

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 22 FEBRUARY 2006

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

10. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS – SHAPING THEIR FUTURE: RESPONSE TO ODPM CONSULTATION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

'D' RECOMMENDATION - that the responses to the ODPM consultation, as set out in Appendix 'A' to this report, be endorsed.

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report details a consultation currently being undertaken by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister into the future development of Local Strategic Partnerships, and seeks Council approval to the proposed response on behalf of this Council.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Objectives

2.1 All local authorities, under the Local Government Act 2000 have a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of their communities. The same Act required local authorities to establish Local Strategic Partnerships and to develop a Community Strategy for their area.

2.2 East Herts' Community Strategy, which was approved by this Council in July 2004, was based on the priorities of the Council, and reflects the sharing of the Council's priorities across the statutory and voluntary sector partners in the Local Strategic Partnership.

3.0 Background

3.1 East Herts Council has an active Local Strategic Partnership, which was established in 2002. The Partnership is chaired by East Herts Council, and includes representatives from Hertfordshire County Council, the Police, South Anglia and Riversmead Housing

Associations, Primary Care Trusts, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce, Glaxosmithkline, Age Concern, the Citizens' Advice Bureaux, the Town Centre Management Partnerships and the Environment Agency.

3.2 The purpose and objectives of the East Herts LSP are as follows:

Purpose:

To oversee the development and implementation of a Community Strategy for East Herts.

Objectives:

- To address issues of District-wide strategic significance
- To act together on the “big issues” wherever appropriate
- To reduce duplication through information sharing and working together
- To seek to commit resources as necessary to the achievement of the East Herts Community Strategy
- To promote the Strategy / LSP within partner organisations and beyond
- To monitor the achievement of actions within the Community Strategy.

4.0 Report

4.1 The ability of local authorities to work in partnership with other statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations is increasingly seen by Government and the Audit Commission as of key strategic importance. The quality of partnership working is a significant determinant of external assessments of local government working.

4.2 Across the country, the form, functions and success of Local Strategic Partnerships varies considerably. Central government is now concerned with the need to ensure that LSPs are operating effectively in all local authority areas, and have published a consultation paper “Local Strategic Partnerships – Shaping their future”, which sets out the Government’s vision for the further development of LSPs into the future.

4.3 The Government’s key objectives for LSPs are:

- that the role of local authorities, and individual Councillors, vis-à-vis their Local Strategic Partnership should evolve to facilitate action through the LSP;

- that LSPs should be able effectively to identify and deliver against the priorities for joint action in their area in a clearly accountable way;
- that LSPs become better able to support neighbourhood engagement and help ensure the views of neighbourhoods and Parish Councils can influence strategic local service delivery and spending;
- that LSPs have effective, transparent and accountable governance and scrutiny arrangements, to enable partners to hold each other to account, and local people to hold the partnership to account.

4.4 The main points made in the consultation paper are summarized below. The paper poses a set of specific questions, to which local authorities and other interested parties are invited to respond by 3 March 2006. The proposed response on behalf of this Council is set out as Appendix “A” (pages 47 - 55).

Sustainable Community Strategies

4.5 The first new proposal within the consultation paper is that Community Strategies should be recast as “**Sustainable**” Community Strategies. This change envisages LSPs becoming a “partnership of partnerships” within a local area; taking a cross-disciplinary, holistic view of the needs of that area, founded on a solid evidence base and capable of translating the defined priority themes articulated in the Community Strategy into tangible outcomes; and moving towards becoming a commissioning body for the delivery of local services. The definition of a Sustainability Community Strategy, as set out in the consultation paper, is shown as Appendix “B” (page 56).

East Herts LSP would currently be defined as an “advisory” rather than a “commissioning” LSP. Our Community Strategy takes a wide view of the needs and priorities of partner organizations and the local community, is well-based in evidence and has been tested through local area community consultation mechanisms. Work was undertaken in 2005 to identify a set of sustainability indicators to measure the quality of life in this District. These indicators are currently out to consultation in the community, and, when adopted, will form a mechanism to measure the impact of the Community Strategy in sustaining and improving local quality of life.

East Herts Council has not sought to use the LSP as a commissioning body for the delivery of local services. However, the

Community Strategy Implementation budget, which was established in 2005/6 as part of the Council's base budget, is deployed as a resource to commission projects which will deliver the actions prioritized in the Community Strategy. The Council is not aware of any other local authority that has specifically set aside a budget for its LSP in this way.

Thus, East Herts LSP is well positioned in terms of the future requirements that this consultation indicates will be placed on LSPs.

Multi-agency and cross-boundary working.

- 4.6 The consultation paper envisages Community Strategies as forming the basis for partner organisations' service delivery plans – such as Primary Care Trust delivery plans, and Community Safety strategies, in order to ensure more effective multi-agency working to deliver shared, rather than competing or unrelated priorities. It also envisages LSPs engaging with regional and sub-regional bodies, and collaborating across local authority boundaries – for example to deliver sub-regional social housing strategies.

In East Herts, the LSP works effectively to guide and shape partner organisations' strategies: the public health improvement strategy, the housing strategy, the Community Safety strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan have all been approved through the LSP, and their implementation groups report in to the LSP (see diagram at Appendix "C", page 57).

Neighbourhood Engagement

- 4.7 The Government's view is that LSPs have an important role to play in supporting neighbourhood engagement, listening to local people's views, and ensuring that local issues and priorities can influence wider service delivery and strategic planning.

East Herts' Community Strategy was based on local area community planning consultation mechanisms. The five Community Voice forums grew out of these local consultations, and provide a consultation and feedback mechanism for Community Strategy priorities as they relate to each of the individual town areas. In addition, a regular rural Parish conference has been established by the Council to engage local representatives in the rural areas.

Local Area Agreements

- 4.8 Hertfordshire County Council, in partnership with the 10 District Councils, has been invited to submit a proposal to central government for a Local Area Agreement. The form and content of this agreement are contained in a separate report on this Council agenda.
- 4.9 The Government's view is that District LSPs and Community Strategies should both feed into the setting of priorities within a Local Area Agreement, and contribute to the delivery of the targets contained within the Agreement.

Local Development Frameworks

- 4.10 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 brought in fundamental changes to the land use planning mechanisms employed by local authorities. Local Plans are replaced by Local Development Frameworks, which must, according to the Act, "have regard to the Community Strategy".
- 4.11 The consultation paper takes this a significant step further, setting out a vision for the Local Development Framework to be "the spatial expression" of the Community Strategy, containing planning policies that are developed hand in hand with the community and key LSP partners.

East Herts Council is currently in a transitional phase in the implementation of the 2004 Act. By agreement with the Government, the Council is currently taking forward the Local Plan Second Review towards formal adoption in early 2007. This Plan will then be "saved" for three years.

On completion of the Public Inquiry in April this year, however, the Council will be required to commence work on the main policy documents that will comprise the new Local Development Framework – the first of which will be a "Statement of Community Involvement", and a draft Core Strategy for the District.

The Council will be able to comply with the requirements of the Act through actively involving LSP partners in the preparation of and consultation on these planning documents.

In addition, a great deal of collaborative work has taken place through the LSP to define this Council's response to the main issues

set out in the draft East of England Plan, and to engage partners in the Council's efforts to protect and preserve the sustainability of the local area in the face of significant development pressures and strain on local infrastructure resources.

Roles of LSPs in two-tier areas

- 4.12 The ODPM's preferred approach to LSPs and Community Strategies in two-tier areas is one where District Community Strategies are aggregated to form an overarching strategy at County level. Alternative models are either an "added value" model, in which county strategies seek to focus on areas where they can add value to District endeavour, or a "separatist" model, where County strategies have few linkages with Districts. This latter option is not favoured by Government.

In Hertfordshire, the County-wide LSP has, to date, concentrated on the model of adding value to District Community Strategies, and avoiding duplication. This model would be preferable, as it offers greater scope to devolve decision-making and activity to local, District level.

Governance of LSPs

- 4.13 There exist a wide variety of LSP structures across the country, and the ODPM is not minded to specify a "one-size-fits-all" approach. However, the consultation paper sets out some key features that the ODPM regards as best practice in terms of partnership structures:

- an executive board, which is able to take strategic decisions
- thematic partnerships – such as the Community Safety Partnership, feeding into the board.

- 4.14 The consultation paper seeks views on whether a specific legislative foundation should be provided for LSPs, to re-iterate the central role of the local authority in leading the LSP, and to set out a "duty to co-operate" on other partner agencies.

The East Herts LSP is structured in line with the best practice as described in the consultation paper.

Accountability

- 4.15 The consultation paper sets out that an LSP is ultimately accountable to the Executive of the local authority, as the

democratically elected body covering the area. In order to ensure that accountability in practice, the paper advocates that LSPs should have performance management frameworks and be subject to Scrutiny.

- 4.16 The paper recognizes that there are issues in respect of accountability between partners within an LSP. Local partners priorities may be driven by the organisation's own national priorities, rather than by the shared priorities expressed in the Community Strategy. The paper suggests that Partnership Agreements could be used to ensure participation and accountability of organizations in an LSP, and that partners could in future be externally assessed (e.g. by the Audit Commission) on their partnership working arrangements.

Capacity Issues

- 4.17 The consultation paper suggests that the majority of LSPs require learning and skills development, in order to facilitate their improvement, and advocates greater co-ordination of the various training and support mechanisms available to assist LSPs.

Response

- 4.18 The consultation paper poses a set of specific questions in relation to the subject areas outlined above. Appendix "A" (pages 47 - 55) details these questions, and puts forward a response for approval by Council.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation has been undertaken with senior officers from the LSP's core partner organisations.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications entailed in this consultation process. However, the document provides a clear insight into the thinking of central government on the future development of LSPs. It is anticipated that future statutory guidance will be issued as a result of this consultation exercise.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications.

8.0 Human Resource Implications

8.1 There are no human resource implications.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

9.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to form LSPs and demonstrate effective community leadership. There is a risk that failings within partnership working will have an adverse effect on a local authority's Audit and CPA scores.

Background Papers

"Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future" ODPM consultation paper, December 2005.

Contact Member: Cllr Mike Carver, Executive Member for Regions and Partnerships

Contact Officer: Mary Orton, Director of Policy and Performance, x2006

Consultation Questions and Responses

LSPs, Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs

Q1: *Do you agree that the key role of the LSP should be to develop the vision of the local area, through the Sustainable Community Strategy and the 'delivery contract' through the LAA?*

A1: East Herts Council believes that the key role of the LSP is to supplement and share the responsibility for delivery of combined services, as opposed to "stand alone" based on the needs of the local community. In two-tier areas, there remains a lack of clarity as to the role of District LSPs in the LAA. We believe that the essence of partnership is about equally sharing goals, not dominance of one tier of local government.

Regional/sub-regional engagement

Q2: *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?*

A2: East Herts Council does not agree that LSPs should exist to deliver regional policies at local level, but should deliver local needs and priorities first and foremost. The democratic mandate of the local authority, which leads the LSP, and the engagement of local communities in defining and delivering Community Strategies mean that it is entirely legitimate for local priorities to differ from regional policy. That local democracy is, for us, at the heart of the LSP remit; to require local LSPs to comply with regional policy would be to remove that local democratic freedom.

Links to local plans

Q3: *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?*

A3: In our view, effective leadership by an LSP is the product of effective consultation and engagement of partner organizations by the local

authority. The extent to which partners sign-up to and share in the LSP vision is what dictates the regard they have to its priorities. Our experience in East Herts is that we do not require legislative “sticks” in order to achieve effective collaboration, because our partnership has been developed over a period of years, in close co-operation between all the key partners. Relationship building is the key factor: we have found that partners collaborate with us because they want to, and because the groundwork was put in to build and foster trust and co-operation.

Sustainable Community Strategies

- Q4: *Are the proposed steps in the development of a Sustainable Community Strategy correct? (See Appendix “B”, page 56)*
- A4: The process outlined is logical and robust. However, the resource implications this process places on local authorities should not be under-emphasised. There is significant cost involved in establishing and maintaining these processes and monitoring systems, which local authorities are being required to absorb. Additional funding resources should be available nationally to LSPs to assist in developing these processes.
- Q5: *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?*
- A5: Our experience is that LSPs should take a long-term view, but also be prepared to be iterative in adapting and renewing their strategy, in line with circumstances. We are not of the view that this is a problem for LSPs – effective LSPs have been doing precisely this since their inception. This is not an area where legislative prescription will add value.

Neighbourhood Engagement

- Q6: *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?*
- A6: Regular scrutiny by the partners’ governing bodies.
Review of action plan and delivery.
Feedback from Ward Councillors reflecting local constituents needs.
Rural conference feed backs.

Q7: *In two-tier areas, is it most appropriate for the responsibility for neighbourhood engagement to rest with the district level LSP?*

A7: Yes, this is essential. Counties are too large to be able to engage sufficiently at local level; whereas District Councils are ideally placed to be in close touch with their local communities at neighbourhood and street level.

Links with Local Development Framework

Q8: *How can spatial planning teams best contribute to Sustainable Community Strategies through the LSP and ensure that Local Development Frameworks and Sustainable Community Strategies are closely linked?*

A8: The community engagement in the evolution of the LDF will ensure that the elements relevant to the LSP and the relative importance of issues within the various elements of the community will be reflected. The Statement of Community Involvement should set out the processes for involving the LSP in the development of development policies for the area.

However, more thought needs to be given nationally to the involvement of LSPs in the development control process. As the core partners in LSPs are not Statutory Consultees in the DC process, the wider community view is often missed when major development applications are being considered.

Q9: *How could revised guidance and accompanying support materials best ensure that Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks join up effectively?*

A9 We do not support the publication of further or revised guidance on this subject. Development Planning Officers are skilled professionals, who are well attuned to the impact of development plan policies on local communities.

In East Herts, the staffing structure places the development plans staff team and the community development team within the same Directorate team. Our experience has been that this has led to highly effective cross-cutting work in this area. It is a model that we would advocate to other local authorities.

Two –Tier areas

Q10: *Should every local authority area have its own LSP?*

A10: Yes

Q11: *Would the establishment of a greater delineation of roles between county and district LSPs as suggested be sensible?*

A11: The delineation is already clear, local is D.C, County is C.C, both are partners in each, one at D.C reflecting and assisting in local needs and the other at C.C. reflecting and assisting where strategic goals are appropriate at a local level.

Key Questions - Governance of LSPs

Q12: *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?*

A12: Our view is that thematic partnerships should be both involved within the LSP, and separate in their own right. Inclusion within the LSP enables a cross-fertilisation of issues and ideas. However, much of the detailed implementation of thematic strategies and action plans is best undertaken separate from the LSP, to avoid the LSP micro-managing every thematic issue. Our own partnership model reflects this simultaneous collaboration and separate identity.

Q13: 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?

A13: No, this is again a fundamental shift from local democracy, local accountability and local delivery. Focused targets will be diluted by compromise across partners. A particular concern is that this proposal would lead to the enforced marginalization of environmental partnerships, which are of crucial importance to our community and our partnership.

Q14: *We believe that the geographic boundaries of partners within LSPs is important. What do you see as the opportunities for, and barriers to, co-terminuses shared geographic boundaries?*

A14: Co-terminosity would be helpful. However successive Government departments keep re-organising but not in tandem, leaving

uncertainty and continuity of LSP partnership membership. This is proving a particular issue for our partners in the Primary Care Trusts.

Q15: *Within the LSP framework and its established priorities, would the creation of single delivery vehicles to tackle particular issues be helpful?*

A15: This is not really the role of the LSP; single delivery vehicles are the responsibility of the thematic partner in their own right. LSP action plans have lead partners but all others are engaged. This approach is the one that should remain.

In addition, the creation of a single delivery vehicle would obscure the central and leading role of the local authority in the LSP.

Ensuring wide representation

Q16: How can the neighbourhood and parish tiers be involved most effectively on the LSP on a) the executive and b) individual thematic partnerships?

A16: (a) Not at Executive, this must remain senior partners, anything less will bring in biases to particular areas of residents, selection process impossible and there already exists democratically elected councillors covering all Parished areas.

(b) Only at a very local level on an engaged delivery basis.

Within East Herts, there exist 50 Parish and Town Councils. Involvement of this tier in the formal partnership structures would be extremely problematic. East Herts has established a wide network of locally based forums for each of its towns and its wide rural area, to ensure effective local engagement with the Community Strategy.

Q17: *How can the private, voluntary and community sectors be involved most effectively on the LSP as a) the executive and b) individual thematic partnerships?*

A17: The private and voluntary sectors are represented on the Executive and are effective contributors but not in financial terms. Basis is a different knowledge base of the community, different contacts and perspectives (b) They can be effective in thematic delivery and engagement.

Providing a legislative foundation

Q18: *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?*

A18: Partnerships work on the basis of trust, equal demonstrable engagement, robust challenge and compromise. Duty does not ensure any of the above. It is difficult to see how a duty could be placed on the private and voluntary sector partners!

Q19: *If so, what obligations, such as attendance, financial or staff support, would be useful to place on partners?*

A19: We do not believe that a duty of co-operation would be beneficial.

Q20: *If so, which public sector agencies would the duty be most sensibly placed on?*

A20: Not applicable.

Q21: *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?*

A21: No. An effective partnership will actively want to do this – compulsion is not necessary.

Accountability between partners

Q22: *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?*

A22: We do not believe that it is beneficial to over burden the administration of the LSP's with cumbersome protocols and agreements. The Community Strategy is the primary document required which clearly articulates the lead partner, timescales, funding etc.

Q23: *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?*

A23: This is not our experience. We have extremely positive engagement without such assessment principles. Assessment is only a robust

measure if there are positive outputs and in a partnership those outputs are equally shared as part of the collective goals.

Involvement of local councillors

Q24: *What do you see at the key role for executive councillors within LSPs?*

A24: All Executive members must be aware of the work of the LSP to ensure that the work complements the direct responsibilities of their own portfolio responsibilities and therefore avoid duplication or inappropriate work being undertaken.

Q25: *What do you see at the appropriate role for backbenchers particularly in ensuring a high quality of local engagement?*

A25: The roles of backbenchers are several fold:

- Local champions of outputs from the LSP
- Scrutineers of the overall performance of the LSP action plan.
- To set, review and influence the priorities of the LSP action plan based on empirical evidence from their own smaller community basis.
- Regular updates from officers to members and the use of surgeries, focus groups at a very local level.

Q26: *What would make councillors' power of overview and scrutiny more effective in scrutinising the 4 blocks of the LAA?*

A26: LAA's are removed a further step from local ward councillors, therefore the relevance for a large number may be limited. Most Councillors are not even aware of the process of LAA's and as such, a steep learning curve is first required. However, it must be remembered that LAA's are short termed (3 years) with no exit strategies, a deflection of attention possibly from key priorities from one's own local accountability.

Involvement of Members of Parliament

Q27: *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?*

A27: Not a role for an MP, as their roles are to represent at a National level and their boundaries are not co-terminus. Awareness, Advice and Information are all appropriate (and this happens through the

normal liaison between the MP and the local authority) but not direct engagement.

Involvement of Communities Served

Q28: *How can we promote effective community engagement and involvement, from all sections of the community in shaping local priorities and public services?*

A28: Threaten their quality of life and they will engage!!

Local authorities are well versed in the wide range of techniques for promoting community engagement. There is little need for central government to intervene in these processes.

Q29: *How can we maximise the opportunities for joint policy and joint activity on community engagement, including the LDF, the LAA and the Sustainable Community Strategy?*

A29: Openness of discussion on the agendas within the partners of the partnerships, SWOT analysis on a regular basis, find the common ground across the partnership which can be addressed with consensus, but keeping in mind the democratic dimension and the statutory effect.

Q30: *How can accountability to local people and businesses be enhanced?*

A30: By publications annually of achievement, by the work of scrutiny by members of partners, by specialist forums at all local level and by the ballot box every four years.

Value for money statements could assist but simple demonstrated outputs are the most robust evidence.

Lyons may provide a solution of greater devolved funding to both local business tax, which then necessitate strong business representation and engagements. Equally, if there was a greater emphasis on locally paid taxes by individuals, this could again shift involvement.

Q31: *What are your LSP's key support/skill gaps?*

A31: We have identified very few gaps. The Council has established a sufficient staff resource to back up the LSP. We have, however, experienced difficulties in ensuring adequate involvement of senior

staff at County level, given that their focus is split across 10 District partnerships.

Q32: *What extra or different support would be most helpful in shifting to a more delivery focused role?*

A32: Delivery is about funding. Our Council has established a small Community Strategy Implementation budget, which has prompted matched funding both in cash or resources which has provided the momentum to move forward with delivery.

Q33: *How would LSPs prefer to receive information and support; through guidance, toolkits, sign posting to existing information, practical learning opportunities etc?*

A33: Evolution has been a learning base and its right. Development of one's own process and protocols appropriate to the local needs are the best way forward. Local government family is always sharing good practice anyway from which one can learn.

Q34: *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?*

A34: If selection of the Executive Board members is robust then the knowledge, experience, management skills, supported by a strong officer working group, little training is required

Q35: *What learning or development do you feel is required by LSPs in order to delivery sustainable communities that embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level?*

A35: If selection of the Executive Board members is robust then the knowledge, experience, management skills, supported by a strong officer working group, little training is required.

Sustainable Community Strategies

Sustainable Community Strategies are an evolution of the Community Strategy requirement introduced in the Local Government Act 2000. They take on board policy developments arising from the introduction of Local Area Agreements, Local Development Frameworks, the Government's new Sustainable Development Strategy and the Government's desire to see Sustainable Communities in every place – communities where people want to live and work. In effect, this evolution will give teeth to the process.

A Sustainable Community Strategy will need to be developed through a number of stages. We have proposed a series of stages below and would welcome views on these proposals.

1. Baselineing current performance.

- The strategy should outline a long-term vision for the area, using the definition and components of sustainable communities¹⁷. This should not be a tick-box exercise, but an accurate consideration of how the components should contribute to communities with their own unique identities – a positive sense of place.
- It will need to be built on robust data available from such sources as the Neighbourhood Statistics and Area Profiles websites (see below), individual local partners, as well as surveys and discussions with local citizens and businesses.
- It needs to establish baselines where data is new and map trends and trajectories where data has been available for a while.
- Where possible, surveys and area data should disaggregate demographic and socio economic information into race, gender, disability, faith, age and sexual orientation.

2. Evidence: analysis of performance and local conditions.

- This vision needs to be explicitly grounded in an analysis of the local area's needs and ideally an understanding of the totality of resources coming into the area.
- **Forecasting:** This should produce a medium-term plan for the next 5-10 years which builds upon the evidence and data referred to above and an evaluation of priorities identified in other local and regional partnerships' plans and strategies (including those of District LSPs in 2-tier areas).
- Wherever possible, it should also relate closely to Local Development Frameworks in the area, ideally using common data (e.g. from Geographical Information Systems), and common consultation mechanisms.
- As previously recommended by the Government, planning relating to neighbourhood renewal, culture & biodiversity should be subsumed within Sustainable Community Strategies at this stage.

3. Local Area Agreements – the outcomes and targets included in the LAA should reflect this overarching vision.

4. Revised action plan: The current Community Strategy Action Plan and the LAA delivery plan will become one and the same.

5. The Sustainable Community Strategy/LAA Action Plan

- This should state who is accountable for what actions, with what resources and to what timescale. Where appropriate, these should be neighbourhood or area-specific (this last point will be particularly important as it relates to District Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plans and Local Development Frameworks). The plan should also state how progress will be monitored, reviewed and reported on to citizens, businesses, partner organisations and, where appropriate, to central government. There is no need for the action to duplicate the work already done in the development of other plans e.g. the Children and Young People's Plan could become the children and young people's part of this Action Plan.
- In turn, future iterations of theme, area or service-based plans should take into account the overall Sustainable Community Strategy and vice versa.

6. In line with the LAA review timetable we would expect a Sustainable Community Strategy to be refreshed on an annual basis and reviewed every three years.

¹⁷ These components have been agreed with the Government and the Local Government Association.

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