

## networkfareham Board Meeting Monday 1 December 2009

### Item 7 Briefing Paper Improving partnership working

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The Board met on 8 September 2009 and was advised about a meeting held with the chairmen of the thematic partnerships on 2 September 2009. The purpose of the meeting was twofold:
  - (a) to self-assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Local Strategic Partnership following the re-structure in 2007;
  - (b) to explore the role of the LSP in a two tier area.
2. "Working better together?" is a study published by the Audit Commission in April 2009.<sup>1</sup> The study contains self-assessment questions to help the LSP to review its arrangements for performance, resource management and governance.
3. It soon became clear that much of the Audit Commission's approach concentrates on LSPs managed by unitary and upper-tier authorities.
4. In evaluating how well networkfareham is doing, the opportunity was taken to review its role in a two-tier context. This was seen to come at a critical time as the Hampshire Local Area Agreement moves from the planning stage towards commissioning and resourcing new initiatives.
5. The Board agreed to ask the officers to prepare a report for further consideration at this meeting.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT

6. The chairmen of the thematic partnerships were invited to consider the summary questions and a suggested response and suggested actions – as set out in [Appendix A](#) to this report.
7. The main points arising from the discussion were:

#### The LSP's long-term goals

- Ensure that the three-year refresh ties in with the refresh of other local and regional strategies and Hampshire's Local Area Agreement.
- Need to work from the bottom up and reflect community priorities.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/communitysafety/workingbettertogether/Pages/workingbettertogether\\_copy.aspx](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/communitysafety/workingbettertogether/Pages/workingbettertogether_copy.aspx)

- Importance of lobbying/influencing role of the LSP.
- The proposed actions in Appendix A were agreed.

#### **Leading the LSP and creating a culture of working together**

- Not a Fareham Borough Council Partnership but all partners together.
- Good links have been established with councillors.
- Difficulties around lobbying/influencing when no response is received.
- The proposed actions in Appendix A were agreed.

#### **Meetings and messages**

- Fareham Environment and Transport Partnership – needs more external partners.
- Limited county involvement and leadership.
- The proposed actions in Appendix A were agreed with the proviso that the induction material should include information on partnership infrastructure.

#### **Benefits of collaboration**

- LSP needs to consider the risk of not collaborating.
- The LSP is more focused now.
- Measurable outcomes are not always possible.
- Need to consider the long-term benefits.
- The proposed actions in Appendix A were agreed.

#### **Getting things done**

- The proposed actions in Appendix A were agreed.

#### **Common frameworks**

- The proposed actions in Appendix A were agreed.

#### **Shared systems**

- There should be a presentation to Thematic Partnership Chairs on the Hampshire County Council Grant Finder to assist with identifying funding sources.
- The proposed actions in Appendix A were agreed.

8. The meeting agreed to commend the suggested actions to the Board.

#### **THE LSP'S ROLE IN A TWO-TIER AREA**

9. The chairmen of the thematic partnerships were invited to turn to the discussion paper – set out in [Appendix B](#) to this report – and consider the LSP's role at a district level.

10. The main points arising from the discussion were:
  - Need resource for delivery.
  - Importance of Fareham Park Project.
  - County involvement.
  - Economic Development Partnership experiencing several difficulties – engaging business, establishing role in light of regional bodies such as PUSH.
11. The meeting heard that the Chairman of the Economic Development Partnership is standing down due to relocation outside the Fareham area. Subsequently, the LSP Chairman has said that he is willing to chair the partnership in the short-term until a replacement can be found.
12. It was recognised that for the LSP to be effective it has to concentrate on 'doing what it can do'. The Fareham Park Project presents a timely opportunity for all the relevant agencies to come together locally to pool their resources and improve the quality of life for the community.

### **CONCLUSION**

13. Overall, the self–assessment and the chairmen's workshop have shown the LSP to be working well particularly at Board level. There is scope to make further progress by reviewing the framework within which the thematic partnerships operate and their links to key strategies, the local area agreement and the Fareham Park Project.
14. The lack of funding available to the LSP has demonstrated the need to encourage agencies to come together and pool their resources on local projects that will make a difference to local people.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

15. The Board is recommended to:
  - a) adopt the suggested actions set out in Appendix A;
  - b) actively promote Fareham Park as its flagship project; and
  - c) review the partnership framework within which the thematic partnerships operate.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS FOR IMPROVED PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

#### **1. THE LSP'S LONG-TERM GOALS**

##### **Summary questions**

1. How well does the sustainable community strategy (SCS) reflect LSP members' ambition and priorities?
2. How well is the long-term SCS embodied in the shorter-term local area agreement (LAA)?
3. How well do partners share performance and other information to enable the LSP to track need and progress across all SCS priorities?

##### **Response**

The SCS has an overarching vision supported by an 'ambition' for each of the seven thematic partnerships. The long-term objectives are based on information gathered from community consultation, annual residents' surveys, the LSP's partners and national trends reflected locally. Disaggregating data to form a 'Picture of Fareham' has proved difficult but convincing evidence was found of a pocket of deprivation in the Hill Park area of the Borough. The LSP will seek to achieve LAA targets but not at the expense of over-riding local priorities. Progress updates are presented to the Board by each of the members representing the thematic partnerships.

##### **Suggested action**

- a) To refresh the SCS every three years.
- b) To develop a picture of the quality of life in Fareham based on the national indicator dataset and broken down into neighbourhood profiles.

#### **2. LEADING THE LSP AND CREATING A CULTURE OF WORKING TOGETHER**

##### **Summary questions**

1. How well are elected members engaged at board and theme group levels?
2. How well do elected members on overview and scrutiny challenge your LSP and partners' performance?
3. How well do chief executives and other senior managers work together to achieve the LSP's vision?
4. How well does your LSP board provide strategic leadership?
5. How well does the board work to develop effective joint working and trust at all levels between the LSP partners?
6. How well does the LSP core team support LAA delivery?

##### **Response**

At least one member of Fareham Borough Council's Executive sits on the LSP Board and each of the thematic partnerships. In addition, the Leader of the Council is an LSP Board member as is an elected member representing Hampshire County Council. A Chairman's agenda meeting is held before Board meetings. The LSP's minutes are reported to Fareham BC's Executive and published on the LSP's website. There is limited or no challenge to the LSP and partners' performance. The LSP has a clear and ambitious vision but a culture of performance still needs to be embedded. The Hill Park Project is providing an excellent opportunity for developing effective joint working and trust at all levels. The LSP has limited or no resources to coordinate LAA delivery.

##### **Suggested action**

- a) To coordinate the public consultation activities of partners.
- b) To develop and implement a performance management framework.
- c) To raise public awareness of the networkfareham brand.

- d) To review the extent to which the style of meetings and other arrangements support or hinder joint working.
- e) To review and manage the progress the LSP is making towards achieving the targets it contributes to in the Hampshire LAA.

### **3. MEETINGS AND MESSAGES**

#### **Summary questions**

1. How well do your LSP meetings reflect a culture of partnership and mutual respect?
2. How was the chair of your LSP chosen?
3. How well does strategic/board membership reflect local diversity?
4. How well does the strategic board agenda reflect the different interests of public sector, private sector and third sector representatives?
5. How (if relevant) has the LSP responded to the challenges of multi-tier working?
6. How well is LSP activity and LAA performance communicated to partners and to the wider community?

#### **Response**

Overall, the LSP has a positive style. The reconfiguration of the Board has made networking between key partners easier. Partners meet as equals. A sense of trust is developing. Discussion and debate is encouraged. Agenda items are timed and a special meeting will be called for important issues. The LSP has a partnership agreement and there are core terms of reference for adoption by each of the thematic partnerships. Although meetings are held mostly at Fareham BC's offices the location and times appear to be accessible to all partners. The Board's AGM agreed the Leader of Fareham BC's proposal that Councillor Cartwright be appointed as Chairman. The LSP's minutes are then received and noted by Fareham BC's Executive. The Board understands the Government's expectation that local authority leaders will play a leading role on LSPs and that local authority executive portfolio holders will play a key role on relevant thematic partnerships. Board members are expected to be able to make strategic decisions and demonstrate senior-level commitment to joint decision-making and action. The LSP is aware that the national failure to align planning and reporting cycles makes it difficult for local agencies to align performance and resource management systems. Hampshire County Council tends to adopt a top-down approach to district councils. The LSP's website is available for partners and the wider community.

#### **Suggested action**

- a) To develop a programme of induction training for new members.

### **4. THE BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION**

#### **Summary questions**

1. How does your LSP board ensure that the contributions of different partners build towards the agreed common goals in the SCS and LAA?
2. How well does your LSP facilitate networking between partners?
3. How well does your LSP assist partners in planning their contributions to achieving common goals.
4. How well do partners work together to exploit the potential efficiency gains from joint working?

#### **Response**

Overall, the LSP relies on the trust between partners for its success in dealing with local priorities. There are county-wide networks for LSP chairmen and support staff to meet up and share experience and good practice. The LSP's goals reflect local priorities and are evidence based. The LSP is clear that when agreeing a joint set of priorities it has a role in influencing how partners' resources are deployed to achieve them. It is hoped that the Hill Park Project will encourage partners to work together to achieve efficient outcomes for local communities.

### **Suggested action**

- a) To target key influencers to win the resources and support needed to achieve the LSP's goals.
- b) To raise the LSP's profile in the community by publicising its major achievements.

## **5. GETTING THINGS DONE**

### **Summary questions**

1. How well is performance management steered by your LSP?
2. How well is financial management steered by your LSP?
3. How well do the LSP board and its executive groups influence mainstream resources to achieve local outcomes?
4. Are partners aligning their internal planning, monitoring, and evaluation processes to focus on LAA and SCS priorities?

### **Response**

The thematic partnerships are responsible for monitoring their performance and reporting high level issues to the Board. The Annual Report to the Board sets out the budget performance for the previous year and an estimated budget for the year ahead together with details of the projects the LSP has funded. The Area Based Grant and Performance Reward Grant are allocated by Hampshire CC. The LSP is lacking in resources and has no real mechanism for assigning resources towards achieving the goals of the SCS and LAA. The thematic partnerships are required to demonstrate their linkages to LAA targets and are the delivery mechanism for Fareham's SCS.

### **Suggested action**

- a) To jointly agree performance management arrangements.

## **6. COMMON FRAMEWORKS**

### **Summary questions**

1. Does your LSP have an agreed performance management framework that recognises and builds on the strategic, executive and operational roles?
2. Is there an agreed data quality policy and action plan with clear ownership?
3. How robust is your LSP's (and partners') approach to delivering performance against LAA targets?
4. How well does your LSP work to keep its evidence base up-to-date?
5. How well do your LSP partners understand the costs of maintaining the LSP?
6. How well have LSP partners made decisions about aligning or pooling of budgets?

### **Response**

The LSP needs a performance monitoring and reporting framework for shared objectives. Fareham BC is developing guidance based on the Hampshire LAA's Data Quality and Sharing Protocol. Most of the grant income from Hampshire CC is likely to be committed to keeping existing services going thereby reducing any flexibility for second-tier LSPs to exert any real influence. The evidence base is to be developed further and brought in line with national indicators. The LSP's income and expenditure is set out in the annual report. Partners tend to administer their own resources and contribute to the achievement of targets at their discretion.

### **Suggested action**

- a) To agree a performance monitoring and reporting framework.
- b) To agree a data quality policy and action plan.
- c) To carry out an assessment of the risks to the partnership.

## **7. SHARED SYSTEMS**

### **Summary questions**

1. How does the LSP ensure there is accountability, through its member organisations, for its actions?
2. How far do the LSP and its partners have a shared performance system that extends across the partnership layers?
3. How well is performance reporting tailored to board, executive and operational level needs?
4. How developed is joint commissioning in the LSP?
5. How well are elected members involved in challenging LAA performance through the scrutiny process?
6. Have the LSP and its partners used benchmarking to assess the effectiveness of the LSP?
7. How well do partners understand each other's financial systems?
8. How far are partners' business plans aligned with SCS and LAA priorities?

### **Response**

The LSP reports on activities, successes and failures to partner organisations, the public and auditors, inspectors and other stakeholders. The Board approved a complaints procedure in June 2009. A shared performance system is unlikely to be justifiable for a second-tier LSP. The Board receives performance reports as specific projects progress or issues arise that are in need of resolution by way of a change in strategic direction by one or more of the partners organisations. The LSP has not undertaken any joint commissioning or benchmarking activity. However, there is wide ranging support from partners to investigate the reasons for deprivation in the Hill Park area of the Borough and a multi-agency conference of service providers active in the area has been held to explore the issues and map a way forward.

### **Suggested action**

- a) To identify budgets that can be influenced by the LSP.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **WORKING TOGETHER IN A TWO-TIER AREA**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Partnership working between authorities within a county area is challenging. The reasons for it seem to cluster around two issues:
  - a) the different layers of local government and the multiple partnership structures that spring up around them;
  - b) tackling cross-cutting issues can lead to:
    - different perspectives on an issue or problem;
    - different approaches to tackling it;
    - different understandings of 'place';
    - potentially conflicting agendas for the same locality;
2. The challenges tend to change as areas move from planning to delivery. For example, challenges relate to size and complexity when identifying who needs to be engaged in joint working, what activity is already going on together with mapping the resources being spent on different activities. Differences in perspective may then arise as consideration is given to what new activities and services might be required. Organisational and political issues come to the fore as plans progress and shift to the commissioning and resourcing of new initiatives.
3. Some issues cannot be addressed by either county or district LSPs acting alone. Economic, environmental and social issues are not confined to local authority boundaries.

#### **ADDRESSING THE ISSUES**

4. The LSP has reached a crossroads. As the Sustainable Community Strategy nears completion, attention will shift towards implementation and the ability of the LSP to deliver its objectives.
5. Given the scarcity of resources, the LSP's role would be best served by concentrating on 'doing what it can do' - that is engaging in activities such as the Fareham Park Project where multi-agency working can make things change for the better. An effective approach would be through:
  - a) establishing a shared understanding of the totality of resources that local partners can bring to bear;
  - b) sharing information and identifying what works and what does not in terms of service provision.
6. The following sections outline areas where the LSP could consider developing a more effective approach to delivering its shared vision.

### **Quality of Life**

7. A clear 'Picture of Fareham' needs to be established. This will need to be built on robust data available from sources such as the national indicator dataset as well as surveys and consultations with local communities.
8. The aim would be to give a portrayal of the Borough of Fareham and its population across a range of general, social, economic and environmental topics with comparative data given at district, county, regional and national levels as appropriate. The indicators should focus on data that help partners to make informed decisions that help to deliver the LSP's strategies and plans and improve people's quality of life.

### **Induction**

9. A successful LSP depends on individual members playing a full role in steering and supporting the partnership. An induction process for new members would help to:
  - a) build an understanding of the purpose and nature of the LSP, its context, its strategies and how partners work together to deliver success;
  - b) provide opportunities to get to know fellow LSP members and their organisations.

### **Lobbying and influencing**

10. There is a need to re-energise the LSP and use it as a more effective vehicle for lobbying and influence. It needs a clear focus and a few specific activities to demonstrate partnership working. Partners need to see the LSP as a useful vehicle to help them deliver their goals. Partners from the various agencies can use the LSP to provide them with a clear steer on spending resources in ways which meet the needs of the community.

### **Links with the thematic partnerships**

11. To ensure the effective delivery of agreed priorities, the thematic partnerships should underpin and support the LSP Board. This support should include:
  - a) providing the LSP Board with sufficient information to make decisions;
  - b) being directly involved in decision-making processes;
  - c) co-ordinating the delivery of the relevant priorities agreed by the wider LSP.

12. There should be clear lines of accountability between the thematic partnerships and the LSP Board that demonstrate how and when the thematic partnerships can influence the decision making process and hold, and be held, accountable by the LSP Board. The 'Progress Updates' to the Board would benefit from being refreshed to focus on key issues and stimulate debate.

### **Community consultation and engagement**

13. Further development of the LSP's website will help in raising awareness of the LSP's work - information on current issues, consultations, the sustainable community strategy, reports on meetings and reciprocal links with partners' websites. The opportunity should be taken to consider combining consultations wherever possible.
14. The LSP needs to ensure that its sustainable community strategy is firmly grounded in effective local consultation and that partners are making best use of the communication channels available. Additional support needs to be given to minority communities to organise themselves and get their voices heard effectively.

### **Performance management**

15. The LSP needs to adopt a performance management framework that provides evidence of how the LSP is achieving better outcomes for local people and helping to identify what needs to be done to improve performance. It is about:
  - a) ensuring progress against the objectives set out in Fareham's Sustainable Community Strategy and the local targets set out in the Hampshire Local Area Agreement;
  - b) measuring progress in narrowing the gap locally between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the Borough;
  - c) prioritising what gets done and making sure there are enough resources to do it;
  - d) ensuring the LSP is adding value and delivering real improvements;
  - e) motivating partners and working constructively together;
  - f) ensuring that community participation, diversity and equalities are integral to the delivery of outcomes.
16. In adding value, the LSP would be looking for opportunities to improve co-operation / co-ordination between partners to achieve outcomes that no one partner can achieve alone. Cross-cutting issues are particularly prone to drift if no one takes on a leading role.