

## **Cabinet - 1 March 2006**

### **Consultation response “Local Strategic Partnerships – shaping their future”**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Tom Ansell, Leader

**Service Area:** All

**Wards:** All

**Forward Plan:** No

#### **Summary of report**

This was launched by the Government in December 2005; the deadline for responses is the 3<sup>rd</sup> March. The response focuses on the key issues of governance and accountability and the role of the local authority. The Council constitution requires responses to Government Consultations to be submitted to Cabinet

The consultation document examines the future role of Local Strategic Partnerships, their governance and accountability, and the increasing importance of their capacity to deliver Sustainable Community Strategies.

The ODPM sees the role of LSPs:

- 1) To be the Partnership of Partnerships in an area, providing the strategic co-ordination within the area and linking with other plans and bodies established at the regional and sub-regional and local level.
- 2) To ensure 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 founded on a solid evidence base
- 3) To develop and drive the effective delivery of their LAA
- 4) To agree an action plan for achieving the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities, including the LAA outcomes.

This is an acknowledgement that the role of LSP's is changing significantly with the increased responsibilities for LAA's and other delivery programmes. The paper responds to many of the issues raised since the establishment of LSP's around governance and accountability and sets out a clearer set of statements around these issues as compared with the original 2001 guidance.

This paper sets out a Council response to the issues and questions raised in the consultation. Key issues for the Council raised are around:

- The Role of the LSP Sustainable Community strategies and LSP's
- The Governance of the Partnership and ensuring wide representation
- Accountability, the Councils role as the accountable body and the role of the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny in this respect

The Government is considering through this consultation the need for shape and content of future guidance and potential legislation on these issues. At that stage there may need to be further consideration of our local arrangements and structures.

The Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership will also be making a response to the consultation.

## **Recommendations**

That the Cabinet agrees to submit the response to the Consultation attached as Appendix1

## **Resource and legal considerations**

The Consultation paper positions local councils (and their executives) as responsible for the actions of LSP's, extending the accountable body role beyond the responsibilities for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and more recently the LAA. It makes a number of statements articulating the lead role of local authorities in community leadership and in initiating and developing LSP's.

A new "duty to co-operate" is proposed to be placed on those LSP partners with statutory responsibilities. However alongside that comes a parallel "duty to involve" which is placed on the council

The principle is that Council's are ultimately responsible for all LSP decisions. With the arrival of Local Area Agreements there is a continuing question as to how this can be exercised by elected members within what remain loose and non statutory partnership bodies. The relationship between the Council and the LSP becomes more of an issue and how this relationship might best work in terms of Executive decision making, and Overview and Scrutiny all require more work both nationally and locally. This point is made in the response and is likely to be taken up by the Local Government association with the Government.

The consultation discusses the need for any additional guidance on the operation of LSP's in the light of the legislation in section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000.

## **Citizen impact**

This consultation runs alongside the development of the Local Area Agreement as part of the Government's vision for joined up Public Services within a locality. The idea is that as a range of partners align their objectives that the delivery of services is increasingly aligned for the benefit of the citizen.

## **Community safety**

The proposals are for the LSP to incorporate all local partnership to incorporate all local partnerships including the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership

## **Environmental impact**

The consultation seeks to make Community plans explicitly “Sustainable Communities Plans” incorporating, Social, Environmental and Economic considerations

## **Performance and risk management issues**

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny and Performance panel have been working on the Local Area Agreements and the development of the Performance management arrangements for that and hence the LSP.

Clearly the issues of Performance Management and scrutiny of future Partnership arrangements are a key issue in this consultation

The Resources and Performance Panel considered a paper on the consultation at its meeting on the 9 February; their inputs have been incorporated into the proposed response. This discussion has taken place alongside the input of the panel to the Local Area Agreement and work is ongoing to develop the Overview and Scrutiny of the Partnership and the LAA.

## **Equality implications**

Within the WBSP there is an Equalities partnership to ensure high level leadership is given on Equality issue.

## **Consultation**

As detailed above the report has also been considered by the O&S Resources Panel. A briefing paper has been circulated to the other O&S panels and any comments received incorporated where possible.

## **Vision 2008**

Partnership working is key to delivery of the Vision, the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Vision are closely aligned. This consultation looks at how this alignment might be further enhanced in order to deliver against all the priorities.

## **Background papers**

Appendix 1 - Proposed response

Appendix 2 - Executive Summary of Consultation

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**Signed:**



**Executive Director:**  
**Tim Johnson**

**Date:** 16.02.06

**Signed:** .....



**Portfolio Holder:**  
**Councillor Tom Ansell**

**Date:** 17.02.06

### Draft Response by Walsall Council

#### The role of LSPs, Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs

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.

*Regional/Sub-regional engagement*

*Yes, Walsall Council has been working with the LSP to develop the strategy and the LAA in line with that proposed in the consultation. The Council feels that it is crucial that partners are open about their plans and that there is an increasing ownership of the objectives and transparency about the use of resources.*

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?

*Links to local plans.*

*Walsall is working hard to make the links with regional and sub-regional partners and plans and recognises the importance of the Sustainable Community Strategy demonstrating the relevant linkages. In order for the LSP's to play a greater role in co-ordination there is a need for Regional agencies to make greater efforts to engage in the local partnership. For local partnerships to engage requires resource both in expertise and time and this will only be prioritised when there is a clear and effective process of engagement between the parties at the different spatial levels.*

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?

*Yes, in order to be a "Sustainable" strategy it needs to incorporate and lead the full range of the Social, Environmental and Economic activity in the Borough.*

#### **Sustainable Community Strategies**

4. Are the proposed steps in the development of a Sustainable Community Strategy correct?

*Yes*

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 can only be achieved by partners at the local level recognising that the Strategy is relevant and the Partnership effective. However Government can help by ensuring that Government Departments and Agencies give this message in*

*their words and deeds. The LSP needs this support in order to continue to build its credibility and to get engagement across all the sectors.*

### **Neighbourhood Engagement**

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?

*This is crucial if the Borough wide LSP is to be effective. The Borough is a very diverse one and the partnership needs to be able to engage effectively with different groups and areas.*

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

*Not applicable to Walsall*

### **Links with Local Developmental Framework**

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?

*This is a developing area but clearly it is key if we are to get proper alignment and integration of activity. In terms of getting spatial planning teams contribution we have made the links locally and are developing the linkages. Councils and the Government will need to monitor and review that the Spatial Planning system is reflecting this more holistic view in delivery.*

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

*There is in our view sufficient guidance on these issues.*

### **Two-tier Areas**

10. Should every local authority area have its own LSP?

*Not applicable to Walsall*

11. Would the establishment of a greater delineation of roles between country and district LSPs as suggested be sensible?

*Not applicable to Walsall*

### **Governance of LSPs**

#### **LSP as the partnership of partnerships**

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?

*Walsall has reviewed its partnership structures in the light of delivering the Local Area Agreement, developing linkages between the thematic partnerships and the LSP's. The LSP Board is made up of representatives from the sectors.*

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?

*The LAA leads development in this direction however we will need to keep under review if this is the most effective way of making sure the LSP Executive is able to best keep an effective overview.*

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?

*Co-terminosity is a significant factor in partner's ability to engage effectively in the LSP, and we would like partners to be able to recognise this in their planning and development.*

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

*We would welcome further development of these and the flexibilities to create them where appropriate within the partnership commissioning framework*

### **Ensuring wide representation**

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

*The Walsall Borough Strategic partnership is developing the Community Involvement strategy and the Council will be reviewing how the Local Neighbourhood partnerships best link in. This is an area that in most cases is best worked out at the local level and any guidance is enabling rather than prescriptive.*

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?

*See answer above*

### **Providing a legislative foundation**

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?

*Broadly welcome this proposal*

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

*It is difficult to be prescriptive on individual organisations, increasingly funding streams need to be channelled through the Partnership commissioning process and partners will need to come to the table with mainstream funding as well to make the system sustainable.*

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

*Health, Police, Fire and Rescue, Learning and Skills Councils, Job Centre plus, Connexions, Regional Development Agencies, English Partnerships, Housing Corporation*

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?

*Prefer this to be achieved through agreement*

## **Accountability**

### ***Accountability between partners***

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*

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?

*Yes this would be helpful*

### ***Involvement of local councillors***

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

*To ensure the strategic link between the Councils plans and the LSP's. To provide leadership and to help make the Partnership accountable.*

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

*Helping in communications between local people, and the partnership, and helping local communities engage in the development of plans and identifying local issues.*

26. What would make councillors' powers of overview and scrutiny more effective in scrutinising the four blocks of the LAA?



*An agreement between the LSP, its partners and the Council on the role and importance of Overview and Scrutiny would be helpful.*

### **Involvement of Members of Parliament**

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?

*We agree that any guidance here needs to recognise the complementary role of MP's and local Councillors. M.P.'s need to see the value of the LSP in terms of delivering their responsibilities and therefore have all parties working to the same objectives.*

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

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

*See answers to Q 16.*

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

*These sectors would welcome the greater transparency around the activity planned and the further opportunities to influence and shape policy, however in most cases they will judge the partnership in terms of what is delivered, what added value is there from the activity.*

### **Capacity**

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

*These issues will be covered in the WBSP response.*

32. What extra of different support would be most helpful in shifting to a more delivery focused role?

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

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?

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

## Executive Summary

1. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Community Strategies were introduced as a result of the Local Government Act 2000. They have helped make great strides to improve the local quality of life. LSPs are now established in all areas and much progress has been made in terms of representation, establishing a common vision and moving to genuinely collaborative working. Community Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships have a critical role in further developing coherent service provision and genuinely sustainable communities.

2. 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."<sup>1</sup> This consultation examines the future role of LSPs, their governance and accountability, and their capacity to deliver Sustainable Community Strategies. It poses a series of questions under each of these headings designed to help us understand how LSPs are operating at present and where changes could be made nationally, regionally and locally to help them develop most effectively.

## The consultation's aims

3. This consultation, which is part of the local:vision debate on the future of local government, re-examines the role, governance and capacity of LSPs and Community Strategies both in terms of short-term changes and more radical longer-term adjustments. Discussions with key national, regional and local partners have led us to identify a number of key ambitions for the future development of LSPs. These core objectives are set out below:

- 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;
- An evolved role for the local authority including local authority members in facilitating action through the LSP and Sustainable Community Strategy;
- LSPs able to effectively identify and deliver against the priorities for joint acting 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;
- LSPs better able to support neighbourhood engagement and to help ensure the views of neighbourhoods and parish councils can influence strategic local service delivery and spending; and
- 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.

<sup>1</sup> "Governing Partnerships – Bridging the accountability gap" Audit Commission Oct. 2005.  
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4. Our 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 critically representatives of the private, voluntary and community sectors, with national, regional, and neighbourhood or parish priorities in developing the Sustainable Community Strategy. 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 Local Development Framework is then the landuse delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy. The outcomes from the LAA would be scrutinised by local authorities and LSPs and then monitored, reviewed and reported on. The Action Plan and its outcomes would then feed into future revisions of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA. Diagrams showing these arrangements for different tiers are shown on pages 22-23.

## The changing policy environment

5. The Government has now set out its vision for creating genuinely sustainable communities. Delivering sustainable communities is the core purpose of Community Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships. 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. 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.

6. 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 delivery. A lot is expected of all LSPs, in particular, the development and implementation of LAAs. This enhanced role provides new challenges to many LSPs. They need to be capable of attracting senior membership, taking difficult decisions and challenging partner members where necessary, in order to drive forward local public service improvements and manage the performance of the elements of the partnership.

7. This builds on the strong emphasis placed on LSPs in the delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal. LSPs were required to develop a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and deliver the Neighbourhood Renewal outcomes. LAAs have placed further expectations on the role of LSPs and Community Strategies. 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 pilots bore out the importance of the LSP in bringing together the thematic partnerships in the local area; providing the governance framework for the delivery of the LAA; and ensuring the identification of cross-cutting themes and ensuring community engagement in the LAA. There are also clear links between the LAA and Community Strategy – both of which set out the priorities for the locality – and many areas have taken their Community Strategies as the basis of their LAA.

8. LSPs also have a key role in our proposals to increase the opportunities for neighbourhood engagement and action following the publication of the local:vision document *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter* (ODPM and Home Office, Jan 2005). It is envisaged that the LSP will have an important facilitating role in supporting neighbourhood engagement and ensuring that neighbourhoods and parish councils can influence strategic local priorities. *Why Neighbourhoods Matter* states that 'evidence shows that action at the neighbourhood level is likely to be more effective where councils and the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) have in place effective arrangements at the more strategic level'.<sup>2</sup> These arrangements should include a co-ordinated approach to community engagement and a commitment to the resources necessary to support it. Neighbourhood management has also proved to be a good way of engaging citizens and influencing service delivery, for example on improving local green spaces.

9. The Government has also set out its commitment to greater involvement of citizens and communities in the improvement of policies and services in the *Together We Can* action plan and the proposals in this document seek to reflect the implementation of that commitment.

10. A further influence on the role of the LSP is the change in focus of Community Strategies to become *Sustainable* Community Strategies. This reflects the increasingly important role of Community Strategies in helping to deliver genuinely sustainable communities which balance and integrate economic, social and environmental goals. Many Community Strategies have, in

the past, struggled to articulate how they will address the area's longer-term and cross-boundary issues. Sir John Egan<sup>3</sup> found there was a need for local leaders to establish priorities that were sustainable and connected to the anticipated changes in the local area. He recommended that these be brought together in a Sustainable Community Strategy. We believe that the move to Sustainable Community Strategies, as part of the wider role changes for LSPs and local authorities outlined in this paper, will help them fulfil the requirement in the Local Government Act 2000 to produce Community Strategies, which contribute to sustainable development in the UK.

11. The local:vision document *Vibrant Local Leadership*<sup>4</sup>, published in January 2005, also demonstrated a commitment to developing this co-ordinating community leadership role of each local authority. It suggested that a long-term objective for the next ten years should be:

*'...developing the effectiveness of the community leadership role of councils in relation to the range of local services that contribute to the well-being of an area and strengthening the relationships between local partners'.*

12. This emphasis on the 'community leadership' role of the local authority is vital as it points to the way in which this leadership should be exercised i.e. in partnership rather than by command. 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. This role as the "partnership of partnerships" was always envisaged for LSPs. It is now imperative that this becomes a reality.

<sup>2</sup> The local:vision document "Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter" ODPM Jan. 2005.

<sup>3</sup> "The Egan Review Skills for Sustainable Communities" ODPM 2004.

<sup>4</sup> *Vibrant Local Leadership*, ODPM, 2005

See [http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_localgov/documents/page/odpm\\_locgov\\_034875.pdf](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_locgov_034875.pdf)  
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*'Undertaking these roles effectively is likely to require an increasingly strong focus for dealing with cross-cutting issues at local level, for which the main vehicle is the LSP.'*  
(*Vibrant Local Leadership* ODPM, 2005)

13. The local authority's involvement is vital to the effective operation of an LSP. The local authority's democratic mandate and accountability provides them with a clear basis on which to determine priorities across the local area. Therefore, we see 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.

14. The local authority role is especially vital given the statutory power local authorities have to secure the economic, social and environmental well-being of the local areas. This power is critical as it enables local authorities to step outside the narrow provision of a range of services they are directly responsible for, to look more widely at community needs, such as promoting community cohesion and tackling social exclusion and discrimination. The powers provide greater freedom for local authorities to adopt new and innovative ways of improving quality of life and securing a more sustainable future for the area.

## **Our vision of the role, accountability and governance of LSPs**

15. We believe it is crucial for the success of LSPs that they are able to co-ordinate delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA.

16. As indicated above, the LSP must take an oversight role, ensuring that the lines of responsibility between partners and thematic sub-partnerships are clear and that duplication is avoided. In essence the LSP needs to be the 'partnership of partnerships' encompassing all thematic partnerships in the area. For example Children's Trusts will be expected to be integrated within the LSP system of partnerships whilst retaining their responsibility for co-ordinating children's services.

#### **We want LSPs...**

1. To be the partnership of partnerships in an 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. To ensure 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.
3. To develop and drive the effective delivery of their Local Area Agreements.
4. To agree an action plan for achieving the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities, including the LAA outcomes.

In two-tier areas we expect:

*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.

*District-level* LSPs (and their Sustainable Community Strategies) to be fully considered and involved in the drawing-up and implementing of the county-wide Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA. Relevant LAA outcomes should also be reflected in the District LSPs' action plans and future iterations of all District-led plans, including Local Development Frameworks.

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17. Some of this shift will, and is, coming with time. The 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.

18. Performance management by the LSP is a key part of the partnership approach. In NRF areas performance management has helped increase accountability between partners. 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. 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 our 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. We are seeking views on this proposal.

## **Securing the capacity to deliver**

19. To deliver this challenging agenda it is increasingly important that LSP members and staff possess skills in performance management, negotiation, policy development, implementation and community engagement. Training and support packages provided nationally, regionally and locally will need to support the development of this new skill set for some LSPs. We need to learn from and build on the skill development already put in place for those LSPs in receipt of NRF.

20. There is a wide range of support and training presently available for partners of LSPs, some directly focused on LSPs. However, this training to date has been provided by a number of different sources, in a number of different ways, based on a number of different criteria. It is crucial that the support provided is made available to all LSPs, not just those in areas receiving NRF, and that it is provided in a coherent way ideally with one access route.

21. In light of the responses to this consultation paper it may be appropriate to publish Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Strategic Partnership guidance as required by Section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000.