

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

**TOWARDS A COMMUNITY STRATEGY: A REVIEW OF THE  
CONSULTATION ACTIVITY**

**REPORT BY THE TOWN CLERK AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The attached papers set out the work by the Office for Public Management on your behalf, in reviewing the following:

- a) The response from previous consultations, mainly by the Council, around general and specific issues in the past.
- b) The results of the 23 consultation events organised over the past few months.
- c) The ideas emerging from those events.
- d) The comments that arose during those events about the "governance issues" around the LSP structure itself.

***Consultation not delegation***

The key task over the next few months, for the Local Strategic Partnership, is to discuss and agree a Community Strategy (together with a parallel Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy).

Clearly any strategy should go with the grain of local public opinion but nevertheless the responsibility for determining on strategy must lie with those in leadership positions.

The nature of the Local Strategic Partnership is to try to combine those who have the power and responsibility to make a difference in local communities, with representatives of those communities and other local agencies and interested parties such as local businesses etc.

The consultation exercise and the synthesis of previous consultation activity clearly goes a long way to helping us understand what emerges when you talk with local people.

But inevitably this consultation activity has to be qualified.

Any consultation activity - which seeks to do more than sample opinion - has to rely upon the active cooperation of individuals and cooperation is more likely to be given by certain groups than others.

## ***The missing perspectives***

The fruits of the consultation exercise seem to show a series of perspectives with the following characteristics:

- A bias towards action - that all problems have solutions
- A high expectation that public agencies should be interventionist .
- A strong sense of locality being important - with a consequent importance given to improvements for local people.
- A lack of perspective on the degree to which the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has to be understood as part of a big capital city.
- Consequently the significance of the Royal Borough as a tourist destination is underplayed.
- There is a lack of attention to the importance to the Royal Borough of pan-London infrastructure such as public transport and the importance of London NHS facilities.

As well as these missing perspectives, there are clearly also missing view points.

The consultation activity will almost inevitably not do justice to:

- "Minimalists" - who on the whole want the Council and other state agencies to leave them alone because they perceive themselves to be self-sufficient or resent interference with their chosen lifestyle, and
- "Non-joiners" - who might include people who have not lived in the Royal Borough for long or do not intend to stay for long, as well as those who by virtue of employment patterns or other circumstances choose not to make a personal investment in their local community.
- "Traditional voters" who are content to vote for elected representatives at both Westminster and the local level to take responsibility for public affairs.

## ***The difference between leadership issues and issues raised in consultation.***

Inevitably during consultation exercises, people raise issues which are important to them, to their immediate family or to the local area in which they live. Others who have a professional or other allegiance, raise "cause" issues.

Leadership of complicated urban areas requires attention to competing in priorities, unpopular causes, compromise between competing objectives and an accommodation with bigger picture issues.

These "dilemmas" will include:

- The reconciliation of the interests of those who use public services and those who pay for them.
- The balance between "freedom" and regulation. (Licensing; planning control; traffic control etc.)

- The need for social control, to protect the vulnerable (where mental health causes risk; child protection; crime; young people causing disorder).
- The balance between promoting self reliance and providing services for those in need.
- Challenges arising from a multi-ethnic multi faith population. A dilemma of when to promote and "regulate" for harmonious relationships and when to respect privacy and rely on good standards of private behaviour.
- When to provide general services and when to recognise the need for bespoke services.
- How to share these dilemmas and how best to seek to create consent for decisions taken in the public name.

### ***The communication challenge***

When we have agreed the content of our first Community Strategy, there is clearly a task to communicate:

- Those key policy and service deliverables which have previously been agreed, particularly within statutory agencies.
- The agreed LSP response to those suggestions which have arisen during the consultation.
- A sense of the dilemmas that are set out above, and which have arisen during the discussion process so as either to engage others in debate, or share a problem to which there may be no obvious solution.
- The costs of policy options and developments so as to be able to lead a debate about the affordability of change.

In communicating these things, we clearly need to understand that there are a number of different audiences:

- Those who are not interested, other than when personal family experience or family problems prompt them to take an interest.
- Those who are "interestable".
- Those who are activists or who occupy space in the policy hinterland of the LSP agencies.

### ***Gaining consent***

The theory offered here is that:

- LSP has to exercise leadership in bringing forward a Community Strategy,
- that leadership has to show how the strategy has been informed by the results of consultation,
- it is necessary then to communicate the Community Strategy and in so doing seek consent.

The early formulation of the LSP working model suggested that such consent should be achieved through a reasonable degree of publicity and a formal "Borough Conference" each year.

### ***Format for the Community Strategy***

A paper elsewhere on the agenda suggests a possible format for the Community Strategy.