

No.8: The Role of Local Strategic Partnerships in Neighbourhood Renewal

The Government's far-reaching plans for regenerating the country's most deprived neighbourhoods focus strongly on improving key public services. While this approach is not new, the strategy recognises the need to pinpoint problems and shape and target resources much more precisely than in the past - at times down to a street by street level.

No single organisation can solve these difficult problems on their own. But a combination of organisations and the community, working co-operatively, have a far greater chance of success. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are the bodies designed to spearhead this process by drawing together all the key agencies - from the public, voluntary, community and private sectors - to assess local needs, plan services, set targets and monitor delivery. Through consultation, LSPs will take the major decisions about priorities and funding for neighbourhood renewal in their local area.



Key issues

1

Who will set up and lead LSPs?

Most of the LSPs are based on local authority areas and local authorities are well placed initially to bring together key partners. Alternatively, where suitable partnerships already existed - such as the Local Government Association's New Commitment to Regeneration Partnership or a Health Action Zone – they may be able to take on the LSP role. After an initial settling-in period, it will be up to the partners in each LSP to decide who should take the lead.

2

Who are the LSP members?

Ideally, LSPs should be fully inclusive and be one of equal players. They include representatives from a wide range of sectors, with a balance between public service and community, voluntary and private organisations. The partnerships are likely to include:

- Residents and community groups
- Voluntary organisations
- Faith communities
- Private sector and business organisations
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Representatives of BME groups
- Local councillors
- Various public sector organisations including: the local authority; local Learning and Skills Councils; housing associations; Primary Care Trusts and primary care groups; the police and fire services; the Employment Service and New Deal Partnerships; the Benefits Agency; the Small Business Service; the Regional Development Agency; community legal service partnerships; Drug Action Teams and representatives from the Government Office for the Region.

3

What will the partnerships do?

LSPs will work in different ways in different places, but their main responsibilities will be to:

- prepare and implement a Community Strategy for the area;
- develop and deliver a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy to tackle deprivation;
- co-ordinate local plans, partnerships and initiatives and provide a forum for local councils, the police, health services, central government and other agencies to work to meet community needs; and
- work with local authorities to develop public service agreements, including targets which will help to reverse decline, especially in terms of reducing worklessness and crime and improving skills, health, housing and the physical environment.

Through consultation, LSPs will decide how best to use local resources; whether local facilities are adequate, and how to improve them; how to respond to the concerns of the local community and ensure that a first point of contact for community concerns is in place in each deprived neighbourhood.

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Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

LSPs in the 88 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas will also have financial muscle. They will be able to use their area's share of the NRF - a total of £900 million over three years - to kick-start the improvement of mainstream services.

Accreditation of LSPs

LSPs in the 88 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas went through a process of accreditation by Government Offices for the Regions in early 2002.

Accreditation was a two-stage process:

- taking into account local conditions and starting points, LSPs collectively self-assessed their progress against the six key accreditation criteria (strategic, inclusive, action-focused, performance managed, efficient and focused on learning and development) and developed appropriate action plans to strengthen the partnership and increase effectiveness;
- the second stage involved Government Offices reviewing the self-assessments and action plans. Final Government Office assessments were based on dialogue with key stakeholders and other interested parties.

By July 2002, all 88 LSPs were successfully accredited.

How will Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies be developed?

Preparing a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is one of the most important jobs for the new LSPs. Strategies must respond to local conditions and will include:

- setting out an agreed vision and plan for positive change in those neighbourhoods which are in particular need of renewal;
- securing the agreement and commitment of all the key people and institutions who have a stake in the neighbourhood;
- setting out a clear local strategic framework for action that responds to neighbourhood needs and put them into the context of the area as a whole; and
- agreeing plans to equip those involved in neighbourhood renewal with the skills and knowledge they need.

How can local people get involved?

LSPs provide the opportunity to develop new ways of involving people in how public services are provided, putting them at the heart of the renewal process. To this end, the Government has invested £36 million over three years in the Community Empowerment Fund. The aim is to raise awareness within communities of the part they can play and ensure people's views are heard through surveys, meetings etc as well as providing training and support so that community representatives can participate as equal partners. Government Offices for the Regions will allocate this funding directly to local community and voluntary organisations in the areas concerned, with each of the 88 NRF areas receiving around £400,000 over the next three years.

“Partnerships are benefiting from the three-year crime reduction programme, which is boosting innovative work in local communities, many in high crime areas.”

What support is there from central and regional Government?

Although LSPs will operate at a very local level, they will be strongly supported by central government. Government departments will encourage their local service providers to be actively involved in local partnerships. Government Offices will support local partners in the development of LSPs and work with the community and voluntary sector to ensure they have the opportunity to be involved and participate in the partnerships.

An LSP in action

Southwark LSP has 26 members – six residents, five voluntary organisations, Christian and Muslim faith representatives, two business representatives and 11 statutory agencies. The LSP has put a major emphasis on youth work, which is a big problem in the area and the new joined-up thinking is already getting results. For example, police officers are now based in schools and there are programmes to support young victims of crime, through mobile police stations.

Similarly, the police and community health service have got together to try out a home-visiting service for vulnerable elderly people, where just one person from either service visits to talk about crime prevention and accidents, freeing up resources for other initiatives. As well as being more responsive to what the community wants and needs, these early initiatives are helping to cut down on bureaucracy and waste.

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Find out more

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

020 7944 8383 (for information and publications)

www.neighbourhood.gov.uk

e-mail: neighbourhoodrenewal@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal – National Strategy Action Plan

The report of Policy Action Team 17 –

Joining it up locally

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu

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Neighbourhood Renewal Factsheet 8
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