Northern Ireland Assembly

Research and Library Service
Briefing Note

Gareth Mulvenna

Total Place

1   Introduction

This briefing note is designed to provide information on Total Place. Total Place has been described as

> …*an ambitious initiative that will consider how a 'whole area' approach to public services can lead to better services at less cost.*[1]

By pooling local budgets and ending duplication[2] the aim of Total Place is threefold:

- To create service transformations that can improve the experience of local residents and deliver better value.

- To deliver early efficiencies to validate the work.

- To develop a body of knowledge about how more effective cross-agency working delivers the above.[3]

---

[1] http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/about/faqs/#what
[2] David Williams, *False economies?* Public Finance, 3rd June 2010
[3] http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/docs/TotalPlaceWeb.pdf

2   Background

2.1

Total Place was launched at Budget 2009 as a key recommendation of the Operational Efficiency Programme (OEP)[4]. Within a subsection of the OEP final report entitled *Local incentives and empowerment*, OEP recommended

> *roll out Total Place, a programme mapping total public spending in a local area and identifying efficiencies through local public sector collaboration, to at least 12 pilot sites with a high level reference group to identify how to increase incentives and eliminate the barriers for joint working and with ministerial sponsorship to ensure that issues raised are addressed swiftly across government…*[5]

Following on from Budget 2009 Total Place was backed by £5 million funding in order to map flows of public spending in local areas; and by making links between services to identify where public money could be spent more effectively.[6]

2.2

There were subsequently 13 pilot sites, covering each region in England:

Region	Pilot Area
East	Luton & Central Bedfordshire
East Midlands	Leicester & Leicestershire
London	Croydon
London	Lewisham
North East	Durham
North East	South Tyneside, Gateshead & Sunderland
North West	Manchester & Warrington
South East	Kent
South West	Dorset, Poole & Bournemouth
West Midlands	Birmingham
West Midlands	Coventry
West Midlands	Worcestershire
Yorkshire & Humber	Bradford

Source: http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/about/faqs/

---

[4] *Operational Efficiency Programme: final report*, HM Treasury, April 2009
[5] *Operational Efficiency Programme: final report*, HM Treasury, April 2009 p.12
[6] http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1209992

2.3

Total Place is overseen by a Ministerial group and a high-level officials' group which include representatives from the Local Government Authority (LGA), delivery agencies from the pilot places and the significant spend departments, including HM Treasury. The Ministerial group, chaired by Secretary of State (SoS) for Communities and Local Government department (CLG), will ensure that the barriers and incentives for joint working are addressed swiftly and effectively and to drive forward action across Government. Membership includes:

- Chief Secretary to the Treasury

- Communities and Local Government

- Minister for the Cabinet Office

- LGA (Chairman Cllr Margaret Eaton or Cllr David Parsons)

- Plus SoS from other significant spend departments such as Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Children Schools and Families, Department of Health[7]

The high-level officials' group is chaired by Lord Michael Bichard, and meets every month. The principal role of the group is to support and provide oversight for the work of Total Place at national level, listen to the findings at the local level, ensure that interdependencies are identified and addressed, and to ensure that the project has full support across central government.

The standing agenda for the group will include:

- Showcasing key achievements within the past period; the outlook for the next period; and progress against key milestones

- Listening to and learning from the progress of the work in the 13 pilot areas

- Developing the opportunities and resolving problems highlighted at the local level

- Considering key programmes risks and issues, ensuring that adequate resourcing is in place to ensure the programme objectives are met

- Update on the development of key products (particularly Pre-Budget Report and Budget reports and other key communications products) and commenting, inputting and providing approvals as appropriate

- Reviewing interdependencies between Total Place and other areas of work to ensure a joined-up approach and solutions.[8]

---

[7] http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/about/involved/#MG
[8] http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/about/involved/#MG

---

3   Pilot Areas

3.1

The map below illustrates the various themes which have been highlighted in each of the 13 pilot areas. The aim of selecting these themes was to allow each local area to examine how public sector money flows in and how the delivery system can be made more efficient.

Source: http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/pilot/map-of-total-place-pilots/
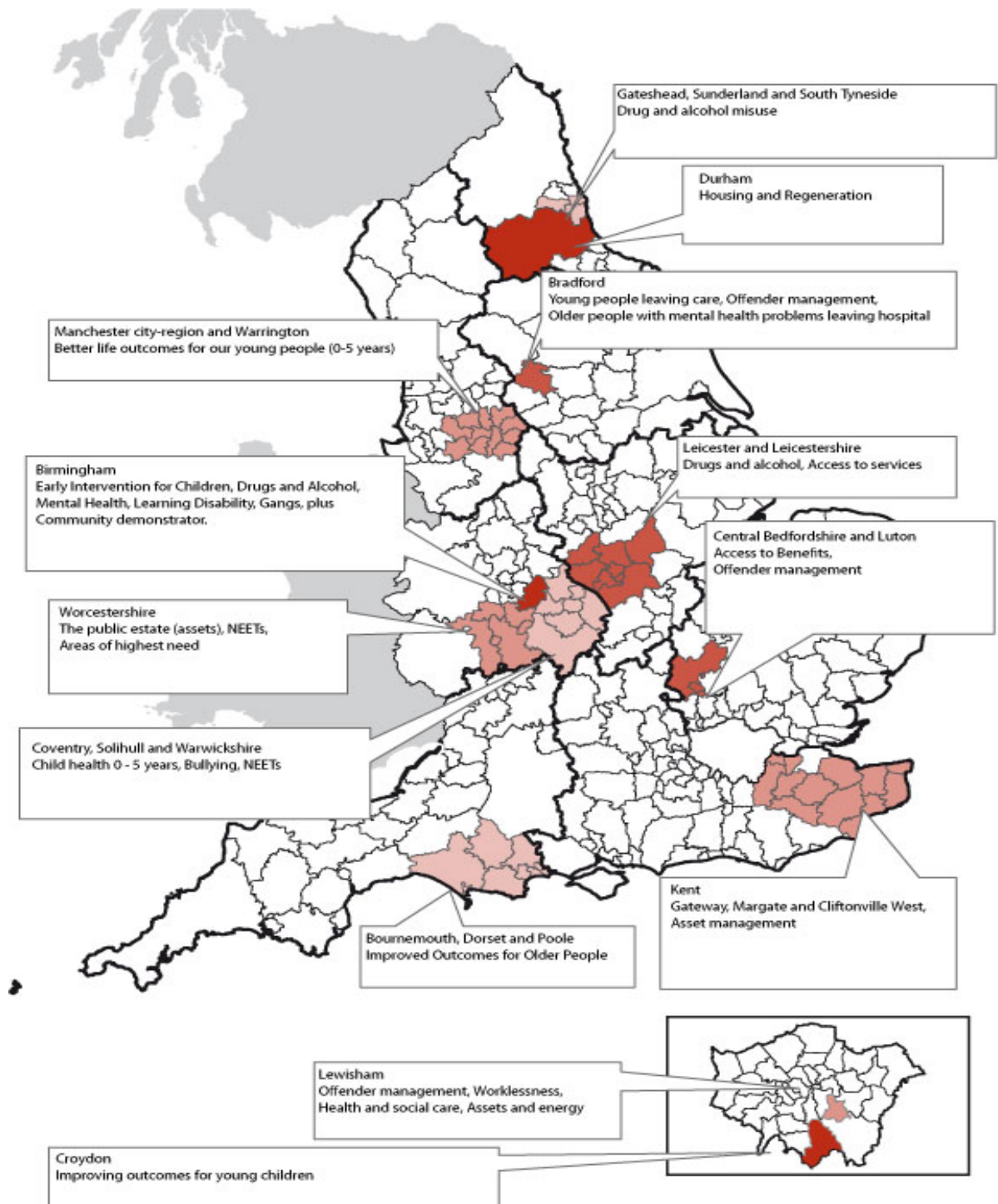
3.2

According to the Leadership Centre for Local Government, at the request of pilot areas, Government Offices in each region are able to act on behalf of Government to provide support and challenge via a named lead and to facilitate the support of all public sector agencies with the project. They will be engaged with the project at a national level, providing timely updates on key issues to the project team and acting as a consultee throughout the lifecycle of the project.

The Government Office network:

- acts for Government in regions and localities

- acts for regions and localities in Government

- builds partnerships and delivers in partnership

- supports the director-general 'champions' for each pilot place

- Locality Managers in each Government Office provide the point of contact for places and Local Strategic Partnerships.[9]

In further describing the responsibilities of The Government Office Network, the Leadership Centre for Local Government stated that it would

- work with partners, including the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships and the Improvement and Development Agency, to raise awareness amongst Local Strategic Partnerships and Authorities on Total Place

- support those Partnerships who wish to engage further by providing links to national work. In particular, Government Offices will act on behalf of Government to dynamically engage the support of and contributions from local, regional and national public sector agencies.

- support the work of the national pilots by facilitating the engagement of public sector agencies. Government Offices will build on existing relationships to ensure good links with Whitehall.[10]

---

[9] http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/about/involved/
[10] http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/about/involved/

4   Resource Mapping: Public Spending Flows

4.1

In July 2009 the Audit Commission published a document entitled *Is there something I should know?*[11] In the document's 'Local government summary' it was stated that

- Good information helps councils to improve the quality of their services, find savings and manage risks.

- Councils recognise the importance of good information, and 94 per cent say that information has become an increased strategic priority.

- Exemplar councils have the right culture, people and standards to provide good information, but most councils do not, and so are missing opportunities to improve services and save money.[12]

As part of this the Commission produced a 'Resource mapping tool'[13] which was designed to demonstrate why information is important in helping councils improve quality in the services they deliver, find savings and manage risks.

4.2

According to HM Treasury the 13 pilots mapped £82 billion within their areas – around one-fifth of total public spending in England. Spending levels were not uniform and estimates of total spend varies from £2.2 billion in Lewisham to £22 billion in the Manchester-city region. Pilots have estimated that public spending per capita varies from just under £6,000 per year in Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire to £8,800 in Bradford and Lewisham. The Treasury stated that some of the evident differences may be accounted for by places choosing to use different counting methodologies, but that differences are also reflective of the higher levels of social security payments in areas with higher deprivation, and other social, economic and geographic differences across the pilots.[14]

4.3

A Communities and Local Government publication entitled *Total Place: Spend Counting Analysis and Customer Insight Status* which was published in April 2010 conceded that, "There are some challenges in conducting spend counting arising from the lack of a standard approach. Many of the pilots categorised their

---

[11] http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/istheresomething/pages/default.aspx
[12] http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/AuditCommissionReports/NationalStudies/20090730istheresomethingishouldknowrsummary.pdf
[13] http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/istheresomething/Pages/resourcemapping.aspx
[14] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/psr_total_place.htm

---

spend differently using different levels of detail and accuracy." To this end CLG stated that 'We believe that more proactive 'moderation' of how pilot areas conducted resource mapping would have enhanced the evidence base needed by localities as they seek to turn the opportunities identified in their submissions into action plans.'[15]

---

[15] http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1531009

5   A whole area approach to public services?

On 25th March 2010 HM Treasury published *Total Place: A whole area approach to public services*. Describing the publication on its website the HM Treasury stated that it

> *…sets out a new direction for local public services and significant new freedoms from central control. It is based on extensive work over the last year by 63 local authorities, 34 primary care trusts, 13 police authorities and other partners, with more than 70 other local areas engaged in similar work. Together the pilots have a population of more than 11 million people. The pilots have mapped more than £82 billion of public spending in their areas.*
>
> *Total Place…shows how all places will benefit from our Smarter Government commitments on de-ringfencing, streamlining funding and reducing burdens.*[16]

The HM Treasury suggested that the key points from the 13 pilots were:

- de-ringfencing and streamlining budgets are important for local collaboration to deliver better services at less cost;

- as are effective pooled or aligned budget arrangements across a geographical area, or across previously separate funding streams;

- different sector-specific performance frameworks can limit the scope for effective working across a place; and

- local areas can achieve significant savings from a Total Capital and Assets approach to local property and capital investment[17]

---

[16] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/psr_total_place.htm
[17] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/psr_total_place.htm

6   Further Information

Updates from the Total Place pilots can be viewed online at
http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/totalplaces/