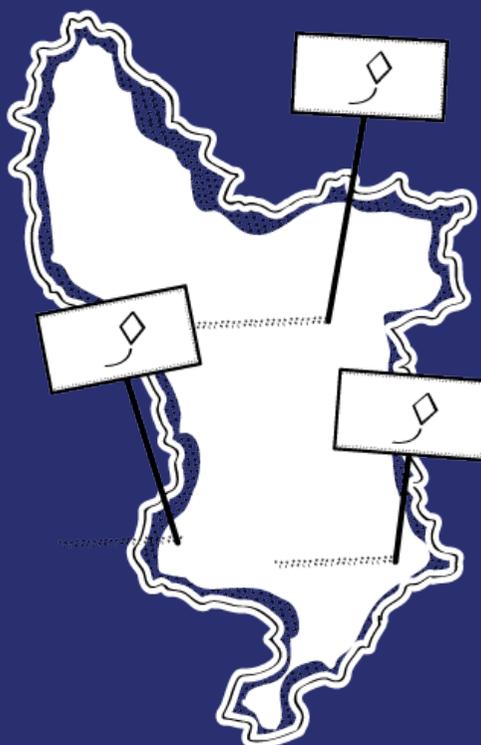


Thriving Communities Update

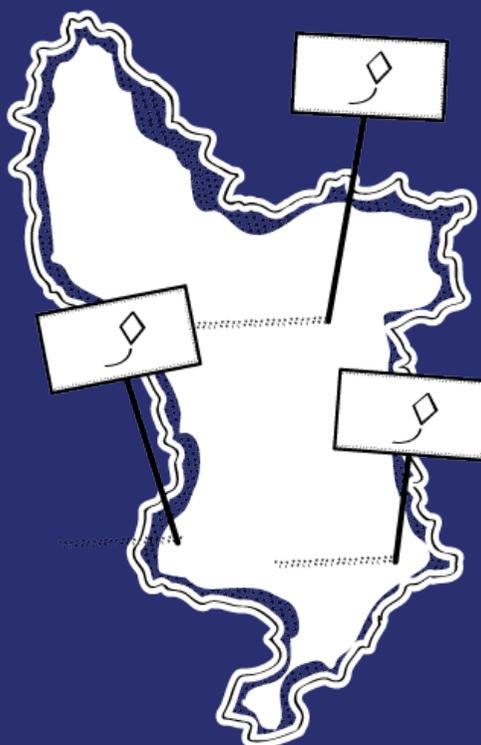
Place Improvement and Scrutiny Committee

18 May 2022



Thriving Communities

Background and development of the approach



Thriving Communities is founded on a powerful case for change:



We must find ways to prevent people hitting crisis point.

Existing services and support are failing to prevent people from falling into crisis, leading to increasing demand for high-cost and unsustainable support.



We must unlock the power and potential held within our communities.

Too often, our existing services and ways of working fail to create the conditions for people and their communities to support themselves and each other.



We must raise people's aspirations and skills to be enterprising and to thrive.

Today we focus too much on the short-term needs of our people and communities, leading to reactive and paternalistic relationships, instead of building people's skills for the future.



Thriving Communities is a commitment to drive improvements to the Council's leadership of place at a strategic and community level to reduce demand through the delivery of a more efficient, system-wide preventative approach.

Thriving Communities (then Thriving Families) focused initially on developing the offer and approach in 4 key localities.

Areas were selected for the following reasons:

- Areas where we could use and build on existing resources
- Areas with strong existing networks to work with and build on
- Areas with diverse families, needs and aspirations
- Areas that required big structural issues to be tackled

In each site, we applied a Radical Efficiency approach, to co-produce new forms of support with families and communities that would radically improve outcomes and reduce costs.

Each site went through this disciplined approach, with activities being staggered overtime so that each locality could learn from the insights, ideas and outcomes of the others. Newhall was added at a later date, as a fifth site.



Cotmanhay: Better together

Where it all started in 2013, Cotmanhay has shown that working flexibly without service boundaries to grow people's potential, rather than offering services to fix problems has created genuine connections between community and services and a whole host of community benefits. Using a Council space differently, community and services have joined forces where previously there had been a huge divide and mistrust.

The impact of Covid (as with all communities) has been felt acutely here. With the Thriving model so heavily based on services and community connecting and creating from a physical space, the pandemic has decimated the presence of people on the ground to be able to respond to local need. Whilst services have continued to provide their support online, the disappearance of the community space and kitchen (which provided a place to meet up, volunteer and produce income) has left community members to fill in the gaps. They have neither the capacity or financial support to do this alone.

Shirebrook: Still rogue

In 2019 an Acceleration programme was carried out in this community, to finalise the Thriving Communities model prior to full roll-out across Derbyshire. Flexible low-level support proved to help local people to transform their circumstances and become active volunteers and a local Council space was re-purposed to house a hub for a café and eclectic mix of local activities. A 'Being Kind In Shirebrook' pledge helped to unite people in a common cause to work proactively and practically together to solve local problems in a spirit of positivity and optimism.

However, evaluation revealed quite clearly that this was still all happening because of the commitment and enthusiasm of individuals. Despite the system, not supported by it. Thriving Communities aims to bring about both community and system level change, and the Accelerator period showed that local staff were still not empowered (or even encouraged) to work in Thriving ways. A deeper organisational understanding of adaptive leadership was thus developed within a DCC training programme.

Gamesley: Fab but fragile

Already adopting many Thriving style practices, Gamesley connects its community with local services in a genuinely collaborative fashion through its Thursday morning GITS (Gamesley Integrated Team) gatherings. Here, a small 'Connected Team' of local staff discuss how they can work flexibly to support local people or families in need of help and plan events that will benefit the community. They also have their finger on the pulse of any challenges which may be bubbling locally and work together to create solutions which will prevent crisis.

Gamesley helped inform the central part of the Thriving model, the need to build trusting relationships and share out flexible practical action locally between staff and local volunteers. It is a 'chipping-in' approach, which can act responsively and appropriately at a hyper-local level right when a need arises. The estate has lost many services over recent years and the worry is that much of the Thriving activity continues to rely on short-term grant funding and good will.

Newhall: Enabling power

Things began well and ideas flourished with the support of a DCC Director. A change in political and strategic leadership, however left this area without high level support. Some amazing creativity at the hyper-local level emerged, but this has remained predominantly low impact and hasn't connected with services to achieve the levels of transformational originally co-designed. A great example of how change remains limited without the presence of full organisational commitment.

Danesmoor: Limited reach

With the backdrop of the Job Centre closing, the Adult Education Centre and local work and skills services prototyped a 'Day in the Life' experience for people who lacked the confidence and connections to access the workplace (a problem locally). Training providers, businesses and local services worked together to offer informal work placements, matching people's talents with local employers. Whilst this had legs on the ground it never 'took off'. Local staff were keen but couldn't sustain the effort without organisational permission.

The key learning from our prototype sites that helped shape today's model

These included:

- **Co-production works!** Co-producing with communities and staff can lead to radically different ideas and support.
- **Untapped resources** Significant amounts of waste in duplication of services locally alongside huge amounts of unrecognised and underutilised local capacity in staff and community members.
- **Facilitation matters** Having a disciplined process and methodology matters, helping to maintain focus, pace and progress.
- **Building capacity takes time** Embedding capacity and building capabilities takes time and requires investment of resources.
- **Local potential is limited by wider systems & structures** Wider system conditions massively impact on the ability to maximise local level resources and assets.
- **Sustainable impacts required transformation at all levels** Not only at community and service level, but the council and across the system.
- **Lack of place-based leadership** Leading at place levels needed to be developed and new ways of collaborating around common goals supported.
- **It's about building a movement** There is a huge amount of energy, capacity and resources in communities, but it can require mobilising people and helping them to connect with one another differently in order to maximise their collective potential.
- **A movement for communities AND services** There is a huge amount of energy, capacity and resources in our workforce and services, but it can require mobilising people and helping them to connect and collaborate with one another differently in order to maximise their collective potential.

Action learning helped to build the model

Through gathering new insights and perspectives we learned that...

- ... Support was appreciated but didn't always help*
- ... There is lots of different, overlapping resource*
- ... Lack of flexibility in services made it difficult for staff to do the right thing*
- ... Communities wanted to help themselves and not be told they are a problem*

By co-designing new solutions we learned that...

- ... People were really pleased to be heard*
- ... More time to build trust led to positive relationships*
- ... Supporting people to set their own goals and work towards these instead of service targets led to much better results*
- ... Staff morale improved*

By working with new capacity we learned that...

- ... Local efforts cannot be sustained without dynamic system understanding of the impact of strategic decisions*
- ... It can't all fall to one service or department to support*
- ... Collaboration works but without a high-level partnership steer, service agendas top trump common sense*

Introducing the 10 Ways of Working for the Thriving Communities approach.

In some areas of Derbyshire, deep understanding and strong bonds of trust have already been forged through years of growing the human-centred, locality-oriented, aspiration-led and collaborative values which underpins the Thriving Communities approach. We have attempted to evidence how we understand these relationships through demonstrable concepts – the 10 Ways Of Working.

Examples of implementing these Ways Of Working are extraordinary, in both senses of the word; excellent and... out of the ordinary! But only out of the ordinary because we are so used to living in unnecessary complexity. Most of what happens in Thriving Communities is both obvious, simple and common sense.

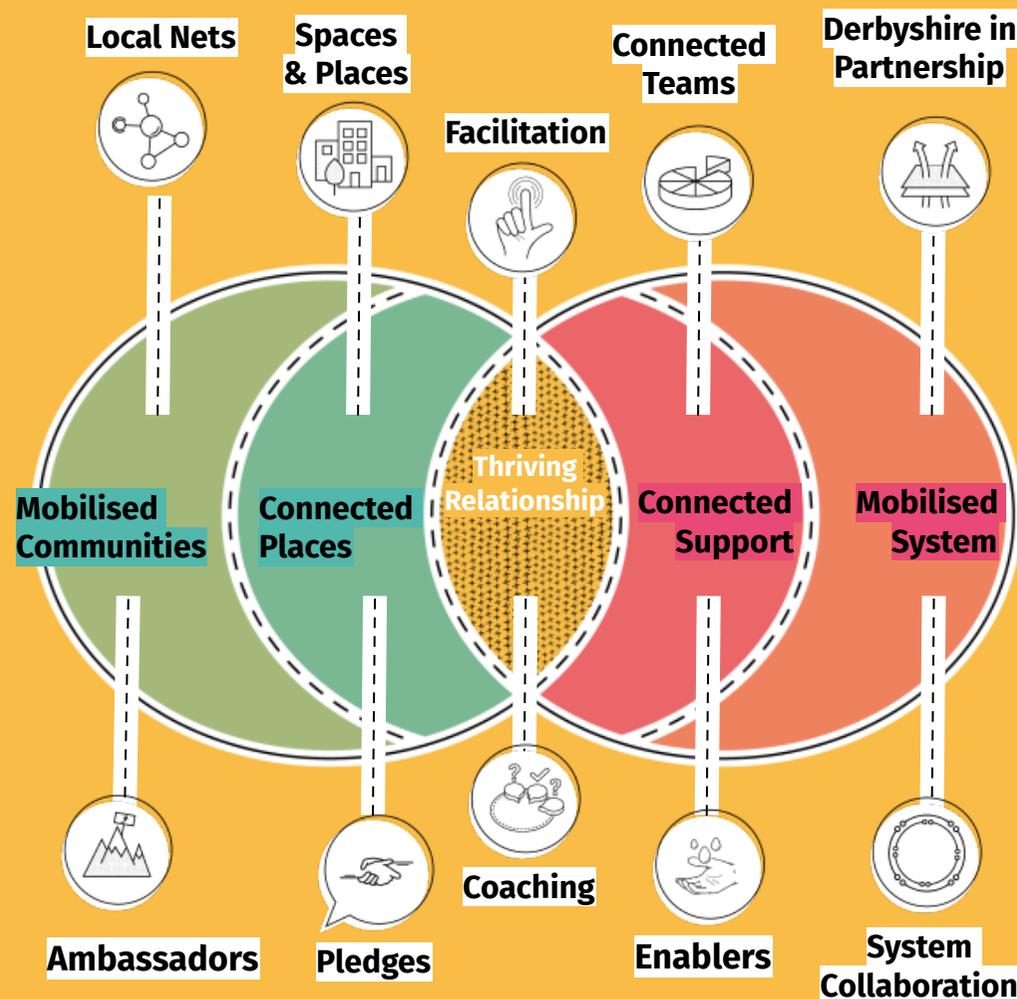
The aim of the WOWs is to learn from them, to share them and to make them commonplace in communities across the county (or beyond).

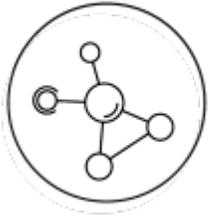
Before going further, some important distinctions to make:

- ★ The WOWs are concepts; the application of each concept can vary greatly from one application to another and are described not to instruct, but to inspire.
- ★ They are like a spice rack; sometimes you might require one or two, or a few, or sometimes you might recognise where there is a need for all of them at once. Some are roles, some are ways of being, some are practical or physical things.
- ★ Some places use certain WOWs more than others. They all aim to serve a single purpose of creating the thriving relationship of support. If their application isn't helping to do that, then it may be time to re-evaluate. Thriving Communities offers a means to develop a process of continuous learning, reflection and progress, it is not an instruction manual for a definitive end goal – because there isn't one! The journey is the destination...

The 10 Ways of Working help us realise the Thriving Communities model and close the gap between communities and the system

The ways of working broadly map across the model and together they help support our communities and system to mobilise and connect in order to create Thriving Relationships.





Local Nets

Open, regular sessions for people to join purposeful conversations and create rich dialogue about common interests, aspirations and challenges. Sharing their insights, activities and taking action together in an area.



Pledges

Promises that help people feel a common sense of purpose and bond around a place or challenge, representing what's important to how they work with each other and the community.



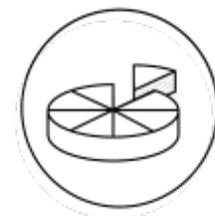
Spaces & Places

Open access & welcoming buildings and spaces that are designed with communities; to be places that support their shared aspirations and build positive connections. Places where you can do things!



Facilitation

Facilitation actively provides practical support to help people connect, set-up and sustain creative and innovative ideas and activities. Doing the doing.



Connected Teams

Collaborative, self-managed teams from across organisations and sectors working together in local places doing things differently. Empowered to identify and respond creatively to local opportunities and challenges.



Enablers

Enablers open doors and make things happen. They give permission and empower workers to come up with sustainable solutions to community needs



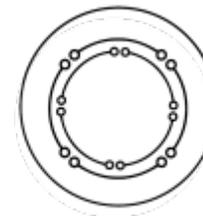
Coaching

Coaching engages with people flexibly, working toward people's aspirations. It builds on people's natural networks, and helps people through a holistic, life-course approach.



Ambassadors

Ambassadors are champions of ensuring the workforce positively influences the community. They work to build and share a positive and achievable story about people, places and a better future for staff and community.



System Collaboration

Supports the development of enhanced, empowered and dynamic alliances to create a common-sense approach to finding solutions within a complex system.

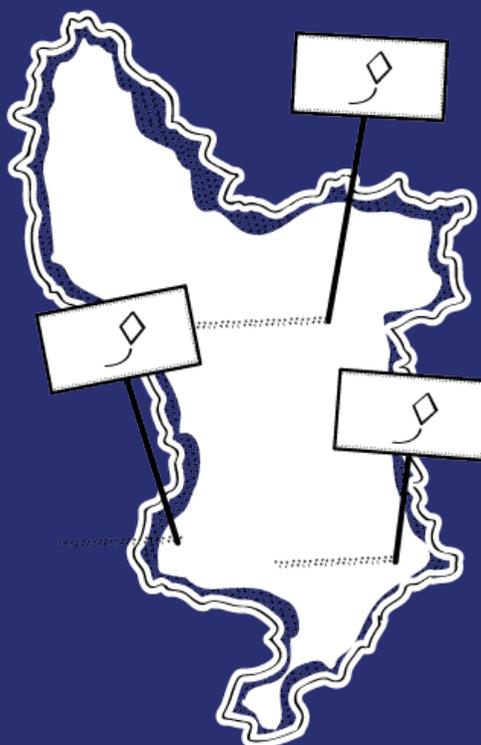


Derbyshire in Partnership

A single cross-partner approach that brings together strategic decision makers to work together around a shared vision to realise the greatest public value for Derbyshire.

Thriving Communities

Current position, progress and future plans



Progress in rolling out the approach

- The pandemic has slowed down progress in identifying and taking forward work in new thriving communities areas, however the establishment of the Thriving Communities Board in April 2021 has ensured that progress and activity are being driven forward. A programme of activity for January to April 2022 was successfully delivered, including a series of local inductions for new staff throughout February and March.
- Induction sessions were well received and local activity is beginning to pick back up. With staff permissions and the relaxation of Covid restrictions, work is progressing to re-build the relationships and connections which will be needed locally to develop the approach in community settings. Connected Teams locally, both in existing and new areas have been directly connected with a strategic 'enabler' from a leadership position within the system.
- Interest and enthusiasm remains strong for building Connected Teams. If properly supported and resourced, these teams have the ability to act with agility, flexibility and creativity to respond to local aspirations and challenges. This could also include managing local spaces and budgets.
- The 'enabler' role has sent a powerful message to local staff that the organisation is supporting the approach and ways of working. It has given confidence to people to mobilise to work together and has the potential to continue to empower people to be involved and influence peers and partners.

Progress in rolling out the approach (continued)

- Despite the pandemic, the Thriving Communities Model (and Ways of Working) remains an appropriate approach and practice model for creating adaptative and dynamic relationships between communities and the system.
- However, the organisation has a number of key challenges which are impacting on the ability of services to get involved on the ground as well as juggling (and generating) many duplicated and often competing initiatives, programmes and projects. Standing up Connected Teams continues to be a challenge with many key local roles remaining unfilled. Many nominated individuals have indicated that have not had any time freed up to fulfil identified roles.
- Even in existing communities, where the approach has evolved over recent years, there have been significant changes – including local staff on the ground, availability of local services etc. There is a need to spend time building trust and relationships and re-introducing basic Thriving Communities skills (e.g. ethnography and co-design)
- There is increasing concern in local communities about the current and worsening cost of living crisis – this is impacting on communities which managed to mobilise and get through the pandemic. Local staff, volunteers, community groups etc are worried for the future in the face of escalating demand.

Draft proposals agreed in principle by the Thriving Communities Board on 22 April 2022

1. Test and further develop the bespoke Derbyshire model for **self-managed hyper-local Connected Teams**
2. Prototype the use of **responsive and flexible small local budgets**
3. Create and test community based **welcoming ‘front-doors’** through
 - Shared spaces (co-designed and co-produced cross-service and with local people)
 - Removal of service-based assessment eligibility and criteria
4. Broaden and deepen the use of story telling across the Council and partner agencies. Train all local teams in **story-gathering (ethnographic)** methods and **carry out local research** to deeply understand current aspirations and needs
5. Collectively support **emerging community priorities and ideas**
6. Confirm departmental commitments to the above at an **extended strategic planning session** face to face in June and confirm corporate delivery strategy moving forward



- **Deepen ‘enabler’ role** to build assurance and confident leadership of the approach
- Commit **cross-departmental support**
- Expand **partner commitments**

Existing Areas

Work has begun to strengthen (or re-establish) hyper local activity in existing communities

Gamesley, High Peak

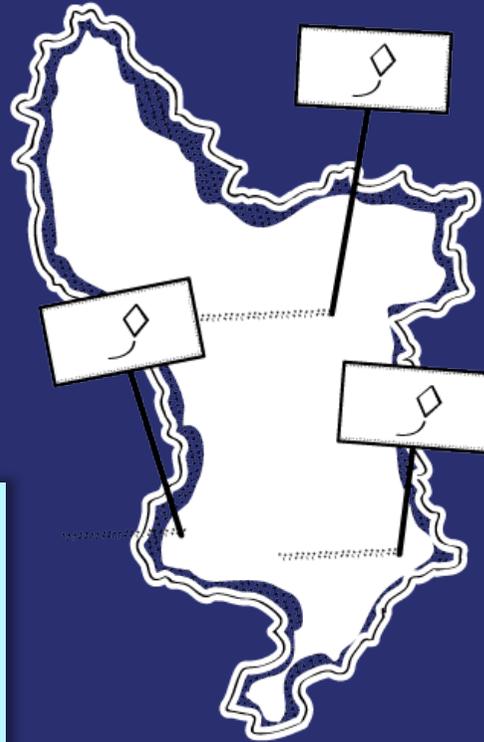
The local team has continued to support the community during Covid, picking up many gaps that disappearing services have left. Following the local induction, commitments have been made to offer more support from services.

Enabler: Linda Elba-Porter (ASC) and Andrew Stokes (HPBC)

Newhall, South Derbyshire

The local team has been re-energised and begun planning to re-connect to community members to understand local need. They are also looking for space to begin working collaboratively together face to face and with community members.

Enabler: Emma Alexander (CST)



Shirebrook, Bolsover

The local team is still predominantly made up of community volunteers, with many services lacking capacity (or still unable to working face to face). A small number of services are jointly re-opening the community space at Carter Lane and the community drop-in on a Friday.

Enabler: Ellie Houlston (ASC/ Public Health)

Cotmanhay, Erewash

With changes in local staff, there is a fresh start for the work in Cotmanhay. With a strong local network, services are beginning to re-connect with the community activity and re-open spaces.

Enabler: Chris Caley (CS)

New Areas

Work has begun to roll out the approach into new communities

Ashbourne and surrounding area, Derbyshire Dales

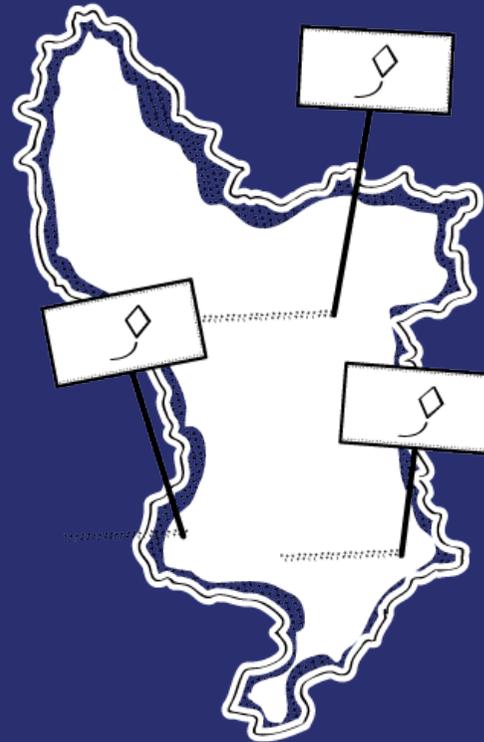
Building a Connected Team to do the work and exploring relationships. Local network already exists linked to the active church, providing a great opportunity to learn together and shape the work collaboratively.

Enabler: Linda Elba-Porter (ASC) and Paul Wilson (DDDC) tbc

Langley Mill, Amber Valley

Small Connected Team growing and a local networking session held to begin to re-connect people who work in the community and build relationships.

Enabler: Emma Crapper (CST)



Staveley, Chesterfield

Early conversations have begun to connect the work with the Towns Fund and local partners, with a positive reception in principle. Currently exploring capacity to deliver with key partners.

Enabler: Pete Handford (CST)

Homelessness

Story gathering was planned and staff trained during 2020 but unfortunately two planned research periods were postponed due to Covid lock downs.

Enabler: tbc