

Devon Towns Forum Market Town Partnership Survey



Analysis and Interpretation

December 2008

Introduction:

The purpose of the Devon Towns Forum Market Town Partnership Survey is to provide up-to-date information about the achievements, requirements and status of Devon's Market Town Community led Planning Partnerships; this includes, but is not limited to, those taking part in the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative Programme.

The Survey achieved an impressive 89.2% response rate providing evidence of:

- **Devon's Market Town Partnerships ability to deliver further Projects and support Community Empowerment and Engagement now and in the future;**
- **Over 4,500 Devon Citizens Engaged and Involved in Community led Planning at the Market Town Level;**
- **An estimated £50 million of increased economic activity influenced by Devon's Market Town Community led Planning activities, so far;**
- **The positive effect of Community led Planning on participation in Local Democracy. (39% of partnerships reported members had either become, or shown an interest in becoming Councillors as a result of their involvement in Community led Planning)**
- **64% of Market Town Community led Partnerships are now engaged with their Local Strategic Partnership.**

The DTF hope that the information will be useful to our key partners and illustrate the impact of Devon's Market Town Partnerships and the value they can offer in any future model for local engagement and governance

The DTF is committed to working with our Agency and Local Authority Partners to support our Market Town Partnerships and will use the responses to adjust its services to better serve those who have contributed to such an impressive record of Community led Planning.

The DTF is grateful to all those who have contributed to what must be seen as an overwhelmingly positive snapshot of Devon's Market Town Partnerships.

Tom Langdon Davies

Tom Langdon Davies

Chairman
The Devon Towns Forum

Devon Towns Forum Market Town Partnership Survey

December 2008

1. Total number of questionnaires sent (28)

Number of returned questionnaires (25)

Representing a response rate of (89.2 %)

Note: Of those responding 22 out of 25 MCTi Market Town Partnerships responded.

Of the non MCTi Partnerships included within the Survey all three responded

Of the 3 MCTi Partnerships that did not respond one is being merged with a another, one has greater involvement outside the County and one other remains outstanding.

Total of Partnerships for which responses were not received (3)

2. Respondents asked to confirm the name and role of the person completing the Questionnaire reported as follows:

Note: Questionnaires were completed by the most appropriate available person, usually the Chairman, but in some cases by others with a longer association or knowledge of the partnerships history.

Questionnaires completed by:

- Chairman (13)
- Vice Chairman
- Paid Co-ordinator
- Project Group leader/member
- Partnership supporter/ stakeholder (1)
- Councillor, 1, 11, 12,17b,25,
- Local Authority or Agency Officer (5)
- Other (4)

3. Respondents asked to identify the types of Community led Plan their Partnership had Produced reported as follows:

Note: Re Parish Plans* this is not an indication of the number of Parish Plans in general, but of those in which the Market Town Partnership reported their involvement.

- MCTi Community Action Plan (21)
- Parish Plan* (7)
- Town or Village Design Statement (5)
- Other Plan (specify) (6)

4. The number of Partnerships reporting that they had received guidance from their local authority when developing their Plan is as follows:

Yes (21)

No (5)

5. The number reporting that they had received guidance from their local Planning Officers is as follows:

Yes (15)

No (9)

6. The number of Partnerships reporting that their District Community Strategy had been considered when developing their Plan is as follows:

Yes (16)

No (7)

7. The number of Partnerships reporting that Devon County's Community Strategy had been considered when developing their Plan is as follows:

Yes (16)

No (6)

8. Respondents asked where and with whom they had lodged their finished Plan, provided the following responses:

Note: It is worth comparing the low number of Partnerships reporting that they lodged their Plan with their Local Strategic Partnership at the time of publication to the much higher number indicating current involvement with their LSP (see Q 18). This may be due to recent improvements in Partnership/ LSP engagement as compared with an earlier period when many Market Town Plans were being launched.

With DCC (12)

With LSP (3)

With DC (15)

With RDA/ MCTA (11)

With Others (17)

9. Respondents were also asked if they received feed back about their plan and from whom. The following responses were provided:

From DCC (7)

From LSP (3)

From DC (7)

From MCTA (7)

From Other: (11)

10. Respondents asked if their Plan had been entered on the Communities in Action Plans Database reported the following:

Note: Although many Partnerships reported that their Plans were on the database the high number reporting that they would **not** be able to keep their Plan up-to-date on the CIA Database is significant to the success of the Database project (see Q11 below). The DTF feel that the Partnerships would benefit from a source of practical technical support that could be offered centrally or administered through the DTF and is an urgent resources issue.

Yes (13)

No (6)

11. Respondents were also asked if their partnership was able to keep the Plan up-to-date on the CIA Database:

Yes (9)

No (10)

12. Respondents were asked to list up to **three** of the most significant projects their Partnership had achieved reported the following:

Note: It should be noted that the respondents were limited to providing details of only three of the most significant projects, many had achieved a significantly higher number including many smaller quick win projects. However, the list provides an impressive indication of the overall level of success, type and nature of the projects delivered to-date.

Community Engagement
Bringing Agencies Together
Communication – Meetings, Website,
Magazine

Too soon for any,

Support for Farmers Market
Improved Shopping (second Supermarket)
Renewable Energy Report

Skate Park
Guide and Walks leaflets
Planning Exercise

Training for Life Training Restaurant and
Homeless Centre
RNLI Lifeboat

Lidl and Sainsbury's Supermarkets

Skills and Economy Programme

Tourism Network
Town Centre Master Plan

CCTV
Road Signage
IT for Adults

New Community Centre.
Created Youth Club
Reinvigorated clubs e.g. Badminton, aerobics,
art.

Community Property Trust
HESCO
Post 16 Education Centre

Acquisition of land for Sports Fields
Involving the Community in regeneration of
open spaces

Town Health Check

Co-ordinated with local authorities on sheltered housing scheme
Residents Consultations re Parking, Public Realm and Youth Projects

Library and Community Resource centre
Market Stall Pilot Project
Performance Space

Successful LAG Bid
Caring Project
Business Club

Business Survey
Affordable Housing
Renewable Energy projects

Transition Town Project
Activities for Young People – Police Cadets
Friends of Local Park

Local Community Forum
Youth Café/ Centre
Community and Village Cinema Project

Independently Financed Vision document
Setting up Action and Project Groups

Town One Stop Shop

Business Enterprise Start-up Units
Skate Park

Music and Arts festival
Food and Drink festival
Youth Café

Community Association with Trading arm
Arts Advisory Group
Renovation of Children's Play Area

Town Enhancement Scheme
Merchants Trail Project
Family Festival

Engaging with Hinterland
Support for Workspace Units
Skateboard Park

Creation of Annual Festival
Youth Nights at Leisure Centres
Sustainability Group Conference

Jobcentre Plus Engagement with Community
Fare Car Scheme
Provision of Dedicated PSCO for the Community

13. Respondents were also asked to list up to three of the most important **unfulfilled** projects identified within their Plan:

Note: The quality and nature of the unfulfilled projects listed is an important indicator of the calibre and potential value of the future work of Devon's Market Town Partnerships. Also, several of the projects are in an advanced state of development:

Comprehensive Follow-up to Renewable Energy Report
Further promotion of area for sustainability
More Start up facilities for area

Community Hall
Parking needs survey
Employment of Project Co-ordinator

Heated Indoor Swimming Pool
Traffic and Parking Plan

Public Transport Plan

Community Umbrella Project
Sport and Leisure Development Plan
Town Centre Planning Partnership

Local Employment Opportunities
Affordable Homes
Better Child Care

Marquee for Festival and Events

Renewable Energy Activities
Outreach work with villages

Relocation of Cattle market
Completion of Cycle Way

Additional Sports Facilities
Build Community Centre
Community Offices and Public Toilets

Harbour Development
All Weather Sports Pitch
Sea Front Regeneration

Hotel
Sports Facilities

Childrens Play Areas
Open Spaces
Community Hall

Sports and Leisure Provision
Broadband for all
Enhancements to Built Environment and
Streetscape

Redevelopment of Town Centre/ Market Place
Transport Improvements
Provision of a Community/ Civic Centre Hub

Learning Resources Centre
Railway Development Project

Green Tourism, Heritage and Transport
Projects

Development brief for Port Royal site
,
Central Development Area Livestock and
Supermarket
Better Walking
Youth Resource Centre

Music Rehearsal Space
Hoppa Bus
Heritage Buildings

Upgrading Local Theatre
Upgrading Business Park
Rebuilding of War Damaged Premises

Visitor Centre
Performing Arts Centre
Cycle Path

Redevelopment of Old Factory Site
Gateway Project
Abattoir Project

Town Plan
Business Development Project
Civic Hall Development

Ascertaining level of need for drug and alcohol
support
Maximising Links with HMP for wider
community benefit

14. Respondents were asked if they felt further projects would be achieved by their partnership:

Note: The high level of confidence reported by the respondents of achieving further projects is an important indicator of the current strength of the Market Town Partnerships and the need to support them appropriately.

Yes (19)

No (1)

15. Respondents were asked to *estimate the total monetary value* of their Partnerships Achievements.

The total of respondents individual estimates indicate increased economic activity influenced by Market Town Partnerships activities to be in the order of **£50 Million***.

The individual figures reported include that which could reasonably said to have been achieved as a result of the reach and influence of the partnerships involvement whilst recognising that many projects are achieved as a result of many partners working together.

The DTF consider the sum, if anything, to be an underestimate as it does not include any accounting of volunteer time. An indication of volunteering can be gained when considering the number of people involved with each Market Town Partnership (see Q 16). The added value of volunteer time would be considerable by any measure and is an important indicator of both engagement and economic outcome.

*Actual total of sums provided = £50,675,500 (without the outstanding responses of three Market Town Partnerships and those not providing estimates.)

16. Respondents asked to estimate how many people had been involved in their partnerships activity to-date provided the following:

The total of individual partnerships estimates indicate that at least **4,500** people have been involved in Devon Market Town Community Led Planning Partnerships Activities to date

Note: The way in which respondents reported the numbers involved differed with some including wider participants while others limited their estimate to a core group. However, it is safe to suggest that at a conservative estimate at least some **4,500 people** have been involved in Community led Planning at the Market Town level in Devon.

17. Respondents asked if their partnership had secured any form of Sustainable funding reported the following:

- Acquired an Asset from which to derive an income? (1)
- Acquired continuation funding; if so from whom? (4)
- Delivered a project from which your partnership can be sustained? (0)

- Undertaken a service on behalf of an Agency or Local Authority (1)
- Secured some additional Grant Funding (9)

Note: The following responses clearly highlight the difficulty Partnerships have in securing any form of sustainable income. It is also apparent from the comments at Q 33 that there is an urgent need for the agencies and local authorities to help secure appropriate and sustainable resourcing of these partnerships if the benefit of Market Town participation is to be fully realised in the longer term.

The low number of partnerships achieving any form of sustainable funding may also be attributable to the unanticipated length of time needed to deliver sizable projects from which an income could be derived. However the results clearly suggest that more needs to be done to find new and imaginative ways of sustaining the capacity of these Partnerships. The risk of failing to address this issue is likely to impact negatively on the delivery of valuable projects and significantly damage the credibility of Devon's Community Engagement and Regeneration Activity generally.

18. Respondents asked if their partnership was represented within their District's Local Strategic Partnership reported the following:

Yes (18)

No (6)

Note: **64%** of Market Town Partnerships are now engaged with their LSP. This has steadily increased in line with DTF objective of facilitating LSP and Inter Partnership Engagement. The DTF now have six Area Representative Board Members to support LSP and Partnership Engagement.

19. Respondents asked to identify who attended the LSP and in what capacity; reported the following range of persons representing the partnerships:

Partnership Chairman, Co-ordinator, DTF Area representative, LA Officer, Paid Partnership Officer, Committee member, LA Cllr. / Committee Member.

20. Respondents were asked if members of their Partnership had either become Councillors or shown an interest in becoming Councillors as a result of their involvement in Community led Planning:

Yes (11)

Note: This statistic represents a significant level of raised interest in participation in the democratic process from over a third (**39.2%**) of Devon's Market Town Partnerships that have undertaken Community led Planning activity.

21. Respondents were asked if their partnership was still supported by the following local authorities and agencies. (Support in this context refers to being engaged with, rather than in receipt of funding or other direct resources such as staffing or materials etc.)

- Parish, Council (7)
- Town Council (21)
- District Council (17)
- County Councils (15)
- Community Council of Devon (4)
- Other (specify) (2)

22. Respondents asked if their partnership was engaged with other Voluntary Sector Organisations reported the following:

Partnerships engaged with:

- Council for Voluntary Service (9)
- Senior Councils for Devon (6)
- Other (6)

23. Respondents asked if they were aware of other Forums or Organisations in their locality that could support inclusive and ongoing Community Engagement; reported the following:

Note: 19 respondents reported a variety of other organisations in their locality thought appropriate to support inclusive and ongoing Community Engagement. From the responses provided no other local organisation appear to have the level of coverage across the 28 Market Towns of Devon provided by the Market Town Partnerships themselves; the detail response in respect of each Partnership is as follows:

Other Organisations

- No other,
- Only Climate Change Action Group, CDT or Town Council
- Local Care Forum, Other Nearby Care forum,
- Senior Council for Devon
- Business link/ South Devon Coastal Towns LAG,
- None,
- Community Centre, Sports Field Assocn, Ruby Country
- Aware of no others,
- Forum of Dev Trust /Town Council and District for MCTi planning
- Transform Neighbourhood Management
- Community Dev Trust
- Teignbridge Strategic Partnership
- LSP
- CVS
- Chamber of Commerce
- District Council Annual Debate Forum
- CDT
- None which are fully inclusive
- HMCA and Parish Council

24. Respondents were also asked if their partnership was represented within such Organisations or Forums:

Yes (13)

25. Respondents were asked if their Market Town Partnership could operate as an inclusive Local Community Forum.

Yes (19)

No (4)

Note: Over **67%** of Devon's Market Town Partnerships reported that they could potentially operate as an inclusive **Local Community Forum**. The DTF feel this is a significant area for which the Partnerships could be resourced in the future as an effective means of maintaining Community Engagement within the Market Town Areas.

26. Respondents were also asked if as an alternative to operating as a Local Community Forum themselves; could the partnership engage with another Community Forum where one existed?

Yes (11)

Note: The above responses and those at Q 25 highlight the importance of Devon's Market Town Partnerships to contribute to the development of inclusive Local Community Forums. Such Forums could provide the mechanism for inclusive grass roots engagement and representation and strengthen the participative aspect of Market Town Communities with LSP's, or potential Community Boards.

27. Respondents asked about their use of *Devon Towns Forum* services reported the following:

Partnerships Use of:

- Training Events (16)
- Seminars and Conferences (18)
- Receive or use DTF Support for Engaging with LSP's and inter partnership working (10)

28. Respondents were asked if their partnership had a Website:

Yes (15)

No (6)

29. Respondents were also asked if their website was a South West Chambers On-line website sponsored by the DTF

Yes (8)

No (6)

30. Respondents were invited to indicate if their partnership would be interested in a DTF sponsored SWCO Website?

Yes (7)

No (4)

Note: The DTF will use this information to identify potential recipients of future DTF sponsorship and I.T. Training

31. Respondents asked what DTF activities were most valuable to their Partnership reported the following:

- Ongoing support,
- Funding
- Networking,
- DTF AGM and seeing what's being done elsewhere
- Training events, funding advice, networking conferences,
- Seminars and conferences,
- Training events,
- Seminars and Conferences
- Advice and education
- Practical support for LSP and partnership engagement, events, networking and influence
- Networking
- Chances to network/ Training events
- Training /Seminars/ Conferences
- Information, training, access to funding streams
- Information via events/ training and Networking

32. Respondents asked to identify the most pressing current, or future need for their partnership reported the following:

Note: Unsurprisingly almost all reported the need for some form of sustainable core funding; this is also highlighted by the lack of other sources of sustainable funding (see responses to Q 17)

- Deliver sustainable Projects
- Creation of a post whose role it would be to enable the CAP to be delivered
- Creating a Community Board
- Funding to support our local office
- Finance/ involvement by local authorities/ regeneration,
- Long term funding for Projects and financing of co-ordinator to facilitate and engage new community members.
- Funding,
- Developing closer working relationships with district and county councils. Also working closer with the voluntary sector organisations
- Secretarial support
- A clear role/ purpose
- Operating funding
- Acquire land for sports complex and funding for ongoing activities.
- Obtain core funding to employ the Community Plan Co-ordinator for 2/3 years to ensure projects within the approved plan are realised. A co-ordination, coercing, supporting, cajoling, nagging role is essential to maintain the momentum created or the Plan will just be a document sat on a shelf gathering dust. There is no dedicated resource available to carry out this role within the Town.
- Core funding/ sustaining projects
- Sustainability and proper resourcing by local authorities or through asset or activity and specific recognition of CLP within LAA funding blocks
- Funding
- Assurance of future funding
- Reassessment of partnership. Re-launch of regeneration in our town
- Small amount of core funding to sustain, securing agreement of Major partners whilst maintaining our engagement with the community town council and hinterland parishes. (&) Take (forward) the projects identified in the review.
- Securing more local volunteers to undertake projects and developing better partnership working with DC

33. Finally, respondents asked what advice would they give to improve Community led Planning and Engagement in the future reported the following:

- More support from district/ county council and others,
- A DTF conference in (our area)
- To follow the MCTi process of establishing weaknesses and strengths via a healthcheck before identifying target projects and to bring public involvement high on agenda,
- Should be led by elected members not volunteers
- Less talking shops and more action and easier access to funding for projects.
- Obtain a commitment of support from local Councils, without this anything you want to do will be hard work.
- Work closely as possible with elected members and officers of all the local authorities that affect your area of partnership
- Availability of ongoing funding to sustain groups beyond development of the Plan and into implementation stage.
- More co-operation and co-ordination between towns, possibly with a database of completed and curtailed projects with details of the good, the bad and the ugly.
- The experience provided within Newton Abbot has been an excellent one. It has engaged people who would not normally have been engaged; it facilitated groups and individuals to communicate where they otherwise would not; and led to groups working towards one aim, to improve their environment. This was all made possible because the Town Council was given the confidence and resources to move things forward. Without MCTi funding this would not have happened, however, now there is no funding to realise the community's dreams. It is very disheartening. Therefore, where a community has an adopted, robust Community Plan which is properly evidenced and supported, funding streams must be made available to facilitate project groups to be created and for them to be able to see the projects through. I do not mean funding for the projects themselves as that is out there, but to support these project groups to have the ability to complete a project that can attract that funding.
- Don't create false expectations
- Ongoing core funding commitment 3 years/ Clearer role of support agencies SWRDA, MCTA, CCD too many taking a cut of the funding
- Create a proper resourcing package for Community Partnerships for the post MCTi phase so they can continue to engage effectively.
- That planning be genuinely 'Community-led', at both a micro and macro level – which might entail a variety of models for engagement and consultation: and the adoption by local authorities of the Sustainable Communities Act.
- Engagement mechanisms for an income stream
- Don't be over ambitious
- Ensure that elected councillors at City, district and Town a) receive appropriate training, b) are subject to monitoring at individual level to ensure their engagement with the community is positive and ongoing,
- A lot more support for the transition from Planning to implementation, financial and training. The skills and expertise required in the post plan period are very different from the Plan development period. There needs to be some way of involving members of the local community with this knowledge and expertise prior to publication to enable a smooth transition forward.
- Communication and give yourself time to build trust. A mechanism to fulfil quick win projects.
- Don't over promise results unless financial support/ local government resources can be made available.

End.

For more information about the Devon Towns Forum or the Market Town Partnership Survey 2008 please contact:

The Devon Towns Forum
Po Box 25
Torrington
EX38 7WY

Tel: 01805 624874
e-mail info@devontownsforum.org.uk
Or visit: www.devontownsforum.org.uk