

**LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**  
**ODPM NEWSLETTER / RESEARCH UPDATE**  
**ISSUE 1 – FEBRUARY 2003**

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**1. THIS NEWSLETTER**

This newsletter provides direct feedback to LSPs, and other stakeholders, on the Government's 5-year LSP evaluation and action research programme. Subsequent newsletters may also highlight other LSP related news, developments and information sources.

**2. LSP RESEARCH PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The first 3 years of the programme were commissioned in March 2002. The objective is to support LSPs and policy-makers at local, regional and central levels, and to evaluate the progress LSPs are making.

Jointly commissioned by three Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) research divisions (LRGRU, NRU and RAE) and the Department for Transport (DfT), the research is being undertaken by the Universities of Warwick, Liverpool John Moores, West of England, Bristol and the Office for Public Management. It comprises a Feasibility Study, Formative Evaluation and Action Research (March 2002 – April 2005). A Summative Evaluation of impacts and effectiveness is provisionally planned for 2005 – 2007.

**2a. Feasibility Study (March – September 2002)**

Now complete, the Feasibility Study has consulted a variety of local, regional and central stakeholders, including a 2002 survey of every English LSP to establish:

- What LSPs want advice and support on.
- How to identify and disseminate good practice.

- How best to provide LSPs with practical support. The feasibility study report will shortly be available on the ODPM LSP research website.

**2b. Formative Evaluation (Autumn 2002 – March 2005)**

The formative evaluation will assess the processes, preliminary impacts and effectiveness of LSPs. It has adopted a 'theory of change' approach to identify what works, how and why.

The evaluation includes nine case studies, a major postal survey of all LSPs in 2004, and a range of smaller targeted surveys. The case studies, which cover a wide range of locations, including one in each region, are being undertaken in collaboration with the following LSPs:

**LSP longitudinal case studies (2003-2005)**

Easington	Tameside	Leeds
Nottingham*	West Suffolk	Herefordshire
Gloucester	Southwark	Hampshire*

\*Broader sub-regional case studies

The case studies will provide in-depth experience of the ways in which LSPs – in both NRF and non-NRF areas – are developing their structures, plans and activities.

In addition to the principal components of the study which focus directly on LSPs, a 'call-down' facility exists for more specific research on related aspects. Currently this includes studies on (1) the role of public sector bodies in LSPs, (2) an assessment of Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies produced by LSPs in NRF areas, and (3) an analysis of perceived good practice in the use of shared or aligned performance indicators.

**2c. Action research (Winter 2002/03 – April 2005)**

In addition to the 9 evaluatory case studies, there are 8 issue-based action learning sets, each bringing

together approximately 12 LSPs to discuss one issue in depth and to develop effective practice. Each set will run over approximately one year. Five sets will commence in Feb/March 2003.

#### 2003 Action Learning Sets

- Mainstreaming 1: Pooling and aligning resources
- Community engagement
- Performance management: indicators and targets
- Strategic planning and delivery
- Governance and accountability

N.B. 3 further sets to commence in early 2004

The choice of issues has been determined directly from consultation during the feasibility study and, in particular, the specific requests from LSPs made in the 2002 survey. Membership of these five sets is now complete. On the whole members represent perceived good practice in each respective area, and have been recruited through responses from the 2002 survey, plus recommendations from GOs, consultants and central stakeholders.

In order to reach more LSPs directly, from early 2004, 9 regional action learning dissemination sets will bring together representatives of LSPs in each GO region to disseminate emerging findings and share good practice. These sets will, where appropriate, integrate with existing regional LSP networks.

#### 2d. Outputs and dissemination

The research will produce outputs on an ongoing basis, including:

- A report for each of the 2002 and 2004 surveys, on progress made by LSPs.
- A series of themed issue papers from the formative evaluation.
- Reports, toolkits and briefing notes from the action learning.
- A research database.
- The 9 regional dissemination learning sets.
- Interim and final reports for formative evaluation and action learning

Findings and good practice guidance materials will be made available throughout the research programme through a range of media including websites (ODPM, renewal.net and IDeA Knowledge). The action learning groups and regional

dissemination networks – actively involving more than a hundred LSPs – will share experiences and test and disseminate new toolkits and guidance materials in a hands-on manner. GOs will be specifically invited to share in learning and dissemination activities. A national conference is planned in 2005. These activities will be signposted to LSPs and stakeholders through this research newsletter.

#### 2e. Summative Evaluation (provisionally 2005 – 2007 and to be contracted in 2005)

Summative ‘impact’ evaluation will commence in 2005, although baseline information (and preliminary impacts) will be collected from 2002. Assessing the impact and ‘added value’ of LSPs on the achievement of local and central aims and objectives will involve linking action research and formative evaluation findings with evaluation of the impacts and effectiveness of LSPs, LSP activities and policies. Assessment of LSPs’ own quantifiable performance measures and management systems will be undertaken alongside that of other potential indicators of outcomes, including measures shared with the overarching evaluation of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda.

### 3. THE 2002 LSP SURVEY

A survey of all English LSPs was undertaken in Summer 2002. The results provide a good snapshot of the levels of LSP development and a benchmark from which to measure future progress. Further surveys are planned in 2004 and 2006.

Some highlighted findings are detailed below. However, the full report of survey is being e-mailed direct to all LSPs. It is also available on the following website under cross-cutting issues  
[www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/index.htm](http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/index.htm)

#### Key findings from 2002 LSP survey

##### Introduction

The survey was sent to all English LSPs in all 384 (local authority) areas. 237 (62%) responses were obtained in total, including 57 (66%) from NRF LSPs. An additional 130 LSPs were contacted by phone to answer basic questions. Highlighted findings include:

##### A rapid pace of development

By Summer 2002, the vast majority of local authority

areas had an LSP or were in the process of developing one. 40% had developed out of an existing partnership. However, 58% had started as new within the last two years, with some at a very early developmental stage.

### **Membership varies widely**

Numbers, indeed concepts, of membership varied widely. Members may represent their organisations or serve in an individual capacity. The average number of 'core' and non-core' members was 20 and 80 respectively. Of 'core' members, all included the local authority, and most the police (93%), health (93%) and voluntary and community sectors (86%), the chamber of commerce (57%), higher/further education institutions (59%), and learning and skills councils (57%). Over 30 other organisations were represented to greater or lesser degrees. In four out of five cases, a local authority councillor or officer chaired the partnership.

### **Structures are complex**

LSP structures varied widely, but typically included a board, thematic groups or sub-partnerships (often themselves with sub-groups) and a wider consultative forum. Almost all LSPs had formal links with other, issue-based, partnerships: the most common (80%) with crime and disorder reduction partnerships.

### **Resources are limited**

The majority of LSPs had no dedicated support staff, three quarters of non-NRF LSPs had no dedicated budget, and the average sum available to this group was under £50,000 per annum. LSPs in areas eligible for NRF were better resourced, and on average had access to over £100,000 p.a. in addition to their NRF.

### **Strategy Development**

In localities with Community Strategies, 78% of LSPs had been 'fully involved' in their development and 17% 'consulted'. Similarly, in localities with Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies (mostly NRF-eligible areas) 84% had been 'fully involved' and 13% 'consulted'.

### **LSPs are moving from setting up to action**

Over 2001 and early 2002, most LSPs had been occupied with developing their structures and membership. Community Strategy development had also been a key activity, and most NRF-eligible partnerships had also spent time developing LNRs and working towards accreditation. For late 2002 and 2003, the balance of anticipated activity shifted significantly with more LSPs planning greater emphasis on policy formulation, co-ordination and delivery e.g. developing shared data systems, performance indicators, rationalising processes and delivery of Strategy targets. However, partnership development still remains a key issue for most.

### **Issues and dilemmas**

The issues and dilemmas facing partnerships can be grouped under five broad themes:

- Stakeholder engagement (communities and businesses, issues of accountability and establishing an appropriately balanced membership).
- Resources and capacity (personnel, financial, funding joint activities and training and development).
- Developing effective ways of working (structures, systems, processes and culture).
- Developing the LSP agenda (role and purpose, priorities, effective delivery).
- External issues (accountabilities with central government and pressures, inter-partnership working and managing stakeholder expectations).

### **Emerging benefits**

For some LSPs it is too early to ascertain benefits. However, most had experienced a wide range of benefits with two thirds mentioning the alignment of objectives and joint working. Other key benefits included the development of shared objectives and a more joined-up approach, networking, relationship building, the development of trust, and the generation of energy, enthusiasm and joint ownership. Some more explicit benefits included securing external funding (including NRF), and improved outcomes. A few LSPs were starting to see the benefits of rationalising partnerships.

*N.B. It should be noted that these results portray the situation as of last year, and that LSPs have moved on.*

## **4. FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **ODPM**

- Government guidance on LSPs [www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/lsp/guidance/index.htm](http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/lsp/guidance/index.htm)
- LRGRU research website [www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/index.htm](http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/index.htm)
- General LSP enquiries e-mail address [LSP@odpm.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:LSP@odpm.gsi.gov.uk)
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