



CHANGING MINDS • CHANGING LIVES

Devon Heartlands Community Development Trust

Carnegie UK Trust Rural Action Research Project

**4th Interim
Progress Report
January 2009**

Engaging Rural Communities in Ongoing Community Planning

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Devon Heartlands 4th RARP Interim Report Summary

This is the 4th interim progress report and is the penultimate report of the Devon Heartlands Rural Action Research Project for the Carnegie UK Trust. It is our intention to publish our final report before the meeting of the English jurisdiction partners in the summer of 2009 at which time a review of all Rural Action Research Projects will take place.

This report provides a timely opportunity for Devon Heartlands to record the progress achieved since the last interim report published in July 2008. And to report the gathering pace around local community empowerment and engagement issues. This has a special significance both for the future work of Devon Heartlands and for Devon as a whole in the run-up to a recommendation by the Boundary Committee for England on the current Local Government Reorganisation proposals for Devon.

A final decision by the Secretary of State about any local government reorganisation is not now expected until late summer 2009. We are hopeful that whatever the outcome this decision will provide a fitting context in which the objective of bringing the engagement of rural communities in ongoing Community led Planning is valued and secure.

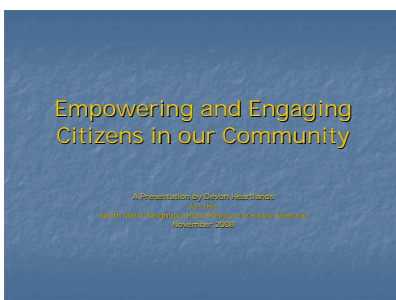


Central to the Devon Heartlands RARP has been the establishment and success of its *Local Community Forum* Concept. This has now been adopted in neighbouring Tavistock and is under serious consideration as a model for other Market Town Community Planning Partnerships across rural Devon. This particular aspect of the RARP has proven itself as a highly credible community empowerment and engagement tool and one that has attracted the interest of our strategic partners.

Other highlights since our last report include our attendance at the Carnegie UK Trust's Annual Convention held in Ireland during November 2008. Thanks to the invitation from Carnegie Devon Heartlands was provided with an unparalleled opportunity to meet other RARP partners, Carnegie personnel and visit some excellent local Community Initiatives and Projects. This years Convention held in the town of Cashel, in the republic of Ireland, provided much stimulating food for thought and a reaffirmation of the value of community spirit. (Right Sculpture from Brú Ború National Cultural Centre Cashel)



In November we were thrilled to be asked by Carnegie to present our RARP including details of our Local Community Forum Project to a select panel of Key Policy Influencers in London. Our presentation was also supported by John Smith the Senior Community Strategy Officer for Devon County Council who travelled to London to show the Councils support for our work on Community Engagement.



We were also kept busy presenting our RARP in conjunction with the Devon Towns Forum to a Seminar in Plymouth organised by the Creating Excellence/ Neighbourhood Resource Centre. The presentation took the theme of 'Empowering and Engaging Citizens In our Community' included a Power Point and project overview by Paul Delahoy with addresses from our Community Forum Chairman Philip Wagstaff and Tom Langdon Davies Chairman of the Devon Towns Forum. The presentations were extremely well received by a large audience drawn from across the South West.

Major Activities and Progress since last Report:

As with previous RARP reports activity and progress is reported against four general headings described as tiers; these are: **Local, District, County** and **Regional** tiers with other work having a wider or national impact separately described. The following tables provide a summary of current engagement and activity and should be read in conjunction with earlier reports all of which are available to view or download from our website at www.devonheartlands.co.uk and the Carnegie Community Planning Partners Hub.

Tier 1 Local	Description of Activity
<p>Devon Heartlands Community Forum</p>	<p>The monthly Community Forum meetings remain well attended with an increasing number and diversity of attendees these include: Individuals and local Residents, Representatives of Local Organisations e.g. Senior Council 4 Devon, Devon LINK, Faiths Representatives, Local Police Liaison Officers, Parish, Town, Borough and County Councillors, Local Authority and Agency Officers, Youth Liaison, Project Group and Business Representatives, Guest Speaker e.g. Central Devon Criminal Justice Board, Dartmoor Railway, Devon County Council, West Devon Borough Council etc.</p> <p>Devon County Council used Forum to inform Community about Boundary Change proposals and were impressed with the forum.</p> <p>The Devon Heartlands Local Community Forum has now been adopted by the TAVi Partnership that work with the communities in the Tavistock area of West Devon. Work with the Devon Towns Forum has enabled the DH Forum Model to be brought to the attention of other communities. See Survey responses under Tier 3 (County Level)</p> <p>The development of Local Community For a at the Market Town level remains an important focus for future Community Empowerment and Social Inclusion/ Engagement in which the Devon Heartlands/ Carnegie model is seen as an exemplar.</p> <p>An indication of the range of issues tackled by the forum in 2008 are described in appendix 1 attached to this report.</p>
<p>Community Projects</p>	<p>Example 1: The Learning Resources Centre development project is ongoing and meetings of partners are scheduled to discuss funding bids. West Devon Borough Council has assisted DH in the funding application process.</p> <p>Example 2: Dartmoor Railway: following the setback reported previously the Railway is now in new ownership and is working closely with DH and are making a valuable contribution to the Community Forum meetings. New levels of investment have been secured and the railway is expected to achieve the development of its intersection and infrastructure improvements during 2009.</p> <p>Example 3: Youth & Community Inclusion Project in which Devon Heartlands has supported Okehampton Community Recreation Association that has now secured funding for 3-yr Outreach Programme which started October 2008 also the introduction of New Wheeled Sports facilities; Youth Café; Chagford Youth Action Group; all established & running.</p> <p>A summary table of all 19 current projects supported by Devon Heartlands are described in Appendix 2 attached to this report.</p>

Tier 2 District	Description of Activity
West Devon Joint Partnership	Continuation and Embedding of the West Devon Joint Partnership concept developed by Devon Heartlands for each of the Rural Market Town Communities in West Devon to meet and share issues and objectives. Also provides representation of Community Partnerships and Fora on West Devon LSP and links with Devon Towns Forum and SW MCTN. The Joint Partnership is supported by the Devon Towns Forum under its Partnership / LSP Engagement Initiative. The Joint Partnership is able to offer additional support to other partnerships and is proving a useful and efficient method of communication between the groups and the LSP and is supporting the cascading of good practice.
Expansion of Forum Concept	As reported above the TAVi Market Town Partnership for the Tavistock area of West Devon are now holding regular and successful monthly meetings based on the Devon Heartlands/ Carnegie model.
West Devon Borough Council	Although some funding has been secured from West Devon Borough Council the Joint partnership and Devon Heartlands have requested a review of Partnership funding support by West Devon and are currently awaiting a response.
West Devon LSP	Devon Heartlands remains engaged and represented on the West Devon Local Strategic Partnership Management Board and its theme groups including LSP Housing Strategy Sub Group, LSP Environmental Group, LSP Economy Theme Group and the LSP Well-Being Theme Group. Up dates relating to the DH RARP are provided by the issue of interim reports and through the DH Forum Chairmen as our representative in the LSP and Joint Partnership

Tier 3 County	Description of Activity
County Level Partner Engagement	Devon Heartlands is maintaining good working relationships with all key partners including: The Devon Towns Forum, Devon County Council, The Devon Strategic Partnership, Devon Rural Network,
Devon Market Town Partnership Survey	Devon Heartlands took part in the 2008 survey of Devon's Market Town Community led Planning Partnerships organised by the Devon Towns Forum. The survey analysis supported the role of Market Town CLP Partnerships as vital to the Empowerment and Engagement of Devon's Rural Communities; in particular the number of partnerships interested in forming Local Community Engagement Forums and the positive effect CLP has on participation in local democracy; see www.devontownsforum.org.uk for details of the Survey.
Boundary Review for Devon	DH Forum used by DCC to address community about proposed boundary changes. DH made a considered submission to the Boundary Committee urging greater emphasis on community engagement on any eventual model of local governance.
Devon Heartlands Presentation in Plymouth	Devon Heartlands presented their RARP work on Community Engagement and their Local Community Forum to a Creating Excellence/ Neighbourhood Resource Centre Presentation in Plymouth on the 23 Oct 2008.
Support for County level Partner Organisations	Devon Heartlands continue to support the CLP Projects Database attending meetings on 16 Oct 2008 and Feb 2009. Also support for DRN VCS Action Group
Devon Strategic Partnership	Engaging with Sustainable and Inclusive Communities Working Group through DCC and through the DTF at the Devon Strategic Partnership Conference on the 7 Nov 08
Devon County Council Inclusion and Participation	DH involved in ongoing talks with DCC about the potential roll-out of the DH Community Forum Concept as a demonstration model for other Market Town Communities.

Tier 4 Regional	Description of Activity
SW Market & Coastal Towns Network	Taking over from the MCTA as the lead body for Market Town Level Community led Planning the South West Market and Coastal Towns Network is to hold its first Annual Conference in Feb 2009 at which the Devon Heartlands RARP and in particular its model for Local Community Forums will be the subject of a discussion workshop.
Devon Towns Forum (Regional)	The Devon Towns Forum is the representative organisation for all of Devon's Market Town Partnerships at a Regional level through its membership of SWMCTN. This offers addition channels for the DH RARP to be exported as shared good practice and made known to others.
South West Acre Network	Devon Heartlands continues to work with SWAN sharing RARP progress attending meetings e.g.7th Oct 2008.
SW RDA	<p>DH offered its draft reports of previous work on the relationship of CLP to Local Development Frameworks to Trevor Cherrett / SWRDA and DCC who are working on the Sustainability Tool Kit.</p> <p>The work undertaken by Devon Heartlands on the engagement of Community Planning Partnerships was prescient as this is now a SWRDA high level priority for Market Town Community Partnerships across the South West. Our work in this area has been supported by the Devon Towns Forum to excellent effect as evidenced by the recent Market Town Survey (Nov 2008) see www.devontownsforum.org.uk</p>

National and Other	Description of Activity
Carnegie UK Trust Annual Convention (Ireland)	Devon Heartlands attended and took part in the Carnegie Annual Convention in Ireland in Nov 2008.
Carnegie UK Trust Key Influencers Seminar (London)	Devon Heartlands asked by Carnegie UK Trust to present work on RARP to a panel of Key Influencers at a specially convened seminar in London on the 26 th Nov 2008 See Report and Press Releases issued by Devon Heartlands as Appendix 3 and 4 attached to this report.
Community Empowerment Conference (London)	Devon Heartlands was represented at the Empowerment Conference in London on the 3 Dec 2008
Carnegie Hub & Fiery Sprits Community of Practice	Devon Heartlands have made regular contributions of news items, press releases and progress updates using both the Carnegie Partners Communications Hub and the new Fiery Sprits Community of Practice Hub.

APPENDIX 1

Table of issues considered by the Devon Heartlands Community Forum 2008

TOPIC RAISED BY THE COMMUNITY IN 2008	Local	West Devon	Devon	Other
Ockment Centre – Continuation	√			
Post Office Closures Programme	√	√	√	
Broad-leaved Trees – Environmental Impact	√			
A30 Road Improvement – Whiddon Down	√	√	√	
West Devon LSP Environmental Theme Group		√		
West Devon LSP Well-Being Theme Group		√		
West Devon LSP Access to Services Theme Group		√		
West Devon LSP Economy Theme Group		√		
West Devon LSP Housing Strategy Sub-Group		√		
West Devon LSP Management Board		√		
Greater Dartmoor Local Action Group – RDPE Funding Application	√	√		
Senior Council of Devon (Okehampton Branch)	√			
Okehampton Deer Park Management Group	√			
Devon Towns Forum			√	
Bus Passenger Representation – Consultations Response	√	√	√	√
New Primary School - Competition	√			
West Devon Local Development Framework – Core Strategy		√		
Sunday Rover Service	√	√	√	
Opportunity Okehampton – New Jobs created	√			
Community Assets & Empowerment	√	√	√	√
Devon Community Plans Database			√	
Okehampton Town Centre Link Road	√			
Free Bus Passes for the Over 60's	√	√	√	
Rural Advocates Report to Government – key issues			√	√
Out of Town Parking	√			
Devon Sustainable Community Strategy			√	
Advice & Support for Disadvantaged People	√			
Truancy	√			
Youth Engagement with the Forum	√			
Neighbourhood Watch	√			
Proposals for CCTV in Okehampton Town Centre	√			
Emergency Services – Traffic Congestion	√			
North Tawton Garden Waste Recycling scheme run by North Tawton Environmental Trust	√			
Parish Plans	√	√		
Okehampton Station Café & Shop Closure	√			
Fairplace – Street Furniture	√			
Boundary Committee Proposal for a Unitary Devon	√	√	√	
Focus On Health Forum	√	√		
Closure of Phone Boxes				
Cessation of the Market & Coastal Towns Association			√	√
Impact in Rural Communities of high fuel costs in particular on transport companies.	√	√	√	
Community Transport – Mileage allowances for use of private car	√	√		
Local Police approach to Anti-social behaviour	√			
North Okehampton Residents Association (NORA)	√			
Web-based advice & guidance for handling Problem Neighbours				√
Local Authority Grass-cutting not up to standard	√			
WD LDF – Okehampton Development Plan consultation	√	√		

events & summary				
West Devon Play Forum		√		
Okehampton "old" Hospital Redevelopment	√			
Top dressing of Pavements with tar	√			
Senior Councils "Ageing Well In Devon" information fayre & input for Okehampton Area.	√			
Okehampton College embracing the "Growing For Our Future" programme	√			
Support for Groups or individuals seeking Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	√	√		
Encouraging Local visitors to Okehampton Castle	√			
The supply of Allotments In Okehampton	√			
Loneliness is hidden problem, especially in rural communities among widowed people.	√			
Issues arising from the New Timetable for the Barnstaple to Tavistock bus service.	√	√		

APPENDIX 2 DEVON HEARTLANDS PROJECT REVIEW – December 2008

No	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT STATUS	CURRENT ACTION
1	Re-development of North Tawton Wool Mill to include Managed Work Space	Site in private ownership; Re-designated as "Housing" with possibility of limited appropriate workspace; Listed Building status, flood plane & new access make the site less attractive to developers	Watching brief
2	Delivery & Implementation Project	Initial 18-months of Implementation were funded through Devon Heartlands (mainly EU funds). This enabled a variety of projects to be delivered.	Skeleton team assisting Project Champions / Promoting Community Planning / Linking with Strategic Partners. Current Grant expires in March 09.
3	Youth & Community Inclusion Project	New Wheeled Sports facilities; Youth Café; Chagford Youth Action Group; all established & running. OCRA secured funding for 3-yr Outreach Programme which started October 2008.	Keep working with Youth leaders. Support West Devon Play Forum & North Tawton Park Enhancement
4	WREN Arts Centre, including Baring Gould Heritage Archive.	Originally planned for Okehampton Mill, now looking at church Hall re-development. Lack of resources to push forward.	WREN major partner in the Okehampton Learning Resource Centre. WDBC has endorsed Business Plan, next stage Detailed Design.
5	Transport Heritage Centre	The Group still looking for appropriate site. Possible option(s) have been identified.	Support Project Champion
6	Green Tourism Project – Tourism without cars	Still in the talking stages, although one off events have illustrated the potential. Key to future is the success of Dartmoor Railway & Transport Heritage projects.	No progress likely until Dartmoor Railway & Transport Heritage Centre Plans are clear.
7	Dartmoor Railway Development Projects	Platform Building Refurbished; New Engine Shed at Meldon; Steam Engine Re-introduced; Regular successful events, including Rail Gala; Funding for Phase 1 Yeoford Passenger Interchange Facility secured, immediately followed by closure by ECT until new owner takes over. Iowa Pacific Holdings Ltd developing vision to include Freight & Community Rail.	Support Friends of Dartmoor Railway to re-structure. Support new owners.

8	Town Design Statement Projects	North Tawton & Okehampton TDS's published using MCTi Quick Win funds. Adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance & recognised by WDBC's Core Strategy.	Work with Strategic Partners to ensure TDS's remain as Planning Guidance.
9	Okehampton Concept Plan	The Plan was developed as a vision by Okehampton Town Council outlining potential development projects. Simmons Park has been delivered; Re-development of the Old Castle site is well advanced whilst OCRA Sports Hub Project is in its early stages.	
10	Child & Family Centre Project	The development of Children Centre as part of the Ockment Community Centre facilities.	Children's' Centre building complete.
11	Chagford Sports Hall	The Project has not materialised to date.	
12	Sampfod Courtenay Village Hall Improvements	Some improvements such better heating & lighting has been completed. Main projects, including new kitchen, has been put on hold until funds can be secured	Provide support when requested
13	Special Education Needs Project	Completed using MCTi Quick Win funds.	
14	Community Woodland Project	North Tawton Environmental Trust is seeking suitable land to develop a community woodland.	Provide support when requested
15	North Tawton Park Enhancement	Community Consultations held & outline Enhancement Plan prepared. Draft Lottery Grant Applications prepared. Working Group re-invigorated by new Chair of NT Youth & Community Centre. Changing Places expression of Interest being prepared for Phase 1 to 3.	Submit Eofl, seek other funding opportunities.
16	North Tawton Produce Market	North Tawton Business Action Group has held 2 markets but is unable to use the Town Hall. Local Pub runs an occasional market on a Saturday morning.	
17	Okehampton Moving Pictures	Volunteer Group set up to continue film shows in Okehampton following closure of the original Carlton Cinema. The Group presented films until the New Carlton opened in December 2006. The Group shows films in village halls, approximately 30 shows per year at 7 different venues.	Provide support when requested
18	Okehampton Learning Resource Centre	Devon Reinvestment Services organised community consultation events in April / May 2006 to establish the community's desire for the development of the Okehampton Mill site. The preferred option was to re-develop as a Learning Resource Centre incorporating Vocational Training Centre, Community Group offices & possibly a new Town Library. This was registered with WDBC. A Business Plan including costings was submitted to WDBC & endorsed by WDBC's Economy & Community Committee	Secure funding for Detailed Development Phase.
19	Devon Heartlands Community Forum	Monthly Community Forum open to all providing grassroots community engagement, linking with Strategic Partners & like-minded organisations including West Devon Local Strategic Partnership & its five theme groups; West Devon Joint partnership; Devon Towns Forum; Senior Council for Devon; LINK ; Devon Rural Network; South West DTA;	Support the Forum & its engagement activities.

Appendix 3

A Brief Report of the Carnegie Key Influencers Seminar in London 26th November 2008

Appeared in Okehampton Times/ Carnegie Hub/ Fiery Friends and Partner News Letters and Websites

RARP partners 'Devon Heartlands' were delighted to be asked to take part in the recent seminar for Key Influencers held in London on the 26th November. The Devon Heartlands Community led Planning RARP was spotlighted as a rural case study for the seminar and presented to a panel of influential people chaired by Patrick Butler head of Society, Health and Education for the Guardian and Observer Newspapers.

The Seminar also included a presentation from Ian Hatton from Essex County Council providing details of his councils approach to community engagement and the drive towards greater localism. The panel included representatives from the New Economics Foundation, the Local Government Information Unit, Urban Forum, Rural Livelihoods Research, the Young Foundation, Action for Communities in Rural England, Action for Market Towns and Devon County Council.

The Seminar was organised by Carnegie to highlight a range of approaches for effective Community led Planning and Engagement from both the local community and local authority perspectives. The Devon Heartlands case study described the development of a vibrant Local Community Forum for the people of Okehampton that was now of interest to the County Council as part of their response to the Communities in Control White Paper and to help address the need to involve and engage citizens at the local level.

Paul Delahoy for Devon Heartlands reported that many Market Towns and Parishes across the Country had gone through Community led Planning and regeneration exercises delivering some fantastic projects for their communities, but the key to long term success was sustaining the engagement of local people and the Devon Heartlands Community Forum was an ideal way of achieving this. Paul pointed out that engagement through a local Forum could be "low cost, but not no cost" a point that was well received by panel members who recognised that far greater continuity of resources was essential if the benefits of Community led Planning were to be fully realised.

Our own Kate Braithwaite endorsed the need to maintain a 'grass roots approach' and to value the contribution that people from all walks of life make to their communities. Commenting on the many excellent examples of ground breaking work there are throughout the country many supported by the Carnegie UK Trust Kate stressed that they should be properly recognised, valued and supported, to create the kind of resilient and empowered communities we all want to see.

Emphasising that Community led Planning was an open ended 'process' Sylvia Brown of ACRE argued that Community led Planning was not a one-off exercise simply to produce a plan, but should be seen as an ongoing facilitated process capable of engaging inclusively that would deliver great benefits for those involved. Sylvia added that Community led Planning was a tool that no local authority could afford to be without.

Chris Wade from Action for Market Towns summed up with a powerful message for both national and local government to recognise the huge contribution made by ordinary people and that Community led Planning is a process that can deliver huge benefits in both rural and urban communities.

It was great to be asked to contribute to such an important event and that Devon Heartlands has something to offer, so thanks Carnegie for the opportunity.

Appendix 4

Press Release / News Item: From the Devon Heartlands Community Development Trust

Appeared in Okehampton Times/ Carnegie Hub/ Fiery Friends and Partner News Letters and Websites

Empowering and Engaging Citizens in our Communities....

A Community Forum that grew out of the Okehampton Market and Coastal Town Initiative is to be highlighted as a Rural Case Study by the Carnegie UK Trust at an Empowerment and Engagement seminar in London this autumn for Key Government Influencers. The Devon Heartlands Community Forum is an initiative of the Devon Heartlands Community Development Trust which succeeded the Okehampton Area MCTi Partnership.

Heartlands Manager Ewen Rae said, "We were determined to deliver the MCTi Action Plan both by delivering projects and by continuing our community engagement activity." Explaining how the meetings of the MCTi group were seamlessly transformed into an inclusive and independent Community Forum Ewen added "it was self evident that the capacity and involvement of the Community should continue to connect with other partners and our Local Strategic Partnership and a Community Forum seemed to be an ideal way of doing this."

Forum Chairman Rev Philip Wagstaff added "the Devon Heartlands Community Forum has grown steadily by working with partners, community members and groups in tackling issues raised by the community and is proving an excellent method of exploring ways of engaging with and helping to empower the local Community. It is heartening that our work is to be used as a National Rural Case Study by such a well respected organisation as the Carnegie UK Trust. We are delighted that other MCTi areas are exploring ways of developing further what was learnt from the MCTi process across Devon and it is good to see that locally our MCTi colleagues in Tavistock are developing a Forum along similar lines to the Heartlands forum".

The Devon Heartlands Forum has attracted the attention of others also looking for a way of developing valuable levels of Community Engagement. This includes the insights and opportunities generated through previous initiatives such as the MCTi and the valuable work developed in partnership with our local authorities.

Devon Heartlands have also been asked to make a presentation about the concept of Community Engagement at the South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre Roadshow 'Empowering and Engaging in our Communities' an event organised on behalf of IDeA and GOSW that will be held in Plymouth on the 23 Oct 2008.

All Devon Heartlands Carnegie RARP Reports can be viewed on line by visiting www.devonheartlands.co.uk

If you require more information please contact Ewen Rae or Paul Delahoy at the address below

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