WEST AREA COMMITTEE – 13 MAY 2009

Title of paper:	SupportNet: Bilborough Community Self-Directed Support Project	
Director:	Lianne Taylor, Acting Director of Local Communities	**Wards affected:** Aspley, Bilborough and Leen Valley
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Relevant Council Plan theme(s):	
Choose Nottingham	
Respect for Nottingham	
Transforming Nottingham's Neighbourhoods	
Supporting Nottingham People	
Serving Nottingham Better	

Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):

This report informs members of the SupportNet, a 'working model' of self directed support being piloted in the Bilborough area of Nottingham.

Recommendations:

1	That members the information contained within Appendix 1 regarding the purpose and aims of the project.
2	That members note the information contained within Appendix 2 regarding the first phase of the project.

1   BACKGROUND

1.1   The SupportNet project is being piloted in the Bilborough area and is led by Adult Services. The main purpose of the project is to nurture the growth of trustworthy, flexible social work support for local people, co-created with local people, offering increased choice and power to those who need care and support.

1.2   Appendix 1 provides information about the purpose and aims of the project including details of methodology.

1.3   Appendix 2 provides a brief outline of implementation of the first phase. Consultants commissioned to deliver the project are available to answer any questions that members of the committee may have about SupportNet.

2   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

To keep members informed of the project being piloted within the Area Committee boundaries and to enable members to ask any questions about the project.

3   OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

None

4   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)

None.

5   RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS)

None

6   LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

6.1   Appendix 1 - Executive Summary

6.2   Appendix 2 - SupportNet: Bilborough Community Project Phase 1

7   PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

None

1. Executive Summary

This paper describes the key features of *SupportNet*, a 'working model' of SDS being piloted in the Bilborough area of Nottingham, using participatory leadership and community engagement approaches to co-create and transform the shape of social care support with local people.

This is an innovative approach with the potential for invaluable national learning. Its in-built self-evaluation processes would usefully be complemented by academic social action research, and DoH is invited to meet the costs of such research and to be represented on the Steering Group.

2. The vision for *SupportNet within the context of SDS implementation in Nottingham*

> *The City's Vision for SDS is that Nottingham will be a place where people eligible for social care services can exercise choice and control to maximise their quality of life and well-being, supported by responsive services and inclusive communities*

Inspired initially by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, the community-based pilot (provisionally named *SupportNet*) will develop a 'working model' of SDS, investing in the creation of the right conditions for engagement and co-production to take shape within a neighbourhood - Bilborough, in the west of the City.

Complementing this pilot, the implementation of Personal Budgets for all service user groups as an integral part of a re-ablement process – starting in some areas of the City in January 2009 – will roll out to the Bilborough area from April 2009.

Purpose: *SupportNet* will nurture the growth of trustworthy, flexible social care support for local people co-created with local people, offering increased choice and power to those who need care and support.

Aims: *SupportNet* will combine the models and methodologies (see Appendix 1) of participatory leadership, accountability-based civic engagement, living systems, the practice of continuous evaluation, i.e. harvesting, within an action research framework, social and community work in a radical approach to community empowerment. It will aim to:
- inspire the community to contribute to the thinking about the possibilities for relevant and local social care support
- seek broad contribution from a diverse range of people and organisations to co-create a new shape for social care support
- bring new practices to convening community conversations that build citizens' accountability and commitment, offering the structures and opportunities for co-production, self organisation and active involvement
- inform the implementation of SDS across the City and nationally, through a continuous process of evaluative social action research

Principles: The principles agreed by the multi-agency Steering Group are that the *SupportNet* pilot will:
- work through collaboration and co-creation
- build community capacity

§ offer opportunity for learning and practising
§ enable creativity in a context of informed risk-taking and the spirit of 'trying things out'
§ engage with the community through a 'whole system' approach
§ improve access to information and support

Areas of particular interest:

Inquiry will be invited into the following as a starting point:
§ stronger communication, so that new collective meaning / intelligence, is generated and owned by the community (i.e. not simply information-giving)
§ co-creating neighbourhood networks of support
§ local commissioning of support
§ people's aspirations for the type and quality of support they want for themselves and family members
§ new types of worker and support such as brokers and advocates
§ better access to universal services

Early intervention and prevention

The pilot aims to promote independence and wellbeing across a broad spectrum of interventions, engaging with people at all of the three levels of the DoH framework[1], not just those who are "FACS eligible".

• **Primary prevention/promoting wellbeing**: people living in the community who have no particular social care needs or symptoms of illness. The focus here is to promote wellbeing, maintaining independence and good health.
SupportNet will
• promote the cohesiveness and safety of the neighbourhood
• engage with professionals promoting healthy lifestyles
• improve access to good quality useful information and to low-cost practical support.

• **Secondary prevention/early intervention:** people identified as vulnerable or at risk.
SupportNet will create neighbourhood networks that will help to spot those becoming vulnerable, and actively work together to improve their situation.

• **Tertiary prevention:** aimed at minimising disability or deterioration in people with established health conditions or complex social care needs.
SupportNet will
• work with rehabilitation/enablement services and social care staff supporting people with complex needs
• both create new resources and encourage more imaginative and person-centred use of existing provision, thus improving choice
• help to create local networks of support with different agencies and individual carers working collaboratively.

Community of practice and influence

This pilot invites an inclusive and collaborative approach to the learning journey and recognises the immense gains of DOH, Skills for Care, Nottingham City Council and Nottingham PCT making meaning together, at strategic level, of the intelligence gained from the pilot.

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[1] '*Making a strategic shift to prevention and early intervention - A Guide*' - DOH (Oct 2008). Although the guide has an older person focus this is a useful model for all service user groups.

This business case therefore includes an invitation to a DOH colleague to join us in this exploration through participation in the Steering Group.

2. Design architecture

The flow for this pilot is a process of co-creation rather than a linear plan. The initial phase of 'Preparing the Ground' - creating a container within which the pilot will be strongly held and supported - is already in progress. So far this has resulted in:
- § Hearing the 'call' and need for the pilot from a series of initial conversations
- § The creation of a multi-agency Steering Group through an invitation to others who are willing to explore new approaches and be part of the learning community
- § Co-creation through the Steering Group of the Purpose and the Principles
- § Selection of Bilborough by Members as the location for the first pilot, using criteria agreed by the Steering Group
- § The creation of two new posts (funded through the Social Care Reform Grant) for community development and market development
- § Interest from the Department of Health
- § Interest from Skills for Care in the 'new types of worker' aspect of the pilot
- § The creation of a robust governance pattern through the Steering Group and the City Council's model of project management

The proposed design architecture for the pilot itself will be grounded in a framework with 4 phases, illustrated in Appendix A. The phases, starting in January 2009, are:

(1) Co-designing (Jan – May 2009) – a period of inviting contribution from people who live or work in Bilborough, building confidence and trust, framing the purpose and principles of the pilot, and convening conversations about possibilities for the future

Desired outputs from the co-designing phase are:
- § Audit of community assets
- § Assessment of accountability-based civic engagement i.e community ownership of future care support solutions
- § A 'live' framework for the next phase with proposed actions
- § Collective clarity about priority actions and levers for change and improvement
- § A visible communication network
- § Surfacing more key questions that require further collective inquiry

Outcomes for people who need support:
- § They, and the professionals who support them, will know what resources already exist in the neighbourhood and how Personal Budgets can be used to access these
- § Convening conversations about wider possibilities will create ideas about new ways to use existing resources and how to increase their accessibility

(2) Practising (June – Nov 09) - setting up new activities and exploring new practice within a structure of supported learning through Action Learning sets and Open Space Technology; mentoring; continued opportunities for dialogue; teaching and developing hosting practice to others. The convergence of this will enable a collective 'stock-take' and review.

Outcomes for people who need support:
- § New types of local support will start to appear. These might include:
      social enterprises grown from initiatives such as 'Small Sparks';

Timebank schemes bringing the skills of a diverse range of individuals together (contributing to community cohesion);
networks of support for Personal Assistants and service users
'neighbourhood agents' schemes (contributing to both the preventative and worklessness agendas)

(3) Extending (Dec 09 – Feb 10) **-** widening the participation and learning, leading to a collective evaluation by the beginning of March 2010, to decide what to keep, what to build on, and what to drop as the period of **(4) Consolidation**, the final 3 months leading to the end of the pilot, begins.

3. What are the conditions for success?

The pilot requires strategic ownership and a collective focus to intentionally create the conditions for participatory approaches and model these at every level, so that co-production is a genuine option as a future model of social care provision. The governance of the project should be congruent with the approach to the pilot.

The principle of co-production means that if, during the eighteen months of the pilot, it is decided that a second area should be involved, it will be necessary to repeat the four phases described above. A pilot such as this will not simply 'copy' to another community.

4. Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

This pilot fits with the Government's aims of:
§ Citizen empowerment and co-production
§ Strengthening communities
§ Early intervention and prevention
§ Improving inter-agency partnership working
It also has the potential to contribute to the Council's intent to create jobs for local people.

5. Evaluation

This pilot will model a participatory approach to leadership to develop resources in the community. As far as we know this is a unique approach in the combination of the intention to build community capacity and the participatory hosting methodologies proposed (see Appendix B).

In keeping with the nature of the pilot, an evaluative research method such as co-operative inquiry[2] (eg. Bath University Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice) or social action research (eg. de Montfort University Social Action Research Centre) seems most appropriate, and we are exploring possibilities and potential costs with each of these. Either approach will enhance the in-built evaluative methodologies such as harvesting and self-evaluation that are a key feature of hosting practice.

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[2] **Co-operative inquiry** or **social action research** integrates action and reflection, so that the knowledge gained in the inquiry is directly relevant to the issues being studied; and in which there is increased collaboration between all those involved in the inquiry project.

Appendix A:

The diagram that follows illustrates the phases of the pilot along a timeline.

Each diamond in the diagram represents a process of:
>**divergence** – finding the key questions that open up dialogue; seeking ideas, concerns and views from a wide range of people; hosting conversations that create collective intelligence,
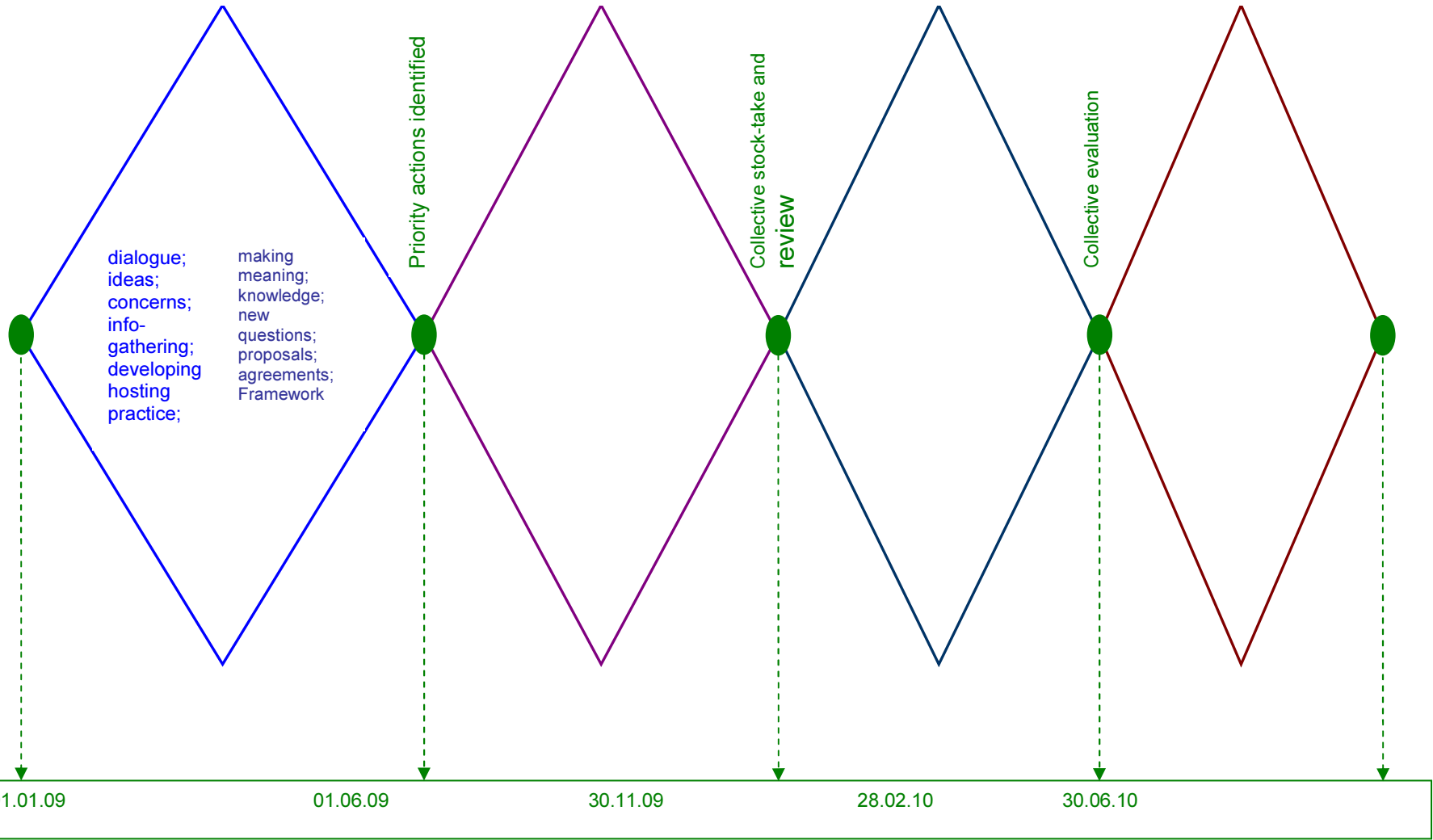
followed by
>**convergence**, which makes sense and meaning of the gathered information, transforming it into knowledge, inspiring new questions and prioritising the actions that will be the levers for change. This feeds into the next phase of divergence, building next level learning and practice at each stage.

Designing **Practising** **Extending** **Consolidation**

Priority actions identified

Collective stock-take and review

Collective evaluation

dialogue;
ideas;
concerns;
info-
gathering;
developing
hosting
practice;

making
meaning;
knowledge;
new
questions;
proposals;
agreements;
Framework

01.01.09   01.06.09   30.11.09   28.02.10   30.06.10

Appendix B

1. Living systems and participatory leadership

The hosting of the pilot, as described above, rests on a 'living systems' approach, which is based on the following principles:
- effective organisations grow out of healthy interconnected relationships
- the wisdom needed is already within organisations and communities and will emerge from them
- self-organisation produces more energy, creativity and commitment
- positive change is more likely to take place on the edge where chaos meets order.

The key area of newness in the pilot will be a radical shift to **participatory leadership/hosting:**
> leadership that builds the conditions for inclusive co-creation
> leadership that surfaces the key questions then convenes groups of people to engage with them so that community ownership, learning and commitment to action emerges
> leadership that produces engagement with groups of people in the community, initiating conversations that shift experience

What are the conditions for inclusive co-creation? - because of its newness, creating a different paradigm of leadership, the pilot needs to be owned at every strategic level. There is already a Steering Group of local decision-makers - senior managers in ASHH, the PCT and other parts of the City Council – hosted in a way that models the gathering and use of collective intelligence on which to build the next level of practice.

What will the community conversations look like? - Accountability-based civic engagement is a set of ideas and tools designed to restore and reconcile communities by shifting the public conversation. Peter Block[3] describes an intention to 'create the possibility of an alternative future by creating a public conversation based on communal accountability and commitment.' This moves away from the 'citizen as customer' paradigm, resting on two premises: (1) *to be accountable, among other things, means you act as an owner and part creator of whatever it is that you wish to improve* and (2) *to be committed means you are willing to make a promise with no expectation of return.*

> "…a shift in conversation can shift the context and thereby create an intentional future."
> - Peter Block: **Civic Engagement and the Restoration of Community** (2005)

Community members will be invited to conversations about the possibilities for the future. Hosting practice supports people to come together and engage in meaningful conversations, in order to find the trust and inspiration to move into new consciousness that in turn creates new practice.

There are specific social technologies that invite such participatory leadership – such as World Café, Appreciative Inquiry, Open Space Technology, Future Search - building contribution and collective intelligence, creating accountability and commitment and supporting sustainable change.

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[3] Peter Block: *Civic Engagement and the Restoration of Community* (2005) – www.asmallgroup.net

2.   Methodologies

- *World Café[4]:* an innovative yet simple methodology for hosting conversations about questions that matter. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, or community. As a process, the World Café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of common aims.

- *Open Space Technology[5]:* in which participants create and manage their own agenda of parallel working sessions around a central theme of strategic importance. It is firmly based on the principles of self-organisation, and with groups of any size creates powerful connections that strengthen learning, responsibility and participation. Open Space works best when the work to be done is complex, the people and ideas involved are diverse, the passion for resolution (and potential for conflict) is high, and the time to get it done was yesterday.

- *Appreciative Inquiry[6]:* this focuses on generating and applying knowledge that comes from inquiry into moments of excellence, periods of exceptional competence and performance – times when people felt most alive and energised. Learning from what works and gives life is more effective and sustainable than learning from problems and pathologies.

- *Circle Practice[7]:* The circle, or council, is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered human beings into respectful conversation for thousands of years. The circle has served as the foundation for many cultures. What transforms a meeting into a circle is the willingness of people to shift from informal socialising or opinionated discussion into a receptive attitude of thoughtful speaking and deep listening and to embody and practice particular structures.

- *Harvesting[8]:* Planning the harvest is an essential part of planning the overall event: the design team will pay as much attention to harvesting the knowledge and learning from the event as hosting the event itself. Harvests start with creative accessible records of conversations - including photos, pictures, quotes, imagery and a story that people recognise. From this, new collective intelligence can be intentionally developed to feed the next level of learning and practice.

  If the work of the host is to engage everyone to make their contribution, listen openly, try to understand differing views and to bring their best to the table and work at hand – then the focus of the 'harvester' is on capturing the wisdom, remembering, seeing patterns and making meaning, then making this meaning visible and available. Harvesting brings us to the next level of understanding; it can enable us to see the same picture and share the same understanding together, enhancing collective intelligence.

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[4] www.theworldcafe.com
[5] www.openspaceworld.org
[6] www.appreciativeinquiry.case.edu
[7] www.peerspirit.com
[8] www.artofhosting.org/thepractice/artofharvesting

To be circulated at the Committee meeting