

## **Membership**

### **Councillors**

Joyce Bosnjak (Chair)  
Chris Barnfather  
Michael Bennett ●  
Stuart Wallace ●  
Martin Wright  
Brian Wombwell

● absent

### **Officers**

Keith Ford – Senior Governance Officer  
Matthew Garrard – Senior Scrutiny Officer  
Ashley Jackson – Scrutiny Research and Information Officer  
Tony Jacobs – Manager, Strategic Partnerships  
Paul Roberts – Partnership Manager

## **1. Election of Chairman**

Councillor Joyce Bosnjak was elected as Chairman of the Sub Committee.

## **2. Membership**

The membership of the Sub Committee was noted as follows: -  
Councillors Barnfather, Bennett, Bosnjak, Wallace, Wright and Wombwell.

## **3. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bennett and Wallace.

## **4. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interests were made.

## **5. Introduction and Scope of Review**

Matthew Garrard, Senior Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report and explained that the review would focus on the Strategic Partnership and District Partnerships only, not including statutory partnerships such as Crime and Disorder or Children and Young People's. It was clarified that as the issue of Crime and Disorder in Ashfield had received a red flag in the Comprehensive Area Assessment this would be addressed by other scrutiny arrangements within that District. The Chair explained that she hoped to

widen the scope of the ongoing Joint Local Area Agreement (LAA) Scrutiny Committee to enable more co-operative scrutiny working between the county, District and Borough Councils.

Tony Jacobs, Manager, Strategic Partnerships and Paul Roberts, Partnership Manager introduced a document titled 'Briefing on Local Strategic Partnership (LSPs) and the County Council's Engagement', copies of which were circulated at the meeting, which explained: -

- the history of the development of LSPs;
- the aims of the Community Strategy and its development, including the role of LSPs;
- the role of elected members, officers and the County Council's Members Forums in supporting LSPs and developing local joined up working; and
- the outcomes of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) peer challenges undertaken in November-December 2007.

During discussion, the following points were raised: -

- the Performance Management Framework was meant to monitor the outcomes from Partnerships. The peer challenges in 2007 had criticised existing practice and consequent improvement plans were now being implemented. Newark and Sherwood LSP produced an Annual Review, highlighting work undertaken and achievements, although this good practice had not been replicated by other LSPs yet;
- the County Council's Members Forums had been established to act as a link between elected Members and LSPs. However, these links had been broken by each Forum individually over time, which was possibly indicative of Members' views of the LSPs and what they achieved. The lack of a definitive remit for the Council within the LSP limited the potential impact which the Council could have;
- each LSP Board had an elected Member and a Lead Officer representative. Members felt that Partners' expectations of those representatives to make decisions on behalf of the Council were unrealistic. District Officer Groups also met to bring together key officers and members, linking into individual service departments;
- Members wanted to know the cost, in terms of money, time and resources, of inputting into the LSPs, to ensure that this was the most cost-effective means of working in partnership. It was suggested that it would also be helpful to define success, clarify what the Council wanted to achieve through the LSPs and develop a plan to monitor and manage outcomes;
- the LSPs and Community Strategy offered an opportunity to join up services, via the various thematic groups. The priorities of these groups needed to be informed by the community. Members felt that LSPs were not good at linking with communities and could take the credit for joint working being undertaken by partners on an ongoing

basis. Officers felt that LSPs were not good at promoting themselves and their achievements although opinions differed as to whether a low profile was actually more appropriate, with funding focussed on service delivery rather than branding and marketing. The Countywide Partnership and the LAA had encouraged LSPs to record their achievements;

- Members felt that alternative partnerships and mechanisms were already in place to undertake the role of the LSP, with more potential for engagement of Councillors (whereas currently they could feel excluded if not directly involved). Members acknowledged the joint work that was undertaken within the thematic groups. Officers felt that criticisms of a lack of engagement were aimed more at the Board level;
- Members felt that their key roles within the LSPs were to influence and act as community champions. There had been criticism in the past arising from partnership meetings due to the Council's representatives not being able to make decisions to commit or pool resources at such meetings, due to local authorities' decision making structures. More creative ways of sharing resources were being considered by partners, such as sharing officers rather than funding. Members highlighted examples of good partnership working in public protection, as a result of partner representatives having the authority to make such decisions. The Comprehensive Area Assessment process would help to ensure a forum existed for senior colleagues within partner agencies to meet together to consider the adequacy of resources;
- The Nottinghamshire Partnership's primary role was to deliver the Community Strategy through the LAA. Of the 23 stretch targets in the 2006-09 LAA (relating to crime, health, environment and children and young people), 15 had been met, whilst some of the other targets were not met due to initial baseline inaccuracies. The Partnership would receive reward grants to fund further improvements to meet the 35 targets in the 2<sup>nd</sup> LAA;
- The links between District local plans, LSPs, and Community Strategies and the Countywide Community Strategy, priorities, and LAA targets were clarified for Members. Although a Countywide body was needed to ensure that a Countywide Community Strategy was developed, resourced and monitored, Members needed to consider whether the existing structures were the most appropriate and cost-effective means of achieving those aims. Other alternative vehicles for undertaking the monitoring role, such as scrutiny bodies in the District Councils, the existing Joint LAA Committee and Members Forums, needed to be explored to clarify whether they could effectively take on that role, without duplication of effort;
- the various District Community Strategies had priorities in common, for example public safety issues and reducing obesity levels, but the County Council was not necessarily the lead partner on such issues, with the lead role for each target taken by the most appropriate

agency. Members felt that they needed to be informed of performance on such issues and to ensure that people could be held to account;

- Members underlined the need for a realistic view of the level of impact which partnerships could have and clarity about what would have been achieved by agencies anyway without the partnerships in place. Officers felt that the main task of partnerships was to co-ordinate efforts to ensure targets could be achieved. Although the development of the partnerships had enabled co-operation between partners, such co-operation was now a statutory duty. Any record of partnerships' achievements needed to specify how people's lives had been changed by such joint working, ideally including some cost-benefit analysis (although it was acknowledged that such analysis could bring additional costs, as highlighted by the previous practice of producing costed delivery plans). Officers underlined that the cost of supporting partnerships, in terms of officer and member attendance at meetings and support from relevant staff, was not great in relation to the overall Community Strategy spend and elements of that involvement would not necessarily realise cash savings if those people were deployed in other ways;
- it was clarified that no LSPs had yet been the subject of a scrutiny review at a local level and that this Sub Committee could consider recommending that each District Council undertake such a review of LSP performance, looking at specific priorities. The Audit Commission had audited the LAA in 2008, with the main finding being the need for decent governance arrangements. The Community Area Assessment was intended to look at partners' collective performance in the County and the Countywide Partnership had established a reference group to develop an action plan in response. The previous peer challenges of LSPs had underlined the need for improved publicity, although the methodology and format of these reviews were not particularly robust. It was felt that these reports could be shared at the next meeting of this Sub Committee for information;
- Members were welcome to observe the meeting of the Strategic Partnership Board taking place at Holme Pierrepont on 14 December 2009 which would include a discussion about the Performance Reward Grant. Tony Jacobs agreed to circulate dates of forthcoming LSP meetings to members.

The meeting closed at 3.47 pm.

CHAIR

Ref: m\_7Dec09