

**TITLE:** Consultation on Future of Local Strategic partnerships  
**TO/ON:** The Cabinet 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006  
**BY:** Head of Community and Partnerships  
**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** Cabinet Member for Customer Services  
**STATUS:** For Publication

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Cabinet of the consultation paper issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2005 on the future role of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's) and to suggest how this Council should respond to the paper.
- 1.2. Formal responses to the consultation paper are required by 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. That the report is noted.
- 1.2. That the Cabinet supports the Rossendale Partnership in its response to the ODPM.

## 2. REPORT AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 2.1 LSP's were introduced in 2000 in order to encourage the main statutory and non statutory organisations within a locality to come together and work towards common priorities.
- 2.2 Rossendale Partnership, the LSP for Rossendale has existed in its current form since 2004.
- 2.3 The priorities for the Partnership were formalized into the Community Strategy Rossendale Alive which outlined a 15 year vision for the Borough across 8 key themes.

- 2.4 The aim of the Partnership has been to bring together partners from all sectors of the community to improve the lives of those people living and working in the borough.
- 2.5 In order to measure the success of the Partnership an annual performance assessment was undertaken in Summer 2005 and the Partnership was rated as amber green. This annual assessment is compulsory for all LSP's in receipt of NRF in England and Wales but not for this partnership. By definition most LSP's are not subject to this regime and as a result the nature and performance of LSP's across England and Wales varies considerably
- 2.6 Evidence has shown that LSP's in receipt of NRF have tended to perform better in terms of partnership working and tackling deprivation.
- 2.7 The introduction of Local Area Agreements (LAA's) of which Lancashire is a round 2 pilot has implications for the future role of this Partnership. The move towards more partnership working and an emphasis on delivery for all LSP's has prompted the publication of this consultation paper. The ODPM consider it '*...crucial all LSP's now develop this delivery focus in order to achieve the vision set out in their Sustainable Community Strategies*'.
- 2.8 A full copy of the consultation paper is attached in Appendix A. However, the main considerations from the paper are summarised below:

- The paper questions whether every local authority area have its own LSP
- LSP are to be the 'partnership of partnerships'
- All LSP's will be required to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) with an associated action plan (local and LAA priorities would form this)
- The paper asks whether guidance required for LSP's to undertake this process and for publishing an SCS
- Other strategies and plans should reflect SCS & vice versa
- Strong evidence base for action plans is required
- The current Community Strategy Action Plan and the LAA delivery plan will become one and the same
- The SCS/LAA action plan will be very specific about who doing what by when
- SCS refreshed on an annual basis and reviewed every three years
- The emphasis on the local authority co-ordinating community leadership. The long term objective being:

*'...developing the effectiveness of the community leadership role of councils in relation to the range of local services that contribute to the well being of an area and strengthening the relationships between local partners'*

- The local authority role is to be widened from a service provider to dealing with wider community needs e.g. cohesion and exclusion
- There is a proposal for a duty on local authorities to involve the business, voluntary and community sectors
- 'A possible model (for role of LSP's) in two tier areas could therefore be to develop a strategic SCS at county level, with a remit to engage with regional,

sub-regional tiers and district authorities/LSP's to reflect their priorities. District level LSP's could then focus on local/neighbourhood engagement and establishing an analysis of the needs of their population'

- In two tier areas the district LSP's may be best placed to engage local neighbourhoods 'although there will be merit in county authorities involving neighbourhoods and parishes in their LSP arrangements'
- Possible restructure of LSP around four blocks of LAA would be '*useful*' but arrangements must address a range of issues and ensure that cross cutting issues are picked up. The LSP exec and the local authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be responsible for this.
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee would ensure local accountability of the LSP
- Role of 'neighbourhood/parish sector to have wider involvement in overview and scrutiny'
- LSP's to facilitate neighbourhood engagement and ensure neighbourhoods and parish councils can influence strategic local priorities Role of Neighbourhood Management important in future role of LSP and developing SCS
- Significant benefits to be gained by planning and delivering policy beyond local authority boundaries that reflect other organisational footprints or housing market areas
- Possible 'duty to co-operate' on key partners in the area (statutory requirement on local authorities & 'specified bodies')
- Closer alignment of strategies e.g. via protocol between neighbouring LSP's & the relevant regional/sub-regional organisations
- Planners to be much more involved in priority setting (via Local Development Framework and on LSP Executive)
- Developing a compact with community empowerment networks
- Introduction of 'single delivery vehicles' i.e. a body created by pooling partner budgets from the LSP to commission
- Representatives of Children's Trust incorporated into LSP
- Accountability of Community Safety Partnership linked to LSP (more to come on this)
- A possible legislative foundation for LSP's i.e. setting '..them on a firmer footing by clarifying and formalising their role, and ensuring the involvement of key agencies'. The benefits would:
  - send a message from government on importance of partnership working
  - reinforce and clarify role of LSP
  - clearly establish role of local authority as central partner
  - set out minimum expectations for partners
  - ensure key public sector agencies are engaged
- The LSP will report formally to the GO on performance against outcomes and indicators in the LAA every six months
- Performance management arrangements must suit local needs and conditions. This will require shared accountability between partners.
- Role of elected members will be crucial in supporting and achieving success
- Major resource implications for the above with the burden currently falling upon the local authority. This could be reviewed 'Where it is clear that actions agreed

by the LSP will have a beneficial financial knock on effect to partners, resources should be allocated by those partners up front to ease the burden on any one agency that would traditionally be expected to fund the action.'

### ***Implications for Rossendale Partnership***

3. If it is agreed to keep the Rossendale Partnership as it is currently, consultation will need to take place over the structure e.g. should it reflect the four blocks of the LAA? This would enable a local focus but potentially weaken influence at a County level.
- 3.2 If it is decided to move the Partnership onto a bigger footprint the issue of governance and local accountability/priorities would have to be addressed.
- 3.3 There are resource implications with the whole process and of reviewing the SCS annually and refreshing it every three years. It may be more prudent to review the action plan yearly and refresh every three years.
- 3.4 The Partnership operates across a number of geographical and political footprints. Moreover, partner footprints vary and many are subject to imminent change e.g. PCT, Police, Ambulance Service. This will require a very flexible approach and more collaborative working with partners or possibly the need to wait until partner organisations have re-organised.
- 3.5 There is a danger of duplicating effort if local and sub-regional/regional priorities are not aligned. Similarly, partner organisations may face problems of having to attend too many meetings and having to prioritise (possibly at the expense of District LSP's)
- 3.6 The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will need to be looked at in ensuring accountability of Rossendale Partnership
- 3.7 A 'duty to cooperate' for partners and a legislative foundation for the Partnership would place a heavier duty on the Council to ensure delivery (with associated resource implications)
- 3.8 The creation of a 'single delivery vehicle' and pooled budgets would have potential resource implications for the Council.
- 3.9 The County LSP will be required to report to GO-NW every six months. This raises the question of who Rossendale Partnership will report to and how it will report to them.
- 4.0 An event was held in early February 2006 between the five LSP's which form the East Lancashire 'cluster' of the LAA consultation arrangements (Pendle, Burnley, Rossendale, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley). This event considered the implications of the consultation paper with the view of submitting a collective response from East Lancashire will be submitted to the ODPM. Responses to the consultation paper should be sent by 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006

## **Conclusions**

5. The consultation paper on the future of LSP's should be considered in the context of many other changes that are taking place on a sub-regional/regional basis. Many of the considerations regarding process already apply to this Partnership. However, the Cabinet are asked to consider where our Partnership (as a District LSP in a two tier situation) wants to place itself in relation to sub regional/regional developments and the LAA process.

## **Background documents:**

LSP Performance management framework documents.  
**Community Strategy and Delivery Plan**  
**Letter from GONW**  
ODPM Consultation on LSPs

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