



Woking Local Strategic Partnership

Local Committee for Woking 12 June 2003

KEY ISSUE:

Woking Local Strategic Partnership is developing its role and finding ways to ensure that it adds value and engages with stakeholders.

SUMMARY:

The Local Strategic Partnership is developing, albeit slowly. Surrey County Council and the Local Committee for Woking are represented on the Local Strategic Partnership for Woking and the Local Director is playing an active role, as intended in the Local Committee for Woking's Action Plan for 2003/04.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to receive the report.

The national framework

1. Woking Borough Council, like other local authorities, is required by Government to have a Community Strategy. Government recommends that there should be a Local Strategic Partnership to involve local stakeholders in developing and implementing the Community Strategy. The 88 local authorities that contain the most deprived wards have additional Neighbourhood Renewal funding channelled from Government through the Local Strategic Partnership, but this does not apply to Woking.
2. Government guidance is that a Local Strategic Partnership should include representatives from local government, other statutory agencies especially health and police, business, and the voluntary and community sectors, and that there should be arrangements for these to provide two-way communication between the sector they represent and the Local Strategic Partnership. In the 88 local authorities that contain the most deprived wards there are additional Government funds to support the community agencies to create networks and have an effective voice, but this does not apply to Woking.
3. Within this framework, Local Strategic Partnerships vary considerably. Some have a large membership, with a smaller group forming an Executive; others are small, with a wider group of consultees. Some have a majority of seats for community voices, others focus on the key agencies with statutory responsibilities and larger budgets.
4. Whatever their structure, Local Strategic Partnerships are indeed supposed to be strategic: creating a unified vision of the needs of the area and a co-ordinated response, with a focus on disadvantage. In theory, the existence of a Local Strategic Partnership should reduce the need for other, smaller, partnerships.

The situation in Woking

5. The Woking LSP was established in June 2001. In March 2002 there were two externally facilitated workshops - one for the LSP to explore purpose, objectives, membership, etc., and one for community representatives to explore the emerging Community Strategy and the structure of the LSP. The community workshop was very positive and supported the structure of the LSP.
6. Surrey County Council (SCC) has been fully engaged since the start, initially through the Area Director Mike Abbott and the Chairman of the shadow Local Committee, Mrs. Compton, with Mrs. Hill involved in consultations in West Woking. The considerable public consultation, in developing and finalising the Community Strategy, was very much a joint exercise between the Borough, County, Police and, to a lesser extent, the Health sector. Since the Local Committee started in April 2002, SCC has been represented on the Local Strategic Partnership since the start by the Chairman of the Local Committee for Woking

and the Local Director. The Area Director for Adults and Community Care has now joined the partnership.

7. Meetings in September 2001 and January 2002 focussed on developing the Community Strategy, which was published in July 2002 (one of the first in Surrey). The Community Strategy influenced the priority-setting of stakeholders in 2002/03, and the Local Strategic Partnership members drew up an Action Plan for 2002/03 setting out the main activities of the Local Strategic Partnership members relating to the Community Strategy. Members did not identify new, co-ordinated approaches at that stage.
8. For its second year, this Action Plan will be revised to focus on the most important actions required to implement the Community Strategy, and in particular, on actions which cut across agencies and require Local Strategic Partnership members to work together to create added value and a real improvement. It is hoped that this will enable the Local Strategic Partnership to add value by finding new, joint approaches to priority problems.
9. From the start, it was decided that the Woking Local Strategic Partnership would be small, consisting of the main public sector policy development and service providing agencies, with representation from the business community through the Chamber of Commerce, and voluntary and community agencies through Woking Association of Voluntary Service (WAVS).
10. At the end of its first year, the Local Strategic Partnership has reviewed its membership. The members are now:
 - Churches Together
 - Surrey County Council: Chair, Local Committee for Woking; Local Director for Woking; Area Director (NW Surrey) Adults and Community Care
 - Surrey Police: Area Commander
 - Woking Area Primary Care Trust: Chief Executive/Director
 - Woking Association of Voluntary Service: Director
 - Woking Borough Council Leader/Deputy of the Executive; Chief Executive; Head of Policy and Performance
 - Woking Chamber of Commerce
 - Woking Community Learning Partnership
11. Other bodies may request or be invited to attend, as appropriate, e.g. GOSE, Environment Agency, etc.
12. The Local Strategic Partnership was chaired in its first year by the Chief Executive of Woking Borough Council; in its second year, the Partnership was pleased that the Director of WAVS agreed to take over. Woking Borough Council services the Local Strategic Partnership and hosts its meetings. Without this, the Partnership, which has no funding, would be unable to operate. The Local Strategic Partnership also reviewed its working arrangements at the end of its first year, and developed protocols for getting items onto the agenda. In line with the Local

Committee for Woking Action Plan for 2003/04, the Local Director has offered to play an active role to support the Local Strategic Partnership.

13. There is a danger that Woking stakeholders see the Community Strategy and Local Strategic Partnership as the responsibility only of Woking Borough Council. In that case, other stakeholders would be less likely to implement the wishes of local people set out in the Community Strategy, and in particular, the Local Strategic Partnership would not fulfil its role of enabling partners to identify shared priority actions and ways to work collaboratively to achieve shared objectives. The active involvement of WAVS and Surrey County Council should help to reduce this danger.
14. Because it is small, the Local Strategic Partnership needs to engage other stakeholders in developing strategies in specific fields of interest, such as health or transport. At the same time, the Partnership has to work out how to engage and build on the views, ideas and energy of local communities, residents and businesses. In its first year, the Local Strategic Partnership did not find a mechanism to achieve this effectively, though WAVS and Woking Community Relations Forum were members.
15. Following its year-end review, the Partnership has now agreed to set up a new system of "linked partnerships". These will fulfil both functions. Existing partnerships with a specific remit or interest can be the Local Strategic Partnership's "think-tank" on those subjects: examples would be Agenda 21, the Transport Forum, and *Safer Woking* (the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership). Communities of interest, which do not yet have a partnership, will see that if they get together their collective voice will have a better chance to influence decisions about strategies and priorities.
16. In many cases, linked partnerships will be organised and funded by other agencies: for example, the Woking Area Primary Care Trust and Surrey County Council Adults and Community Care consult on health matters. Where a community of interest should appropriately be contributing to the Local Strategic Partnership policy work and needs resources to do so, it will need to make an application for funding to existing grant-givers.
17. The Local Strategic Partnership hopes to hold two meetings a year with all the linked partnerships, one probably in September to give the opportunity to influence thinking about planning for the coming year. The Local Strategic Partnership has asked the Local Committee for Woking to fund the September event, on condition that funding from another partner is found for any second event. These events will be important opportunities for the Local Committee for Woking and Surrey County Council services to hear the views of key stakeholders across all sectors in Woking. The only source of funding available to the Local Committee is from Members' Allocations. If the bid for community consultation is approved under item 14 of the agenda for this meeting, it is suggested that part of this could contribute to the Local Strategic Partnership's consultations because they are relevant to the work of Surrey County Council and the Local Committee.

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