

**CABINET : 1 MARCH 2006**

**LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS (LSP'S) :  
SHAPING THEIR FUTURE – A CONSULTATION PAPER**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The consultation paper examines the future role of LSP's, their governance and accountability and their capacity to deliver sustainable community strategies and Local Area Agreements (LAA's) in an increasingly complex and challenging environment. It poses a series of questions under each of these headings designed to help understand how LSP's are operating at present and where changes could be made nationally, regionally and locally to help them develop most effectively in order to meet greater expectations being placed upon them.
- 1.2 The Government's vision for the role of the LSP is that it takes the strategic lead in the locality by bringing together the views of local partners, including representatives of the private, voluntary and community sectors with national, regional and parish priorities in developing the Sustainable Community Strategy. It promotes the idea that the LSP is the partnership of partnerships in an area rather than it being seen as separate to other partnerships.
- 1.3 The consultation paper has been put together following national research undertaken on the way LSPs and community strategies are progressing.
- 1.4 This is an opportunity for everyone involved in the Changing Lives Partnership to not only consider a response but also to input into the further development of the Partnership.
- 1.5 The Government see this consultation as part of the local vision debate on the future of local government. It has been identified as one of the most important consultations of the year.
- 1.6 The consultation ends on 3 March 2006.

**2. THE CONSULTATION'S CORE OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The paper contains a lot of positive messages about the potential role of LSP's and the place the community strategy has in forging improvement within an area both through short term changes and more radical longer term adjustments.

- 2.2 The core objectives of the consultation are as follows:
- Commitment amongst central government departments, regional organizations and local partners to the LSP system of partnerships and the Sustainable Community Strategy as the overarching local plan;
  - An evolved role for the local authority including local authority members in facilitating action through the LSP and Sustainable Community Strategy;
  - LSP's able to effectively identify and deliver against the priorities for joint action in their area through the Sustainable Community Strategy, LAA and Local Development Framework (LDF) in a clearly accountable way;
  - LSP's better able to support community engagement and to help ensure the views of communities and parish councils can influence strategic local service delivery and spending; and
  - Effective, transparent and accountable governance and scrutiny arrangements for LSP's to enable partners to hold each other to account and local people to hold the partnership to account.

### **3. SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES AND CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is the Executive Summary of the consultation paper.
- 3.2 Details relating to two main issues (District LSP Framework and stages for establishing a Sustainable Community Strategy) are set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The consultation paper is structured into the four chapters and the main points of relevance to this District are set out in Appendix 3.

### **4. DEVELOPING A RESPONSE**

- 4.1 Input is sought from a wide range of partners in order to provide a response from both the Local Strategic partnership and the New Forest District Council.
- 4.2 Comments are welcomed to help develop responses to the specific questions raised in the consultation paper.
- 4.3 Responses will be considered by the Changing Lives Partnership's Core Group on 2 March and by NFDC's Cabinet on 1 March.
- 4.4 Contributions should be forwarded to

Keith Smith, Head of Performance & Strategic Development  
New Forest District Council , Appletree Court, Lyndhurst,  
Hampshire SO43 7PA  
E mail: Keith Smith at NFDC tel 023 8028 5551  
By Wednesday 22 February 2006

## **5. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS**

5.1 To follow.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 A draft response will follow.

### **Further information:**

Keith Smith,  
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### **Background Documents:**

Published



Office of the  
Deputy Prime Minister  

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Creating sustainable communities

# *Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future*

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A consultation paper

## 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.

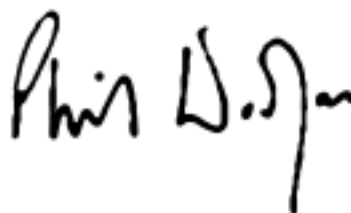
Partnerships only work well where they are developed locally to reflect the local situation. We understand that 'no- one- size- fits- all' and do not want to prescribe how an LSP should work. However, it is critical that LSPs are able to fulfil the new expectations being placed on them and move to genuinely 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

# 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."<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> "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’.<sup>2</sup> 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 Egan<sup>3</sup> 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*<sup>4</sup>, 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 [odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_localgov/documents/page/odpm\\_locgov\\_034875.pdf](http://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.

### **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. Baselineing current performance.**

- The strategy should outline a long-term vision for the area, using the definition and components of sustainable communities<sup>17</sup>. 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.

<sup>17</sup> These components have been agreed with the Government and the Local Government Association.

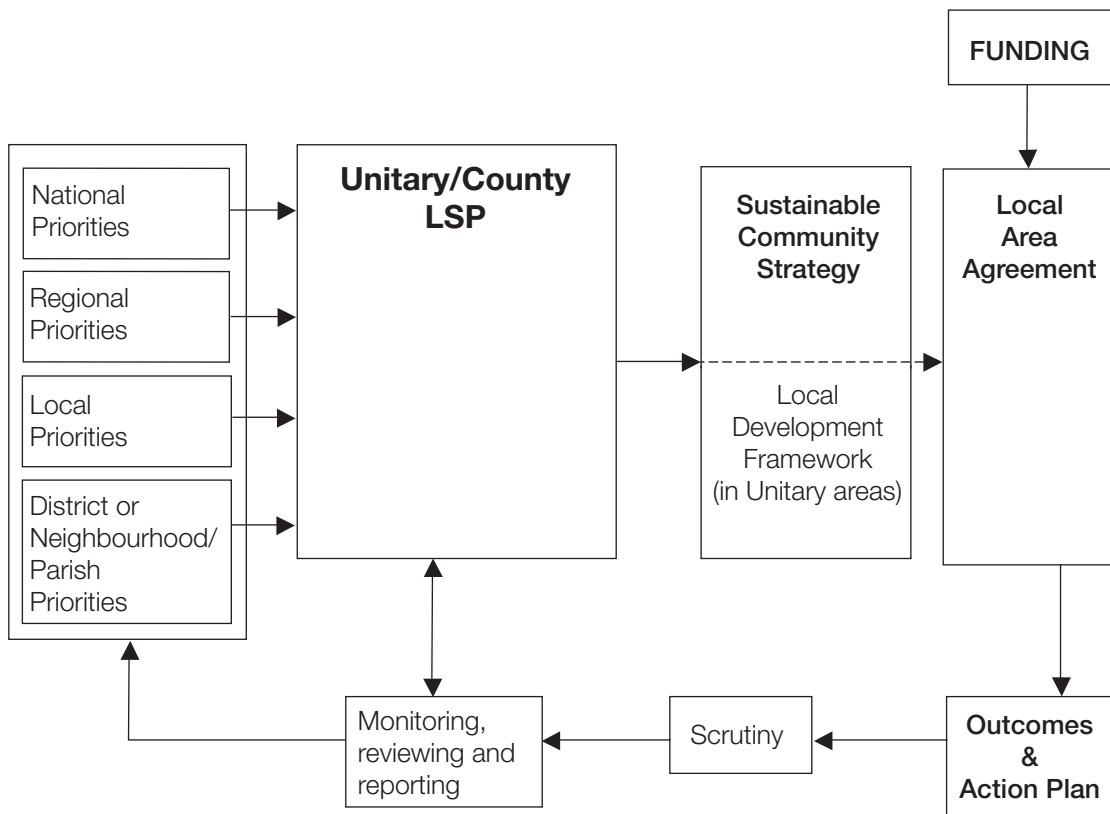
**Caradon District Council**

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 guidance<sup>23</sup> 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 [odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_localgov/documents/page/odpm\\_locgov\\_038736.pdf](http://odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_locgov_038736.pdf)

Figure 2: District LSP Framework

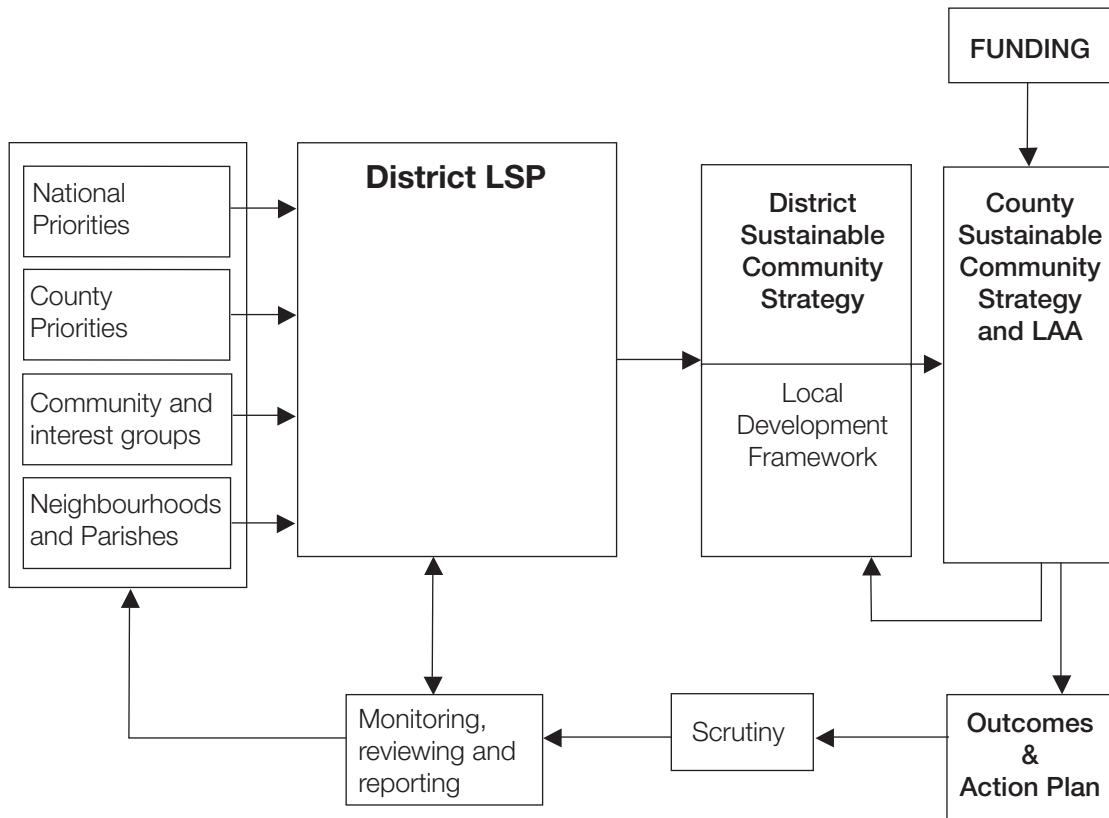


Figure 3: The relationship between Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Area Agreements and local action planning



• **The Role of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's) and Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS)**

Main Proposals	New Forest District Perspective	Key Questions	Draft ideas for inclusion in response
<p><b>The strategic leadership role</b>                      LSP sets out the Vision for the area, co-ordinates and drives the delivery of local services leading to improved outcomes for citizens that go beyond the remit of one partner. It creates opportunities for joint provision of services, is able to attract external funding and increase its influence over the policies and structures of partner agencies.                      The LSP should have an oversight role ensuring the lines of responsibility between partners and partnerships are clearly defined and avoid duplication. The local authority is accountable for the actions of the LSP.</p>	<p>Vision set for 2025. Actions for community Strategy geared for partnership delivery with economic, social and environmental benefits against the priorities of the Community Strategy. Examples of joint provision but not key focus. Potential for more focus on attracting external resources. Main influence over policies through normal consultation results. Little influence over partner agency structures. CAN structures help avoid duplication but lines of responsibility not specifically recorded. Accountability not always clear in partnership work. Worth checking partners views on this.</p>	<p><b>1 LSP's, Sustainable Community Strategies and LAA's.</b> 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?</p>	<p>At the basic level the proposal has merit and sets out the framework for establishing the role of LSP's with regards to SCS and LAA . With potential to enhance county / district links.</p> <p>Need to be clear on executive role – if the aim is to move more towards a coordinating delivery role this will need the LAA to have a tighter mechanism for appropriate district LSP oversight/ownership. Para 15 refers – ie. “Relevant LAA outcomes should also be reflected in the District LSP's actions plans”</p>

<p><b>The current role and expectations of LSP's</b></p> <p>Described mainly as voluntary non executive partnerships. A small number have established themselves as a company limited by guarantee or Local Public Service Boards.</p> <p>Research shows that two main roles adopted – either advisory or commissioning. Good progress in establishing Vision for the area and community strategies but less progress in establishing genuinely collaborative ways of working.</p>	<p>LSP is a mixture of advisory and commissioning.</p> <p>Collaborative working taking place particularly at CAN level. No specific consideration of alternative forms eg Public Service Boards. LSP's Improvement Plan geared to achieving more collaborative working.</p>		
<p><b>Moving to a commissioning or delivery co-ordination role (see appendix 2)</b></p> <p>Change of emphasis required to move towards a delivery co-ordination role in particularly through the development and delivery of LAA's. Need for clarity about role of LSPs. Identified as:</p> <p>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 establish at the regional and sub regional and local level</p> <p>2 To ensure a Sustainable Community Strategy is produced that sets the Vision and priorities for the area agreed by all the parties, including citizens and businesses and founded on a solid evidence base</p> <p>3 To develop and drive the effective</p>	<p>Partly achieved through Community Strategy Action Planning process – partnership is one of the criteria. Development of LAAs has included assessment of Community Strategies at District level.</p> <p>1 This is how the LSP has been developed. GOSE represented at meetings of Core Group. Some CANs provide links to regional and sub regional levels. All CANs link to local levels.</p> <p>2 Good start but need to strengthen engagement with citizens and businesses and more</p>		

<p>delivery of their LAA 4 To agree an action plan for achieving the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities, including the LAA outcomes</p>	<p>emphasis needed on establishing evidence. Working alongside LDF is a great opportunity. 3 Link with LAA needs strengthening. Currently at awareness stage rather than driving delivery. 4 Good record of action planning and delivery. Need to consider building in LAA outcomes.</p>		
<p><b>The move to Sustainable Community Strategies (see appendix 3).</b> These would set out the vision and priorities for the area with the LAA defining the detailed outcomes, which will be part of the Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plan. Number of stages proposed: 1 Baseline current performance 2 Needs to be evidence based – analysis of performance and local conditions 3 Local Area Agreement 4 Revised Action Plan 5 Sustainable Community Strategy/LAA Action Plan Strategy agreed by all parties including citizens and businesses so needs to be backed up by community engagement and linking local activities with the Community Strategy. The Community Strategy Action Plan and its outcomes would then feed into future</p>	<p>Sustainable Community Strategy is something the LSP has been working to. Need to understand level of influence district level CS have with LAA's .If the new approach is to work that level needs to be enhanced.</p>	<p><b>4 Sustainable Community Strategies.</b> Are the proposed steps in the development of a Sustainable Community Strategy correct? (see box on page 18)</p>	<p>Might all this result in CS being written to attract the most resources rather than meeting local needs? What happens if some of the detailed outcomes of the LAA don't tie in with the CS for a district?</p> <p>Is there prescription around the agreement process? Little chance of agreement by all citizens and businesses for example on economic V's environmental issues. Is there an argument for aligning CS review timetables across a county to help join up LAA's and CS?</p>



<p>its outcomes would then feed into future revisions of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA. Suggest local plans are developed with reference to the Sustainable Community Strategy (eg PCT Local Delivery Plan, Local Transport Plan, Housing Strategies, Community Safety/Drug Action Plans) The local authority is the accountable body for the SCS.</p>		<p><b>5 Sustainable Community Strategies.</b> What more could be done to ensure Sustainable Community Strategies are better able to make the link between social, economic and environmental goals and to deal more effectively with the area's cross boundary and longer term impacts?</p>	<p>Fully utilizing the definitions and components of sustainable communities in making the links as part of the development of the themed areas – cross referencing</p>
<p><b>The links between regional, sub regional and local activities</b> Currently little evidence that links are being made between community strategies and regional and sub regional strategies. Need to develop greater planning and delivering policy beyond local authority boundaries eg travel to work areas, retail catchments, housing market areas and strategic transport links. Greater opportunities for linking with Regional Spatial, Economic and Housing Strategies as well as Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks and through LAAs.</p>	<p>Some links exist through for example the work of the Housing, Transport and Children's and Young Peoples CANs. Potential for strengthening the approach in all relevant CANs. LAA has started to strengthen this process in Hampshire. Working with HCC attempts to do this. Perhaps more focused work with Southampton and South West Region authorities might be</p>	<p><b>2 Regional/sub-regional engagement.</b> We believe it is important that LSP's reflect regional/sub regional plans where relevant in their Sustainable Community Strategy priorities and that regional organizations and partnerships take account of key local needs. How can this greater co-ordination best be facilitated?</p>	<p>Para 50 refers – potential for 'agreements' between reg./sub-reg. plans and SCS</p>

	<p>authorities might be needed?</p>	<p><b>3 Links to Local Plans.</b>  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?</p>	<p>This would be a key activity to ensuring joined-up working that prevents duplication and provides opportunities for partners to offer resources across thematic areas.</p> <p>This follows on from the suggestion of partners sharing performance data, resource levels and action plans.</p>
<p><b>The impact of the Local Area Agreements (see appendix 3).</b>  The LAA sets out the detailed outcomes, indicators and targets which relate to the strategy ensuring that the targets agreed as part of the LAA flow directly from the analysis and priorities agreed as part of the Vision and Strategy.  The LAA would be scrutinized by local authorities and LSP’s and then monitored, reviewed and reported on.  The local authority is the accountable body for the LAA.</p>	<p>Draft LAA initially developed following assessment of all district Community strategies. No particular evidence of ongoing links between developing LAAs and community strategies.</p>		

<p><b>Local Development Frameworks</b></p> <p>The LDF sets out the spatial aspects of the SCS and provides a long term spatial vision. LDFs go beyond the 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. Need to establish the nature of the relationship between LDF and the SCS and how links might be achieved in practice. Planners need to see land use planning in much broader terms and LSPs need to see land use planning as much more important to the delivery of local priorities. Paper encourages the use of the skills and experience of planners in helping to create the right evidence base for the SCS.</p>	<p>Strong focus of activity for 2006/07. Close working between Community Strategy review and Local Development Core Strategy. LSP keen to join up the processes wherever possible. Greatest opportunity is through joint consultation and involvement. Communities of interest might best be engaged with through the Cans. Geographical communities potentially through grouping of parishes. Opportunity for greater evidence base through planners input already recognized. Joint training event held in November 2005.</p>	<p><b>8 Links with the Local Development Framework.</b></p> <p>How can spatial planning teams best contribute to Sustainable Community Strategies through the LSP and ensure that LDF's and Sustainable Community Strategies are closely linked?</p>	
		<p><b>9 Links with the Local Development Framework.</b></p> <p>How could revised guidance and accompanying support material best ensure that Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks join up effectively?</p>	

<p><b>The roles of LSP's in two-tier areas</b></p> <p>Need greater clarity about roles within a two tier local authority area to achieve either the:</p> <p>Aggregation model – where district level Community Strategies are aggregated to form an overarching strategy at the County level</p> <p>Added value model – County Community Strategies focus on areas where it can add value to district strategies, creating more strategic focus, avoiding duplication and with an emphasis on sub regional issues. Either of these models would move some arrangements away from the separatist model which is where a County strategy has been developed with few linkages and in isolation to district strategies.</p>	<p>Hampshire based more on added value model.</p> <p>Potential for stronger links between work of the Hampshire Community Strategy and district level community strategies.</p>	<p><b>7 Neighbourhood Engagement.</b> In two tier areas, is it most appropriate for the responsibility for neighbourhood engagement to rest with the district level LSP?</p>	<p>In the main, yes - there would however be opportunities for partnership work with county and cross-district areas.</p> <p>Key factors in this would be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 access to resources/funding to support local engagement as part of the LAA delivery outcomes</li> </ol> <p>And/or</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Alignment of funding streams/delivery plans</li> </ol>
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		<p><b>10 Two tier areas.</b> Should every local authority area have its own LSP?</p>	<p>Every LA should have its own LSP. This underpins the concept of the SCS being locally driven and owned. Without local knowledge, commitment and relationships the aim of a SCS would be flawed.</p> <p>From both a strategic and local engagement perspective the symbolism of a LSP at a LA level is vital to SCS buy-in.</p>
		<p><b>11 Two tier areas.</b> Would the establishment of a greater delineation of roles between county and district LSPs as suggested be sensible? (see paras 65 to 69)</p>	<p>Is this a question of balance rather than delineation?</p> <p>The balance may be seen as part of a wider remit to make the best use of limited resources to achieve a SCS</p>

▪ **Governance**

<p><b>Governance of the LSP: in particular, the relationship between the LSP and other thematic partnerships and the role of the executive board</b></p> <p>If regarded as partnership of partnerships and moving from advisory to commissioning there is a greater need for effective governance arrangements – potentially a formal partnership agreement to cover role, responsibilities and accountability between partners.</p> <p>Local authority role to initiate and maintain momentum in the LSP. Members of the LSP need to be able to hold the LSP Executive to account.</p> <p>Paper encourages executive board and thematic partnerships as structure. Also to consider potential for Local Public Service Boards or service delivery partnerships within the LSP structure.</p> <p>Also encourages thought to be given to gearing the LSP structures to the LAA structure</p>	<p>Overall aim, terms of reference established from the start but conscious decision not to have too rigid an approach to this in early years of the partnership. District Council has been main driver of the LSP – an approach supported by the partnership. Issues relating to LSP internal accountability recognized as part of developing the Performance Management System which is included in the LSPs Improvement Plan. Fits well with LSP structure. No specific consideration of Local Public Service Boards or Service Delivery partnerships as part of the structure.</p> <p>Reasonably good alignment between LAA and LSP CAN structures. Consider as part of the Community Strategy review.</p>	<p><b>12 LSP as the partnership of partnerships.</b> 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?</p>	<p>Governance arrangements - yes there should be a formal partnership arrangement to ensure transparency, accountability and delivery on thematic areas – this to include thematic partner leads and other key stakeholders</p>
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		<p><b>13 LSP as the partnership of partnerships.</b> We believe that a rationalization 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?</p>	<p>The LAA blocks could be seen as the primary theme areas with additional themed areas based on local need/circumstances. The rolling review programme should take into account the structure needed to deliver an effective SCS.</p> <p>The principle of thematic partnerships is essential to the delivery of an effective SCS through LAA outcomes. However, at district LSP level the thematic partnerships would need to support neighbourhood engagement/needs.</p> <p>The emphasis on raising the profile of the LSP/SCS means there is a need to have a model that neighbourhoods/local communities can engage with and understand.</p> <p>The New Forest model of CAN's is showing the potential to do this – whereby, for example, Parish Plans can be 'bridged' to the relevant CAN/S.</p>
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		<p><b>15 LSP as the partnership of partnerships.</b> Within the LSP framework and its established priorities, would the creation of single delivery vehicles to tackle particular issues be helpful?</p>	<p>It is possible that a similar 'bridging toolkit' could be incorporated for 2 tier activity to the LAA outcomes – this could help flexibility at a district level to have themed partnerships as needed to meet local circumstances</p> <p>Need to be mindful of the fit/gaps between county wide LAA themed areas and local district needs</p>
<p><b>Geographical boundaries of partners</b> Consideration is being given to the issue of better alignment of partner geographical boundaries.</p>	<p>LSP started with strong alignment of boundaries. Since then County, PCT and police structures have all changed which at the least have not strengthened partnership work.</p>	<p><b>14 LSP as the partnership of partnerships.</b> We believe that the geographical boundaries of partners within LSP's are important. What do you see as the opportunities for and barriers to, co-terminosity shared geographical boundaries?</p>	<p>a) opportunities –</p> <p>b) barriers -</p>
<p><b>Ways of ensuring wide representation</b> Important to ensure proper representation of the voluntary, community and the private sector.</p>	<p>Chair of LSP is Chief Officer of Community First New Forest. His involvement at Core Group, CAN and community level provides excellent links between the LSP and the voluntary sector. Communities of interest</p>	<p><b>16 Ensuring wide representation.</b> How can the neighbourhood and parish tiers be involved most effectively on the LSP on a) the executive and b) individual thematic partnerships?</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>



	<p>Communities of interest reasonably included as part of CAN work and consultation but local geographical communities not specifically involved. Main private sector input is via the Economy CAN ( NF Business Partnership). Need to challenge robustness of this process and consider additional ways of achieving private sector input. The LSP needs to consider how the private sector “value” and perceive the LSP.</p>	<p><b>17 Ensuring wide representation.</b> How can the private, voluntary and community sectors be involved most effectively on the LSP as a) the executive and b) individual thematic partnerships?</p>	<p>a) Executive - VCS representation/involvement via local infrastructure organisations</p> <p>b) thematic partnerships – relevant VCS providers/stakeholders invited to be partners</p> <p>Private Sector – Chambers of Commerce / local Business Partnership / Economic Dev. Partnership – need comment from the private sector on this</p>
<p><b>A possible legislative foundation</b> The paper discusses the possibility of placing a duty on statutory agencies to co-operate in the SCS and the LAA (as in CDRPs and Children’s Plan). For non statutory agencies the emphasis is more on local agreements about expectations of being a member of the LSP.</p>	<p>No current arrangements in place other than the statutory examples quoted. LSP considering developing protocols and partnership Performance Management System as part of its Improvement Plan.</p>	<p><b>18 Providing a legislative foundation.</b> Would a duty to co-operate with the local authority, in producing and implementing the Community Strategy, help to set LSP’s on a firmer footing and better enable their enhanced delivery co-ordination role?</p>	<p>In principle, yes Sets a standard and expectations</p>
		<p><b>19 Providing a legislative foundation.</b> If so, what obligations, such as attendance, financial or staff support, would be useful to place on partners?</p>	

		<b>20 Providing a legislative foundation.</b> If so, which public sector agencies would the duty most sensibly be placed on?	
		<b>21 Providing a legislative foundation.</b> 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?	To support consistency in approach - yes

• **Accountability**

<p><b>The accountability of the local authority and between partners</b>  Clear accountability requires mutually understood and accepted ways of working, internal performance management to check progress and external scrutiny. Each partner is responsible for the action they agree to take and are accountable to the LSP, to their parent organization and to the local community.  The LSP is accountable to  a) local people through the democratic process through the local authority and more directly, in listening to and informing local</p>	<p>Not a key feature of current working although some aspects covered (see below). Identified as part of future Performance Management System.   a) Not convinced New Forest people will make the link. Too early in the LSP development. Conscious decision taken for low key approach to publicizing/ marketing the LSP in its early years. No real public awareness as yet. Corporate Overview Panel taken an interest. Sub Group</p>	<p><b>22 Accountability between partners.</b> Should each partner be encouraged to produce protocols or “partnership agreements” between partners to ensure clear lines of accountability for the delivery of agreed outcomes?</p>	<p>Yes – would help to clarify a lot of areas that are currently ambiguous   Would also possibly prevent mission drift and maintain a sense of stability</p>
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<p>communities. The Overview and Scrutiny role has a clear role here.</p> <p>b) Central Government in relation to outcomes agreed in the LAA</p> <p>c) the local authority executive, as ultimately responsible for the LSPs actions rest there.</p> <p>The Government has no plans to make LSPs statutory bodies. Performance management is crucial in LSPs if they are to deliver on new agenda. New arrangements for LAAs include formal reporting by LSPs against progress on LAAs every 6 months. Basic performance management arrangements should cover review of outcomes, review of partnership working and an improvement plan.</p>	<p>formed which meets with H o P &amp; S D every 3 months. Other review panels involved in LSP work through partnership work relating to the portfolios they scrutinize.</p> <p>c) Cabinet approve the Community Strategy Action Plan ad rely on NFDC representatives on Core Group and review panels to monitor progress. District LSP reporting mechanisms to County/Government for LAA purposes not yet agreed. Improvement Plan in place includes development of Performance Management System.</p>		
<p><b>Accountability upwards to central government and between the partners themselves</b></p> <p>Gaining commitment from local partners is cited as the most significant barrier to developing a successful strategy. Partnership working was seen as an addition to the day job and not core business. Proposals to reduce the level of organization-based/national targets. Initiatives like the LAA and Childrens Plan encourages more horizontal accountability between partners.</p>	<p>Some good examples of commitment in LSP working but gaining real commitment across the whole of LSP working provides the greatest opportunity for growth. LSP recognize that many people’s “day job” is partnership work. Continuous improvement in CAN working is key measure of success. Good early work on Children’s Plan taking place.</p>	<p><b>23 Accountability between partners.</b> 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 you views?</p>	

<p><b>Accountability to citizens, including the role of elected politicians, both local councillors and MP's and the role of scrutiny of partnerships</b></p> <p>Local councillors involvement in the LSP\and Community Strategy is crucial but role needs to be better understood. Consider role as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- community representative</li> <li>- member of overview and scrutiny</li> <li>- member of area committee</li> <li>- member of council approving the community strategy</li> <li>- member monitoring the achievements of the LSP and the delivery of the CS Action Plan</li> </ul> <p>Consider how best to involve local MPs in the LSP</p> <p>Need to involve local residents in a coherent way. Make the LAA, LDF and CS Community involvement processes complimentary through possibly a joint Statement of Community Involvement.</p>	<p>Good examples of this continuing and emerging in New Forest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Bridging Guide</li> <li>-Community planning activity etc.</li> <li>- 'bottom up' approach evidenced</li> </ul> <p>Equalities Forum – emerging activity</p> <p>Links to LSP and Comm. Strategy</p> <p><b>Clarity in roles not as clear as they might be. Some training given to NFDC members. LSP training included in draft list of training for members. MP's involved in Changing Lives process through conferences and consultation processes. No direct involvement with Core Group meeting and CAN working.</b></p>	<p><b>6 Neighbourhood Engagement.</b> 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?</p>	
		<p><b>24 Involvement of local councillors.</b> What do you see as the key role for executive councillors within LSP's?</p>	
		<p><b>25 Involvement of local councillors.</b> What do you see as the appropriate role for backbenchers particularly in ensuring a high quality of local engagement.</p>	
		<p><b>26 Involvement of local councillors.</b> What would make councillors' powers of overview and scrutiny more effective in scrutinizing the four blocks of the LAA?</p>	

		<p><b>27 Involvement of Members of Parliament.</b> 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 the local councillor?</p>	
		<p><b>28 Involvement of communities served.</b> How can we promote effective community engagement and involvement, from all sections of the community in shaping local priorities and public services?</p>	<p>Package of engagement measures, eg.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Raise the profile of the SCS – this would support community awareness and understanding – would help the SCS become more valued by local community and thereby more likely to feel engaged</li> <li>2. Involvement in review and development of SCS</li> <li>3. Feedback on progress/achievements of the SCS</li> </ol>

		<b>29 Involvement of communities served.</b> How can we maximize the opportunities for joint policy and joint activity on community engagement, including the LDF, the LAA and the Sustainable Community Strategy?	Allocating joint resources to this activity  Adopting protocols that influence joint policy/activity – with monitoring mechanisms to evidence
		<b>30 Involvement of communities served.</b> How can accountability to local people and businesses be enhanced?	Evidence based regular reports on achievements Use of media  Public engagement events

▪ **Capacity Issues**

<b>The skills needed by LSP's</b> LSPs need skills in performance management, planning, data collection, analysis and use of evidence and evaluation. Influencing, collaboration and community engagement skills are also important. Need to consider how best to fill any skills gap.	The need for a <b>common performance management system with training to LSP core members and leads has been identified and included in the Improvement Plan.</b>  <b>The LSP members need to comment on support/skill gaps possibly via a brief questionnaire.</b>	<b>31 Capacity issues.</b> What are your LSP's key support/skill gaps?	
		<b>34 Capacity issues.</b> How can LSP's 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?	

		<b>35 Capacity issues.</b> What learning or development do you feel is required by LSP's in order to deliver sustainable communities that embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level?	
<p><b>Financial resources available to LSP's</b> Average annual budget outside of NRF areas is £78,000. Strong reliance on local authority support. Some examples of partners contributing financially. Potential to consider use of funding streams eg reward grant in LPSA2, reduced discount on council tax for second homes and charges for discretionary services.</p>	<p>No specific budget for LSP. Strong emphasis on making best use of existing resources. Much has been achieved using this approach. A shift in gear for LSP working might require a rethink of this principle. <b>Additional resources may be needed to enhance the core activity work in:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing the SCS</li> <li>2. Raising the profile</li> <li>3. Public engagement events</li> <li>4. Partnership and LSP development</li> </ol> <p>As shown in the consultation paper NRF LSP's tended to have more dedicated staff resources allocated to the LSP. This could be an area for joint resourcing or exploring other local funding options</p>	<p><b>32 Capacity issues.</b> What extra or different support would be most helpful in shifting to a more delivery focused role?</p>	<p>This would probably require a review of existing LSP structure and processes.</p>

<p><b>Existing training and other support</b>  Wide range of support and training available (listed in annex C to the consultation paper).  Needs to be made more widely available to LSPs outside of NRF areas. Capacity Building Funds established for LSPs in the North</p>	<p>The need for joint training has been identified in the LSps Improvement plan. Some opportunities given but not widely taken up.</p>	<p><b>33 Capacity issues.</b>  How would LSP's prefer to receive information and support; through guidance, toolkits, sign posting to existing information, practical learning opportunities etc?</p>	
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To: The LSP Consultation  
The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
Zone 5/K10  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU

Dear Sir,

LSPs: Shaping Their Future

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above consultation paper.

As a district (council/level LSP) we find the contents of the paper welcome and challenging but in some areas confusing and unrealistic. The agenda for the future is one that we wish to be part of but the practicalities given current capacity, reduction in co-terminosity between partners and undue haste in implementing Local Area Agreements make it an agenda that is hard to fully sign up to without better information on resourcing and an injection of realism about the expectations of partnership working.

The paper appears to be geared towards more urban and unitary working and is lacking in meaningful detail about district level working. There are several references to "local authority" and "area" which is confusing and doesn't help create the clarity of roles at the different levels which the paper puts forward as something that should be done.

Greater clarity and realism is needed on the issue of accountability. If LSPs are to be held to account they need to become responsible for spending decisions in certain areas as with the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). In this context the idea that the local authority is ultimately accountable for the LSP and its performance is unrealistic if this is to be achieved through working in partnership rather than by command. An autocratic approach to this issue would not be conducive to achieving genuine buy in to the LSP.

Although the paper talks about links to other plans, a bit more detail on the desirability of linking community strategies with protected area management plans (including National Parks) would have been welcomed for those of us who work in an area such as the New Forest District.

The Changing Lives Partnership (the LSP for the New Forest District) has made good progress over the past 3 years and has developed largely in line with the proposals contained in the paper. It has developed the Community Strategy, delivered two years action plans and aligned partners resources to the priorities of the strategy through a range of Community Action Networks (CANs) that are the operational arms of the LSP. Action has been developed using themes and criteria that place sustainability at the heart of the outcomes. It is very much seen as a way of working encompassing all partnership work in the district rather than a separate entity. Its focus is on improving the quality of

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life through improving partnership work generally. Its success has been largely due to a lack of prescription and relationship building over a period of years. Good partnership work is all about the people involved it not something that can be drawn in a diagram, but creating the climate and relationships to make people want to work with each other, to share common goals and to view the community as the top priority rather than the organization they are representing. This is what creates innovation and creativity and it cannot be imposed nor rushed. It has taken time to get to where we are and the investment in that time should not be lost.

We have treated this consultation as a very important one to respond to. We would stress the need to consider this issue as part of an overall plan crossing all Government Departments and initiatives. The experience to date is that there has been little to encourage LSPs outside of NRF Areas and in fact there have been more barriers than incentives put in the way to create better opportunities for partnership working eg moving away from co - terminus boundaries, the growth in single agency national targets and undue haste in LAA have all restricted the benefits to come out of LSP working.

The New Forest LSP role has developed beyond the key activity of developing and delivering the Community Strategy. In many respects it is now the hub for local and national issues to be engaged with through partnership. It is this local partnership approach that has been crucial to the aim of improving quality of life. Local partnership working must remain focused on delivering results that enhance quality of life with appropriate processes and structures to build on existing good practice. In this context the partnership model needs to have the correct balance in being results driven and not process driven.

Attached are our responses to the questions posed in the consultation which I hope you will find useful in helping you decide on a way forward.

Yours faithfully,

APPENDIX

**Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's): Shaping Their Future – Response from New Forest District Council**

Key Questions	Response
<p>1 LSP's, Sustainable Community Strategies and LAA's. 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?</p>	<p>At the basic level the proposal has merit and sets out the framework for establishing the role of LSP's with regards to SCS and LAA . With potential to enhance county / district links.</p> <p>What is crucial from a district level is that the SCS is about the Vision and the priorities. It is these that must drive the LAA which is about funding some of the outputs. The quality of the arrangements between the County and District levels needs to be enhanced if we are to preserve the connection between community needs and delivery. Creation of this quality must be the prime concern rather than meeting unrealistic centrally driven timescales which make no allowance for enabling good quality partnership input.</p> <p>Need to be clear on executive role – if the aim is to move more towards a coordinating delivery role this will need the LAA to have a tighter mechanism for appropriate district LSP oversight/ownership. Para 15 refers – ie. "Relevant LAA outcomes should also be reflected in the District LSP's actions plans"</p>
<p>2 Regional/sub-regional engagement. We believe it is important that LSP's reflect regional/sub regional plans where relevant in their Sustainable Community Strategy priorities and that regional organizations and partnerships take account of key local needs. How can this greater co-ordination best be facilitated?</p>	<p>LAA has started to strengthen this process in Hampshire. Working with HCC attempts to do this.</p> <p>It is a key part of the evidence gathering stage.</p> <p>There is a real danger of GOSE concentration rather than the fundamental point of simply for reasons of ease of administration rather than the fundamental point of being closer to communities. If Counties are going to lead on this part of the agenda the quality of links between Counties and districts has to be consistently good if the end product is to reflect community needs.</p>

<p>3 Links to Local Plans. 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?</p>	<p>This would be a key activity to ensuring joined-up working that prevents duplication and provides opportunities for partners to offer resources across thematic areas.</p> <p>This follows on from the suggestion of partners sharing performance data, resource levels and action plans.</p> <p>Our concern is what happens in the event of bodies not "having regard" to the SCS? What sanctions are proposed? How does this fit in with the accountability issues?</p> <p>We would prefer that the need for any requirement should be one that is requested locally rather than automatically imposed.</p>
<p>4 Sustainable Community Strategies. Are the proposed steps in the development of a Sustainable Community Strategy correct?</p>	<p>The steps seem logical but our concern is that the LAA might become the driver in order to attract funding rather than the needs of the community being the priority. Need to ensure the SCS doesn't lose sight of the need to meet local (ie parish &amp; district needs). Some of the detailed outcomes of the LAA will not exactly tie in with the SCS for every district. It is therefore essential that the LAA is seen as only part of the district level SCS action plan. Any other approach will dilute the real "local" dimension to all this work.</p> <p>The paper suggests that the SCS` needs to be agreed by all parties. In practice there is little chance of agreement by all citizens and businesses for example on economic V's environmental issues.</p> <p>There is the potential for exploring the alignment of SCS review timetables across a county to help join up LAA's and SCS.</p>
<p>5 Sustainable Community Strategies. What more could be done to ensure Sustainable Community Strategies are better able to make the link between social, economic and environmental goals and to deal more effectively with the area's cross boundary and longer term</p>	<p>Need to promote the use of the definitions and components of sustainable communities in making the links as part of the development of the themed areas. New Forest's CS and action planning criteria ensure longer term and economic, social &amp; environmental impacts are key drivers.</p> <p>Each SCS could have its own section to demonstrate cross boundary issues that have formed the basis of joint discussions/work with neighbouring authorities which might cross County and Government Regions as in our case.</p>

<p>impacts?</p> <p>6 Neighbourhood Engagement. 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?</p>	<p>This is best achieved through a range of community planning initiatives and joint consultation initiatives.</p> <p>Good examples of this continuing in New Forest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Community Bridging Guide – linking local initiatives into the LSP and Community Strategy</li> <li>-Community planning initiatives via parish plans, market town healthchecks to provide evidenced 'bottom up' approach</li> <li>Equalities network developed to influence all LSP working.</li> <li>Participatory Needs Assessments – community worker for 6 months working with community to help identify their needs. Initially linked to health or social deprivation issues.</li> </ul>
<p>7 Neighbourhood Engagement. In two tier areas, is it most appropriate for the responsibility for neighbourhood engagement to rest with the district level LSP?</p>	<p>In the main, yes - there would however be opportunities for partnership work with county and cross-district areas.</p> <p>A key factor in this would be access to resources/funding to support local engagement as part of the LAA delivery outcomes</p> <p>It might be useful for each LSP to co-ordinate the production of an annual programme of planned consultation for each "area". This would help understand who is doing what and when and for what purpose. This should result in more joint consultation/engagement and avoid duplication.</p>
<p>8 Links with the Local Development Framework. How can spatial planning teams best contribute to Sustainable Community Strategies through the LSP and ensure that LDF's and Sustainable Community Strategies are closely linked?</p>	<p>This is a strong focus of activity for New Forest in 2006/07. Close working between Community Strategy review and Local Development Core Strategy. LSP is keen to join up the processes wherever possible. The greatest opportunity is through joint consultation and involvement, aligning SCS and LDF structures and mapping and reviewing policies and strategies alongside joint recognition of emerging issues. Communities of interest might best be engaged with through LSP operational networks. Geographical communities potentially through grouping of parishes. Opportunity for greater evidence base through planners input already recognized. Joint working and training event provide opportunities.</p>
<p>9 Links with the Local</p>	<p>By picking up some of the key themes mentioned in our response to 8 above.</p>

<p>Development Framework. How could revised guidance and accompanying support material best ensure that Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks join up effectively?</p>	<p>Include some good practice case studies.</p>
<p>10 Two tier areas. Should every local authority area have its own LSP?</p>	<p>Every LA area should have its own LSP. This underpins the concept of the SCS being locally driven and owned. Without local knowledge, commitment and relationships the aim of a SCS would be flawed. There needs to be some mechanism for developing partnership work in every area and LSPs seem the logical way to achieve that. From both a strategic and local engagement perspective the symbolism of a LSP at a local level is vital to SCS buy-in and achievement.</p>
<p>11 Two tier areas. Would the establishment of a greater delineation of roles between county and district LSPs as suggested be sensible? (see paras 65 to 69)</p>	<p>Is this a question of balance rather than delineation? The balance may be seen as part of a wider remit to make the best use of limited resources to achieve a SCS – that surely is the most important thing to get right. We are aware there are differing arrangements in different county areas, relationships are different between counties and districts across the country. This needs to be borne in mind. Greater clarity of roles should be achieved between county and district LSPs locally rather than having a national standard – the role of the county LSP is not always clear in current working. Clear lines of communication are crucial to make the systems work.</p>

• **Governance**

<p>12 LSP as the partnership of partnerships. We believe that it is important that the LSP is</p>	<p>Yes there should be a formal partnership arrangement to ensure transparency, accountability and delivery on thematic areas – this to include thematic partner leads and other key stakeholders.</p>
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<p>made up of the thematic partnerships in the area together with an LSP board. What is your view?</p>	
<p>13 LSP as the partnership of partnerships. We believe that a rationalization 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?</p>	<p>Suggest this should be determined at a local level rather than prescribed. At a county level the LAA blocks could be seen as the primary theme areas with additional themed areas added on based on county need/circumstances. From a district perspective the partnership structures should be based on the SCS as this provides the alignment of resources against the priorities at a relevant local level. Any rolling review programme should take into account the structure needed to deliver an effective SCS.</p> <p>The principle of thematic partnerships is essential to the delivery of an effective SCS through LAA outcomes. However, at district LSP level the thematic partnerships would need to support neighbourhood engagement/needs.</p> <p>The emphasis on raising the profile of the LSP/SCS means there is a need to have a model that neighbourhoods/local communities can engage with and understand.</p> <p>The New Forest model of CAN's is showing the potential to do this – whereby, for example, Parish Plans can be 'bridged' to the relevant CANs and enable strategic influence over local planning and a bottom up approach to community strategy work.</p> <p>It is possible that a similar 'bridging toolkit' could be incorporated for 2 tier activity to the LAA outcomes – this could help flexibility at a district level to have themed partnerships as needed to meet local circumstances</p> <p>Need to be mindful of the fit/gaps between county wide LAA themed areas and local district needs</p>
<p>14 LSP as the partnership of partnerships. We believe that the geographical boundaries of partners within LSP's are important. What do you see as</p>	<p>a) opportunities – need to build into sign up and buy in to LSP working that any reorganization of agencies should take full account of impact on partnership working. Many recent examples in new Forest have not helped develop LSP working.</p> <p>b) barriers – lack of stability in the future geographical shape of agencies. The</p>



<p>the opportunities for and barriers to, co-terminosity shared geographical boundaries?</p>	<p>frequency of change makes it almost impossible to progress. Need to give time for any changes to bed in and become constructive.</p>
<p>15 LSP as the partnership of partnerships. Within the LSP framework and its established priorities, would the creation of single delivery vehicles to tackle particular issues be helpful?</p>	<p>Only if it can be seen to be feasible and add value. Should not be prescriptive on this.</p>
<p>16 Ensuring wide representation. How can the neighbourhood and parish tiers be involved most effectively on the LSP on a) the executive and b) individual thematic partnerships?</p>	<p>a) Parish &amp; town councils represented through two members of the local association but crucial that communication channels are good between association and its members for them to be able to take a representative role. b) this is perhaps best done through the review process and neighbourhood engagement. We have found it difficult to find parish council reps to join in on district wide themed approaches – most feel they are not empowered to spend time outside of their immediate remit of their own parish area.</p>
<p>17 Ensuring wide representation. How can the private, voluntary and community sectors be involved most effectively on the LSP as a) the executive and b) individual thematic partnerships?</p>	<p>a) Executive - Community First (Voluntary Sector) chairs the LSP. Provides representation/involvement via local infrastructure organizations. Other relevant bodies include Citizens Advice Bureau and New Forest Business Partnership. b) thematic partnerships – relevant VCS providers/stakeholders invited to be partners. Community First active member on various networks. Private Sector –New Forest Business Partnership provides the economic input into the SCS and is the economy arm of the LSP. Chambers of Commerce and others have opportunities through review process and community planning to get involved. Challenge is to find ways that will attract their participation.</p>
<p>18 Providing a legislative foundation. Would a duty to co-operate with the local authority, in producing and implementing the Community Strategy, help to set LSP's on a firmer footing and</p>	<p>In principle, yes Sets a standard and expectations but better to create a framework of commitment to encourage innovative and creative working. The potential for protocols and partnership agreements should be pursued in the first instance.</p>

<p>better enable their enhanced delivery co-ordination role?</p>	
<p>19 Providing a legislative foundation. If so, what obligations, such as attendance, financial or staff support, would be useful to place on partners?</p>	<p>Comment as above</p>
<p>20 Providing a legislative foundation. If so, which public sector agencies would the duty most sensibly be placed on?</p>	<p>Comment as above</p>
<p>21 Providing a legislative foundation. 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?</p>	<p>Comment as above</p>

• **Accountability**

<p>22 Accountability between partners. Should each partner be encouraged to produce protocols or "partnership agreements" between partners to ensure clear lines of accountability for the delivery of agreed outcomes?</p>	<p>Yes – would help to clarify a lot of areas that are currently ambiguous          Would also possibly prevent mission drift and maintain a sense of stability          We understand the Government's interest in creating LSPs that can be held to account but accountability comes with responsibility. It is not clear how the Government sees the level of responsibility at a district level. The idea that the local authority should be ultimately accountable for the LSP and its performance is difficult to see being exercised through true partnership working rather than through command.          We are not clear about the Government's intentions regarding sanctions should partners not perform. Our view is that any local agreements cover that issue.</p>
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<p>23 Accountability between partners. 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?</p>	<p>This would be a useful contribution if the Government is serious about strengthening the role of LSPs.</p>
<p>24 Involvement of local councillors. What do you see as the key role for executive councillors within LSP's?</p>	
<p>25 Involvement of local councillors. What do you see as the appropriate role for backbenchers particularly in ensuring a high quality of local engagement.</p>	<p>Crucial to link the community role with the Community Strategy and LSP working. Challenge is to ensure awareness of the opportunities to bridge between the two. Opportunities via parish plans market town healthchecks.</p>
<p>26 Involvement of local councillors. What would make councillors' powers of overview and scrutiny more effective in scrutinizing the four blocks of the LAA?</p>	<p>Greater clarity about the role of scrutiny across partnerships and not just the council's involvement in partnerships. Need to develop any approach with caution and sensitivity and needs to be balanced against any voluntary element of joining in with partnership work. Scrutiny could be geared to LAA work only. Might be a useful check of LAA draft against local community strategy but need to build in time for this.</p>
<p>27 Involvement of Members of Parliament. 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</p>	<p>Should not be prescriptive on this. Different levels of interest and availability. Local approach limited to consultation and involvement in major conferences.</p>

<p>complementary to the role of the local councillor?</p>	
<p>28 Involvement of communities served. How can we promote effective community engagement and involvement, from all sections of the community in shaping local priorities and public services?</p>	<p>Package of engagement measures, eg.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Raise the profile of the SCS – this would support community awareness and understanding – would help the SCS become more valued by local community and thereby more likely to feel engaged</li> <li>2. Involvement in review and developments of SCS</li> <li>3. Feedback on progress/achievements of the SCS</li> </ol>
<p>29 Involvement of communities served. How can we maximize the opportunities for joint policy and joint activity on community engagement, including the LDF, the LAA and the Sustainable Community Strategy?</p>	<p>Allocating joint resources to this activity</p> <p>Adopting protocols that influence joint policy/activity – with monitoring mechanisms to evidence</p> <p>Publish annual programme of consultation and results for each area.</p>
<p>30 Involvement of communities served. How can accountability to local people and businesses be enhanced?</p>	<p>Evidence based regular reports on achievements</p> <p>Use of media</p> <p>Public engagement events</p>

**- Capacity Issues**

<p>31 Capacity issues. What are your LSP's key support/ skill gaps?</p>	<p>Not yet identified. Joining in with GOSE initiative on this issue.</p>
<p>34 Capacity issues. How can LSP's ensure that adequate learning and support provision is available to build the capacity of communities to engage with the</p>	<p>As above</p>

<p>LSP and its partners at the various levels?</p> <p>35 Capacity issues. What learning or development do you feel is required by LSP's in order to deliver sustainable communities that embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level?</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>32 Capacity issues. What extra or different support would be most helpful in shifting to a more delivery focused role?</p>	<p>This would probably require a review of existing LSP structure and processes. At New Forest there is no specific budget for LSP. Strong emphasis on making best use of existing resources. Much has been achieved using this approach. A shift in gear for LSP working might require a rethink of this principle. Additional resources may be needed to enhance the core activity work in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing the SCS</li> <li>2. Raising the profile</li> <li>3. Public engagement events</li> <li>4. Partnership and LSP development</li> </ol> <p>As shown in the consultation paper NRF LSP's tended to have more dedicated staff resources allocated to the LSP. This could be an area for joint resourcing or exploring other local funding options</p>
<p>33 Capacity issues. How would LSP's prefer to receive information and support; through guidance, toolkits, sign posting to existing information, practical learning opportunities etc?</p>	<p>Guidance and toolkits are useful as long as they are based on practical working examples and not produced as a theoretical approach. Networking across LSPs and practitioners is often the most productive use of time and resource.</p>