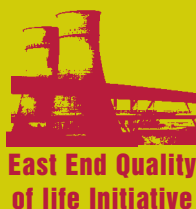




Developing Locally Agreed Quality of Life Indicators

The example of the Darnall Action Area, Sheffield

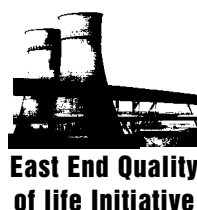




Developing Locally Agreed Quality of Life Indicators

The example of the Darnall Action Area, Sheffield

January 2003



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The **East End Quality of Life Initiative (EEQOL)** is a Sheffield Health Action Zone (HAZ) funded project. Part of EEQOL's brief was to develop locally agreed Quality of Life Indicators, as a contribution to reducing health inequalities within the Sheffield Health Action Zone. EEQOL works to involve local people and groups in strategic planning and decision-making alongside Sheffield City Council, Sheffield South East Primary Care Trust, Rotherham Council, the Highways Agency, the Passenger Transport Executive, Meadowhall/Stadium Developments and others. In order to bring about changes in health inequalities, EEQOL aims to build capacity through community research, profiling and monitoring in the Darnall Action Area.

EEQOL has developed close links with the **Darnall Area Panel**. Darnall Area Panel has existed for over four years, aiming to try and make sure that City Council services (both directly provided and those contracted) meet the needs of the people and communities in the Darnall area. This includes Tinsley, most of Handsworth and all of Darnall. The Panel consists of four elected councillors, three elected from the Darnall ward and one from Manor ward. It meets every two months in different localities. The public meetings of the Panel help to work out the priority issues – mapped out every year in the *Area Action Plan* – and encourage greater co-ordination between different agencies. They also serve to strengthen the role of councillors as the voice of local communities in the Town Hall. The Area Panel also tries to ensure that new funding that come into the area works to the advantage of local people and communities, as well as meeting the needs of the funding agencies. The Area Panel also meets representatives of local community groups, tenants and residents groups and significant local voluntary groups every two months through the *Darnall Dialogue meetings*.

For more information, contact either the Area Co-ordinator, Andy Shallice, The Old School, Station Rd, S9 4JT (tel: 203 7494) or the Chair, Councillor Terry Barrow (tel: 286 4177).

The **East End Quality of Life Initiative** was established under the auspices of the East End Strategy Group. The project Steering Group is a sub-group of the East End Strategy Group. Members include representatives from Tinsley Forum, Sheffield City Council's Environment Protection Service and Planning, Transport and Highways departments, and the Sheffield South East Primary Care Trust.

Further information and more copies of this report can be obtained from

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See www.sheffildeastend.org.uk/eeqol, the web site of the East End Quality of Life Initiative, for more information.

QUALITY OF LIFE REPORT



The phrase ‘successful neighbourhoods’ is used a lot in the regeneration world at present – indeed, the City Council defines it as one of the core objectives. But this begs two questions – successful for whom? Is it successful for people who live in an area; or people who work in an area; or for the Council or whoever has to fund the services for the area. The second question is, and it’s clearly linked to the first – how does anyone define and measure ‘success’?

There is plenty of advice from the experts and government about the answers to these questions. But the Darnall Area Panel wanted to know what the real experts thought – the residents of Darnall, Tinsley and Handsworth. Is a measure of the quality of your life the amount of bird song you can hear? Or the amount of rubbish on the streets? Or your elderly aunt’s confidence about getting a bottle of milk at the shop at 8pm on a winter’s evening? Or the GCSE results of the local secondary?

The East End Quality of Life project has been developing in the Tinsley and Darnall areas for the last few years and they wanted to know the answers as well. Indeed, their title asserts that this is something they’re trying to identify and improve. Additionally, the work undertaken by East End Quality of Life in terms of local research, advocacy and information in areas of regeneration policy, land use and transport planning policy and environmental quality is exceptional. It isn’t only the theoretical but also the practical steps to improving neglected and unseen small areas. So the Area Panel set a challenge – if we mean that ‘successful neighbourhoods’ and ‘quality of life’ is best determined by local residents, what is it that local people say are the best indicators, the best markers which you measure improvements, or decline?

The resulting booklet is the East End Quality of Life’s response. I am pleased to commend it to those in the partnership world who have asked these questions, as this is the view from the real specialists – the local communities themselves.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'T' and 'B' followed by a long, sweeping flourish.

Cllr Terry Barrow
Chair, Darnall Area Panel
January 2003

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Quick guide to East End Quality of Life's process to developing quality of life indicators in the Darnall Action Area

Why did we do it?

1. Government policy proposes that local strategic partnerships should monitor progress towards locally agreed Community Strategies.
2. Part of the East End Quality of Life Initiative's brief, as a contribution to the overall aims of Sheffield's Health Action Zone (HAZ) was to develop locally agreed quality of life indicators which would be monitored and reviewed regularly to measure progress. In order to bring about changes in health inequalities, one of the project's aims was to build capacity through community research and community profiling in the Darnall Action Area.

Where did we start?

1. We looked what other people had done:
 - University of Toronto
 - London Southwark and the LITMUS test
 - Birmingham City Council's Environmental Services Department
 - Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions guidance on sustainable development.
2. We built on what had been done in the area in the past, i.e. local issues that had been highlighted in:
 - A survey in Tinsley, 1997
 - Public meetings in Darnall during December 1999 and written responses received afterwards.
 - Darnall Community Research (288 one-to-one interviews during February-May 2000, undertaken by 10 locally recruited interviewers. Interviewees were asked to prioritise up to five problems and five suggestions that they thought would make the most impact on their lives.)
3. We worked in partnership with the Darnall Area Panel and local forums.

What did we do next?

1. We collected data that was reasonably easy to find, through the Neighbourhood Statistics web site (www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/home.asp), and by writing to various city council departments, statutory agencies, and subcontractors (Onyx, education, parks and countryside, housing, health, etc.) and started to build up baseline data.
2. Using local surveys,^{1,2} a list of 21 local Quality of Life issues was compiled alongside the government's list of 29 indicators.³ These were presented to local people in a survey carried out during October-November 2001 using a structured questionnaire. A total of 736 responses were obtained by the team of local interviewers working in Tinsley and Darnall

1. EEQOL (2000) *Darnall Community Research*

2. BCTRA (2000) *Results of Bowden, Clifton and Triangle Residents Association Survey*

3. DETR (2000) *Local quality of life counts: a handbook for a menu of local indicators of sustainable development*

libraries, local shops and community meetings, in residents' own homes, and at the On Track Fun Day at the Darnall Education Centre (Starworks). 294 questionnaires were also posted out to people who had indicated in previous surveys that they would like to take part in further research, and 56 of these were returned (a response rate of 19%). People were asked to pick the 10 most important factors that affected their quality of life, but were not asked to rank them in order of importance.

From the total of 792 responses received, the top 10 indicators (in descending order of importance) from each of the lists were:

Local issues

1. Fear of burglary
2. Drug-related activities
3. Litter and rubbish dumping
4. Fear of car theft
5. Disruptive/threatening behaviour by children/youths
6. Vandalism
7. Lack of safe play areas
8. Speeding traffic
9. Graffiti
10. Lack of maintenance to public places

Government's Indicators

1. Houses fit to live in
2. Fear of crime
3. Adult education
4. Crime rate (recorded crime)
5. Qualifications of young people
6. Access to key services
7. Air pollution
8. Homelessness
9. Employment (and unemployment) rates
10. The amount of household waste collected

When the figures were weighted to try and reflect more accurately the make-up of the Action Area's population (i.e. age, sex and ethnic group),⁴ the results for the top 10 included two Government indicators on waste (amount of waste collected, and amount of waste recycled). It was noticed during the survey that some people misinterpreted the 'amount of waste collected' indicator as being a measure of satisfaction with the service, rather than the Government's aim to reduce the amount of waste collected. We have therefore amalgamated the two 'waste' indicators as, if there were more opportunities for recycling, the overall amount of household waste collected should decrease. The adjusted weighted results, in descending order of importance, were then:

Local issues

1. Litter and rubbish dumping
2. Fear of burglary
3. Vandalism
4. Disruptive/threatening behaviour by children/youths
5. Drug-related activities
6. Fear of car theft
7. Speeding traffic
8. Lack of safe play areas
9. Graffiti
10. Lack of maintenance to public places

Government's Indicators

1. Fear of crime
2. Crime rate (recorded crime)
3. Air pollution
4. Houses fit to live in
5. The amount of household waste recycled/collected
6. Qualifications of young people
7. Access to key services
8. Homelessness
9. Public concern over noise
10. Adult education

4. It is difficult to establish an exact picture of the 'action area' as many statistics are ward based, and some are based on the 1991 census data, the 2001 census data not yet being available, but our sample would appear to be low on younger and older people, men and white ethnic groups.

Taken together, the lists show that people are most concerned about problems they perceive in their immediate environment, but at the same time are concerned with the broader, more long-term picture.

An in-depth survey of 120 householders who had indicated in previous surveys that they were willing to participate in further studies were contacted by letter in January 2002, and subsequently visited up to four times (if necessary) by community researchers to conduct an interview using a detailed questionnaire. 61 questionnaires were completed, a response rate of 51%. 24 men and 37 women took part, with an average age of 46, and an age range of 19 to 78. Responses were analysed under the following headings: satisfaction with the area, noise, public transport and getting around, crime and anti-social behaviour, social networks and participation, suggestions to make the area a better place to live.

The results of these surveys was made widely available, through Area Panel meetings, copies of reports in local libraries, local newsletters, etc.

Where do we go from here?

1. Data needs to be collected on a regular basis to monitor changes in the indicators.
2. As part of the Area Action Plan, a very specific piece of work is currently underway (the Kettlebridge Placecheck) to try and bring about improvements in an area of derelict land.

Lessons learned and Recommendations

1. There are no hard and fast rules. Other studies' approaches may not be applicable to local needs or local populations, e.g.:
 - University of Toronto, Canada, undertook studies in Lawrence Heights and Riverdale (www.utoronto.ca/qol). They took a more conceptual approach to Quality of Life indicators, focusing on ideas such as being (physical, psychological, spiritual), belonging (physical, social, community), and becoming (practical, leisure, growth), with suggested indicators for each facet. They then approached different sectors of the community (adolescents, older people, and people with disabilities) and agreed Quality of Life indicators through focus group discussions.
 - Birmingham City Council aimed to raise awareness and 'inspire a renewed sense of citizenship and participation'. Their Environmental Strategy Team worked in partnership with the University of Birmingham to consult widely throughout the city (both with individuals and groups) to agree a list of 22 indicators, whittled down from an initial draft list of over 200. These indicators were then adopted by the City Council. The focus groups also provided valuable information about how easily indicators were understood and how they linked with sustainability (and how 'sustainability' itself was understood). They also give an indication of how much the exercise cost (£6280, plus officer time and free research project time).
 - The DETR handbooks suggest where to find data, and whether data exists on a very local basis – this is improving with the availability of Neighbourhood Statistics (www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/home.asp).
 - Calvert-Henderson have concentrated on national indicators for the USA, focusing more on how to draw together the many and varied local initiatives into a single matrix.
2. Start from what is already known, i.e. the issues and concerns that have been raised in meetings and surveys – but finding out who has done and said what, particularly in an area

such as Darnall where there are many diverse groups, may be the most difficult part of the exercise.

3. Use local people as interviewers – they know where to find the people you want to talk to, and they are good at letting people know what has happened to the information afterwards.
4. Use whatever information you can get – finding interviewers, interviewees and suitable venues will not be easy; you will be criticised for not having a representative (age, sex, ethnic group) sample, and there are usually problems getting young people involved; survey fatigue may set in.
5. Check out understanding, e.g. the wording of questions may lead to misinterpretation (there was a feeling that the government indicator of ‘amount of household waste collected’ was interpreted more as the importance of regular rubbish collections, rather than cutting down on the amount of household waste). Where possible, use questions that have been tried and tested in other questionnaires – not only are they less likely to be misinterpreted, but your results will also be comparable with other surveys.
6. Giving effective feedback to people who took part is often difficult – write to the ones that are willing to be contacted; put copies of reports in the local libraries and send them to local forums; do presentations at the local Area Panel and other relevant meetings (and send out written invitations to the meeting where possible); report back in local newsletters.
7. Keep the action going – quality of life indicators are a means of measuring progress, not something that’s a once and for all event.
8. Develop some means of taking action when indicators start to show things are getting worse, not better.

How much has it cost?

- Interviewer time: 450 hours (paid at approx. £5/hour)
- Researcher time: 300 hours (approx.) (recruiting, training and supporting interviewers, interviewing, designing questionnaires, analysing data, writing reports, doing presentations)

1 Introduction

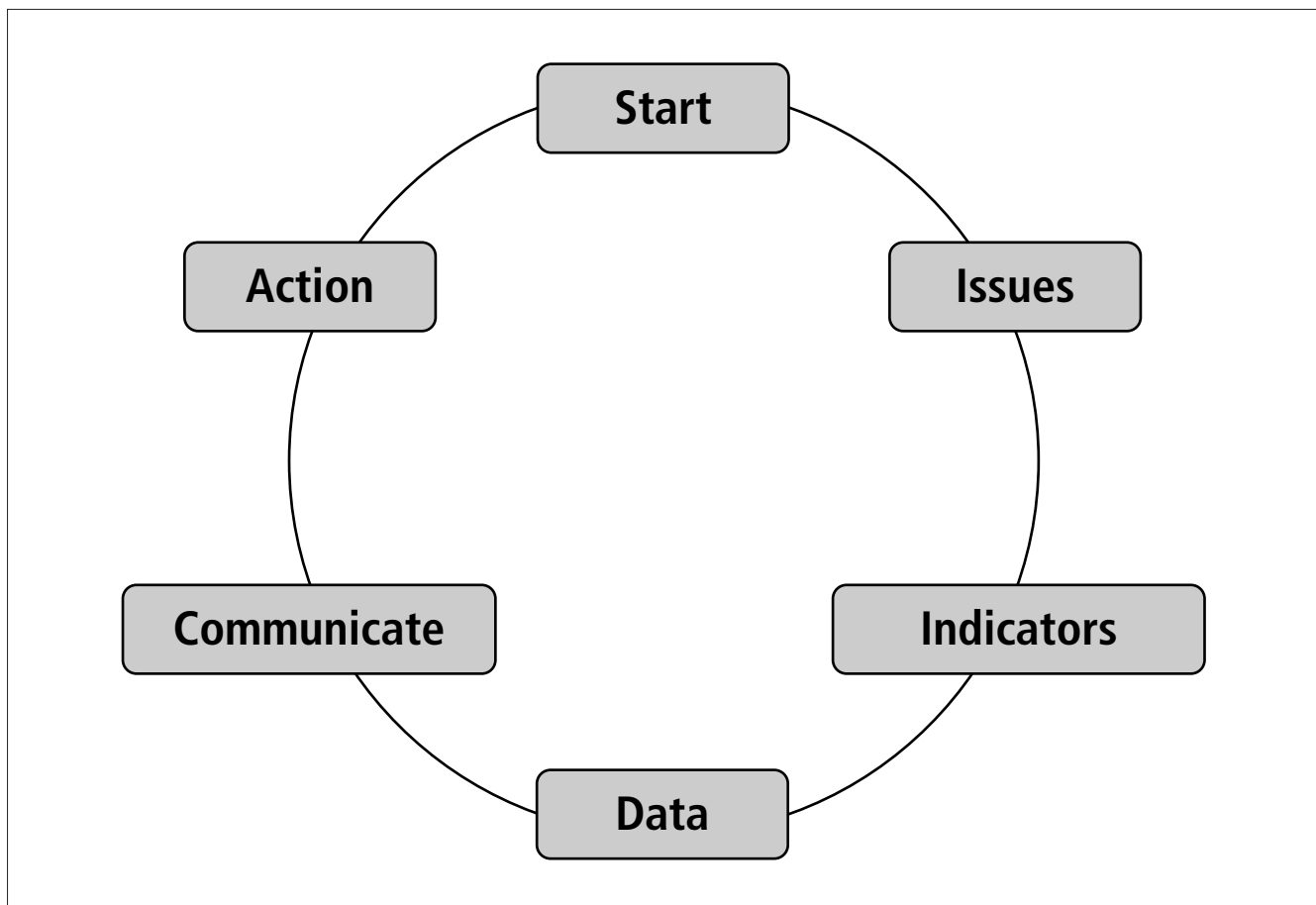
This booklet has been designed as a guide on how to agree, monitor and act on local quality of life indicators. It is based on the experiences of the East End Quality of Life Initiative in the Darnall Action Area, Sheffield, but also reflects the expertise and advice from a wide variety of other sources, both in the UK and world-wide.

Some important points should be emphasised right from the start:

- Be clear about why you want to agree and monitor indicators – it should be to improve quality of life in the local community, not just to collect information.
- No-one has all the answers as to how to make quality of life indicators effective.

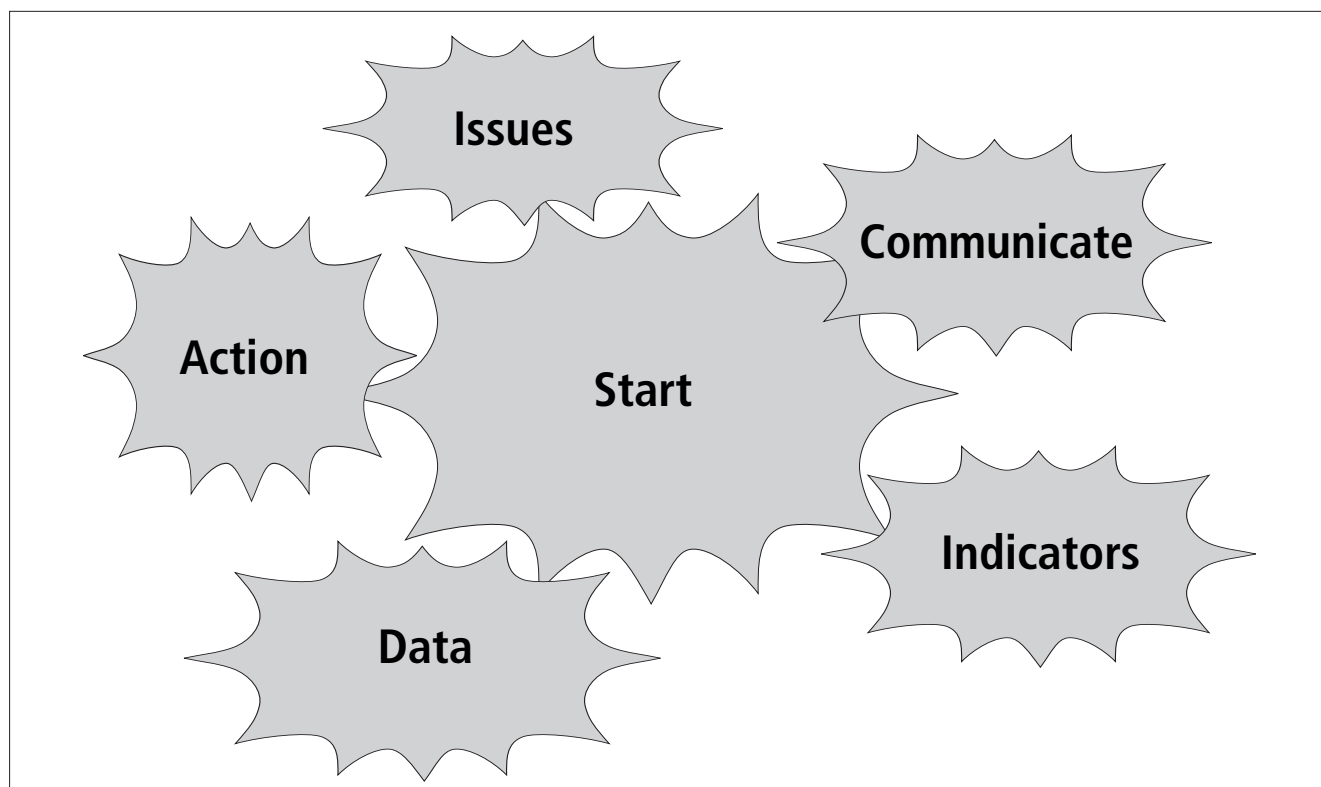
- There are many ways of involving people in agreeing indicators – try whatever seems applicable in your area.
- You may have particular problems involving some members of the community (e.g. young people, older people, people from ethnic minorities, etc.) – make special efforts to include them, using a range of methods, over a long period of time, in order to include their views.
- Employ local people as interviewers and researchers – they bring a local perspective and insight to the work and are an effective way of accessing some of those hard to reach people.

This guide is of necessity set out in a linear, step-by-step format but in reality life is less tidy. The government's *Local quality of life counts*⁵ shows the cyclical nature of agreeing and monitoring indicators and actions:



5. DETR (2000) *Local quality of life counts: a handbook for a menu of local indicators of sustainable development*; www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/indicators/local/

We would suggest the process looks more like this:



Government policy proposes that local strategic partnerships should monitor progress towards locally agreed Community Strategies. Guidance document *Preparing Community Strategies* paragraph 103 suggests:

'progress on community strategies should focus primarily on key outcomes as the basis for providing clear and accessible progress reports back to the community. In particular, there are two complementary strands of work which could provide relevant measures of progress on community strategies. First, authorities may wish to consider using all or a selection of indicators from the menu of 29 indicators of sustainable development/quality of life, which were developed for local use by the Central and Local Information Partnership (CLIP) task force on sustainable development. They were designed for use in monitoring and reporting as part of the LA 21 process. In addition, they might want to make use of the quality of life and cross-cutting indicators currently being developed by the Audit Commission. Local strategic partnerships are encouraged to select and use these indicators according to their local experiences and needs and the objectives they set themselves. The key point is that indicators should be relevant to the objectives of community strategies. So local strategic partnerships may need to supplement those from these two menus

with additional locally chosen or developed indicators, including indicators devised to measure the impact of activities on different groups (such as ethnic minorities, disabled people, older people or women).'

Part of the East End Quality of Life Initiative's brief, as a contribution to the overall aims of Sheffield's Health Action Zone (HAZ) was to develop locally agreed quality of life indicators which would be monitored and reviewed regularly to measure progress. In order to bring about changes in health inequalities, one of the project's aims was to build capacity through community research and community profiling in the Darnall Action Area.

The process of developing quality of life indicators in the Darnall Action Area grew out of the concerns that local people had been expressing for some time about environmental problems in the area. Other city-wide and national concerns were combined with these local issues into questionnaires to give a broader picture of what local people felt was important for their quality of life. A variety of events and surveys were used (employing local interviewers) to canvas the views of a large number of local residents. At the same time, efforts have continued to raise awareness about sustainability issues through the distribution of newsletters, and the process of collecting baseline data was started by contacting local statutory agencies.

2 Getting started

- *Raise awareness about what you are doing.*
- *Plan the next stage.*
- *Enlist help.*

What's it all about?

Before local people can get involved, they need to understand the issues they are being asked about and how the information will be used. EEQOL has for some time distributed newsletters to all households in the Darnall Action Area. These were used as a means of explaining terms such as 'sustainable development' and 'quality of life indicators' (see Appendix 1). It should be remembered that EEQOL (and its predecessor, the Community Health and Transport project in Tinsley) had been raising awareness about health and environmental issues in the local community for some time. Where a project is starting from scratch, more work may need to be done to raise awareness. Some suggestions from other places to raise awareness include:

- mailing a leaflet to all households (London Southwark)
- street party (London Southwark)
- stalls at local events (London Southwark)
- focus groups (Lancashire County Council)
- presentations to key agencies – statutory, voluntary, community (University of Toronto).

Whatever methods are used, there are some important points to consider:

- the use of jargon should be avoided where possible, or explained in plain language where it can't be avoided.
- not everyone will read a newsletter or leaflet that comes through the door.
- not everyone will attend local events and meetings.

It is important to remember, too, that the process of understanding local issues is not one-way. EEQOL used data from previous surveys and public meetings, both in the local area and city-wide,⁶ to identify issues that were likely to be of concern to local people.

What to do next?

Having got a basic understanding of what the local issues might be, EEQOL decided to try and get the views of as many people as possible in a relatively short period of time. Local libraries were identified as a good basis both to conduct a quick 'tick box' survey (see Appendix 2) and to continue to raise awareness about the issues. We therefore:

- employed and trained local interviewers
- set up an exhibition in local libraries
- interviewed local people.

The value of employing local people as interviewers quickly became apparent, as they were able to identify other places to interview people (in their own homes, at lunch clubs, youth clubs, in shops, on the bus, at the mosque, etc.) Keeping a database of anyone who says they are willing to take part in local surveys is also useful, as we were able to mail questionnaires to participants in earlier surveys. In this way we were able to get the views of nearly 800 people within a month. We also went along to an event that On Track were holding at the time, which not only gave us access to more local people but also helped build useful connections with other organisations working in the area.

Other methods to try (depending on available time and resources) might include:

- mailing out a questionnaire
- targeting specific groups (e.g. young people, older people, young parents, etc.) and conducting surveys or organising focus groups in places where they meet

Who can help?

Not everyone will have the time or energy to participate, but it is important to give as many people as possible the opportunity. Some people will be happy to fill in a questionnaire from time to time, some will take part in focus groups and events, and a few will be willing to work many hours, paid or unpaid, on the project. Much depends on what else is going on in the area. Survey fatigue can set in if different agencies are conducting surveys in the same area at the same time, especially if people do not hear about or see any results.

6. Tinsley questionnaire (1999, 256 responses); Public meetings in Darnall (Dec 1999); EEQOL (2000) Darnall Community Research; BCTRA (2000) Results of the Bowden, Clifton and Triangle Residents Association Survey; Sheffield City Council (2000) Housing Survey; New Deal for Communities (2000) Neighbourhood Profiles for Tinsley and Darnall; Sheffield Hallam University Joint Institute for Social and Economic Research (1997–99) Evaluation of the SRB and Urban Programmes in Sheffield.

EEQOL recruited 10 community interviewers about two years ago, initially to work on the Darnall Community Research. Most of them have been happy to be re-employed, at a modest rate of pay, on other surveys since then. As well as getting paid, there have been other personal benefits, such as getting to know more people in their local area, and getting a better understanding of local issues.

EEQOL has maintained a database of people who have said they would take part in further research with each survey that has been undertaken. If someone says they are no longer willing to take part, or if they move away from the area, they are not contacted again. In this way, the database changes each time a survey takes place, as we contact new people who replace those who are no longer available.

The links that have been built up over time with statutory, voluntary and community agencies working in the area have proved invaluable in that we have been able to share data, expertise, and personnel. This has often saved asking the same questions in different surveys, gaining quicker access to potential interviewees, and given workers a broader picture of the area in which they work. Joint working in the Darnall Action Area is facilitated by Sheffield City Council's Darnall Area Co-ordinator, whose thorough knowledge of the people and organisations in the area is invaluable. The commitment shown by the Darnall Area Panel in progressing quality of life issues is crucial in keeping local people involved.

3 Deciding issues

- *Reach agreement about local issues.*
- *Involve local people.*

What's important here?

EEQOL had the benefit of almost two years of working in at least part of the Darnall Action Area before starting to work specifically on quality of life indicators. In Tinsley there were particular concerns about traffic-related health and environmental problems such as air pollution and noise. Darnall is a more diverse area, but public meetings and EEQOL's *Darnall Community Research* highlighted concerns about crime, safe play areas, road safety, fly tipping and derelict areas of land. These issues were combined with the government's list of 29 indicators from *Local quality of life counts*, and people were asked to pick their 'top ten' from each of the two lists. The results of this survey can be found in the Quick Guide, on p3.

In other areas, focus groups have been used to get a more in-depth picture of quality of life issues. These have usually targeted specific groups, such as ethnic minorities, women, disabled people, older people, refugees, and young people (London Southwark, University of Toronto).

How to get local people involved?

EEQOL used locally recruited interviewers from different sections of the community. Contact with statutory, voluntary and community agencies helped us to get the views of some of the harder to reach groups, such as younger and older people. We did not specifically set out to reach a representative sample, but tried to include a broad range of views. When we looked at the 792 people who had replied, we found that younger and older people were under-represented, and women and minority ethnic groups were over-represented. We therefore applied a combination of factors to the replies to get a more representative picture of the population of the Darnall Action Area. On local issues, the same issues appeared in both the unweighted and the weighted top ten, although the order changed. With the government's list of indicators, only one issue changed from the unweighted to the weighted list, although again the order changed.

Innovative and fun techniques, such as photo or video diaries and arts, are recommended as ways of involving young people. Another technique used by London Southwark was a 'quality of life market'. People had to 'buy' their favourite quality of life cans (depicting issues such as pollution, crime, etc.) and the resulting 'sales' were recorded.

4 Developing indicators

- *Develop one or two indicators for each issue.*

What's it about?

Having established what concerns are most important for local people, we need to find ways of measuring how good or bad things are, how things are changing over time, and a simple way of reporting those trends.

Does the indicator point the way to action?

Indicators should inform action. However some issues are complex and may not directly inform action, e.g. recorded crime and fear of crime may be due to perceptions about policing, lack of youth facilities in the area, etc.

Is the indicator understandable?

Data may need to be simplified in order to be readily understandable.

EEQOL has collected some baseline data but further work needs to be done to simplify the data into understandable, measurable indicators for the issues that are important to the local community, e.g. in order to measure fear of crime and burglary, a survey needs to be undertaken on a regular basis, as this data is only available on a national basis (British Crime Surveys). Recorded crime statistics do not reflect peoples' fear of crime, but fear of crime has a greater influence on peoples' quality of life.

Work in London Southwark showed that it takes a long time to develop indicators, and some are easier to develop than others. Some indicators are more easy to measure than others, e.g. the amount of household waste collected and recycled should be readily available from the local authority, but the ease of data collection should not be the determining factor as to which indicators are measured.

5 Gathering data

- *Discover what data is available.*
- *Collect information through surveys and observation.*

Is the data available?

Some information is routinely collected and reported on, but not necessarily in the format or for the area that you might want. A growing source of useful neighbourhood data at electoral ward level is <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/>. It can take time to build up contacts with other local agencies who collect data to get them to share the data with you. You may encounter suspicion about what you want to do with the data. Some data, such as local attitudes and opinions, can only be collected by doing a local survey. Data about local shops and services could be achieved by a local mapping exercise.

EEQOL gathered data from the following sources:

- <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.sheffield-ha.nhs.uk/>
- Sheffield Wildlife Trust
- Sheffield City Ecology Unit
- Sheffield Education Authority
- Sheffield Environment Protection Service
- Sheffield City Council Transportation and Road Safety
- Sheffield City Council Street Force
- Sheffield Housing Services Research and Policy Section
- South Yorkshire Police Authority
- local surveys
- desk-based mapping of local services and facilities

6 Communicating indicators

- *Communicate in different ways for particular audiences.*

Feedback to people who took part in surveys

If people hear nothing, they think nothing is happening. Tell them what you found out, and what is happening now. Keep it short and simple. If there is a more detailed report, tell them where they can find it (e.g. the local library).

Communicate with people who can do something about it

Get particular issues on the agenda at the local Area Panel. The councillors there will take up the issues. People who took part in the surveys will go to panel meetings if you tell them that their issues will be on the agenda. Write to the relevant department within the local council. Encourage local people to get together in self-help groups – this is often the quickest and most effective way to bring about improvements that really matter to local people, and they can often attract funding that would not otherwise come into the area.

Use the local media, particularly for 'good news' stories. However, be aware that, once in the public domain, research results can be re-interpreted in unexpected ways. Try to manage the media through the use of press releases.

7 Taking action

- *Challenge local people, businesses, local and regional government to take action based on the indicators.*

What's happening?

Indicators should promote action. There may be quick wins, but generally progress will be slow, and it may be difficult to see how progress on any individual indicator directly affects local quality of life.

Whilst setting targets may help to make action more likely, it is important to remember that indicators show change over time, but are not in themselves targets. One London council officer (quoted in the LITMUS Test) said, *'I'm a bit sceptical about the target-led approach – it's a bit like the cart leading the horse!'*

Indicators may well pose further questions, rather than providing answers, as *'progress towards one objective may impact adversely on progress towards other objectives.'*⁷ Thus *'the focus has to be sharpened, to prevent trade-offs being made against the primacy of "futuraity" as expressed in the Brundtland Report. The integration of sustainable development objectives requires structural changes and new approaches – the concept of "no pain" change is unrealistic.'*⁸

The process of measuring quality of life indicators in itself has an important effect, helping people get involved with the local area and changing attitudes about what can be done.

A community indicators project in West Devon helped to reduce car use for children travelling to primary schools, encouraged the demand for locally produced organic food, and encouraged awareness about waste in primary schools.

In Peckham, London, two derelict sites were surveyed using photographic and video evidence. With some persistence local people got an agreement to clean up the sites and alternative uses are being considered. EEQOL is currently working with Kettlebridge residents to get three areas of derelict land cleaned up and improved play facilities for local children.

Encouraging active citizenship and social cohesion

If local people can see positive results from their involvement, they are more encouraged to work together to influence decision-makers and sustain local improvements.

7. DETR (1999) *Quality of life counts*, p13, para 2.3.

8. Cattle (1999) Breaking the gridlock, in *Town and Country Planning*, September 1999, p225.

8 Next steps

- *Long-term commitment to measuring indicators.*
- *Long-term commitment to influencing decisions to benefit local quality of life.*
- *Long-term support for local people to participate in the process of agreeing and measuring quality of life indicators.*

Resources

Agreeing and measuring local quality of life indicators is not a quick or a one-off process. It requires a long-term commitment of time and resources if indicators are to be measured over a meaningful period of time. The success of community-based indicators is due as much to the involvement of local people in the process, and they need support and encouragement if that involvement is to continue.

9 References and sources of information

Prove It! Measuring the effect of neighbourhood renewal on local people. Groundwork and NEF, 2000. www.neweconomics.org

Describes Groundwork's and NEF's experience of evaluating the effects of 17 Groundwork projects on local communities.

Local Quality of Life Counts: a handbook for a menu of local indicators of sustainable development. DETR, 2000. www.sustainable-development.gov.uk

Illustrates 29 local quality of life indicators and describes how to measure them. The handbook is based on the experience of 30 local authorities, which have used the indicators.

Quality of Life Counts: indicators for a strategy for sustainable development in the United Kingdom: a baseline assessment. DETR, 1999.

Set of 15 national headline indicators of sustainable development plus around 135 supplementary indicators. The indicators support and monitor the UK's sustainable development strategy.

Communities Count! A step by step guide for community sustainability indicators. NEF, 1998.

www.neweconomics.org

Describes in detail how to develop and use community sustainability indicators.

Quality of life indicators pilot 2001/02: evaluation and recommendations on future use of indicators. Audit Commission, 2002. www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Feedback from pilot local authorities, and a MORI survey on quality of life cross-cutting indicators, with a proposed list of final indicators.

Quality of life: using quality of life indicators. Audit Commission, 2002. www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Outlines the pilot process and summarises lessons learned, with a set of quality of life indicators that can be used to help monitor community strategy.

Communities Count: the LITMUS test: reflecting community indicators in the London Borough of Southwark. New Economic Foundation and Southwark Council, 2001. www.neweconomics.org

Highlights the experiences in Southwark.

Indicators into action: assess your arena of action.

www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/geography/Pastille/

A European action research project that analyses the effectiveness of local sustainability indicators, co-ordinated by the London School of Economics.

Towards a local sustainability profile: European common indicators. www.sustainable-cities.org/indicators/

Methodology sheets for testing a common set of European local sustainability indicators. A European Commission initiative.

EU Urban Audit. http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/urban2/urban/audit/ftp/volume1.pdf, [vol2.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/urban2/urban/audit/ftp/volume2.pdf), [vol3.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/urban2/urban/audit/ftp/volume3.pdf)

Three volumes on an initiative by the European Commission to do a sustainability audit in 58 European cities.

The Community Quality of Life Project: a health promotion approach to understanding communities.

www.utoronto.ca/qol/

Reports on the development of agreeing quality of life indicators with various groups in two metropolitan Toronto communities.

*Community indicators of health-related quality of life – United States 1993-1997 (2000), in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 49, 281-285.*

Reports on relationship between community health status indicators and ill health.

Sustainability indicators for Birmingham: how do we measure up? (1998). Birmingham City Council Agenda

21

Describes the process of agreeing and monitoring indicators in the city of Birmingham.

Calvert-Henderson Quality of Life Indicators.

www.calvert-henderson.com

Developed national indicators for the USA, trying to draw together the many and varied local initiatives into a single matrix.

Appendix 1

The following is an article explaining terms such as 'sustainable development' and 'quality of life indicators' which appeared in EEQOL's newsletters (the *Tinsley Tribune* and the *Darnall Health & Environment Herald*) during the first survey.

Page 4

What You think should be measured to reflect changes in your quality of life.

The East End Quality of Life Initiative working with Darnall Area Panel have been developing a set of indicators that local people think reflect changes in their quality of life. 792 people were asked to select their "top ten" indicators from both the Government's list and from a list of issues arising from previous community research. The survey was conducted by locally recruited interviewers and took place in Tinsley and Darnall libraries, local shops and community meetings, and at the On Track Fun Day at the Darnall Education Centre (Starworks) on 10 November. Only people resident in the Darnall Action Area were interviewed.

The indicators will be used over time to measure how Darnall is moving towards Sustainable Development. **Sustainable Development** is about making sure everyone, both now and in the future, has a better quality of life. It recognises that our economy, environment and social well-being are all connected and interdependent. This means that we must protect and, where possible, enhance the environment to ensure continuing economic development. Sustainable development is also about ensuring people's basic needs for warm homes and

safe streets are satisfied, and that they enjoy a good quality of life through education, participation, good health and employment. A sustainable economy creates the wealth needed to satisfy those needs, now and in the future.

Quality of Life Indicators are tools to meas-

ure important issues and trends. They help us understand the relationships between sustainable development issues. As well as measuring progress towards sustainable development, they raise awareness about the issues and help people understand what they can do to live in a more sustainable way.

Local issues	Government indicators:
Litter and rubbish dumping	Fear of crime
Fear of burglary	Crime rate (Recorded crime)
Vandalism	Air pollution
Disruptive/threatening behaviour by children/youths	Houses fit to live in
Drug-related activities	The amount of household waste recycled
Fear of car theft	Qualifications of young people
Speeding traffic	Access to key services
Lack of safe play areas	The amount of household waste collected
Graffiti	Homelessness
Lack of maintenance to public places	Public concern over noise

3 This is the list of things the government has suggested might be measured. From this list, please choose up to 10 items that you feel are the most important things to be measured:

Prudent use of energy (gas and electricity)	1
Prudent use of domestic water	2
The amount of household waste collected	3
The amount of household waste recycled	4
Air pollution	5
River water quality	6
Changes in wildlife habitats	7
Changes in the population of birds and wildlife	8
Death rates	9
Qualifications of young people	10
Adult education	11
Houses fit to live in	12
Homelessness	13
Access to key services (shops, post offices, health services, information and advice, schools, leisure, etc)	14
How people travel to work	15
How school children travel to school	16
Overall traffic volumes	17
Using brownfield sites for new homes	18
Public concern over noise	19
Crime rate (recorded crime)	20
Fear of crime	21
Participation and involvement in your local community	22
Overall satisfaction with your local community	23
Tenant satisfaction and participation	24
Employment (and unemployment) rates	25
Number of people on benefits	26
Number of new business start-ups and business closures	27
Companies with environment management systems	28
Number of social and community enterprises	29

4 Have you got any other comments about living in this area?

5 How old are you? (write in number) years

6 Are you (tick one box) male ¹ female ²

7 Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present?

employee in full time job (30 hours or more a week)	1	unemployed and available for work	6
employee in part time job (up to 30 hours a week)	2	permanently sick/disabled	7
self employed full or part time	3	wholly retired from work	8
on a government supported training scheme	4	looking after the home or family	9
full time education at school, college or university	5	doing something else (please specify below)	10

8 Do you suffer from any long standing illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or work in any way?

yes	no
1	2

9 To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

White - British	1
White - Irish	2
White - Other	3
Black British	4
Black - Caribbean	5
Black - African	6
Black - Other	7
Indian	8
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	10
Yemeni	11
Somali	12
Chinese	13
Mixed Race	14
Other _____	15

10 Would you be interested in taking part in further surveys or focus groups in the area? (This might involve completing a more detailed questionnaire with an interviewer, or coming to a meeting locally to discuss some of the issues raised)

yes	no	(If yes to questions 10 or 11, please give your name and address)
1	2	

11 Would you like to receive the results of this survey?

yes	no
1	2

Thank you for taking part in this survey

(please return your form in the envelope provided)

January 2003
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