

KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA PARTNERSHIP

RE-VISTING THE STRUCTURE OF THE KCP

15th MARCH 2006

This paper:

Invites the Steering Group to consider the suggested outline for re-visiting the structure of the Partnership.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the KCP Steering Group meeting on July 6, 2005 it was agreed that there is a need to re-visit the structure of the Partnership in preparation for its role in over seeing the new Community Strategy, subsequent monitoring plan, and the recently negotiated Local Area Agreement (LAA). It was also agreed that more detailed work be carried out by the Community Strategy sub-group.
- 1.2 This paper outlines what the sub-group will be asked to consider and invites the Steering Group to ensure that this covers all necessary elements. Volunteers to join the sub-group to contribute more closely to this process are also welcome.

2. A healthy partnership

- 2.1 In September 2005, Government Office for London (GoL) assessed the KCP as a 'Green' rated LSP. This assessment was based not only on progress against the previous Community Strategy targets and Neighbourhood Renewal priorities but also on the general health of the LSP as a well-functioning partnership. The process highlighted a number of elements essential to healthy partnership working such as regular review of progress against agreed aims and objectives, and regular review of structure and purpose. With this in mind, the Community Strategy monitoring plan will reflect a target that requires the KCP to under go an annual review and commission an external evaluation every three years.
- 2.2 Government's recently published consultation paper on the future working arrangements of LSPs asked many questions that prompt LSPs to consider their 'health'. A copy of the response to this paper was sent on behalf of the KCP and is attached at Annex A for information.

3. What to focus on

3.1 The following is a summary of suggested areas for the sub-group to focus on as part of any potential re-structure:

Steering Group membership

- Have we got the right organisations represented on the Steering Group? For example both Job Centre Plus and the Fire Service have approached the LSP to express interest in joining the Steering Group, not least as a result of the LAA process and inclusion of stretch targets that focus on these areas.
- Is there duplication or gaps in membership across the KCP Steering Group and other partnerships?

The relationship between the KCP and other partnerships

- How do we link in with other partnerships such as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership?
- Do we need to be clearer about respective roles and responsibilities, and the way the KCP relates to other partnerships?
- Do we need something extra, such as a Local Public Service Board to take joint decisions about the deployment of statutory sector resources?

The Cluster structure

- How do we ensure there is a link between the Steering Group and service delivery?
- Is the cluster structure the best way to do this and if so, do we want to retain the cluster champion arrangement, but realign it to take account of the new Community Strategy and LAA?
- Is there a need to devise alternative service delivery sub groups that demonstrate a direct link to Steering Group members and if so, can this take account of already existing operational partnerships?
- Could new sub-groups provide an opportunity to engage other partners and local stakeholders to help drive priorities forward?

The Regeneration Exchange

- Should we revisit the form and purpose of the Regeneration Exchange?
- These events have proved successful and popular, so what role could such a forum play in helping the Partnership secure delivery of the LAA and new Community Strategy?

Engagement and Communication

- What other ways could the Steering Group communicate and engage with the public that it serves, is there a need for a supplementary event? The current Terms of Reference mention the Borough Conference, which no longer exists.
- Do Steering Group members want more support in order to engage and participate in LSP business? Current Terms of Reference, mention the Steering Group has committed to one away day per year, is this enough and/or does it need to be complemented by training and development delivered by an external organisation such as the Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA) for example?

Terms of Reference

- Current Terms of Reference need to be revised and updated to reflect any changes made during the re-structure process.

4. Timescale

- 4.1 Whilst re-visiting the structure of the KSP is not subject to any externally driven timescales, the delivery of the Community Strategy and LAA will inevitably benefit from the process. As such, the sub-group should work on proposals for development to be presented at the next Steering Group meeting in May. Implementation of any agreed proposals should be completed by Autumn 2006.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Steering Group are therefore asked to note this suggested list of priorities above and are invited to;
- add/delete any that they feel are not included/appropriate
 - note the suggested timescale for development
 - volunteer to join the sub group

FOR DISCUSSION

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ANNEX A

Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future

This is a response from the Kensington and Chelsea Partnership (KCP), the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), to the recently published consultation paper from ODPM, *Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future*.

Role of LSPs and Sustainable Community Strategies

The consultation defines LSPs as the partnership of all partnerships in a local area. It asks:

- Should the key role of the LSP be to develop the vision for the local area, through the Sustainable Community Strategy?
- Should the 'delivery contract' be through the LAA?
- Should there be a requirement on bodies producing theme or service-based plans to 'have regard' to the Sustainable Community Strategy in doing so and vice versa?

The KCP has developed a new Community Strategy, published in November 2005. This sets out the vision for the local area, ensuring links with the Local Development Framework and other key strategies where the aims and objectives of the Community Strategy are reflected. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) programme comes to an end in March 2006 and so NRF priorities have been subsumed into the new Community Strategy, some elements are also reflected in the newly negotiated Local Area Agreement (LAA). Importantly, this recognises the need for the LSP to provide the guiding vision for the whole community, including targeted areas of need.

The LAA delivery plan, on which the LSP will be measured, ought only to reflect agreed targets that appear in the LAA. The KCP rejects the notion that LAAs and community strategy delivery plans should be one and the same. LAAs are voluntary agreements between Government and local partnerships, although they may contribute to the delivery of the community strategy. The new Community Strategy for RBKC will be accompanied by a monitoring plan, setting out progress against targets and naming lead partners who will be responsible for driving delivery forward. This plan will serve to measure progress locally. If the role of LSPs is to take a strategic overview in a local area then this degree of devolution in terms of delivery and accountability needs to be supported by government. The KCP sees itself first and foremost as accountable to local residents, businesses and organisations. The Partnership recognises its obligation to report to the local community on progress in delivering the community strategy. It believes this local accountability is fundamental to a healthy relationship between organisations that deliver public services and the people they exist to serve. It would not wish to see Government seek to redirect this line of accountability to Whitehall through wide-ranging Local Area Agreements agreed with Ministers.

While some local areas may benefit from a statutory requirement on other bodies to ensure that the Sustainable Community Strategy is reflected in the development of other plans and strategies, for the KCP this arrangement is already informally in place. Indeed it would not have been possible to develop the new Community Strategy and negotiate a Local Area Agreement without this level of collaboration between partners and colleagues.

Governance

The consultation considers the structure of LSPs and calls for a rationalisation of local partnerships, suggesting thematic partnerships that co-ordinate the delivery of priorities that appear in the Community Strategy. It asks:

- Should the LAA four-block structure be used as a template for this?
- Should there be a legislative foundation for LSPs?
- Is there a need for a statutory duty to be placed on partners to participate and in conjunction, should a statutory duty be placed on other partnerships to link with the LSP?

In RBKC, the LAA is a 'single pot' agreement. Suggesting a themed partnership structure that focuses on the LAA four-block structure would therefore not make sense locally. If the LSP is to focus more on delivery then it must be able to adopt a structure that relates to service delivery at a local level. The Community Strategy is the most logical point of reference for this. Currently, the KCP have themed 'clusters' in place to track progress against the aims and objectives of the first Community Strategy. As part of the development of the second Community Strategy, these themed clusters will be revisited within a wider exercise considering the structure, format and membership of the Partnership generally.

The KCP has a steering group with a membership of 16, which meets bi-monthly. The group is chaired by the Leader of the Council and membership includes members of the council's Cabinet, a minority party member, the Police, the PCT, the voluntary and community sector, a Housing provider, the Forum of Faiths, the Chamber of Commerce, the local Tenant Management Organisation and an amenity society. It has strong links via cross membership with other multi-disciplinary partnerships, like the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Joint Health Partnership Board. It engages the voluntary and community sector both at strategic level via the Steering Group and at delivery level via the themed 'clusters'.

Achieving this has not been an easy task but this has been managed through fostering existing relationships between partners and developing new ones.

Without this level of participation and engagement from partners it would not have been possible to develop such a comprehensive Community Strategy or negotiate such a broad-ranging set of LAA targets. This structure is not perfect and relationships amongst partners are not without challenges, but by and large it works well and has strengthened over the years. We have organisations that are now actively striving to join the Steering Group.

In areas of the country where partners are not adequately represented on the LSP or where commitment and engagement is lacking, a legislative duty to cooperate may be useful and in some cases necessary. But this is not the case in RBKC and in fact, the success of this particular aspect of the KCP could be attributed to the fact that continued involvement from partners is voluntary. Introducing a sense of coercion through statute could actually undermine one of the factors that contribute to the LSPs' strength.

Accountability

The consultation notes that broad representation on LSPs across partner organisations is important in determining accountability with regard to service delivery. It also asks:

- Should LSPs be encouraged to produce protocols or 'partnership agreements' between partners to ensure clear lines of accountability for the delivery of agreed outcomes?
- How could partners already involved be supported to become more representative?
- How can effective engagement of local communities be achieved and how can accountability to local businesses and people be enhanced?

The Community Strategy monitoring plan will perform the function of an agreed protocol, detailing targets against aims and objectives, naming lead partners responsible for delivery, and noting timescales for tracking progress. Again, enforcement of these arrangements may be useful in some areas, but this would make little difference to existing working arrangements within the KCP. To formalise this, a concise but comprehensive revised version of the terms of reference for the LSP will be agreed as part of the review process of the Partnership, currently underway.

Ultimate responsibility for the delivery of front line services rest with individual organisations, represented on the LSP. The delivery of these services is enhanced and improved through partnership working. The Government's desire for clear lines of accountability in relation to the delivery of outcomes is at odds with its desire to see partners work together jointly to tackle cross-cutting issues such as public health, community safety and the quality of the public realm. While it may be easy to assign lead responsibilities for action on such issues, delivery will inevitably depend on the actions of a larger number of organisations. Accountability for delivery will therefore effectively be shared, and attempts to impose "clarity" could militate against effective partnership working.

Those delivering services are represented by those who sit on the KCP Steering Group. The importance of this relationship is demonstrated by the need for themed partnerships to ensure clear links from delivery to Community Strategy priorities. These themed partnerships are where service delivery is discussed and co-ordinated. Advisory and strategic co-ordination is still the role of the LSP. This is reflected in government's intention to divide strategic and operational responsibilities within CDRPs, as an example. Governments' recently published review of CDRPs suggests that the strategic element should rest with the LSP. Operational responsibility needs clearly to sit within a partnership that contains operational staff and/or managers.

This is not to say that LSPs have no influence over service delivery but it is simply to recognise the limitations of a partnership whose membership ranges from democratically elected members, senior management of large statutory organisations through to local businesses and the voluntary and community sector. It is important that the Government recognises the nature of these partnerships. The strength of LSPs lies in their ability to bring people from various sectors across a local area together to discuss and debate issues that matter to local people; to build a consensus on ambitions for the future of the area; to identify opportunities for working more closely together to deliver them; to encourage organisations not directly represented on the LSP to play their part in such joint endeavours; and to monitor progress, looking for solutions or new ways of doing things if delivery is slow.

LSPs have no or only limited budgets under their control, limited staff resources and no executive authority over their member organisations. The voluntary, community and business sector representatives have limited powers of direction or leadership over their wider constituencies. The power to deliver and manage change therefore lies not with the Partnership but with the individual organisations that operate in the local area, be they in the public, private or voluntary sector. The accountability of these organisations to their electorate, Government department, board of trustees, or shareholders is far stronger than their accountability to one another or to the LSP. These realities cannot be legislated away. A clear picture of why members are involved in the LSP supports them to represent more effectively. A wide and varying range of possible structures exist across LSPs, but for those who adopt a lean structure it is practical to ensure that duplication of membership, role and responsibility is avoided. A clear distinction between operational partnerships and the LSP helps to achieve this and also serves to ensure that the strength of other partnerships is not undermined in the process.

The LAA includes a target concerning community empowerment that aims to tackle the issue of effective community engagement. Partner organisations are already undertaking a wide range of activities that focus on consultation and engagement across the local area. In the absence of targeted funding from the government, the Council have made some funding available for activities contributing to this LAA target. The KCP will take the lead on developing a programme of activities focussing on forms of community engagement. This is currently being developed within the Partnership.

Capacity

The consultation asks:

- What support would be most useful in order to help LSPs shift to a more delivery-focussed role?

Members of the KCP have identified development as an important priority. The group have committed to one away day per year but would like to see a greater commitment from government in providing support. This could be in the form of training and practical learning opportunities. It would be ideal for this to support the review process that is currently underway, which is intended to re define the partnership's structure, role and purpose.