council has developed its [Customer Access Strategy](#) based on learning from the DeFRA Shropshire Rural Pathfinder in 2007. A number of innovative approaches to enable people from more rural areas to access services are now well established including tellytalk and broadplaces. Access to quality public services remains a focus for the partnership to build upon and requires guidance and input from the Leadership Board

The move to the Unitary authority has provided further opportunities in the area for sharing accommodation between partners to the benefit of the public. There are particular synergies to be had between organisations such as Citizens Advice, Age Concern and Council services such as Housing, Revenues and Benefits and Older People and Physical Disabilities. An example of where this has happened is Monkmoor Campus, Shrewsbury where multi agency professionals covering social work, paediatrics, disabled living, and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Learning Disability Services are based to provide a more coordinated approach to Shropshire's early intervention arrangements.

- Continuing to improve public transport provision

The implementation of the new rural transport strategy will continue to significantly enhance the levels of rural accessibility in Shropshire. The introduction of a new responsive countywide service providing a flexible passenger service to over 97% of rural residents is helping to improve this area of concern and has already enabled more rural households to access services in town centres.

Enhancements to the concessionary fares scheme has further improved accessibility for certain groups, however there are concerns for disadvantaged groups who are not eligible for concessionary fares.

Improvements to public transport provision requires significant investment, particularly given the impact of the rising operating costs. Further improvements will need to be balanced against other key partnership priorities.

Some improvements have been made for people with mobility difficulties, including better parking enforcement following the implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, more low-floor buses and improvements at signalised crossings. The council has adopted revised Mobility Design Guidance and will be introducing a vulnerable road user audit process to improve access and safety for vulnerable road users.

There is still scope to further improve integration with land use planning and other policy areas such as education, housing and economic development in order to ensure that key facilities and new developments are located and designed in order to maximise accessibility.

The emerging countywide Local Development Framework should help to provide a more robust policy framework to support this aim.

### **In summary**

The work of the Shropshire Partnership is built upon the foundation of strong evidence and robust community engagement as demonstrated in the Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base.

The challenges identified above represent real issues for local people and will be tackled more effectively through the joint working capacity of the partnership.

Shropshire Partnership will continue to review its priorities in light of local intelligence through the evidence base and to build on the way the partnership monitors and evaluates its work. This will ensure that the resources of all partners remain focussed on the issues that are important to the people of Shropshire.