



Tandridge Local Strategic Partnership

3 December 2004

KEY ISSUE

The Tandridge Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is taking stock of its progress as it prepares to develop a new Community Strategy during 2005. The County Council and Tandridge District Council are jointly charged with the development of the Strategy and with ensuring that the LSP is an effective partnership that encourages and ensures multi-agency working for the benefit of Tandridge residents.

SUMMARY

This report, and the oral briefing that will accompany it, will update the Local Committee on the discussions of the Local Strategic Partnership at its scheduled meeting on 18th October and its recent special workshop on 24th November 2004.

The current Community Strategy runs through to March 2006. During 2005, the work will take place to review the current Strategy and roll it forward from 2006. Prior to that work being planned in detail, the LSP Chairman has invited all partners to consider how the Partnership is working to ensure that effective arrangements are in place for the future.

The County Council, and especially its local embodiment – this Local Committee – have a particular role to play in support of the LSP. The Local Committee Chairman and the Local Director are the County Council's representatives on the LSP.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to note the report and comment on any aspect of partnership working that it would like to feed back to the LSP.

INTRODUCTION

Background to LSPs

1. The Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities the power to promote the economic, environmental and social well being of their communities. Along with it came a duty to prepare – in partnership – a Community Strategy that would set out a long-term vision for the area and an action plan that demonstrated how steps would be taken to realise that vision. Local Strategic Partnerships were suggested as the partnership vehicle.
2. The principle of partnership working and the use of a strategy and action plan were both commonplace tools within the public sector. The unique aspect of LSPs was that they were meant to be the premier partnership in an area, with the most senior and influential representation, able to give leadership to the increasingly complex world in which community needs and aspirations are matched to public, voluntary and private sector provision.
3. The experience of LSPs over the last three-four years has been mixed. In some areas inter-agency understanding, co-operation and working has developed for the better. LSPs have been given some new roles by Government departments, whilst being apparently bypassed by others. In many Councils, their development alongside the implementation of new political management arrangements has led to questions about their place in relation to the community leadership role of all councillors.
4. More difficult for LSPs has been responding to the accusation that they are no more than ‘talking shops’, even though they bring together a unique group of people who are unlikely to meet altogether in another forum.
5. The key challenge for all partners is to make their LSP relevant to the strategic issues that need better multi-agency working in their local area.

Progress in Tandridge

6. In Tandridge, the District Council (TDC), as is commonly the case in two tier areas, has taken the lead in establishing the Partnership and in initiating public and stakeholder consultation. The County Council has supported these processes. This resulted in the first Community Strategy document that set out three key issues for Tandridge:
 - Keeping you safe and secure
 - Protecting the environment
 - Improving roads and public transport
7. In the 2003 Review of the Community Strategy, a number of actions related to health and vulnerable people were added.

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8. The Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) report on Tandridge District Council made comment about the LSP, noting TDC's positive role in encouraging engagement from a broad range of interests to the three year Strategy. It also noted that, "The council intends to build on this work with the LSP to develop clear ambitions for what the community would like to see over the next five to ten years."
9. A most welcome development in 2004 has been Councillor Gordon Keymer taking on the chairmanship of the LSP and the active involvement of TDC's Chief Executive.

TAKING STOCK OF PROGRESS

10. A consequence of this gear change in leadership has been the start of a discussion about the current arrangements and make-up of the LSP. Wisely, the question has been asked as to whether those arrangements that saw it through set-up, consultation and a short term strategy, are best suited to the next challenge of developing community ambition five to ten years forward.
11. The current strategy document covers the period from 2003 to March 2006. The majority of work to review the current strategy and to develop proposals for a new strategy – meeting the challenge of a longer-term focus – will take place in 2005. The current review initiated by the Chairman is, therefore, very timely.
12. The July LSP meeting started this debate and led to a request from the Chairman for general comments and responses to particular questions about the possible use of panels for detailed working; about the current representation on the LSP; and a challenge to suggest ways to improve partnership working.
13. The responses to this invitation have provided the content for the facilitated workshop on 24th November. The Local Director will feedback on the outcome of those discussions.

THE LOCAL COMMITTEE AND THE LSP

14. The guidance issued by Government on the compilation of Community Strategies also encouraged the provision of a range of other mechanisms to improve the delivery of holistic services to communities. These included the creation of local forums or committees, providing greater opportunities for Members to demonstrate community leadership, and engaging more with residents as citizens and service users. Local Committees respond to each of these matters and are a significant and entirely complementary initiative to local strategic partnerships.
15. The Local Committee has a prime focus on the services of the County Council (particularly Transportation). It offers the District Council through its membership of the Committee, and the general public through the public nature of its meetings, the opportunity to comment on the performance and appropriateness of County services and to influence their future shape. Such is the extent of partnership working that the discussions within the Committee quite reasonably stretch beyond the immediate remit of County services, and many partner organisations have attended and spoken at Local Committees.

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16. The concerns of the public will rarely be satisfactorily dealt with by just the district, or the county or even by the LSP or some other partnership. It is in these areas that there can be productive exchange between the Local Committee and the LSP. At the level of an individual issue or problem, any number of partners might have a role in its resolution, and Local Directors have a specific remit to act as local 'brokers' for solutions. The Local Committee may feel that the wider membership of the LSP would make it the ideal forum for an issue to be progressed. Alternatively the LSP may ask the Local Committee or a County Service to lead the improvement of an issue.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

17. This report updates the Local Committee on current discussions within the Local Strategic Partnership to ensure it has the support and structure to develop a longer-term set of ambitions for Tandridge. The Local Committee, whose Chairman represents the County Council on the LSP, will wish to be aware of these discussions and be supportive of the LSP. Comments on partnership working that the Committee may wish to pass on to the LSP would be most welcome.

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