

**REPORT TO STOCKTON RENAISSANCE
10TH SEPTEMBER 2013**

LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (LSP) – A BRIGHTER BOROUGH FOR ALL

Summary

This report presents the proposals for updating the strategic document for the LSP, the partnership arrangements and infrastructure. The proposals take account of changes in statutory requirements associated with the current LSP infrastructure and discussions with stakeholders.

The recommendations presented take account of all of these changes and feedback.

The report also includes summary information relating to the review of the Compact, which is an agreement that aims to ensure that the partners within the LSP infrastructure work effectively to achieve common goals and outcomes for the benefit of local residents.

Recommendations

Stockton Local Strategic Partnership agree:

- a) the revised approach to the Local Strategic Partnership.
- b) to a further review of the LSP arrangements in 2014/15.
- c) to replace the Sustainable Community Strategy as the key strategic document for the LSP with the Family Poverty Framework renamed as 'A Brighter Borough for All – Tackling Family Poverty across Stockton-on-Tees'.
- d) the separate branding for Stockton Renaissance be abolished with the arrangements named as Stockton Local Strategic Partnership and Area Partnerships as Locality Forums.
- e) note the arrangements for reviewing the Compact

Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

There is no longer a statutory requirement to have a local strategic partnership or a Sustainable Community Strategy. The report and recommendations take account of this and that there are some elements within the LSP infrastructure that remain statutorily required. The recommendations are also based on changes to the LSP infrastructure that take account of feedback from Members, officers and key stakeholders about the on going need for some elements of the infrastructure and proposals to build on what has worked well.

DETAIL

1. The Renaissance LSP structure has been subject to several reviews over the years, the last one being in 2009. Since then a number of changes have taken place, particularly over the last 12-18 months that necessitated a refresh of the current arrangements. These changes are outlined in paragraphs 2 to 9 below.
2. Local authorities are no longer statutorily required to have a Local Strategic Partnership or its associated Sustainable Community Strategy. Both of these have historically served the Council, its key strategic partners and local voluntary and community sector representatives well in terms helping to develop a shared vision and action plan for the borough linked to Promoting Achievement and Tackling Disadvantage and delivered a range of key outcomes linked, for example, to the Local Area Agreements and Neighbourhood Renewal funding.

3. The Health and Social Care Act led to the establishment of Health and Well Being Boards as a statutory committee of the Council as a forum where key leaders from the health and care system work together to improve the health and well being of the local population and reduce health inequalities.
4. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act introduced the role of Police and Crime Commissioners and reinforced the statutory role of local community safety partnerships originally laid down in the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998.
5. The establishment and on going development of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the associated statement of ambition and proposals around the emerging City Deal, has become the key forum for setting the vision, strategy, action plan and business engagement around economic development and enterprise. This, alongside the Stockton Business Forum arrangements replaces the need for the current Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership within the LSP infrastructure.
6. The creation of a multi-agency Fuel Poverty Partnership was a key recommendation from a recent Scrutiny Review of Affordable Warmth and was agreed by Cabinet with a request that it was linked in to the emerging arrangements for the LSP.
7. Consultation with voluntary and community sector representatives on the various elements of the LSP infrastructure and with members, officers and other key stakeholders indicated the need for VCS representatives to be better supported to effectively engage productively in LSP meetings at board and partnership level and for protocols around representation to be more clearly understood.
8. A number of the 'communities of interest' groups within the current structure no longer exist (for example, Integrated Service Areas), others have been integrated within other arrangements (for example the BME and Faith Networks have been embedded within the Voice hub), new groups have emerged (for example Community First Panels) and others currently sit outside of the LSP arrangements (for example Infinity – the financial inclusion forum).
9. There are a range of views in relation to the effectiveness of the Area Partnerships as a vehicle for identifying and tackling issues at a local level with some clear examples of where these have been valued as a means through which to route concerns, identify and deal with potential problems before they are escalated and (following changes to the process based on feedback from last year) as a means for dealing with the Area Transport Strategy allocations. In addition views indicate a need for the Area Partnerships to be more focussed on collective problem-solving at a local level linked to the key priorities within key strategic documents such as the Council Plan, the Health and Well Being Strategy and the Family Poverty Framework.
10. Research nationally and regionally indicates that a range of different approaches have been taken in relation to local strategic partnerships, with no single approach emerging as the consistent alternative.
11. The changes and context described above was used to engage with LSP members through the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the thematic groups, the Area Partnerships, the Communities of Interest groups and other key stakeholders. They were also asked to identify what they felt worked well and what didn't and also what they felt was the value of the LSP and what they would do if it didn't exist.

THE PROPOSALS

12. The proposed new infrastructure for the LSP is shown diagrammatically at **Appendix 1** with accountability lines, relationships and key strategic documents clearly indicated.

Stockton Renaissance Board (Stockton Local Strategic Partnership)

13. The outcome from the discussions with stakeholders demonstrated an intrinsic value in the LSP as a forum through which the various organisations within the public sector, private sector and the voluntary and community sector come together to improve Stockton-on-Tees for the benefit of its residents, through a common and shared vision and set of objectives. There was a strong desire to change the nature of the LSP Board from a series of regular scheduled meetings that endorsed some reports, received others for information or as a means through which to route consultation (many of which were also presented in other arenas) to a forum in which the various partners could come together 2 or 3 times a year to make a collective and positive difference on specific topic areas linked to the strategic plans of key partners and emerging policy areas e.g., Council Plan, Health and Well Being Strategy, Family Poverty and linked to the agendas within the thematic groups. This is an approach that has worked well with the annual Renaissance events.
14. In addition an annual 'business meeting' would receive an update on progress against the 'Brighter Future for All' strategic document as well as presentations from each of the Locality Forums (see below).

Area Partnerships (Locality Forums)

15. Whilst some concerns linked to the Area Partnerships were raised, overall the feedback from stakeholders was that they needed to be retained as they often provide a forum through which to effectively deal with issues before they need to be escalated to senior officials and or politicians. There were also examples quoted of where they have been a successful vehicle to promote democratic involvement.
16. Feedback on the Area Partnerships also indicated a need for them to be more focussed to the core LSP strategies and to establish local priorities linked to these and that the Area Partnerships need to be a place where the members of the partnership work together as a collective for the good of the area through 'task and finish groups' and not just as a place to hold partners to account. The Area Partnerships are where the Borough Council, Town and Parish Councils, other key agencies and resident and community groups come together. There was a strong recognition that support in setting priorities that are strategically linked at a local level to the Family Poverty Framework, the Health & Well Being Strategy and the Council Plan is needed and in some cases better use of demographic and other information would help this considerably.
17. It is proposed therefore that the Area Partnerships remain, renamed as Locality Forums, with the issues identified in paragraph 7 being addressed in revised terms of reference and training and support. An example terms of reference is included in Appendix 2.
18. At the same time as the work was underway relating to the refresh of the LSP, Catalyst was consulting with the key stakeholders and the VCS around 'Voice'. Their consultation echoed the findings from the LSP refresh work the need for VCS representatives to be clear about their roles and responsibilities in terms of their representation within LSP arrangements and they need to be better supported to do so. To this end 'role descriptors' and responsibilities are proposed for representatives alongside training for those who are elected by the sector to take up representative positions on behalf of the sector and pre-agenda meetings will be held with them. This support will be delivered through Catalyst under the terms of their existing contract.

Thematic Partnerships

19. In relation to the thematic partnerships the Health and Well Being Board (HWBB) is a statutory board which has embedded the former Children & Young People's Trust Board arrangements within its governance through the Children & Young People's Health and Well Being sub-group.

The HWBB is supported by the Health and Well Being Partnership which is accountable to the HWBB.

20. The Safer Stockton Partnership will continue to exist in its current form as required by statute.
21. As a result of the developments associated with the LEP and the Business Forum identified at paragraph 5 it is proposed that the Economic Development, Regeneration and Transport Partnership be dissolved. Where there are economic development and/or regeneration issues that relate solely to the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees the Head of Regeneration will meet as appropriate with the Chairs of the Locality Forums and where activity relates to a specific locality officers will attend the appropriate Locality Forum on a one-off or 'task and finish' basis.
22. The Area Transport Steering Group aspect of the LSP is, on the whole, seen as being positive by the majority of the stakeholders within the LSP infrastructure and is recommended to remain as part of the proposed arrangements. Following feedback on the process last year changes were made to the process and procedure which have been acknowledged and welcomed. Consideration will be given to a funding mechanism based on relative population.
23. The Environment Partnership will be dissolved in its current guise but will meet as a "community of interest group" on an annual basis. .
24. The Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership will remain as it is valued as a key strategic forum for discussion on housing related issues and was deemed to be particularly valuable in the context of welfare reform.
25. The Culture Partnership will also be dissolved in its current form and move to an annual meeting.
26. The new Fuel Poverty Partnership created as an outcome from the scrutiny review of affordable warmth will be brought in to the LSP infrastructure. Terms of reference and membership are currently being developed.
27. Historically, Infinity, the Financial Inclusion Forum, has been outside of the LSP arrangements. It is proposed that discussions take place with the Chair/Vice Chair with the aim of linking Infinity to the LSP given the potential impact of welfare reform on local residents and key public sector organisations.
28. One of the priorities within the Family Poverty Framework is to give children the best start in life. Clearly education and learning have a role within this and it is proposed that the Campus Stockton Collaborative Partnership are approached to be part of the relationship infrastructure, but not categorised as a formal thematic partnership, as it is a schools-led initiative with its own governance arrangements in place.
29. It is proposed that where a thematic partnership remains in place, VCS representatives should be selected to represent the sector (rather than elected) due to the more specialist nature of a thematic.

Communities of Interest Groups

30. There are a number of Communities of Interest Groups that exist within the current structure to facilitate and enable specific groups within local communities to engage in the development and delivery of policy and strategy. It is recommended that those that still exist are retained and in addition work is undertaken to establish a Community of Interest Group for Armed Forces linked to the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

31. The BME and Faith Network have historically been supported by the VCS and will remain part of the Voice function within Catalyst and the Community Empowerment Support contract currently held by Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association, pending the outcome of the review of these agreed by Council as part of the budget decisions on 12th June 2013.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

32. Historically the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 'Promoting Achievement and Tackling Disadvantage' has been the strategic plan underpinning the LSP. As a result of the changes identified in paragraphs 2 to 9 of this report many of the elements within the SCS are embedded within other strategic plans such as the Health and Well Being Strategy and associated delivery plan, the LEP Statement of Ambition and the emerging City Deal and the Crime and Community Safety Plan. The remainder of the key objectives within the SCS are contained within the Family Poverty Framework which was agreed by the LSP and Cabinet in 2012 and is a partnership plan. It is therefore recommended that the SCS is replaced by the Family Poverty Framework as the key delivery plan for the LSP, with its focus on tackling disadvantage and protecting the vulnerable. It is further proposed that this strategic document is renamed as 'Brighter Borough for All' with a strapline 'Tackling Family Poverty in Stockton-on-Tees' recognising our aspirations for our residents.

REVIEW OF THE COMPACT

33. The Compact is an agreement amongst the partners within the LSP infrastructure to comply with a set of shared principles and joint commitments to build relationships and work together effectively. The authority and its partners have historically signed up to the Compact, which was due for renewal in 2012. Agreement was reached with the VCS that any review of the Compact should take place after the refresh of the LSP.

34. There is a national Compact in place and it is supported nationally and locally by Compact Voice. It is essentially a set of principles, agreed by the statutory, voluntary and community sectors, whereby all parties agree to work together, recognise and value the diversity that exists in society generally and in Stockton-on-Tees. It can cover a variety of factors including consultation, representation of the Third Sector, commissioning etc.

35. The review of the Compact is part of the business plan for 13/14 for the Policy, Improvement and Engagement and will be presented to Cabinet for approval.

NEXT STEPS

36. Subject to the Local Strategic Partnership agreeing with the proposals set out in this paper, the Community Engagement Team and Democratic Services will:

- make the necessary changes to the various terms of reference
- work with Catalyst to communicate the decision to the voluntary and community sector
- work with Catalyst to ensure selection of representatives to the remaining thematic partnerships and election to the Area Partnerships (following the development of the role descriptors and training)
- communicate the decision to all of the relevant stakeholders within the LSP infrastructure
- instigate discussions with Infinity and the Campus Stockton Collaborative
- make the necessary amendments to the 'Outside Bodies' list
- make the necessary amendments to the Cabinet report template and advise officers

37. In light of the on going changes impacting on all sectors represented within the LSP infrastructure it is recommended that these arrangements are subject to review in 2015.

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