

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

<b><i>Name of Committee</i></b>	<b>The Cabinet</b>
<b><i>Date of Committee</i></b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> February 2006</b>
<b><i>Report Title</i></b>	<b>Response to Consultation on the future of Local Strategic Partnerships</b>
<b><i>Summary</i></b>	<p>This paper summarises the current ODPM Consultation on the future of Local Strategic Partnerships. The paper contains a draft County Council response to the specific questions raised within it. The consultation is taking place at a highly relevant time and coincides with our early work on the development of the Local Area Agreement and the partnership and governance issues that this raises. Cabinet is asked to consider and comment upon the draft response which will then, subject to any amendments, be forwarded to ODPM prior to the consultation deadline of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006.</p>
<b><i>For further information please contact:</i></b>	<p>Nick Gower Johnson County Partnerships Manager Tel: 01926 412053 <a href="mailto:nickgower-johnson@warwickshire.gov.uk">nickgower-johnson@warwickshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Monica Fogarty Head of Policy Tel: 01926 412514 <a href="mailto:monicafogarty@warwickshire.gov.uk">monicafogarty@warwickshire.gov.uk</a></p>
<b><i>Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]</i></b>	No
<b><i>Background papers</i></b>	<p>ODPM Consultation Paper dated December 2005 – entitled ‘ Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future’.</p>

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-**

Details to be specified

- Other Committees  .....
- Local Member(s)  .....
- Other Elected Members  .....
- Cabinet Members  Cllr Chris Saint – Comments incorporated in the report  
Cllr Bob Stevens
- Chief Executive  Jim Graham, Chief Executive – Comments incorporated in the report
- Legal  Jane Pollard
- Finance  David Clarke and Oliver Winters
- Other Strategic Directors  William Brown – Community Protection  
Graeme Betts – Adult, Health & Community services  
Marion Davis – Children, Young People and Families Services  
John Deegan – Environment & Economy
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals

**FINAL DECISION**

**Yes**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by the Cabinet
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

**Cabinet – 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2006**

**Response to Consultation on the future of Local Strategic Partnerships**

**Report of the Strategic Director – Performance and Development**

**Recommendations:**

- (1) That the Cabinet authorise the Strategic Director for Performance and Development to forward the response to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Warwickshire Members of Parliament.
- (2) That the response be signed by the Cabinet portfolio holder and the other political group spokespersons.

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published a detailed Consultation Paper on the future Local Strategic Partnerships on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2005 entitled ' Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future'. The period for consultation expires on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006.
- 1.2 The purposes of this report are:
  - To summarise the Consultation Paper – see Appendix A.
  - To place the issues raised by the Paper within the context of current arrangements and issues affecting partnership work in the county, and, in particular in relation to the development of the Local Area Agreement (LAA)
  - To propose a response to the Consultation Paper for approval by the Cabinet on behalf of the County Council – the response has been prepared in line with the questions listed in the Consultation Paper. The draft response is attached as Appendix B.
- 1.3 A complete version of the Consultation Paper is available from the ODPM website - <http://www.odpm.gov.uk>

- 1.4 Whilst the consultation response addresses all of the questions raised by ODPM, perhaps the key point to note from the outset is the close linkages between the LSPs, the Local Area Agreement (LAA), the Children's Strategic Partnership and the Crime and Disorder Partnerships. Our view is that the county LSP should be based on the geographic local authority with responsibility for education, social care and strategic planning together with its partners in Health and Police – i.e. the County Council.

## **2 General Background – the national picture**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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 the delivery of local outcomes.
- 2.4 There are now increasing expectations on all LSPs, in particular, the development and implementation of Local Area Agreements. 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 LAA pilots bore out the importance of the LSP in bringing together the thematic partnerships in the local area; providing the governance
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 The LSP role has often been described as being the "partnership of partnerships".

- 2.7 The local authority involvement is vital to the effective operation of an LSP. The local authorities' democratic mandate and accountability provides them with a clear basis on which to determine priorities across the local area. Therefore, the Consultation Paper sees 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.
- 2.8 In Warwickshire there are six LSPs – the Warwickshire Strategic Partnership (the county wide LSP) and a further LSP in respect of each of the District/Borough areas.
- 2.9 The role, remit and membership of the Warwickshire Strategic Partnership is currently under review and this includes the ways in which it relates, and ensures coherence with the District based LSPs. Issues relating to 2 tier local authority area are described in detail in the Consultation Paper (see Appendix A)
- 2.10 The Chief Executive has convened a Partnership Summit – to be held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006. This will address a range of issues including the development of the LAA together with the future governance arrangements for LSPs and the public services generally.

### **3. The Warwickshire Context**

- 3.1 The role and structure of the county LSP, (WSP) remains under review. At the meeting of the County Leaders' Group on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2005, concerns were raised issues about the role of the partnership, its value and the nature of the contributions members felt able to make to it.
- 3.2 The Chair of WSP (Sir Brian Follett) has met with the Chief Executive. Sir Brian has indicated that he will not continue in this role (although he would be willing to help with interim governance arrangements and contribute to the development of a revised County Strategic Partnership). He has also concluded that that the County Leaders Group should not continue in its present form.
- 3.3 Accordingly, the current position relating to WSP is that
- a) The County Leaders' Group (as presently operated and constituted) will be discontinued
  - b) A 'revised WSP' should have a future role and that this should include the following elements:
    - Having a broad remit should focussing on those issues that can best be addressed at a county level

- Responsibility for taking forward the Warwickshire Strategic Partnership Plan including implementation, review and performance management of the WSPP
- Overseeing the establishment and operation of the WSP Theme Groups – ensuring that these Groups correspond precisely with the functional blocks of the LAA
- Overseeing and supporting the development of the Warwickshire LAA
- Oversight and performance management of the Warwickshire LPSA2
- Ensuring the development of coherent partnership approaches across and with the District LSPs
- Supporting the consistent development of the Warwickshire approach to the establishment of neighbourhood/locality working

3.5 In relation to the district based LSPs, each of these appear very much to have its own identity, approach to partnership work and community planning and bespoke but not necessarily compatible structural arrangements.

3.6 We are committed to developing the revised county LSP in the very near future and will begin work on this in earnest following the Partnership Summit on 28<sup>th</sup> February. The revised LSP for the county will reflect the fact that prime responsibility for key public services including Education, Social Care and Strategic Planning are county wide services which are statutory responsibilities of the County Council. Accordingly, arrangements to underpin and develop partnership activity in relation to these matters must be co-ordinated through a countywide LSP.

3.7 In our draft response to the ODPM Consultation we have, wherever possible made reference to this important factor. We would urge ODPM to use this consultation as an opportunity to bring greater clarity to partnership working within two tier areas.

DAVID CARTER  
Strategic Director –  
Performance & Development

Shire Hall  
Warwick  
9<sup>th</sup> February 2006

## Summary of the Consultation Paper

### 1 The Aims of the Consultation

- 1.1 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Community Strategies were introduced as a result of the Local Government Act 2000. The Consultation Paper avers that LSPs have helped make great strides to improve the local quality of life and that much progress has been made in terms of representation, establishing a common vision and moving to genuinely collaborative working.
- 1.2 Community Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships have a critical role in further developing coherent service provision and genuinely sustainable communities.
- 1.3 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- Bridging the Accountability Gap" (October 2005).
- 1.4 The Consultation Paper examines:
  - The future role of LSPs
  - Their governance and accountability
  - Their capacity to deliver 'Sustainable Community Strategies'.
- 1.5 A series of questions is posed under each of these headings designed to assist consultees understand how LSPs are operating at present and where changes could be made nationally, regionally and locally to help them develop most effectively.
- 1.6 The Consultation Paper aims to re-examine the role, governance and capacity of LSPs and Community Strategies both in terms of short-term changes and more radical longer-term adjustments.
- 1.7 The Paper identifies a number of key ambitions for the future development of LSPs. These are set out below:
  - To ensure 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;
  - To develop an evolved role for the local authority in facilitating action through the LSP and Sustainable Community Strategy;

- To establish LSPs which are 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;
- To improve the capacity of LSPs to support neighbourhood engagement and to help ensure the views of neighbourhoods and parish councils can influence strategic local service delivery and spending; and
- To ensure 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.

## **2 The Government's Vision for Local Strategic Partnerships**

- 2.1 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 the local partners, including representatives of the private, voluntary and community sectors, with national, regional, and neighbourhood or parish priorities in developing the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 2.2 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 outcomes from the LAA would be scrutinised by local authorities and LSPs and then monitored, reviewed and reported on.
- 2.3 The Government believes that it is crucial for the success of LSPs that they are able to co-ordinate delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA. The LSP must take an oversight role, ensuring that the lines of responsibility between partners are clear and that duplication is avoided. In essence the LSP needs to be the 'partnership of partnerships' in the 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.
- 2.4 In addition to this, the Government considers that LSP must ensure that 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.
- 2.5 LSPs should also develop and drive the effective delivery of their Local Area Agreements, and agree an action plan for achieving the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities, including the LAA outcomes.



- 2.6 In two-tier areas the Government expects 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. The District-level LSPs (and their Sustainable Community Strategies) must be fully considered and involved in the drawing-up and implementing of the county-wide Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA. Further, relevant LAA outcomes should also be reflected in the District LSPs' action plans and future versions of all District-led plans, More information on the proposals in respect of two tier areas is given at Paragraph 3.3. of this report.
- 2.7 The Government considers that this 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.
- 2.8 Performance management by the LSP is seen as being a key part of the partnership approach. 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.
- 2.9 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 the Government's 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.

### **3. Proposals in respect of two tier areas**

- 3.1 The Consultation Paper suggests that establishing clear roles and responsibilities in two-tier local authority areas can be problematic. Two-tier LSPs have expressed mixed views as to whether or not working across two-tier areas poses a significant problem. 50% state that the LSP represents a forum where county/district tensions are

avoided but 42% disagree. Similarly, 52% feel that there is effective collaboration between county and district LSPs but 40% disagree.

- 3.2 The Paper states that Action Learning Research conducted by LSPs themselves has indicated that the problems are not substantially more complex within a two-tier structure than in a unitary structure, but reflect common difficulties of differing administrative boundaries which all LSPs face to some degree.
- 3.3 ODPM's LSP evaluation programme has identified three main ways of working in two tier areas:
  - The Aggregation model – where district-level Community Strategies are aggregated to form an overarching strategy, at county level
  - The Added Value model – county Community Strategy focuses on areas where it can add value to district strategies – creating more strategic focus, avoiding duplication and with an emphasis on sub-regional issues
  - The Separatist model – where the county strategy has been developed with few linkages and in isolation to district strategies
- 3.4 ODPM would want to encourage more areas to move to a combination of the 'added value' and 'aggregation' models. A possible model in two-tier areas could therefore be to develop a strategic Sustainable Community Strategy at county level, with a remit to engage with the regional, subregional tiers and district authorities/LSPs to reflect their priorities. District-level LSPs could then focus on local/neighbourhood engagement and establishing an analysis of the needs of their population. This model is based upon a presumption that each local authority should have its own LSP which can determine the specific priorities for that area.
- 3.5 The Paper goes on to suggest that whatever models are adopted, LSPs in two-tier areas should be encouraged to use existing opportunities to foster effective working relationships between tiers.

**Response to Key Questions identified in the Consultation Paper**

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

We agree that one of the key roles for the LSPs is to develop the vision for the local area through the Sustainable Community Strategy. However, we would like to see greater emphasis on the roles of the LSP in

- a) Ensuring coherent community engagement
- b) Ensuring the full engagement of the voluntary and community sector
- c) Fulfilling the role of a delivery vehicle for the priorities identified in the Strategy
- d) Supporting effective performance management
- e) Ensuring that all partners share all relevant information

It is necessary to enhance the role of LSPs and ensure that, within the communities that they serve, they are seen as bodies that have sufficient authority to enable them to carry out their responsibilities.

In respect of two tier areas, we feel that greater emphasis should be given to:

- a) acknowledging the prime role of the County Councils as the prime authority with a county-wide responsibility for education, social care and strategic planning - this must be reflected in any delineation of responsibilities between county and district-based partnerships
- b) Ensuring the development of coherent working arrangements between the county and district based partnerships
- c) Ensuring that all agencies involved in the partnership develop a consistent and coherent approach to defining sub district / neighbourhood areas

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

In a two-tier area, the county LSP should have responsibility for ensuring that these matters are fully taken into account both within its own strategies and also within those developed by the District based partnerships.

This is a two way process – regional/sub-regional organisations and partnerships must in turn take account of key local needs.

Community Strategies must ensure engagement both from a broader regional/sub-regional level through to a parish level (aided by parish plans) and incorporate all relevant local strategies.

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

It would be beneficial to achieve this. This responsibility should be included within the proposed 'duty to co-operate' being contemplated for public agencies.

**4: Are the proposed steps in the development of a Sustainable Community Strategy correct? (See box on page 18)**

The description given in the Consultation Paper is, in general, helpful and logical.

However, the suggestion that the Sustainable Community Strategy is 'refreshed' annually and reviewed every three years needs further consideration. There needs to be a balance between aspiring for the stability that a three year Plan could give and ensuring that important new developments are taken into account promptly.

It is apparent from the research into the progress made by Phase One and Phase Two LAA authorities that it will be a challenge to ensure that the development of 'bottom-up' Local Community Strategy can be reconciled effectively with the negotiations with Government Office leading to the production of the LAA.

**5: What more could be done to ensure Sustainable Community Strategies are better able to make the links between social, economic and environmental goals and to deal more effectively with the area's cross-boundary and longer-term impacts?**

This could be assisted through ensuring that each LSP and its Community Strategy is structured around the functional blocks of the LAA and their coordinated achievement.

**6: What should be the role of the LSP in supporting neighbourhood engagement and ensuring the neighbourhood/parish voice, including diverse and minority communities, is heard at the principal local level?**

Responsibility for this should rest with the individual partner agencies involved with the LSPs. The LSP should co-ordinate the efforts of partner agencies to support neighbourhood engagement and ensure that this is undertaken in a coherent manner, avoiding duplication, confusion and 'consultation fatigue' in the minds of local citizens.

**7: In two-tier areas, is it most appropriate for the responsibility for neighbourhood engagement to rest with the district level LSP?**

Neighbourhood engagement must be seen as being the responsibility of all partner agencies, and both the county and district-based LSP.

**8: How can spatial planning teams best contribute to Sustainable Community Strategies through the LSP and ensure that LDFs and Sustainable Community Strategies are closely linked?**

They should set out the framework of strategic policy within which the Community Strategy has to fit

**9: How could revised guidance and accompanying support materials best ensure that Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks join up effectively?**

The guidance should make it clear as to the scope and detail of policy within which the LDF's can deliver for SCS's.

**10: Should every local authority area have its own LSP?**

We take the view that the County Council should ensure that an effective LSP exists at county level to ensure that the partnership arrangements underpinning its prime responsibilities for Education, Social Care and Strategic Planning are carried out through the vehicle of an LSP.

We take the view that consideration should be given to drawing an overt distinction between the very different roles of county and district-based LSPs. This could be achieved by defining the county LSP as a Local Strategic Partnership and giving another name to the district based grouping – perhaps calling these ‘a Locality Partnership Group’. This locality body would oversee the delivery of much of the operational activities within the Local Area Agreement in a targeted geographical area.

**11: Would the establishment of a greater delineation of roles between county and district LSPs as suggested be sensible? (See paras 65 to 69)**

We agree that there needs to be a clear delineation of the current roles of the county and district-based LSPs but consider that the difficulties that exist in two tier areas are underplayed in the Consultation Paper. The Paper fails to take into account the current differing roles and responsibilities of county and district-based partnerships

Moving to a combination of the ‘Aggregation Model’ and the ‘ Added Value Model’ may be appropriate but we consider that the proposals contained in the Consultation Paper for achieving this are inappropriate and unrealistic.

District and County partnership groupings should be structured in a compatible way – with the role, membership and remit of Theme Groups for both County and District partnerships being directly linked to the functional LAA Blocks

**12: We believe that it is important that the LSP is made up of the thematic partnerships in the area together with an LSP board. What is your view?**

We agree but would repeat the need in two tier areas:

a) to ensure that county and district based partnerships are structured in a compatible manner linked to the LAA functional blocks with 'permeable boundaries' between the blocks in order to ensure overall coherence and that cross-cutting issues are addressed.

b) To radically examine current partnership groupings and accountability arrangements in order to ensure greater coherence, clarity and the avoidance of duplication.

**13: We believe that a rationalisation of local partnerships would help the LSP executive take an effective overview. Would clustering partnerships around the four LAA blocks be a sensible way to achieve this?**

Yes – see our response to 12 and 13 above.

The review of LSPs should be grasped as a golden opportunity to rationalise existing partnership groupings at both county and district level. This should be in line with the criteria in the Audit Commission publication 'Bridging the Accountability Gap'

**14: We believe that the geographic boundaries of partners within LSPs is important. What do you see as the opportunities for, and barriers to, co-terminosity shared geographic boundaries?**

We agree that co-terminosity of the geographic boundaries used by partner agencies is a helpful aspiration and that this applies not only at a macro level (e.g. at regional, sub regional, county and district level) but also at micro (i.e. community or neighbourhood) level.

More regard must be given to current partner boundary issues such as police health and CDRP re-organisations which will have a fundamental effect on boundary issues.

In particular, the 'direction of travel' in relation to PCT re-organisation (in Warwickshire the likelihood of a single PCT for the whole county) emphasises the need for health and social care issues to be joined up at a strategic level – i.e. through the county LSP.

Similarly, in relation to Police modernisation the establishment of a single Basic Command Unit covering the whole of the e county is a distinct possibility. As with the PCT re-organisation, this points towards the primacy of a county-wide LSP for all issues relating to Community Safety matters.

**15: Within the LSP framework and its established priorities, would the creation of single delivery vehicles to tackle particular issues be helpful?**

Yes – we agree that this could be helpful and it should be possible to achieve this through building on existing good practice. However, the current form of governance and accountability arrangements for LSPs may not be fit for the purpose of directly managing or overseeing single delivery vehicles.

**16: How can the neighbourhood and parish, tiers be involved most effectively on the LSP on a) the executive and b) individual thematic partnerships?**

By ensuring that these bodies have the capacity to be involved effectively and via representation from the local Association of Parish Councils. Further by ensuring that neighbourhood and parish plans feed in to the Sustainable Community Strategy and vice versa.

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

By ensuring that these bodies have the capacity to be involved effectively and via representation within both individual thematic partnerships and the executive arrangements for the LSPs

In relation to the private sector via a representative agency such as the Chamber of Commerce

In relation to the voluntary and community sector via the local VCS forum or its Council for Voluntary Service which should have the responsibility of empowering organisations, wherever possible, to represent themselves

In all respects, representatives should have the responsibility of ensuring that they use their best endeavors to ensure that their engagement in the LSP is fully representative of their sector / interest groups.

Key public sector partners in the LSPs should have a duty to engage with these sectors where appropriate.

**18: Would a duty to co-operate with the local authority, in producing and implementing the Community Strategy, help to set LSPs on a firmer footing and better enable their enhanced delivery co-ordination role?**

Yes – but on whom would this responsibility be imposed and how would it be managed?

**19: If so, what obligations, such as attendance, financial or staff support, would be useful to place on partners?**

Certainly attendance, engagement with the LSP by individuals who have the authority to bind their agency and wherever possible to offer financial and/or staff support. Additionally:

- the responsibility to provide and share relevant baseline information, evidence and analysis of local conditions.
- The responsibility to collaborate on the development, implementation and review of the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.
- The responsibility to work collectively to secure neighbourhood/citizen engagement in relation to the development and review of the Community Strategy.
- The responsibility to translate Community Strategy priorities into their own service plans

**20: If so, which public sector agencies would the duty be most sensibly placed on?**

County Council; District Council; Primary Care Trust; Police Force and relevant regional and sub-regional bodies.

**21: Should there be a statutory duty on local authorities and named partners to promote the engagement of the voluntary and community sectors in the LSP?**

Yes. This should be extended to give a responsibility to those partners or the LSP itself to between them support (through funding and otherwise) the capacity needs of the sectors to enable them to engage fully with the LSP

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

Yes although it would be wrong to assume that the accountability of the voluntary and community and private sectors can have be secured through the same framework as applies in relation to local authorities.

The current basis of LSPs means that there is inherent confusion and ambiguity around accountabilities and the Consultation Paper does little to address this.



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

This would be useful

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

To be actively engaged as partners, consultees and deliverers of approved strategies.

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

To carry out to the full their community leadership and scrutiny roles.

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

Through the active engagement of Cabinet Portfolio Holders and Party Spokespeople in the development and scrutiny of the LAA

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

Through awareness of the work of the LSP, and the Sustainable Community Strategy

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

This would best be achieved by ensuring that all public agencies have the responsibility to work collectively on promoting effective community engagement in not only shaping public services but also securing community/service user feedback on the services that they have received (see responses to Q1 and 6 above).

It is always difficult to balance the need for effective decision making within a partnership with the risk of excluding agencies which feel that they should have a 'seat at the top table'. Government needs to be very careful that it does not over prescribe in relation to the agencies that it feels must be engaged with as this could have an adverse impact on effective decision making.

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

Through Partnership Agreements and Protocols, Compacts and arrangements in respect of delegated decision making. However, we need to be aware of potential conflicts with the democratic mandate.

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

Through all partners agreeing a common communication strategy concerning the work of the LSP.

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

We have not yet undertaken a skills analysis and do not feel able to respond in detail to this question. However, this is likely to involve capacity building on core partnership skills, and skills to enhance community engagement. This is a key issue and in setting up our new LAA governance arrangements we will be ensuring that it is addressed.

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

In order to meet any new responsibilities or duties, we may require additional central government funding and the re-focusing of existing resources.

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

Through Local Councils and key partners from the private and voluntary/community sectors.

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

Through capacity building and the development of a coherent approach to these issues

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

Through capacity building, the development of a coherent approach to these issues and shared engagement via partnership mechanisms.