



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future

A consultation paper



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December 2005

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London

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Foreword

Local services are increasingly being delivered in partnership – with local authorities working with other public sector agencies, businesses, and the voluntary and community sectors. Local Strategic Partnerships are the vehicle for this way of working.

The future role of LSPs is central to the Government's vision for the future of local decision-making, in particular to developing a strong leadership role for local authorities. LSPs also provide an important opportunity for realising better quality neighbourhood engagement and bringing together the resulting neighbourhood arrangements.


LSPs play a significant role in the delivery of many of our objectives – providing an opportunity to define and deliver local priorities across the area rather than work being confined to separate agencies. LSPs in areas of high deprivation have a key role in tackling entrenched disadvantage and all LSPs will play a vital role in agreeing and delivering Local Area Agreements.

Community Strategies need to evolve into Sustainable Community Strategies. These will be: based on firm evidence; add value to other local plans; be spatially relevant and robust enough to set the agenda for priorities in Local Area Agreements.

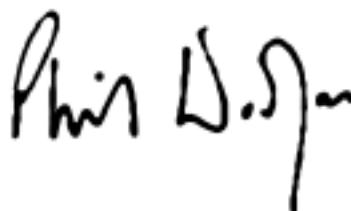
Partnerships only work well where they are developed locally to reflect the local situation. We understand that 'no- one- size- fits- all' and do not want to prescribe how an LSP should work. However, it is critical that LSPs are able to fulfil the new expectations being placed on them and move to genuinely driving better co-ordinated local services. To achieve this, all partners need to see collaboration as the only way to achieve efficient and coherent services and not an addition to the day job. To achieve this major shift, changes will need to be made, not just at a national, but at regional and local levels as well.

LSPs in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources have already made the shift from focusing on process to the delivery of outcomes through the introduction of performance management. Local Area Agreements are also clearly focused on outcomes and it is crucial all LSPs now develop this delivery focus in order to achieve the vision set out in their Sustainable Community Strategies.

Your views will be invaluable in shaping the future development of Local Strategic Partnerships.



David Miliband
Minister of Communities and Local Government
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister



Phil Woolas
Minister for Local Government
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Next Steps

The Consultation Exercise

In this consultation paper we ask a number of specific questions; you are welcome to respond to them all, to some or not others or to write about other issues that have not been covered. Responses to this consultation paper should be received no later than 3rd March 2006 to:

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Further copies of this consultation paper are available from the above address Alternatively, you can read this consultation paper online at:

www.odpm.gov.uk

Disclosure

A summary of responses to this consultation will be published. Paper copies will be available on request.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and, in the majority of circumstances; this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Ministers may wish to publish responses to this consultation paper in due course or deposit them in the libraries of the House of Parliament. All responses may also be included in statistical summaries of comments received and views expressed.

Executive Summary

1. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Community Strategies were introduced as a result of the Local Government Act 2000. They have helped make great strides to improve the local quality of life. LSPs are now established in all areas and much progress has been made in terms of representation, establishing a common vision and moving to genuinely collaborative working. Community Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships have a critical role in further developing coherent service provision and genuinely sustainable communities.
2. LSPs are working in an increasingly complex and challenging environment with important expectations being placed on them. This has increased the need to ensure that LSPs are working effectively and accountably, a theme developed in the Audit Commission's recently published paper "Governing Partnerships."¹ This consultation examines the future role of LSPs, their governance and accountability, and their capacity to deliver Sustainable Community Strategies. It poses a series of questions under each of these headings designed to help us understand how LSPs are operating at present and where changes could be made nationally, regionally and locally to help them develop most effectively.

The consultation's aims

3. This consultation, which is part of the local:vision debate on the future of local government, re-examines the role, governance and capacity of LSPs and Community Strategies both in terms of short-term changes and more radical longer-term adjustments. Discussions with key national, regional and local partners have led us to identify a number of key ambitions for the future development of LSPs. These core objectives are set out below:
 - Commitment amongst central government departments, regional organisations and local partners to the LSP system of partnerships and the Sustainable Community Strategy as the over-arching local plan;
 - An evolved role for the local authority including local authority members in facilitating action through the LSP and Sustainable Community Strategy;
 - LSPs able to effectively identify and deliver against the priorities for joint action in their area through the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, Local Area Agreement (LAA) and Local Development Framework, in a clearly accountable way;
 - LSPs better able to support neighbourhood engagement and to help ensure the views of neighbourhoods and parish councils can influence strategic local service delivery and spending; and
 - Effective, transparent and accountable governance and scrutiny arrangements for LSPs to enable partners to hold each other to account and local people to hold the partnership to account.

¹ "Governing Partnerships – Bridging the accountability gap" Audit Commission Oct. 2005.

4. Our vision for the role of the LSP is that it takes the strategic lead in the locality by bringing together the views of the local partners, including critically representatives of the private, voluntary and community sectors, with national, regional, and neighbourhood or parish priorities in developing the Sustainable Community Strategy. The strategy would set out the vision and priorities for the area with the Local Area Agreement defining the detailed outcomes, which will be part of the Sustainable Community Strategy's action plan. The Local Development Framework is then the land-use delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy. The outcomes from the LAA would be scrutinised by local authorities and LSPs and then monitored, reviewed and reported on. The Action Plan and its outcomes would then feed into future revisions of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA. Diagrams showing these arrangements for different tiers are shown on pages 22-23.

The changing policy environment

5. The Government has now set out its vision for creating genuinely sustainable communities. Delivering sustainable communities is the core purpose of Community Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships. There are currently over 360 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in England, 88 of which are in areas that currently receive Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF). Some of these partnerships date back to local initiatives in the early 1990s, others have only been set up relatively recently. Over recent years progress has been made in terms of increasing representation of harder-to-reach groups, joining-up working on cross-cutting themes and using well-being powers to facilitate improved local services.
6. Those areas in receipt of NRF are required to have an LSP but outside those areas, LSPs are entirely voluntary. In the past, their role was to develop a vision for their locality through their Community Strategy. This shared vision for the area remains an important part of their role but LSPs across the country are also increasingly becoming involved in delivery. A lot is expected of all LSPs, in particular, the development and implementation of LAAs. This enhanced role provides new challenges to many LSPs. They need to be capable of attracting senior membership, taking difficult decisions and challenging partner members where necessary, in order to drive forward local public service improvements and manage the performance of the elements of the partnership.
7. This builds on the strong emphasis placed on LSPs in the delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal. LSPs were required to develop a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and deliver the Neighbourhood Renewal outcomes. LAAs have placed further expectations on the role of LSPs and Community Strategies. First piloted in 21 areas in 2004/05, LAAs are now being rolled out to all upper-tier authorities in England over the next two years. LAAs set out the priorities for a local area negotiated between central government, represented by the Government Office, and a local area, represented by the local authority and LSP. The experience of the pilots bore out the importance of the LSP in bringing together the thematic partnerships in the local area; providing the governance framework for the delivery of the LAA; and ensuring the identification of cross-cutting themes and ensuring community engagement in the LAA. There are also clear links between the LAA and Community Strategy – both of which set out the priorities for the locality – and many areas have taken their Community Strategies as the basis of their LAA.
8. LSPs also have a key role in our proposals to increase the opportunities for neighbourhood engagement and action following the publication of the local:vision document *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter* (ODPM and Home Office, Jan 2005). It is envisaged that the LSP will have an important

facilitating role in supporting neighbourhood engagement and ensuring that neighbourhoods and parish councils can influence strategic local priorities. *Why Neighbourhoods Matter* states that ‘evidence shows that action at the neighbourhood level is likely to be more effective where councils and the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) have in place effective arrangements at the more strategic level’.² These arrangements should include a co-ordinated approach to community engagement and a commitment to the resources necessary to support it. Neighbourhood management has also proved to be a good way of engaging citizens and influencing service delivery, for example on improving local green spaces.

9. The Government has also set out its commitment to greater involvement of citizens and communities in the improvement of policies and services in the *Together We Can* action plan and the proposals in this document seek to reflect the implementation of that commitment.
10. A further influence on the role of the LSP is the change in focus of Community Strategies to become *Sustainable* Community Strategies. This reflects the increasingly important role of Community Strategies in helping to deliver genuinely sustainable communities which balance and integrate economic, social and environmental goals. Many Community Strategies have, in the past, struggled to articulate how they will address the area's longer-term and cross-boundary issues. Sir John Egan³ found there was a need for local leaders to establish priorities that were sustainable and connected to the anticipated changes in the local area. He recommended that these be brought together in a Sustainable Community Strategy. We believe that the move to Sustainable Community Strategies, as part of the wider role changes for LSPs and local authorities outlined in this paper, will help them fulfil the requirement in the Local Government Act 2000 to produce Community Strategies, which contribute to sustainable development in the UK.
11. The local:vision document *Vibrant Local Leadership*⁴, published in January 2005, also demonstrated a commitment to developing this co-ordinating community leadership role of each local authority. It suggested that a long-term objective for the next ten years should be:

‘...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’.
12. This emphasis on the ‘community leadership’ role of the local authority is vital as it points to the way in which this leadership should be exercised i.e. in partnership rather than by command. The benefits of partnership working in addressing difficult issues are widely recognised and we have placed increasing emphasis on partnership working across government, for example, through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and, more recently, Children’s Trusts. We have also recognised that, to be effective, these different partnerships and their plans must be co-ordinated. This role as the “partnership of partnerships” was always envisaged for LSPs. It is now imperative that this becomes a reality.

2 The local:vision document “Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter” ODPM Jan. 2005.

3 “The Egan Review Skills for Sustainable Communities” ODPM 2004.

4 *Vibrant Local Leadership*, ODPM, 2005

See http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_locgov_034875.pdf

‘Undertaking these roles effectively is likely to require an increasingly strong focus for dealing with cross-cutting issues at local level, for which the main vehicle is the LSP.’
(Vibrant Local Leadership ODPM, 2005)

13. The local authority’s involvement is vital to the effective operation of an LSP. The local authority’s democratic mandate and accountability provides them with a clear basis on which to determine priorities across the local area. Therefore, we see a clear role for the local authority in initiating and maintaining momentum in the LSP; ensuring appropriate representation across the different sectors including involving local residents; and scrutinising the LSP. The local authority is also responsible for producing the Community Strategy and is ultimately accountable for the LSP’s actions.
14. The local authority role is especially vital given the statutory power local authorities have to secure the economic, social and environmental well-being of the local areas. This power is critical as it enables local authorities to step outside the narrow provision of a range of services they are directly responsible for, to look more widely at community needs, such as promoting community cohesion and tackling social exclusion and discrimination. The powers provide greater freedom for local authorities to adopt new and innovative ways of improving quality of life and securing a more sustainable future for the area.

Our vision of the role, accountability and governance of LSPs

15. We believe it is crucial for the success of LSPs that they are able to co-ordinate delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA.

We want LSPs...

1. To be the partnership of partnerships in an area, providing the strategic co-ordination within the area and linking with other plans and bodies established at the regional, sub-regional and local level.
2. To ensure a Sustainable Community Strategy is produced that sets the vision and priorities for the area agreed by all parties, including local citizens and businesses, and built on a solid evidence base.
3. To develop and drive the effective delivery of their Local Area Agreements.
4. To agree an action plan for achieving the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities, including the LAA outcomes.

In two-tier areas we expect:

County-level LSPs to agree the LAA and relevant action plan, taking into account priorities identified by District local authorities and LSPs in their Sustainable Community Strategies.

District-level LSPs (and their Sustainable Community Strategies) to be fully considered and involved in the drawing-up and implementing of the county-wide Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA. Relevant LAA outcomes should also be reflected in the District LSPs’ action plans and future iterations of all District-led plans, including Local Development Frameworks.

16. As indicated above, the LSP must take an oversight role, ensuring that the lines of responsibility between partners and thematic sub-partnerships are clear and that duplication is avoided. In essence the LSP needs to be the ‘partnership of partnerships’ encompassing all thematic partnerships in the area. For example Children’s Trusts will be expected to be integrated within the LSP system of partnerships whilst retaining their responsibility for co-ordinating children’s services.

17. Some of this shift will, and is, coming with time. The process will be significantly enhanced if members of the LSP see their part in the partnership as a key way for them to achieve their goals rather than as an addition to the 'day job'. This requires a joint coherent approach from central government as collaborative working is also hampered by the sheer weight of central target-setting. It is integral to the vision for the future of LSPs, and local governance more generally, that the space for individual local agencies to act innovatively and collaboratively is increased through a reduction in the level of organisation-based/national targets.
18. Performance management by the LSP is a key part of the partnership approach. In NRF areas performance management has helped increase accountability between partners. All partners within an LSP are expected to be accountable for their contribution to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy. They are also expected to play their part in ensuring all partners take an active and effective role. To increase the LSPs' effectiveness it may be appropriate to place obligations on key partner agencies to participate. This model of a statutory 'duty to co-operate' has been adopted in the context of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. Similarly, the Children Act 2004 requires wide co-operation arrangements in the context of Children's Trusts. The Scottish equivalents of LSPs, Community Planning Partnerships, are also underpinned by statutory co-operation arrangements with named agencies having a 'duty to participate' in the community planning process. Imposing a statutory requirement upon local authorities and specified bodies to work together would in our view send a strong signal that LSPs have a very significant role in co-ordinating delivery locally. To ensure wide representation there could be a parallel duty on local authorities to involve the business, voluntary and community sectors. We are seeking views on this proposal.

Securing the capacity to deliver

19. To deliver this challenging agenda it is increasingly important that LSP members and staff possess skills in performance management, negotiation, policy development, implementation and community engagement. Training and support packages provided nationally, regionally and locally will need to support the development of this new skill set for some LSPs. We need to learn from and build on the skill development already put in place for those LSPs in receipt of NRF.
20. There is a wide range of support and training presently available for partners of LSPs, some directly focused on LSPs. However, this training to date has been provided by a number of different sources, in a number of different ways, based on a number of different criteria. It is crucial that the support provided is made available to all LSPs, not just those in areas receiving NRF, and that it is provided in a coherent way ideally with one access route.
21. In light of the responses to this consultation paper it may be appropriate to publish Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Strategic Partnership guidance as required by Section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000.

Chapter 1: The role of Local Strategic Partnerships and Sustainable Community Strategies

This section looks at the following issues:

- The strategic leadership role of LSPs
- The current role and expectations on LSPs
- Moving to a commissioning or delivery co-ordination role
- The move to *Sustainable* Community Strategies
- The links between the regional and sub-regional tiers
- The impact of the Local Area Agreements
- Local Development Frameworks
- The roles of LSPs in two-tier authority areas

The strategic leadership role

22. The main objective of LSPs is to set out the vision of an area and co-ordinate and drive the delivery of local services leading to improved outcomes for citizens that go beyond the remit of any one partner. Other benefits of partnership working include increased opportunities for joint provision of services, the ability to attract external funding and increased influence over the policies and structures of partner agencies.
23. Individual partnerships do realise some of the benefits of partnership working including avoiding duplication and creating more seamless services. However, focussing on a defined thematic area can mean that wider opportunities and benefits are missed. LSPs, with their over-arching remit, can add even greater benefit by enabling different agencies from the public, private and voluntary and community organisations to work together effectively to improve services. The LSP must take an oversight role, ensuring that the lines of responsibility between partners and partnerships are clearly drawn and that duplication is avoided.

The current role and expectations of LSPs

24. Section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on every local authority to prepare a **Community Strategy** for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom. Statutory guidance on Community Strategies, to which local authorities must have regard, was published in 2000. This guidance set out that these strategies were to be produced in partnership with all local delivery agencies and their communities. The guidance also formally introduced the concept of **Local Strategic Partnerships** and placed an expectation on local authorities to seek the participation of local stakeholders in this process, via an LSP where possible.

25. Further non-statutory guidance on LSPs was issued in 2001. Since then, LSPs have been established in the vast majority of local authority areas. The guidance describes them as voluntary, non-executive partnerships and only 2% of LSPs have chosen to alter this position by establishing themselves as a company limited by guarantee. A small number of areas have also established Local Public Service Boards – a model discussed in more detail later.

Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

26. The **88 areas in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding** were required to have a LSP before they could receive NRF. The LSP then has a formal role in agreeing to the expenditure of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. LSPs in receipt of NRF must also produce a **Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy**, often as part of the Community Strategy, setting out how they will narrow the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest.
27. LSPs pooling NRF within their Local Area Agreement must include six mandatory neighbourhood renewal outcomes within the agreement. These outcomes cover the six key neighbourhood renewal themes (crime; education; health; housing; liveability and worklessness). These outcomes are designed to bring about a narrowing of the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the district. They build upon the national floor targets, which will be included in the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS). This bringing together of NRF within LAAs is in light of the fact that many LSPs have merged their LNRS and Community Strategy. Neighbourhood renewal should be delivered through the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.
28. Government Offices (GOs) formerly accredited NRF LSPs (in 2002 and 2003). Since then, annual accreditation has been replaced by a performance management approach, under which NRF LSPs self-assess their progress in achieving delivery on neighbourhood renewal objectives. To ensure robustness of the performance management process the Audit Commission has validated 60 LSP performance management frameworks and the GOs also have a key role in challenging LSP performance and local targets, together with making an assessment of partnership working.
29. The Audit Commission validation found that “in the last 12 months LSPs have made significant progress in implementing performance management systems. This is a notable achievement given the complexity and sensitivity of developing performance management in a partnership context. It marks a further stage of development in the life-cycle of LSPs and demonstrates a level of organisational maturity which is reassuring given their relative youth”.⁵

Moving to a commissioning or delivery co-ordination role

30. Two main roles have been adopted by LSPs – **advisory** and **commissioning**. Advisory LSPs typically have a large membership working to build consensus and acting to co-ordinate and make recommendations. A commissioning LSP, on the other hand, makes decisions, commissions action and is actively involved in the delivery of the Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal floor targets. This is a less common model outside NRF areas.

⁵ See: <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/document.asp?id=1366>

31. Our research⁶ shows that LSPs themselves regard their biggest progress as having been made in establishing a collective vision and co-ordinated strategy, which reflects the emphasis placed on developing the Community Strategy/Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Significantly less progress has been made in establishing genuinely collaborative ways of working: for example, the least progress was assessed as having been made in mapping partners' spending programmes and pooling budgets.
32. Prior to the development of LAAs, the role of LSPs in non-NRF areas was primarily developing a vision for their locality through their Community Strategy. Increasingly, however, LSPs across the country are moving towards a delivery co-ordination role in particular through the development and delivery of Local Area Agreements.
33. We recognise that partnerships take time to build and that a mature partnership may be better able to achieve the greater delivery expectations now placed on LSPs.⁷ It takes time to create solutions locally that are sufficiently sophisticated to work with the complexity of the relationships and issues involved.⁸
34. Also having a mature partnership does not ensure clarity of purpose across the different member partners, nor does it inevitably produce the ability to genuinely co-ordinate or commission action. The movement from advising to commissioning is not a matter of inevitable evolution, but reflects the expectations placed on the role of the LSP.
35. Research conducted with LSPs in London⁹ highlighted a lack of clarity, for many LSPs, about their overriding purpose and the roles and responsibilities of the different partners. It was stated this had led to tensions between partners who had different perceptions about what the LSP was for and how they could benefit from participation. It is critical that we provide a clear view of the role of LSPs, the expectations of all partners, including the private, voluntary and community sectors, and the benefits participation are likely to produce. Our vision of the role of LSPs is outlined below:

The Role of LSPs

1. To be the partnership of partnerships in an area, providing the strategic co-ordination within the area and linking with other plans and bodies established at the regional and sub-regional and local level
2. To ensure a Sustainable Community Strategy is produced that sets the vision and priorities for the area agreed by all parties, including local citizens and businesses, and founded on a solid evidence base
3. To develop and drive the effective delivery of their LAA
4. To agree an action plan for achieving the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities, including the LAA outcomes

6 LSPs self-assessments of progress, 2004 Survey of all English LSPs, ODPM 2005.

7 National Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships: Report on the 2004 Survey of all English LSPs (March 2005) ODPM.

8 Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships: Governance Action Learning Set ODPM 2005.

9 LSPs and Neighbourhood Renewal in London: the story so far. Association of London Government. 2003.

36. The provision of specific staffing and support materials to NRF LSPs has undoubtedly aided these partnerships' development (for more details see chapter 4 and Annex C).

*"In general, NRF LSPs claim to have achieved more outputs/outcomes than those in non-NRF areas."*¹⁰

37. However, clarity of purpose itself can help speed up the partnership-forming process and ensure the necessary internal structures are in place. This pattern has been demonstrated through LSPs in areas receiving Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and the LAA process and was recorded in the evaluation of the LAA pilot process:

*"It is evident that the LAA process has the capacity to help build stronger and more effective partnerships. The process has begun to strengthen LSPs, given focus to existing theme partnerships and helped stimulate the establishment of new ones where necessary"*¹¹

The move to Sustainable Community Strategies

38. As described above, the central role of all LSPs is to produce and deliver a Community Strategy. Since the original guidance was written in 2000 we have gained extensive experience of what makes an effective Community Strategy. Developing a common vision for a more sustainable future is important and it is crucial that this vision is based on an in-depth analysis of the specific needs of the area and results in priorities which must be able to translate into meaningful outcomes. This is particularly important given the need for the Community Strategy to reliably inform the Local Area Agreement.
39. The on-going evaluation of Community Strategies¹² provides us with a picture of gradual improvement in the quality of Community Strategies but mixed success when measured against the above criteria. It found that:
- Almost all local authorities have now formally adopted a Community Strategy and approximately 40 per cent have undergone a process of partial or complete revision of the strategy.¹³
 - Whether the LSP led in the development of the strategy reflected the development and resourcing of the LSP. Larger authorities typically have more established LSPs, leading to a more 'partnership-orientated' document; in contrast, smaller authorities, typically rural districts, have often led the development of the Community Strategy themselves.
 - Many Community Strategies contain little analysis of evidence to back up proposed actions. They tend to rely largely on community aspirations and make few references to available baseline data that should inform priorities for action.

10 National Evaluation of LSPs: Report on the 2004 survey of all English LSPs.

11 Process evaluation of the negotiation of the pilot Local Area Agreements, OPM for ODPM P116.

12 Process evaluation of Plan Rationalisation and Community Strategy Survey, ODPM December 2004.

13 Process evaluation of Plan Rationalisation and Community Strategy Survey, ODPM December 2004.

- Nearly three-quarters of LSPs have an implementation or Action Plan in place – in the remainder the process is underway. Just over two-thirds of authorities also have a system in place for monitoring the Community Strategy – although typically, few details on this are provided in the strategy itself.
40. LAAs enable a renewed focus on the Community Strategy as the overarching visioning document for the area, underpinned by the specific outcome targets agreed and delivered as part of the LAA.
 41. In response to the Egan Review¹⁴ and the publication of the Government's new UK Sustainable Development Strategy¹⁵ we have committed to reshaping Community Strategies as Sustainable Community Strategies. The key point of Egan's recommendation was to re-emphasise the need for local leaders to take a more cross-disciplinary and integrated approach to social, economic and environmental issues. This also led on to recommendations regarding the skills required to deliver sustainable communities.
 42. We have now set out a definition and components of sustainable communities,¹⁶ which is reproduced in annex A of this document. In summary the components relate to a community being: Active, Inclusive and safe; Well-run; Environmentally sensitive; Well designed and built; Well connected; Thriving; Well served and; Fair for everyone.
 43. Sustainable communities balance and integrate social, economic and environmental components of their community; meet the needs of existing and future generations; and respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally to make communities sustainable. As such, the definition and components provide a guide for LSPs as they put together their Sustainable Community Strategies.

14 "The Egan Review – Skills for Sustainable Communities" ODPM 2004.

15 Securing the Future – www.sustainable-development.gov.uk

16 ODPM's 5-Year Plan 'People, places and Prosperity' and the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, 2005.

Sustainable Community Strategies

Sustainable Community Strategies are an evolution of the Community Strategy requirement introduced in the Local Government Act 2000. They take on board policy developments arising from the introduction of Local Area Agreements, Local Development Frameworks, the Government's new Sustainable Development Strategy and the Government's desire to see Sustainable Communities in every place – communities where people want to live and work. In effect, this evolution will give teeth to the process.

A Sustainable Community Strategy will need to be developed through a number of stages. We have proposed a series of stages below and would welcome views on these proposals.

1. Baseline current performance.

- The strategy should outline a long-term vision for the area, using the definition and components of sustainable communities¹⁷. This should not be a tick-box exercise, but an accurate consideration of how the components should contribute to communities with their own unique identities – a positive sense of place.
- It will need to be built on robust data available from such sources as the Neighbourhood Statistics and Area Profiles websites (see below), individual local partners, as well as surveys and discussions with local citizens and businesses.
- It needs to establish baselines where data is new and map trends and trajectories where data has been available for a while.
- Where possible, surveys and area data should disaggregate demographic and socio economic information into race, gender, disability, faith, age and sexual orientation.

2. Evidence: analysis of performance and local conditions.

- This vision needs to be explicitly grounded in an analysis of the local area's needs and ideally an understanding of the totality of resources coming into the area.
- **Forecasting:** This should produce a medium-term plan for the next 5-10 years which builds upon the evidence and data referred to above and an evaluation of priorities identified in other local and regional partnerships' plans and strategies (including those of District LSPs in 2-tier areas).
- Wherever possible, it should also relate closely to Local Development Frameworks in the area, ideally using common data (e.g. from Geographical Information Systems), and common consultation mechanisms.
- As previously recommended by the Government, planning relating to neighbourhood renewal, culture & biodiversity should be subsumed within Sustainable Community Strategies at this stage.

3. Local Area Agreements – the outcomes and targets included in the LAA should reflect this overarching vision.

4. Revised action plan: The current Community Strategy Action Plan and the LAA delivery plan will become one and the same.

5. The Sustainable Community Strategy/LAA Action Plan

- This should state who is accountable for what actions, with what resources and to what timescale. Where appropriate, these should be neighbourhood or area-specific (this last point will be particularly important as it relates to District Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plans and Local Development Frameworks). The plan should also state how progress will be monitored, reviewed and reported on to citizens, businesses, partner organisations and, where appropriate, to central government. There is no need for the action to duplicate the work already done in the development of other plans e.g. the Children and Young People's Plan could become the children and young people's part of this Action Plan.
 - In turn, future iterations of theme, area or service-based plans should take into account the overall Sustainable Community Strategy and vice versa.
- 6.** In line with the LAA review timetable we would expect a Sustainable Community Strategy to be refreshed on an annual basis and reviewed every three years.

¹⁷ These components have been agreed with the Government and the Local Government Association.

44. One of the key weaknesses of many current Community Strategies is their lack of a reliable evidence-base. In future achieving an evidence-base should be considerably easier, due to the developments described below:
45. **Neighbourhood Statistics**¹⁸ – the on-line service developed by the Office for National Statistics enables users to download a vast range of social and economic datasets and analyse this data on a consistent small area geography.
46. **Area Profiles and Quality of Life Indicators**¹⁹ – The Audit Commission has piloted Area Profiles for two years in dozens of local areas. This project has now enabled a detailed picture of quality of life and local services to be drawn up against ten themes for each local authority area. Area Profiles provide data and information against those themes that will be of particular help to LSPs. The project highlights 45 local Quality of Life Indicators, which measure a wide range of issues covered by each of the ten themes. All the indicators draw on national data sources and are available on the Area Profiles section of the Audit Commission's website.

Links to regional, sub-regional and local activities

Regional/cross-boundary working

47. To be effective – and genuinely sustainable – a Sustainable Community Strategy, should influence, and be influenced by, the content of other key local, regional and sub-regional plans. The current version of the Community Strategy guidance outlines the organisations that LSPs are encouraged to engage with at the regional and sub-regional level. In addition, the LSP guidance highlights the role of Government Offices as facilitators and mediators between these bodies and LSPs. However, the 2004 survey of all Community Strategies²⁰ has shown in general that there is relatively little evidence that links are being made between Community Strategies and regional and sub-regional strategies.
48. There are significant benefits to be gained by planning and delivering policy beyond local authority boundaries in a way that corresponds to the functioning geographies of economies and societies. These might include travel-to-work areas, retail catchments, housing market areas and strategic transport links.
49. It is therefore essential that the Sustainable Community Strategy is developed in a way that fully addresses needs and opportunities across administrative boundaries. As the overarching partnership for a local area, the LSP is ideally placed to facilitate cross-boundary collaboration and communication at the appropriate sub-regional level.

18 See <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

19 See <http://www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk/>

20 "Formative Evaluation of Community Strategies – Review of Community Strategies: Overview of All and more detailed assessment of 50", ODPM 2005.

50. The development of Local Area Agreements has brought LSPs and regional and sub-regional organisations into a closer working relationship. This means that there is greater opportunity for Sustainable Community Strategies, Regional Spatial Strategies, Regional Economic Strategies, Regional Housing Strategies and Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks, amongst others, to be more closely aligned. One way to achieve close working relations is through a agreement or protocol between neighbouring LSPs and the relevant regional/sub-regional organisations. An Action Learning set of LSPs²¹ produced a model of what such an agreement might look like which establishes agreed ways of working and respective responsibilities regarding strategic co-operation, information-gathering and resources, information-gathering and resources.

Identifying opportunities for local collaboration

51. The Sustainable Community Strategy adds value in an area by being the over-arching plan and by drawing out those key priorities and actions that require a collaborative approach. It was always envisaged that the Community Strategy would perform this role. However, in practice – and often as a result of centrally-set target regimes – individual agencies or thematic partnerships have developed many local plans entirely separately and the key actions are not picked up in the Community Strategy. To help ensure the most effective and transparent allocation of resources in the locality, the LSP may wish to consider setting up mechanisms for individual partners to share performance data and levels of resourcing.
52. In addition, the Government has succeeded in reducing the number of separate plans required from local partners but to ensure this synergy of priorities and activities we suggest that local plans should be developed with reference to the Sustainable Community Strategy and vice versa, for example:
- PCT Local Delivery Plans
 - Local Transport Plans
 - Housing Strategies
 - Community Safety/Drug Action Plans

Basingstoke and Deane LSP

The LSP has had direct involvement in the ongoing work of the Local Development Framework and the Regional Spatial Strategy (the 'South East Plan'). This has demonstrated the benefits of an integrated approach to LSP partners and has led to a series of joint projects working towards:

- Joint community engagement between the local authority, police and PCT based around a broadened Statement of Community Involvement. The aim is for this to develop into a full engagement strategy for the LSP
- Joint commissioning of research and agreed data-sharing across functions and sectors
- A common set of performance measures shared across partners to measure improvements in the delivery of public services and community outcomes

²¹ 'LSPs and the regional and sub-regional agenda – towards a more joined up approach' Report of the Action Learning Set, ODPM 2005.

Neighbourhood engagement

53. We also believe that LSPs will have an important role in supporting neighbourhood engagement and ensuring that neighbourhoods can influence strategic local priorities. This is already happening in many NRF LSPs.
54. The discussion document *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter* (ODPM and Home Office, January 2005) looked at how local authorities and their partners would be expected to provide opportunities for neighbourhood engagement and the empowerment of local people. Neighbourhood arrangements currently take a variety of forms and we will continue to encourage local variety and innovation. For example, there are already parish and town councils in some areas, and we are considering neighbourhood charters, neighbourhood forums, local action planning, and much more.
55. It is essential that mechanisms and activities at neighbourhood level are linked effectively with decision-making and planning at the strategic local level. They also need to reflect national policies where relevant, such as those relating to planning or housing, so expectations need to be managed. Therefore, it is envisaged that the LSP will have an important facilitating role in supporting neighbourhood engagement, listening to the views of the neighbourhoods in a locality, and ensuring that neighbourhoods can influence wider priorities in service delivery and the allocation of resources. The LSP, in developing the Sustainable Community Strategy in partnership with local people, should set out the visions and plans for neighbourhood engagement in the locality. The following example illustrates how this may operate. In engaging with any new neighbourhood arrangements it will be important for LSPs to look beyond formal neighbourhood structures, to ensure less vocal, less organised minority voices are heard.

Bradford Vision

In Bradford, the LSP (Bradford Vision) has supported local people to develop neighbourhood plans in around 60 neighbourhoods and developed a system of area conferences through which they directly influence borough-wide priorities. There is high awareness of neighbourhood action planning and clear political support from the Cabinet and council directors, who are keen to incorporate plans into the wider planning process.

56. In two-tier areas, the district level LSP may be best placed to ensure engagement of their local neighbourhoods, although there will also be merit in county authorities involving neighbourhoods and parishes in their LSP arrangements.
57. In some areas parish councils have also been closely involved in making links to specific neighbourhoods, often supported by the principal authority to develop parish plans. This can result in a more effective Local Strategic Partnership and may feed into the service delivery plans of LSP partners. The following example illustrates the potential for involving parishes and parish planning²².

²² "What makes a good Parish Plan" – The Countryside Agency.

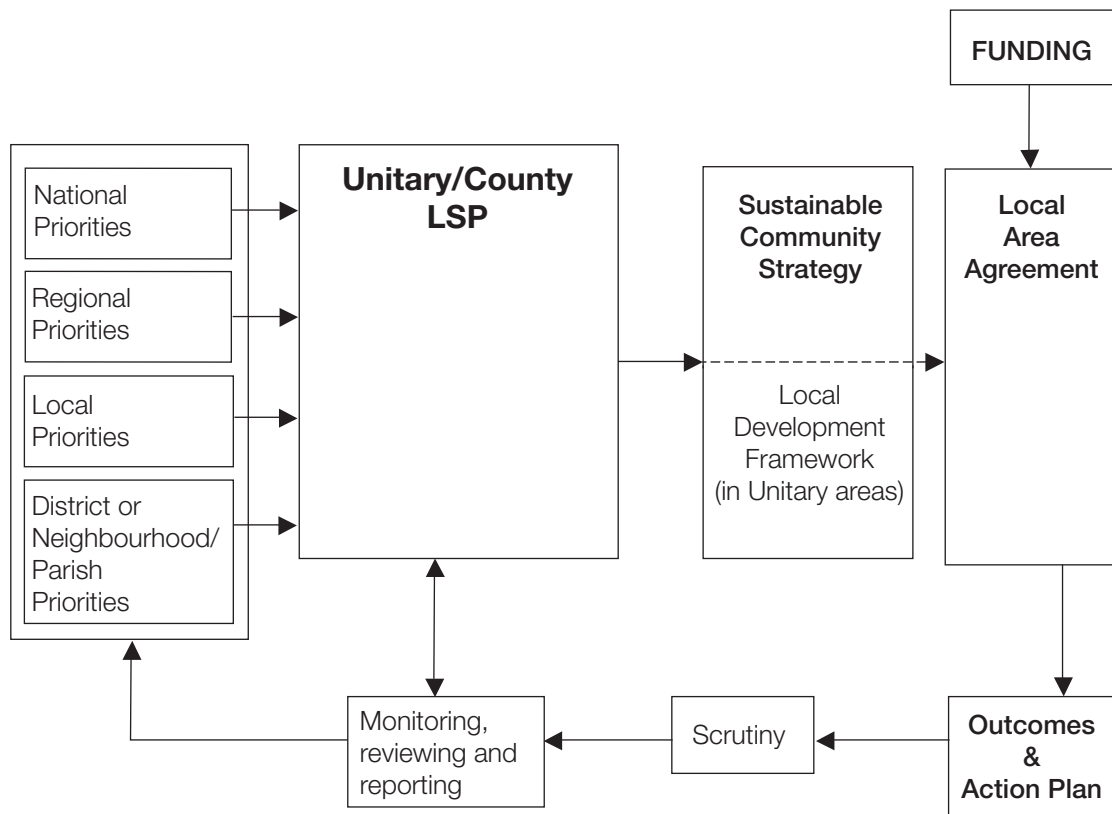
Caradon District Council

In Caradon the Parish Plan Action Group Chairperson is a member of the LSP. This ensures close working links with all projects and actions that have arisen from the Community Strategy. It also serves to position the parish planning process alongside the key issues, such as transport, health & housing, the local economy and vulnerable people, that make up the headings of the Community Strategy. It ensures that the interests of parishes are represented in the Community Strategy.

The impact of Local Area Agreements

58. As LAAs become part of the local landscape it becomes increasingly important to consider their relationship to the Sustainable Community Strategy. The approach suggested in the LAA guidance²³ is that the Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the overarching vision and priorities for the area and the LAA sets out the detailed outcomes, indicators and targets which relate to the strategy. This ensures that the targets agreed as part of the LAA flow directly from the analysis and priorities agreed as part of the vision and strategy.
59. Set out below in figures 1, 2 and 3 is our vision of the relationship between Sustainable Community Strategies, LAAs and the LSP's action planning.

Figure 1: Unitary & County LSP Framework



23 www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_locgov_038736.pdf

Figure 2: District LSP Framework

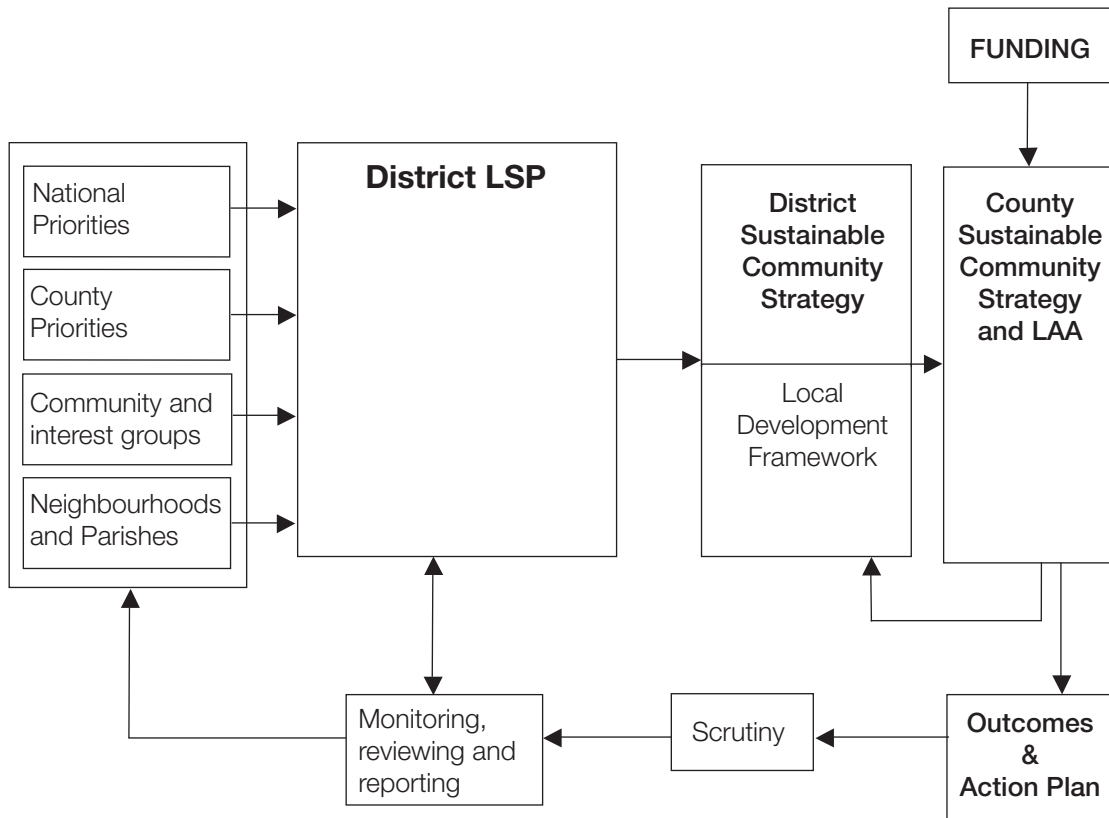


Figure 3: The relationship between Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Area Agreements and local action planning



Local Development Frameworks

60. The Local Development Framework must be a key component in the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy, setting out its spatial aspects and providing a long-term spatial vision. LDFs go beyond traditional land use planning and should integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes that influence areas and how they function, including those for supporting infrastructure and service delivery. In order for them to do this effectively the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Local Development Framework to have regard to the Community Strategy
61. In practice, this linkage is often not very apparent. The evaluation of Community Strategies concluded that in Community Strategies “There were few references to spatial strategies (either Regional Spatial Strategies or Local Development Frameworks/Local Development Documents) and whether the area would face specific spatial challenges in the future.”²⁴
62. This may not be surprising given the relative newness of LDFs. However, it is important that we establish more firmly the nature of the relationship and how links might be achieved in practice. This is particularly important given that this constitutes a new role for LSPs and requires a new way of working for both the partnership and planners. For the new system to work, planners are required to see land use planning in much broader terms, whilst LSPs need to see land-use planning as much more important to the delivery of local priorities. This requires planners to be much more involved in local area priority setting and vice versa.
63. The different stages of the Local Development Framework process have many linkages with the production of Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements. These include: surveying and gathering evidence; involving the local community and other stakeholders in working up proposals and appraising alternative options; writing core strategies and thematic and area action plans. The expertise in the fields of analysis, assessment and geographic information systems in many plan-making teams can provide a valuable support to the production of more evidence-based Sustainable Community Strategies. The close links to a variety of service providers and the community, which LSPs deliver, can in turn assist plans to be more firmly integrated within and owned by the community and key stakeholders.
64. To ensure that the LDF can become the spatial expression of the Sustainable Community Strategy links need to be made throughout the process and most importantly LSPs and local planning authorities need to work closely together throughout the planning and delivery cycles of these plans and strategies.²⁵ The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) has been commissioned by ODPM to provide advice for LSP partners and planning practitioners on how to make the most of opportunities presented by reforms to the planning system and highlight the benefits of collaborative working. The RTPI would welcome contributions from consultees to this. Please contact Louise Waring on 0207 929 9485 or louise.waring@rtpi.org.uk. The following case study gives an example of this joint working:

24 “Formative Evaluation of Community Strategies – Review of Community Strategies: Overview of All and more detailed assessment of 50” ODPM 2005.

25 For more detailed information about this see...
http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_024497.pdf

Hambleton District Council, North Yorkshire

Since the introduction of Community Strategies in 2000, the Community Strategy team within the Council has been an integral part of the wider Department dealing with spatial planning. This has resulted in close collaboration in the production of the Community Strategy and LDF. The LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options document demonstrates this as its themes closely correlate with those in the Community Strategy. The consultation on the Preferred Options is now informing the review of the Community Strategy.

Roles of LSPs in two-tier local authority areas

65. Establishing clear roles and responsibilities in two-tier local authority areas can be problematic.
66. Two-tier LSPs have expressed mixed views as to whether or not working across two-tier areas poses a significant problem. 50% state that the LSP represents a forum where county/district tensions are avoided but 42% disagree. Similarly, 52% feel that there is effective collaboration between county and district LSPs but 40% disagree. Action Learning Research conducted by LSPs themselves has indicated that the problems are not substantially more complex within a two-tier structure than in a unitary structure, but reflect common difficulties of differing administrative boundaries which all LSPs face to some degree²⁶.
67. Our LSP evaluation programme has identified three main ways of working²⁷:
 1. **Aggregation model** – where district-level Community Strategies are aggregated to form an overarching strategy, at county level
 2. **Added Value model** – county Community Strategy focuses on areas where it can add value to district strategies – creating more strategic focus, avoiding duplication and with an emphasis on sub-regional issues
 3. **Separatist model** – where the county strategy has been developed with few linkages and in isolation to district strategies
68. While retaining scope for local discretion, there may be value in being clearer about the roles of different LSPs across a county. We would want to encourage more areas to move to a combination of the ‘added value’ and ‘aggregation’ models.
69. A possible model in two-tier areas could therefore be to develop a strategic Sustainable Community Strategy at county level, with a remit to engage with the regional, sub-regional tiers and district authorities/LSPs to reflect their priorities. District-level LSPs could then focus on local/neighbourhood engagement and establishing an analysis of the needs of their population. Evidence suggests that in several places this model has evolved naturally. There is also evidence of a similar structure being established in unitary areas with local area partnerships for specific parts of the authority working within the strategic overview of the LSP. This model is based upon a presumption that each local authority should have its own LSP which can determine the specific priorities for that area.

²⁶ Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships: Two Tier Action Learning Set, ODPM 2005.

²⁷ Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships:
http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=5112&l=4

70. Whatever models are adopted, LSPs in two-tier areas are encouraged to use existing opportunities to foster effective working relationships between tiers. For example using the joint working arrangements between tiers for the production of local development frameworks or developing children's services.

Key Questions – The role of LSPs and Sustainable Community Strategies

LSPs, Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs

- 1: Do you agree that the key role of the LSP should be to develop the vision for the local area, through the Sustainable Community Strategy and the 'delivery contract' through the LAA (as set out in figures 1 & 2)

Regional/sub-regional engagement

- 2: We believe it is important that LSPs reflect regional/sub-regional plans where relevant in their Sustainable Community Strategy priorities and that regional organisations and partnerships take account of key local needs. How can this greater co-ordination best be facilitated?

Links to local plans

- 3: Would a requirement on bodies producing theme or service-based plans to 'have regard' to the Sustainable Community Strategy in doing so and vice versa, increase the LSP's ability to take the over-arching view in an area?

Sustainable Community Strategies

- 4: Are the proposed steps in the development of a Sustainable Community Strategy correct? (See box on page 18)
- 5: What more could be done to ensure Sustainable Community Strategies are better able to make the links between social, economic and environmental goals and to deal more effectively with the area's cross-boundary and longer-term impacts ?

Neighbourhood Engagement

- 6: What should be the role of the LSP in supporting neighbourhood engagement and ensuring the neighbourhood/parish voice, including diverse and minority communities, is heard at the principal local level?
- 7: In two-tier areas, is it most appropriate for the responsibility for neighbourhood engagement to rest with the district level LSP?

Links with Local Development Framework

- 8: How can spatial planning teams best contribute to Sustainable Community Strategies through the LSP and ensure that LDFs and Sustainable Community Strategies are closely linked?
- 9: How could revised guidance and accompanying support materials best ensure that Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks join up effectively?

Two-tier areas

- 10: Should every local authority area have its own LSP?
- 11: Would the establishment of a greater delineation of roles between county and district LSPs as suggested be sensible? (See paras 65 to 69)

Chapter 2: Governance

This chapter explores the following issues:

- Governance of the LSP: in particular, the relationship between the LSP with other thematic partnerships and the role of the executive board
- Geographic boundaries of partners
- Ways of ensuring wide representation
- A possible legislative foundation

Governance of the LSP

71. The key feature of LSPs is that they should be the overarching partnership in a locality bringing together all local thematic partnerships. For this system of partnerships to operate as an effective co-ordinator of delivery, each LSP needs effective, accepted and transparent governance arrangements.
72. As LSPs move from advisory bodies to commissioning bodies – effective governance arrangements become increasingly vital. A recent Audit Commission report²⁸ on this subject takes this argument further to commend a formal partnership agreement between partners to cover the nature of governance. This would be expected to reflect the local situation but cover role, membership, responsibilities and accountability between partners.
73. There is no one model for the governance of an LSP. They reflect the variety of local circumstances, and often derive from what was there before, such as Single Regeneration Budget partnerships or New Commitment to Regeneration partnerships, amongst others. In general, LSP structures are becoming more sophisticated: 82% of LSPs now have an executive/board; 78% distinguish between core and other membership; and in over 79% core membership includes Local Authority councillors and officers, health, police and voluntary sector umbrella groups (Survey of All English LSPs, ODPM 2004).
74. The local authority's involvement is vital to the effective operation of an LSP, the local authority is also responsible for producing the Sustainable Community Strategy and is accountable for the LSP's actions. The local authority is also the accountable body for the LAA. The local authority's democratic mandate and accountability provides a clear basis on which to determine priorities across the local area. Therefore we see a clear role for the local authority in initiating and maintaining momentum in the LSP: ensuring appropriate representation across the different sectors including involving local residents; and scrutinising the LSP.
75. LSPs were originally envisaged as the partnership of partnerships. This role was clearly set out in the 2001 Local Government White Paper 'Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services' which stated that the: *'Proliferation of these separate partnerships can lead to fragmentation, duplication and inefficiency. LSPs were established in part to bring some order to this situation by placing themselves at the apex of local partnership arrangements... LSPs will be able to slot any statutory partnerships into their emerging structure'*²⁹ LSPs must ensure that partnership arrangements are inclusive. This means that members from all sectors of the LSP should agree the partnership structure and have adequate opportunity to influence and hold to account members of the executive.

28 Audit Commission – "Governing Partnerships" Oct 2005.

29 The 2001 Local Government White Paper.

76. The Audit Commission has highlighted subsequently the importance of ensuring that partnerships are effective and avoid duplication³⁰. The LSP as a 'partnership of partnerships' must provide the overview and strategic co-ordination that effective partnership working within a locality requires. Annex B describes a selection of the huge range of existing partnerships which exist at local level, which is by no means exhaustive. This proliferation of local partnerships is likely to make the overview and co-ordination job of the LSP substantially more difficult.
77. There are also different circumstances in different parts of the country regarding the geographic coverage of local authorities and their partner organisations which can have implications for the LSP providing effective co-ordination. Many local authorities have made representations on this point to central government. Consideration is beginning to be given to the issue of the **geographic boundaries of partner organisations** and whether these can be aligned. As an example Strategic Health Authorities are starting the process of reviewing PCT boundaries.
78. We do not believe it is sensible for LSP structures to be specified in detail at national level. However, experience has shown that the basic structure of an LSP should include some form of executive board, which is able to take strategic decisions, underpinned by the local thematic partnerships which will need to feed into the board and which will effectively be the delivery mechanisms for the LSP. The board will need to be made up of all the key interests in an area: elected representatives, the local authority Chief Executive, senior public sector officials, voluntary, community and business sector representatives and local residents. It is important that as far as possible boards and the core membership of LSPs reflect the diversity of their area. The lead representative from each of the main thematic partnerships, such as the children's trust and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships would be expected to be a core member of the board, as would a senior planner. See Figure 4 on page 31 for more details.
79. In response to the introduction of performance management many LSPs in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund have already developed 'delivery teams' and/or 'executive boards' to enable them to deliver LNRS priorities effectively. The Audit Commission has also confirmed that a delivery team and/or executive board does assist an LSPs in delivering improvements³¹.
80. A small number of areas are trying out forms of **local public service board**, building on the ideas developed by the Innovation Forum. These partnership bodies have generally been established within the over-arching LSP framework. Their focus is on bringing together the major public sector partners in the locality, to map and influence the totality of public expenditure, and to co-ordinate joined-up public service delivery. In many ways these boards have the same role as an LSP executive board but tend to have less broad representation. The Local Government Association believes that Local Public Service Boards help achieve stronger local leadership for localities, with visible and accountable political direction of their activities. We believe it is crucial that any Public Service Board is set up within the LSP rather than as a rival to it or lines of accountability and decision-making will inevitably become blurred.

³⁰ Audit Commission "Governing Partnerships" 2005.

³¹ Audit Commission validation of NRF LSPs 2004.

81. Another approach to developing effective governance arrangements may be to introduce **single delivery vehicles/service delivery partnerships** which could focus on the delivery of specific issues under the umbrella of the LSP. While LSPs can join up strategy and commissioning they are not direct delivery bodies. Examples include models such as INclude, a non-profit company jointly owned by Liverpool City Council and a Registered Social Landlord which does a variety of regeneration activities. LSP partners could choose to pull together some of their budgets and assets and contract with a single delivery vehicle to ensure clearer joint delivery arrangements for particular issues. If such an approach were to be adopted we would expect the LSP to oversee the activities of the single delivery vehicle to ensure they fit with the priorities identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA. Guidance on forming and working within a range of service delivery partnership models can be found in the Final Report of the ODPM's Strategic Partnership Taskforce and its knowledge programme.

The LAA structure and its relation to the LSP

82. LSPs are best placed to decide the partnership arrangements that are most appropriate to their local circumstances. Whatever arrangements are put into place, LSPs will wish to keep these under review and ensure sufficient flexibility to respond to changing needs over time.
83. Local Area Agreements put LSPs at the centre of negotiation, delivery and monitoring of the priority outcomes of a local area. Most LAAs are focused around four blocks: Safer and Stronger Communities; Children and Young People; Healthier Communities and Older People and Economic Development and Enterprise. Many areas have begun to cluster local partnerships around these four thematic areas to enable more focused discussion and decision-making in the LSP. This clustering of partnerships around blocks is a useful approach though we do not want to prescribe the structure of LSPs and local areas will wish to develop partnerships that best meet local needs.
84. Moreover, it is vital that partnership arrangements for LSPs reflect the full remit of their Sustainable Community Strategies. This means ensuring themes such as the environment, transport, culture, and adult learning are catered for effectively in the partnership arrangements. Cross-cutting themes such as sustainable development would need to be considered their core business. It would be expected that the Executive Board or equivalent and the local authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee, would be responsible for ensuring that all cross cutting issues are picked up. The following sections set out some of the key partnerships that have an important bearing on the development of LAAs:

Children and Young People

85. The primary partnership vehicle for this block would be children's trusts. Children's Trusts bring together all services for children and young people in an area, underpinned by duty to cooperate set out in the Children Act 2004. They focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people. They aim to integrate key children's services within a set of locally determined arrangements to achieve better outcomes for children and young people.
86. The local authority is responsible for the production of a Children's and Young People's Plan. We would expect this plan to both inform and take account of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Every Child Matters outcomes framework underpinning the Children and Young People's block of the LAA, and this in turn should be integrated

within the Every Child Matters improvement cycle. The CYPP determines the commissioning activities of the children's trust. The children's trust should be a commissioning body with its own governance and accountability arrangements through the Director of Children's Services and lead member. It is expected that the key representatives of the children's trusts would be core members of the LSP.

Safer and Stronger Communities

87. There may be several thematic partnerships within this block. The major partnership would be the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships with their focus on community safety issues. The other elements within this block such as fire and road safety, increased community volunteering, local environmental quality and ability to access services may be picked up within a broadly-defined CDRP or with separate thematic partnerships.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)

88. Crime and disorder reduction partnerships (also known as "community safety partnerships") were established in response to the duty to co-operate imposed on responsible authorities and specified bodies, under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The partnership provisions in that Act have recently been reviewed. The review examined the existing legislation relating to CDRPs to discern which aspects had been successful and aimed to make recommendations for legislative and other changes to enable agencies to work together more effectively to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in local communities. The Government intends to announce the proposals arising from the review shortly.
89. CDRPs will be one of the LSP thematic partnerships. It would be expected that the key representatives of the CDRP, such as the Chief Executive(s) and local senior police officer, would be core members of the LSP. The key outcomes relating to the CDRP should also be reflected in the Safer and Stronger Communities block of the LAA.
90. The Government is considering how the accountability arrangements for CDRPs (which have been looked at as part of the review referred to above) might sensibly be linked to those of LSPs. We hope to be able to say something more about that shortly.

Economic Development and Enterprise

91. Partnerships relating to economic development are not prescribed at a national level. Most LSPs have a thematic sub-group reflecting the priorities within their Community Strategy related to the local economy. The fourth block of LAAs will, over time, serve to emphasise the leadership role of localities in tackling local economic issues and improving prosperity. It will bring funds together and help to strengthen partnership working between local authorities, businesses and other partnerships.
92. The guidance on Regional Economic Strategies³² encourages Regional Development Agencies to involve local authorities and LSPs in determining the strategies and ensuring that their plans and priorities are shared. Most RDAs have established sub-regional investment partnerships to facilitate these links; this should be encouraged in all localities and be built into the role of the LSP. It is clear that issues relating to the economy can extend beyond the immediate locality and this reinforces the importance of making links to the regional and sub-regional levels.

32 <http://www.consumers.gov.uk/rda/info/res.htm>

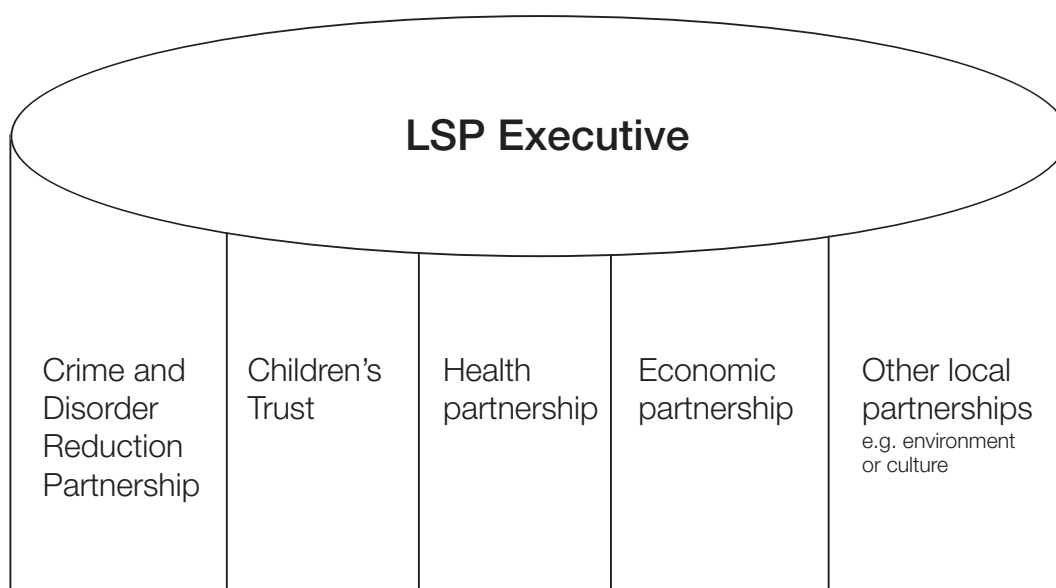
Healthier Communities and older people

93. Again, the partnerships relating to health and older people are not prescribed at a national level. The Department of Health has encouraged NHS bodies, particularly Primary Care Trusts, to use LSPs as the main partnership forum to conduct local health business and research has shown that almost all LSPs have NHS representation at some level. Frequently there is a health and well-being thematic partnership advising the LSP core and their plans and priorities are expected to inform the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA.

Environmental Partnerships

94. As with health and economic development, partnerships relating to the environment are not prescribed at a national level. Many areas, for example, have established environment thematic partnerships which feed into the LSP focusing on such issues as biodiversity, energy and waste. There is not a specific LAA environmental or cultural theme block, as such it is vital that both environmental well-being and culture, among others, are themes that cuts across all four blocks.

Figure 4: A basic LSP governance structure



Ensuring wide representation

95. The active representation of all different sectors on the LSP is key to effective governance. Most NRF LSPs have now established a wide-ranging membership base, although the business sector remains significantly under-represented. For non-NRF LSPs membership is gradually becoming more representative. Concerns have been expressed by non-NRF LSPs themselves about the representation of the business sector, the voluntary sector and the community sector.³³ Of course, active engagement as well as fair representation is important, these issues are dealt with in chapter 3.

³³ The business sector (by 57 per cent), the voluntary sector (by 20 per cent) and the community sector (by 40 per cent). National Evaluation of LSPs: Report on the 2004 survey of all English LSPs.

The voluntary and community sectors

96. LSPs are well placed to encourage wider **community involvement** in developing a vision for the area's future as well as **community action** which helps deliver a genuinely sustainable community. However, to make this a reality it is important that representatives from the voluntary and community sector are included on LSPs and relevant sub-groups, both in their roles as service deliverers and as representatives of the local community. Representatives need to reflect all the community including a diverse range of minority voluntary and community sector interests. Their representation on both the board and its sub-thematic partnerships will be critical to ensuring LSPs can tackle the increasingly important challenges of achieving community cohesion and tackling social exclusion.
97. Many LSPs support the involvement of the voluntary and community sector through the development of a local compact³⁴. These are formally agreed ways of working between the voluntary and community sector and the local statutory bodies which can help clarify acceptable ways of working, respective roles, etc. It is important, however, that Compacts are not seen as a substitute for establishing good working relationships over time. In NRF areas Community Empowerment Networks co-ordinate, on behalf of all partners, the involvement of the variety of different community groups in the LSP's activities.
98. The Government's revised Sustainable Development Strategy, Securing the Future³⁵, has also recognised the contribution which communities can make to the delivery of a more sustainable future for all. Therefore we have launched "Together we can secure the future" as part of the cross-government "Together we can" action plan³⁶ which brings together local people and Government and encourages local communities to get involved in Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and Parish Plans to help shape a more sustainable future for their area. Local Strategic Partnerships should fully embrace and build upon Local Agenda 21 initiatives or equivalent community activity on sustainable development. This will be needed to help shape Sustainable Community Strategies.

The private sector

99. The original Community Strategy and LSP guidance anticipated that the private sector would also be fully involved in the community planning process and the scrutiny of it. To date, the evidence suggests that this has been patchy. While most Community Strategies have sections about the local economy and employment, and two thirds of Community Strategies had moderate or significant input from Chambers of Commerce, only around half had involvement from individual private sector bodies. There are a number of reasons for this such as the perceived limited role and effectiveness of many LSPs, particularly those without additional funding. However, economic development should be recognised as a key part of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA and therefore it is critical that individual local business together with their umbrella organisations are represented on both the board and its sub-thematic partnerships. A number of recent initiatives provide greater local discretion over spending on economic development so there is an additional incentive for private and business sectors to become more involved. These include the Economic Development and Enterprise Block in LAAs and Business Improvement Districts.

34 See <http://www.thecompact.org.uk>

35 'Securing the future' UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005. See <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk>

36 See <http://communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/civil/together-we-can/>

100. Given that social, economic and environmental components together help create sustainable communities, it is important that all of these perspectives or disciplines are equally represented in the community planning process and the LSP. Unbalanced representation in the process will significantly hinder the development of an effective Sustainable Community Strategy.

A possible legislative foundation for LSPs

101. As all LSPs begin to move towards a greater delivery co-ordination role, as opposed to operating in a purely advisory capacity, it is important to consider whether to set them on a firmer footing by clarifying and formalising their role, and ensuring the involvement of key agencies. This could better enable them to fulfil this much more substantive role and could also provide the basis for holding the partnership to account (an issue discussed in more detail in chapter 3).
102. There are various policy areas in which partnership working has been encouraged and strengthened. Where the intention has been to establish a partnership on a firm legal footing the model adopted has typically been to impose a duty on the key public service agencies to co-operate with the local authority. Whilst a statutory duty to co-operate in the production of the Sustainable Community Strategy (and LAA) can only be placed on key statutory agencies, in practice the partnership would need to encompass a much wider group of partners and it may therefore be helpful to also require the local authority, as part of their initiation role to involve the voluntary, community and private sectors. It would also be possible to specify in more detail what the named partners would need to do to meet this duty, for example in terms of frequency of attendance or providing some form of financial or support in kind.
103. The main benefits of providing the LSP with some form of legislative foundation would be:
- a) to send a strong signal from national government that partnership working across the whole set of issues in an area is important;
 - b) to reinforce and clarify the LSP's role as the 'partnership of partnerships' particularly in relation to individual thematic partnerships with a statutory foundation;
 - c) to provide an opportunity to reiterate the centrality of the local authority's role to the LSP by giving them a clear initiation role;
 - d) to set out the minimum expectations being placed on partner members and thereby avoid confusion; and
 - e) in areas of poorer partnership working, to ensure that the key public sector agencies are engaged in the LSP.

104. We recognise that securing the attendance of member organisations does not on its own ensure their active engagement or the effective delivery of the LSP's objectives and that the introduction of LAAs provides an additional catalyst for partners to participate. However, this model has the advantage of providing the partnership with greater legitimacy without creating a whole new entity or 'statutory LSP'. Creating a statutory LSP would in effect create a new layer of local bureaucracy and therefore a rival bureaucracy to the democratically elected local authority. As such it is not a model we would wish to pursue. The duty to co-operate follows the model applied to thematic partnerships including CDRPs and children's Services, and the model applied in Scotland to Community Planning Partnerships, the equivalent of LSPs. Details are given below:

The children's trust model

The new duties in the **Children Act** 2004 require local authorities and their "relevant partners" to co-operate to improve children's well being. Local authorities have a duty to promote the participation of the relevant partners and other people or bodies that are engaged in activities related to children in the area.

County or unitary authorities must take a lead in making arrangements to promote co-operation between local agencies whose work impacts on children within the authority's area. As joint stakeholders, the relevant partners must co-operate with the authority in the making of those arrangements.

The specific relevant partners cited are: the district council (in two-tier areas), the police authority, the local probation board, the youth offending team, the Strategic Health Authority and Primary Care Trust and the Learning and Skills Council.

The Scottish Model

'Community Planning' is essentially the Scottish equivalent of preparing the Community Strategy. It was established by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The local authority is required to initiate, maintain and facilitate such a process in their area. They also have a responsibility to determine the means of consultation and co-operation.

Local authorities are required to invite and encourage all public bodies in their area, and appropriate community bodies, to participate in Community Planning jointly.

There is a requirement on a number of public sector bodies to participate with the local authority in the planning process and assist the local authority in its initiation, maintenance and facilitation role. These include Health Boards, joint police boards, Joint Fire Boards, Scottish Enterprise and the Transport Authority.

The impact of Community Planning Partnerships and the underpinning legislation is currently being evaluated by Audit Scotland.

Key Questions – Governance of LSPs

LSP as the partnership of partnerships

- 12: We believe that it is important that the LSP is made up of the thematic partnerships in the area together with an LSP board. What is your view?
- 13: We believe that a rationalisation of local partnerships would help the LSP executive take an effective overview. Would clustering partnerships around the four LAA blocks be a sensible way to achieve this?
- 14: We believe that the geographic boundaries of partners within LSPs is important. What do you see as the opportunities for, and barriers to, co-terminosity shared geographic boundaries?
- 15: Within the LSP framework and its established priorities, would the creation of single delivery vehicles to tackle particular issues be helpful?

Ensuring wide representation

- 16: How can the neighbourhood and parish, tiers be involved most effectively on the LSP on a) the executive and b) individual thematic partnerships?
- 17: How can the private, voluntary and community sectors be involved most effectively on the LSP as a) the executive and b) individual thematic partnerships?

Providing a legislative foundation

- 18: Would a duty to co-operate with the local authority, in producing and implementing the Community Strategy, help to set LSPs on a firmer footing and better enable their enhanced delivery co-ordination role?
- 19: If so, what obligations, such as attendance, financial or staff support, would be useful to place on partners?
- 20: If so, which public sector agencies would the duty be most sensibly placed on?
- 21: Should there be a statutory duty on local authorities and named partners to promote the engagement of the voluntary and community sectors in the LSP?

Chapter 3: Accountability

This chapter explores the following:

- The accountability of the local authority and between partners
- Accountability upwards to central government and between the partners themselves
- Accountability to citizens, including the role of elected politicians both local councillors and MPs and the role of scrutiny of partnerships

Accountability of the local authority and between partners

105. For LSPs to be effective and agree local priorities and actions that improve local services, all parties need to be clear what is expected of them and deliver relevant actions. As discussed earlier, clarifying the role of the LSP and ensuring strong positive leadership from the local authority is also crucial. However, clarity of role and effective leadership alone will not ensure clear and transparent lines of accountability. Clear accountability requires:
- Mutually understood and accepted ways of working
 - Internal performance management to check progress
 - External scrutiny
106. Earlier, we set out our expectations of LSPs. In summary these are that they provide the strategic co-ordination for the area, ensuring a Sustainable Community Strategy is produced, and the LAA is agreed and delivered.
107. Within the LSP, each partner is responsible for the actions that they agree to undertake, and as such are accountable for the delivery of those actions to the LSP, to their parent organisation and to the local community. It is essential that this accountability between partners is clarified and understood. Formal agreements or protocols between partners can be an effective way of ensuring clarity about who is responsible for the different elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LAA delivery.
108. The LSP is accountable to different audiences:
- a) To local people through the democratic process through the local authority and, more directly, in listening to and informing local communities. The Overview and Scrutiny role of backbench ward councillors has a clear role here.
 - b) Central government in relation to outcomes agreed in the LAA.
 - c) To the local authority executive, as ultimate responsibility for the LSPs actions rests here.

109. Local authorities are democratically elected. As such they have the mandate to improve social, economic and environmental outcomes across the local area. LSPs are therefore ultimately accountable to the local authority. LSPs are voluntary unincorporated partnerships which do not discharge any statutory functions. Although we are considering creating a duty on some public sector bodies to participate with local authorities in regard to Community Strategies, to ensure the LSPs have the ability to lead work across different services, we have no plans to make LSPs statutory bodies. Local authorities with their democratic mandate and community leadership role are ultimately the body responsible for the LSP, Sustainable Community Strategy and the delivery of the LAAs (including NRF) as a whole.
110. Establishing clear lines of accountability within and from the LSP will enable a clear focus on delivery of agreed outcomes and thereby support good performance. It will also enable targeted action to be taken in any areas of under-performance. Clarity of accountability between partners will enable the partnership to address such issues collectively in advance of any external action from government. Clear accountability and greater transparency will also enable local people and service users to play a key role in holding the LSP to account.
111. As set out previously, LSPs in NRF areas have been required to have a Performance Management Framework in place since October 2003. They were able to use any system or framework they chose as long as it met 3 core requirements:
- A review of outcomes
 - A review of partnership working, and
 - An improvement plan
112. Performance management has enabled partners within NRF LSPs to be more accountable to one another by allocating delivery of outcomes to partners and monitoring progress and performance. This has driven forward delivery of LNRS targets. Performance management will be crucial to all LSPs as they deliver their LAA. Many NRF LSPs are building upon the performance management arrangements they already have in place to monitor the whole of the LAA.
113. Prior to the introduction of LAAs, less than half of those LSPs not in receipt of NRF had a performance management system. With the introduction of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) all LSPs must now be able to manage their performance effectively. The LAA guidance³⁷ sets out the key elements of performance management.
114. The LAA performance management framework is based around effective performance management by the LSP and an ongoing relationship between the partnership and the Government Office (GO). The LSP will report formally to the GO on performance against the outcomes and indicators in the LAA every six months. At those points in the year there will also be a dialogue between the LSP and the GO about progress in implementing the LAA, how the LSP intends to tackle any problems and support which the GO can offer. Following these dialogues GOs will, in turn, report on progress to central Government Departments.

³⁷ This guidance can be found on the ODPM website www.odpm.gov.uk

Accountability upwards to central government and between partners themselves

115. To effectively co-ordinate service delivery in an area partners within an LSP need to be able to hold each other to account for the commitments they make, especially those actions committed to as part of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA.

“...the aim is for partners to determine performance management systems to suit local needs and conditions that will underpin delivery These will require partners to share accountability more clearly, which will reinforce the interest in challenging each other's performance³⁸”

116. However, we recognise that pressures that exist between local agencies and their parent departments/organisations often do not provide incentives for partnership working. Instead many local partnerships are driven by specific national priorities and find it difficult to devote sufficient attention to the delivery of LSP objectives. This contributes to the impression that LSPs sometimes operate more as talking shops with lip service paid to partnership working.
117. This is not the case in all areas and many excellent partnerships operate well in spite of the tensions between the priorities and targets from within individual organisations and those of the LSP. However, the research into Community Strategies³⁹ indicates that for the majority, achieving buy-in and accountability between partners is an issue. Gaining commitment from local partners was cited as the most significant barrier to developing a successful strategy. A key issue was a lack of information on partners' performance and the absence of mechanisms through which pressure could be exerted (especially via the LSP). Partnership working was viewed as an addition to the 'day job' rather than core business.
118. It may be helpful to clarify this further through partnership agreements or protocols between partners. Partnership agreements, can define the role of the partnership, its Terms of Reference, and the expected and agreed contribution from all partners. This might include seniority of those attending, financial and staff contributions to the operation of the partnership. However, partnership agreements should not be seen as a substitute for the effort needed to build trust.
119. To enable accountability between partners to be strengthened requires a lessening of the purely organisation-based accountability between an agency and its central department. It is integral to our vision for the long-term future of LSPs, and local governance more generally, that the space for individual local agencies to act innovatively and collaboratively is increased through a reduction in the level of organisation-based/national targets. This method of working is being facilitated by the area-based approach to performance management introduced by the LAA and a similar approach in specific areas, for example, children's trusts are moving to an area based approach to performance management. This is underpinned by cross-agency working with a duty to improve children's well-being.

38 The Local:vision document – Securing better outcomes: developing a new performance framework, ODPM/HMT 2005.

39 Process Evaluation of Plan Rationalisation – Formative Evaluation of Community Strategies, Dec. 2004.

120. The longer-term aim of the LAA performance management framework is to reduce the burden of reporting on local areas – thus enabling a focus on the agreed priorities set out in the LAA. It, in turn, also aims to increase the horizontal accountability between partners. This reflects, and is supported by, the underlying aims of the proposed new performance framework as set out in *“Securing better outcomes: developing a new performance framework”*.
121. At present, only the local authority is assessed on the quality of its partnership working through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and the Primary Care Trust through the Healthcare Commission. It may be more effective in securing commitment and the necessary space for collaborative working from the other public sector agencies if partnership working was included as part of other key agencies’ assessments. This and other related issues are explored as part of the Government’s Reducing Inspections consultation.

Accountability to citizens

Involvement of elected members

122. Elected members of local authorities have a unique role in carrying responsibility for the overall balance of governance in an area and being directly accountable to citizens. As such, their support to the LSP and Community Strategy process is crucial to achieving success.
123. Currently, there is a high level of local authority representation on LSPs (99 per cent of LSPs have councillors represented). However, the function they are performing is not always the most appropriate one and existing council mechanisms like the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are not being used to greatest effect. Research into the current progress made by LSPs on Community Strategies⁴⁰ suggests that the precise role of elected members of the local authority, both the executive and backbenchers, is currently not understood.

⁴⁰ Plan Rationalisation and Community Strategies survey, ODPM December 2004.

Different roles currently adopted by elected officials within LSPs

Source: "National Evaluation of LSPs, Interim project report and interim case study report, ODPM, 2004."

"Beyond representation on the LSP Board, councillors are present on a range of LSP structures. For example:

In East Durham, the Leader of Easington District Council chairs the LSP, the Deputy Leader chairs the Children and Families Group and other cabinet members and a few non-executive members are involved in some of the implementation groups. In contrast, in Herefordshire, the chief executive chairs the Board, with cabinet members chairing a number of the "Ambition Groups".

The majority of the case studies demonstrate a clear predominance of cabinet members in member representation on the LSPs. This was the case in East Durham and Herefordshire. Similarly, in Southwark the council is represented by the Leader and a further cabinet member. In Tameside cabinet members dominate member involvement in the LSP. It appears in some cases (Tameside, Herefordshire) that cabinet involvement is aligned with cabinet portfolios, in theory providing a powerful link between executive decision-making in key areas on the council and the operations of the LSP.

One potentially negative consequence of such cabinet dominance is the marginalisation of non-executive members which is a feature of member representation in all areas studied in detail."

124. The current Community Strategy guidance⁴¹ outlines that local authority member executives will wish to draw on the expertise and skills of all members of the council and explicitly states that this should involve councillors:

- In their role as community or ward representatives
- As members of overview and scrutiny committees
- As members of area and neighbourhood forums and committees.
- Formally adopting the Community Strategy as part of the full council
- Monitoring the achievements of the LA and other partners within the LSP against delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy action plan.

Role of Overview and Scrutiny

125. The current Community Strategy guidance also explains in depth the wide role that overview and scrutiny committees have: "*Overview and scrutiny committees have an invaluable role to play in working with the executive (in councils operating executive arrangements) and the council to identify community needs and initiatives. This role could involve scrutinising the stated plans and priorities of the council(s) and other provider agencies, commenting on the results of local consultation, and initiating audits of resources to meet expressed needs. They may also wish to play a role in evaluating the strategy as it develops, for example against sustainable development criteria.*" This role has the potential to extend therefore to scrutinising the four blocks of the LAA because they set out the outcomes for delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy. Councillors, however, have limited powers to require partners other than the local authority and health to attend and recognise their recommendations. It may be useful to extend this to other sectors. There is also potential for the neighbourhood/parish sector to have wider involvement in overview and scrutiny where their local knowledge, could be of benefit.

⁴¹ Preparing Community Strategies, ODPM 2000
http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_locgov_605670.hcsp

Involvement of Members of Parliament

126. Unlike councillors, Members of Parliament are not well represented on LSPs – only 6 per cent of LSPs regard their MP as being a core member and a further 16 per cent have their MP represented as part of the partnership. As LSPs have become the key strategic partnership in an area, it is important that they involve MPs. MPs have substantial democratic legitimacy in the local area and the ability to bring a wide range of partners to the table to produce genuinely collaborative working. There is no set way to do this and current practice varies between the MP chairing the LSP to receiving papers and attending an annual event. Each area will need to consider the most appropriate mechanism for them.

Accountability to, and engagement of, the communities served

127. For LSPs to be effective the local community, voluntary and private sectors must be engaged and their needs, priorities and views taken into account. To meet this criterion, LSPs need to be actively involving back bench and executive councillors, resident and community representatives in their decision-making. The increased importance of LSPs also means they have a responsibility to inform users and local communities how the LSP works, where responsibility and accountability lie, and how complaints can be made. One of the 3 overarching objectives of community strategies is to promote social wellbeing – through facilitating community cohesion, reducing social exclusion and narrowing inequalities. This requires LSPs to be accountable to the wider community as well as partner bodies.
128. It is crucial that local residents are involved in a coherent way which makes most efficient use of partner resources and residents' time. Under both the Local Area Agreement and Local Development Framework processes the local authority is required to set out how the local community is involved in determining priorities and actions. The Community Strategy guidance also requires the local authority to consult local stakeholders when producing the Community Strategy. We believe it is critical that these different processes for involving the local community are complementary. For some time now it has been good local authority practice to work up with the community a policy for community engagement across all sectors of their work. Some local authorities are aligning the production of their LDF Statement of Community Involvement with a review or creation of such a policy. This could provide an opportunity for local authorities to create a joint Statement of Community Involvement for the Sustainable Community Strategy, LAA and Local Development Framework.
129. There is a wide range of different activities that can be deemed “consultation” or “involvement”, from annual questionnaires, to events aimed at reaching specific groups, through to specific local area partnerships such as those created in Tower Hamlets (see below).

In **Tower Hamlets** local partners are commissioning the VCS to support the delivery of safer and stronger outcomes. Measures include:

1. Targeting crime prevention capacity gaps by providing training to voluntary and community groups
2. Involving local people in decisions over the use of grants (the Safer Neighbourhoods Community Chest)
3. Increasing the involvement of victims and community volunteers in responding to crime
4. Establishing a partnership target to strengthen local engagement through outreach events.

130. The 2004 survey of all Community Strategies shows that the community was involved to a moderate or great extent in 88% of strategies. Community Strategies have, in the past, not always been well publicised. This is often the result of limited resources. This lack of visibility may reduce the credibility and impact of the Community Strategy amongst LSP partners and the general public. As Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs continue to grow in importance LSPs should consider how to better promote the Sustainable Community Strategy in their area. By contrast, the level of publicity already operating for Local Development Frameworks is generally a lot higher. There could be some useful opportunities for joint use of resources for community engagement, especially on Local Development Framework Core Strategies.

Key Questions:

Accountability between partners

22: Should each partnership be encouraged to produce protocols or 'partnership agreements' between partners to ensure clear lines of accountability for the delivery of agreed outcomes?

23: We believe that if partnership working was included as part of other key agencies' assessments it would be effective in securing greater commitment from other public sector agencies. What are your views?

Involvement of local councillors

24: What do you see as the key role for executive councillors within LSPs?

25: What do you see as the appropriate role for backbenchers particularly in ensuring a high quality of local engagement?

26: What would make councillors' powers of overview and scrutiny more effective in scrutinising the 4 blocks of the LAA?

Involvement of Members of Parliament

27: What would be the most appropriate way for a Member of Parliament to be involved with the LSP and how can we ensure that it is complementary to the role of local councillors?

Involvement of Communities Served

28: How can we promote effective community engagement and involvement, from all sections of the community in shaping local priorities and public services?

29: How can we maximise the opportunities for joint policy and joint activity on community engagement, including the LDF, the LAA and the Sustainable Community Strategy?

30: How can accountability to local people and businesses be enhanced?

Chapter 4: Capacity Issues

This chapter explores the following issues:

- The skills needed by LSPs
- Financial resources available to LSPs
- Existing training and other support

The skills needed by LSPs

131. Due to the shift in role towards co-ordinating delivery for all LSPs, their capacity is becoming increasingly important. The recent LAA pilots indicated that LAAs provided a new focus for LSPs but that some LSPs followed the LAA process, rather than led it. It is vital that all LSPs develop the capacity to succeed against the expectations placed on them.
132. When LSPs were first set up it was important that local areas focused on developing robust partnership arrangements with clear governance and structures. Now, as LSPs are becoming more focused on delivery of outcomes, the skills needed to develop and maintain effective LSPs have developed. LSPs now also need skills in performance management, planning, data collection, analysis and use of evidence and evaluation⁴². Influencing and collaboration skills are also vital in ensuring strong, effective leadership by the LSP. It is also recognised that with the increasing emphasis on engaging communities, LSPs need to develop the skills to ensure that this happens. There is a need for many LSPs to develop new approaches to involve the private sector and community sectors. LSP members and staff might also benefit from a development of specialist skills related to equality impact assessments and mainstreaming equalities.
133. The 2004 survey of all English LSPs also highlighted a number of consistent gaps across most, but not all, Community Strategies. They tended to make little sustained reference to the available local evidence thereby prohibiting the accurate identification of areas/groups of multiple-need. Setting meaningful targets, milestones and trajectory planning was also difficult for some LSPs. These skills are vital for the development of effective Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs.
134. Sir John Egan's review of skills for sustainable communities identified LSPs as being key stakeholders who would require learning opportunities to improve skills in joining-up social, economic and environmental disciplines. The Academy for Sustainable Communities, Defra and ODPM are now exploring the learning opportunities which would best support LSPs in their work to help create genuinely sustainable communities.⁴³ Initial research has found that significant gaps exist in LSP skills and learning, particularly in their capacity to integrate social, economic and environmental issues to address the area's wider or more long-term environmental impacts. This skills gap must be filled if LSPs are to be able to deliver genuinely sustainable communities.⁴⁴

⁴² National Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships Report of 2004 Survey of all English LSPs, March 2005.

⁴³ Further information on this work will be posted on the Academy's website and will form part of the package of support measures on offer to LSPs during 2006 to help them deliver sustainable communities which embody the principles of sustainable development locally.

⁴⁴ Research undertaken for ODPM, Defra and ASC found that the topics most commonly engaged in by LSPs were community safety (66%), healthy lifestyles (62%), social inclusion (55%) and community engagement in decision making (55%). The topics that LSPs were least engaged with were sustainable consumption (10%); reducing pollution (17%); fuel poverty (21%); sustainable economy (21%); sustainable procurement (21%); sustainable design and construction (24%); climate change (28%); energy efficiency and renewable energy (28%).

It also reflects work going on across the public sector to improve skills and knowledge about delivering genuinely sustainable communities; for example the National School for Government's work to include sustainable communities in its training portfolio for civil servants.

135. Experience of the NRF LSPs and the broader evaluation of all LSPs have identified the following key building blocks for successful LSPs:

- **Leadership** – Clarity of vision, commitment of all partners to agreed priorities / targets and embedding these within partners' own business plans.
- **Delivery manager** – A senior manager and small team is needed to enable and drive implementation of the local strategy. This involves planning, co-ordinating action with priority places and groups, project management, overcoming obstacles and tracking progress.
- **Delivery system** – a system with sufficient analytical capacity is needed to collate and analyse data, appraise options and provide evidence-based management information to drive and monitor performance.
- **Communication** – across the partnership, with all sectors and with the public is vital so there is awareness of goals, actions and achievement.

Resources available to LSPs

136. There is a wide variation in the level of resources made available for developing the Sustainable Community Strategy. Over half of local authorities (57%) had a specific budget for developing the Community Strategy⁴⁵ but the remaining had no budget for the development of the Community Strategy. There is a similarly wide range of staff levels. 69% of LSPs have only 1 or 2 people involved in development of the Community Strategy. In comparison NRF LSPs have, on average, 5 support staff and generally indicate that they have sufficient staff.
137. We expect LSPs to be supported by partners within existing budgets as partnership working should be a more efficient way of delivering outcomes. Currently, local authorities provide the vast majority of LSP support and resources (the average annual budget for LSPs is £78,000⁴⁶ (excluding those in areas in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding)). However, partners are beginning to recognise the importance of ensuring an effective LSP and to contribute financially to achieving this. For example, following a self-assessment and peer review, the LSP in Thurrock, "Shaping Thurrock", decided that a Partnership Director should be appointed. Thurrock Council, the Urban Development Corporation, Thurrock PCT and Essex Police jointly fund this post.
138. 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. For major actions this may require a cost/benefit analysis or impact assessment to be carried out.

45 National Survey of all LSPs in England, ODPM, 2004.

46 National Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships Report of 2004 Survey of all English LSPs, March 2005.

139. Some LSPs have also made creative use of other sources of funding to support the partnership and implement their Community Strategies, for example the reward grant from Local Public Service Agreements, extra funding from the reduced discount on council tax from second homes and charges from discretionary services have all been used in this way.

Existing support and training

140. There is a wide range of support and training available for partners of LSPs. Some is directly focused on LSPs. Other training develops capacity in areas that have a strong impact on the effectiveness of an LSP, such as leadership, negotiation and partnership-building skills. However, this training to date has been provided by a number of different sources, in a variety of different ways, based on several different criteria. It is crucial that the support provided is made much more available to all LSPs, not just those in areas receiving neighbourhood renewal funding and that it is provided in a coherent way ideally with one access route.
141. A summary of the support available to LSPs and key partners is set out in annex C. This includes training to develop capacity in areas that have a strong impact on the effectiveness of an LSP, such as leadership, negotiation and partnership building skills.
142. As part of the wider local government capacity building programme, there are a number of National Programmes with scope for the support to LSPs to be aligned and integrated. This is an area that can be explored further to seek to address the need to develop capacity and address skills gaps.
143. Following the Spending Review in 2004, £57 million of the capacity building fund was allocated over the next 3 financial years to Improvement Partnerships. Improvement Partnerships have been established in the North East, North West and most recently the West Midlands, with others likely to follow shortly. Improvement Partnerships are proving to be an effective mechanism through which authorities can share experiences and good practice. These partnerships bring councils, fire authorities, and related agencies together at a regional level facilitating improved internal capacity by providing opportunities to innovate, tackle shared problems, share best practice, provide support and pool resources. In addition, the government's framework for community capacity building *Firm Foundations*, also identified the importance of investing in community development and appropriate learning opportunities to ensure that communities have the capacity to respond to the increased opportunities for neighbourhood engagement and for influencing policies and services. LSPs need to consider how these learning and support needs can best be met across their area.
144. In addition, in some regions, LSPs have set up forums to discuss issues affecting those regions and to share good practice. Government Offices have also set up and facilitate networks of LSPs for similar purposes.
145. A further potential source of support for LSPs is from within the partners, translating the experience, such as data analysis, performance management or community engagement existing within their organisations to support the development of the LSP.

Key Questions

31: What are your LSP's key support/skill gaps?

32: What extra or different support would be most helpful in shifting to a more delivery focused role?

33: How would LSPs prefer to receive information and support; through guidance, toolkits, sign-posting to existing information, practical learning opportunities etc?

34: How can LSPs ensure that adequate learning and support provision is available to build the capacity of communities to engage with the LSP and its partners at the various levels?

35: What learning or development do you feel is required by LSPs in order to delivery sustainable communities that embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level?

Annex A: Definitions and components of sustainable communities

One-line definition

Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future.

Definition

Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

Components: headlines

Sustainable communities are:

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well run
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built
- Well connected
- Thriving
- Well served
- Fair for everyone

Components: in full

Sustainable communities embody the principles of sustainable development.

They:

- *balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental components of their community*
- *meet the needs of existing and future generations*
- *respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally also to make their communities sustainable.*

Sustainable communities are diverse, reflecting their local circumstances. There is no standard template to fit them all. But they should be:

(1) ACTIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SAFE – *Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities*

Sustainable communities offer:

- a sense of community identity and belonging
- tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, background and beliefs
- friendly, co-operative and helpful behaviour in neighbourhoods
- opportunities for cultural, leisure, community, sport and other activities, including for children and young people
- low levels of crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour with visible, effective and community-friendly policing
- social inclusion and good life chances for all

(2) WELL-RUN – *with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership*

Sustainable communities enjoy:

- representative, accountable governance systems which both facilitate strategic, visionary leadership and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations
- effective engagement with the community at neighbourhood level, including capacity building to develop the community's skills, knowledge and confidence
- strong, informed and effective partnerships that lead by example (e.g. government, business, community)
- a strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector
- a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride

(3) ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE – *providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment*

Sustainable communities:

- actively seek to minimise climate change, including through energy efficiency and the use of renewables
- protect the environment, by minimising pollution on land, in water and in the air

- minimise waste and dispose of it in accordance with current good practice
- make efficient use of natural resources, encouraging sustainable production and consumption
- protect and improve bio-diversity (e.g. wildlife habitats)
- enable a lifestyle that minimises negative environmental impact and enhances positive impacts (e.g. by creating opportunities for walking and cycling, and reducing noise pollution and dependence on cars)
- create cleaner, safer and greener neighbourhoods (e.g. by reducing litter and graffiti, and maintaining pleasant public spaces)

(4) WELL DESIGNED AND BUILT – *featuring a quality built and natural environment*

Sustainable communities offer:

- a sense of place (e.g. a place with a positive ‘feeling’ for people and local distinctiveness)
- user-friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone including children and older people
- sufficient range, diversity, affordability and accessibility of housing within a balanced housing market
- appropriate size, scale, density, design and layout, including mixed-use development, that complement the distinctive local character of the community
- high-quality, mixed-use, durable, flexible and adaptable buildings, using materials which minimise negative environmental impacts
- buildings and public spaces which promote health and are designed to reduce crime and make people feel safe
- accessibility of jobs, key services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling

(5) WELL CONNECTED – *with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services*

Sustainable communities offer:

- transport facilities, including public transport, that help people travel within and between communities and reduce dependence on cars
- facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling
- an appropriate level of local parking facilities in line with local plans to manage road traffic demand
- widely available and effective telecommunications and Internet access
- good access to regional, national and international communications networks

(6) THRIVING – *with a flourishing and diverse local economy*

Sustainable communities feature:

- a wide range of jobs and training opportunities
- sufficient suitable land and buildings to support economic prosperity and change
- dynamic job and business creation, with benefits for the local community
- a strong business community with links into the wider economy
- economically viable and attractive town centres

(7) WELL SERVED – *with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all*

Sustainable communities have:

- well-performing local schools, further and higher education institutions, and other opportunities for life-long learning
- high-quality local health care and social services, integrated where possible with other services
- high-quality services for families and children (including early years child care)
- a good range of affordable public, community, voluntary and private services (e.g. retail, fresh food, commercial, utilities, information and advice) which are accessible to the whole community
- service providers who think and act long term and beyond their own immediate geographical and interest boundaries, and who involve users and local residents in shaping their policy and practice

(8) FAIR FOR EVERYONE – *including those in other communities, now and in the future*

Sustainable communities:

- recognise individuals' rights and responsibilities
- respect the rights and aspirations of others (both neighbouring communities, and across the wider world) also to be sustainable
- have due regard for the needs of future generations in current decisions and actions

Annex B: Partnerships in a local area

Partnerships in a local area							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Children's trusts	The Government's long-term vision is to integrate key children's services within a set of locally determined arrangements called children's trusts.	Membership can be drawn from providers of children's services – Social Services, Health, Education, Youth Justice Board, Police, Parents, VCS.	Non statutory Children's Trusts are established in response to the new duties in section 10 of the Children Act 2004 which after 2004 requires local authorities and their 'relevant partners' to co-operate to improve children's wellbeing. Local authorities must take a lead in making arrangements to promote co-operation between local agencies whose work impacts on children within the authority's area. As joint stakeholders, the relevant partners must co-operate with the authority in the making of those arrangements.	DfES	Formed through the pooling of budgets and resources across the local authority, Connexions, certain health services and where agreed locally, Youth Offending Teams.	Children's trusts usually operate at top-tier level, although they may delegate to district level partnership boards in 2-tier areas.	Most areas should have a children's trust by 2006 and all areas by 2008.
Area Child protection Committees To be replaced by Local Safeguarding Children's Boards under the Children Act	Helping to protect children from abuse and neglect to agree how services should work together to safeguard children in that area.	Education, Health, Social Services, LAs.	Non statutory Under the Children Act, local authorities will be required to establish a statutory LSCB.	DfES	Locally flexible – each ACPC should be supported in its work by its main constituent agencies.	Counties/Districts	To be replaced by Local Safeguarding Children's Boards under the Children's Act.

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs)	The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.	Statutory members: Chief Officer of Police, Local Probation Board, Youth Offending Team, Strategic Health Authorities/ Primary Care Trust, NHS Trusts, Connexions Services, CAFGASS, any Secure Training Centre and any Prison that detains children in the area concerned. Local authorities should also secure the involvement of any other organisations as necessary.	Statutory under the Children Act 2004.	DfES	LSCBs need to be supported by their member organisations with adequate and reliable resources.	Top-tier	All existing Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs) must be replaced by LSCBs by 1 April 2006.

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Children's Fund Partnership	Supports children & young people between 5 and 13 who are showing early signs of difficulty by providing them and their families with services. The Children's Fund is designed to support the local authority's preventative strategy.	LAs, Parents, Education, Social Services, VCS.	Non statutory Local authority is often the accountable body or lead partner. Migrating towards the children's trust.	DfES	CYPFD formula funding – released subject to agreed proposals that meet broad objectives & achievement/attainment. Locally flexible (in consultation with local community groups and children and young people).	Top-tier	

Partnerships in a local area (continued)						
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers
<p>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Strategy Group or Partnership (May be known by other titles e.g. Local CAMHS Strategic Planning Group)</p>	<p>To draw up a multi-agency CAMHS strategy and monitor progress. Partnerships are essential local mechanisms to oversee commissioning, funding and the development of a comprehensive CAMHS by 2006 (DoH PSA target) and to implement the National Service Framework for Children and Young People and Maternity Services.</p> <p>To ensure links between the CAMHS strategy and other strategic planning e.g DATs, Early Years, adult mental health Local Implementation Teams. Will feed into Children and Young People's Plan and link to children's trust developments.</p>	<p>The LA – including both social care and education, PCT & The NHS Trust which provides CAMHS services (not all NHS Trusts do). There are local variations – some partnerships can include user representatives, voluntary organisations, the local Youth Offending service.</p>	<p>Non statutory Becoming Part of Children's Trust.</p>	<p>Department of Health lead with DfES interest</p>	<p>£67m in 2004-05 of which £60.5m is allocated directly to councils using the children's Formula Spending Share (FSS). CAMHS grant £90-539m for 2005/6 of which £84.739m is allocated directly to councils using the children's Formula Spending Share. Additional NHS funding for CAMHS is available through Primary Care Trusts.</p>	<p>Counties, Unitaries, London and Metropolitan Boroughs.</p>
						<p>CAMHS Region development workers have worked with local partnerships to review member and functions and improve effectiveness. Some partnerships now operate within children's trusts.</p>

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships	To reduce crime and disorder and combat drug misuse in local areas. The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 placed a duty on local agencies to work together as partners. Each partnership produces an audit and strategy for its local area. (The Crime & Disorder Act is currently under review).	LAs, Police, Fire & Rescue Authorities and PCTs who are required to act in co-operation with local probation boards and other specified bodies.	CDR partnerships are established in response to the statutory requirement placed on LAs, Chiefs of police and police authorities to jointly formulate and implement strategies for their area, in order to reduce crime and disorder, and combat drugs misuse.	Home Office	Main funding through Building Safer Communities Fund (part of Safer and Stronger Communities Fund). Funds are allocated depending on Crime and Population. 376 partnerships received £74m for 04/05.	In England, each district or London Borough, the City of London, the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly; in Wales, each county or county borough, is required to have one.	More recently there's been a move toward merging funding streams, to reduce the administrative burden and the complication for partnerships.
Youth Offending Teams	To prevent offending by children and young people.	LAs, Police, Health, Education, Fire, Social Services, Probation Officers are the key statutory players – housing Connexions, fire, etc. are also involved.	Statutory Local authorities have a duty to establish one or more youth offending teams for their area.	Home Office (Youth Justice Board)	Funded by five key players and LAs (Police, Probation Office, Health, Education & Social Services). Approx 21.8% of funds provided by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, a non-departmental public body.	155 YOT in England and Wales. In some instances this covers Counties, Districts and Unitary areas.	YOTs are prepared to work as part of children's trusts arrangements where it meets local needs.

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Drugs Action Teams (DATs)	Local multi-agency coordinating groups set up under the UK Government's strategy for England, 'Tackling Drugs Together'. (i) coordinates and commissions local services to tackle drugs. (ii) develops local plans (iii) monitors and reports on performance (iv) communicates with stakeholders (v) enhances community awareness.	LA, Health (PCT), DAT, Probation, Police, Social Services, Education, Community Groups.	Non-statutory (will be subsumed with CDRP)	Home Office	Running costs funded by Home Office support grant – programmes receive funding from Home Office and DoH. For 2004/05 HO allocated just over £389m for this partnership.	Not co-terminus with County or Districts. Inner City boroughs have their own DAT. Area based.	DATs should become engaged in children's trusts.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs)	Help plan early years and childcare for children aged 0 to 4 years to meet the aims of the National Childcare Strategy.	Local authorities schools, employers, parents, child-care providers, Learning and Skills Councils, national bodies and health and information service.	Non statutory EYDCPs no longer have executive powers but they have been kept going in some areas as consultative bodies.	DfES	Locally flexible – no dedicated funding provided by DfES.	Counties/ Districts	Some LAs have amalgamated them with other, more strategic partnerships such as a CYPSP. They will also decide for themselves what the required level of participation is.

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Sure Start local Partnership (SSLP)	Integrate and improve early education, childcare, health and family support services for 0-4 year olds and their families within a strictly-defined catchment area.	SSLP Partnership Board members can be drawn from local authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Jobcentre Plus, local community groups, parents, grandparents, public agencies and voluntary and private sector organisations.	Non-statutory	DfES	Direct from DfES. As an Area-Based Initiative, revenue funding for SSLPs is currently paid separately from the main Sure Start Grant which goes to local authorities. The partnership has the say on how their money is spent.	Varies locally	From April 2006, revenue funding for all SSLPs will be paid to local authorities as part of their General Sure Start Grant. Although SSLP revenue will be ring fenced, local authorities will have more control over how resources are allocated. Almost all SSLPs will become children's centres in due course (by 2008) and children's centres will be administered by local authorities.

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	
Connexions Partnership	Provide integrated advice, guidance and personal support to 13-19 year old young people including brokerage and advocacy to other help agencies. The principle PSA target is to reduce number of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training. Provide integrated advice guidance and personal support.	Partnership boards are composed of directors from the main statutory, public, private, voluntary and community agencies involved in youth support including local authorities, and led by independent chair.	Non-statutory Not been prescriptive on membership, but require collaborative working which best meets local need.	DfES	Funding direct to partnership via Connexions Grant – £445m in 05/06. An additional £19m of the Connexions Grant has been paid to LAAs in areas where it has been agreed to pool Connexions funding.	47 partnerships organised sub-regionally.	Partnerships have been working with local authorities in the context of Local Area Agreements (LAAs). In 2005-06 a small number have agreed to pool their connexions grant funding into LAAs. More have aligned their business plan alongside the LAAs without actual pooling funds. This process is expected to accelerate as phase 2 of LAAs comes on stream from April 2006 and as children's trusts begin to form.

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Local Learning Partnership	Set up to promote a new culture of provider collaboration across sectors and to rationalise the plethora of existing local partnership arrangements covering post – 16 learning.	LA, Connexions, trade unions, employers and faith groups.	Non-Statutory	Learning Skill Council (LSC)	Funding channelled through the LSC and forms part of the LSC Intervention and Development Fund.	District & Unitary	Learning Partnerships are also involved in follow-up Area Inspections, 14-19 proposals and a range of initiatives around Basic Skills, workforce development. Contributing increasingly to local strategies for regeneration.
Regional Skills Partnership	Agree skills priorities and plan for region.	RDA, the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus, the Small Business Services and the Skills for Business Network with other regional partners.	Non-Statutory	ODPM/DTI, LSC and JobCentre Plus	Funded by the partners themselves.	Regional	

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Special Educational Needs (SEN) Regional Partnerships	A key means of achieving the aims of the SEN Strategy. In particular, they are an important medium for sharing the most effective practice in SEN and helping to tackle difficult issues.	LAs in the region also multi-agency partners, health, social services, voluntary organisations.	Non-statutory Local authorities in the region expected to be a partner. Role is broadening to link into Every Child Matters covering vulnerable children.	DfES	DfES fund the lead LA in each region for recurrent costs including facilitator post(s) and administrative support in each partnership. The National Steering Group approves annual plans, the local authorities and other partners own them.	Counties/ Districts	Their role has evolved since 1999 and is continuing to evolve. Most recently the SENEPs have been extended from April 06 – March 08 with a broadened role linked to ECM and closer based to GOs.

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
<p>Education Improvement Partnerships (formerly known as foundation partnership)</p>	<p>Education improvement partnerships provide a framework for schools and other partners to work together to raise education standards and to take on wider responsibilities for the children and young people within their local community.</p>	<p>Primary, Secondary and Special Schools, Pupil Referral Units, Local Authorities, Further Education Colleges, Work-based Training Providers, Voluntary Sector and Private Providers. These parties are to be involved as appropriate, dependant on the purpose and agreed function being delivered in partnership.</p>	<p>Non-Statutory</p>	<p>DfES</p>	<p>Local Authority</p>	<p>District/Unitary</p>	

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Local Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Boards (TPPB)	Boards created to tackle both causes and consequences of teenage parenthood. Boards aim to reach challenging target of reducing under 18 conceptions by 50% by 2010. Thus essential wide-ranging membership galvanises all support available locally to provide coherence/strategic direction.	Membership consists of key partners locally including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teenage Pregnancy coordinator; • Representatives from local authority (including social services, education, local housing authorities and/or support people). • Local Primary Care Trusts. • Other key partners such as Sure Start/Children's Centres, Connexions and Voluntary sector. 	Non-statutory	DfES	DfES direct ring fenced Teenage Pregnancy Local Implementation Grant (£29.5 million in 06/07 to 07/08).	Top-tier	Authorities with freedom from the grant terms and conditions (3 star social services, excellent in the CPA or with pooled funding in LAAs) are not required to have a Board. In practice many continue to do so, or have similar strategic level Board reporting up to the Children's Trust Board or Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

Partnerships in a local area (continued)							
Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Health Improvement Partnership (still exists in some areas)	Developed by partners and agencies with an interest in, and a responsibility for improving health and providing services in the area.	Local Authorities, Doctors.	Non-Statutory	PCT	Funds received in various ways – voluntary sector, partnership findings. Funding receives varies from area to area.	Districts/Countries	
Health and Social Care Development Group	Advice on strategy, policy and health and social care development.	Local Authority, PCT.	Non-statutory	DoH	DoH	Counties/ Districts	

Partnerships in a local area (continued)

Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/ future developments
Supporting People (SP) Partnership	Supporting People is a national programme under which grant is paid to local authorities towards expenditure incurred in connection with the provision of welfare services.	A working partnership of local government, probation, health, voluntary sector organisations, housing associations, supporting agencies and service users.	SP is a national programme. It was established under statutory direction under s93(9) of Local Government Act 2000.	ODPM. DWP/DoH also have an interest	Grant is paid by ODPM under s93 – which allows grant to be paid towards expenditure incurred by local authorities in connection with the provision of welfare services. Services that are eligible are housing-related support services.	Counties/ Unitary and metropolitan authorities.	
Regeneration Partnership	Many were set up as a result of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB).	Local Authority, businesses.	Non-statutory	ODPM	Funded mainly through the SRB but some Partnerships receive funding from elsewhere.	Districts	With the ending of SRB in March 2006 some Regeneration Partnerships will change format.
Community Legal Services Partnership (CLSP)	Set up as part of community legal services. To discuss community legal services issues to meet local priority needs. 200 CLSPs were set up by April 2004. This target was 99.9% met.	Membership varies around the country but have members from LA, legal service providers (e.g. solicitors) and Citizen Advice Bureau.	Non-Statutory	DCA	Sponsored by the Department of Constitutional Affairs.	Counties/ Districts	Currently drafting a strategy document on legal services which look at CLPs which will be published later this year.

Partnerships in a local area (continued)

Partnerships	Role & purpose	Members	Legal status	Lead Department	Funding	Tiers	Recent/future developments
Safety Camera Partnership	The programme board advises ministers on the overall policy, strategy, direction and performance of the speed camera programme.	Membership must comprise the local authorities, police, Magistrates' Court and, where appropriate, the Highway Agency. Some may include other stakeholders such as health authorities.	Non-Statutory	DfT	Costs can be reclaimed from DfT.	Counties/ Districts	
Quality Bus Partnership	Section 114 of the Transport Act 2000 gives local transport authorities a power to enter into a statutory quality partnership scheme.	Local Transport Authority, bus companies.	Discretionary power	DfT	No specific funding. Some projects are funded by the Local Transport Plan or local authorities.	County level and metropolitan and unitary.	
Local Agenda 21	Came out of the Rio Summit in 1997 to agree and implement local sustainable development action plans for the future in partnership with the local communities.	Local Authorities, PCT and police.	Non-Statutory	Defra	Local Authority	Districts	LA 21s have been incorporated into community strategy in most local authority areas.

Annex C: Existing and forthcoming support for LSPs and key LSP partners

The Capacity Building Programme

The ODPM and Local Government Association established the Capacity Building programme in April 2003, as part of a three year initiative to support improvement in local government. Following the Spending Review 2004, additional funding was secured, extending the programme to 2008.

The programme aims to enhance and develop local authorities' confidence, leadership and skills, to advance improvement as well as developing the capacity to learn, innovate, and share knowledge and expertise about what works and how.

Capacity Building Programme Support is provided through:

National Programmes: these are high-quality targeted programmes to address local authorities' shared capacity building needs.

Direct Support: Direct financial and tailored development support for authorities rated 'Poor' and 'Weak' under CPA.

Improvement Partnerships: Following SR04, £57 million of the capacity building fund was allocated over the next 3 financial years to Improvement Partnerships.

Improvement Partnerships have been established in the North East, North West and most recently the West Midlands, with others likely to follow shortly.

These partnerships bring councils, fire authorities, and related agencies together at a regional level facilitating improved internal capacity by providing opportunities to innovate, tackle shared problems, share best practice, provide support and pool resources.

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit support

The NRU delivers a range of activities to support and improve NRF LSP performance, including:

- Renewal.net – the on-line guide to what works in neighbourhood renewal
www.renewal.net
- The LSP Delivery Toolkit – which gives advice on developing, delivering and reviewing strategies and includes the Floor Target Action Plan toolkit
www.renewal.net/lsp
- Delivery Skills Training sessions – including training on ways of adopting a strategic commissioning approach to funding
- Neighbourhood Renewal Advisors (NRAs) with expertise in a number of fields including performance management.

In 2004 26 NRF LSPs received additional NRF to develop and implement plans to tackle the floor targets they were most at risk of missing. To help them, the NRU produced a floor target action planning toolkit which provided guidance on the preparation of evidence-based action plans to meet specific floor targets. It set out the five steps to prepare a **Floor Target Action Plan** although **this methodology could be used when producing the Sustainable Community Strategy too:**

- **Current performance** – Establish or review BASELINE, performance and trends on floor target
- **Analysis of performance and of local conditions** – Identify characteristics of area and nature of the problem – EVIDENCE
- **Forecasting whether targets will be met** – plot trends and impact of actions to identify any GAP
- **Option appraisal** – based on insights from steps 1 – 3 reassess what works in the local context and consider new/modified actions
- **Revised Floor Target Action Plan** – State plans and reassess targets – is there still a gap?

Super Output Area (SOA) data has helped practitioners drill down below ward level and the Indices of Deprivation (2004) was based on SOAs. There are also other tools available and being developed that help LSPs focus on the neighbourhood-level including:

- **Neighbourhood Statistics** – the on-line service developed by the Office for National Statistics that enables users to download a vast range of social and economic datasets and analyse this data on a consistent small area geography. The Neighbourhood Statistics Service can be found on the national statistics website at <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>
- **Area Profiles and Quality of Life Indicators** – The Audit Commission has piloted Area Profiles for two years in dozens of local areas. This project has now enabled a detailed picture of quality of life and local services against ten themes for each local authority area to be drawn up. Area Profiles provides data and information against those themes that will be of particular help to LSPs. The project highlights 45 local Quality of Life Indicators, which measure a wide range of issues covered by each of the ten themes. All the indicators draw on national data sources and are available on the Area Profiles section of the Audit Commission's website⁴⁷.
- **The Data Provision for Neighbourhood Renewal project** – An existing report which signposts data sources for local renewal practice⁴⁸. This toolkit was updated in November and provides information on what data is available, by floor target theme, at lower spatial levels. This has been published on the NRU, renewal.net and NeSS websites. It identifies data that is publicly available and also indicates data not publicly available but held by local service providers.

47 See <http://www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk/>

48 <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=128>

- **Local systems** – Many LSPs have developed systems to analyse data within their district at the neighbourhood level, see for example Bristol’s approach below:

Bristol’s “State of the Neighbourhoods” Management Information System

The system has been developed by Bristol City Council to do the following:

1. Evaluate the impact of regeneration in Bristol
2. Review and target spend
3. Provide consistent data about specific regeneration areas
4. Compare the gap between neighbourhood renewal areas and the rest of the city
5. Provide neighbourhood-level information
6. Address gaps from other sources of data

It comprises a neighbourhood level database of over 30 key indicators and is supported by data supplied by mainstream service providers and information from Bristol’s annual quality of life survey. The system is available on-line at: www.bristolforward.net/evaluation

To improve LSP performance for those areas which receive NRF, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has introduced a package of support, for weak LSPs, which includes:

- Appointment of a Neighbourhood Renewal Assignment Manager to prepare detailed diagnosis of the issues, identify priorities and make recommendations for action, including support needs.
- Agreement of tailored support package. A short agreement sets out: (a) what support Neighbourhood Renewal Unit/Government Office will provide; and (b) what the LSP will deliver within an agreed time-scale.
- Frequent monitoring of progress. In some cases, the ODPM Relationship Manager will discuss progress at Government Monitoring Boards. Performance will be reported to NRU Board and ODPM’s Director of Local Government Practice.

Support available to devise a Local Area Agreement

To help the improvement of Local Area Agreements as they roll out nationally, the ODPM is working in partnership with the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and Local Government Association (LGA) to provide a package of support. This is available to all local authorities and LSPs primarily through www.idea.gov.uk and incorporates:

- Formal Local Area Agreement (LAA) Guidance which provide the policy framework
- LAA Toolkit which offers written policy interpretations, good practice case studies, practical signposts and sources of information to aid all stages of the LAA process and content

- individual tailored on-site LAA support to meet specific needs delivered by primarily delivered by IDeA
- region-based networking and practice exchange between LAAs and facilitated by Government Offices
- collective briefings and problem-solving amongst LAA networks and the Government Offices facilitated LGA Reference Groups and LAA Sounding Boards

Other sources of training support to LSPs

- **The Peer Challenge:** This was set up to provide constructive and mutual support to help LSPs to look at how they are performing at their strengths and areas for improvements. This model had been developed through a partnership between Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) Enterprise, Warwick University Business Schools Local Government Centre and the IDeA. The Peer Challenge is conducted by a team of people who take the role of ‘critical friends’ and focus on the specific circumstances of the LSP being assessed. Further information is available from www.idea.gov.uk and www.solaceenterprises.com
- **Local Government Leadership Centre:** The Local Government Leadership Centre has a key role evaluating and advising councils about their leadership capacity. They will make recommendations on how councils can improve their leadership. Following an initial assessment, they will agree an ongoing development programme, including a range of development options such as coaching, mentoring, consultancy and development centres.
- **Leadership Academy:** The academy is run by the IDeA. The programme is designed to specifically for councillors. The course aims to develop participants’ leadership style, give them confidence and create a support network among peers in other local authorities and parties. Further information is available from www.idea.gov.uk
- **Academy for Sustainable Communities:** This is funded by ODPM to take forward the Egan Review's recommendation for a new national skills centre to support those working towards sustainable communities. Its purpose is to inspire and enable people across different fields to work together in a coherent, farsighted approach to creating renewing our communities. ASC will work with local government initiatives like the Local Government Leadership Centre and the Planning Advisory Service to deliver on shared priorities. Further information is available www.ascskills.org.uk
- **The cross-government Cleaner Safer Greener Communities programme:** This aims to encourage the sharing of lessons and good practice through a combination of guides and learning events, including:
 - Three “How To” guides on managing town centres, improving residential areas, and creating quality parks and open spaces
 - a linked programme of learning events that will provide further advice and good practice that will be incorporated into updates of these guides
 - The Cleaner Safer Greener Communities web portal providing access to a wide range of information and guidance www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk;
- **The Sustainable Development Commission:** The SDC's website offers a wealth of information to help LSPs get to grips with sustainable development at a local level. www.sd-commission.gov.uk