

Background Briefing on Local Strategic Partnerships

What is a Local Strategic Partnership?

LSPs are cross agency umbrella partnerships, which include representation from the public , private, community and voluntary sectors. The LSP remit is working together to improve the quality of life locally. The Government sees them as the main mechanism for the co-ordination and delivery of better services and increasingly as the means through which to channel funding for local priorities and to ensure delivery.

These non-statutory bodies are the main vehicles for developing a vision for transforming a place and for tackling hard crosscutting social problems. Underpinning and supporting the LSP are various thematic partnerships such as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, which seek to deliver improvements, which meet the overarching vision, set out by the LSP.

Why do we need an LSP?

A combination of organisations and the community, working co-operatively as part of an LSP will have a far greater chance of success in delivering sustainable economic, social and physical regeneration and improved public services that meet the needs of local communities than any single organisation working on its own. To achieve these improvements, we all need to work together to ensure we tackle issues that matter to local people.

Place-shaping

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced community strategies, and the power of local authorities to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of an area. The White Paper entitled "Strong and Prosperous Communities", produced in October 2006 took this further with the place-shaping agenda. This refers to the strategic role that local authorities have in bringing together various local agencies and groups in order to build a vision of how to respond to and address a locality's problems and challenges in a co-ordinated way.

The role of an LSP

Various mechanisms have been put in place to strengthen the ability of LSP's to work effectively. These include:

- Local authorities' power to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area
- Local authorities' responsibility, with partners, to draw up a Community Strategy for their area, setting out shared long-term vision and combining economic, social and environmental objectives
- Local Area Agreements (LAAs) as a mechanism for setting joint targets and clarifying who is responsible for delivery

- Local Development Frameworks, which provide the spatial expression of the Community Strategy, and set out the intentions for involving the local community in the preparation and review of development plans, in a Statement of Community Involvement.

Accountability

It is not intended that local authorities will run all local partnerships or should dictate to partners what needs to be done. Different partners will also be accountable in different ways, through their own channels of accountability. In addition, the recent introduction of Councillor Call for Action (originally named Community Call for Action) means that frontline councillors can call to account the work of partner agencies throughout the local area.

Local Authority Member involvement

“Strong and Prosperous Communities” makes it clear that local authority leaders will be expected to play a leading role on LSP’s and also play a key executive role on relevant thematic delivery partnerships.

Thematic Partnerships

LSPs will provide the forum for setting the strategic vision for an area, for capturing the vision in the Sustainable Community Strategy and for agreeing priorities for improvement in the LAA. Responsibility for implementing plans and for driving delivery of outcomes is the role of the partners and thematic partnerships, which underpin the LSP.

Too many partnerships can dilute their effectiveness and place an excessive burden on those involved. The CDRP and children’s trusts are statutory partnerships, which currently exist, and it is proposed that there will be new statutory partnerships for health and well being, which will sit under LSP’s.

Duty to co-operate

The White Paper also places a duty on the local authority and named partners to co-operate with each other to agree targets in the Local Area Agreement (LAA), and to have regard to relevant targets agreed in the LAA. These named partners include county and district councils, the police, probation, NHS bodies, JobCentre Plus, Learning and Skills Councils, Fire and Rescue Services, the Highways Agency, the Environment Agency and others.