

**THE KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
MEETING OF THE SHADOW LSP STEERING GROUP 6TH DECEMBER 2001**

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LSP STEERING GROUP

REPORT BY THE TOWN CLERK AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Introduction

Under Government guidance it is recognised that the Council may need to take a lead in the early stages of forming a Local Strategic Partnership.

In its early thinking the Council wanted to recognise that the Royal Borough has a rich mixture of large and small organisations who wish to play a part in the future of the Royal Borough.

This includes the main statutory agencies with their large budgets; the disparate business community; over 350 residents and tenants associations; a large range of voluntary organisations and a large number of informal working partnerships which are already seeking to plan future developments or spend specialist streams of public money.

Joint planning within the Council's area has been developed over the last decade and now represents a very complicated set of administrative arrangements. These arrangements include a number of prescribed partnerships which have discrete authority which often have access to specialist funding.

Some areas are obviously stronger than others. The main "welfare" areas are well served by both statutory agencies and robust partnership arrangements. Other important areas of community life such as the local economy and the artistic and cultural life of the Borough are more resistant to organisation, as they naturally involve a large number of free standing and independent organisations.

To recognise this diversity the Council advanced a theoretical model in which a huge number of organisations would be recognised as "members" of the community partnership.

The aspiration was to seek out all those parties who would wish to be recognised as a "friend of the future of the Royal Borough" and offer them the opportunity to:

- be on an e-mail address list and receive and comment on, the plans for the Royal Borough;
- and attend a Borough Conference once a year to hear about the change in context for the Royal Borough, and to share information about local progress or otherwise.

Other partnership models

The Government Office for London have offered guidance on the nature of Local Strategic Partnerships, but have recognised that there are a large number of models already in existence in different local areas. These range from small limited companies to large combinations of representatives drawn from various parts of community life.

The model offered by the Royal Borough Council was of this large congregation of interests, to whom a small steering group would report.

The belief was that the Steering Group should remain small so as to both promote trust and therefore honest dialogue and also to make it more likely that each of the individuals on the Steering Group felt that they had a significant voice and therefore some influence, as experience shows that this is the best incentive for active participation.

The first Shadow Steering Group

To get discussions started the Council invited the current membership to form the first Shadow Steering Group which met for the first time in the summer.

The initial membership reflected the changes in the Council's decision making structure - which makes the leadership on community strategy a matter for the "Executive" and drew in the obvious members from the voluntary sector and the other arms of the statutory sector which are run by local management.

Since then there has been much discussion amongst the first membership of the Shadow Steering Group and arising through the consultative process.

The Government Office for London guidance is also relevant.

A number of individuals and interest groups have approached the matter on the basis that membership of the Steering Group is desirable as the Steering Group will be exercising some sort of power. The converse to this is that the Steering Group has to exercise responsibility and be accountable back to the host of community interests who form the Borough Conference.

The "duty" element of participation in the Steering Group needs to be acknowledged and will cause some sectors to reflect on whether they can participate to this degree.

For example, a place has been reserved for the local business community within the initial membership of the Steering Group since the outset, but at the present time neither the local Chamber of Commerce nor the other small business groupings in the area see themselves as being able to put forward a credible representative who can make an enduring contribution.

To recognise the challenge of participation in these terms, the Government Office for London has allocated some funding for "capacity building" and it has been agreed that this should be spent by the two Social Councils.

The Local Strategic Partnership Steering Group will no doubt wish to ensure that this capacity/building resource is applied to ensure that both the Steering Group and the wider partnership can function well.

The contenders for Steering Group Membership

Representations have been made as follows:

1. Kensington and Chelsea College have offered to join, stressing the importance of the Further Educational Sector to the future success of the Borough.
2. Various residents, as representatives of Residents Associations, have stressed that there ought to be more direct involvement of local residents.
3. The Government Office for London guidance suggests that an effort ought to be made to get a representative of the local employment service/benefits agency involved.
4. Discussions have been started to create a local "inter-faith forum" and this raises the issue as to whether or not there ought to be more than one representative from the different faith groups in the Borough.
5. The Social Councils represent that there ought to be more representation from the non-statutory sector.
6. The Minority group of Councillors on the Council have sought to say that they ought to be represented as part of the Councillor group.
7. Given the growing importance of emergency planning and the new local command structure within the London Fire and Rescue Service, there is a question as to whether the local Fire Commander ought to be invited to join.
8. The Royal Borough has a rich cultural and artistic life and there may be some interest in seeing these interests represented within the Steering Group.
9. The local success of the "better government for older people" work and the planned work to run a "better local government with young people" project, prompts discussion about whether there ought to be any attempt to see representatives from particular age groupings invited to join the Steering Group.

It is clear that inviting representatives along these lines may push up membership towards 20 places. It is almost inevitable that the future may bring more offers/requests for representation and from those who see themselves as having a particular interest including tenants and leaseholders, refugee communities etc.

The Kensington and Chelsea Policing Community Consultative Group is perhaps illustrative. It has an invitation list which goes to over 70 people.

Some principles for moving forward

The responsibility for determining membership must lie with the current Shadow Steering Group. Some principles for determining whether or not to increase the current membership might be as follows:

1. The maximum size for a workable group is 15.
2. Even within a group of 15 there may need to be occasions where there are smaller meetings set up to look at particular issues.
3. As the only directly elected local representatives, Councillors should be a significant part of the membership of the Steering Group.
4. Other major spenders of public money - those with discretion to vary such spending - should also be represented (the Police and the Health Service).
5. As a commitment to ensuring that the Steering Group remains rooted in experience of living in the Royal Borough, over 50% of the individuals serving on the Steering Group ought to have a home address within the Royal Borough.
6. Where representatives are sought from resident, community or other interested groups (outside of the main statutory agencies and the two Social Councils) then there ought to be a process of advertising and selection to make appointments to "membership classes" on the basis that the individuals chosen will be competent, willing and able to make a contribution to the duties and accountabilities of the Steering Group.

Decisions required

1. There is no absolute requirement to change the Shadow Steering Group membership at present. However continued debate might be a distraction on the main work of settling on the Community Strategy and Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and then delivering on the commitments therein.
2. Clearly the self assessment/accreditation process which the LSP must go through will also require us to be confident in local arrangements.
3. If the Local Strategic Partnership apparatus is to be credible, then it needs to be well considered and others need to recognise that their aspirations have been acknowledged and reasonably dealt with.

<p>Members of the Shadow Steering Group are invited to debate the issue and determine a way forward.</p>
