



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

Department for
Transport

*National Evaluation of
Local Strategic Partnerships:
Formative Evaluation and
Action Research Programme
2002–2005*

Final Report



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January 2006

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The findings and recommendations in this report are those of the consultant authors and do not necessarily represent the views or proposed policies of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

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Printed in Great Britain on material comprising no less than 75% post-consumer waste.

January 2006

Product Code 05 LGFG 03610

ISBN-13: 978 185112 835 8

ISBN-10: 1 85112 835 2

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. This report draws together key findings from the National Evaluation of LSPs. Jointly commissioned by three ODPM research divisions (LRGRU, NRU and RAE) and the Department for Transport (DfT), the first 3 years of the programme has been undertaken by the Universities of Warwick, Liverpool John Moores, West of England, Bristol and the Office for Public Management. It comprised a Feasibility Study, Formative Evaluation and Action Research (March 2002 – March 2005). The objective of this phase of the National Evaluation has been to support LSPs and policy-makers at local, regional and central levels, and to evaluate the progress LSPs are making. A Summative Evaluation of impacts and effectiveness is provisionally planned to commence in 2006.
2. The evaluation has identified both governance and delivery issues. This summary presents the main findings under these two headings, and the consequent policy implications.
3. This has been a formative evaluation, focused on processes and policy development but only preliminary impacts. This reflects government's view in commissioning the evaluation that it was too early to fully evaluate the *impact* of LSPs until after they have bedded down and have had several years to implement their strategies. This is consistent with the findings of much research on partnerships which suggests that effective partnership working relationships can take a considerable time to become embedded.

Governance issues

4. Governance issues encompass a wide range of factors (from leadership to representation and accountability) concerning the ways in which LSPs are organised as institutions and work with other organisations and interests, including their local partners and institutions 'above and below the LSP.
5. The evaluation shows that LSPs have, in a relatively short time, established themselves as a vital part of the institutional arrangements of modernised local governance. There is a broad positive consensus about the principle and purpose of LSPs.
6. However there are very considerable differences in the extent to which LSPs can yet be said to have established robust and sustainable governance arrangements. There are important differences between NRF and non-NRF LSPs, and also between those in different kinds of local authority area (as well as between LSPs within these categories). The extent to which the LSP has been able to draw on a positive history of partnership working in each locality and whether it was set up relatively early or late are major factors.
7. Some LSPs have established governance arrangements which seem both effective and inclusive. In others there is often still a gap between the accepted principle of the LSP and the reality. Many LSPs' structures and arrangements are not necessarily yet fully fit for purpose. There are a number of significant factors concerning governance arrangements.

8. The **strategic capacity** of the board or executive is important. This in turn relates to issues of membership, leadership and a clear understanding of the role and purpose of the partnership. **Leadership** is a crucial element in determining the capacity of LSPs, but the exercise of leadership within strategic partnerships remains extremely challenging, implying the desirability of further support to LSPs for leadership development. The importance of strategic capacity and effective leadership is now made all the more important by the roll-out of **LAAs**.
9. An important task envisaged for LSPs in early guidance was the **rationalisation** of the often overlapping and confusing pattern of partnerships at local level. Little progress has been made on this, but LAAs have also brought this issue into sharp focus.
10. There has been more progress with '**process rationalisation**' by means of protocols, co-ordination and better ways of working – but it is not clear this is always an effective substitute for structural rationalisation. There has also been progress in **rationalising plans and processes** and reducing the planning burden (on local authorities and their partners), though this is taking time to work out in practice.
11. Substantial numbers of LSPs identify accountability as an area that needs strengthening. There is a lack of clarity on a number of aspects including the accountability of the LSP *to* partners, and the accountability *of* partners to the LSP, as well as wider public accountability. A key issue is the relationship of the LSP to local democratic processes, where the lynchpin role is that of the local councillor, yet many are not closely connected to, or in sympathy with, the LSP, and it is not clear that even where (mostly senior) councillors are actively and positively engaged with the LSP that they necessarily prioritise issues of democratic accountability. In addition, LSPs can operate as agents or mechanisms of **accountability per se**. For example, effective partnership working, and integrating/aligning plans, targets, performance management regimes and budgets all result in considerable scrutiny of individual agencies' actions and resources by stakeholders (public, private, voluntary and community alike).
12. **Performance management** processes may be helpful in improving accountability, but these are not yet well established in many non-NRF LSPs while in NRF areas performance management may promote accountability to GOs and the NRU as much as or more than to local partners. Issues of accountability and legitimacy are made vastly more important by the pivotal role of LSPs in LAAs.
13. There are also questions about the **capacity** of LSPs. These include, on the one hand, how far structures and processes make it possible to take hard decisions, for example resolving tensions between conservation and development in one place, dealing with conflicts between competitiveness and cohesion in another. On the other hand, capacity issues are indicated by the expressed need of LSPs for more support from both government and local partners. In particular, non-NRF LSPs require more support from GOs while NRF LSPs may not be able to rely indefinitely on the NRF to support their operation.
14. The extent to which LSPs have been successful so far in **engaging partners and stakeholders** varies greatly – both among LSPs, and between different categories of partner and stakeholder. For some LSPs, fundamental processes of engagement such as understanding partners' priorities and sharing information and data still remain largely on the 'to do' list. There is, as yet, little good practice anywhere in mapping partners' spending plans.

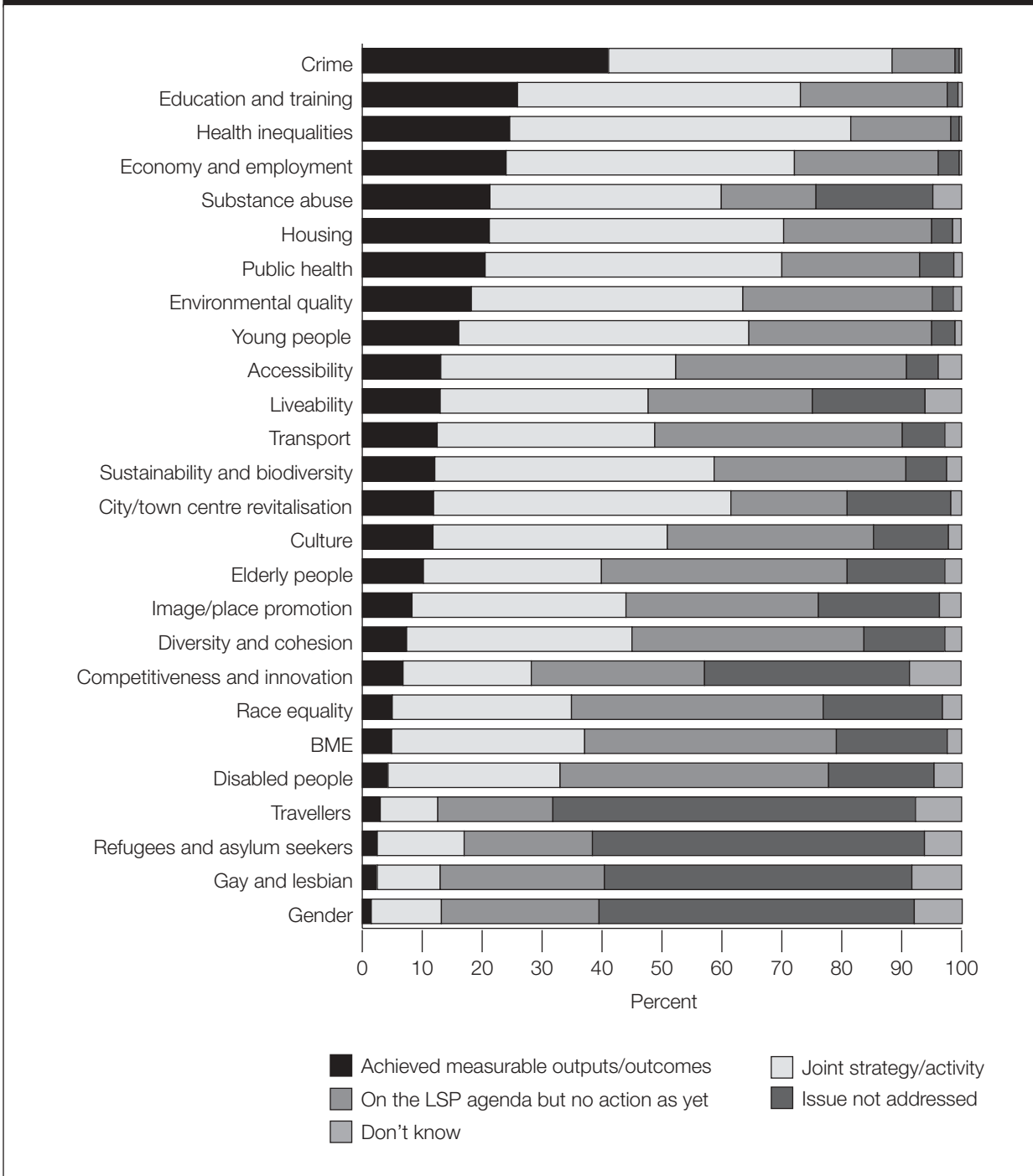
15. The evidence is that many **public sector** partners are now making a strong contribution within LSPs, but this engagement needs to be translated into securing change within partner organisations in line with LSP priorities. Other partners – including **local councillors** – still need to be more actively engaged in the LSP itself. There is still a need to engage the **private and business** sector more substantively in many LSPs though there are a number of cases where business involvement is strong and from which lessons could be learned. The **voluntary and community** sector is stretched and under-resourced, and there is a concern that new remits for LSPs (LPSAs, LAAs) should not marginalise the voluntary and community role.
16. There is an ongoing debate within LSPs about how to steer a course between centrally determined and enforced **performance management** systems versus locally developed systems, and about how to minimise the danger of over complicated bureaucratic systems taking up too much time and energy. Underlying this debate is the current status of the LSP as a non-statutory, non-executive organisation, and the questions of how far an LSP can performance manage its partners, and whether performance management inhibits or encourages partnership working.
17. Above the LSP, there need to be stronger ties between LSPs' agendas (especially Community Strategies) and **regional and sub-regional economic strategies**.
18. The **neighbourhood governance** agenda makes relationships below the LSP particularly important, and in principle the LSP can be a forum in which multiple sub-local interests can come together. However avoiding duplication of arrangements and involving councillors are important issues.
19. There are specific issues concerning **two tier areas**. County and district LSPs must be understood as being complementary rather than conflicting, sitting side by side rather than one above the other and underpinned by a common understanding and agreement about their respective roles and strengths. This implies the fuller engagement of district representation in county LSPs in order to engage and legitimise a bottom-up input to strategic thinking, and conversely that of county LSP partners in district LSPs in order to contribute to a more locally responsive and community based application of strategic priorities. In some places, the strategic economic, physical and social issues confronting LSPs at county level do not confine themselves to local government boundaries, and many of the most pressing issues relate to the major urban areas (often unitary authorities) and their hinterlands. Such issues cannot be addressed by county or district LSPs alone.

Delivery issues

20. The evaluation shows the primary drivers of activity by LSPs are national policies – Community Strategies and, in NRF areas, neighbourhood renewal – although other potential drivers, such as the Well Being Power, have not been taken up to anything like the same extent.
21. As Figure 1 below shows, LSPs have become involved in many areas of activity. On many fronts, this activity has already led to either measurable outcomes or the development of joint strategy and/or activity among partners. The greater government requirements of, and support for, NRF LSPs means that in general they have developed more substantial activity and made more progress across most issues (not just in tackling deprivation) than

elsewhere. However, many non-NRF LSPs have developed initiatives on a range of issues, from transport to rural development and from economic development to environmental sustainability. There is a clear relationship between the ‘maturity’ of the LSP partnership and the amount of progress made. At the same time, the evidence indicates a ‘tail’ of LSPs (mostly but not exclusively non-NRF) where activity so far is limited, including in particular many counties which are or will soon be preparing their LAA. The issue for these LSPs is whether they have the capacity to engage effectively in the process of preparation and delivery of the LAA, or whether they will be marginalised by the process. In this context, the fact that many LSPs consider they need more support from government is significant.

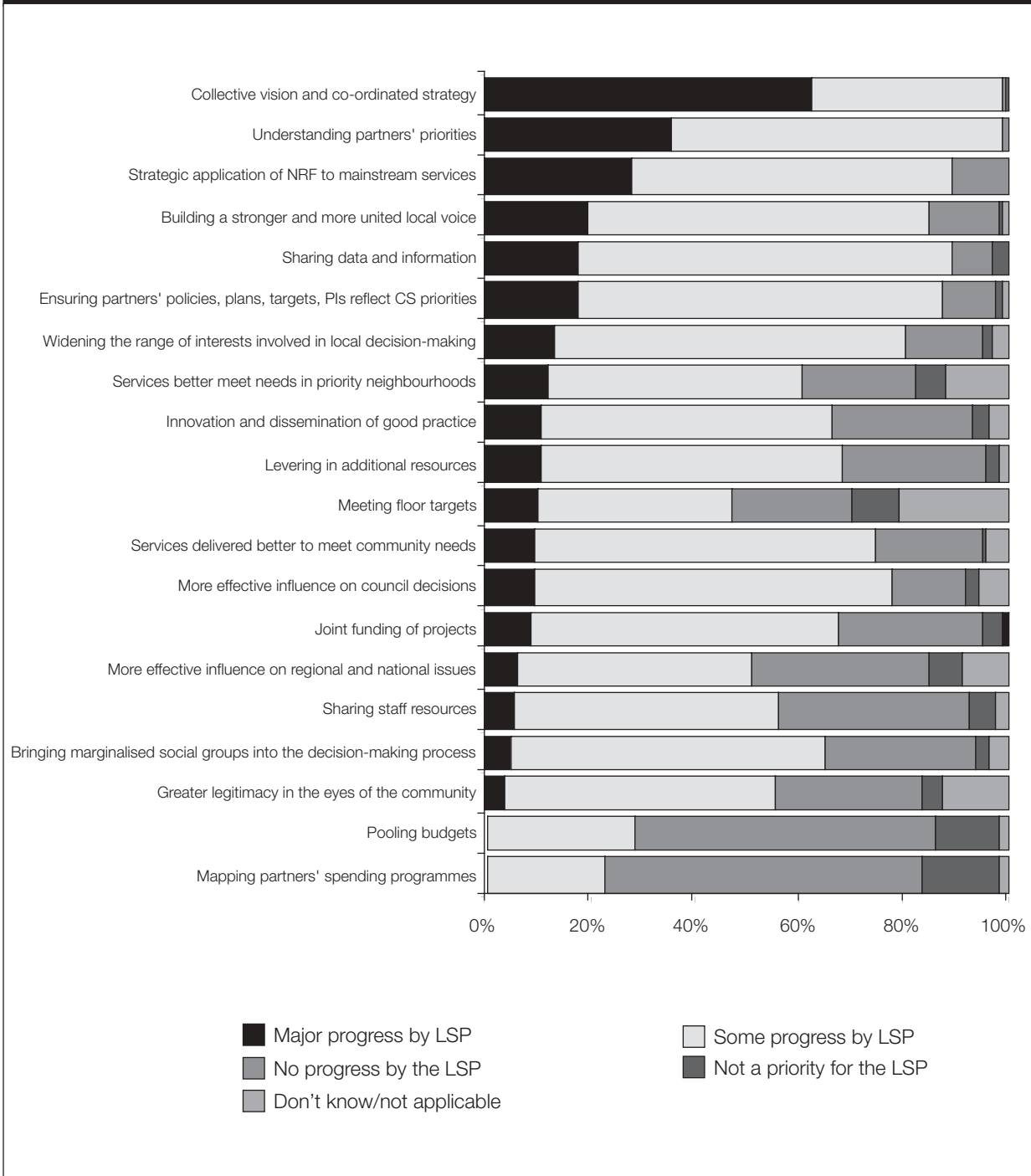
Figure 1: LSP involvement in specific policy issues



Source: LSP evaluation, 2004 survey

22. There are also some issues (such as some equalities issues) which are not substantively on the agendas of many LSPs. One effect of LAAs might be to increase the focus on the ‘most important’ issues at the expense of others seen locally as less important, but alternatively the process could provide an opportunity for government to bring such neglected issues up the agenda.
23. LSPs face a number of tensions in developing activity and action across a broad front. These include the compatibility (or lack of it) of government and local agendas, the question of the level at which to act – strategic or delivery focused and the extent to which the LSP is able to engage both agencies and communities. A further key issue is what action and activity is (and is best) undertaken by ‘the LSP’, by sub-partnerships, or by partners with the collaboration or consent of the LSP.
24. Figure 2 below shows progress that LSPs consider they have made. Overall, this shows that very significant progress is being made in many areas, especially when it is remembered that LSPs have only been established for a very limited time and the initial expectation was that they would often need some time to bed down. In evaluating the progress of LSPs in delivering outcomes, we have made a distinction between process outcomes, governance outcomes and service outcomes.
25. Much of the activity of LSPs still centres around what can be called ‘**process outcomes**’ – working more closely with partners, sharing information and staff resources, and financial collaboration via pooled funding of activity. There has been good progress on some of these issues but at the same time there are considerable numbers of LSPs which have not yet made progress in these areas. If these issues are indeed important preconditions which are necessary for LSPs to make real and sustained progress towards service and governance outcomes, the implication must be that for numbers of LSPs significant levels of outcomes may still be some way off.
26. **Local governance** outcomes include the development of a collective vision and agreed strategy; widening the range of interests involved in local decision making; creating a stronger local voice; improving the perceived legitimacy of local governance; and exercising more effective influence locally and nationally.
27. The development of a **collective vision and co-ordinated strategy** stands out as the predominant issue on which major progress is claimed by LSPs. Many LSPs also claim to have made some progress on others of these issues, though only very limited numbers consider that they have yet made major progress.

Figure 2: Progress by LSPs



Source: LSP evaluation, 2004 survey

28. The third category of potential areas of progress relate to outcomes in terms of **service improvements**. The issues on which the 2004 survey provides evidence are:

- Ensuring that partners' policies, plans, targets and PIs reflect the Community Strategy's properties.
- Services delivered better to meet community needs.
- Services which better meet needs in priority neighbourhoods.

- Meeting floor targets.
29. As is the case in relation to progress towards better governance, the overall picture in relation to service improvements is that substantial numbers of LSPs claim to have made some progress towards service improvement, although only relatively small proportions yet claim to have made major progress.
 30. Differentials between **types of LSPs** are significant in terms of both governance and service outcomes. Thus, as might be expected as a result of the neighbourhood renewal agenda, **NRF LSPs** have had more success in bringing marginalised social groups into decision making. Many more NRF than non-NRF LSPs show major progress achieved in terms of improved services and meeting floor targets. **County LSPs** lag somewhat behind other local authority types, with few claiming major progress.
 31. Turning to progress on **specific policy issues** (as shown in Figure 1 above) a number of issues stand out where significant numbers of LSPs claim to be achieving measurable outputs/outcomes. These are led by crime, but there are numerous other issues where at least a fifth of LSPs claim to have achieved measurable outcomes. These tend to be the areas associated with floor targets and key neighbourhood renewal priorities. At the other end of the spectrum, there are certain issues which significant numbers of LSPs are not addressing at all – these include, for at least one third of all LSPs, competitiveness and innovation (distinguished from economic development and employment); gay and lesbian and gender issues; refugees and asylum seekers and travellers. These would seem to be important issues for government policies on the economy and on social inclusion and community cohesion.
 32. It is important to be able to show what contribution the LSP has made to such outcomes and that they would not have occurred without the LSP. Some LSPs can now identify, with some degree of precision, ways in which the LSP is enabling positive outcomes to occur which would – at least – have been more difficult in the absence of the LSP. However in other cases LSPs are still find this difficult, and some partners are clearly dubious whether the LSP is **adding value**. In some cases there is a suggestion that LSPs may merely be ‘badging’ outcomes achieved by partners. Those LSPs which are not yet using some form of **performance management** seem to find it hardest to identify added value.
 33. The evaluation has given considerable attention to the issue of **mainstreaming** as one of the keys to delivery. By mainstreaming we primarily mean ‘strategic’ mainstreaming – the refocusing of mainstream programmes and funding onto targets which are agreed and shared by local partners, reflecting the pattern of local need; but we can also consider ‘initiative mainstreaming’ – adopting innovative approaches and learning from localised, short-term pilot projects into the mainstream. The evaluation has identified positive examples of mainstreaming, mostly by more experienced LSPs. However, in many LSPs mainstreaming remains largely undiscussed, ambiguous and a major challenge. Most LSPs think that their public sector partners would like to realign programmes, but are constrained by both resources and by central government targets and demands. However, well over half also consider that a lack of partner commitment is also an important or very important factor, while more than a third of LSPs do not regard realignment of main programmes as a priority.

34. The key **drivers** for mainstreaming emerging from the research are:
- That the local authority, the police and health organisations are key players.
 - That neighbourhood renewal funding (and area-based initiatives in general) can be a powerful learning tool and stimulus to mainstreaming.
 - That 'locality' planning between the level of the LSP/local authority and the neighbourhood) is fertile ground for main programme reshaping – close enough to delivery to be responsive to community; far enough above the small area to make main programme planning feasible.
 - That three groups in particular – elected members, senior officers, and middle managers (in all delivery partners) – are important.
35. **LAAs** are an opportunity for LSPs to demonstrate that they have the capacity to add value by helping to bring about improved performance in shared outcomes. LAAs also represent a significant opportunity for LSPs to exert a more effective governance role, enhancing their role as the forum within which partners come together to agree and deliver on local priorities, and enabling them more effectively to influence the mainstream policies of partner agencies. They will also potentially lead to enhanced accountability of government agencies to local people, to the extent that government agencies are active participants in the LAA (which in the pilots was variable). But LAAs also represent a major challenge to local partnership working. Many LSPs lack the capacity and structures for rapid and effective decision-making which the LAA will require. LAAs may highlight tensions between efficient decision making and wide participation, and weaknesses in communication channels. The LAA process is particularly challenging for county level partnerships, where the number of stakeholders is potentially very large and there may be intra-sector tensions to be resolved, and for sectors which lack responsive decision making structures. LAAs also require some mechanism for focused work and decision making within each of the blocks, and effective links between the LSP and the sub-partnerships that are likely to be best placed to fulfil this role. Furthermore, LAAs potentially represent a radical shift in the relationships between LSPs and government, with the Government Offices' performance management, support and intervention role – hitherto confined to LSPs in NRF areas – being extended to all LSPs.

Key implications of the evaluation for LSPs, partners and government

FOR LSPS

36. The key implications for LSPs that derive from the research findings include:
- The research indicates that it is important that LSPs keep under review the extent to which their **membership** is 'fit for purpose' in terms of knowledge, skills, and commitment. Consideration should be given to the level (board / executive group, sub-thematic partnership) at which partner resources can best be exploited, as this may change as the LSP increasingly shifts from 'forming' to delivery. There may be 'missing partners' who need to be involved, and others who could be more actively

engaged with particular LSP activities. Decisions on structures and membership should be linked to decisions on purpose and function.

- **Skills** needs may change as LSPs move from establishing themselves to a greater concern with delivery of the Community Strategy and LAA outcomes, and it will be important to ensure that staff competencies reflect this.
- **Protocols** can be useful for handling relationships within the partnership, especially where partners work together on delivery and where resources are involved. This includes with partnerships and organisations above and below the LSP. However, protocols should not be seen as a substitute for the effort needed to build trust.
- Issues of transparency and **accountability** appear to be a particular priority for LSPs. In many cases there is a need for LSPs to set out clearly their proposed arrangements for consultation, communication and reporting, and the relationship between these and the accountability mechanisms of partner organisations.
- The research shows that developing a positive relationship between the LSP's accountability processes and local **representative democratic processes** is a particular priority. To be effective LSPs need to be more clearly related to the management and political management systems of local authorities. Initiatives which seek to raise the awareness of **non-executive councillors** of LSP activities are valuable but it may be more effective to connect LSPs more directly to the council political structures which are dominated by non-executives – namely scrutiny and neighbourhood bodies. The issue of party politics may also need more attention in order to improve **cross-party working** in relation to the LSP.
- At the same time, there is a need to balance the democratic accountability of councillors with other **accountability mechanisms such as other elected** (eg MPs) and **non-elected** partners (eg community representatives, chambers of commerce, voluntary umbrella organisations.).
- The LSP research also highlights that, in order to improve the contribution of the **voluntary, community and business sectors**, it is important for LSPs to better understand the breadth and diversity of the sectors, and promote any changes in partnership structures and working practices which would support their contribution, and prioritise capacity building and resourcing for these sectors, especially in relation to LAAs.
- In developing greater engagement at the **neighbourhood** level, it is necessary to avoid duplication of the structures and processes of the local authority or other partners and clarify the purpose of LSP activity at neighbourhood level.
- Single and top-tier LSPs would find it beneficial to devote more attention to building positive relationships with **regional and sub-regional** partnerships and organisations, especially RDAs and sub-regional economic partnerships.
- In preparation for their LAA, LSPs should **review the family of partnerships** in their area to ensure that roles and relationships are clear and agreed, and that there is a set of strong partnerships in place that cover the requisite topics, while eliminating duplication and overlap.

- In **two tier areas**, a review of existing partnership arrangements may be desirable, in order to enhance the complementarity of district and county LSPs.
- In places where key issues relate to a **wider urban area** and its hinterland, there may be a case for a Strategic Partnership including county, district and unitary interests.
- For some LSPs, the evidence suggests that it should be a priority to make progress on key '**process outcomes**' which underpin delivery and outcomes in terms of better local governance or service delivery.
- The wide spread of activity in which LSPs are involved, suggests a need for a careful **prioritisation of activity**, even though this may mean difficult choices (for example between national and local priorities). Identifying more clearly where the LSP can add 'proportionate value' should help determine priorities.
- For many LSPs, the institution of more effective **performance management** should help drive delivery. External evaluation may be helpful alongside performance management within the partnership.
- LSPs should work with their partners to identify what are the key drivers and barriers to the **alignment of mainstream services** in their local context.
- Some LSPs – particularly in two tier areas – are likely to need to address weaknesses or gaps in their processes, sub-partnership structures and/or Community Strategies in order to develop and implement their **LAA**.

FOR PARTNERS

37. The key implications for local partners that that derive from the research findings include:
- The research indicates that for LSPs to be effective and sustainable partners need to consider whether they can offer greater **resources and support** to the LSP, including staffing resources with the necessary skills and expertise to cope with the diverse and challenging tasks undertaken by an LSP staff team.
 - It is also critical that partners ensure that effective arrangements are put in place to ensure that the strategic priorities of the LSP are **supported by their organisation** or sector.
 - In many areas it will be important for partners to consider whether their constraints on partnership working are real or only perceived and ensure that where **freedoms and flexibilities** already exist they are making use of them proactively.
 - The requirements of LAAs may require partners to provide additional support and resourcing for the LSP. This will in some cases be linked to a change of attitude amongst any partners who have yet to accept the legitimacy of **the LSPs' role in holding them to account for their performance**.

FOR GOVERNMENT

38. The key implications for central and regional government that that derive from the research findings include:

- The evaluation shows that the current regime of guidance, support and management for LSPs has been successful in establishing the concept of an LSP very widely, and providing the basis for considerable progress in many areas. However there may now be a **need to review and strengthen** the framework, both to support strongly performing LSPs as they take on new challenges such as LAAs, but also to bring more LSPs up to the levels of progress being achieved by the front runners.
- In **clarifying and strengthening the role and function** of LSPs it will be important to strike the right balance between giving greater clarity/providing clear expectations and allowing space for local initiative and flexibility, especially for LSPs which are already performing strongly. Guidance for LSPs themselves may need to be reinforced by **guidance to the local authority and other partners**.
- Again drawn from the research, a second implication of strengthening the framework for LSPs is that the regulation, performance management and/or inspection regimes applicable to local public agencies be amended to include the **requirement to report** on the quality and content of their partnership working and their contribution to Community Strategy implementation.
- In the context of LAAs, there needs to be a stronger commitment by government departments to work together to **review local partnership arrangements** and join with LSPs in reducing the number of local partnerships and tackling issues of conflicting or overlapping remits.
- Management of performance in the new context of LAAs will require government to **review frameworks for both performance management and accountability**, especially for non-NRF LSPs in which performance management is still embryonic.
- Government should consider how best to **enhance the capacity of LSPs** in a number of specific ways including leadership capacity and the contribution of councillors and the business and voluntary and community sectors (again, especially but not exclusively in non-NRF areas).
- More effective **involvement of the voluntary and community sectors** would be enhanced by more consistent messages from government departments to their local agencies.
- **Improving delivery** by many non-NRF LSPs would be greatly assisted by more support from government and GOs, especially on those issues identified as necessary for the effective development and delivery of LAAs.
- Progress on the **realignment of mainstream services** remains dependent not only on action at local level but on greater commitment and co-ordination by government departments.

- **Mapping partners' spending plans** is important if LSPs are to influence the pattern of spending. More research and policy development work is needed, including work among government departments, to develop and test a methodology which LSPs can utilise.
- Government should **ensure that LSPs are not hindered in delivery** by being overloaded with demands from different national departments and agencies.
- Government may need to consider how to assist LSPs in improving delivery on some important issues, including **economic development and competitiveness**.
- Government Offices can help to ensure that the strategies and targets of **RDAs and other regional and sub-regional bodies** reflect an appropriate concern for LSPs strategic priorities.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Local Strategic Partnerships

- 1.1 Local Strategic Partnerships are a major innovation in the pattern of local governance in England¹. An LSP is a body which:
- Brings together at a local level the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together.
 - Is a non-statutory, non-executive organisation.
 - Operates at a level which enables strategic decisions to be taken yet is close enough to the grassroots to allow direct community engagement.
- 1.2 Initial guidance on the establishment of LSPs was issued by government in early 2001. Currently, LSPs have been set up in the vast majority of localities in England. In those 88 LA areas containing the most deprived neighbourhoods in England, eligibility for Government funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), is conditional on the existence of an LSP and the production of a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS). However, most localities (in NRF areas or not) have reacted enthusiastically to the government's proposals.
- 1.3 Local partners working through a LSP are expected to act strategically to deliver decisions and actions which join up partners' activities across a range of issues, enabling each of them to meet their own targets and goals and tackle cross-cutting issues more effectively. LSPs are regarded as key to improving social cohesion, the relationship between different communities in an area and their relationship with statutory authorities. They should also strengthen connections with, and between, public sector agencies, local government, the voluntary and community sectors, businesses and local residents. Overall, the intention is that LSPs will ensure public services work better and are delivered in ways that really meet the needs of local people, and that economic, social and physical regeneration is sustained – in both deprived and prosperous areas.
- 1.4 LSPs can also provide a single co-ordinating framework to:
- Work with local authorities to prepare and implement a Community Strategy with the aim of improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of an area.
 - Bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives. Improving linkages and simplify arrangements, and where possible reduce the number.

¹ See <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1133514>

- Develop and deliver a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in the 88 local authority areas receiving Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), to secure more jobs, better education, improve health, reduced crime, better housing and physical environment, addressing liveability issues, narrowing the gap between deprived neighbourhoods and the rest and contribute to the national targets to tackle deprivation.
- Work with local authorities that are developing Local Area Agreements (LAAs), Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) and Safer and Stronger Communities Frameworks (SSCF), helping to devise appropriate targets.

1.5 A critical role for LSPs is outlined in the recent government consultation paper, *Local Strategic Partnerships – Shaping their Future*. The consultation positions LSPs as central to the delivery of effective LAAs, the development of strong local leadership and devolved decision-making, and a key driver of community engagement.

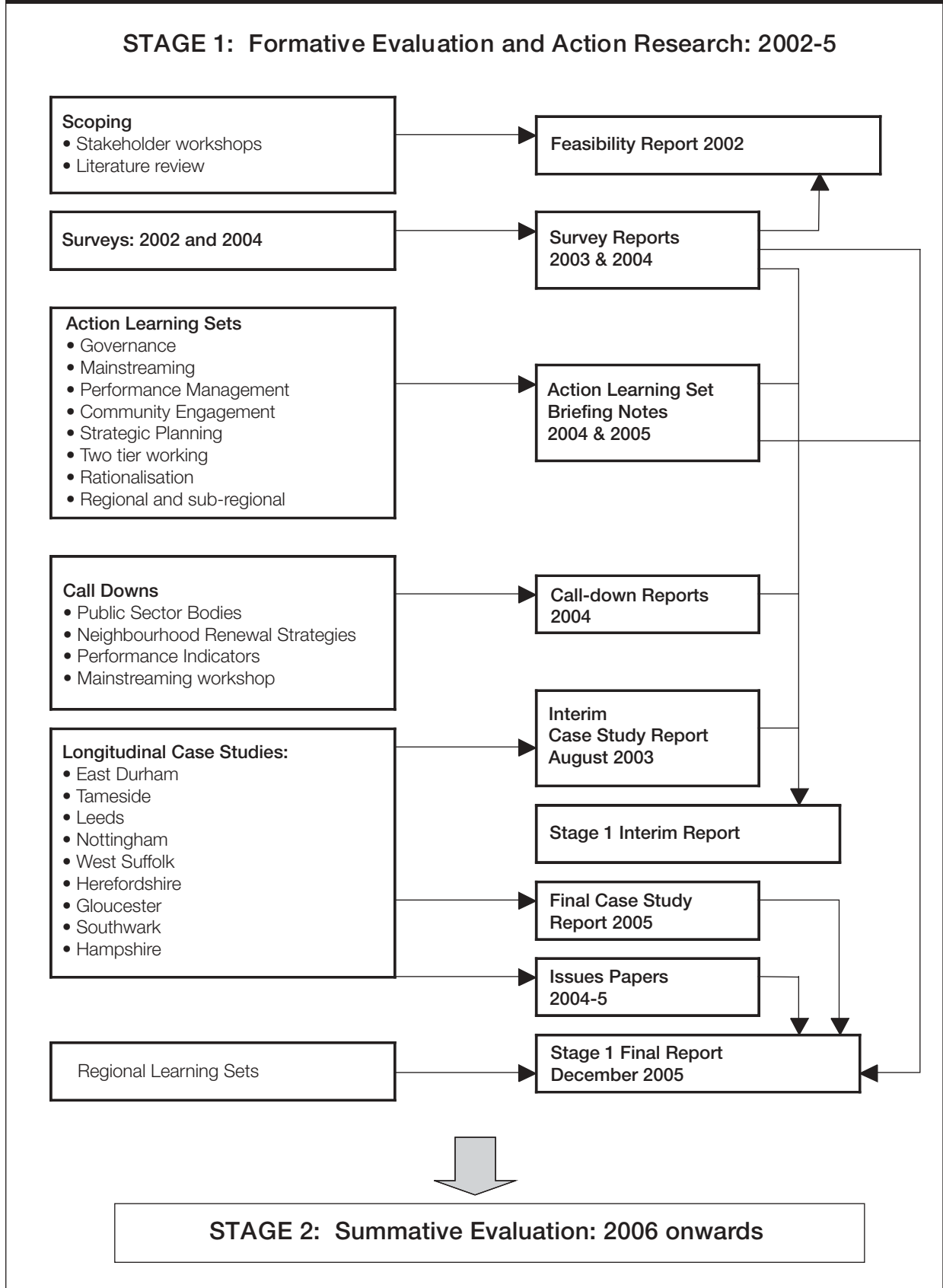
1.6 Chapter 2 discusses the changing policy context in which LSPs have developed.

The National Evaluation of LSPs

1.7 The objective of the National Evaluation 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 ODPM research divisions (LRGRU, NRU and RAE) and the Department for Transport (DfT), the first 3 years of the programme was commissioned in March 2002, and 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 – March 2005). A Summative Evaluation of impacts and effectiveness is provisionally planned for 2006 – 2008.

Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the evaluation.

Figure 1.1 Overview of the Evaluation



FEASIBILITY STUDY (MARCH – SEPTEMBER 2002)

1.8 The Feasibility Study 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.
- Basic information and data regarding the status and development of LSPs.

FORMATIVE EVALUATION (AUTUMN 2002 – JULY 2005)

1.9 The formative evaluation has assessed the processes, preliminary impacts and effectiveness of LSPs. It has adopted a ‘theory of change’ approach to identify what works, how and why.

1.10 The formative evaluation included 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, were 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		

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

1.12 In addition to the principal components of the study, a ‘call-down’ facility has permitted more specific research on several issues:

- (1) The role of public sector bodies in LSPs.
- (2) An assessment of Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies produced by LSPs in NRF areas.
- (3) An analysis of perceived good practice in the use of shared or aligned performance indicators.
- (4) Mainstreaming.

Action Learning Sets	
2003	2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstreaming: pooling and aligning resources • Community engagement • Performance management • Strategic planning • Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two tier contexts • Regional and sub regional relationships • Rationalisation of activities, plans and partnerships

ACTION RESEARCH (WINTER 2002/3 – MARCH 2005)

1.13 The formative evaluation has been paralleled by a programme of action research. 8 issue-based action learning sets, each bringing together approximately 12 LSPs, have discussed a specific issue in depth in order to develop effective practice.

OUTPUTS AND DISSEMINATION²

1.14 The research has produced outputs on an ongoing basis, including:

- A report for each of the 2002 and 2004 surveys.
- A series of themed issue papers from the formative evaluation.
- Interim and final reports on the case studies.
- Reports, toolkits and briefing notes from the action learning.
- Interim and final reports drawing on all strands of the research.
- From early 2004, a programme of national and regional dissemination workshops to disseminate emerging findings and share good practice; to be followed by a conference and workshops following the publication of the final report.

1.15 Findings and good practice guidance materials have been made available throughout the research programme through a range of media including websites (ODPM, IDeA Knowledge and the NRU's renewal.net).

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION (PROVISIONALLY TO COMMENCE IN 2006)

1.16 Summative 'impact' evaluation is preliminarily planned to commence in 2006, drawing on baseline information (and preliminary impacts) from the formative evaluation and action research. 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.

² A full list of outputs is given in Appendix 1.

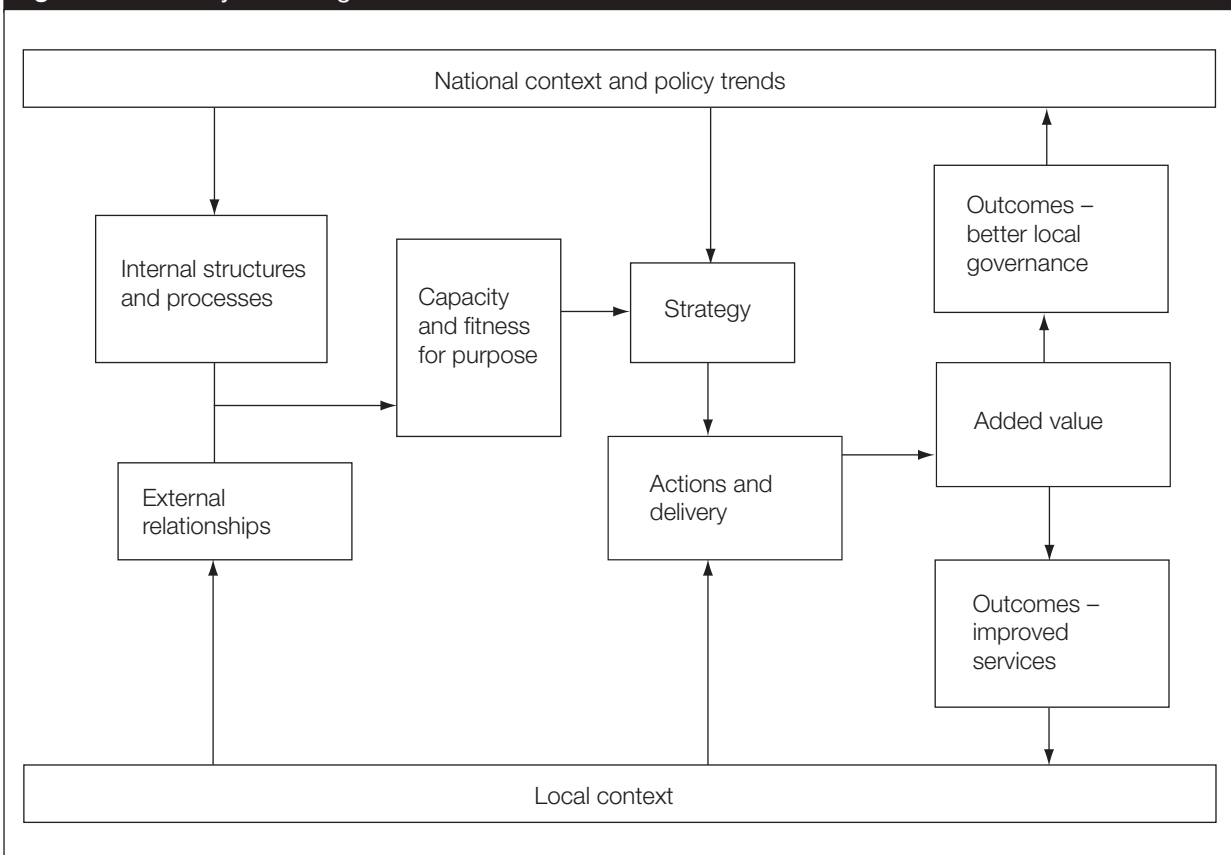
A theory of change approach

1.17 In developing our initial proposal for the LSPs evaluation, we took the view that there were certain advantages of a theory of change (TOC) approach:

- It can provide a set of agreed perspectives to drive the evaluation.
- It assists in focusing the evaluation not only on whether policy is working but also more precisely on what works, why and how.
- In addition, the adoption of a TOC approach should be helpful in linking this evaluation to the overarching evaluation of the LGMA.

1.18 We suggested that the Government's 'system of assumptions'³ about the role of LSPs was built around the proposition that a framework of strategic partnership at the local level will create more inclusive and pluralist local governance, bringing together key organisations and actors (from the three spheres of state, market and civil society) to identify communities' top priorities and needs, and work with local people to provide them. This is consistent with the wide perception in the policy community of the advantages of partnership working as the way of achieving effective outcomes, and solutions to complex, multidimensional problems, by building trust, sharing knowledge and resources, and working collaboratively across boundaries.

Figure 1.2: Theory of Change



³ The idea of a 'system of assumptions' is not intended to imply an explicit and fully shared set of assumptions in government. There are inevitably differences of view and changes over time. Nonetheless, key statements, such as the Local Leadership, Local Choice White Paper do embody a coherent set of assumptions which have in broad terms been influential and long lasting.

- 1.19 The evaluation team has elaborated a theory of change model (Figure 1.2) to help to guide the evaluation. This diagrammatic representation assumes that there are a number of key links in the chain of causation which will determine the extent to which LSPs come to represent an effective element within the structures and processes of local governance.
- a) Emerging LSPs are conditioned by the national and local policy contexts. The national policy environment within which LSPs are emerging is one of major change in the contemporary forms of governance, with new forms emerging in response to the deficiencies of traditional, large bureaucratic ‘silos’, a more fragmented and fluid set of institutional structures and relationships, and changing relationships between the state, the market and civil society. Many of these tendencies are closely related to the government’s key policy drivers such as the modernisation of government and local government, continuous improvement in the performance of public services, and joined up working to tackle cross-cutting issues such as social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal.
 - b) At the same time, the local policy contexts in which LSPs are emerging are strongly conditioned by such trends, but will respond in differing ways as a result of local factors. The capacity of emerging LSPs is initially conditioned by the history of past partnership working and the character and capacities of key partners, bringing ‘to the table’ a set of vested interests, knowledge, aspirations, hopes and fears. Initially therefore LSPs will be able to draw on some resources, but will be seeking to acquire more and transform others, adding value and seeking synergy.

These national and local contextual factors are not merely an input to the forming stage of the LSP, but a continuing influence. In turn, if LSPs are successful, they will increasingly influence, as well as being influenced by, these national and local contexts.

- c) The structures, processes and relationships established by each LSP then provide the framework which these resources can be drawn upon, as the LSP starts to form its own organisational culture, as trust is built and leadership style established, in the process of determining its priorities within the parameters set by government guidance and policy objectives. We distinguish between the LSPs internal arrangements (membership, structures, resources, staffing, performance management etc) and its external relationships (with partners, and with stakeholders both ‘above’ and ‘below’ the LSP).
- d) These processes of ‘forming’ the LSP will condition its capacity – to develop vision and strategy; to put strategic approaches into practice, and in both contexts to function as a learning institution. We distinguish in the diagram between the strategic role – the development and implementation of the community strategy and neighbourhood renewal strategy – and the sphere of action, implementation and delivery.
- e) The model also highlights the crucial issue of the ways in which the LSP may add value, through its actions, to outcomes in terms of changes in governance or service improvements.
- f) It is upon this linked chain of causation that outcomes in terms of both improved services and more inclusive local governance will depend. In turn, the success of

the LSP in facilitating such outcomes will impact back upon the legitimacy, authority and capacity of the wider local governance system – and on the position within it of the LSP itself.

Clearly, any model such as this is a simplification, in at least three ways:

- Processes are more complex than this simple linear progression would suggest.
- The model does not reflect the possibility that different LSPs or different stakeholders may espouse different views, based on different theoretical propositions, about LSP purposes and processes.
- The model implies a virtuous circle, in which the linked theoretical propositions are validated in practice. It is also possible to model a ‘vicious circle’, in which this is not the case.

1.20 Despite these limitations, the model has been helpful both in drawing together the various elements within the evaluation.

The structure of this report

1.21 The structure of this report follows the logic of the theory of change, and at the beginning of each chapter we indicate which ‘links’ in the chain of causation it addresses.

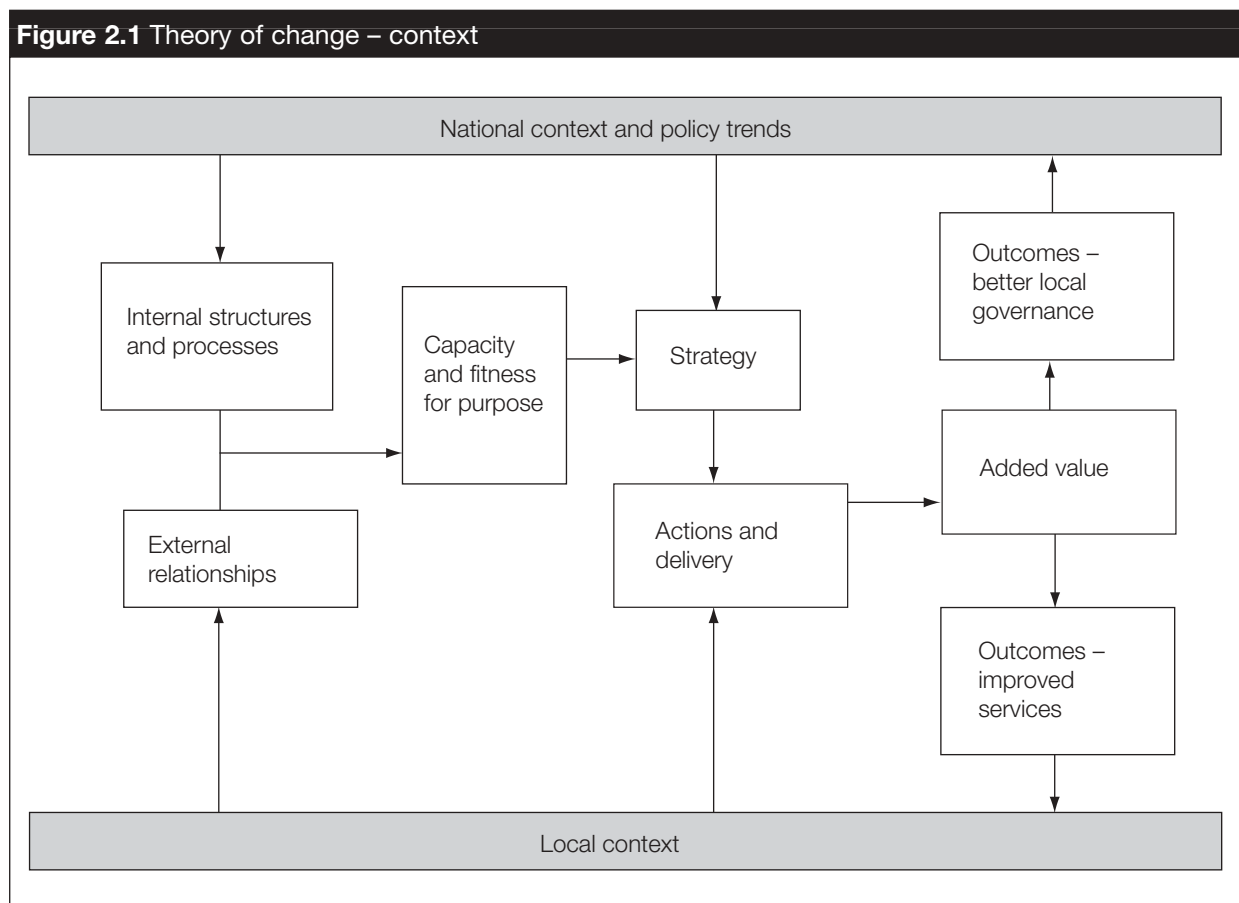
1.22 Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 deals with the changing policy context of LSPs. Chapter 3 then considers the internal organisational structures and processes which LSPs have developed, while Chapter 4 analyses LSPs’ external relationships with partners and stakeholders. Chapter 5 reviews the way in which LSPs have developed their strategies and action programmes, while Chapter 6 assesses progress towards outcomes and the value added by the LSP. Finally Chapter 7 concludes by drawing together key findings and policy implications.

CHAPTER 2

Context

Introduction

2.1 In our interim report we concluded that ‘context matters’. Two years later, we are in a position to reinforce that conclusion, but also to deepen our understanding of the nature of contextual influences and the role they play in shaping LSP strategy and action. This chapter falls into two sections, the first a brief review of the contexts which shaped the initial establishment of LSPs, the second dealing with the changes in context which have occurred since that time. Figure 2.1 shows how the issues considered in this chapter relate to the overall theory of change which helps structure the report.



The establishment of LSPs

2.2 It is now five years since the emergence of LSPs, identified on the one hand as a vehicle for a focused and integrated attack on area based disadvantage and on the other hand as the consultative mechanism through which community planning and community strategies should be prepared.

- 2.3 Driven by the work of the Social Exclusion Unit, and responding to the needs of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the 'Joining It Up Locally' agenda had pointed to the need to provide more flexible services, to work with communities, to make cross agency resource decisions and to connect area based initiatives one with another⁴. The subsequent adoption by government of a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, the creation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU), and the establishment of a Neighbourhood Renewal Fund addressing a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS) provided a focus for implementation. For 88 localities, the LSP role in preparing LNRS, in allocating NRF resources, and in pursuing floor targets has been dominant, most obviously so within our research in five of the nine case studies – East Durham, Leeds, Nottingham, Tameside, and Southwark.
- 2.4 At much the same time a local government modernisation agenda had suggested the creation of a power of well being and a duty of community leadership within which a community strategy would be required, prepared under the auspices of a local strategic partnership⁵. Guidance related to both substance (what there should be in a local community strategy) and to process (functions, membership, structures, systems, relationships accountabilities) but nevertheless left much to local interpretation.
- 2.5 Early guidance from the then DETR⁶ identified four aims for LSPs – help in achieving floor targets, rationalisation of partnership working, community planning, and supporting neighbourhood renewal. With varying degrees of emphasis over time and to varying degrees in different localities, the pursuit of these goals has established the context within which LSPs have evolved. The context has been one of high expectations and ambitious goals, but at the same time one of espoused localism – central government guidance left much of the detail of setting up an LSP to local interests.

The changing context

- 2.6 Against this background it is possible to identify a number of strands of changing context. The first revolves around **central government** and its response to and expectations of LSPs. Within the period there has been some departmental re-structuring within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (which succeeded DTRL which had itself succeeded DETR) with the Regional Co-ordination Unit and the Social Exclusion Unit brought alongside the Local Government Directorates of ODPM. Bringing closer integration of the two main agendas of LSPs, this structural change nevertheless only partly succeeded in reconciling the differing expectations which government had of LSPs. Nevertheless ODPM, with other departments, have continued to regard LSPs as a vehicle for integrating the programmes of different agencies at local level, culminating in the Local Area Agreement initiative (see below). This has drawn government departments other than ODPM even more closely into the debate about how best to integrate programmes and funding at the local level, a move which has been largely welcomed across Whitehall, albeit with caution from some departments about its implications for central government priorities and for accountability of funds.

4 DETR (2000) *Joining It Up Locally: Report of Policy Action Team* 17 April 2000

5 DETR (2000) *Preparing Community Strategies Government Guidance to local authorities* December 2000

6 DETR (2001) *Local Strategic Partnerships: Government Guidance* March 2001

- 2.7 Before LAAs, however, there were signs of a shifting relationship between some central government departments and localities. In health, in community safety, on children, on accessibility, on learning, on rural issues and on transport, for example, there have been initiatives which have demanded a local response and which have led in many instances to the establishment of **thematic local partnerships**. The relationship of such partnerships to LSPs varies widely, some lying clearly within, and reporting to, the LSP which operates not unlike a holding company, but with other thematic partnerships operating more independently of the LSP, and reflecting a closer relationship of reporting and control with the relevant central government department. The integration of thematic partnerships with LSPs, is not, however, exclusively determined by central government since local circumstances and personalities also strongly affect relationships between local agencies and the LSP.
- 2.8 Also generated by central government has been uncertainty about the structure of **sub-national government**. Regionalism continues to be a strong influence, with Regional Assemblies, Regional Development Agencies and a number of non departmental public bodies operating at the regional and often sub-regional scale. Responding to the regional debate has been a challenge to LSPs, and a variety of responses have emerged. Equally the possibility of local government reorganisation has also been on the horizon, and despite the result of the North East referendum, there is a widespread feeling amongst many LSPs that some form of reorganisation remains on the government agenda, and indeed too many partners some rationalisation is long over due.
- 2.9 The revival of **regionalism** (Assemblies, Development Agencies, and Economic Strategies) has latterly been paralleled by new thinking on the role of the city. Understood for much of the past half century as the source of many problems, the inner city has been seen to generate the flight of those who can move and the worsening plight of those who cannot. But the Rogers Report, the Urban Policy White Paper and the work of the ESRC Cities programme, all informed by cross-national thinking, have pointed to the potential of the cities as a source of innovation, as the stimulus to the knowledge economy, and as the focal point for sub-regional and regional growth. The Core Cities movement has articulated this thinking further, and the interdependence of city and hinterland in terms of environment, living space, movement, leisure and retailing is gradually being perceived as an agenda as significant as the longstanding urban/rural divide. There is growing recognition of the role of the suburb, of the threat to green belt policies from housing need, and of 'edge city' as an intellectual as well as policy challenge. The political and administrative geography of the city region lacks coherence however, and poses a challenge to strategic capacity. Moreover, at the same time as the **city region** agenda has emerged, the Communities Group in the Home Office has increased its focus on active communities, civil renewal and community cohesion – a rather different perspective.
- 2.10 A further – and related – contextual feature of LSPs has been the influence of the evolving **neighbourhood renewal agenda**. The demands of closing the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest, and of meeting floor targets, remain central to the 88 NRF localities. LSPs in these areas have not only had to develop performance management frameworks along NRU suggested lines, but also to meet demanding targets.
- 2.11 The neighbourhood agenda relates to a wider agenda of decentralisation and '**below the LSP**' initiatives in many localities, with challenges emerging for LSPs as local government develops decentralised structures and as the local political importance of area assemblies

or forums is enhanced. Activities at neighbourhood level are seen as “an important part of responding to the twin interconnected challenges – securing sustainable improvements in our public services and re-engaging our citizens with the institutions of government” (Why Neighbourhoods Matter, p.9)⁷. Related research points to a growing linkage between New Deal for Communities and LSPs, with NDCs being seen in some areas as offering new approaches to service delivery. While government stresses the importance of the development of civic engagement at a neighbourhood level, evidence also shows that action at neighbourhood level is likely to be more effective where councils and LSPs have effective arrangements at a more strategic level in place, and where relationships between the two levels are effective.

- 2.12 If neighbourhood renewal, city regions, and change both ‘above’ and ‘below’ the LSP offer challenges, so does **local government modernisation**. For local government, partnership working is both a threat and an opportunity. The threat of a non elected, opaque, unaccountable and often publicly invisible LSP is perceived by some local politicians as a danger to representative democracy, and many LSPs reflect tensions with local politicians – tensions most clearly articulated by back benchers but managed by leaders/cabinet members. There is the potential for conflict as local authorities develop their wider scrutiny function in respect of services delivered by partners, while the LSP is also encouraged to fulfil a horizontal challenge role to delivery agencies. The LSP also represents a challenge in so far as CPA ratings are increasingly influenced by the quality of the local authority’s partnership working, even if – or especially if – partnerships are not within the control of local government. Thus on key target issues on which the local authority will be assessed (e.g. children), there is a tendency in some localities to retain control rather than fully engage the LSP. At the same time partnership working is the mechanism through which the community leadership role can be exercised and engaging the LSP in ownership of and responsibility for Community Strategy targets represents a major opportunity for the local authority – but one requiring a new leadership style from officers and councillors.⁸
- 2.13 Thus the interaction between local authority and LSP is contextually crucial, especially in two tier areas, where uncertainties about reorganisation continue. In practice there have been many areas of interaction – spatial development, local transport, early years, community safety, sustainable communities and others, but of underlying significance has been – and will continue to be – the relationship over Local Public Service Agreements and Local Area Agreements. In the first generation of **Local Public Service Agreements** (LPSAs) there was no explicit requirement to involve partners. However, many authorities involved partners on a bilateral basis, some consulted their LSP about the selection of targets and have kept them informed of progress, while a few explicitly used the LPSA as a way of strengthening the LSP and giving it something concrete to do. In ‘second generation LPSAs’ (LPSA2) there has been a new emphasis on local targets and priorities and the engagement of partners as well as the local authority, a stronger focus on district council involvement in two tier areas, and a more relaxed timetable that permits such engagement in a way that was often not possible in LPSA1. The LSP is given an explicit role as a forum in which to discuss the priorities for improvement locally (based on the Community Strategy inter alia); how each partner might contribute to a “stretch” in performance beyond what might have happened anyway; and how government might help by altering what it permits or requires of the authority or its partners.⁹

7 Civic Engagement and Public Services – Why Neighbourhoods Matter. ODPM and Home Office. January 2005

8 Vibrant Local Leadership. ODPM January 2005

9 LPSA 2G: Building on Success. ODPM December 2003

- 2.14 It seems that most authorities¹⁰ have involved their LSP in the selection of priorities for their LPSA2 and are keeping them informed about the progress of negotiations, although a few have preferred to work bilaterally with selected partners¹¹. Since few agreements have been concluded, it is difficult to say what role LSPs will play in the co-ordination or performance management of implementation. However, given that many targets will involve contributions from several partners and that performance management of partnership targets proved problematic in the first generation of LPSAs, this would seem to be a useful role. It is to be expected that the integration of LPSA with Local Area Agreements (see below) will lead to an enhanced role for LSPs.
- 2.15 **Local Public Service Boards**¹² have been seen as ‘LSPs with teeth’. Proposed by the Innovations Forum, they are seen as involving the major spending agencies in an area, which would take responsibility for driving forward the sharing of resources, the development of shared programmes, and the achievement of shared targets. The debate about LPSBs reflects the tension between exclusivity (and efficiency) and inclusiveness (but higher transaction costs). Some of the Local Area Agreement pilots used the opportunity to push ahead with developing a LPSB, but in other areas it seems that the pressure of producing an LAA in the timescale and the realisation that membership of the LPSB would be contentious as not everyone would be on it (notably the voluntary and community sector, private sector and all districts and PCTs in two tier areas), led to pilots deciding to reconsider or postpone the formation of a LPSB until a later date.¹³ It seems clearer now that any LPSB would be expected to be part of the LSP and representative of agencies delivering services in the area.
- 2.16 **Local Area Agreements** – announced only towards the end of fieldwork in our evaluation of LSPs – are a new approach to improving coordination between central government and local authorities and their partners. They focus on a range of agreed outcomes, shared by all the delivery partners locally and which all agree to work towards achieving. They are intended to simplify a number of additional funding streams from central government, to help join up public services more effectively, to allow local flexibility and streamline bureaucracy.¹⁴ The policy drew on lessons from the Devolved Decision Making Review¹⁵ (which calls for a greater emphasis on locally owned targets), on the work of the Innovations Forum (on LPSBs), and on the work of Regional Co-ordination Unit (on rationalisation of ABIs and Single Local Management Centres). Piloted in 21 top tier authorities in 2004–5, the first round of LAAs are structured around three blocks – children and young people, safer and stronger communities, and healthier communities and older people. Some of the pilots developed a fourth block (usually around sustainable communities), while others introduced cross cutting themes such as housing; neighbourhood renewal was explicitly allowed for as a cross-cutting theme in areas eligible for NRF. The second wave of LAAs, which started while this report was being drafted, has a fourth block covering economic development and enterprise.
- 2.17 The LAA process was intended to provide a focus around which the role of the LSP, relationships between its constituent partners and between the LSP and other local partnerships are strengthened. The time-scales for development of the LAA for the 21

10 Long Term Evaluation of LPSAs: working paper on LPSA2 (March 2005, unpublished)

11 Long Term Evaluation of LPSAs: working paper on LPSA2 (March 2005, unpublished)

12 Local Public Service Boards: an Innovation Forum Prospectus LGA and Idea 2004

13 A process evaluation of the negotiation of the LAA pilots. ODPM June 2005

14 Local Area Agreements: a prospectus. ODPM June 2004

15 Devolved Decision Making. HM Treasury March 2004

pilots were short, however, and with guidance coming late in the process, the extent to which LSPs could involve them in the process was constrained: most discussed and endorsed rather than leading¹⁶. The agreements, signed off in March 2005, leave much of the implementation detail to be resolved. Most significant, but largely after our research was complete, has been the announcement of 66 new LAAs which will integrate with LPSA 2 and thus set a more specific set of LPSA stretch targets within a broader based local area agreement. This is likely to demand, and receive, more attention from LSPs and will provide a clearer and stronger focus for strategic planning and delivery.

- 2.18 New arrangements for the funding of community safety, resourced through a **Safer and Stronger Communities Fund**, will be rolled out across all local authorities from April 2005 in the form of a 'mini LAA'. There is less evidence about how such mini-LAAs have been developed across England, but in top tier pilot localities responsibility has largely lain with CDRPs. In two tier areas the fund is channelled through the county, and the experience of LAAs in some two tier areas has been that the safer and stronger communities block proved extremely contentious, with districts and their CDRPs fearing a reallocation of funding across the county and a loss of autonomy. In these cases the county level LSP was not always strong enough to secure an agreement.
- 2.19 The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to produce **Community Strategies**. These should 'promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK'. Most community strategies are prepared by Local Strategic Partnerships; these pay heed to government guidance which states that there should be involvement by local people in the design and implementation of the community strategy. This role was recognised by Sir John Egan in his Review *Skills for Sustainable Communities* (2004), which acknowledged the potential of LSPs as the principal vehicle for delivery of community strategies through partnership working with a range of local agencies, such as police and health.
- 2.20 The Egan Review contains a definition of sustainable communities which, since its publication, has been further refined and forms the basis on which the government's revised *Sustainable Development Strategy* (2005) was drafted. The Review maintains that sustainable communities will only occur as the product of visionary thinking and commitment by civic and national leaders, developers and professionals, with the full engagement of local partners and communities. Further, Egan maintained that progress towards sustainable communities would be better supported if Community Strategies were to become **Sustainable Community Strategies**; the Review contains a recommendation to this effect which was accepted and is being taken forward by Government. This may lead to a revision of existing guidance on their preparation.
- 2.21 If local government modernisation is a crucial contextual feature, so too is change for the **community and voluntary sectors**. Already stretched in terms of resources, the sectors have been confronted by the Treasury review of the non statutory sector and most recently by proposals for Change Up which have demanded new thinking about infrastructure, resources and capacity. Other possible changes – LPSBs, LAAs, for example – are thought by some in the sector to threaten the position of the community/voluntary sectors within partnerships and perhaps to marginalize them from the key decision-making forums.

16 A Process Evaluation of the Negotiation of the Pilot Local Area Agreements. ODPM June 2005

Conclusion

2.22 This discussion has identified a number of important issues about the changing context in which LSPs have worked. We will refer to these in the following chapters, and especially in the Conclusion in our discussion of policy implications and recommendations.

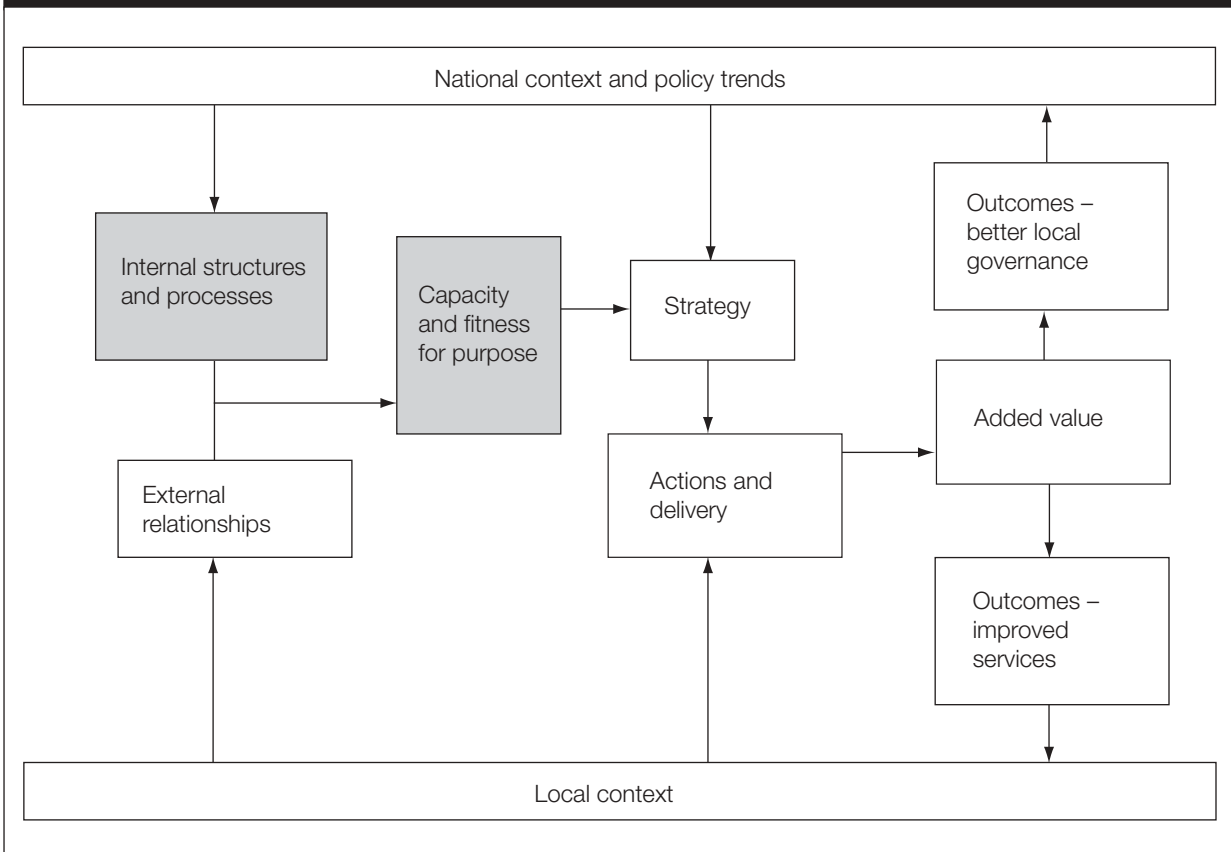
CHAPTER 3

Institutional Arrangements: Are LSPs' structures and processes fit for purpose?

Introduction

3.1 The major question addressed in this chapter is whether the institutional arrangements which LSPs have established provide them with adequate capacity to address their core purposes. The relationship of the issues discussed in the chapter to the theory of change adopted within the evaluation is indicated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Theory of change – internal structures and processes



The theory of change proposition is that the institutional arrangements (the structures and processes) of the LSP will determine its capacity to work and act effectively and inclusively. Accordingly, this chapter reports on key elements of LSPs' structures and processes:

- Membership.
- Leadership.
- Organisational structures and processes.
- Staffing and resources.
- Performance management.

The chapter concludes with an assessment of how far these arrangements make LSPs 'fit for purpose'. The following chapter looks at LSPs 'external' relationships – with partners, and with stakeholders 'above' and 'below' the LSP.

Membership

- 3.2 The findings from the evaluation on LSPs' membership present a complex and indeed sometimes contradictory picture.
- 3.3 In the first place, the data we have – principally from the 2002¹⁷ and 2004¹⁸ surveys, and from the case studies^{19,20}, makes it clear that what constitutes 'membership' of an LSP is not a straightforward issue. Some LSPs distinguish between a '**core**' and a **wider membership** while others do not; there can be both individual and institutional membership; in some parts of the LSP membership may not be precisely defined; and there may be different views on, say, whether members of theme partnerships are part of the membership of the LSP. These blurred boundaries of LSPs in relation to membership may make for ambiguity – but they may also be a much more positive indication of the way in which an LSP is constituted precisely as an institution which works across organisational boundaries and is effective because of its ability to be flexible about who 'belongs' and who does not.
- 3.4 While the data from the 2002 and 2004 surveys needs to be treated with caution precisely because of these ambiguities, nonetheless it offers some very clear messages. First among these are that, overall, membership patterns have changed relatively little between 2002 and 2004, and thus membership seems to have a degree of stability. (This does not mean, of course, that there may not have been considerable turbulence in some, maybe many, LSPs). Secondly, most LSPs think they have about the right number of members, even though this number varies widely between LSPs. Table 3.1 shows the membership of LSPs by category in both 2002 and 2004.

17 Report of 2002 LSP Survey (Appendix 1, No. 20)

18 2004 Survey of all English LSPs (Appendix 1, No. 5)

19 Case study interim report: a baseline of practice (Appendix 1, No. 12)

20 Case Studies: Key findings from 2004 research (Appendix 1, No. 24)

Table 3.1 LSP membership 2004 and 2002(% of all LSPs with membership in each category)²¹.

Category of membership	Core		Total	
	2002	2004	2002	2004
Local authority				
Local authority – councillors		92		99
Local authority – officers		84		94
Local authority (all)	100		100	
Other public sector				
PCT/Health authority/NHS	93	99	96	100
Police	93	95	96	99
Jobcentre Plus	37	33	59	73
HE/FE universities/colleges	59	53	74	85
GO	38	46	61	71
RDA	27	27	44	48
Connexions	13	18	35	65
LSC	55	57	73	80
Fire Service	10	26	18	63
Transport authority (LTA or PTE)		12		38
Countryside Agency	16	6	29	33
Culture/sport/leisure agencies		19		58
MPs/MEP's		6		22
Other public sector		36		45
Private sector				
Chamber of Commerce	57	52	69	78
Other business umbrella group	39	43	56	62
Transport operators	9	8	20	38
Individual businesses	30	37	44	63
Other private sector	3	9	12	19
Voluntary and community sector				
Voluntary sector umbrella group	86	79	93	90
Voluntary sector organisation/individual/s		41		79
Community network		36		55
Housing Association/RSL	27	39	39	66
Faith organisations/individuals	28	46	46	71
Residents groups/individuals	22	14	32	49
BME groups/individuals	30	30	38	56
Area or neighbourhood forums/ partnerships		22		50
Other voluntary and community sector		17		27
Other		29		41

- 3.5 However, not all LSPs think their membership is 'about right' and in particular significant numbers consider that the **business and voluntary and community sectors may be under-represented**. A substantial number of LSPs either have, or are about to undertake a **review of membership**. In some cases, one purpose of this is to resolve some of the ambiguities about membership referred to above, but in others the main purpose is connected to unease about the balance between inclusivity and efficiency produced by a particular pattern of membership. This, as the case studies show, may be an issue of both size and composition of membership. With a large core group (Board, Executive), for example, it may not be possible to allow time for everyone to speak, while a small one can raise concerns of exclusivity and governance by a small elite. In relation to

²¹ In some cases, the data for the two years differs in detail. See the Report on the 2004 Survey of all LSPs for further information.

composition, membership review in at least one case study has, as a result of experience, given more places to the voluntary sector. Membership reviews may also be related to issues such as patterns of attendance and non-attendance; whether individual members can send substitutes; and more widely to take account of what is now in most cases several years' experience of how membership arrangements have worked in terms of both inclusiveness and efficiency. It may also be considered that membership needs adjusting as LSPs move forward from strategy to delivery. The case studies suggest that **councillor membership** – both at Board/Executive level and in sub-partnerships – may be an issue. This is discussed in the following chapter. One issue on which there is only limited information is how partners identify or nominate members.

- 3.6 There are also significant differences between LSPs in relation to membership. In comparison with NRF LSPs, membership in **non-NRF** areas, especially core membership, is more restricted. Organisations such as Jobcentre Plus, or interests such as community networks, are much less common (the latter doubtless associated with the absence of CEN funding). Some non-NRF LSPs do not have core membership in all the main categories – local authority, public sector, business, voluntary and community sector. Membership in **county** LSPs is in general larger than in either the **district or urban** categories with, especially, larger numbers of local authority members, reflecting the need to engage districts. A significant number of district LSPs do not have private sector 'core' membership.
- 3.7 The membership picture thus differs from place to place. While overall it may appear that LSPs seem now to have fairly stable membership patterns, this should not hide the fact that there are a number of issues causing many LSPs to feel a need to review their membership.

Leadership

- 3.8 Formally, the primary leadership of the LSP lies with the Chair. In a majority of cases the chair is taken by the local authority; and in the great majority of these by an elected member, usually but not by any means always the Council Leader. However, while the predominance of local authority chairs reflects the importance of leadership from the local authority, the fact that **nearly half the chairs are from other partners** is also a powerful statement about the importance given to avoiding local authority dominance and recognising that leadership can come from many directions. 16% of LSPs are currently chaired by a member from another public sector agency, about one in ten by a private sector member and the same proportion by a member from the voluntary or community sector²², with a further small group of 'independent' chairs. Moreover, it would appear, comparing the 2002 and 2004 survey results, that there has been a significant shift away from local authority chairs.
- 3.9 Leadership is however a much more complex issue than the question of who chairs the LSP. As the Leadership Issues Paper²³ suggests, a partnership offers no automatic connection between 'leadership' and 'follower-ship' – in other words when an LSP commands 'jump' it is not clear that anyone necessarily jumps. Leadership is therefore necessary to create the linkages between the outcomes agreed by the partners, the

²² It is relevant to note that partners from the voluntary and community sectors often do not have executive powers over the organisations they represent, and may therefore be more attuned to exercising leadership through influence.

²³ Leadership Issues Paper (Appendix 1, No. 4)

strategy adopted to achieve those outcomes, and the delivery systems available through partner organisations. Once those linkages have been created, leadership will be necessary to ‘turn on the current’ so that energy and resources flow sufficiently robustly to make things happen. There are thus three identifiable elements to LSP leadership:

- **Dialogue** to agree outcomes.
- **Strategy** to identify how they might be achieved.
- **Delivery**; taking action.

At the same time, leadership is needed in three ‘fields’:

- **Political** leadership – supplying democratic legitimacy and the resources and power of the local authority.
- Leadership from **partner** organisations – ensuring that partners are able and willing to deliver to partnership aims.
- **Community** leadership – securing the consent and active engagement of the wider community.

3.10 All three areas of leadership are unlikely to be carried by the same individual, and perhaps the most successfully led LSPs have a number of key ‘leaders’ working closely together. The case studies emphasise, though, the **central role of the local authority**. In the end, our evidence is that the extent to which an LSP achieves a balance of power between partners appears to depend first and foremost on how willing the local authority is to lead, but to do so in an inclusive manner. The case studies provide evidence of both effective leadership, but also cases where neither the local authority nor other partners have been able to exercise adequate leadership. Leadership is a crucial element in determining the capacity of LSPs, but the exercise of leadership within strategic partnerships remains extremely challenging, implying the desirability for further support to LSPs for leadership development.

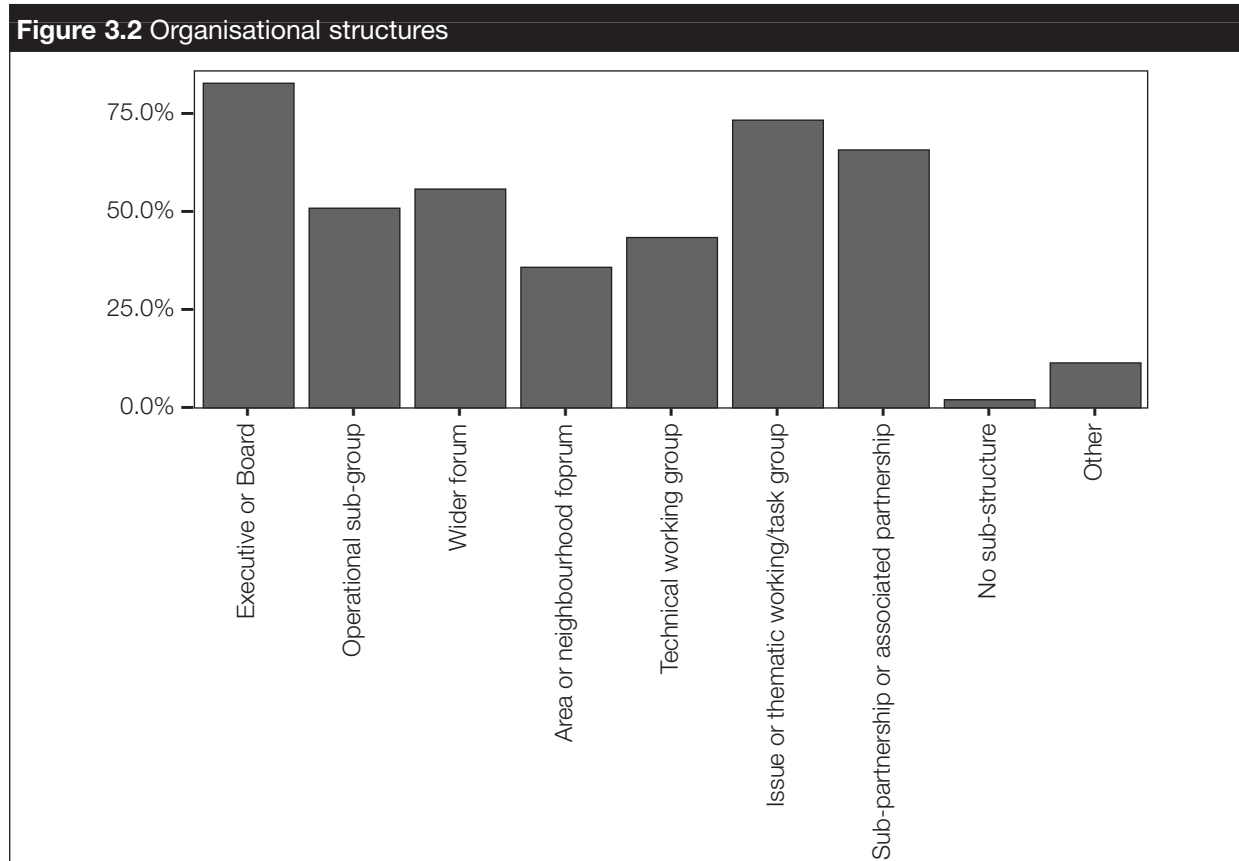
Local authority leadership in case study LSPs.

Access to resources meant that local authorities were in the most powerful position in the case study LSPs, though in some cases it was not clear whether it was the officers or councillors who were the driving force. Most LSPs were chaired by councillors; one was chaired by a councillor until a change of political control in June 2004, after which the post has remained vacant; Board meetings are now chaired alternately by the two vice-chairs. The councillor chair of another has now stood down and the appointment of an independent chair is in progress. The role of the chair in a third is also under review, with a suggestion of rotating the chair being considered. The personality and personal capacity of the chair and their impact on the conduct of meetings and progress were highlighted in some areas. Despite their dominant role, the local authority chairs were often seen as doing their best to be inclusive. In some, attempts were made to share power within the Board by involving the Vice Chairs in setting the agendas and giving them the opportunity to chair meetings.

In more than one of the case studies however, absence of leadership by the local authority was noted, and this has had a serious impact on both relationships within the partnership, and progress made.

Organisational structures and processes

3.11 Many LSPs now have quite sophisticated structures. The 2004 survey shows that the most widespread structures are the Executive or Board (83% of LSPs²⁴); issue or thematic groups (73%) and sub-partnerships (66%), but many LSPs also include in their structures area/neighbourhood forums (36%), technical working groups/task groups (44%) and ‘wider forums’ (56%).



Source: LSP evaluation, 2004 survey

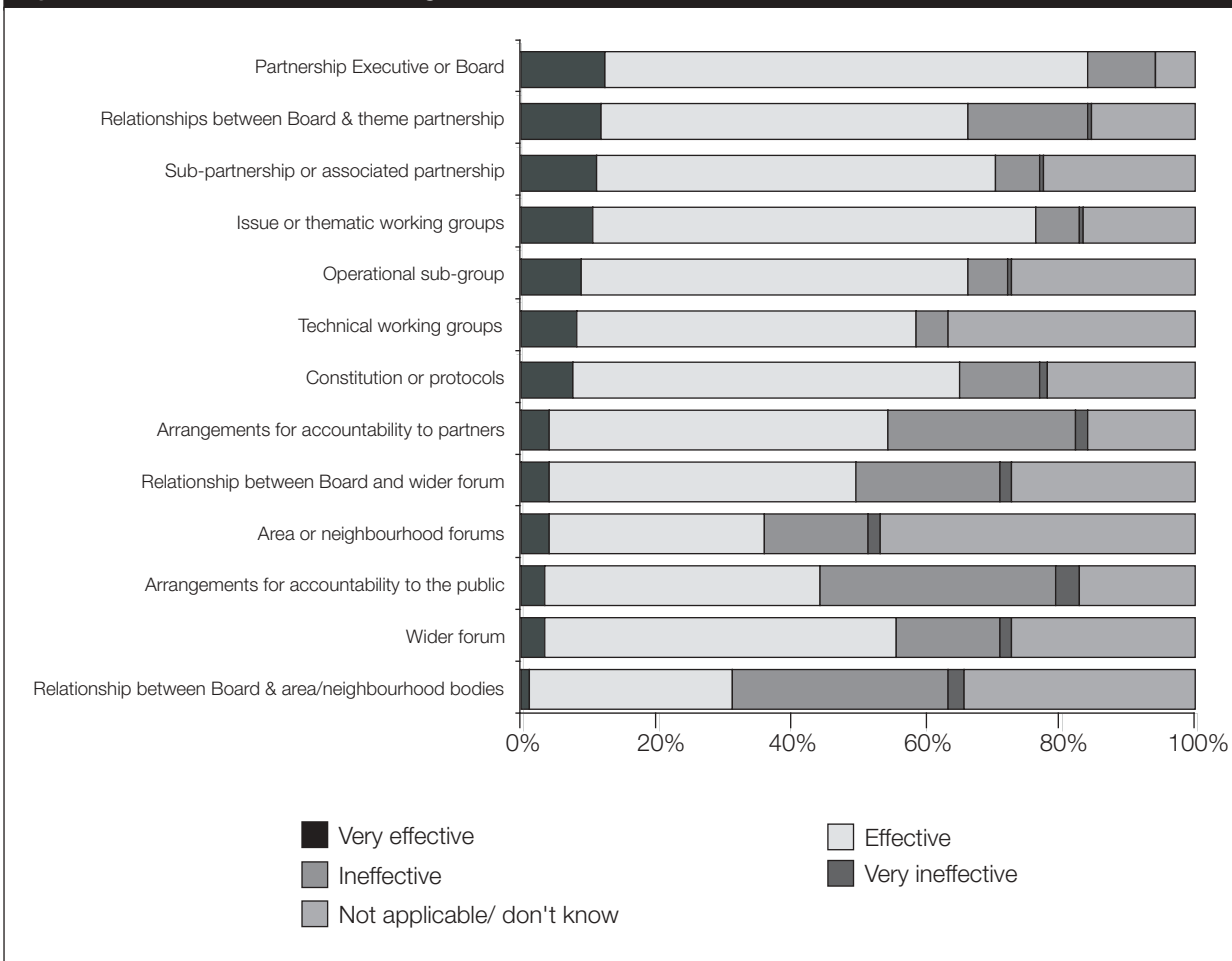
3.12 More **NRF** than non-NRF LSPs have area or neighbourhood forums and technical/working/or task groups. More **county** LSPs have wider forums, while more **urban** LSPs have area or neighbourhood forums.

3.13 In general the 2004 survey suggests that LSPs consider many of their structures and working processes are **effective or very effective**. Important exceptions however, where significant numbers of LSPs consider arrangements are ineffective, are:

- **Accountability arrangements**, where over a third think arrangements for accountability to the public are ineffective and more than a quarter consider accountability to partners ineffective.
- Relationships between the **Board/Executive** and **wider forums** (more than one in five) and between the Board/Executive and **area/neighbourhood bodies** (one third).

24 Presumably in those LSPs not indicating an Executive or Board the full partnership plays this role.

Figure 3.3 Effectiveness of LSP organisational structures



Source: LSP evaluation, 2004 survey

3.14 **NRF LSPs** are more likely than those in non-NRF areas to consider that their structures and working arrangements are effective or, sometimes, very effective. However, there are again minorities, often substantial ones, of NRF LSPs in which certain structures/arrangements are ineffective or very ineffective. These include relationships between the Board/Executive and area/neighbourhood bodies, accountability arrangements to partners and to the public.

3.15 Findings from the case studies²⁵ tend to suggest, however, that issues and concerns about how structures are working are more widespread than the responses to the survey show. This is partly because in the case studies we were able to discuss these issues with a range of partners, whereas the 2004 survey data was provided by LSP managers/coordinators.

3.16 For example, there have been major reviews of structures and organisational arrangements in two case study LSPs.

²⁵ Case studies: Key findings from 2004 research (Appendix 1, No. 24)

Reviewing structures and arrangements

In one LSP, arriving at the current set of arrangements and terms of reference for different parts of the structure, formally and finally agreed in November 2004, is identified as “arguably the main activity and achievement of the LSP”. In another, a long established partnership where there is a history of keeping the structures under review, a new structure was put in place in 2004 with the aim of establishing arrangements better tailored to the delivery of the revised Community Strategy.

- 3.17 Over the last two years there have also been less fundamental changes to structures and arrangements in other case study LSPs. In one they involve the membership and division of labour between the executive and support group. In another the issue has been mechanisms for allocating NRF, including new cross-cutting theme groups to develop priorities and a separation of the support and commissioning elements of the LSP, as well as establishing new sub groups to deal with new funding or other initiatives, for example, liveability, children and families. In a third, where it is acknowledged that the LSP structure will evolve over time, there is consideration of an Older People’s Partnership, together with some tightening up of procedures for reporting between the board and thematic partnerships. In yet another, board membership was reviewed in 2004 with a view to a better balance of members from the different sectors and membership and role of the support group has also changed; thematic sub-groups, formed to work up priorities for the Community Strategy, have ceased to meet, and there is some concern that structures are not working effectively.
- 3.18 **Reviews of structures and arrangements** are planned in a number of areas. One partnership, previously considered a model of good practice, is now felt to have “lost its leading edge”, prompting a need for review. In another, review will take place in the context of the removal of recent uncertainty about local government structures and a forthcoming review of the CS/LNRS. One case study LSP has gone through major difficulties, and previous structures are now being replaced by a new model designed to focus the LSP more directly on key priorities, with a slimmer Board and subgroups formed around priority issues.
- 3.19 As well as the structures themselves, the effectiveness of relationships within structures is one of the issues highlighted in the case studies, and in a number of cases the need to clarify or strengthen relationships is, or has been, part of the rationale for a review of structures and organisation.

Reviewing structures and organisation

The review of structures in one LSP was driven by the aim of distinguishing more clearly the respective roles of a steering group, a coordination group and a set of outcome groups. In particular the review sought to reinforce the role of outcome groups in developing and delivering on the strategy, with advice from the coordination group and reporting back to the steering group.

In another the new arrangements, which are comprehensive, elaborate and well-resourced, are similarly geared to delivery. Here there is a separation in the role of the board (holding to account), and two executive groups concerned with providing direction, advice and performance management to six strategy (delivery) groups. In both these cases the arrangements are relatively new, and so untested in practice, but have been subject to considerable thought and deliberation.

Nevertheless there are outstanding issues in both cases about relationships within the structures. The position of the LSP in relation to a number of key initiatives in the area – the LAA, LPSA, and Children’s Trust – is an issue. In the other LSP the two executive groups are charged with leadership in relation to different agendas, competitiveness and social cohesion, and the challenge is seen as being to integrate these and ensure one (competitiveness) does not dominate the other.

- 3.20 In other case studies two kinds of ‘relationship’ issue arise. One concerns the relationship or **link between sub-groups** (thematic or area) more concerned with delivery **and the board or executive** of the LSP. In one case, for example, it is unclear if sub-groups are separate entities ‘badged’ to the LSP for convenience or delivery units for the LSP. The Executive receives reports and presentations from sub-groups, but it is less clear that they provide strategic direction for these initiatives or hold sub-groups to account. In another, there are similar concerns about sub-groups operating as “semi-independent fiefdoms in possession of their own slice of NRF”, and about where power lies in the structure. In a third the relationship of the board to some sub-groups was characterised as “arm’s length”, with groups developing and pursuing their own agendas.
- 3.21 The other kind of ‘relationship’ issue reflects the well-known **silos problem**. This concerns the problem of establishing links across sub-groups and counteracting the tendency of thematic sub-groups to retreat into service or agency specific silos pursuing their own agendas. This is true to some degree in at least four of the case studies. There are hints that it is exacerbated by rather opportunistic competition for NRF. However, the issue is acknowledged in all of these LSPs and various mechanisms aimed at overcoming this problem have been or are being established. These include merging some groups, setting up new cross-cutting groups, and establishing intermediary structures, such as theme chair groups, to manage coordination and communication. Tension between the LSP and CDRPs is mentioned in three of the case studies, reflecting the unclear relationship between the statutory, funded and established CDRPs and the non-statutory, less established LSPs.
- 3.22 In one case study, which seems to exemplify best a model of good practice regarding relationships within the LSP structure, relationships are managed via partnership agreements and partners are generally very clear and positive about links and relationships within the structure.
- 3.23 The case studies confirm the findings from the 2004 survey that only limited **partnership rationalisation** is taking place. In one LSP, all educational issues are now merged within a Learning partnership, in another, Health Improvement partnership was abolished at an early stage of LSP development, though there is now a proposal to recreate this. A third

has merged crime and drugs issues into a single partnership, and is considering the merger of the Learning partnership and the Economic Forum. Elsewhere there is evidence that the policy context does not encourage rationalisation, with new central government initiatives more likely to give rise to new partnership formation (liveability, culture, children, and older people). In areas where speculation about local government reorganisation has been strongest, e.g. the North East, a reluctance to embark on rationalisation reflects a status quo strategy of not upsetting others. Overall there is more evidence of new partnerships or groups being created to fill gaps in response to new initiatives or issues, or to manage communication and relationships in increasingly complex local structures.

Staffing and resources

3.24 Both the 2004 survey²⁶ and the case studies²⁷ show that the majority of LSPs regard themselves as stretched in terms of both human and financial resources. The average LSP has a total support team of 2.8 people to deal with management and administration. In 2002, the mean size of an LSP **staff team** was 2.1 persons. The average staff team has therefore grown slightly, although it may be doubted whether this growth has matched the growth in the workload of LSPs. It is also the case that longer-established LSPs tend to have more staff support. There are fewer LSPs established prior to 2002 with dedicated staff complements of one and less, and more with staffing levels ranging from 1.1 to 5 or more.

There are, though, important differences concerning staff resources between NRF and non-NRF LSPs. The average **NRF LSP** has a staff team of more than 5 people, while **non-NRF LSPs** have considerably more limited staff resources. Levels of dedicated staff support are also generally somewhat higher in urban and county LSPs than in districts.

3.25 Staffing is, of course, not only a matter of numbers but of **skills and experience**. While some LSP Chief Executives/managers seem to have a level of seniority which would assist them in negotiating with senior personnel in partner organisations, this is not the case with many LSPs. Salary levels also vary widely among LSPs. The 2004 survey found that either majorities or very substantial minorities of respondents consider the LSP does not have enough staff with relevant skills for the main tasks which they need to undertake. This is particularly the case in respect of skills in bid writing/planning, data collection, analysis and use of evidence, evaluation and monitoring and performance management, where less than 50% of LSPs have enough staff with relevant skills. The only skills for which even a majority of LSPs consider they have adequate staff are the secretariat, strategy development and partner liaison. While the majority of NRF LSPs consider that they have enough staff resources for most tasks, there are again substantial numbers who do not, and a majority (58%) who do not consider they have enough skills in data collection, analysis and the use of evidence.

3.26 Turning to **financial resources**, the mean level of financial resources available to an LSP for management and operation (excluding NRF and other government funds) is about £78,000. The vast majority of the LSPs' financial resources come from the public sector and especially the local authority. The local authority is also the primary provider of resources in kind, although there are also significant contributions from other partners.

²⁶ 2004 Survey of all English LSPs (Appendix 1, No. 5)

²⁷ Case studies: Key findings from 2004 research (Appendix 1, No. 24)

- 3.27 The mean level of financial resources available to an **NRF LSP** for management and administration, excluding NRF and other government funds, is £112,000, with the vast majority coming from the local authority and other public sector partners. The local authority is also the major provider of resources in kind. A majority of NRF LSPs also use NRF for administrative purposes including staffing. The average level of financial support for a **non-NRF LSP** is £64,000.
- 3.28 There are significant problems in making precise comparisons with 2002, but the level of financial resources available to NRF LSPs would appear to have changed little since 2002. The average (mean) level of resources (excluding NRF) for an NRF LSP was £110,000 in 2002 compared with £112,000 in 2004. For non-NRF LSPs in contrast, the respective figures are £46,000 and £64,000, showing some growth in financial resources.
- 3.29 LSPs are concerned at the limits imposed on their effectiveness by staffing and financial resource constraints, as the comments below from the 2004 survey show.

Resource constraints

'LSPs need more dedicated resources from government and 'ring fenced' monies from partners. It is difficult for LSPs to be effective if they are reliant on partners for all funding.'

'LSPs will require additional and appropriate dedicated staff and financial resources if their role and remit is to continue to expand.'

'Partners should continue contributing to the LSP's core management and administrative costs – if they don't then the local authority could question why they are taking on the lion's share when they have so few seats.'

'The work load has increased significantly within a short space of time. LSPs without staff teams must struggle and it is very difficult to engage partners when the LSP is a purely voluntary partnership with no core funding requirement'

- 3.30 Evidence from the case studies supports these survey findings, while also showing how the resource needs of case study LSPs depend in part on their interpretation of role. For those which take a strategic, influencing role with no delivery responsibilities the need is for a resource which supports strategic planning and co-ordination. Linkages and positive relations with partner agencies are crucial. LSPs which have adopted a delivery as well as a strategic role (and NRF LSPs in particular) recognise the need for a larger resource, and in general regard themselves as being under-resourced.
- 3.31 The resource need, however, is also a function of the degree of independence (from the local authority above all) sought by the LSP, with those seeking an independent position (and possibly location) being less able to mobilise local authority staff, time, and expertise, which for many case studies represented the primary resources available. Also important is the extent to which the LSP sees itself as being owned by all partners and thus being resourced from all partners.

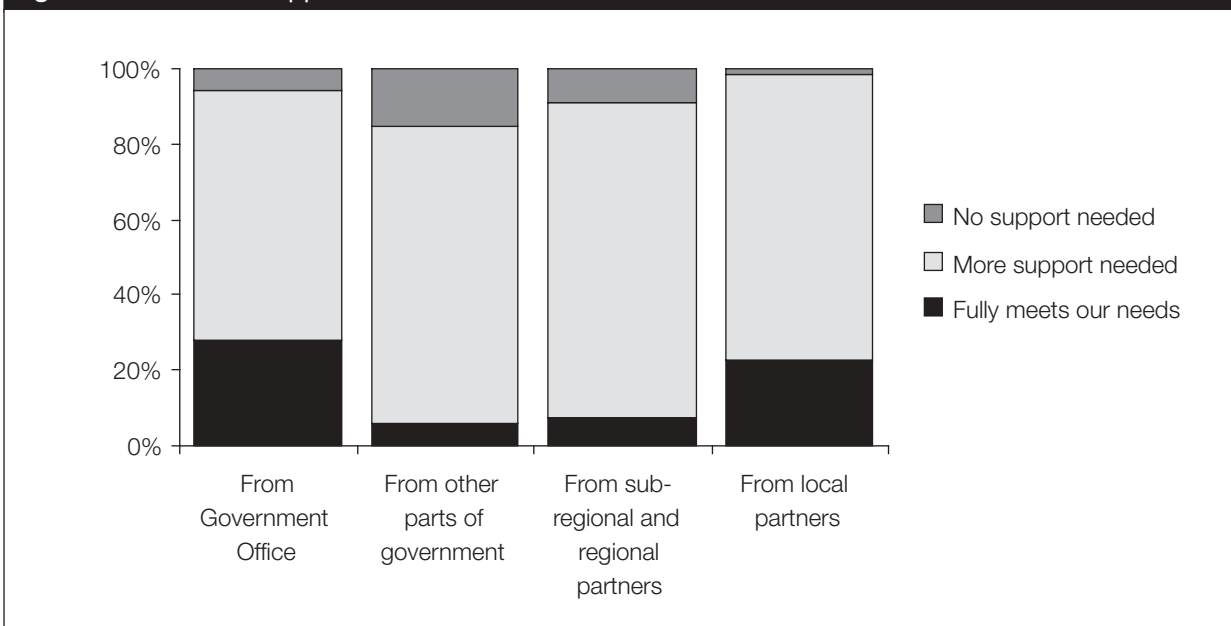
Managing with limited resources

One case study demonstrates the possibilities of widespread commitment to the LSP, a relatively small LSP core team, and the exploitation of extensive resources across partner agencies – *"partnership working has been absorbed into people's day jobs"*. The alignment of community strategy objectives with central government targets provides a framework within which partners are motivated to collaborate.

- 3.32 Without the mobilisation of partner resources seen in this example, most LSP case study LSPs considered themselves over stretched. In part this is attributable to the inability to operate as an LSP secretariat as well as undertake strategic community planning functions; in part also it reflects a skill shortage and the case studies reinforce the observation from the survey that there is a lack of strategic, data collection, and analytic skills. As important is the lack of time for strategic developmental work and those LSPs with delivery responsibilities (for the LNRS) felt that the demands of delivery inhibited strategic thinking. Generally there was little time for reflection, few away days, and little time for personal development or learning. LSP managers are often isolated and lack the senior managerial support offered in more traditional jobs. Two LSPs with larger staff numbers illustrated not simply the emergence of an LSP 'team', but the benefits of that in terms of skill mix and the maintenance of good relations with a large number of partners and external bodies. At the same time some partners in a number of LSPs were suspicious of growing bureaucracy and saw advantage in maintaining a 'lean and mean team'.
- 3.33 In terms of style it was suggested that the consensual style required to make an LSP workable might militate against tough decision making. As delivery begins to dominate activity, will a more abrasive or challenging style be needed to drive forward LSP action, and would the staff, who had worked to generate trust, good relations and a collaborative atmosphere be skilled and suited to a shifting culture?
- 3.34 Overall, the evaluation shows that LSPs, whether established or relatively new, regarded themselves as **stretched in resource terms**, and as the demands upon them increased (delivery, performance management, LAAs for example) consider that their resources have not increased commensurately. In particular, those LSPs which have relied upon NRF resources to underpin the staff costs of LSP management may need to look to sustainable resource flows for the future, and generally attention will need to be given to the human resource management issues raised by the emergence of LSP staff and teams (e.g. training, line management, career development, appraisal etc.).

Support for LSPs

- 3.35 Consistently with these findings, LSPs think they need more support, as Figure 3.4 below shows.

Figure 3.4 Levels of support

Source: LSP evaluation, 2004 survey

3.36 Large majorities of LSPs want more support from government, from Government Offices, from regional and sub-regional agencies and from local partners. This suggests that improvement in the contribution of partners and stakeholders to the LSP, as discussed in the previous chapter, is necessary if LSPs are to build on the start which they have made in developing and implementing strategic programmes of action.

3.37 Among **NRF LSPs**, the 2004 survey showed that 47% thought that the support they received from Government Offices fully met their needs compared with only 21% of non-NRF LSPs. Most of the remainder in both groups wanted more support. Only a handful said that no support was needed. Fewer of both groups found that support from other parts of government fully met their needs: 11% of NRF LSPs and only 4% of non-NRF's, whereas 71% and 82% respectively wanted more support. However, in this case, 19% of NRF's and 14% of non-NRF's said that no support was needed.

3.38 Table 3.2 indicates views of NRF LSPs about the different types of support available to them. Over 90% found networking activities useful or very useful. By contrast, although the majority found them useful, about one fifth of respondents had not found support in terms of development, skills and knowledge and performance management useful.

Table 3.2 Usefulness of support NRF LSPs have received from Government Office and NRU

	Very Useful	Useful	Not useful	Not applicable
Development support	21%	54%	18%	7%
Networking activities	31%	59%	9%	1%
Skills & knowledge programme	10%	69%	20%	1%
Performance management	15%	62%	22%	1%
NRAs	22%	46%	15%	17%
Websites including renewal.net	12%	72%	13%	3%
Skills in research, evaluation & use of evidence	6%	49%	32%	14%

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and resources for NRF LSPs

3.39 The LSP model is applicable in all areas, but the LSPs in the most deprived local authority areas have received additional resources through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. Table 3.3 provides information for the NRF case study LSPs. This designation/eligibility has had wider implications. Initially it carried with it a process of accreditation. NRF LSPs have been required to produce a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. There has continued to be stress upon performance management and, increasingly, a focus on the achievement of floor targets and the need to narrow the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and groups and others. All this has also meant that GOs have been more involved with NRF LSPs.

3.40 The authorities that were eligible were the 81 that were amongst the 50 most deprived on any of the six measures in the Indices of Deprivation. There were also transitional arrangements for the ones within the 50 most deprived on any of the four measures under the old Index of Local Deprivation, but not in the list of 81. This added a further seven authorities to the list, making a total of 88. As two eligible areas have combined in one LSP, there are 87 NRF LSPs. Nearly half of these (42) are in the three northern regions and a further twenty in London. East and West Midlands have fourteen and the East, South East and South West combined have ten.

Table 3.3 NRF allocations across the case study LSPs

Area	Main allocation	Main allocation	Main allocation	Main allocation	Residual allocation	Total allocation	Main allocation
	2001/02 (£m)	2002/03 (£m)	2003/04 (£m)	2004/05 (£m)	2004/05 (£m)	2004/05 (£m)	2005/06 (£m)
Easington	£2.216	£3.325	£4.433	£4.433	£1.260	£5.694	£4.433
Leeds	£4.197	£6.296	£8.396	£8.396	-	£8.396	£8.396
Nottingham	£4.622	£6.934	£9.246	£9.246	£2.629	£11.875	£9.246
Southwark	£3.956	£5.934	£7.912	£7.912	£2.250	£10.162	£7.912
Tameside	£0.670	£1.005	£1.340	£1.340	-	£1.340	£1.340

3.41 The grant allocation to each authority was based on a standard amount per head of population in those wards in the most deprived 10% of all wards nationally, with a minimum allocation of £200k for any eligible authority. This related the grant to the severity of deprivation, measured by the number of their residents living in particularly deprived areas. The Government's 2004 Spending Review announced that just over £1 billion of new NRF resources would be made available during the period 2006-2008 though the way that this will be allocated has not yet been decided.

3.42 The distribution of funding further emphasises the regional disparities. For example, the allocations for 2005/06 average out as follows:

- East, South East and South West: £1.62m per LSP.
- London: £4.10m.

- East and West Midlands: £5.71m (without Birmingham, the average would be £2.45m).
- North East, Yorkshire/Humber and North West: £5.28m.

3.43 Table 3.3 shows the allocation up to 2006 to the National Evaluation case study LSPs eligible for NRF. It also shows that three out of the five case study NRF LSPs were eligible for some of the residual NRF allocated in October 2003 to the 26 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) that had furthest to go to meet their floor targets. All of the 26 were in the 10 most ‘at risk’ categories within at least 2 of the 18 floor target indicators. The NRU asked these LSPs to develop Floor Target Action Plans detailing the action they are taking towards their ‘at risk’ floor. For comparison, Table 3.4 gives information about the range of grants in other areas, which underlines the wide variation in the amounts received and, therefore, in the significance of NRF in relation to other resources.

Table 3.4 The range of NRF allocations

Area	Main allocation	Main allocation	Main allocation	Main allocation	Residual allocation	Total allocation	Main allocation
	2001/02 (£m)	2002/03 (£m)	2003/04 (£m)	2004/05 (£m)	2004/05 (£m)	2004/05 (£m)	2005/06 (£m)
Wandsworth	£0.200	£0.300	£0.400	£0.400	-	£0.400	£0.400
Liverpool	£10.066	£15.099	£20.133	£20.133	£5.274	£25.407	£20.133
Manchester	£10.297	£15.446	£20.595	£20.595	£5.856	£26.451	£20.595
Birmingham	£11,021	£16.532	£22.043	£22.043	-	£22.043	£22.043

3.44 NRF is non-ring fenced. It can be spent in any way that will tackle deprivation in the most deprived neighbourhoods, to improve services, particularly, but not exclusively, in relation to the floor targets. Provided that the funding benefits the most deprived areas; it can be devoted to the mainstream services provided by LSP partner organisations and it is certainly intended to be a catalyst for improving mainstream services.

Table 3.5 NRF contribution to budget for LSP management and operation

	£0-49k	£50k-99k	£100k-£499k	£500k-£999k	£1m+
	36%	12%	31%	4%	17%

n=75

3.45 Table 3.5 shows the levels of NRF contribution to the budget for management and operation including staff of NRF LSPs responding to the 2004 survey. A further 14.5% received NRF resources in kind. This emphasises the discrepancy between NRF and non-NRF LSPs in terms of the resources they can draw on to manage the LSP.

Performance management

3.46 Performance management for an LSP is the process whereby the partnership monitors and reviews its performance in order to ensure that desired outcomes are achieved. Performance management is central to the management of an LSP, and may embrace a range of activities including:

- Defining **indicators and targets** to measure progress towards agreed objectives.
- Assigning **responsibility for action**.
- Gathering and analysing **data** on processes, inputs, outputs and outcomes;
- **Reviewing performance**, and diagnosing the reasons for good or bad performance.
- Holding those responsible to **account**.
- Planning for **improvement**.
- **Reporting** to stakeholders.

The 2002 and 2004 surveys, case studies, call down research into PIs²⁸ and performance management action learning set²⁹ all indicate that most LSPs regard performance management as a very important, but complex and sometimes confusing issue. LSPs are currently at different stages, often focusing on monitoring rather than utilisation of monitoring information to manage performance. Some are still in the process of getting partners to agree that active performance management as opposed to monitoring is a legitimate activity for the LSP. While significant progress has been made since our interim report, a significant minority of LSPs are still at an early stage in developing PM arrangements.

- 3.47 In order to manage their activity more effectively, two thirds of LSPs have now adopted performance management arrangements. Of those not yet with an operational performance management system, a majority are in the process of developing or choosing a system, but a third think that it is too early for performance management to be relevant. The extent to which LSPs have adopted performance management arrangements also varies according to the date of their establishment. While 81% of LSPs established before 2002 manage their performance, only 44% of those set up in 2003 do so.
- 3.48 The primary purpose of performance management for all LSPs is to monitor and manage the **delivery of the LSPs' strategies/plans**. For more than three quarters it is also to assess the **effectiveness of partnership working** and (for two thirds) as an aid to **improvement planning**, while about half also see PM as a means of **identifying added value**. While about a third of LSPs' arrangements are based on the NRU's model framework, nearly 60% use locally developed models.
- 3.49 Nearly half of LSPs use performance indicators to manage performance or monitor progress, and a further quarter are at the stage of having agreed a set of indicators. This compares to only 19% of LSPs which had an agreed set of PIs in 2002. However more than a quarter of all LSPs have not yet considered or agreed a set of indicators.
- 3.50 Given the fact that NRF LSPs have been required to institute performance management arrangements by the NRU, there is a significant difference between **NRF and non-NRF LSPs**. All but one of NRF LSPs responding to the 2004 survey operates a performance management system. Unsurprisingly, all regard this as a means to monitor performance,

28 Mapping approaches to integrating PIs across LSPs (Appendix 1, No. 18)

29 Mainstreaming action learning set report (Appendix 1, No. 15)

review the effectiveness of partnership working, and for improvement planning. Two thirds also see performance management as a way of identifying added value. Nearly 60% of PMSs are based on the NRU model but one third is locally developed. One third of NRF LSPs actively manage performance against PIs, and a further 14% monitor progress against a set of indicators, but 18% have not yet adopted a set of indicators. So far, less than 50% of non-NRF LSPs has an operational performance management system, and a third have not yet agreed a set of performance indicators. While many say they are in the process of choosing a system or developing performance management capacity, a substantial number consider it is too early to be doing so. Among those non-NRF LSPs working with a PMS, three quarters are using locally developed systems.

3.51 Performance management was a particularly dominant concern for two NRF case study LSPs in 2004/05 because of their involvement in the Places Project. The Project was initiated following the allocation of residual NRF to those areas with furthest to travel to meet their floor targets. This additional grant was to be accompanied by more concerted action by the NRU and GOs in all 26 areas, but beyond this the Places Project was to pilot work in three areas to explore the action needed to accelerate progress towards meeting floor targets, to identify barriers wherever they are occurring and, where possible, address them. As the title suggested, the focus was on the *places* concerned, not just the local authority, and therefore it was appropriate that the work was led locally by the LSP. Although local partners understood that it was about developing a more collaborative approach between them and Government, they also perceived it having a strong performance management dimension.

3.52 The most important benefits of performance management for LSPs are seen as:

- Clarifying **strategic objectives**.
- Closer **alignment** of partners' plans and priorities.
- Providing an **evidence base for improvement** and identifying areas where improvement is needed.

3.53 Among the problems of performance management, getting data to monitor performance stands out. Other factors such as partner commitment and the resource demand on the partnership secretariat are also important.

3.54 There is a however recognition that performance managing a partnership which depends on the commitment of partners is fraught with difficulties. Performance management for an LSP is very different from performance management for an organisation – more complex, and more difficult. The difficulties in managing performance in an LSP derive from several sources:

- The nature of a voluntary partnership. The LSP governs by consent, and the focus has to be on leadership and securing commitment rather than command.
- The complexity of the agendas with which the LSP is concerned means that many partners have to contribute, each with their own agenda. It is difficult to agree priorities and actions. Yet without a clear strategy and action plan, performance management and improvement is impossible.

- There are often very different approaches to and understandings of performance management between the different sectors within a partnership. This can make it difficult to convince partners – especially those who do not come from formal organisations – of the value of investing in performance management.
- Even at the level of performance monitoring there are problems, including the absence of reliable and valid indicators for some outcome areas, boundaries that are not coterminous, differences in definitions and the way in which data is collected, and the resources required to collate data regularly across the partnership.
- LSPs are encouraged to focus performance management on outcomes rather than intermediate measures, but outcomes are often strongly affected by external factors, are difficult to influence, are often by their nature slow to change, and in the case of cross-cutting issues typically require an input from several partners.

3.55 The case studies provide interesting evidence of the different attitudes and approaches among LSPs. Among NRF LSPs there is a concern to respond effectively to the need for external review while developing systems which minimise the workload for partners. But if there are concerns amongst some partners over the apparent complexity of PM, there is also general recognition of the benefits of a robust system and several case studies (including non NRF cases) are committed to working up a system in the future.

Approaches to performance management

The approach developed by one LSP (acknowledged to be a good model) includes the Community Strategy (with aims and key performance measures for each of the priority themes); Partnership Agreements with the thematic partnerships; the Quality of Life Report, which documents progress in each of the Community Strategy's key measures together with central government floor and LPSA targets; the annual reports of the thematic partnerships to the Partnership Board; LSP Development Days to review qualitative aspects of partnership performance; Communications (Officer Link Group bringing together staff supporting the thematic partnerships, the Partnership Newsletter and web-site); and Board agendas and Community Strategy (with items on the agenda linked to Community Strategy themes) and reporting procedures (with standardised reports). The PMF is regularly reviewed and individual Thematic Partnerships are encouraged to modify targets (with justification) in the Annual Reporting system. The 'Monitoring Quality of Life' document is important for bringing together all the different targets and performance measures (Community Strategy, LPSA and central government floor targets).

Another LSP is more ambivalent about PM and about the usefulness of floor targets (identifying a danger of putting agencies back into silos at the expense of developing more cross-cutting indicators). Subject to two recent reviews and with evidence about both strengths and weaknesses of recent performance management, this LSP aims to strengthen its systems through enhancing the availability and use of data systems, by addressing the ownership and plausibility of data, and by developing a monitoring and reporting framework for the strategy groups.

3.56 There is, therefore, an ongoing debate within LSPs about how to steer a course between **centrally determined, enforced systems versus locally developed systems**, and minimise the danger of over complicated bureaucratic systems taking up too much time and energy. Underlying this is the status of the LSP as a non-statutory, non-executive

organisation. How far can an LSP manage the performance of its partners, and will performance management inhibit or encourage partnership working?

- 3.57 The context within which LSPs are required to manage performance will be fundamentally changed by **Local Area Agreements**, although there is as yet no evidence as to how this will work out in practice. The process of preparing a LAA will require local partners to agree a set of outcomes and targets; these will then have to be monitored and reported on – internally in some detail and to the GO at a high level – and actively managed. The intention is to streamline reporting to government, and to encourage a focus on achievement of high level outcomes rather than the monitoring of inputs – which should bring significant benefits. LAAs should begin to address one of the frequently cited barriers to effective performance management by LSPs – the presence of conflicting silo targets which constrain partners’ ability to work towards shared local priorities.
- 3.58 LAAs will also involve closer scrutiny and greater accountability – between partners and from localities to government – particularly in respect of cross-cutting outcomes where government at present has little leverage. This change will be most apparent in non-NRF areas where LSPs have not hitherto been held to account. It is to be expected that some partnerships – given the embryonic stage of their current PM arrangements – will find developing and operating the new systems a challenge. In many cases the LAA will not map exactly onto the Community Strategy (generally being more focused), and LSPs will have to consider how performance management of the LAA relates to their wider PM responsibilities. It is also to be expected that the new arrangements will test the relationship between the LSP and its sub partnerships and members, since government has made it clear that strong local performance management (which will involve effective challenge) is required. Government expectations for performance management, as set out in the guidance, represent a step change compared with the arrangements in place in most LSPs.

Conclusion: the governance of LSPs – institutional arrangements and fitness for purpose

- 3.59 LSPs have, in a relatively short time, established themselves as a vital part of the institutional arrangements of modernised local governance. The evaluation shows that there is a broad consensus about the principle and purpose of LSPs, as the comments from the case studies show:

Agreement on the LSP principle

- The LSP *'is in principle a useful mechanism ... acting as information giving/sharing, consultation and – to a limited extent – discussion forum'*
- *'an overwhelming consensus that the partnership model, whatever its faults, is the right way forward for local governance'*
- *'the right vehicle for what needs to be done; if it wasn't here we probably would have invented it'*
- *'conceptually sound and filling a real need'*
- *'the concept of LSPs as a valuable one, any doubts or questions were about how the concept can be realised'*

- 3.60 However, as some of these comments make clear, there is often still a gap between the principle of the LSP and the reality. Are LSPs' governance structures and arrangements fully fit for purpose yet? The straightforward, if superficial answer is, in most cases, not necessarily. Only in one of our case studies do most partners seem to agree that the arrangements are fully fit for purpose. This partly hinges on the successful working of the framework of partnership agreements in this LSP, which clarify roles, links and reporting arrangements. But other aspects of the structure and arrangements are regarded in a positive light: a board which is not too big, not too many sub-groups, and a feeling that the partnership is active and effective. In other cases, recent reviews and restructuring seem to have produced extensive and well-resourced arrangements. But because the arrangements are so new it was difficult for participants in the research to evaluate their effectiveness.
- 3.61 In other locations there were a variety of concerns about 'fitness for purpose' and reviews were planned. As well as the kinds of concerns about links and relationships within structures and arrangements which have been discussed already, other concerns include the strategic capacity of the board or executive, which relates in turn to issues of membership, leadership and a clear understanding of the role and purpose of the partnership. There are also issues to do with having the resources and capacity to support strategic partnership working, especially in LSPs based in smaller, second tier authorities. Accountability is identified by substantial numbers of LSPs as an area of weaknesses, with lack of clarity about who LSPs are accountable to, through what processes, and where the legitimacy for their actions is rooted. Finally there are questions about the capacity of LSP structures and processes to take hard decisions, for example resolving tensions between conservation and development in one place, dealing with conflicts between competitiveness and cohesion in another.
- 3.62 There are clearly also important differences between LSPs. Generally, NRF LSPs are better resourced, and often better organised, than those in non-NRF areas – but then they have more substantial responsibilities. District LSPs are in general less well resourced and supported than others, raising at least a question about the viability of two tiers of LSP. Such questions may be intensified as the purpose of LSPs changes with the arrival of LAAs and LPSA2s, which will bring a new level of demands especially in non-NRF and two tier areas.

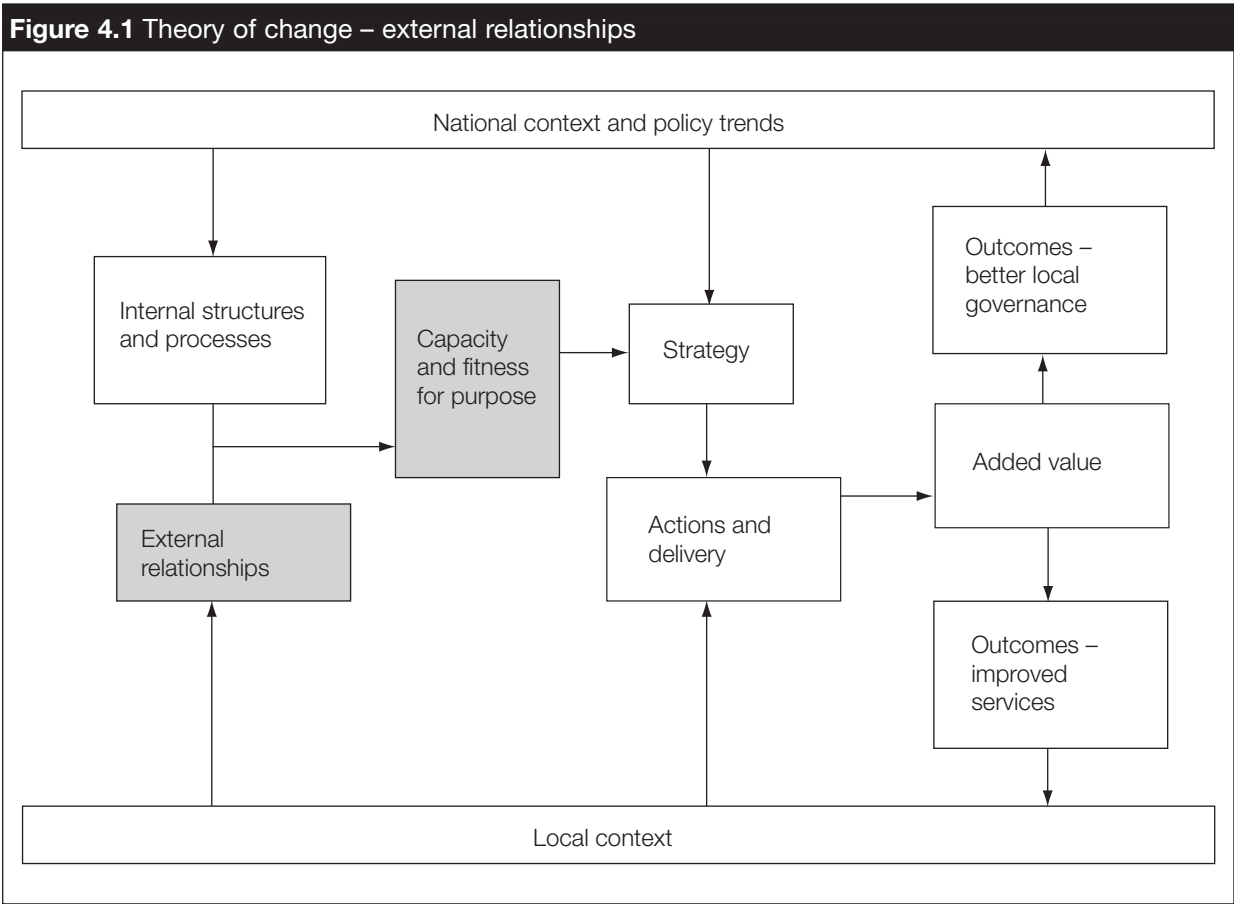
3.63 Having said this it is understandable that relatively new and complex institutions like LSPs will take some time to settle down. It is clear that many participants accept that structures and arrangements will need to evolve over time and be subject to periodic review. It is also clear that 'perfect' structures and processes may be unobtainable and that individuals and their attitudes will continue to be at least as important as structures and formal processes.

CHAPTER 4

Relationships with Partners and Stakeholders: Networked Local Governance?

Introduction

4.1 This chapter examines LSPs' relationships with their partners and stakeholders. The relationship of the issues discussed in the chapter to the theory of change adopted within the evaluation is indicated in the diagram.



4.2 Our theory of change argues that the inclusiveness and effectiveness of the LSP's relationships with its partners and stakeholders will enable it to generate a shared analysis, sense of direction and capacity for action. The chapter looks first at relationships with partners, and then at relationships with stakeholders 'above' and 'below' the LSP.

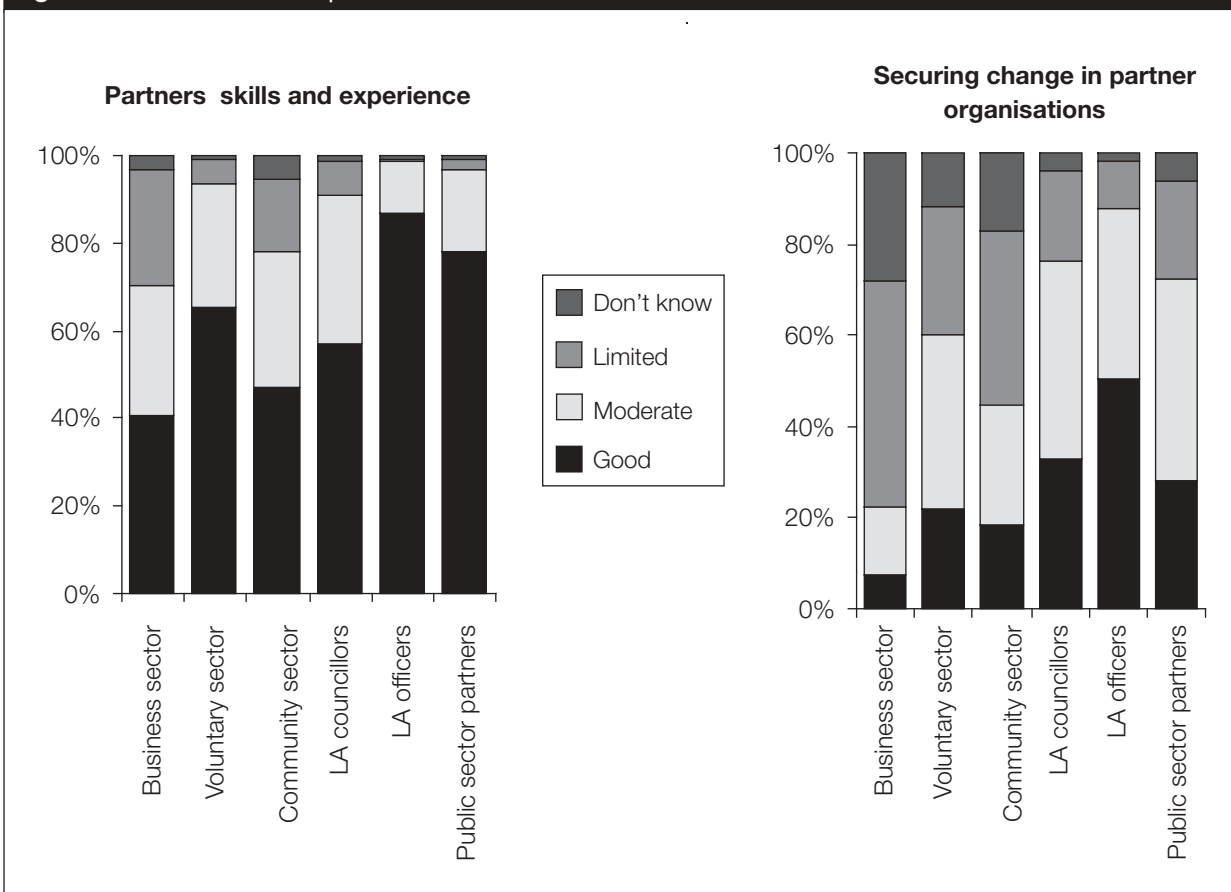
Engaging partners in the LSP

4.3 The engagement of partners in the LSP has at least two dimensions: the degree to which **partners are engaged in the LSP** itself and the extent to which that **engagement leads to changes** in their organisations, activities or policies in line with the LSP’s priorities.

4.4 Overall, as Figure 4.2 shows, on the basis of the evidence of the 2004 survey³⁰ LSPs are happier with the contribution that partners make within the LSP than with their capacity to achieve change in their own organisations in line with the LSP’s priorities, where substantial numbers consider that many partners are only achieving limited results.

Business partners are ranked lowest both in terms of the skills and experience they bring and their capacity to secure change in their organisations according to the LSP’s priorities. **Local authority officers and public sector partners are ranked highest** on both criteria. Those LSPs which were established earliest seem to be most successful in exploiting partner contributions, suggesting partner contributions may improve as LSPs mature.

Figure 4.2 Involvement of partners in LSPs



Source: LSP evaluation, 2004 survey

4.5 The more limited membership of **non-NRF LSPs** is paralleled by higher numbers of LSPs which consider that the contribution of partners and their ability to secure change in their organisations is moderate or poor rather than good.

4.6 The case studies provide more insight into the involvement of different partners.

30 2004 Survey of all English LSPs (Appendix 1, No. 5)

Local government

4.7 Our Interim Case Study Report³¹ argued that the role of local government was as a ‘strong leader’ of the LSP; ‘a major – sometimes virtually the sole – driver of LSP working’; recognised by partners as the ‘most powerful partner’ in the LSP. These findings remain unaltered as local government continues to be the lead agency within the LSP. As the Local Government Issues Paper³² argues, this powerful position reflects a number of aspects of LSP creation and operation:

- Historically, some authorities have developed a tradition of providing leadership in multi-agency partnerships in their localities.
- Local authorities were usually the prime movers in setting up LSPs.
- Local authorities are the only partner required to engage in partnership working and assessed on this basis (CPA), and hence have tended to fill gaps left by any lack of enthusiasm and commitment of other partners.
- The key strategic tool of the LSP – the Community Strategy – was often developed with a strong local authority lead, because the statutory duty to prepare a CS lies with the local authority, because they have the officer capability and/or capacity, and sometimes because the CS was initially prepared before the LSP was firmly established.
- Local government dominates the chairing arrangements of LSP Boards, giving local authorities at least a certain degree of positional power and authority.
- Local government is often well represented in all the various structures of the LSPs.
- Local authorities frequently provide the majority of resourcing to the LSP.
- Local government employment of direct support staff and their co-location within the local authority gives local authorities a unique advantage in both having an oversight of the LSP operations and privileged access to LSP information.
- Local government officers outside of these direct support staff often provide considerable ‘in kind’ resource to LSP structures.
- In certain LSPs, the LSP has ‘adopted’ key management processes of the authority. For example, one LSP’s performance management framework has shaped the performance management systems of the LSP.
- Government legislation and guidance allocates the potentially powerful community leadership role to local authorities, thus giving their lead a great deal of legitimacy.
- Councillors can claim to be ‘more legitimate than other partners’ because they are democratically elected.

31 Case study interim report: a baseline of practice (Appendix 1, No. 12)

32 Local Government Issues Paper (Appendix 1, No. 25)

- 4.8 Such a strong position has unsurprisingly produced concerns – and claims and counter-claims – about ‘**over dominance**’. Indeed, the case studies contain many instances of the use of the language of ownership and control, denoting an awareness and concern amongst interviewees about the underlying power relationships that shape the LSP. However a number of the local authorities within the case studies have demonstrated a real sensitivity to these claims of ‘council dominance’ and have taken steps to develop a more equal power balance (see box below). Nevertheless, given the above list of structural and contextual issues which explain local government’s powerful position, creating such ‘equality of voice’ will be a real challenge for LSPs.

Building wider ownership

One LSP has sought to counter such criticism by introducing a new logo, changing the LSP’s name and allowing other organisations to chair key groups. This has had only limited success with the Council’s officers and members continuing to play a key role in most groupings and often deputising for other agency chairs. Another is also adopting a more consensual approach to its leadership and in particular within the Thematic Partnerships is trying to facilitate other agencies taking the lead – to produce a position of ‘equality of voice’. It has also sought the appointment of vice chairs from outside the local authority.

- 4.9 But despite the power of the local authority in the LSP, the evidence of the case studies is that local government views the development of LSPs with some degree of ambivalence. The case studies reveal a range of both positive and negative attitudes towards LSPs. Although there are many instances where members and officers are described as enthusiastic and committed, there are as many where they are portrayed as disengaged, sceptical or dismissive.
- 4.10 It is also important to realise that local authorities are not monolithic, homogeneous organisations but instead are multi-purpose organisations comprising a wide range of actors and sub-cultures which may often have differing interests and priorities. This makes it difficult to talk of an LSP – local government relationship as though there is one relationship which is simple, coherent and easy to define. As will be discussed below, there are differences in how the range of actors in local government responds to the LSP agenda.
- 4.11 The case studies paint a picture of complexity and diversity in how **councillors** become engaged (or not) in LSP development, and also a lack of clarity over the roles of councillors within LSPs. Five of the nine case studies are chaired by councillors. It is not always clear though, whether the formal chairing role is translated into a more substantive community leadership role for the councillor chair. The councillor chairs are not uniformly council leaders but are always cabinet members, and cabinet members predominate amongst member representatives on wider LSP structures.

Councillor involvement issues

Beyond representation on the LSP Board, in some of the case studies councillors are present on a range of LSP structures. For example, in one the Leader of the District Council chairs the LSP, the deputy chairs the Children and Families Group and other cabinet members and a few non-executive members are involved in some of the implementation groups. In contrast, in another the chief executive chairs the Board, with cabinet members chairing a number of the Ambition Groups. The majority of the case studies demonstrate a clear predominance of cabinet members in member representation on the LSPs. It appears in some cases that cabinet involvement is aligned with cabinet portfolios, in theory at least providing a powerful link between executive decision-making in key areas on the council and the operations of the LSP. One of the negative consequences of such cabinet dominance is the marginalisation of non-executive members which is a feature of member representation in all case study areas.

- 4.12 The marginalisation of non-executive councillors is compounded by two further features of the LSP – local government relationship. The first is instances of duplication of neighbourhood/community/area structures between the LSP and the council/s. Second, the case studies suggest that the scrutiny function of local authorities is not being linked to LSP development in any substantive way.
- 4.13 The case studies also provide evidence of differing views held by members concerning LSPs. While some were enthusiastic and committed, seeing LSPs as a key opportunity to address the problems of their communities, others were suspicious and sceptical.

The LSP and local representative democracy

This attitude of suspicion was clearly demonstrated in an LSP where councillors are not really engaged in the LSP, do not promote it nor support its linking to local authority structures. Elsewhere some members were concerned about the threat posed by the LSP to the primacy of the elected representatives' democratic mandate but in other places there was, in contrast, concern about the democratic deficit of the LSP itself.

- 4.14 The issue of **party politics** and politicisation is one which needs more attention. In a number of the LSPs it is clear that opposition members are excluded (whether deliberately or not) from involvement in the LSP. In one case study the exclusion of non-ruling group members is an issue which has not yet been resolved. However in two others, attempts have been made to develop more cross-party working, probably a reflection of recent changes in political control and generally a less stable political environment.
- 4.15 As with member engagement, involvement of **local authority officers** can be described as complex and diverse – sometimes largely limited to direct officer support, sometimes involving the chief executive and a wide range of others.

Local authority officer involvement

The chief executive chairs the LSP in one case study and generally officers are engaged with Board and Management Group, whilst members are involved in the Ambition Groups. In another LSP though, the chief executive is not involved and few officers have much involvement in an ongoing basis outside of direct officer support (though some officers engage in the sub-groups as and when appropriate given their management remits). In a third, there is one officer on the Board and a range of City Council departments send representatives to many of the Strategy Groups (again, per management remits).

- 4.16 As with members, officers' attitudes towards the LSP appear to be mixed, with enthusiasts and sceptics. For example, in one locality it is said that amongst the Council's officers some have taken the LSP seriously whereas others 'might well see it as a pain'. In terms of bringing about change in mainstream services, support from the leadership of the main service departments (in particular education, social services and transport in top tier authorities) is crucial.
- 4.17 Further, again paralleling the member situation, there appear to be issues of awareness of the LSP within the wider officer body. Three case studies all question the extent to which there would be an understanding of the LSP at all levels of the authority (outside the senior tier). This may be hampered by an absence of clear reporting mechanisms within authorities. For instance, in one LSP officer leads report back differentially to their departments and departments engage in the LSP differentially.
- 4.18 Local authorities provide by far the largest proportion of the **resources** of the LSP in each of the case study areas.
- One key element of this resource is the provision of direct officer support to the LSP. In one case study this funds the post of a partnership manager. In another it funds a co-ordinator and assistant for the LSP.
 - In many cases these direct support staff are co-located within the local authority organisation.
 - In many instances of co-location, direct support staffs are located in the corporate centre of the authority, in the Council's Policy Unit for example.
 - Local authorities are also providing much resource in the form of officer support 'in kind', in particular to thematic groups of the LSP.
- 4.19 This review suggests two key implications for the relationship between LSPs and local government:
- The **marginalisation of the non-executive councillor** is of particular concern. Initiatives which seek to raise the awareness amongst non-executive councillors of LSP activities are valuable but it might be more effective to more directly connect LSPs more directly to the council political structures which are dominated by non-executives – namely, scrutiny and neighbourhood bodies.
 - There is an absence of systematic processes for '**accountability backwards**' to the local authority. Currently, local authority representation on LSPs is following the depressing historical pattern of poor feedback to the sponsoring authority. LSPs need to be more clearly related to the entirety of the management and political management systems of local authorities.

Two tier local government areas

- 4.20 In 'two-tier' areas Local Strategic Partnerships exist at both county and district levels. The survey information that comes from the 21 counties and 200 districts which responded to the two tier question is hard to interpret, in part because there is a wide range of agreement/disagreement in responses to the eight propositions offered and in

part because county and district LSP responses differed. Care must be taken also because respondents were LSP co-ordinators rather than county or district council based respondents likely to have stronger views one way or the other.

- 4.21 In the survey, generally counties seemed markedly less satisfied with roles and relationships than did districts. Only 38% of counties, but 66% of districts thought that effective **arrangements for linkage** existed. Similarly there were differing views about whether there was **effective collaboration**, with 55% of counties disagreeing as opposed to 39% of districts. There was widespread agreement that district LSPs are most effective in **engaging communities** but less agreement that county LSPs are best at **strategic issues** with – surprisingly – only 19% of counties agreeing but 48% of districts. Views of whether agencies with a county wide or sub-regional focus failed to engage with district LSPs were mixed – overall 45% agreeing, 49% disagreeing, with relatively little difference between county and district LSPs. Whilst there was a roughly even split over whether LSPs **represent a forum where county-district tensions** are avoided, counties and districts had similar views. However on whether LSPs represent a forum where **party political differences** are avoided, whilst 48% of counties agreed, 67% of districts thought this was the case. Lastly the survey suggests that 69% of counties, but only 37% of districts, find the possibility of **local government re-organisation** to be an obstacle to good two tier relations.
- 4.22 Greater in depth evidence comes from the case studies (four of which – covered either a county or a district in a two tier area) and from one of the action learning sets. Some of the case studies confirm the existence of tensions between the tiers exacerbated by the possibilities of local government reorganisation, and point to a lack of integration between the county and district LSPs. The links between the district and the county LSP are described as ‘poor’, with a view that ‘the two LSPs were not well integrated’.
- 4.23 In other areas there are claims of better working relationships. One case study, is trying hard to develop a closer working relationship between the tiers. It has attempted to link the county strategy to district strategies, has a well developed system for ensuring member and officer attendance at district LSPs (with the county council leader modelling collaborative behaviour) and a County Community Strategy Fund which has been made available to the district LSPs.
- 4.24 The key issues confronting two tiers working identified by the action learning set³³ were:
- Clarity over the **respective roles** of LSPs at county and district level and the ways in which value is added at each level.
 - The appropriate **geographical scale** at which different activities can best be addressed and how LSPs can effectively relate inwards to the locality/neighbourhood and out to the region.
 - Structures and forms of **representation** (and cross-representation) for both local government and non-local government partners.
 - The processes and **working arrangements** of and between county and district LSPs (to avoid duplication, minimise bureaucracy and transaction costs).

³³ Two-tier working action learning set (Appendix 1, No. 6)

4.25 Clarity is needed about the respective role and function of an LSP at each level and the learning set found helpful a typology which identified several different types of relationship (some of which could exist side by side). LSP relations could be seen as:

- Reflecting widespread **political commitment** to the LSP structure and operations.
- Being predominantly **managerialist**, reflecting a mechanism for rationalising.
- Reflecting a county view that community planning is best developed from the district level and that **county resources are best used to support district LSPs** or that county community planning should come after and build on district work.
- Recognising an opportunity, not just to build from district community strategies, but also to develop **new sub-county area** based planning and delivery systems.
- The vehicle for articulating and implementing a **strategic (top down)** view in which the interests of a particular stakeholder dominate.
- The means by which **non local government interests**, and wider community interests can be drawn into a broad based coalition/alliance.

4.26 Drawing lessons from survey, case studies and action learning, the research suggests two fundamental points.

4.27 First, two tier LSP working should not be seen as being within the traditional hierarchical framework which characterises local government. County and district LSPs must be understood as being **complementary rather than conflicting**, sitting side by side rather than one above the other. There is a need for the fuller engagement of district representation in county LSPs in order to provide a local input to strategic thinking, and conversely that county LSP partners should be more fully engaged in district LSPs in order to contribute to a more locally responsive and community based application of strategic priorities.

4.28 The second major conclusion stems from the fact that the strategic economic, physical, and social issues confronting LSPs at county level do not confine themselves to local government boundaries, and many of the most pressing issues relate to the **major urban areas/city regions** (often unitary authorities) and their hinterlands. Such issues cannot be addressed by county or district LSPs alone and there is a strong case in hybrid counties that 'Strategic Partnerships' should include unitary area LSPs. This issue is discussed more fully below under the 'city region' heading.

4.29 Finally, the possibility of **local government reorganisation** is still a key contextual factor. There is some evidence that some partners – in police, health, even local government – think that a spatial level between that of a county and that of districts may be the most effective functional area for the delivery of services.

Public sector partners

- 4.30 Public sector partners apart from the local authority account for between 21% and 31% of total membership of the case study LSP Boards. In terms of engagement, **health** (especially **PCTs**) and the **police** stand out in the 2004 survey as the most universal public sector partners. Beyond this, as Table 3.2 in Chapter 2 showed, are a wide range of public bodies involved in LSPs in many locations. However the case studies show clearly how engagement in any particular LSP can be affected by **variability in attendance** of individual representatives, and can depend more on individuals and individual commitment, rather than organisational commitment – with vacancies, absences and changes of personnel having a considerable capacity to disrupt relationships and affect progress.
- 4.31 Some public agencies – principally the police, PCTs and, to a lesser degree, the Fire Service – operate both in the ‘core’ and in (in some cases a range of) functional partnerships. Others, like Connexions and Jobcentre Plus tend to be engaged more through function-specific partnerships, although our case studies also provide some evidence of cross-sectoral working: such as health, police and the fire and rescue service on inequalities, Jobcentre Plus and PCTs on issues relating to people on invalidity benefit.
- 4.32 The extent of recognition by public sector partners of the potential that LSPs offer for meeting their targets, especially for those focusing on localised delivery, or for networking and informal contacts, varied widely between some of the more successful partnerships and others where the disengagement of some key partners was a cause for serious concern. In these latter cases, some partners complained of lack of strategic direction in the LSP, while others saw the lack of guidance, pressures on public agencies from targets and other obligations to central and regional government, or lack of financial resources as a constraint. Overall, however, engagement of public agencies was resourced by officer time and other in-kind support and financial constraints are not referenced as significant constraints.
- 4.33 In terms of **financial contributions** towards administration of the LSPs, there is a mixed picture of either no contribution in some case studies or of relatively small amounts. This picture is complicated however, if consideration is given to the ‘wider’ LSP, in that several public agencies will be supporting partnerships such as the Lifelong Learning Partnership and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.
- 4.34 **Regional and sub-regional** public agencies face specific problems in relating to district-level LSPs, with county-level LSPs increasingly competing for their attention and potentially offering a more compatible fit. The variable geographies of some public agencies complicates this picture: thus while several case study LSPs have only one PCT for the area, one has five to accommodate, with consequent problems in organising representation at the LSP.
- 4.35 The case studies show how variable the engagement of public bodies in LSPs is, and how fragile it can be. While a more in-depth analysis supports the evidence from the national survey that public bodies are leading partners in terms of the skills, resources and experience they bring, there is still some way to go for many LSPs in engaging them fully, let alone in securing change in their priorities in accordance with the LSP’s strategic objectives. We return in Chapter 6 to the issue of ‘mainstreaming’ and both the drivers that can facilitate a stronger alignment of partners’ programmes with the LSPs priorities, and the barriers that continue to make mainstreaming a difficult issue for many LSPs.

The voluntary and community sector

- 4.36 Voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations have **two broad roles** relevant to LSPs. In particular, they can “fill the gaps between disadvantaged communities and service providers, by establishing a dialogue and providing additional services”³⁴. One role, therefore, is as **providers of services** in such spheres as youth work, social and health care, childcare and sports and culture. These services may be paid or unpaid; that is involving both the paid ‘professionals’ and the purely voluntary parts of the sector, the larger voluntary organisations and the smaller community groups.
- 4.37 The other role of VCS groups is to **‘speak for’ local people**. However, there is a balance to be struck. The sector can bring its knowledge of the impact of service provision on local people. It can serve an important advisory function. In particular, it is especially important that “groups who are more easily ignored or have fewer resources are involved in local joint action”. This has important implications for the breadth of LSP membership. Yet VCS partners cannot claim to be “fully representative of either local people or the community and voluntary sectors as a whole; the community and its organisations are simply too diverse for that to work”. Even in purely practical terms, it would be impossible to cover all interests so that, although “there needs to be a sufficient number of community and voluntary sector members of any LSP to ensure an effective balance of interests and expertise, they should not be seen as the sole voice of local people”.
- 4.38 As the Issues Paper³⁵ on the voluntary and community sectors shows, the VCS covers a **wide range of organisations and groups**, registered charities, non-charitable and non-profit organisations. It is sometimes argued that voluntary and community are two sectors not one, but it is not easy to draw a hard and fast distinction. Rather there is a continuum of organisations. The LSP Guidance noted that the levels of community and voluntary activity in different areas vary and that voluntary and community sector groups differ in their nature and size and in their support needs. Related to this is the variation in how far the VCS infrastructure is developed and in the degrees of cohesion and trust within the sector. There are also issues about **the strength of the sector** and its existing infrastructure and how far co-ordination is possible. There may be uncertainty inside and outside the VCS about what exists and the scale of the sector’s contribution to local life. It is not surprising, therefore, that there are differences in the way that LSPs relate to the sector:
- Whether and how far they distinguish between the voluntary and community sectors and what these each comprise.
 - The level of representation on the LSP.
 - Whether or not BME and faith communities (if present) come through the VCS or separately.
 - The mechanisms for engaging the VCS and selecting/electing representatives and the extent to which representatives on LSPs see themselves as representative of, and accountable to, their constituency or rather as bringing a particular perspective.

34 National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, *Joining it up locally*, PAT 17, DETR 2000, p.18

35 Voluntary and Community Sector Issues Paper (Appendix 1, No. 3)

- 4.39 Table 3.1 In Chapter 3 showed the relative proportions of different sorts of VCS organisations involved in the total membership across all LSPs. It was notable that between 2002 and 2004, there was a significant increase in the involvement of faith organisations, BME groups and residents' groups. The level of involvement of BME and residents' groups is higher in NRF LSPs than non-NRFs. Across all LSPs, it is voluntary sector umbrella groups (79%) that are most frequently involved in the core membership, though this ranges from 70% amongst NRF LSPs to 83% for non-NRFs. By 2004, the most frequent VCS body in the core membership of NRF LSPs was the Community Network, whereas this was the case in only 17% of non-NRFs.
- 4.40 As the Community Participation Programmes evaluation³⁶ noted, for many, “the simple fact of having established a place on the LSP is an achievement in itself.” It also brings various benefits to the sector:
- Gaining knowledge and awareness of policies and plans.
 - Building trust with, and gaining recognition from, other sectors.
 - Being consulted.
 - Having access to decision makers.
- 4.41 However, there are still several questions about how far the VCS is an equal partner and how far it is equipped to take advantage of its place in an LSP.
- 4.42 In asking whether any sectors were **under-represented** in the LSP, the 2004 survey distinguished between the voluntary and community sectors. Under-representation was more common for the VCS than for the local authority and other public sector organisations, but less common than for the business sector. Of those that responded, 16% thought the voluntary sector under-represented compared with 33% thinking that the community sector was under-represented. This was more likely to be the case in non-NRF LSPs than in NRF ones in relation to both sectors. (5% of NRF and 20% of non-NRF LSPs thought that the voluntary sector is under-represented, while 13% of NRF but 40% of non-NRF LSPs considered the community sector under-represented.)
- 4.43 How many sector representatives there should be is one of the critical issues. For some purposes, the overall membership of the different LSP groupings needs to be kept fairly tight in order to remain strategic and action focused. There is an ongoing tension between inclusiveness and effectiveness. However, having fewer members possibly raises more representational issues for the VCS than it does for other sectors because of the enormous diversity of organisations and interests it encompasses. In practice, VCS presence in LSPs extends beyond the total and core memberships to places on wider partnership groups such as theme or working groups and often representatives feel they can play a more influential role in these wider partnership structures, but even at this level there is a danger of the groupings becoming too large to be effective.
- 4.44 A longstanding issue for VCS representatives in partnerships is how far they speak for the sector and what ‘model’ of representation is being applied. It is clear that very often the VCS have tried to utilise a ‘representative democracy’ model, placing greater demands on

³⁶ Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, ODP, *Making Connections: An Evaluation of the Community Participation Programmes*. Research Report 15, NRU March 2005

representatives to be mandated by and feedback to their ‘constituency’. This was hard enough to operate in neighbourhood level area-based initiatives. At LSP level, it is impossible. However, Community Empowerment Networks (CENs) can still find that LSP partners and/or some within the VCS fail to recognise the difficulties and have unrealistic expectations. There can also be tensions between continuity of membership and democratic processes within the sector.

- 4.45 Representativeness is closely allied to accountability. Again, although in practice accountability mechanisms are still variable and haphazard, there are perhaps higher expectations of the VCS in this regard than of other sectors. However, whilst clarity and transparency in decision-making processes are important, there is a danger of over-preoccupation with mandating VCS representatives in a way that constrains their full participation and means that the sector’s focus is more on processes than on the content of policies.
- 4.46 A number of factors appear to affect VCS participation in LSPs. Time is as much a constraint as finance. Other government agendas are putting pressures on the sector even though these might also be providing new opportunities. Although the VCS in NRF areas have had Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) funding, there can still be complaints about lack of capacity. Another issue is that VCS representatives sometimes feel overwhelmed by the number of council and other public sector officers. It is evident that many in the sector perceive LSPs as being dominated by the local authority. This means therefore that, on the one hand, its **relationship with the local authority** is crucial for the sector and, on the other, significant progress towards equal partnership is unlikely without a change in the council’s culture and receptiveness. The relationship between VCS and local authorities/elected members is a key one and the historic position is important in influencing the present position and current views – the extent of community development that has taken place in the past, the structures ‘below the LSP’, and past relationships between councillors and other types of community representatives. Current council policies are also significant, such as the levels and processes of grant-making to VCS bodies. In two tier areas, it may be difficult to co-ordinate VCS organisations across different spatial levels.
- 4.47 There is a distinction between the **numerical representation** of the VCS on the LSP and the **influence** the sector wields. CENs and the sector more generally can still feel they only have **junior partner** status, that they have not yet overcome all the misconceptions about the role of the VCS and that they are not exercising real influence. The perceptions and expectations of partners from other sectors may be as important as the actual capacity of the VCS but the overall lack of resources of the sector, the fact that it largely comprises lots of smaller organisations rather than fewer more muscular ones and the status of the representatives all contribute to the VCS being an unequal partner in terms of power and influence. For the NRF LSPs, the timing of different developments was an impediment because the Community Strategy and Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy processes were in place before the CEN was set up so that, in some LSPs, the VCS had to find a way into arrangements that were already up and running.
- 4.48 A related factor that sometimes applies is **a lack of clarity about their role** on the part of both VCS representatives and others in the LSP. VCS representatives do not necessarily feel equipped to address the high level strategic issues nor is this where their interests lie. More broadly, there can be questions about the culture of the sector and how far it is attuned to the responsibilities of partnership. Observers inside and outside the sector comment on a tendency to be confrontational at times which can alienate partners and

make them less inclined to recognise the sector's potential contribution. Nevertheless, it is widely acknowledged that the VCS have a valuable role in being a conduit to groups that other sectors would find it harder to reach.

- 4.49 The 2004 survey provides information about how far the different sectors bring their skills and experience to the LSP. Across all LSPs, nearly two thirds of respondents thought that the voluntary sector had made a good contribution whereas only 44% thought this of the community sector. This distinction between the two is mirrored in responses from the NRF and non-NRF LSPs, though the margin of difference is lower for the NRFs. Although fewer than 30% in either group of respondents thought that the VCS had been good at securing change within their own organisations, the views from the NRF LSPs were marginally more positive about this, suggesting that the capacity building that has been enabled by the Community Participation Programmes was starting to be effective.
- 4.50 LSPs can **support** their VCS in a variety of ways – financial support, direct work with VCS representatives to inform and brief them, support in auditing the sector and networking, developing the rules of engagement between the VCS and other agencies through Protocols about relationships within the LSP and Compacts to provide a framework for wider partnership working. The survey showed that the most common form of support to the involvement of the VCS is through the development of a Compact or protocol. This has happened in 71% of all LSPs, ranging from 60% of non-NRFs to 98% of NRFs. Predictably, NRF LSPs are more likely to provide most forms of support but especially those that are more resource intensive, such as providing financial support and training and infrastructural development. Although only a minority of NRF or non-NRF LSPs have mapped the VCS, this is an area in which non-NRFs do not lag so far behind the others. This may be because doing some form of mapping was a desirable preliminary step to establishing appropriate sectoral representation on the partnership.
- 4.51 There are various ways in which LSPs can reach out to a wider range of people and organisations (beyond the 'usual suspects'); for example, using an LSP forum, community empowerment, wider dissemination / consultation / communication, reaching out to faith groups, BME involvement. In all of these, the VCS will be one means of outreach and contact but not the only one. Rather the LSP as a whole needs to establish mechanisms for relating to the entire population and to do this systematically, using skilled staff.
- 4.52 To sum up: the diverse arrangements and different levels and types of participation signal that potentially the VCS have a range of roles within an LSP. Partners inside and outside the sector are often unclear about what is expected and about how to turn a general sense that participation is necessary and beneficial into practical reality. LSPs often still need to answer several questions about:
- What is the **function** of the sector within the LSP in general and in relation to its specific priorities?
 - What the VCS representatives are there to do and their role in **relation to their own constituency** as well as LSP partners.
 - Whether there is scope for further **clarification** about the range of possible functions and the types of organisations best placed to fulfil them.
 - What are the implications of VCS involvement in LSPs for **other forms of governance?**

Business

4.53 The importance of the business contribution to LSPs has been strongly emphasised, for example in recent research by Business in the Community³⁷ and in the Report of the Private Sector Advisory Panel on neighbourhood renewal³⁸. There are increasing numbers of examples of good practice and ‘toolkits’ for improving the contribution of business. However, our 2004 survey shows that business stands out among categories of partner in being **hard to involve**, and even harder in terms of securing change by businesses in line with LSP objectives. In general, LSPs seem to be finding it easier to secure involvement of representative business groups on Boards than that of individual businesses, whose involvement at this level has been slight. Business attendance is often intermittent, and there have been instances in our case studies where LSPs have found it difficult to fill vacancies caused by the departure of previous business representatives. It is also clear that some business representatives are unsure of their role or contribution and/or have sceptical attitudes about the basis for securing additional business involvement beyond some limited networking benefits. It is relatively rare for business partners to exercise a leadership role on the Board.

Business involvement

One LSP has sustained a strong business involvement reflecting the LSPs’ origins as a public private partnership. As well as having a strong presence on the Board and one of the Executives, and in addition to the Economy Strategy Group, private sector representatives can find an arena for their specific interests in various Partnership Groups: International, Manufacturing, Financial Services and Media.

- 4.54 Many business members have gravitated to economic sub-groupings, but there is also limited representation on other sub-partnerships in some LSPs (e.g. Lifelong Learning, Crime and Disorder, Community Safety). However, the evidence from our work on the economic development role of LSPs (see Chapter 5 below) raises questions about the added value which is being produced in economic theme partnerships. In two tier areas, businesses may choose to become involved at the county level if they have strategic concerns (e.g. transport).
- 4.55 The challenge is, therefore, to involve business at the right level and keep a **balance** between maintaining involvement without asking too much and the danger of looser arrangements which can lead to ‘separatist’ tendencies in the case of some more action-oriented partnerships, such as one where there is a separate Economic Partnership. Business involvement may have been an especial challenge during the partnership building phase, and more action-oriented initiatives may capture greater business interest – but may also lead to businesses prioritising certain issues and divert them away from a broader partnership engagement. Thus there is a need to persuade business of the need to embrace wider social issues (e.g. crime, educational attainment) without bogging them down in lengthy agendas.
- 4.56 It is unclear what level and forms of support, if any, LSPs offer to businesses either already involved or showing interest beyond Business Brokers’ networking, awareness raising and event-staging roles. If LSPs do indeed need business engagement in the whole

³⁷ Working with business in local strategic partnerships: Guidance Note. Undated.

³⁸ Neighbourhood Renewal Unit 2004: The Private Sector Advisory Panel on neighbourhood renewal: Report and Government response.

work of the partnership, it seems clear that many need to **defined more clearly** what involvement they want from business and how they can support that involvement. One of our case studies suggests strongly that it is through the identification of specific contributions which businesses can make – towards progress on floor targets, for example – that a real contribution can be obtained.

Relationships above and below the LSP

4.57 In order to be effective, LSPs need good working relationships with organisations both ‘above’ the LSP at regional and sub-regional level, and below it, especially at neighbourhood level. Table 4.1, derived from the 2004 survey, shows the current state of these relationships.

Table 4.1 Nature of LSPs links to agencies and other activities									
	Formal reporting and communication linkages		Informal reporting and communication linkages		No or insignificant linkages		Not applicable		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Regional and sub-regional									
RDA	68	24%	97	35%	102	36%	13	5%	280
Sub Regional Partnership	75	26%	146	51%	61	21%	4	1%	286
LSC	121	42%	122	43%	44	15%	0	0%	287
Other	33	48%	12	17%	3	4%	21	30%	69
Sub-local and neighbourhood									
Local area/ward committees/forums	78	28%	104	38%	44	16%	50	18%	276
Parish Councils	82	30%	102	37%	36	13%	57	21%	277
Neighbourhood Management initiatives	52	21%	51	21%	26	11%	119	48%	248
NDC	12	5%	36	14%	32	13%	172	68%	252
Delivery of NRS/NRF	80	31%	7	3%	11	4%	158	62%	256
Other ABIs	54	22%	91	36%	23	9%	82	33%	250
Town Centre Partnership	73	28%	104	39%	26	10%	62	23%	265
Other	14	44%	6	19%	0	0%	12	38%	32

4.58 The data shows considerable variation, with significant numbers of LSPs reporting both stronger and less strong linkages. For all LSPs, formal linkages with RDAs and sub-regional partnerships appear to be relatively limited; those with LSC are significantly stronger. There is, though, a very differentiated picture between NRF and non-NRF LSPs and different local authority contexts. In most cases, **NRF LSPs** report that linkages with a range of regional and sub-regional agencies, and with sub-local or neighbourhood structures, are in place either formally or informally. However there is much variation as to whether these are formal or informal. There are substantial minorities of NRF LSPs, though, which have no or insignificant links to RDAs and sub-regional partnerships. For **non-NRF LSPs** these proportions are higher. Not surprisingly **county and urban LSPs** tend to have more relationships with regional and sub-regional bodies, while districts work more closely with sub-local and neighbourhood structures.

LSPs and regional and sub-regional agencies

- 4.59 Findings from both the action learning set on regional and sub-regional issues³⁹ and the case studies show that, while in some areas there is a reasonably good direct working relationship between the RDA, the regional economic strategy and the LSP, in other areas there appear to be few such links, at either strategic or operational levels, and those that there are can be difficult. For non-NRF and district LSPs, GOs can also seem distant and unresponsive.
- 4.60 There is considerable diversity both in the way in which working relationships are organised between LSPs and sub-regional partnerships and other sub-regionally organised agencies (such as the LSC or Environment Agency) and intermediary institutions such as Regeneration Zones, and in how effective these relationships are. These differences often appear to have emerged as much as a result of local circumstances as from structural factors.
- 4.61 It is clear that LSPs want more opportunity to influence strategic developments at sub-regional levels. However the complex pattern of sub-regionally organised agencies and partnerships makes this a difficult task. Some case studies suggest that LSPs want better direct relationships with RDAs, but others seem to suggest that such relationships are best conducted at sub-regional level.
- 4.62 To the extent that different ways of handling the relationships between LSPs and regional and sub-regional agencies/partnerships reflects respect for local contexts and needs, then this diversity may be a good thing. However, it may well also be that there is a need to review the **advantages and disadvantages of different working relationships** between LSPs and the sub-regional level. Certainly some of the case studies seem to show either very complex relationships between a large number of partnerships and agencies, with the LSP or LSPs only one among a number of institutions trying to exercise influence, or very limited relationships between the LSP and sub-regional bodies, reducing the potential for joined up governance.
- 4.63 There are a number of issues here connected to the context in which the LSP is located – either the socio-economic context, or the structure of local government in the area. In some areas – and especially areas where the local authority environment is a diversified pattern of county, district and unitary, an LSP is part of a complex institutional ‘soup’ and can find it difficult to work effectively, although this may not be true elsewhere and the latter demonstrates that working in the complex transport context can be effective.
- 4.64 In **two tier** areas there is a tendency for many agencies to put their effort into the county LSP because of the resource cost of engaging with a number of districts. The implication may be that district LSPs should principally engage with sub-regional partners via county LSPs. **Rural LSPs** may consider that regional and sub-regional strategies tend to marginalise their interests if they are within primarily urban regions, whereas **urban LSPs** in primarily rural regions believe sub-regional partnerships marginalise urban interests.

³⁹ Regional and Sub-regional action learning set (Appendix 1, No. 7)

4.65 Ways of improving relationships between LSPs and regional and sub-regional agencies might in principle include:

- Developing **protocols**, or other formal or informal institutional arrangements to make joint working more effective, both in complex institutional environments and in cases of limited collaboration.
- Rationalising the **pattern of LSPs** (e.g. joint county-district; or conurbation-wide LSPs).
- Rationalising the **relationship** between LSPs and sub-regional partnerships, including consideration of joint LSP/SRPs (at least one case of which was identified in the evaluation).

The city region

4.66 Although the city region was not a specific focus of the evaluation, a number of elements of the research provide evidence about the relationship of LSPs to the city region issue. These include some of the case studies, the economic development and transport issues papers and the regional and sub-regional action learning set⁴⁰.

The LSP's regional role

In one city, one of the LSP's aims concerns the city's role in its region. Taking this forward is seen to require a mechanism for driving forward this agenda and engaging with partners in other parts of the region, broadening the focus of the engagement with regional agencies, ensuring that existing groups reflect the regional role in their strategies, plans and firmer corporate propulsion.

4.67 From this limited evidence, but also reflecting on other relevant research, the main conclusion concerns the failure of most LSPs so far to recognise or address 'city-region' issues or indeed the importance of the relationship between cities and their hinterlands. This appears to stem from a number of factors.

- The lack of any clear **articulation of the concept of 'the city-region'**, and in consequence the absence of any clear understanding of what geographical territories it might encompass. Conversely there is much attention given to sub-regional partnerships and the relationship with Regional Development Agencies, with the definition of the sub-region by the RDA being the determining factor in setting this agenda.
- The **variety of geographical size** and tightness of boundaries of many of the larger cities and larger urban areas makes shared experience and shared understanding of the city region limited, and similar varieties in the size and function of RDA sub-regions increases this lack of shared understandings.
- The **'core cities'** movement of recent years has emphasised the importance of the big cities. The 'core cities' agenda is seen by some to be counter posed to pressures

⁴⁰ Appendix 3 offers detailed evidence from two contrasting areas which reflect the wider sub-regional/city region context and which illustrate the specific challenges facing some LSPs in such areas.

of regionalism/sub-regionalism rather than as complementary to them and creating an urban/rural, or urban/suburban, divide.

- In contrast to a policy emphasis on the inner city, there has been limited attention in urban policy to ‘the suburb’ or ‘**edge city**’ which is an overlooked focus for strategic thinking, often because the edge city is also the focus for tension between the city and its surrounding districts.
- Such tension is in many areas exacerbated by relationships between **counties and districts**, with urban fringe districts often suspicious of strategic discussions which appear to demand land release for housing, to place pressures on transportation, and to threaten environmental goals and sustainability.
- Where strategic issues are recognised as being of common concern, in two tier areas these are most often seen as a county preserve; in **hybrid areas** there is often action – sometimes competing – by both unitary and the county. Conversely there is some evidence (Bristol on transport, Tees Valley on economic development) of adjoining unitary authorities recognising some issues as being of common strategic interest.

LSP engagement with local areas, neighbourhoods or parishes

- 4.68 LSPs engage with local areas, neighbourhoods or parishes either through specific activities, structures and processes that were set up by the LSP and/or through mechanisms that were already established. In neither cases are the mechanisms very well embedded yet and there appears to be significant variation in terms of the importance attached to these mechanisms and the resources associated with them.
- 4.69 In our case studies, **county** LSPs and those with a predominantly **rural** character were unlikely to have developed direct relationships with parishes/towns etc. Instead, they worked with the relevant umbrella group for parishes and town councils on the LSP Executive.
- 4.70 Those case studies with a strongly **urban** focus and/or with **NRF** were very likely to have developed some means of linking with neighbourhoods. In some cases this meant the establishment of mechanisms within the LSP. Elsewhere mechanisms that were already established were used to provide the bridge between the LSP Executive and local communities. There was little consistency in these arrangements across the LSPs in terms of scale or membership. One LSP worked with neighbourhood based projects and partnerships, run by volunteers or voluntary organisations, and ensured that each kind of neighbourhood arrangement was represented on the LSP Executive. By contrast another has developed District Partnerships that covered much larger geographical areas than what the NRU might define as ‘neighbourhoods’ but included in each of its partnerships representatives from a range of sectors. Urban/NRF LSPs were likely to have neighbourhood focused sub-groups or co-ordinating mechanisms to enable strategic deliberation about neighbourhood issues to be represented to the LSP Executive.

- 4.71 In some case study LSPs there appeared to be **parallel arrangements** for linking with neighbourhoods, with LSP mechanisms co-existing with local authority mechanisms for decentralisation. Usually the local authority developments preceded those of the LSP. It is not always clear how the two mechanisms link together and how they will avoid overlap in their roles. Other local authorities appear to be developing mechanisms that can be used by the LSP as a means of engaging with neighbourhoods. The police and PCTs were other public bodies that were likely to engage with area based arrangements (through the LSP or local authority arrangements).
- 4.72 More generally, the case studies suggest that stakeholders are frequently unclear as to the **purpose of engagement** with ‘sub-localities’. Possible purposes include: influencing service delivery and decision making, ‘partnership working and developing a ‘joined-up’ approach’, and enhancing public engagement. The public engagement purpose is most often cited in relation to ‘sub-local’ arrangements but if these arrangements are to be sustainable this needs to be more fully developed, i.e. public engagement for what purpose, rather than for its own sake. Relatedly, it can be difficult to discern clear functions for ‘sub-local’ representatives within LSPs, or what difference is made to the LSP and to ‘sub-local’ bodies as a result of their interactions. If ‘sub-localities’ are to have an influence in the delivery chain (of mainstream services or regeneration) then the expected consequences of this should be clearly identified and monitored.
- 4.73 Given the emphasis paid to ‘neighbourhood governance’ in ODPM’s developing Local Government Strategy, it is likely that the area dimension will remain an important aspect of local governance in the near future. The ‘Below the LSP’ Issues Paper⁴¹ identifies the following as outstanding issues that LSPs will need to address in developing their approach to ‘sub-localities’ and neighbourhoods:
- Evidence from the case studies suggests that LSPs and local authorities are frequently developing relationships with ‘sub-localities’ in parallel. It will be important that LSPs and local authorities begin to reconcile their arrangements in order to **minimise overlap and avoid conflict**.
 - Local elected members do not play a prominent role. Given that one of the potential consequences of the ‘sub-local’ agenda is the development of new community leaders to facilitate neighbourhood governance, greater thought needs to be given to the role(s) to be played by **local elected members** in ‘sub-local’ and neighbourhood arrangements and how to manage the relationship between them and with other emerging community leaders.
 - Interactions between LSPs and ‘sub-localities’ are resource intensive and this will be particularly costly for ‘sub-local’ bodies that rely on voluntary capacity. If these interactions are to become systematised and embedded then LSPs will need to find a way to **support the participation of ‘sub-local’ representatives**.
 - There are multiple and diverse ‘sub-local’ bodies in any given locality. The LSP provides an opportunity for these bodies to come together in a **single forum** to deliberate on issues of common concern and to develop a clear ‘voice’ in the LSP. LSPs need to develop an appropriate way of facilitating such a forum and linking it in to the decision making processes of the LSP.

41 ‘Below the LSP’ Issues Paper (Appendix 1, No. 2)

Conclusion: Improving the relationships between LSPs, their partners and stakeholders

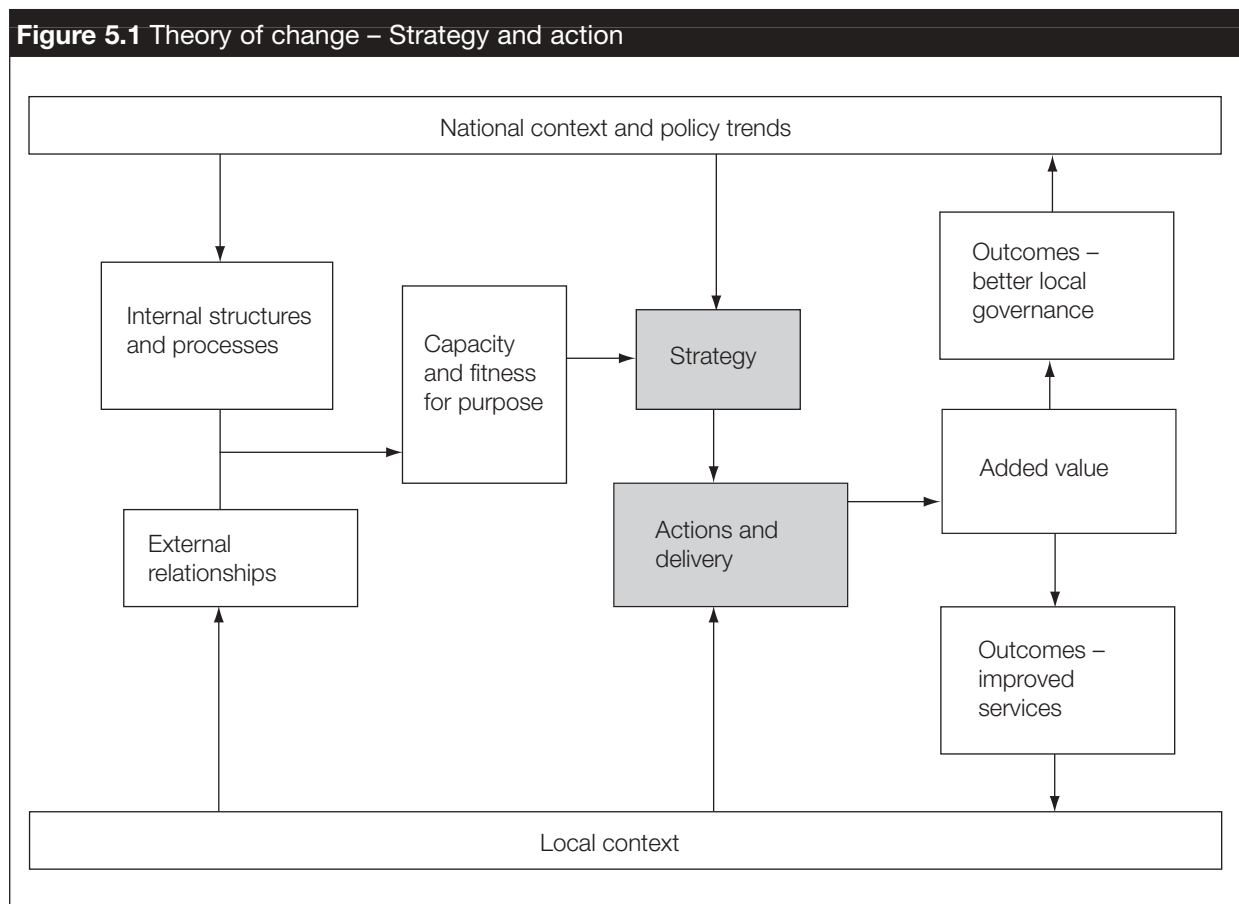
- 4.74 This chapter has shown that the extent to which LSPs have been successful so far in engaging partners and stakeholders varies greatly – both among LSPs, and between different categories of partner and stakeholder.
- 4.75 The evidence is that many **public sector partners** are now making a strong contribution to LSPs, but this engagement needs to be translated into securing change within partner organisations in line with LSP priorities. Other partners – especially local councillors and the business community – still need to be more actively engaged in the LSP itself.
- 4.76 Improving the relationship between the LSP and the **local authority** means addressing the marginalisation of many non-executive councillors, and improving accountability mechanisms. The evaluation suggests a number of ways in which arrangements for LSPs in two tier areas can be made to work more effectively.
- 4.77 The **voluntary and community sector** is increasingly stretched and under-resourced. Ways of increasing its capacity (e.g. through Change Up investment in infrastructure) will help, but consideration needs to be given to whether new remits for LSPs (LPSAs, LAAs) will tend to marginalise the voluntary and community role.
- 4.78 There is still a need to engage **business** more substantively in many LSPs though there are a number of cases where business involvement is strong and from which lessons could be learned.
- 4.79 Above the LSP, there need to be stronger ties between LSPs' agendas (especially Community Strategies) and **regional economic strategies**.
- 4.80 The **neighbourhood** governance agenda makes relationships below the LSP particularly important, and in principle the LSP can be a forum in which multiple sub-local interests can come together. However avoiding duplication of arrangements and involving councillors are important issues.

CHAPTER 5

Strategy and Action: What do LSPs do?

Introduction

5.1 The major questions addressed in this chapter concern how LSPs are developing patterns of activity and delivery around strategic perspectives. The theory of change suggests that if LSPs have developed inclusive and effective structures and processes, they will be able to develop clear strategic perspectives which bring unity to the local governance agenda and which partners will then implement.

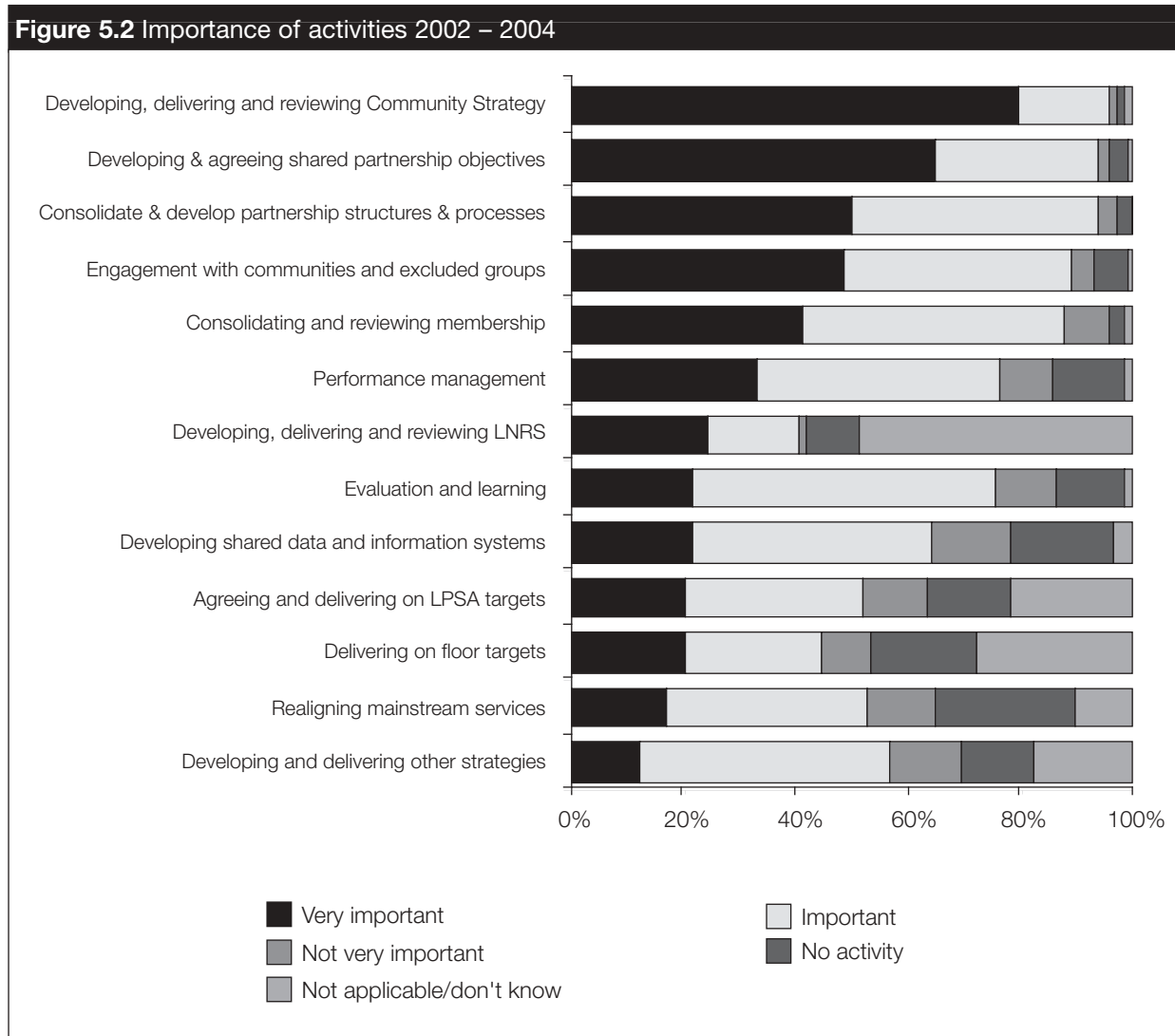


5.2 Among the issues considered in this chapter are:

- The role of LSPs in the development, review and delivery of key strategies, especially the Community Strategy (CS) and Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS).
- Other activity and action by LSPs, including their role in processes such as LPSAs and on a range of issues from transport to sustainability and economic development.
- The support which LSPs received and need in developing their activity.

Process, strategy and delivery

5.3 Figure 5.2 based on the 2004 survey⁴² shows the importance of a range of activities which LSPs have undertaken during the period 2002-2004.



Source: LSP evaluation, 2004 survey

5.4 This shows how LSPs have had to simultaneously build their organisational arrangements and processes while at the same time developing major strategic initiatives and starting to deliver on key targets.

5.5 Thus activities identified as ‘very important’ or ‘important’ by 80% or more of LSPs include both ‘process’ issues:

- Consolidating and reviewing membership.
- Engagement with communities and excluded groups.
- Consolidating and developing partnership structures and processes.

42 2004 Survey of all English LSPs (Appendix 1, No. 5)

And strategy development and delivery:

- Developing and agreeing shared objectives.
- Developing, delivering and reviewing the Community Strategy.

5.6 The same is true of a further set of activities which have been ‘very important’ or ‘important’ for 50% or more LSPs. Further ‘process’ issues include:

- Evaluation and learning.
- Developing shared data and information systems.

5.7 While strategy and delivery activity includes:

- Developing and delivering other strategies, projects and initiatives.
- Realigning mainstream services.
- Agreeing and delivering on LPSA targets.
- Performance management.

5.8 Within this overall picture, though, there are important differences. Levels of activity are even higher in NRF LSPs. Issues identified as ‘very important’ or ‘important’ by 90% or more of **NRF LSPs** include:

Process –

- Engagement with communities and excluded groups.
- Consolidating and developing partnership structures and processes.

Strategy and delivery –

- Evaluation and learning.
- Developing and agreeing shared objectives.
- Developing, delivering and reviewing the Community Strategy.
- Developing, delivering and reviewing the LNRS.
- Delivering on floor targets.
- Performance management.

5.9 However, it should be noted that for significant numbers of NRF LSPs activities such as developing shared data and information systems, realigning mainstream services and LPSA targets have not yet been areas of important activity.

- 5.10 **Non-NRF LSPs** show significantly lower levels of activity, and overall a higher proportion of attention devoted to ‘process’ issues such as community engagement and development of partnership structures and processes, compared to ‘outcome’ activities such as realigning mainstream services.
- 5.11 Many differences among LSPs in **different local authority contexts** reflect the greater weight of NRF LSPs in the urban category. However some other differences are also notable: consolidating and reviewing membership and engaging with communities and excluded groups are ‘very important’ for many more districts than counties. Substantial minorities of counties and districts alike register ‘no activity’ regarding floor targets and realigning mainstream services.
- 5.12 Comparison between activity and priorities highlighted by LSPs in the **2002⁴³ and 2004** surveys shows that, in general, the activities which LSPs anticipated in 2002 that they would be working on in the 2002-3 periods are similar to those which they now say have been important or very important for them when looking back over the 2002-4 period⁴⁴. The main difference is that more LSPs have rated more issues as important or very important than they envisaged in their plans two years ago. Consolidating membership and partnership structures, performance management and evaluation, developing shared objectives and data and information systems, developing and delivering the Community Strategy and delivering on floor targets are all activities which were identified more frequently in 2004 as important or very important areas of activity in 2002-4 than were mentioned in 2002 as planned activities for 2003⁴⁵. This seems to provide further evidence of the heavy workload experienced by many LSPs, particularly given that their resources of staff and money have grown only to a limited degree during this period.

Strategy as the basis for delivery

- 5.13 The Community Strategy and, in NRF areas, the LNRS, are, not surprisingly, the main focus for the development of strategic perspectives by LSPs. But there are important differences in the specific roles which LSPs have played in strategy development and delivery – the LSP is more important in the development of vision and strategy than it is (yet?) in delivery. While 85% of LSPs took a lead role in agreeing the vision for the Community Strategy, fewer (70%) led in preparing the Strategy and in implementing it (60%), although 67% are leading in reviewing it.
- 5.14 The position in NRF LSPs is very similar. However, in relation to the LNRS the proportions are somewhat lower: 66% led in agreeing the vision, 56% in preparation, 48% in management and delivery and 56% in review. In significant numbers of cases, the LSP was in a supporting rather than active or lead role.
- 5.15 Moreover, among individual LSPs there are mixed views about the quality and usefulness of the Community Strategy⁴⁶. On the one hand it is often seen as woolly, insufficiently explicit about objectives, targets, actions etc, ‘motherhood and apple pie’. On the other

43 Report of 2002 LSP Survey (Appendix 1, No. 20)

44 One important difference is that a majority of LSPs included activity on rationalising plans and partnerships as a priority in 2002. The 2004 questionnaire did not ask about this (because of other evidence that this was no longer a priority for many LSPs).

45 It should be noted again that the data compared here is not exactly the same and especially that the 2002 data refers to activity envisaged in 2002-3 whereas the 2004 data refers to activity in 2002-4.

46 Case studies: Key findings from 2004 research (Appendix 1, No. 24)

hand it is regarded as a highly useful framework within which collaborative action can be taken forward, even if the CS itself does not specify precisely what, how, how much. Thus in one LSP it 'is central to planning and delivery, is owned, and drives action'; in another it 'offers the framework within which external funding and special initiatives can be managed'; in several it has been the focus for partnership building and the primary output so far from LSP working. However in at least one case it has been subservient to the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and funding, while in another it has been no more than 'a legitimating document for existing actions rather than a tool for driving change'.

- 5.16 In several LSPs there is recognition of its value, but less unanimity about its central role. For many the process of preparation was as important as the product, especially where a hasty first strategy was the focus for partnership building. There are expectations that next time round the process and the output will be better focused and will relate more closely to delivery. In the meantime there is reliance on a wide raft of strategic plans and programmes of a number of sub-partnerships.

A key issue is the relationship between the LSP and the local authority in the development and delivery of the CS, and the need to ensure that the local authority's corporate strategies are integrated with the CS while avoiding a position where the CS is seen as a local authority strategy. This is illustrated by some of the case studies.

The LSP and the Community Strategy

In most of the case studies the Community Strategy (CS) was considered to be the 'key overarching document within which others fitted'. In these case studies, the priorities of the community strategy would shape council corporate plans and service plans. Another provides a model of a relatively 'integrated' approach to LSP priorities informing the local authority's own strategic planning processes. The Council has sought to align the objectives of the Community Strategy and its own priority areas in the latest Corporate and Performance Plan. The CPP also translates these into thematic strategies, service plans, targets and performance indicators.

In one case study the local authority also seeks to use the Community Strategy as the framework for its own strategic and business planning. The CS has shaped the Council's Corporate Strategy and the developing local plan. A performance management system for the LSP is also being refined around the CS targets, applying Quality of Life indicators. There is clear evidence of integration with Council processes, with the Council also being asked to adopt the Quality of Life indicators.

In another case study however the local authority has regarded the CS as 'its' strategy, and its focus has been on its own corporate strategy rather than the CS although the two are potentially compatible. The integration of LSP and Council processes has been hampered by a problematic relationship with the LSP, although there are signs that this is improving. In another case study the CS was seen as the major outcome of the LSP. However, for the local authorities involved the direction of influence was from corporate strategy to Community Strategy – rather than the other way round, and none of the interviewees were able to say that the CS had influenced their own plans and strategies.

Neighbourhood renewal

- 5.17 In **NRF areas** there have been differing approaches to the preparation of the LNRS and to its relationship with the CS. Whilst there was often some disjuncture in the first LNRS, revisions to the strategies are bringing a closer integration between the two strategic processes. In one case study the original LNRS was said to be seldom used by partners (although a Floor Target Action Plan was more influential on partner agencies). The lack

of LSP ownership of LNRS probably stemmed from the fact that NRF has been treated in isolation from mainstream and other funding streams and been seen as a relatively ‘easy option’ in the past. Planned integration of the LNRS within the revised CS and greater attention to action planning should ensure that in future it impacts to a greater extent on planning and delivery of services. A second LSP is taking an active, but not a lead, role in developing the original LNRS, which provided some decision-making tools, but started with the easiest and most obvious targets, while the new strategy (planned to be ready for March 2005) will look more widely and comprise a three-year city wide plan plus 5 district ones. There is a strong focus on neighbourhoods in one non-NRF LSP, probably as a result of the influence of a Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder.

- 5.18 Appendix 2 describes in more detail the evolution of LNRSs in the five NRF case studies. Overall, there are ongoing but different processes of revising LNRSs and linking them to Floor Target Action Plans. The evidence suggests LSPs having a different role in relation to LNRSs and Community Strategies, and that the two strategies can contain different depths of analysis and go into different levels of detail. It seems likely though that the processes are coming closer together, especially with some LSPs trying to make their LNRS a sub-set of the CS. There are questions about how far the LNRS is a comprehensive strategy or primarily focused upon the deployment of NRF. There are also some signs from other evaluations that NDCs are not closely linked into their LSPs and the LNRSs leave them out of the reckoning because they are seen to be sufficiently well-resourced already. However, the increased focus on floor targets probably requires a move towards a more integrated approach to narrowing the gap. It is also evident that the increasing shift towards structures ‘below the LSP’ can provide a greater opportunity to embed neighbourhood renewal priorities in mainstream service provision.

Community Strategy, LNRS and other structures

In one case study the LNRS sits within the Community Strategy, and a NR sub-group drives neighbourhood renewal activity through a combination of delivery mechanisms including the agencies that make up the LSP and especially the thematic partnerships; delivery agencies such as regeneration partnerships; the District Assemblies, neighbourhood champions appointed by partner agencies, and the development of Neighbourhood Action Plans in specific areas.

- 5.19 The key issue appears to be whether the coming generation of CS and LNRSs will move up a gear to provide a more explicit, targetable and measurable basis for joint action and whether it will provide the basis for any resource realignment. Even in the most advanced examples within the evaluation, progress on shifting the pattern of resources or reshaping mainstream delivery has been limited, and there is little evidence that CS/LNRS are widely owned beyond the immediate stakeholders, or that as yet they offer legitimacy for serious service change.
- 5.20 The case studies show that, whilst they do not need to have an LNRS, **non-NRF LSPs** do recognise the need to tackle disadvantage. In one area there is a key goal of “Reducing poverty and isolation though, in common with other objectives in the strategy, there has as yet been little progress towards delivery of outcomes. In another LSP the CS has two priorities that address these issues – tackling deprivation and reducing inequalities. The latter focuses on inequalities experienced by disadvantaged groups rather than geographical communities. In a third, by contrast, there is an emphasis on neighbourhood working that chimes well with partners’ own visions for service delivery and community engagement. Although some interviewees were concerned that this approach might miss groups such as black and minority ethnic communities or people with disabilities, their

issues are regularly represented at LSP conferences and are not necessarily marginalised by a neighbourhood focus. The Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder in this locality exemplifies how such a focus can address the needs and concerns of BME communities in deprived areas.

Other activity and action

5.21 Further activity and action by LSPs can be seen as falling into two categories:

- Activity stemming from specific government initiatives.
- Other areas of activity in which drivers are often both local and national.

5.22 In the first category, the 2004 survey provides some information about the involvement of LSPs in LPSAs and the Well Being Power.

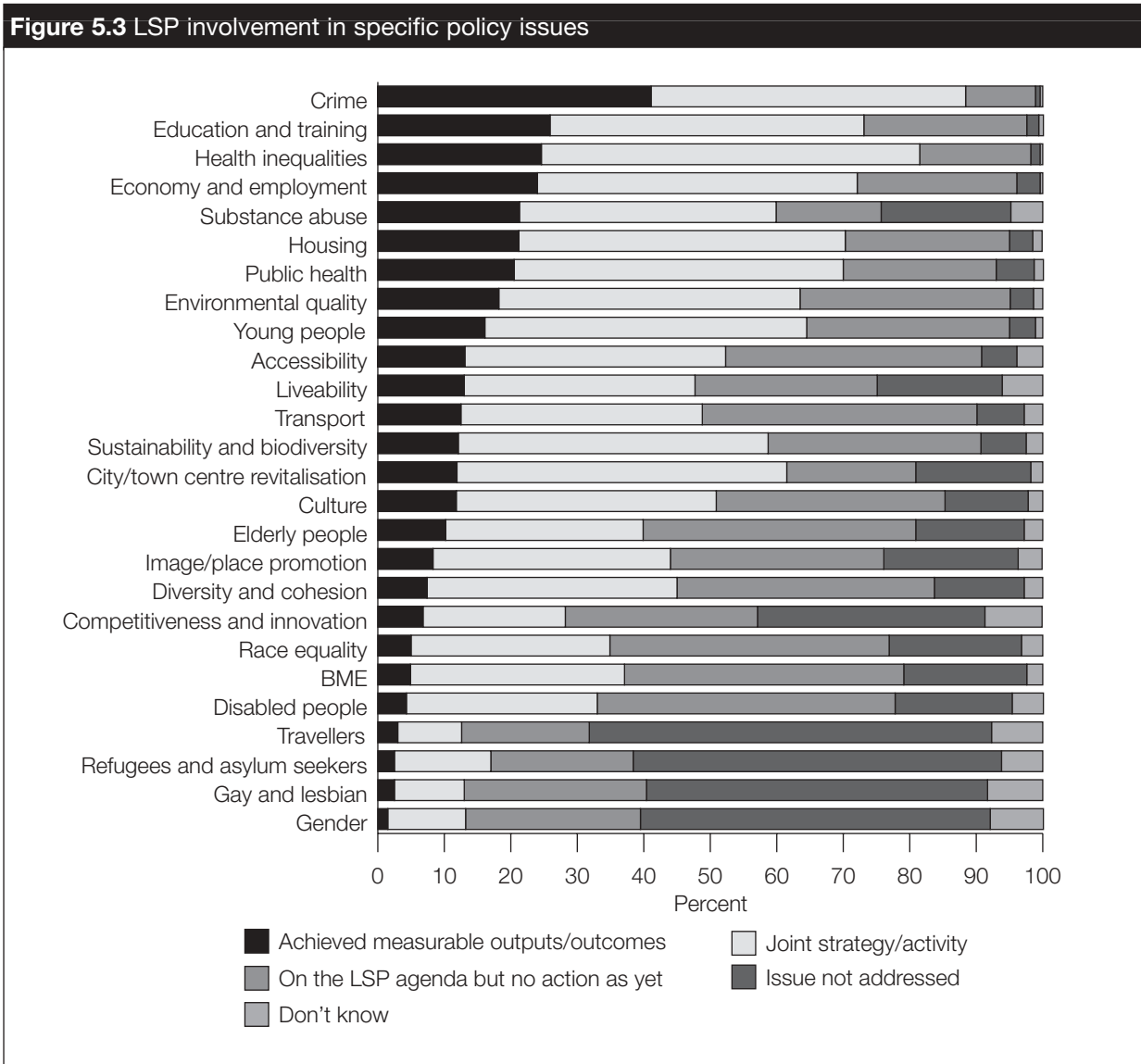
	Not involved		Taking the lead on some targets		Supporting role		Consulted and informed		Don't know/N/A		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Deciding priorities and choosing the targets	46	28%	18	11%	31	19%	47	29%	20	12%	162
Negotiating the targets	48	31%	12	7%	32	21%	39	25%	25	16%	156
Planning actions to achieve the targets	45	29%	23	15%	32	20%	34	22%	24	15%	158
Implementing actions to achieve the targets	41	26%	24	15%	40	25%	29	18%	25	16%	159

5.23 Table 5.1 shows that there is a wide spread of roles that LSPs have played in the first round LPSAs, recognising of course that this has not been an issue in all localities. The main point to note is that, in comparison to the CS and LNRS, LSP involvement has been more in a supporting or consultative than a lead role. This limited role is in part a reflection of the timing of the earlier LPSAs, negotiated when many LSPs were in their infancy; LSPs are more closely involved in second generation LPSAs which explicitly require partnership working.

	NRF LSPs		Non-NRF LSPs		All LSPs	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
LSP is aware of Well Being Powers	74	89%	197	90%	271	89%
LSP has considered making use of Well Being Powers	18	22%	35	16%	53	18%
LSP made use of the Power in pursuing its objectives	9	11%	14	6%	23	8%

5.24 The limited role of LSPs is even more apparent in relation to the Well Being Power, where, although 90% of LSPs are aware of it, only a small proportion is yet making use of it. This may appear surprising given the potential of the Power to assist in the delivery of Community Strategy goals, but it is possible that the low of take up is a reflection, not of lack of interest on the part of LSPs, but of lack of capacity to act, or support action, using the Power.

5.25 Figure 5.3 shows that, beyond activity stemming from such specific government initiatives, LSPs are involved in a very wide range of activity areas.



Source: LSP evaluation, 2004 survey

5.26 Some of the issues on which LSPs have been most actively involved are of course those most likely to be prioritised in CS and LNRS, such as crime, the economy and employment, education and training, health inequalities and public health, housing, and substance abuse. Progress on these issues will be discussed further in the next chapter. At the other end of the spectrum, there are certain issues which significant numbers of LSPs are not addressing – these include, for at least one third of all LSPs, competitiveness and innovation, gay and lesbian and gender issues, refugees and asylum seekers and travellers. In between these are issues such as transport, rural issues and sustainability which illustrate some of the questions facing LSPs in trying to respond to some of the many topics on which they could, in principle, take action.

Transport and accessibility

5.27 Table 3.1 showed that transport authorities (LTAs or PTEs) are among the core membership of 12% of LSPs and the wider membership of 38%. Transport operators are amongst the core membership of 8% and the wider membership of 38% LSPs. There is some overlap – 63 LSPs (21%) have both authority and operator membership. In 16% of LSPs there is only transport authority membership; in a further 16% only operator membership. In terms of type of local government area – relevant given that districts have no LTA status – transport authorities are present in 87% of metropolitan LSPs, and (with the exception of London) more evenly amongst county, district and unitary LSPs (28%-33%). Transport operators are present in all types of LSP area – most frequently in county LSPs (47%), but also in metropolitan LSPs (40%), unitary and districts (both 37%), and also London boroughs(29%). This places transport authorities clearly in the ‘second tier’ of partners, with a considerably lower level of membership than that of some public agencies (health, police etc). It can be presumed in relation to both authorities and operators, that in many cases this wider membership is likely to be in a sub-partnership, either transport but also elsewhere, for example environment). There is thus some transport presence – authority or operator – in the wider membership of 53% of all LSPs, but there is little evidence that LSPs coterminous with LTA areas have a stronger presence than district based LSPs⁴⁷.

Table 5.3 LSP involvement in the next Local Transport Plan

	Not involved		Lead on some targets		Supporting role		Consulted and informed		Don't know/ N/A		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Deciding priorities and choosing the targets	61	21%	25	8%	52	18%	87	30%	64	22%	289
Developing the LTP	66	23%	11	4%	69	24%	80	28%	64	22%	290
Facilitating consultation	64	23%	15	5%	78	27%	43	15%	85	30%	285
Establishing links to ensure joint working	60	21%	26	9%	90	31%	38	13%	73	25%	287
Enabling delivery of/ parts of the LTP	69	24%	22	8%	69	24%	38	13%	87	31%	285
Monitoring delivery of the LTP	71	25%	14	5%	56	20%	51	18%	89	32%	281

⁴⁷ However the differences in the way in which LSPs define membership needs to be remembered at this point – this data may understate involvement.

Table 5.4 Barriers for LSPs in addressing transport issues			
	All LSPs		Main Barrier
	N	%	(%)
Lack of participation in the LSP by transport stakeholders	166	54	25
Lack of guidance on what LSP should do on transport issues	154	51	12
LSP members do not have enough knowledge of transport issues	140	46	7
Transport issues are the responsibility of the LTA	133	44	26
Too many competing policy interests for transport to be dealt with	106	35	11
Transport issues are too difficult to deal with	80	26	9

- 5.28 Tables 5.3 and 5.4 show the extent of actual or intended involvement of LSPs in local transport planning, and the barriers which face them in addressing transport issues. Involvement in the next Transport Plan (most work on which followed fieldwork for the LSP evaluation), and the focus for that involvement vary (Table 5.3⁴⁸). Whilst in a minority of cases (less than 10%) LSPs took the lead on some targets, they were more likely to play a supporting role (18 to 31% depending on the specific issue) or to be consulted/informed (13 to 30%). There was no involvement on the part of one quarter to one fifth of LSPs.
- 5.29 There is now more involvement in transport issues (although comparisons between 2002 and 2004 are difficult because Transport Plans are only prepared every five years and not much activity would have been expected in 2002). In 2002, only 7% of LSPs mentioned 'developing a Local Transport Plan' as an activity for 2002-3 (and only 3% listed it as one of their five top priorities). This compares with broadly similar percentages in 2004 (between 4% and 9%) indicating a *leading* role on aspects of transport targets for the next Local Transport Plan in 2004, but many more (18 to 31%) engaged in a supporting role. These figures suggest growing, if still modest, engagement of LSPs with transport issues.
- 5.30 Many LSPs identify a number of barriers to addressing transport issues, or doing so more effectively (Table 5.4). LSPs were asked to identify all the barriers to addressing transport issues. Identified most frequently are non-participation in the LSP by transport stakeholders together with a lack of guidance on what the LSP should do on transport issues (54% and 51% of LSPs respectively). In relation to the main single barrier, the fact that transport issues are the responsibility of the LTA comes top of the list (26% of respondents), followed closely by an absence of transport stakeholders in the LSP (25%).
- 5.31 Membership of an LSP or its sub/theme group does not in itself guarantee integrated working. The 2004 case study work, whilst pointing to the fact that by comparison with 2003 accessibility and/or transport working was more visible, nevertheless confirms the conclusions of the Transport Issues Paper about the challenges confronting the integration of LSP and LTA working. The case studies offer some insight into the issues of accessibility and transport. For some LSPs accessibility is seen as primarily a transport issue – relating to distance and journey times and informed by accessibility profiles. For others accessibility reflects more closely the DfT definition of accessibility as more than simply a transport issue, encompassing much wider dimensions including employment, health, and learning policies and relating closely to improving access to

⁴⁸ It should be noted that the relevant question in the 2004 survey asked about involvement and/or intention to be involved, and thus the data reflects both these.

services for disadvantaged groups/neighbourhoods. These different approaches may reflect the extent to which LTP and Community Strategy work are (or are not) integrated. The 2004 survey pointed to the fact that about half of all LSPs had either taken joint action or achieved measurable outcomes in relation to ‘transport’ (49%) and ‘accessibility’ (52%). In relation to accessibility, measurable outputs/outcomes were more frequent in NRF areas (25% of LSPs) than in non NRF areas (9%), although transport outcomes were slightly more evident in non NRF areas (12%) than in NRF areas (9%). Across all LSPs a further 40% had both accessibility and transport on their agendas, suggesting the potential to generate more integration in the future than hitherto.

- 5.32 At district level, whilst local transport issues (accessibility, notably in rural areas) are recognised in many areas, there is both a lack of knowledge of transport issues, combined with the fact that the Transport Authority is a unitary, county or metropolitan. In LTA areas there has been a tendency towards reliance on well tried and experienced structures and arrangements for preparation of the LTP, and the Transport Issues workshop demonstrated the extent to which LTA officers needed to understand, and be persuaded of, the benefits of engagement with the LSP. Whilst multi-level working is not unique to transport, the established nature of LTA/LTP patterns of work makes new ways of thinking harder, and as with other policy areas, integrating across levels poses major challenges.
- 5.33 Two localities exemplify both the growing significance of the transport presence and alternative approaches to transport. Additionally they illustrate the role perceived locally (whether rightly or wrongly) for the LSP as a focus for external relations and lobbying. The first case study in the box below illustrates an example of how transport and accessibility issues can be tackled by an LSP through playing into existing structures, while the second is an example of the more specific work of an LSP transport sub-group.

LSPs tackling transport and accessibility issues

In one borough the Council commissioned a ‘Transport Audit’ and a review of the Strategic Partnership’s relationship with the PTE, the findings of which are directly informing the Council’s contribution to the development of the wider metropolitan (LTP). In addition to playing into this strategic discussion, the LSP has explicitly decided not to establish a transport group and the Community Strategy treats transport as a means to achieve other outcomes rather than as an issue/theme in its own right. The strategy identifies two transport related measures – ‘halving the number of people who are killed or seriously injured on local roads by 2007/2008’ and ‘increasing bus use’. This locality offers examples of the treatment of transport/access issues within existing structures – PTE representatives attend the Older People’s Partnership, whilst the Children and Young People’s Partnership was identified as the appropriate group for developing future funding bids in relation to road safety.

By contrast in a second metropolitan area the Transport Partnership is tasked not only with lobbying for greater transport investment, but also with combining connectivity for deprived areas with meeting the commuting and business access needs of a congested city. This LSP’s vision has a major transport element, and considerable effort has been put at strategic levels into the development of a major public transport proposal.

- 5.34 Elsewhere engagement with accessibility and transport issues varies widely. In one county ‘Improve Accessibility’ is one of the priority outcome areas of the Community Strategy which identifies mapping of strategies and gaps, engaging strategic partners in the transport debate, developing innovative community transport, development of green travel plans, and provision of information. This locality supported a workshop early in 2005 with

transportation work being closely linked to work on the regional/sub-regional and local spatial plans. Transport is a key issue for a rural unitary authority, lying at the heart of the economic development/environmental sustainability debate. As in metropolitan areas, partnership unity on backing and lobbying for new investment was perceived locally (rightly or wrongly) as essential to win Department for Transport approval. In other case studies, though, it has been harder to generate engagement with transport issues, and whilst in most case-studies the LSP has some level of involvement in some specific initiatives, in some there was little engagement with transport issues. In one major urban area this is because following recent local transport investment that supported access into, and within the boundaries of the LSP area there is a degree of satisfaction with what has happened; in another area because, within a set of protocols agreed between a city and sub-regional partnership the remit for transport lies with the latter.

5.35 Three key implications have been drawn from these differing experiences.

- Different approaches to integrating accessibility and transport issues into LSP working are valid – an accessibility and transport group or the integration of these issues into other groupings – but which is more appropriate in particular localities depends on pre-existing arrangements and the overall structure and functioning of individual LSPs.
- As discussed more fully in the two tier sections of this report (paras 4.20–4.29 and 7.34), the transport issue illustrates the importance of developing structures which allow district interests to be articulated in county LSPs, and county interests to be explored and evidenced from district LSPs.
- Engaging Transport interests from the county Traffic/Transport departments in LSP working remains a challenge; some cross-over seems to be emerging but much remains to be done.

5.36 It was too early to judge from the case studies fieldwork the extent to which the LSPs were engaged in the accessibility planning required for the next round of LTP's, but this will be one of the tests for integration of LSP and transport working.

Rural issues

5.37 69% of all LSPs include rural areas. Of these, many consider a range of rural issues to be 'important' or 'very important' (Table 5.5). This applies to a concern with growth pressures, rural development, to transport and accessibility and rural exclusion. Agriculture is rather less of an issue for LSPs, but over 60% still regard it as important or very important. Rural issues are particularly important for counties – 100% of county LSPs regard rural development, social exclusion and transport and accessibility as important or very important issues.

Table 5.5 LSPs involvement in rural issues

	Very Important		Important		Not Important		Don't know		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
All LSPs									
Rural growth/land use/ housing pressure	104	51%	82	40%	12	6%	5	3%	203
Agricultural issues	28	14%	91	47%	60	31%	16	8%	195
Rural developmental issues	79	40%	89	45%	21	11%	7	4%	196
Rural social exclusion	101	50%	80	39%	17	8%	5	3%	203
Rural transport and accessibility	126	61%	66	32%	10	5%	4	2%	206
Other	18	72%	4	16%	0	0%	3	12%	25

5.38 In some case studies, rural issues have a high profile.

- One LSP has concerned itself with rural issues and has (albeit pre-existing) structures and strategies around the rural question. Although the Community Strategy does not have an explicit rural focus or section, rural issues are emerging in the priority outcome areas. The Community Action programme in the area has a strong rural arm through its work on rural housing enablers (affordable rental or to buy housing or local people), and its role as community transport provider. The linked Economic Partnership has a rural economy task force.
- Another LSP recognises rural issues, but these are of relatively low priority when compared with job market issues and the relative desirability of the area as a place to live.
- A third LSP is, in many ways, defined (and defines itself) by its concern with rural issues. Some partners feel that the partnership has yet to address fundamental questions about strategic direction – should it pursue rural regeneration, or become a peaceful dormitory county for retirees and tourists? At the same time, at a more concrete level of action, the Partnership was able to facilitate a positive collective response to the foot and mouth crisis. Foot and Mouth was an issue-specific crisis very different from systemic challenges about whether should pursue economic regeneration, or managed decline. The fact that the Partnership was able to respond to the former issue, but not (yet) the latter raises a question of whether LSPs might sometimes be well advised to focus more on ‘concrete’ strategic issues than ‘systemic’ strategic issues.

5.39 However in some places where one might expect the rural question to feature, it does not, or is of lower priority than perhaps it should be. In one are the rural dimension is significant, but the LSP has not done anything to ‘address problems of rurality’, and appears to be waiting for the government to specify a role rather than acting independently. Another is a mixed urban/rural area, but rural issues do not feature significantly in the Community Strategy or partnership activity. A largely urban LSP perceives that planning issues in rural districts affect it, notably border housing developments. However, it is not considered an issue that the LSP can have much influence over, even though it is recognised as an issue for joint working across partnership/agency boundaries. In short, there appear to be three reasons for non-activity over rural issues: evasion, prioritization and (perceived) dependence or incapacity.

Sustainability

5.40 The ‘sustainability’ theme emerges in LSPs in different ways, but does not sit easily within a strategic approach focused on priorities such as government floor targets. Conversely it is a principle for which many interviewees expressed support. In some areas sustainability is seen as a cross-cutting issue which pervades (or should pervade) all thematic working. Elsewhere liveability issues (waste management, recycling, urban renaissance, the attractive borough reflect concerns about environment and quality of life. One LSP reflects some of the uncertainty surrounding sustainability, with the Local Agenda 21 partnership having ‘died of its own accord’, with some of its functions subsumed within the newer Health and Crime and Disorder partnerships, some environmental issues addressed in LPSA 2, some identified but not the subject of partnership agreements (the route to delivery in this LSP).

5.41 In many of the case studies sustainability issues more directly reflect environmental concerns.

- Environment is one of the eight Vision themes in one LSP and measures of its success include high environmental standards for cleanliness, air quality and waste management and over 80% of development on brown field land.
- In another sustainability emerges under an environmental theme in the community strategy with objectives and actions to increase recycling, promote green business, and promote biodiversity. Waste recycling performance has improved though whether as a result of LSP involvement rather than better inter-authority working is unclear.
- A third LSP has a priority outcome in the Community Strategy relating to Protecting and Enhancing the Environment, and the Environment Agency convened an environment conference, (80 attendees; focus on economic, social, environmental issues with workshops on flood risk, waste management, water, biodiversity, housing), the outcomes to be pulled together into an Action Plan for the HSP priority outcome.
- Activity in a fourth stems from the Environment Implementation Group (e.g. cleaning up ‘grot spots’) or Housing and Communities Group (e.g. energy efficiency measures to reduce fuel poverty, litter, and dog fouling and abandoned vehicles measures). In future, the Liveability Group will be able to use special funds for public realm improvements, but currently sustainability issues are not owned by the LSP as a whole. Nevertheless the LSP has played a role – the EIG has discussed major future environmental initiatives affecting the borough such as Heritage Coast plans, coastal pollution and the Urban Renaissance Towns and Villages Programme. The Community Network has lobbied the Coal Authority and Environmental Agency regarding mine water pollution problems and prompted them to revisit their approach to consultation and policy.

5.42 The examples of transport, rural policy and sustainability reflect some of the tensions for LSPs in developing activity and action across a broad front. These include:

- The compatibility (or lack of it) of government and local agendas.

- The question of the level at which to act – strategic or more concrete.
- The extent to which the LSP is able to engage both agencies and communities.
- The knowledge base and capacity of the LSP.

5.43 A further key issue is the extent of LSP activity, and the extent to which action and activity is (and is best) undertaken by ‘the LSP’, by sub-partnerships, or by partners with the collaboration or consent of the LSP. Some of these issues are illustrated by the example of economic development.

Economic development

5.44 Case study LSPs have an interest in a broad range of economic development priorities, which relate to the nature of their economies:

- Linking the local labour force with opportunities in other parts of London and to the priorities and activities of the main economic development agents in the area and helping those with multiple barriers to employment to enter and stay in the labour market is a key task.
- Addressing a range of drivers including infrastructure, skills, investment, innovation, and the needs of specific sectors such as aerospace, defence, tourism, transport and the rural economy.
- A focus on business support services in one LSP to increase local employment and inward investment promotion, new business accommodation, attracting a greater range of inward investors to lessen vulnerability on call centres and improving the link between jobs and the unemployed.
- Priority to innovation and the knowledge economy, inward investment promotion, educational attainment, sector support, business support services for international growth.
- A priority in the Community Strategy is to “make a prosperous community”, with actions identified as securing internal and external investment, providing business support, improvement of transport and communication infrastructure, and support for lifelong learning.

5.45 However, while LSPs make reference to strategic economic development aims, their actual relationship to the activities in question may be direct or indirect, close or more distant, with activity typically undertaken by external organisations and partnerships under the ‘banner’ of an LSP theme group, as the examples below show.

LSPs and economic development – examples from different LSPs

- In one LSP, funding from the RDA's 'building communities' theme has helped encourage urban renewal, but a recently established URC is now pushing forward the agenda. The contribution of the LSP is focusing on the regeneration of the city centre park.
- The aim of another LSP on economic development is not action per se but to improve understanding of barriers to employment for different groups; more effectively market the existing range of training and job preparation services; and provide intensive support and guidance for particular vulnerable groups to improve their job readiness
- The local Business Service and the Business Broker scheme in one LSP area has improved links with business and resulted in more business-led support schemes. Various flagship schemes have boosted local employment and improved the borough's image as an investment location. Integrated shop front improvements and retail advice has been supplied in a variety of village centres using NRF. Planned investments, again using NRF, will address the shortage of business accommodation and the need for enhanced business support.
- In another LSP Knowledge Network, a task group reporting to the Economic Partnership, is establishing a futures capability amongst the local research, analysis and policy community and has developed an information databank that can be accessed by partner organisations. A new marketing company has been formed arising out of the task group's work funded by the RDA, the Council and private sector contributions. Its principal task is to develop and implement a marketing plan to raise the city's profile across the UK and internationally.
- Influencing the activities of others: one LSP has negotiated with the RDA to seek support and investment from the Investing in Communities (IiC) programme. A report to the LSP board in 2004 claims that "by acting as a unified partnership the LSP has made a stronger case than each individual local economic partnership or district council could have made".

5.46 These examples indicate that the LSP may promote action by the exercise of influence as well as more direct action, and that action may well take place 'below' the LSP, by theme partnerships or by partners. In some cases, activity may be little more than 'badged' by the LSP, although in other cases its impact, even if indirect, may be much more important.

5.47 The limited role of LSPs on economic development is confirmed by the findings from three case studies undertaken for the issues paper on economic development⁴⁹. Evidence from two thematic economic partnerships of NRF-supported LSPs and one two-tier non-NRF LSP, suggests they are not directly undertaking many concrete economic development activities. What new activities have arisen has tended to be in employment and skills projects, but activity has mostly come from key partners working together bilaterally, rather than from the partnership as a whole. It is therefore important to differentiate between activities that have arisen because of the partnership (few and far between), and those that have arisen between partners that happen to be members of the partnership. Rebranding of partners' activities under the guise of the thematic partnerships and LT has also occurred.

5.48 The evidence thus suggests that LSPs have not so far greatly changed the economic development activities of partners. They have a role in the more intangible aspects of economic development, bringing agents together and providing a mechanism to discuss and consult on particular issues, but evidence of actual value added is scarce. They lack the resources and capacities necessary to fully engage in economic development

⁴⁹ Economic Development Issues Paper (Appendix 1, No. 1)

activities. Typically, economic development occurs at sub-regional and regional scales, with agents viewing the 'local' in the context of sub-regional objectives, and essentially being reactive to the priorities of 'local' economic partnerships of LSPs. This approach by sub-regional agents derives from strong direction by parent government departments, making it difficult for thematic economic partnerships and LSPs to work in partnership with these agents or influence their activities.

- 5.49 The connection between thematic economic partnerships and the broader LSP can also be tenuous. Many partners in the thematic economic partnerships were unaware of the partnerships' connection to the LSP board, or the role of the latter. This has potentially important implications in terms of economic development activities impacting upon national and sub-national competitiveness and social exclusion targets. Mainstream service providers and local community/voluntary sector groups that tend to dominate LSP boards are detached from economic development agents and agendas. This includes economic development-related agencies which are also on LSP Boards, such as the local LSC, who find that agendas are dominated by mainstream service provision priorities, or that economic development is squeezed because of the many priorities being juggled by the LSP. Often the economic development implications of mainstream services are not discussed, despite the fact that joined-up working is at least nominally a continuing strategic imperative. Nor are the implications of economic development for citizens, communities and services discussed a great deal. Economic development has important implications for a number of issues, such as crime and health, but this is not presently being recognised. Without greater connection between economic development agents and mainstream service providers it is likely that many opportunities will be missed to improve the impact of mainstream service provision on citizens and address government targets for social exclusion and competitiveness.

Conclusions

- 5.50 The evaluation shows the primacy within the activity of LSPs of national drivers – Community Strategies and, in NRF areas, neighbourhood renewal – although other potential drivers, such as the Well Being Power, have not really been taken up. However, there is considerable variation in activity patterns – between NRF and non-NRF areas, between different local authority contexts, and in other less easily classified dimensions. The greater government requirements of, and support for, NRF LSPs means that in general they have developed more substantial activity than elsewhere. However, many non-NRF LSPs have developed activity programmes around a range of issues, from transport to rural development and environmental sustainability. At the same time, the evidence indicates a 'tail' of LSPs (mostly but not exclusively non-NRF) where activity patterns so far are limited, and some issues (such as some equalities issues) which are not substantively on the agendas of many LSPs.
- 5.51 Looking back over the whole field of LSP activity discussed in this chapter, it may be possible to recognise several typical patterns, such as:
- New joint cross-agency activity meeting the objectives of the Community and/or other strategies.
 - Discussion, debate and subsequent support for strategic action (often pursued by a particular partner) and involving the expression of commitment, publicity, and lobbying.

- Information sharing, adoption, and badging of the activities of partners with the view that the LSP has somehow enhanced or accelerated action.

5.52 Most LSPs seem to provide examples of at least some of these types of activity. The more established LSPs with a clear programme of work associated with the Community Strategy and/or a set of active sub-partnerships produce more examples of actions that can reasonably be attributed to the LSP.

5.53 The next chapter moves on to assess in more detail the extent to which the programmes which LSPs are developing are starting to deliver outcomes and add value to the work of partners and stakeholders.

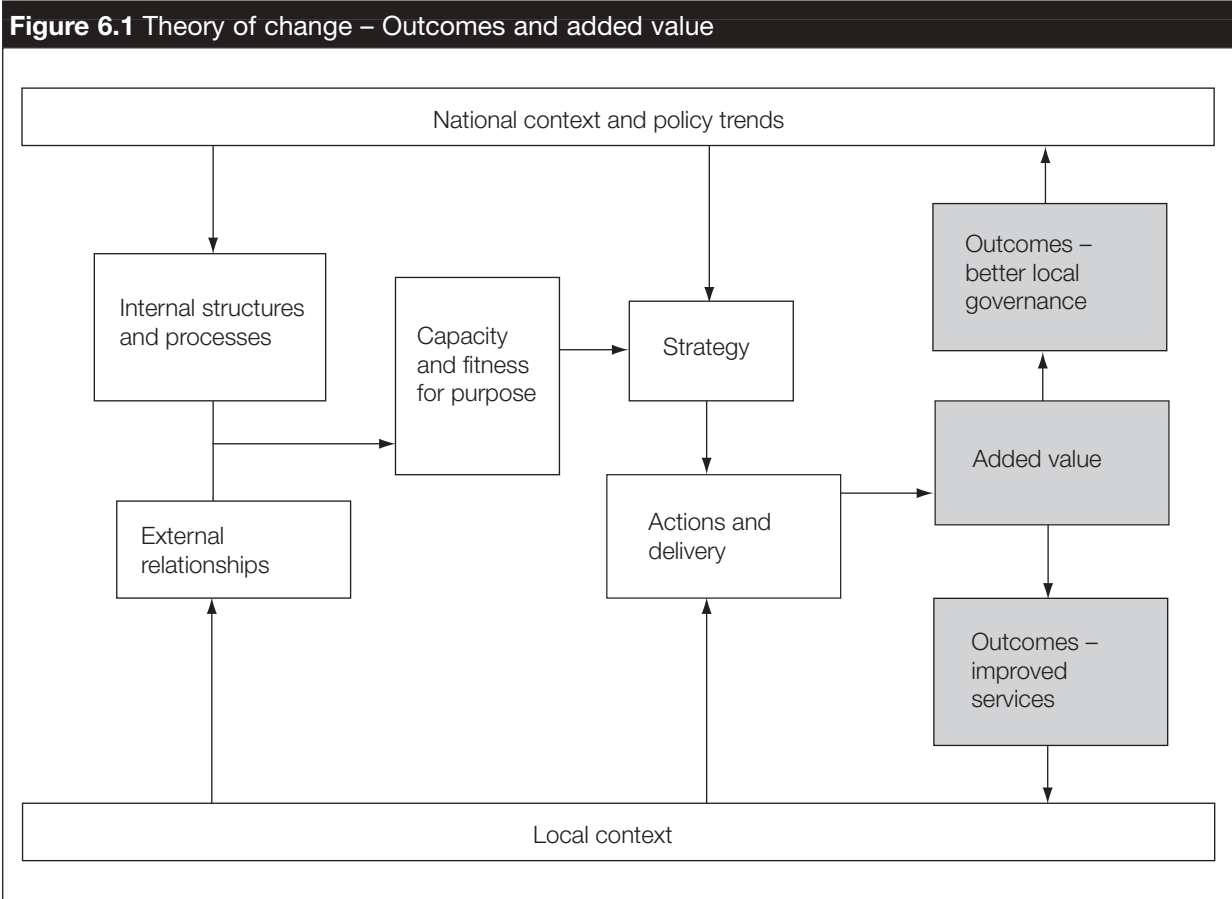
CHAPTER 6

Progress, Outcomes and Added Value

Introduction

6.1 The major question addressed in this chapter is the extent to which LSPs are succeeding in improving service delivery – especially in neighbourhood renewal areas – and local governance by implementing strategies and actions which bring partners together around common agendas. Diagram 6.1 shows how these issues relate to the overall theory of change. We explore issues including:

- How substantial is the evidence of progress, outcomes, impacts and the added value of LSPs?
- Do our Interim Report conclusions – that LSPs are progressing, but in most cases only slowly, from strategy to action still apply, or has there been significant progress in the last year or two?



Progress towards outcomes

- 6.2 In assessing progress, we draw on the 2004 survey⁵⁰ along with the case studies^{51, 52} and other more detailed and qualitative evidence from various elements of the evaluation.
- 6.3 Most LSPs think they have made at least some progress across a wide range of issues according to the 2004 survey, in which LSPs were asked to state, in relation to a wide range of issues, whether they had made major progress, some progress or none (or whether the issue was not a priority for them).
- 6.4 In looking at this picture in more detail, we will distinguish between three kinds of outcomes:
- ‘Process outcomes’. These may be defined as necessary preconditions to achieve outcomes in relation to:
 - Governance outcomes – outcomes which contribute to better local governance.
 - Service outcomes – improvements in services of various kinds.

PROCESS OUTCOMES

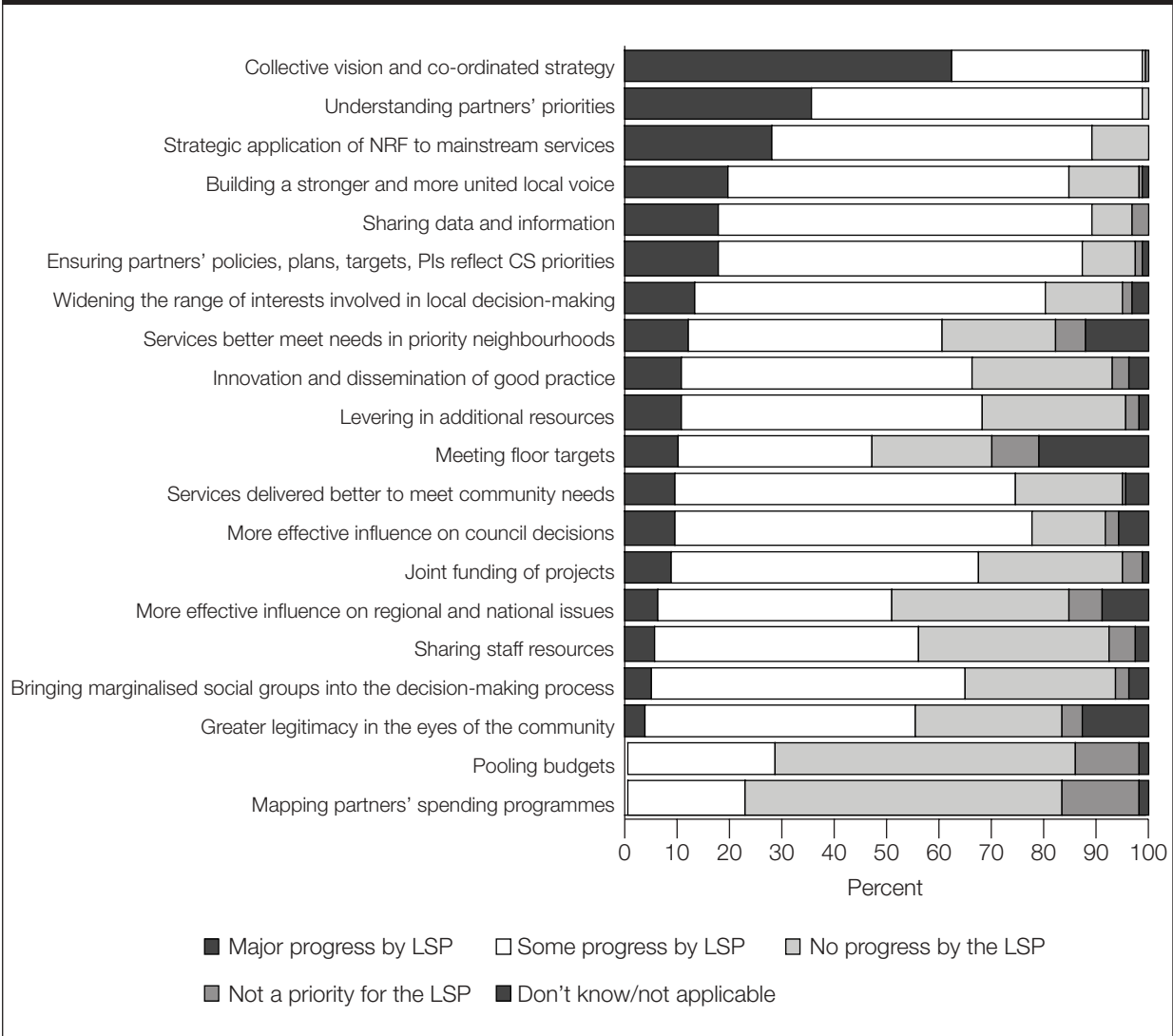
- 6.5 A number of the aspects of progress shown in Figure 6.2 can be defined as process outcomes. These include:
- Understanding partners’ priorities.
 - Mapping partners’ spending programmes.
 - Sharing data and information.
 - Sharing staff resources.
 - Pooling budgets.
 - Levering in resources.
 - Joint funding of projects.
- 6.6 Table 6.1 provides a more detailed breakdown of progress reported by LSPs on these issues, including breakdowns between NRF and non-NRF LSPs and local authority types in non-NRF areas (in three broad categories of county-led, district-led and urban LSPs), as well as for all LSPs.

⁵⁰ 2004 Survey of all English LSPs (Appendix 1, No. 5)

⁵¹ Case study interim report: a baseline of practice (Appendix 1, No.12)

⁵² Case studies: Key findings from 2004 research (Appendix 1, No. 24)

Figure 6.2 Progress by LSPs



Source: LSP evaluation, 2004 survey

Table 6.1 Progress – Process Outcomes						
	NRF LSPs %	Non-NRF LSPs %	Counties (non-NRF) %	Districts (non-NRF) %	Urban (non-NRF) %	All LSPs %
Understanding partners' priorities						
– major progress	49	30	10	33	38	36
– some progress	51	68	90	65	62	63
Mapping partners' spending programmes						
– major progress	1	0	0	0	0	0
– some progress	42	15	7	19	9	23
Sharing data and information						
– major progress	25	15	17	13	22	18
– some progress	73	71	73	71	69	72
Sharing staff resources						
– major progress	7	5	3	5	3	5
– some progress	62	46	33	47	53	50
Pooling budgets						
– major progress	0	1	0	1	0	0
– some progress	53	19	7	17	35	28
Levering in additional resources						
– major progress	16	9	13	9	6	11
– some progress	72	51	45	53	48	57
Joint funding of projects						
– major progress	17	6	3	6	6	9
– some progress	70	55	50	59	41	59

Note: numbers do not sum to 100 because 'not a priority' and 'no progress' responses are not included.

6.7 In general, progress has been varied on these issues. More than a third of LSPs claim to have made major progress in understanding partners' priorities, and more than 50% claim to have made at least some progress on sharing data and information and sharing staff resources, and in levering in resources and jointly funding projects. However, not only do these figures imply that there are considerable numbers of LSPs which have not yet made progress in these areas, but the picture is much less positive in relation to mapping partners' spending programmes and pooling budgets. Here, only 23% of all LSPs claim to have made even some progress on the former and 28% on the latter. If these issues are indeed important preconditions which are necessary for LSPs to make real and sustained progress towards service and governance outcomes, the implication must be that for numbers of LSPs significant levels of outcomes may still be some way off.

6.8 Within this overall picture there are important differences between **types of LSP**. The most significant of these are between NRF and non-NRF LSPs, and among non-NRF LSPs, the relatively poor showing of county or county-led LSPs. NRF LSPs consistently show greater progress than non-NRF LSPs, although even so there are large majorities of NRF LSPs which do not yet claim to have made any more than 'some' progress on all of these issues (with the exception of understanding partners' priorities, where about half have made major progress). Counties appear to have made less progress than either urban or district LSPs on almost all counts.

6.9 The case studies cast further light on the achievement of many LSPs to date.

Better processes emerging from LSPs

The case studies show 'process' gains in both NRF and other LSPs.

- In one LSP process outcomes are reflected in increased information about other partners, in networking and in members reflecting on the relationship of their own organisation to others.
- In another, interviewees pointed to the intrinsic value of collaboration and alignment of activity.
- In a third there is now a virtuous circle of helping the city's success and benefiting from the associated feel-good factor. For this long standing LSP, maturity combined with the right focus has brought success. LSP structures have a symbolic significance but also provide a shared context for the partners – and people see it in their self-interest to be involved. The LSP's key roles are facilitation, networking and providing an umbrella for a common agenda.
- In a fourth case study the LSP is seen as bringing partners together and facilitating new ways of thinking and operating, e.g. looking in a cross-cutting way across the thematic partnerships. A 'non-political' environment helps in this.
- In another, working in the LSP is regarded as a worthy endeavour with value derived from involvement – the more you get involved the more use it is. The LSP badge is seen to legitimise activity.
- In yet another the key value seen is that people now talk to each other, whilst in a final case added value is seen as proportionate to the effort put in – an improvement on previous partnership efforts.

GOVERNANCE OUTCOMES

6.10 A second set of aspects of progress can be grouped together as local governance outcomes. They include:

- The development of a collective vision and agreed strategy.
- Widening the range of interests involved in local decision making.
- Bringing marginalised social groups into decision making.
- Building a stronger and more united local voice.
- Achieving greater legitimacy in the eyes of the community.
- Innovation and dissemination of good practice.
- More effective influence on council decisions.
- More effective influence on regional and national issues.

Table 6.2 presents the findings from the 2004 survey on these issues.

Table 6.2 Progress – Governance Outcomes						
	NRF LSPs %	Non-NRF LSPs %	Counties (non-NRF) %	Districts (non-NRF) %	Urban (non-NRF) %	All LSPs %
Collective vision and co-ordinated strategy						
– major progress	70	60	60	58	67	63
– some progress	30	39	40	39	33	36
Widening the range of interests involved in local decision-making						
– major progress	18	11	10	11	12	13
– some progress	73	65	43	68	74	67
Bringing marginalised social groups into the decision making process						
– major progress	11	3	0	4	0	5
– some progress	77	53	45	50	71	60
Building a stronger and more united local voice						
– major progress	27	17	23	16	18	20
– some progress	58	67	57	69	71	65
Greater legitimacy in the eyes of the community						
– major progress	5	3	0	3	3	3
– some progress	58	50	31	52	59	52
Innovation and dissemination of good practice						
– major progress	16	9	6	9	12	11
– some progress	60	54	55	54	53	56
More effective influence on council decisions						
– major progress	11	9	10	9	6	9
– some progress	72	67	48	69	71	68
More effective influence on regional and national issues						
– major progress	8	6	13	3	12	6
– some progress	42	46	55	46	41	45

Note: numbers do not sum to 100 because 'not a priority' and 'no progress' responses are not included.

- 6.11 The development of a collective vision and co-ordinated strategy stands out as the predominant issue on which major progress is claimed (by 63% of LSPs in the 2004 survey), with a further 36% claiming to have made some progress. Clearly, the process of developing a Community Strategy will have been central to this progress – but if so this data suggests that only two thirds of LSPs think their CS represents major progress in this respect. On the other hand, only very limited numbers of LSPs – ranging from 3 to 20% – consider that they have made major progress on any other of these issues, although in all cases (with the exception of influence on regional and national issues) more than half claim some progress.
- 6.12 **NRF LSPs** have again made more progress on governance issues than those in non-NRF areas. Especially, as might be expected as a result of the neighbourhood renewal agenda, they have so far had more success in bringing marginalised social groups into decision making – although it is notable that only 11% of NRF LSPs think they have made major

progress on this. It is also the case that **county** LSPs lag somewhat behind other local authority types (although with the exception that they claim somewhat more progress in influencing regional and national agendas).

- 6.13 The case studies provide insights into the very varied progress which LSPs have made so far in contributing to improved local governance, and some of the factors influencing the extent of progress made.
- 6.14 One case study shows how an LSP – one of those where the LSP was formed from a pre-existing partnership and thus embodies the accumulated benefit of a number of years of collaborative working – can reap rewards in terms of the contribution which the LSP is now making to more effective local governance.

Factors underlying progress

In one NRF LSP, most partners give a very positive assessment of progress, citing factors such as the following:

- The partnership mix and balance – the extent to which it is genuinely a **‘whole city’ partnership**, in which partners see it as in their self interest to be involved. It is a significant governance mechanism, especially for ‘latching together’ the Council and other partners.
- It has been successful in relation to branding, badging and establishing its **identity**; it lobbies well and it is possible to talk about ‘the City’s view’; it is strong on communicating what is going on and ensures a transfer of information across silos.
- The strong involvement of the **private sector** enables a more business-friendly approach from the public sector – being accountable with a small ‘a’.
- Having a long term **vision** that is accepted across the political parties helped to ease the transition to power when there was a change of political control.
- It has brought greater cohesion to the development of some economic sectors, such as financial services, manufacturing and media, achieving more with less effort, galvanising agencies into more coherent planning.
- It has been able to **drive agendas** forward. For example, working on image making with specific sectors has demonstrated the need to do so for the whole city.
- There is now a history of speaking to government with one voice and there is a huge value in being able to say “The city thinks.....” as distinct from “the City Council thinks.....” or “the PTE thinks.....”
- A new Cultural Partnership exemplifies a more general benefit, adding value because there is so much to do that no single organisations could respond. It is enabling partners to face big decisions that had been being ducked, such as the poor quality sports facilities in neighbourhoods. The partnership structure allows them to think what to do as well as identify those spheres in which there still needs to be a better dialogue.
- Integrated transport has been at the heart of the LSP since its start and this has resulted in having coherent, partnership-backed – and especially business-backed – strategies to put to government.
- In 2004 the city was confirmed as the regional winner of the Enterprising Britain competition. The bid could be produced well and quickly because the networking was in place and there was already a wider culture of enterprise in the mindset.
- The LSP has opened doors for the VCS so that the sector is now accepted as a partner to the extent that others now feel uncomfortable if there is no VCS presence.

- 6.15 In other localities, however, the view of the extent to which the LSP has produced improvements in governance is either more nuanced, or more differentiated among partners.

Contrasting perspectives on progress

In this urban non-NRF LSP there were different views on the progress made, with some acknowledgement that the LSP had not yet lived up to their expectations, but suggesting that their initial expectations has been too high, and others unclear about what original expectations of the LSP were and so having nothing to measure their experience against. The most commonly cited disappointment with the LSP was that ‘it had failed to operate at the centre of things’, that it had not become the key strategic agency for the city and that in the immediate future it could potentially become marginalised as an Urban Regeneration Company became established. Partners’ failure to commit themselves to the LSP was cited as the main reason for the LSP’s relatively marginal role, and there was little indication that in the future commitment would increase.

While some partners considered that the LSP needed an injection of energy if it was to re-capture participants’ enthusiasm, others argued that energy would come with resources and that if government was really serious about the contribution to be made by LSPs it would fund them appropriately particularly in relation to voluntary and community sector participation.

Problems in sustaining progress

In another non-NRF LSP, the majority view is that the LSP is living up to early expectations, at least to some extent and in some areas, although a minority of respondents disagreed, considering that the partnership started life as a recognised example of good practice, but that in some respects it has fallen behind – necessitating a review of goals, structures and plans. Thus one Board member argued that while the partnership had made a strong start, different parts of the process had become ‘bogged down’. Another partner spoke of ‘bureaucratic coagulation’ and ‘wading through treacle’.

The local authority view was that the partnership has lived up to expectations among leading partners, but that it has not done enough to promote its achievements. Others echoed this view, arguing that the Partnership has overachieved on its ability to sustain cooperation, but that it needs to recover its reputation for innovation. One respondent suggested that some partners are disappointed, not at what they have achieved, but in how slowly the government has moved in allowing them to achieve more – for example through merging services and cost centres.

There is a difference in perspective between those inside the partnership and the wider public outside. To the extent that the latter are aware of the partnership, they may not be aware of process gains, or may feel that issues important to them have been neglected. In a large area with many issues to address and limited resources, significant but incremental change may not be noticed. Partnership, in other words, is a long journey, and public perception creates a potential risk that with budget cuts, some may argue for downsizing or eliminating the partnership as an ineffective piece of added bureaucracy. Hence a view is that there needs to be much more community involvement in the partnership.

- 6.16 In some places, however, it is clear that the LSP has so far delivered few if any advances in effective local governance.

Factors inhibiting progress

In one case, the failure of the LSP to develop strategic perspectives which were widely owned by partners, failure to make significant progress on floor targets, and excessive focus on allocating NRF funding, has meant that the LSP has been through a fundamental review in order to make it more fit for purpose.

In another, some partners had very low expectations of the LSP so were not disappointed with lack of progress, but some had higher expectations which had been frustrated. The expectations here varied – that LSPs would be a strong vehicle for community engagement or local project work, which they would develop as more innovative service delivery vehicles, or that they would substantially enhance the ability of the partners to expand funding through bidding etc. Others were disappointed by lack of progress, but saw this as inevitable given the context – more than one local authority, no partnership manager for a period, strategic partnership working as a new and not well understood concept, small authorities with limited capacity.

6.17 To summarise, LSPs are thus improving local governance processes in different ways. These include:

- Offering a single voice externally and internally and thus adding weight and legitimacy to views which local stakeholders want to express.
- A closer, though still often not close enough, relationship with communities of place and interest and with the voluntary sector, allowing the voices of those sectors to be more clearly heard and understood.
- The capacity to focus on particular issues and problems and to assemble knowledge, understanding and resources to pursue such issues in an integrated and collective manner.
- The opportunity to network, exchange information and share ideas in a manner which builds understanding and trust.
- An opportunity for individuals to develop their skills and experience in working in partnership with others (a valuable element in personal and organisation capacity building).

6.18 However, as the Governance Action Learning Set found⁵³, such governance improvements are easily jeopardised. The challenge is to create LSPs that are flexible and swift to act – and are seen as sufficiently transparent and legitimate to win public support. The answer does not lie in a new bureaucracy, but in creating the spaces for diversity, dialogue and creativity.

⁵³ Governance Action Learning Set Report (No. 14, Appendix 1)

SERVICE OUTCOMES

6.19 The third category of potential areas of progress relate to outcomes in terms of service improvements. The issues on which the 2004 survey provides evidence are:

- Ensuring that partners' policies, plans, targets and PIs reflect Community Strategy priorities.
- Services delivered better to meet community needs.
- Services which better meet needs in priority neighbourhoods.
- Meeting floor targets.

Table 6.3 Progress – Service Outcomes

	NRF LSPs %	Non-NRF LSPs %	Counties (non-NRF) %	Districts (non-NRF) %	Urban (non-NRF) %	All LSPs %
Ensuring policies, plans, targets and PIs of partners reflect CS (and where relevant LNRS) priorities						
– major progress	33	12	10	13	6	18
– some progress	65	72	58	72	82	70
Services delivered better to meet community needs						
– major progress	17	7	3	6	12	10
– some progress	74	61	48	65	56	65
Services better meet needs in priority neighbourhoods						
– major progress	27	6	0	7	6	12
– some progress	69	41	14	45	45	49
Meeting floor targets						
– major progress	29	2	0	3	0	10
– some progress	71	24	17	26	18	37

Notes: 1. Numbers do not sum to 100 because 'not a priority' and 'no progress' responses are not included.
2. Neighbourhood renewal floor targets are only relevant to NRF areas.

6.20 Table 6.3 shows that, as is the case in relation to progress towards better governance, the overall picture in relation to service improvements is that, while substantial numbers of LSPs claim to have made some progress towards service improvement, only relatively small proportions yet claim to have made major progress – only 10% and 12% of all LSPs think they have made major steps to delivering services which better meet community needs and those in priority neighbourhoods respectively, and only 10% make a similar claim in relation to floor targets.

6.21 Differentials between **types of LSPs** are even more significant than is the case for governance outcomes. Even though it is still a case of substantial minorities, many more NRF than non-NRF LSPs show major progress achieved in terms of improved services and meeting floor targets. Similarly, there are very few county LSPs indeed which are claiming major progress.

- 6.22 Figure 5.3 in the previous chapter showed the extent of progress on **specific policy issues** by LSPs. On the one hand, a number of issues stand out where significant numbers of LSPs claim to be achieving measurable outputs or outcomes. These are led by crime (41%) but there are numerous other issues where at least a fifth of LSPs claim to have achieved measurable outcomes – the economy and employment, education and training, health inequalities and public health, housing, and substance abuse. Notably, these tend to be the areas associated with floor targets and key neighbourhood renewal priorities. At the other end of the spectrum, there are certain issues which significant numbers of LSPs are not addressing at all – these include, for at least one third of all LSPs, competitiveness and innovation (distinguished from economic development and employment), gay and lesbian and gender issues, refugees and asylum seekers and travellers.
- 6.23 The limited progress of LSPs on economic competitiveness issues is confirmed by the evaluation findings⁵⁴ showing LSPs may not be adding value on economic development. This may indicate that there is a need to re-orient LSPs' priorities in many areas towards a better balance between 'public services/social' issues and 'economic' issues. This would often require – but could also be a catalyst for – more business involvement.
- 6.24 Differences between **NRF** and **non-NRF LSPs** are again significant. In general, NRF LSPs claim to have achieved more outputs/outcomes than those in non-NRF areas. Examples are crime (NRF 63%, non-NRF 33%), and health inequalities (NRF 46%, non-NRF 14%). However many non-NRF LSPs have developed joint strategies or activity on a range of issues even if this has not yet produced outputs/outcomes.
- 6.25 there are fewer examples of concrete improvements to services than governance outcomes among the case study LSPs – but some examples still show what is being achieved in some localities.

54 Economic Development Issues Paper, Appendix 1 No 1

Adding value to service delivery

In one NRF LSP a number of examples of the way in which an LSP can add value to service delivery can be cited.

- **Health Service.** The PCT presented its health plan and spending programme to the Partnership Board and the discussion that followed flagged up the recruitment difficulties that the Trust might experience. The discussion prompted the PCT to convene a working group with Jobcentre Plus and other partners. This group met and developed a health recruitment strategy that resulted in careers information being disseminated to schools, Jobcentres and community facilities. This partnership working would not have happened, in the way and at the speed at which it did, without the LSP – *“the Partnership provided the catalyst”*.
- **Homeless young people.** The Housing Partnership was asked to report to the LSP Board on the homeless situation of young people with recommendations on policy. The issue became a policy focus and has become incorporated in the LPSA Round 2 targets.
- **Neighbourhood Renewal and mainstreaming.** Here the LSP facilitated the shift towards mainstreaming of Neighbourhood Renewal activity, with Thematic Partnerships being given a lead role (advised by the Neighbourhood Renewal Sub Group) in the allocation of NRF funding.
- The Partnership has facilitated the promotion of **vocational skills training** for a registered social housing landlord through the network of schools involved in the Partnership. The LSP was important in giving the RSL an additional incentive to engage in wider regeneration activity – *“there’s a pull in the direction of regeneration with the LSP giving more of an impetus”*.
- **‘English as a Second Language’ (ESOL) strategy.** The Community Cohesion Thematic Partnership identified the language barriers experienced by particular groups and challenged the Lifelong Learning Partnership to come up with a strategy. The strategy which has been developed provides for a wider spread of provision including more basic introductory level teaching. The LSP both enabled the development of the ESOL strategy and was able to bring in LSC funding to facilitate it.

Adding value in a rural area

In a rural LSP there are also examples of concrete outcomes that might not have been achieved without partnership working. Examples include saving some rural 6th forms and tackling the foot and mouth crisis more rapidly and efficiently.

A further example relates to the fact that the area suffered an outbreak of Legionnaires Disease last year. Good relationships between the company concerned, the Council and the PCT via the LSP meant that the outbreak was managed and contained more quickly than it would have been otherwise. For example, the Chief Executive of the PCT felt able to telephone the Council Chief Executive and ask him to be part of the ‘gold’ command structure – knowing he would be concerned about the potential impact on tourism and the economy. After the outbreak, all the cooling towers in the area were investigated for the disease in response to Chamber concerns about business suffering from further outbreaks.

- 6.26 Not only does progress towards outcomes vary widely among LSPs – the evaluation shows that **expectations** as to what an LSP might have achieved also vary considerably. In some case study LSPs, there were high hopes at the outset. Sometimes, these high expectations have been realised, but in other cases there has been disappointment that progress has been slow, that partnership working has become more bureaucratic and that partners were not as committed as they might have been. Often, the lack of resources was considered to have inhibited real progress. Others had lower expectations, and were by and large pleased with progress – which was faster than many had hoped. The following boxes illustrate, first, a case where expectations and views on progress are mixed, and a second where, by and large, although expectations were mixed there has been satisfaction with progress.

Mixed progress towards outcomes

In this NRF area the majority of partners had high hopes that the LSP would promote closer joint working, pooling of resources and better service delivery. Most partners feel the LSP has successfully engaged a wider range of interests, particularly from community and voluntary groups and private businesses, than previous groupings and is consequently less public sector dominated. This has served as a check on ‘provider’ mentalities, and there is evidence of organisations incorporating community input more into decision making (e.g. involvement of the community network in local authority member area panels; debates over provision of Children Centres).

However, some partners have been disappointed by subsequent events, and become frustrated by what they see as the persistence of silo mentalities, restrictive effects of mainstream budget targets, battles over use of NRF to top up perceived under-funded mainstream programmes, excessive bureaucracy and various central requirements.

Nonetheless – and this is typical of several of the case studies – most of these respondents still think that the LSP is a good concept. In addition a handful of respondents who had quite modest ambitions originally (e.g. that the LSP would be a useful discussion forum and increase agencies’ awareness of each other’s agendas) indicate that the LSP has exceeded their expectations. They cite greater community engagement and challenging of service providers, the advantage of gathering all the senior decision makers from the main agencies around the same table and the increased amount of joint working.

Major progress – and more anticipated

This case can be summed up by several comments by partners.

“It’s vastly exceeding expectations... If you go back five years perhaps it was seen as another government initiative and there was a lot of cynicism around. The questions then were about how we are going to get everyone together – about process. Yet in a very short timescale we have got everyone together and got thematic partnerships and reviewed them and performance management. It’s not an easy nut to crack.”

“(Council officer/ Board member/Thematic Partnership Chair)

“I’ve been pleasantly surprised by [the Partnership’s] achievements. It has more than lived up to my expectations. Professionalism has increased over the last eighteen months.

“There is a need for something like the LSP and it would be a disaster if central government lost interest in it given where it is and what it has achieved.” (Board member/ public sector)

“There is a need for a common blueprint and a framework of structures with which to operate and performance manage it and then to look at resources. We can’t step backwards into a simpler model where the local authority does everything.” (Partnership Coordinator)

More qualified comments were that, despite its many achievements, it still had a long way to go to becoming the key driver/ vehicle for setting priorities and emphasised the need for more partnership development and external communication work.

“[The Partnership] has met expectations by pushing people’s thinking along, encouraging people to think outside the box and respond to a wider set of objectives. Whether it has met central government expectations in becoming the key vehicle for setting priorities is still questionable and a reflection of the reality of local democracy. It will be an interesting journey.” (Council officer/ Thematic Partnership Chair)

“[The Partnership] is living up to expectations though it is becoming more challenging day by day. Central government wanted a comprehensive partnership to make everything work better and we have got that but central government’s requirement for better management has still to be achieved although we’re getting there.” (Board member/ regeneration agency)

“Internally [it has met expectations] although there is still an issue about communicating what the LSP is doing externally.” (Board member/private sector)

Progress and the value added by the LSP

6.27 Some if not all LSPs can, therefore, now point to significant outcomes in terms of better governance and – if to a lesser extent – in service delivery. It is, though, important to be able to show what contribution the LSP made to such outcomes and that they would not have occurred without the LSP. The previous sections show that some LSPs can now identify, with some degree of precision, ways in which the LSP is enabling positive outcomes to occur which would – at least – have been more difficult in the absence of the LSP. However in other cases LSPs still find this difficult and some partners are clearly dubious whether the LSP is adding value. In some cases there is a suggestion that LSPs may merely be ‘badging’ outcomes achieved by partners. An active approach to performance management is one of the major ways through which the LSP can identify the value it is adding, and those LSPs which are not yet using some form of performance management do seem to find it hard to identify added value.

- 6.28 In our interim report, we suggested that LSPs should apply the concept of **'proportionate value'** when assessing their contribution. By this we mean that an assessment should be made of the outcomes achieved, and value added in relation to the resource demands of the LSP. In relation to this, it can be noted that in one of the case studies reference was made to the 'good value' delivered by the LSP because it was achieving progress on the basis of very limited resources. On the other hand, several case studies make reference to the 'bureaucracy' of LSP processes, suggesting that proportionate value is not being achieved. We continue to think that many LSPs should do more, in the context of performance management arrangements, to identify 'proportionate value'.
- 6.29 In the course of the preceding discussion, we have identified a number of factors which appear to facilitate or prevent progress towards outcomes, and which enable or prevent the LSP adding value to what is being done by partners. In the first place, we have undertaken an analysis to see whether there is a relationship between the **resources** (staff and financial) which the LSP has and outcomes. This does not point to a significant correlation. This quantitative exercise was not able to take into account qualitative factors such as the calibre and skills of LSP staff which might affect performance, or the possibility that the level of resources which an LSP can draw on may condition the view of what constitutes more or less progress. There may also be more complex relationships, between not only resources and outcomes but other factors such as the effectiveness of the LSP's organisational arrangements. One illustration of the complexity of these issues is the finding that county LSPs tend to have more resources than districts, but have achieved less.
- 6.30 There is, though, a significant relationship between the **maturity** of the LSP and the amount of progress achieved. Major progress is claimed by more LSPs established prior to 2002 than those established later in relation to the majority of the activities identified. These range from understanding partners' priorities and ensuring their plans reflect Community Strategy priorities, through sharing data and information, pooling budgets, jointly funding projects and leveraging in additional resources, to meeting floor targets and delivering services better to meet community and priority neighbourhoods' needs. It might then be hypothesised – but it is only a hypothesis – that more recently established LSPs may before long start to make the kind of progress which more established ones are achieving.
- 6.31 There is also a correlation between **NRF status** and the numbers of LSPs established prior to 2002. The relationship between NRF status and progress has been one of the themes of this and preceding chapters. Moreover, about two thirds of NRF LSPs were established prior to 2002, and further analysis (see Appendix 4) shows that this group of LSPs are particularly likely to have made major progress in relation to all three categories of outcomes (process, governance, service) which we have discussed. The two factors – NRF status and partnership maturity – thus appear to reinforce each other in generating progress.

Mainstreaming

- 6.32 The re-orientation of mainstream local services to align them more closely with the LSP's priorities – mainstreaming – is of course one of the primary ways in which LSPs can deliver added value. The evaluation has given considerable attention to the issue of mainstreaming. Evidence from a number of sources, including the report of a workshop

on mainstreaming⁵⁵, identified positive examples of mainstreaming, mostly by more mature LSPs. These examples, described in Appendix 5, show the potential for considerable progress by LSPs towards main programme change. However, our Interim Report⁵⁶ concluded that mainstreaming was not well established in many LSPs, or in the perspectives and practices of many government departments. Our case studies suggest that there has been relatively little progress in the intervening period. In a number of case study areas the issue remains either undiscussed, ambiguous, or a major challenge. This section therefore reviews the evidence from the evaluation on the drivers and barriers to mainstreaming.

- 6.33 The 2004 survey of LSPs indicates what LSPs consider to be important barriers to aligning mainstream programmes with LSP strategic priorities. Most LSPs think that their public sector partners would like to realign programmes, but are constrained by both **resources** and by **central government constraints** (over 70% of LSPs considered these factors to be important or very important). However, well over 50% also consider that a lack of **partner commitment** is also an important or very important factor, while surprisingly 40% of LSPs do not regard realignment of main programmes as an LSP priority.
- 6.34 More qualitative evidence from other elements of the evaluation^{57, 58, 59} confirms that major **barriers** (to mainstreaming in general, and especially to practices such as pooling budgets which could underpin mainstreaming), stem from the limits which central government places on local discretion, and that the possibilities for using resources in different ways is limited. More specific barriers include:
- Differences among service providers in financial planning and reporting regimes, human resources regimes, appraisals and salaries.
 - The tendency to get dragged into micro issues rather than strategy.
 - Short term funding streams.
 - The excessive time and resources devoted to consultation.
 - The resistance of professional groups to change.
- 6.35 As indicated by the evidence quoted earlier about the limited progress being made by LSPs in mapping partners' spending plans, **lack of knowledge of current resource allocation** is an important barrier. Much more needs to be known about where existing resources are going in order to establish an evidence base about the pattern of resources which it is hoped to bend, to enable relative levels of access to services to be assessed, and as a basis for exploring the potential for re-allocating mainstream funding. It is important to know how much resource is going into particular neighbourhoods, but resource mapping may be most sensibly pursued at the wider locality level, in order to enable relative levels of access to services to be assessed and as a basis for exploring the potential for re-allocating mainstream funding. This is a task which the LSP, involving all

55 Mainstreaming workshop report (Appendix 1 No 23)

56 Interim Report (Executive Summary) (Appendix 1, No. 11)

57 Case study interim report: a baseline of practice (Appendix 1, No. 12)

58 Case studies: Key findings from 2004 research (Appendix 1, No. 24)

59 Mainstreaming action learning set report (Appendix 1, No. 15)

agencies and covering the whole locality, can develop and drive through, beginning to align planning, allocation and accounting mechanisms.

- 6.36 There are problems confronting resource mapping – relating to technical management accounting problems of recording expenditures, to the difficulties in allocating joint costs to specific areas or activities, and to political reluctance to make explicit the fact that particular areas receive less or more than neighbouring ones. Consequently there appear to be few examples of comprehensive mapping in practice.
- 6.37 Some of these technical issues can be (and are being) worked round, but the majority of the barriers relate to **organisational cultures** and the perspectives of individuals at different levels in organisations, and it takes time to work through these. It seems clear that more attention needs to be paid, both nationally and locally, to this issue.
- 6.38 The key **drivers** for mainstreaming emerging from the research are:
- That the local authority, the police and health organisations are key players.
 - That neighbourhood renewal funding (and area-based initiatives in general) can be a powerful learning tool and stimulus to mainstreaming.
 - That ‘locality’ planning (between the level of the LSP/local authority and the neighbourhood) is fertile ground for man programme reshaping – close enough to delivery to be responsive to community, far enough above the small area to make main programme planning feasible.
- 6.39 The importance of three groups in particular – elected members, senior officers, and middle managers – emerges from the research.
- 6.40 The attitudes of **elected members** can be particularly significant. Many types of council have embraced the community leadership role, but this creates pressure for “branding” so that the council can feel that it is establishing its organisational identity with local communities. This can raise tensions within LSPs, and more specifically highlight the concerns of some elected councillors about the legitimacy of the LSP.
- 6.41 Some politicians can also be concerned about loss of control of budgets, about de-prioritising current services or about shifting the balance from universal services (such as cleansing/refuse collection) to targeted services. Rapid progress with mainstreaming through LSP activity can reinforce these concerns.
- 6.42 Whilst recognising the importance of addressing the role of councillors it is also clear that mainstreaming is reliant on ‘political maturity.’ A climate of political stability is helpful for other partners in an LSP but maturity in this instance also means councillors taking the broader and longer view, and being ready to listen to the ‘business case’ as presented by officers and recognising that, although it is very important, their democratic legitimacy may rest on shaky electoral foundations. ‘Maturity’ also implies community leadership skills which include transparency in decision-making.
- 6.43 **Strategic leadership** is also important. It is important to recognise the difference between organisational and individual leadership (and also their complementarities). Organisationally, in the LSPs covered in the evaluation, the driving agencies were variously the LSP itself, one of its strategic sub-partnerships or sub-groups such as CDRPs

on community safety, or the key organisations concerned with the relevant area of activity. CDRPs have a number of characteristics which tend to promote mainstreaming:

- They are amongst the longer established partnerships.
- They have a statutory role.
- They are outcome driven.
- They are lead organisations that can see ‘what’s in it for them’.
- They are frequently pursuing additional funding.
- They have common performance issues.

6.44 The role of *individual leaders* is critical to achieving the mainstreaming agenda. There is no substitute for enthusiasts in key leadership positions who are able to lead the necessary process of reflection across partners and to broker changes, or for senior level sign up across the partner organisations. Without this, there will be difficulties in achieving a genuine common vision and middle managers will pick up on lack of commitment, leading to risk aversion in relation to developing new ways of using resources. The first experience of mainstreaming will be culturally the most threatening and the hardest, and it is helpful for this to be led at top level, and to be properly resourced.

6.45 Senior leaders can clearly provide role models. Their attendance and contribution in partnerships affect the way in which other members approach the partnership, and they have a major role in incentivising and empowering others in their organisations to work collaboratively. *Middle management* exercises operational (as opposed to strategic) leadership at a different level within organisations. It is vital to engage and get the buy-in of the middle managers who control budgets and influence delivery on the ground. The role of middle management in different organisations and different professions and their capacity to operate in new ways will vary. Middle managers may feel threatened by proposed changes and fear that these will entail sacrificing autonomy, control or visibility either in their area of management responsibility or, for people such as head teachers and GPs, in their professional territory. There is no simple definition of ‘middle managers’ but the term applies to programme budget holders, service level directors, heads of professional groups – those who hold resources and have some discretion in the allocation and management of financial and/or human resources. Such middle managers are typically subject to performance targets and may well have experienced resource cutbacks and/or staff shortages. They will in some instances be resistant to change and are unlikely to be rewarded for engaging in joint activities unless these directly support the achievement of departmental targets.

6.46 The public bodies call-down study⁶⁰, action learning set⁶¹, and the mainstreaming workshop⁶², all confirm the findings from other research for DETR/ODPM that middle management plays a crucial role in supporting or inhibiting organisational change⁶³.

60 Not published

61 Mainstreaming action learning set report (Appendix 1, No. 15)

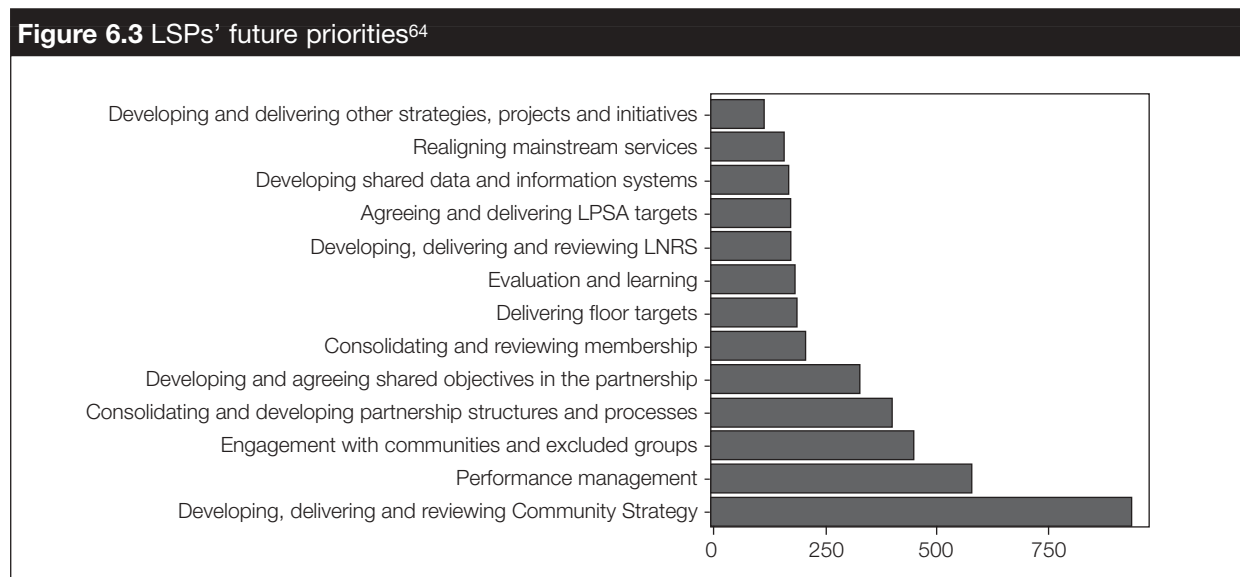
62 Mainstreaming workshop report (Appendix 1, No. 23)

63 DETR (2000) Cross-cutting issues affecting local government (2000) London: DETR ODPM (2002) Collaboration and Co-ordination in Area-Based Initiatives (p.43) London: NRU/RCU.

The impacts of reshaping health, education, welfare or environmental services are often felt most strongly by those whose career paths are affected by the pressure to abandon their silos and move towards cross-agency and joint resourcing which may threaten their professional and managerial areas of autonomy. The world of middle management – the processes within and between organisations, where government policies are translated in to programmes – has hitherto been largely ignored, but it is to that world of main programmes and its relationship to initiatives that new learning may need to be applied.

Future prospects and directions for LSPs

6.47 The 2004 survey asked LSPs about future activity and priorities in the period 2004-6, and about factors influencing future progress. Figure 6.3 shows that LSPs will continue to spread their energies over a wide range of activities including ‘process’ concerns such as membership, community engagement and partnership structures and processes, strategic development and delivery, and delivery on floor targets and LPSA targets.



Source: LSP evaluation, 2004 survey

6.48 It will be seen that the continuing development and delivery of the **Community Strategy** is the top priority, but other important priorities cited include performance management, engagement with communities and excluded groups, consolidating and developing partnership structures and processes, and developing and agreeing shared objectives in the partnership. There is a considerable degree of similarity in the future priorities indicated by all LSPs, but nonetheless some noteworthy differences between **NRF** and **non-NRF LSPs**. These include:

- Consolidating membership and partnership structures remain key priorities for many non-NRF LSPs.
- Floor targets are seen as a priority by all LSPs, but realigning mainstream services is less of a priority, and LPSAs are more of a priority, for non-NRF LSPs.

⁶⁴ LSPs were asked to rank their five leading priorities. These were given a score of 1 to 5. The numbers shown are the sum of responses from all LSPs that responded.

- 6.49 By comparison, relatively few NRF LSPs consider that the ‘process’ activities will be their top priorities over the coming period 2004–6, while many more identify as priorities delivery activity (on floor targets, mainstream services and LPSA targets), and managing performance, with the continuing development and delivery of the Community Strategy being the top priority⁶⁵.
- 6.50 The 2004 survey also asked LSPs about **future influences** – the importance of a number of factors in influencing the future progress of LSPs over the next two years⁶⁶. **All** of the factors suggested – staff capacity, financial resources, the contribution of partners (local authority, other public bodies, business partners, the voluntary community sectors), the relationship between national and local priorities, the relationship between the LSP and the local government modernisation agenda, and the expectations of LSPs from central government – were seen by 90% or more of LSPs as being very important or of some importance. Only very small numbers of LSPs saw some factors as unimportant, but these included the contribution of business partners, the relationship between national and local priorities, the LSP and local government modernisation, and expectations of the LSP on the part of central government. More non-NRF LSPs identify financial resources and the contribution of voluntary and community partners as critical factors influencing their future success.
- 6.51 Our more detailed case study work allows a broad distinction to be made between **external factors** influencing future direction and **internal issues** relating to current constraints/possibilities facing LSPs and the implications for how they expect to handle these. In relation to external influences, some partners, especially local government, were clearly aware of the significance of the LSP within the changing system of local governance. The case studies also reinforced the importance of regionalism – and in some cases of the possibilities of strong sub-regionalism or city regionalism. Local government reorganisation is still a factor despite the North East referendum, and in one case-study the relationship of the LSP, the Community Strategy and the inspection regimes of central government emerged as a possible future issue.
- 6.52 In terms of issues confronting LSPs, some case studies identified as a challenge the changing economic position of the locality in relation to neighbouring areas, and/or the economic disparities within areas, or other inequalities. Other concerns echo the external context and changing national policies. One LSP picks out climate change as well as transport, whilst several LSP case studies pointed to Every Child Matters and Children’s Trusts as of future importance.
- 6.53 **Internally** LSPs highlight a number of issues to do with their structures and operational styles. Membership, resources, staffing, leadership/chairing, business plans, communication, performance management are variously identified as key issues to address, as previous chapters in this report have shown. Equally some LSPs point to the local political context and the possibilities of stability (or conversely instability) as an important influence on future behaviour.
- 6.54 In general, these responses indicate the very complex and uncertain environment within which LSPs must develop.

65 Further detail is available in the report on the 2004 survey of LSPs (Appendix 1 No 5).

66 At the time of the survey LAAs were a fledgling initiative which was not yet widely known. Had the survey been undertaken more recently they would doubtless have featured prominently.

Conclusions

- 6.55 It is difficult to draw overall conclusions about the progress of LSPs because the pattern is so varied. In some cases, progress has been painfully slow and achievements have been very thin on the ground. In others the picture is a very different one of strong progress, even if more is anticipated.
- 6.56 The main axis of variation in progress is the distinction between NRF and non-NRF LSPs. Figure 6.4 sums up key differences between NRF and non-NRF LSPs. However, while the correlation between performance and NRF status is clear enough, it is much more difficult to identify with any certainty what are the factors associated with NRF status which are important. Variations between NRF and non-NRF LSPs do not necessarily spring directly from the receipt of NRF funding. First, as has been noted, the character of the group of NRF LSPs differs in a number of respects. Over two thirds of NRF Partnerships were established prior to 2002 compared with less than one third of non-NRFs. It is also the case that nearly one third of NRF LSPs are in Metropolitan Boroughs compared with less than 2% of non-NRFs and proportionately there are far more unitary authorities and London Boroughs and fewer Districts. These are factors that may in themselves create differences though it is difficult to disentangle them to identify which has been particularly influential.

Figure 6.4 Comparing NRF & Non-NRF LSPs		
Factor/Issue	NRF LSPs	Non-NRF LSPs
Establishment of LSPs	Established earlier. <i>Key statistic:</i> 67% established prior to 2002	Tend to be more recently established. <i>Key statistic:</i> 32% established prior to 2002
Membership	Wider 'core' & total membership	More restricted membership
Structures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More likely to consider their structures & working arrangements effective 2. More NRF LSPs have area or neighbourhood forums & technical working groups <i>Key statistic:</i> 60% NRF LSPs have area or neighbourhood forums 68% have technical working groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Less likely to consider structures effective 2. Fewer neighbourhood & task groups <i>Key statistic:</i> 27% have area or neighbourhood forums 35% have technical working groups
Staffing Resources	Greater number of staff <i>Key statistic:</i> Average size of staff team is 5.1 people	Smaller staff <i>Key statistic:</i> Average size of staff team is 1.8 people
Financial Resources	Greater access to financial resources <i>Key statistic:</i> The average (mean) level of resources (excluding NRF) was £112,000 in 2004	Significantly lower level of financial support to non-NRF LSPs <i>Key statistic:</i> The average (mean) level of resources was £64,000 in 2004
Performance Management Systems	Vast majority operate a performance management system <i>Key statistic:</i> 99% undertake performance management	Just over half operate a performance management system <i>Key statistic:</i> 52% undertake performance management
Activities	Higher levels of activity in NRF LSPs	Significantly lower levels of activity. Higher proportion of activity dedicated to 'process' issues such as community engagement
Outcomes	More significant progress claimed in NRF versus non-NRF areas	Non NRF LSPs claim fewer outputs/outcomes

- 6.57 Secondly, receipt of NRF is linked with other ways in which NRF LSPs are different and/or are treated differently. The level of deprivation in these areas that has made them eligible for NRF probably also signifies that they are more likely to be the focus of other government regeneration initiatives. For example the survey shows that over three quarters of NRF LSPs have regeneration partnerships working with or affiliated to them compared with less than half the non-NRF LSPs and over 60% have neighbourhood management schemes compared with less than one fifth of non-NRF ones. NRF has been a passport to Community Participation Programme funding. It has entailed performance management requirements and greater attention to government floor targets. This in turn has meant that Government Offices have had to work more closely with NRF LSPs than with non-NRF. Again, all of these would potentially influence their focus, the complexity of their task, their capacity, the way they function, their performance and their perceptions about the role of LSPs and the current policy environment in which they are operating.
- 6.58 However, while it is difficult to disentangle the effect of the various aspects of NRF status, what is clear is that the combination of ‘carrots and sticks’ in NRF areas has had a galvanising effect not felt in many non-NRF localities. A key question will be whether LAAs will function as a similar driver for non-NRF LSPs.
- 6.59 Alongside the differentials between NRF and non-NRF LSPs, the relatively slow progress of county LSPs stands out. This contrasts with the fact (discussed in Chapter 3) that in general county LSPs are better resourced than districts. Again it is not possible to be precise as to the reasons for this performance differential, but it adds extra emphasis to the issues about LSPs in two tier contexts which we discussed in Chapter 4.
- 6.60 The variable progress of LSPs to date can of course be ‘read’ in different ways. On the one hand, it may be argued that the strong progress made by some LSPs (not all of them in NRF areas) shows that this should, in principle, be possible for many more. On the other hand, to take one important issue, the evidence of this evaluation is in line with the conclusions of much other research on partnership working which concludes that effective partnership normally takes a considerable time to build, and that too much should not be expected too soon from what are mostly still ‘immature’ LSPs. Is the glass, therefore, half full or half empty? Our conclusion would be that there should be the potential for many LSPs, given support and encouragement by government, to align themselves with the ‘virtuous circle’ which we have described, and to demonstrate more progress and added value within a reasonable period of time. At the same time, it must be a concern that a significant number of LSPs are still some way from achieving significant outcomes and in some cases from having put in place some of the necessary preconditions for progress. It thus seems likely that – in the absence of major change to the current policy regime – progress will continue to be variable, with a significant ‘tail’ of less well performing LSPs, albeit within an improving picture overall.
- 6.61 Finally it must be emphasised that progress – or lack of it – does not only depend on the efforts of partners and stakeholders at the local level. Our discussion of mainstreaming shows that, while there are important lessons for LSPs and their local partners, the ability of LSPs to make progress depends heavily on the policies of government departments, and the extent to which Whitehall departments are able and willing to encourage the local agencies which they fund, influence, support and regulate, to align their programmes and commit their resources to LSPs’ strategic priorities. The success of LSPs depends not only on a progress at local level, but on a positive central-local relationship.

CHAPTER 7

Key Findings, Policy Implications and Recommendations

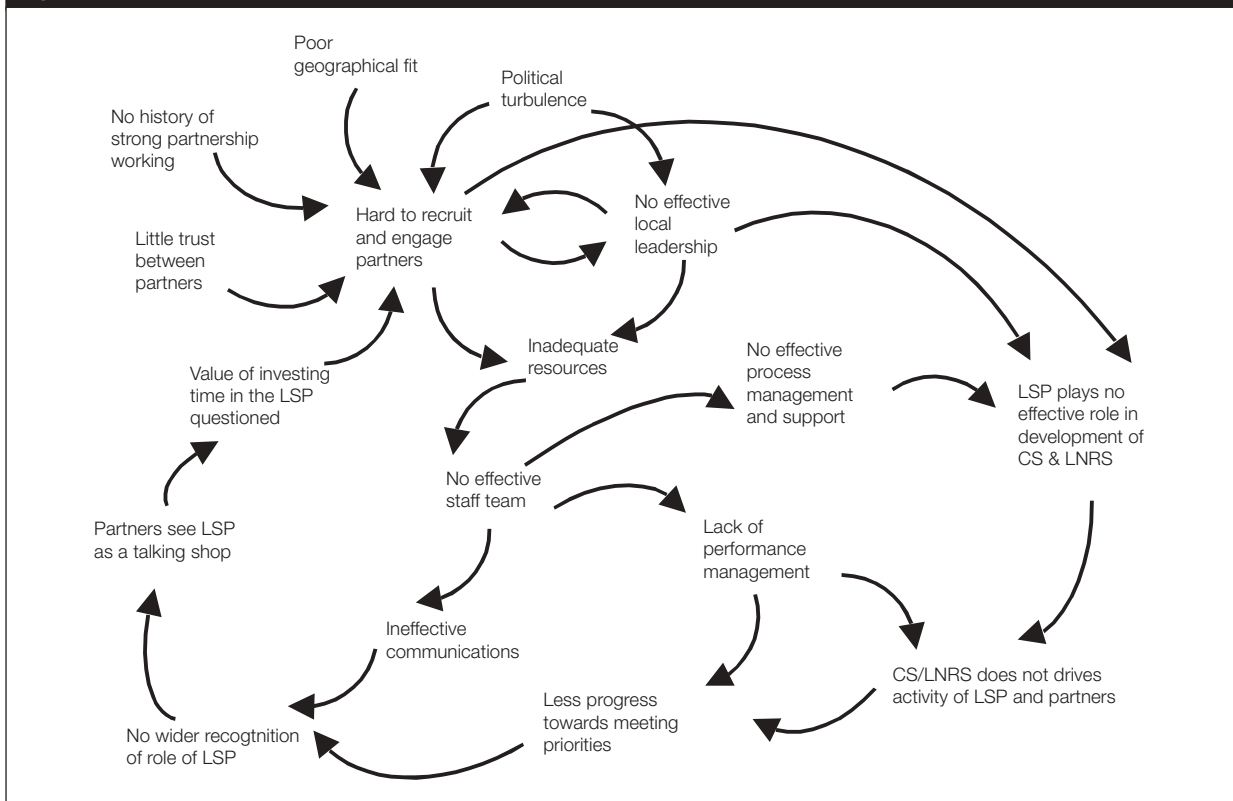
Introduction

- 7.1 This concluding chapter draws together key findings from the previous chapters, and draws out their policy implications. In the evaluation, we have developed and used a theory of change approach, and this has proved helpful in identifying the main 'links in the chain of causation' which together determine the extent to which LSPs represent an effective part of modernised local governance arrangements. We have discussed how LSPs' internal structures and processes, and their external relationships, condition their capacity and fitness for purpose; how strategic development links to action and then to outcomes in which the LSP adds value in terms of both better local governance and improved service delivery. At the same time, both national and local contexts impact on the progress which LSPs are able to make.
- 7.2 The findings and policy implications arising from this analysis are numerous and wide ranging. In this chapter, we make a distinction between what can be defined as governance issues (broadly, what we have considered in Chapters 3 and 4) and delivery issues (which we discussed in Chapters 5 and 6). Policy implications are then set out for LSPs themselves; for their partners; and for government.
- 7.3 It is also important to recall that this has been a formative evaluation, focused on processes and policy development but only preliminary impacts, not a summative evaluation (which is planned to follow). This reflects government's view in commissioning the evaluation that it was too early to fully evaluate the impact of LSPs until after they have bedded down and have had several years to implement their strategies. This is consistent with the findings of much research on partnerships which suggests that effective partnership working relationships can take a considerable time to become embedded.
- 7.4 The evaluation shows that LSPs have, in a relatively short time, established themselves as a vital part of the institutional arrangements of modernised local governance. There is a broad positive consensus about the principle and purpose of LSPs.
- 7.5 However there are very considerable differences in the extent to which LSPs can yet be said to have established robust and sustainable governance arrangements. There are important differences between NRF and non-NRF LSPs, and also between those in different kinds of local authority area (as well as between LSPs within these categories). The extent to which the LSP has been able to draw on a positive history of partnership working in each locality and whether it was set up relatively early or late are major factors.

- 7.9 Alongside the leadership exercised by leading Board or Executive members, the role of the partnership's **staff team** is crucial in setting up and running the processes through which the LSP works in an inclusive, professional and efficient manner. An effective staff team will communicate well with partners, regional and sub-regional partners, the GO and other stakeholders, and will ensure that strong performance management arrangements are used proactively to monitor and evaluate performance and drive progress.
- 7.10 Adequate **resources** will be available to manage and run the LSP – probably primarily from the local authority, but other partners will contribute because they recognise the value of the LSP to their own objectives.
- 7.11 The LSP will have played a leading role in the development of the Community Strategy (and the LNRS in NRF areas), ensuring that it is widely owned and is **seen to add real value** to the strategies of partners. The **CS and LNRS will be driving the activity of the LSP**, and as both these strategies and those of partners are reviewed and updated there will be increasing synergy between them and this will lead to opportunities to modify partners' spending plans to meet joint priorities, and to significant progress involving active collaboration among partners to meet local floor targets and other priorities. **Performance management arrangements** will be an integral part of the LSPs development and improvement.
- 7.12 As progress is made it will increasingly have a **self-sustaining effect**, as partners and stakeholders recognise the value which the LSP adds and commit themselves more fully. Effective **publicity** will ensure that the role of the LSP in the wider local governance system is recognised well beyond those who contribute directly to it. Partners will increasingly recognise the value of the LSP in **lobbying** on behalf of the area with regional and national government. When asked about the added value which the LSP brings, partners will be able to quote concrete examples of **positive outcomes and impacts**, and will consider that, in the words of one individual 'if the LSP did not exist we would have to invent it'.

The vicious circle

- 7.13 The vicious circle is most commonly found in local contexts where there is **no tradition of strategic partnership and little trust** between key partners, some of whom may not see how an LSP covering the area in question has strategic relevance to them. **Political turbulence** in the local authority may inhibit the local authority's ability to give sustained community leadership, and other key partners may also be preoccupied with their own concerns.

Figure 7.2 The Vicious Circle

7.14 In such contexts, it will be difficult to secure the involvement in the LSP of key partners, and **engagement by partners will be limited and superficial. The leadership of the LSP will be ineffective** – perhaps because many partners think the local authority is too dominant, or equally because it is not supportive enough. In the absence of local authority leadership, other partners may adopt instrumental or defensive attitudes to the LSP. There will be little evidence that partners are committed to changing their own organisations in accordance with LSP priorities.

7.15 Instead of the LSP taking the lead in developing the CS and LNRS, its role may have been little more than one of ‘signing off’ these documents, and as a result the **strategies are likely to be superficial**, failing to engage with the priorities of partners. As a result, the CS and LNRS will not drive the activity of the LSP or of key partners, and the LSPs activity will not add up to more than a disparate bundle of actions not rooted in the mainstream. In NRF areas, partners may see the LSP as little more than an opportunity to access NRF funding.

7.16 In this scenario, the LSP is likely to suffer from **inadequate staffing and resourcing**. Lack of commitment to the LSP will mean that neither the local authority nor other partners are willing to commit substantial resources to the LSP, and consequently a small staff team, often perceived to have little autonomy from the local authority, will not give the LSP sufficient capacity. **Performance management may be lacking** or may exist in principle but without serving as a real driver of improvement. With the failure to develop a strong strategic focus which engages partners, the LSP may come to be seen as a talking shop, or as a **bureaucratic process** which consumes time without leading to outcomes. Partners will increasingly question the value of the LSP, and devote more time to their own organisations or to other partnerships which seem to offer more added value.

- 7.17 Identification of these virtuous and vicious circles is not intended to imply that LSPs need become locked in one or the other. It is possible for LSPs to ‘break in’ to the virtuous circle or ‘break out’ of the vicious circle at various points. Thus, for example, strong local leadership can build a supportive local context for the LSP in areas where this does not already exist, while failure to institute efficient working practices can undermine initial partner commitment. The purpose of identifying these trajectories is rather to highlight on the one hand those factors which in combination tend to make for an effective LSP, and those in which the LSP is unlikely to succeed.
- 7.18 The identification of both virtuous and vicious circles of LSP development helps to highlight the importance of the following key findings from the evaluation concerning LSPs’ governance arrangements.

Governance issues

- 7.19 Governance issues encompass a wide range of factors (from leadership to representation and accountability) concerning the ways in which LSPs are organised as institutions and work with other organisations and interests, including their local partners and institutions ‘above and below the LSP.
- 7.20 The **strategic capacity** of the board or executive is important. This in turn relates to issues of membership, leadership and a clear understanding of the role and purpose of the partnership. **Leadership** is a crucial element in determining the capacity of LSPs, but the exercise of leadership within strategic partnerships remains extremely challenging, implying the desirability of further support to LSPs for leadership development. The importance of strategic capacity and effective leadership is now made all the more important by the roll-out of **LAAs**.
- 7.21 An important task envisaged for LSPs in early guidance was the **rationalisation** of the often overlapping and confusing pattern of partnerships at local level. Little progress has been made on this, but LAAs have also brought this issue into sharp focus.
- 7.22 There has been more progress with ‘**process rationalisation**’ by means of protocols, co-ordination and better ways of working – but it is not clear this is always an effective substitute for structural rationalisation. There has also been progress in **rationalising plans and processes** and reducing the planning burden (on local authorities and their partners), though this is taking time to work out in practice.
- 7.23 Substantial numbers of LSPs identify accountability as an area that needs strengthening. There is a lack of clarity on a number of aspects including the accountability of the LSP *to* partners, and the accountability *of* partners to the LSP, as well as wider public accountability. A key issue is the relationship of the LSP to local democratic processes, where the lynchpin role is that of the local councillor, yet many are not closely connected to, or in sympathy with, the LSP, and it is not clear that even where (mostly senior) councillors are actively and positively engaged with the LSP that they necessarily prioritise issues of democratic accountability. In addition, LSPs can operate as agents or mechanisms of **accountability per se**. For example, effective partnership working, and integrating/aligning plans, targets, performance management regimes and budgets all result in considerable scrutiny of individual agencies’ actions and resources by stakeholders (public, private, voluntary and community alike).

- 7.24 **Performance management** processes may be helpful in improving accountability, but these are not yet well established in many non-NRF LSPs while in NRF areas performance management may promote accountability to GOs and the NRU as much as or more than to local partners. Issues of accountability and legitimacy are made vastly more important by the pivotal role of LSPs in LAAs.
- 7.25 There are also questions about the **capacity** of LSPs. These include, on the one hand, how far structures and processes make it possible to take hard decisions, for example resolving tensions between conservation and development in one place, dealing with conflicts between competitiveness and cohesion in another. On the other hand, capacity issues are indicated by the expressed need of LSPs for more support from both government and local partners. In particular, non-NRF LSPs require more support from GOs while NRF LSPs may not be able to rely indefinitely on the NRF to support their operation.
- 7.26 The extent to which LSPs have been successful so far in **engaging partners and stakeholders** varies greatly – both among LSPs, and between different categories of partner and stakeholder. For some LSPs, fundamental processes of engagement such as understanding partners' priorities and sharing information and data still remain largely on the 'to do' list. There is, as yet, little good practice anywhere in mapping partners' spending plans.
- 7.27 The evidence is that many **public sector** partners are now making a strong contribution within LSPs, but this engagement needs to be translated into securing change within partner organisations in line with LSP priorities. Other partners – including **local councillors** – still need to be more actively engaged in the LSP itself. There is still a need to engage the **private and business** sector more substantively in many LSPs though there are a number of cases where business involvement is strong and from which lessons could be learned. The **voluntary and community** sector is stretched and under-resourced, and there is a concern that new remits for LSPs (LPSAs, LAAs) should not marginalise the voluntary and community role.
- 7.28 There is an ongoing debate within LSPs about how to steer a course between Centrally determined and enforced **performance management** systems versus locally developed systems, and about how to minimise the danger of over complicated bureaucratic systems taking up too much time and energy. Underlying this debate is the current status of the LSP as a non-statutory, non-executive organisation, and the questions of how far an LSP can performance manage its partners, and whether performance management inhibits or encourages partnership working.
- 7.29 Above the LSP, there need to be stronger ties between LSPs' agendas (especially Community Strategies) and **regional and sub-regional economic strategies**.
- 7.30 The **neighbourhood governance** agenda makes relationships below the LSP particularly important, and in principle the LSP can be a forum in which multiple sub-local interests can come together. However avoiding duplication of arrangements and involving councillors are important issues.
- 7.31 There are specific issues concerning **two tier areas**. County and district LSPs must be understood as being complementary rather than conflicting, sitting side by side rather than one above the other and underpinned by a common understanding and agreement about their respective roles and strengths. This implies a fuller engagement of district

representation in county LSPs in order to engage and legitimise a bottom-up input to strategic thinking, and conversely that of county LSP partners in district LSPs in order to contribute to a more locally responsive and community based application of strategic priorities. In some places, the strategic economic, physical and social issues confronting LSPs at country level do not confine themselves to local government boundaries, and many of the most pressing issues relate to the major urban areas (often unitary authorities) and their hinterlands. Such issues cannot be addressed by county or district LSPs alone.

Delivery issues

- 7.32 The evaluation shows the primary drivers of activity by LSPs are national policies – Community Strategies and, in NRF areas, neighbourhood renewal – although other potential drivers, such as the Well Being Power, have not been taken up to anything like the same extent.
- 7.33 LSPs have become involved in many areas of activity. On many fronts, this activity has already led to either measurable outcomes or the development of joint strategy and/or activity among partners. The greater government requirements of, and support for, NRF LSPs means that in general they have developed more substantial activity and made more progress across most issues (not just in tackling deprivation) than elsewhere. However, many non-NRF LSPs have developed initiatives on a range of issues, from transport to rural development and from economic development to environmental sustainability. There is a clear relationship between the ‘maturity’ of the LSP partnership and the amount of progress made. At the same time, the evidence indicates a ‘tail’ of LSPs (mostly but not exclusively non-NRF) where activity so far is limited, including in particular many counties which are or will soon be preparing their LAA. The issue for these LSPs is whether they have the capacity to engage effectively in the process of preparation and delivery of the LAA, or whether they will be marginalised by the process. In this context, the fact that many LSPs consider they need more support from government is significant.
- 7.34 There are also some issues (such as some equalities issues) which are not substantively on the agendas of many LSPs. One effect of LAAs might be to increase the focus on the ‘most important’ issues at the expense of others seen locally as less important, but alternatively the process could provide an opportunity for government to bring such neglected issues up the agenda.
- 7.35 LSPs face a number of tensions in developing activity and action across a broad front. These include the compatibility (or lack of it) of government and local agendas, the question of the level at which to act – strategic or delivery focused – and the extent to which the LSP is able to engage both agencies and communities. A further key issue is what action and activity is (and is best) undertaken by ‘the LSP’, by sub-partnerships, or by partners with the collaboration or consent of the LSP.
- 7.36 Overall, LSPs consider they have made very significant progress in many areas, especially when it is remembered that they have only been established for a very limited time and the initial expectation was that they would often need some time to bed down. In evaluating the progress of LSPs in delivering outcomes, we have made a distinction between process outcomes, governance outcomes and service outcomes.

- 7.37 Much of the activity of LSPs still centres around what can be called '**process outcomes**' working more closely with partners, sharing information and staff resources, and financial collaboration via pooled funding of activity. There has been good progress on some of these issues but at the same time there are considerable numbers of LSPs which have not yet made progress in these areas. If these issues are indeed important preconditions which are necessary for LSPs to make real and sustained progress towards service and governance outcomes, the implication must be that for numbers of LSPs significant levels of outcomes may still be some way off.
- 7.38 **Local governance outcomes** include the development of a collective vision and agreed strategy; widening the range of interests involved in local decision making; creating a stronger local voice; improving the perceived legitimacy of local governance; and exercising more effective influence locally and nationally.
- 7.39 The development of a **collective vision and co-ordinated strategy** stands out as the predominant issue on which major progress is claimed by LSPs. Many LSPs also claim to have made some progress on others of these issues, though only very limited numbers consider that they have yet made major progress.
- 7.40 The third category of potential areas of progress relate to outcomes in terms of **service improvements**. The issues on which the 2004 survey provides evidence are:
- Ensuring that partners' policies, plans, targets and PIs reflect the Community Strategy's properties.
 - Services delivered better to meet community needs.
 - Services which better meet needs in priority neighbourhoods.
 - Meeting floor targets.
- 7.41 As is the case in relation to progress towards better governance, the overall picture in relation to service improvements is that substantial numbers of LSPs claim to have made some progress towards service improvement, although only relatively small proportions yet claim to have made major progress.
- 7.42 Differentials between **types of LSPs** are significant in terms of both governance and service outcomes. Thus, as might be expected as a result of the neighbourhood renewal agenda, **NRF LSPs** have had more success in bringing marginalised social groups into decision making. Many more NRF than non-NRF LSPs show major progress achieved in terms of improved services and meeting floor targets. **County LSPs** lag somewhat behind other local authority types, with few claiming major progress.
- 7.43 Turning to progress on **specific policy issues**, a number of issues stand out where significant numbers of LSPs claim to be achieving measurable outputs/outcomes. These are led by crime, but there are numerous other issues where at least a fifth of LSPs claim to have achieved measurable outcomes. These tend to be the areas associated with floor targets and key neighbourhood renewal priorities. At the other end of the spectrum, there are certain issues which significant numbers of LSPs are not addressing at all – these include, for at least one third of all LSPs, competitiveness and innovation (distinguished from economic development and employment); gay and lesbian and gender issues;

refugees and asylum seekers and travellers. These would seem to be important issues for government policies on the economy and on social inclusion and community cohesion.

- 7.44 It is important to be able to show what contribution the LSP has made to such Outcomes and that they would not have occurred without the LSP. Some LSPs can now identify, with some degree of precision, ways in which the LSP is enabling positive outcomes to occur which would – at least – have been more difficult in the absence of the LSP. However in other cases LSPs are still find this difficult, and some partners are clearly dubious whether the LSP is **adding value**. In some cases there is a suggestion that LSPs may merely be ‘badging’ outcomes achieved by partners. Those LSPs which are not yet using some form of **performance management** seem to find it hardest to identify added value.
- 7.45 The evaluation has given considerable attention to the issue of **mainstreaming** as one of the keys to delivery. By mainstreaming we primarily mean ‘strategic’ mainstreaming – the refocusing of mainstream programmes and funding onto targets which are agreed and shared by local partners, reflecting the pattern of local need; but we can also consider ‘initiative mainstreaming’ – adopting innovative approaches and learning from localised, short-term pilot projects into the mainstream. The evaluation has identified positive examples of mainstreaming, mostly by more experienced LSPs. However in many LSPs mainstreaming remains largely undiscussed, ambiguous and a major challenge. Most LSPs think that their public sector partners would like to realign programmes, but are constrained by both resources and by central government targets and demands. However, well over half also consider that a lack of partner commitment is also an important or very important factor, while more than a third of LSPs do not regard realignment of main programmes as a priority.
- 7.46 The key **drivers** for mainstreaming emerging from the research are:
- That the local authority, the police and health organisations are key players.
 - That neighbourhood renewal funding (and area-based initiatives in general) can be a powerful learning tool and stimulus to mainstreaming.
 - That ‘locality’ planning between the level of the LSP/local authority and the neighbourhood) is fertile ground for main programme reshaping – close enough to delivery to be responsive to community; far enough above the small area to make main programme planning feasible.
 - That three groups in particular – elected members, senior officers, and middle managers (in all delivery partners) – are important.
- 7.47 **LAAs** are an opportunity for LSPs to demonstrate that they have the capacity to add value by helping to bring about improved performance in shared outcomes. LAAs also represent a significant opportunity for LSPs to exert a more effective governance role, enhancing their role as the forum within which partners come together to agree and deliver on local priorities, and enabling them more effectively to influence the mainstream policies of partner agencies. They will also potentially lead to enhanced accountability of government agencies to local people, to the extent that government agencies are active participants in the LAA (which in the pilots was variable). But LAAs also represent a major challenge to local partnership working. Many LSPs lack the capacity and structures for rapid and effective decision-making which the LAA will

require. LAAs may highlight tensions between efficient decision making and wide participation, and weaknesses in communication channels. The LAA process is particularly challenging for county level partnerships, where the number of stakeholders is potentially very large and there may be intra-sector tensions to be resolved, and for sectors which lack responsive decision making structures. LAAs also require some mechanism for focused work and decision making within each of the blocks, and effective links between the LSP and the sub-partnerships that are likely to be best placed to fulfil this role. Furthermore, LAAs potentially represent a radical shift in the relationships between LSPs and government, with the Government Offices' performance management, support and intervention role – hitherto confined to LSPs in NRF areas – being extended to all LSPs.

Key implications for LSPs, partners and government

FOR LSPS

7.48 The key implications for LSPs that derive from the research findings include:

- The research indicates that it is important that LSPs keep under review the extent to which their **membership** is 'fit for purpose' in terms of knowledge, skills, and commitment. Consideration should be given to the level (board / executive group, sub-thematic partnership) at which partner resources can best be exploited, as this may change as the LSP increasingly shifts from 'forming' to delivery. There may be 'missing partners' who need to be involved, and others who could be more actively engaged with particular LSP activities. Decisions on structures and membership should be linked to decisions on purpose and function.
- **Skills** needs may change as LSPs move from establishing themselves to a greater concern with delivery of the Community Strategy and LAA outcomes, and it will be important to ensure that staff competencies reflect this.
- **Protocols** can be useful for handling relationships within the partnership, especially where partners work together on delivery and where resources are involved. This includes with partnerships and organisations above and below the LSP. However, protocols should not be seen as a substitute for the effort needed to build trust.
- Issues of transparency and **accountability** appear to be a particular priority for LSPs. In many cases there is a need for LSPs to set out clearly their proposed arrangements for consultation, communication and reporting, and the relationship between these and the accountability mechanisms of partner organisations.
- The research shows that developing a positive relationship between the LSP's accountability processes and local **representative democratic processes** is a particular priority. To be effective LSPs need to be more clearly related to the management and political management systems of local authorities. Initiatives which seek to raise the awareness of **non-executive councillors** of LSP activities are valuable but it may be more effective to connect LSPs more directly to the council political structures which are dominated by non-executives – namely scrutiny and

neighbourhood bodies. The issue of party politics may also need more attention in order to improve **cross-party working** in relation to the LSP.

- At the same time, there is a need to balance the democratic accountability of councillors with other **accountability mechanisms such as other elected** (eg MPs) and **non-elected** partners (eg community representatives, chambers of commerce, voluntary umbrella organisations.).
- The LSP research also highlights that, in order to improve the contribution of the **voluntary, community and business sectors**, it is important for LSPs to better understand the breadth and diversity of the sectors, and promote any changes in partnership structures and working practices which would support their contribution, and prioritise capacity building and resourcing for these sectors, especially in relation to LAAs.
- In developing greater engagement at the **neighbourhood** level, it is necessary to avoid duplication of the structures and processes of the local authority or other partners and clarify the purpose of LSP activity at neighbourhood level.
- Single and top-tier LSPs would find it beneficial to devote more attention to building positive relationships with **regional and sub-regional** partnerships and organisations, especially RDAs and sub-regional economic partnerships.
- In preparation for their LAA, LSPs should **review the family of partnerships** in their area to ensure that roles and relationships are clear and agreed, and that there is a set of strong partnerships in place that cover the requisite topics, while eliminating duplication and overlap.
- In **two tier areas**, a review of existing partnership arrangements may be desirable, in order to enhance the complementarity of district and county LSPs.
- In places where key issues relate to a **wider urban area** and its hinterland, there may be a case for a Strategic Partnership including county, district and unitary interests.
- For some LSPs, the evidence suggests that it should be a priority to make progress on key '**process outcomes**' which underpin delivery and outcomes in terms of better local governance or service delivery.
- The wide spread of activity in which LSPs are involved, suggests a need for a careful **prioritisation of activity**, even though this may mean difficult choices (for example between national and local priorities). Identifying more clearly where the LSP can add 'proportionate value' should help determine priorities.
- For many LSPs, the institution of more effective performance management should help drive delivery. External evaluation may be helpful alongside **performance management** within the partnership.
- LSPs should work with their partners to identify what are the key drivers and barriers to the **alignment of mainstream services** in their local context.

- Some LSPs – particularly in two tier areas – are likely to need to address weaknesses or gaps in their processes, sub-partnership structures and/or Community Strategies in order to develop and implement their **LAA**.

FOR PARTNERS

7.49 The key implications for local partners that that derive from the research findings include:

- The research indicates that for LSPs to be effective and sustainable partners need to consider whether they can offer greater **resources and support** to the LSP, including staffing resources with the necessary skills and expertise to cope with the diverse and challenging tasks undertaken by an LSP staff team.
- It is also critical that partners ensure that effective arrangements are put in place to ensure that the strategic priorities of the LSP are **supported by their organisation** or sector.
- In many areas it will be important for partners to consider whether their constraints on partnership working are real or only perceived and ensure that where **freedoms and flexibilities** already exist they are making use of them proactively.
- The requirements of LAAs may require partners to provide additional support and resourcing for the LSP. This will in some cases be linked to a change of attitude amongst any partners who have yet to accept the legitimacy of **the LSPs' role in holding them to account for their performance**.

FOR GOVERNMENT

7.50 The key implications for central and regional government that that derive from the research findings include:

- The evaluation shows that the current regime of guidance, support and management for LSPs has been successful in establishing the concept of an LSP very widely, and providing the basis for considerable progress in many areas. However there may now be a **need to review and strengthen** the framework, both to support strongly performing LSPs as they take on new challenges such as LAAs, but also to bring more LSPs up to the levels of progress being achieved by the front runners.
- In **clarifying and strengthening the role and function** of LSPs it will be important to strike the right balance between giving greater clarity/providing clear expectations and allowing space for local initiative and flexibility, especially for LSPs which are already performing strongly. Guidance for LSPs themselves may need to be reinforced by **guidance to the local authority and other partners**.
- Again drawn from the research, a second implication of strengthening the framework for LSPs is that the regulation, performance management and/or inspection regimes applicable to local public agencies be amended to include the **requirement to report** on the quality and content of their partnership working and their contribution to Community Strategy implementation.

- In the context of LAAs, there needs to be a stronger commitment by government departments to work together to **review local partnership arrangements** and join with LSPs in reducing the number of local partnerships and tackling issues of conflicting or overlapping remits.
- Management of performance in the new context of LAAs will require government **to review frameworks for both performance management and accountability**, especially for non-NRF LSPs in which performance management is still embryonic.
- Government should consider how best to **enhance the capacity of LSPs** in a number of specific ways including leadership capacity and the contribution of councillors and the business and voluntary and community sectors (again, especially but not exclusively in non-NRF areas).
- More effective **involvement of the voluntary and community sectors** would be enhanced by more consistent messages from government departments to their local agencies.
- **Improving delivery** by many non-NRF LSPs would be greatly assisted by more support from government and GOs, especially on those issues identified as necessary for the effective development and delivery of LAAs.
- Progress on the **realignment of mainstream services** remains dependent not only on action at local level but on greater commitment and co-ordination by government departments.
- **Mapping partners' spending plans** is important if LSPs are to influence the pattern of spending. More research and policy development work is needed, including work among government departments, to develop and test a methodology which LSPs can utilise.
- Government should **ensure that LSPs are not hindered in delivery** by being overloaded with demands from different national departments and agencies.
- Government may need to consider how to assist LSPs in improving delivery on some important issues, including **economic development and competitiveness**.
- Government Offices can help to ensure that the strategies and targets of **RDAs and other regional and sub-regional bodies** reflect an appropriate concern for LSPs strategic priorities.

APPENDIX 1

Published outputs from the evaluation

1 The following reports are available on ODPM's Local and Regional Government Research Unit website at www.odpm.gov.uk/localgov

1. **LSP Evaluation: Multi-level governance and economic development, December 2005**

This research report highlights the potential, though to date somewhat limited progress, which LSPs have made in addressing issues of economic development, especially at the regional and sub-regional levels.

2. **LSP Evaluation: Below the Local Strategic Partnership, December 2005**

This report focuses on LSP activities at the sub-local authority level. It examines LSP responses to government policy encouraging neighbourhood working and outlines key enabling and constraining factors.

3. **LSP Evaluation: Voluntary and community sector engagement in LSPs, December 2005**

This report assesses the contribution of the voluntary and community sectors to LSP working. It assimilates evaluatory findings and provides examples of good practice.

4. **LSP Evaluation: Leadership in LSPs, December 2005**

This report discusses concepts and practices of leadership within the context of LSPs. It draws on research evidence and concludes with a model for taking forward issues of LSP leadership.

5. **LSP Evaluation: 2004 Survey of all English LSPs, August 2005**

This report presents the findings from a survey of all LSPs in England undertaken in summer 2004. Hence, this report provides an opportunity to assess the progress of LSP's over the period 2002 to 2004.

6. **LSP Evaluation: Two-tier working action learning set, August 2005**

In two-tier areas, LSPs have been established at both county and district levels. This research examines existing practice, to understand and clarify barriers to and opportunities for collaborative working and identify good practice in two-tier working.

7. **LSP Evaluation: Regional and Sub-regional action learning set, August 2005**

This report is concerned with the role of the LSP in relation to regional and sub-regional institutions, strategies and issues.

8. **LSP Evaluation: Rationalisation action learning set, August 2005**
This report aims to learn about existing practice in rationalising plans and partnerships, examines barriers and problems and identifies models of change and ways forward.
9. **LSP Evaluation: Strategic planning action learning set, August 2005**
This report aims to help LSPs to design and develop approaches to strategic planning and delivery that would work effectively at local level.
10. **LSP Evaluation: Interim Report, August 2005**
This interim report of the National Evaluation of LSPs aims to support LSPs and policy-makers at local, regional and central levels, and to evaluate the progress LSPs are making.
11. **LSP Evaluation: Interim Report (Executive Summary), August 2005**
The interim report of the National Evaluation of LSPs aims to support LSPs and policy-makers at local, regional and central levels, and to evaluate the progress LSPs are making.
12. **LSP Evaluation: Case study interim report: a baseline of practice – Full report**
This May 2004 report details preliminary baseline findings from the first stage of longitudinal case study research in 9 LSPs. The report details the processes and activities, issues and constraints, successes and challenges for the LSPs.
13. **LSP Evaluation: Case study interim report: a baseline of practice – Summary**
This May 2004 summary details preliminary baseline findings from the first stage of longitudinal case study research in 9 LSPs. The report details the processes and activities, issues and constraints, successes and challenges for the LSPs.
14. **LSP Evaluation: Governance action learning set report, May 2004**
This report provides briefing materials for LSPs for issues of governance and accountability. It details different modes of governance that LSPs have developed and provides guidance on the appropriate forms of accountability arrangements for these modes.
15. **LSP Evaluation: Mainstreaming action learning set report, May 2004**
This report provides briefing materials for LSPs in mainstreaming partner activities and resources. The report exemplifies two types of mainstreaming: strategic and initiative, and provides pointers to the development of good practice.
16. **LSP Evaluation: Community engagement action learning set report, May 2004**
This report provides briefing materials for LSPs in taking forward community engagement. The report provides examples of practice as well as a self completion toolkit that LSPs can use in regard to their specific local circumstances.
17. **LSP Evaluation: Performance management action learning set report, May 2004**
This report provides briefing materials for LSPs in taking forward performance management. It highlights the issues in effective partnership performance management, exemplifies various models developed by LSPs and provides pointers to good practice.

18. **Mapping approaches to integrating PIs across LSPs – October 2003**
Mapping approaches to integrating performance indicators across local strategic partnerships: Gathering examples of perceived good practice. Final Report.
 19. **LSP Evaluation: LSP Newsletter February 2003**
A short update report on the evaluation.
 20. **LSP Evaluation: Report of 2002 LSP Survey, published 2003**
This report presents the findings from a survey of all LSPs in England undertaken in summer 2002.
2. The following is available on the NRU's website at www.neighbourhood.gov.uk
21. **Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies: Document Analysis and Review Summary Report**
Analysis of the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies; submitted by NRF LSPs. The study provides a collective analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the documentation and identifies areas where LSPs may require additional support to refine these strategies
3. The following is available on the Department for Transport's research website at http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_localtrans/documents/page/dft_localtrans_032547.pdf
22. **Transport and Accessibility Issues Paper**
4. The following is available on www.Renewal.net
23. **Mainstreaming workshop report**
 24. **Case studies: Key findings from 2004 research**
 25. **Theory of Change Issues Paper**
5. Reports to be completed in 2006
26. **Local Government Issues Paper**

APPENDIX 2

Developing Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies – Case Study Experience

In one locality, the LSP took an active but not a lead role in developing the LNRS. The original strategy was seen as having too narrow a focus and was being revisited. Although it supplied some data as a basis for decision-making, it had begun with the most obvious targets and there was a need for a more realistic appraisal of the whole city. Developing a city-wide plan was being linked with developing district plans for the 5 District Partnerships covering the ‘wedges’ (excluding the city centre) into which the city has been divided for the purpose Area Management. These District Partnerships bring together senior officers of the main public service providers as well as VCS and business representatives, Town and Parish Council representatives and young people.

The work was being undertaken by consultants to ensure consistency across the plans. The purpose of the LNRS is to provide a roadmap for delivering the themes and priorities of the Community Strategy. It required recognising the linkages both across agendas and between the structures delivering economic, social and environmental programmes in the five districts. It was intended that the broad structure of the plans should:

- Use local understanding and information to assist in interpreting the aim of ‘narrowing the gap’ and its themes.
- Help set out the delivery roles of public agencies and their partners.
- Map the relevant regeneration projects and service innovations for delivering the aim and its themes.
- Assist in producing a ‘gap analysis’ between the current baseline and ultimate achievement.
- Support the production of an action plan for delivering the aim and its themes.

The LSP sees the need to develop better performance indicators for managing the Narrowing the Gap agenda. Floor targets are insufficient. A more holistic approach is required. Developing the LNRS was ranked as a very important priority second only to agreeing objectives and developing the Community Strategy.

In the second locality, the LSP focused on NRF allocation and delivery. The LNRS had a higher profile than the Community Strategy but it has only a limited impact because of the failure to develop a strategic and cross-cutting approach. However, it has laid the foundations for better area working – through area action planning involving a four sector group framework in nine areas. Groups had responsibility for developing and implementing neighbourhood renewal

action plans and then competing for NRF. The LSP's Strategy Group assess the eligibility and plausibility of the projects put forward before allocating the money. Various factors detracted from this being a strategic exercise. First, there were times pressures at each level. For the Area Groups data collection and consultation left little time for planning and led to a focus on do-able projects instead of comprehensive plans. The vast number of projects put forward also put the Strategy Group under time constraints. This added to a concern to maintain good relations across the areas – and local elected members – meant that the whole exercise was perceived as primarily as one of grant allocation divorced from a more strategic perspective.

In the third locality, the LNRS was a very important priority. It is the vehicle for allocating funds to revitalise priority neighbourhoods. There are three groups of priority neighbourhood:

- Those within major regeneration programmes.
- Those most deprived outside the regeneration programmes targeted from 2001 onwards.
- Ones targeted in the second phase, 2004-6 where some renewal activity may already have taken place.

Similarly in the fourth locality, the LNRS was considered very important. Neighbourhood renewal targets were closely linked with the PSA targets. The October 2004 version of the LNRS laid out the principles it was expected that the thematic partnerships would link with their own strategies to promote 'top-down' inclusion of NR activity in the planning of service delivery. The relatively small amount of NRF gives added impetus to having a mainstreaming focus. The LNRS moves towards a 'commissioning' model to encourage an understanding of neighbourhood renewal and acceptance of the principle of mainstreaming as the means of achieving it. The Partnership Agreements – in effect action plans – were the means of embedding neighbourhood renewal principles and objectives in their planning and service delivery. The devolution of this activity to thematic partnerships was seen as a gradual process and some autonomy was retained in the two key regeneration areas that were seen almost as mini-LSP's.

Here the LNRS envisages neighbourhood renewal being delivered through a combination of mechanisms:

- The LSP agencies, especially the Thematic Partnerships.
- Delivery agencies such as local colleges.
- Regeneration partnerships.
- District Assemblies.
- Neighbourhood champions appointed by partner agencies.
- The development of specific Neighbourhood Action Plans in specific areas.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Sub-Group brings together Council officers, Neighbourhood Renewal Area Managers, the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Manager and VCS and CEN representatives. As well as being responsible for developing the strategy and making recommendations to the LSP, this group acts as a catalyst for developing service delivery. The 2002 LNRS for the fifth locality was still current in 2004 but seldom used. However, the LSP's

Floor Target Action Plan exercised some influence on different delivery agencies in relation to NRF project outputs. NRF was treated in isolation from the mainstream and other funding streams and this led to a lack of full ownership of the LNRS by the LSP. For example, much of the associated analysis and target setting fell to the Council. An additional factor was the lack of fit between some floor targets and mainstream targets. The Floor Target Action Plan had begun to have more influence on different agencies' priorities, though the exercise was still hampered by a lack of baseline and trend data in some policy spheres. There are now plans for integrating the LNRS within a revised Community Strategy which, with greater attention to action planning should ensure that it impinges more on the planning and delivery of services in future.

APPENDIX 3

The city region

This appendix provides details of issues concerning the LSP-city region relationship in two areas.

One is a major urban area, complex administratively, in which city region-wide administrative arrangements have been important in the genesis and development of the LSP. There is a sub-regional partnership (SRP) which focuses on economic development, growth and competitiveness issues within the conurbation and forms part of the delivery structure of the RDA. Following the introduction of LSPs and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, there was an initial possibility that the SRP would qualify for LSP status across the conurbation. This did not happen because of concerns by neighbouring local authorities that a conurbation-wide LSP would be focused on the city centre and dominated by the major local authority. In the event, an LSP was set up in each local authority area.

The relationship between the SRP and the LSP in the major local authority area has been characterised by ambiguities. A formal protocol had been developed to guide relationships and establish the spheres of competence of the two partnerships, but for some interviewees this merely prevented a public falling out.

The complexities of the city region are illustrated by two examples.

- Transport infrastructures and services cross many administrative boundaries. The Local Transport Plan is developed in combination with the County Council (as LTA) and the SRP. The protocol between the LSP and SRP identifies transport as the responsibility of the SRP (and the conurbation-wide Transport Partnership which is the SRP's strategic action theme). The main strategic context for transport is the Local Transport Plan and the Progress Report, rather than the Community Strategy.
- Social Inclusion can be seen in terms of both the SRP's agenda (based mainly on principles of economic inclusion), and the LSP's agenda (emphasising the social aspects of deprivation). Some initiatives on economic development can be broadly defined as social exclusion but they are the remit of the SRP. This also means that some organisations seeking funding will play the LSP and SRP off against each other.

Some people see the SRP as the body which should be tackling the LSP agenda because local authority boundaries do not take account of broader, conurbation-wide processes and, as such, they have a far better strategic scope for action. For instance, local authority boundaries are not a sensible place from which to look at neighbourhoods because conurbation dynamics such as job opportunities are often located outside the city. Others think that the SRP does not operate at the right level to effectively engage in neighbourhood renewal and equalities issues, nor does its economic remit allow it to prioritise these. Others see the relationship in terms of the LSP agenda needing to fit within the SRP 'macro' strategy.

Some interviewees take the view that the SRP has much stronger levels of involvement from the important bodies within the area. This is due to a broader conurbation-wide approach that has developed over a much longer period of time. Moreover, compared with the LSP, its boundaries are more coterminous with organisations such as the LSC and Chambers of Commerce, which often cover many LSPs. The LSP's relationship with other partnerships such as the conurbation-wide Skills Partnership and Transport Partnership, which is a strategic theme group of the SRP, has also been limited.

Relationships between the major local authority LSP and other LSPs within the city region appear to be extremely limited. The SRP did seek to act as a conduit between LSPs within its area, hosting meetings, but these stopped for a long period of time and were considered to have limited impact on the agendas of LSPs, particularly given competing demands from within their own Partnerships.

The second (county) area is also institutionally complex, with the county council, eleven district councils and two unitary authorities. A strong local authority grouping provides a robust local government forum for discussion of strategic issues. The most significant issue here involves the relationship with regional bodies and in particular with the RDA over the regional spatial strategy. In other parts of the country sub-regional partnerships typically operate above the LSP or, where the county area equates to the sub-region, at the same level. In this county there are 'sub-regions' *below* the LSP, one of which is widely seen as a city region. Institutionally significant has been the emergence of a partnership representing a new alliance of the two unitaries in this area with their neighbouring urban districts and the county council. Revolving around the need to regenerate the central part of the city region, the need to respond to the housing demands of the Regional Spatial Strategy, to the economic demands of the Regional Economic Strategy, to the growing significance of transport issues, and to the challenge to liveability across the area posed by growth, the new partnership has generated local tensions. These reflect its desire to see a growing economy (which is currently seriously underperforming) as against resistance to growth because it means more pressure on housing, environment, and movement not only in the city region but also in neighbouring rural areas.

A range of spatial land use/housing/service delivery issues reinforce the difficulties faced by agencies in relating solely to the county area. With police, fire, health and others having a functional responsibility for the county and three unitaries, the majority of strategic service issues (and the greatest challenges) relate to a larger area than that of the county LSP. Underlying all of this debate runs the possibility of local government reorganisation and/or an enhanced role for a regional assembly (even if unelected). This is complicated by the dual mandate held by many county councillors who are also district councillors.

Both these examples illustrate the complex institutional environment within which LSPs in city region areas currently operate, and the difficulties this can pose for LSPs set up on local authority boundaries.

APPENDIX 4

Progress by NRF LSPs according to date of establishment

The table shows the proportion of NRF LSPs making 'major progress' which were established prior to 2002. The proportions shown can be compared to the overall proportion of about two-thirds of NRF LSPs established prior to 2002.⁶⁷

The data shows that on most issues there was a higher proportion of pre-2002 NRF LSPs making major progress than would be expected if there was an even distribution between those established pre and post 2002. In the two cases where the proportion is low (50%) the numbers concerned are extremely small.

Aspect of progress	% of NRF LSPs making 'major progress' established prior to 2002
Process outcomes	
Understanding partners' priorities	70%
Mapping partners' spending programmes	100%
Sharing data and information	75%
Sharing staff resources	50%
Pooling budgets	–
Levering in additional resources	77%
Joint funding of projects	71%
Governance outcomes	
Collective vision and co-ordinated strategy	69%
Widening the range of interests involved in local decision-making	67%
Bringing marginalised social groups into the decision making process	89%
Building a stronger and more united local voice	86%
Greater legitimacy in the eyes of the community	50%
Innovation and dissemination of good practice	85%
More effective influence on council decisions	78%
More effective influence on regional and national issues	67%
Service outcomes	
Ensuring policies, plans, targets and Pis of partners reflect CS (and where relevant LNRS) priorities	74%
Services delivered better to meet community needs	86%
Services better meet needs in priority neighbourhoods	77%
Meeting floor targets	71%

⁶⁷ This figure refers to those LSPs responding to the 2004 survey. It is not possible to specify the figure more precisely as slightly different numbers of LSPs responded to the various parts of the question from which this data is derived.

APPENDIX 5

Examples of Mainstreaming

Example	What has happened?	Leading to	Future developments
Blackburn Neighbourhood Co-ordination	5 NRF funded Co-ordinators for 5 areas (pop = 30,000) to co-ordinate local services.	Multi-agency area teams including Council, Police & PCT and others	Intention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use to deliver other schemes. • Learn from new approaches. • NM Pathfinder as mainstreaming driver.
Wolverhampton Local Environmental Services	Review of local environmental services – what is being delivered, where and with what resource.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading to linked agendas, informing service plans • Data has informed LNRS – identified lead person from NR Partnership to take it forward through a commissioning process. 	Mainstream bending through City Council committing an additional £1m resource to environmental services.
Liverpool NRS	Structures being developed to deliver NR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint planning and agreements. • Integrated structures for inter-agency action and political and community scrutiny. • Skills audit across all Liverpool Partnership Group members and joint staff development. • Service delivery innovation piloting actions that impact across several PSA targets 	Piloting new delivery methods and rolling out successes
Stoke-on-Trent Neighbourhood Renewal	New model of NR delivery developed using Area Implementation Teams and local consultation to develop area plans and a Joint Strategy Planning Team to provide overview.	Piloted in one area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling out • Local Learning Plan to develop teams and partner-ship at the levels of Board/Chief Officers; Joint Strategy Planning Group; Area Implementation Teams. • Evaluation around an action learning framework involving all participants of NR delivery

Example	What has happened?	Leading to	Future developments
Middlesbrough Locality-Based Public Health Nursing Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of health visiting services leading to a change in the distribution of Health Visitors to match need. LSP investing £200k NRF over 2 yrs to facilitate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation of locality teams bringing HVs out of general practices into teams alongside nursery and school nurses. Reconfiguration of local authority social services to same boundaries 	<p>PCT approved full business plan including commitment to continue funding after NRF ceases.</p> <p>In discussion with midwifery and mental health services re integration with locality teams</p>
Walsall – Mainstreaming the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership	Mainstream funding for Community Safety Team (3 staff) and operating costs. Walsall's was the only WM CDRP without mainstreaming funding for a core CS Team.	WBC took over part funding from NRF in 2003/4 and in full from April 2004.	Review and further negotiations re WBC taking over other CS posts currently funded from other sources and encouraging other partners to consider mainstreaming other NRF posts impacting on their service areas.
Liverpool Citysafe	Merger between CDRP and Drug Action Team with buy-in of all agencies represented in Citysafe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-located Team Pooled budgets Joint Agency groups created around Offenders; Vulnerable Persons and Locations, each with a top sliced budget of £50k to pump prime additional activity. Various interventions and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pooling resources for a central City safe Drug Treatment Centre Alley gating an example of a City safe scheme mainstreamed into City Council functions.
Sheffield First – Reducing Crime in Neighbourhoods	Tackling crime as a thread in the multi-agency NRS (<i>Closing the Gap</i>) – focus on neighbourhoods where crime is a significant problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-burglary initiatives combining targeting offenders and preventive measures Setting up local policing teams ASB initiatives 	There are examples in other policy areas of <i>Closing the Gap</i> strategy focusing resources on neighbourhoods most in need of transformation.
Kirklees SWEET Project	Project to tackle problems faced by women in the sex industry.	Multi-agency involvement and changes in service delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast track drugs service Police referral direct to project on arrest Counselling service GP outreach service Information sharing protocols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core funding for some elements of the project. Service extended into other parts of Kirklees. Discussions about extending Police register of 'dodgy punters' nationwide. Lessons about working with vulnerable young people due to be incorporated in an amendment to Child Protection legislation.

This research report is for Local Strategic Partnerships and their local, regional and central partners. It evaluates progress made by LSPs to date and identifies issues for further development.

ISBN-13: 978 185112 835 8
ISBN-10: 1 85112 835 2
Price: £15

ISBN 978185112835-8



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