

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For immediate release: 14 May 2004**

### **Education high on the agenda**

Education was top of the agenda for Derby City Partnership when it looked at the issues surrounding the subject at its recent meeting.

The Board looked at the scale of the Education Service and the priorities facing it, nationally and locally, which are very significant. Discussion focused on two issues because of their importance to the well-being and development of the city: school improvement and the development and renovation of secondary schools, under the Building Schools for the Future initiative.

School improvement is one of a number of priorities for Derby City Partnership which has to achieve government targets set for unemployment, crime, education, health, housing and the environment.

In his presentation, Andrew Flack, Director of Education focused on the fact that schools are not just isolated sites and there are other major influences on a pupil's education beyond the teacher's input, including the family, peers and community.

Julia Swan, Assistant Director, School Improvement and Inclusion, suggested ways Derby City Partnership could actively contribute to raising achievement by supporting the role of communities and people less easy to reach, securing funding to target

needs, engaging children and young people including those more difficult to reach and offering routes to economic independence. A contribution to work on the Children Bill would also be important.

Members heard about Derby's expression of interest for the government's Building Schools for the Future programme. The proposal suggests that secondary school sites become neighbourhood learning centres, incorporating special education and pupil referral unit provision. They will also deliver a wide range of public services, recognising the community's needs around health, social and community services. This vision, which proposes changes to the approaches to education and the context in which it is delivered, needs the active support of a wide range of partners. Members divided into groups to discuss four questions:

- How do we engage schools in the business of Derby City Partnership?
- What do we want from our schools?
- What do we want a secondary neighbourhood learning centre to look like in terms of the services provided to its pupils and community?
- How do we respond to the debate about community input to the school?

It was agreed that Derby City Partnership has a significant role in helping to take this forward and the Director of Education offered to bring proposals for how this could be achieved to the next meeting on 15 July.

**Ends**

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**Derby City Partnership** is an alliance of organisations working together to create a better Derby.

Members represent

- public services
- local businesses
- community and voluntary groups
- individuals who live or work in Derby.

Since 1995, Derby City Partnership has been working to:

- develop closer and better working between organisations
- improve services and facilities
- attract funding
- make best use of all resources
- bring the work of all partnerships in the city together

Derby City Partnership is also the Local Strategic Partnership, delivering the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal in the most deprived neighbourhoods of the city.

Derby City Partnership Board meets bi-monthly. One hour of the meeting is devoted to a strategic discussion on a key topic for the city.

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