



## LSPs ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE



LSPs are becoming more effective, according to the latest research. Findings in a new report suggest that the collective efforts of partners – through LSPs – usually add up to more than the sum of the parts.

This government commissioned independent evaluation, *Report on the 2008 survey of all English local strategic partnerships*, was based on a national survey. It highlights quality and efficiency gains through joint working, and progress in LSPs' ability to co-ordinate strategy, understand partners' priorities, jointly fund projects, and lever in additional resources. The majority of respondents agreed that the benefits of LSPs outweigh their costs in time, energy and resources.

Ninety per cent of survey respondents agreed that LSPs can successfully launch initiatives that benefit the community, which would not otherwise have happened, with 46 per cent able to point to more than five such initiatives.

*Long term evaluation of local area agreements and local strategic partnerships – report on the 2008 survey of all English local strategic partnerships, July 2009. Read more on pages 4-5.*

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# Two tier support fund

Working effectively across different tiers of governance is a frequently cited challenge among LSPs in the South East, with most of the region covered by two-tier arrangements.

Developing clear lines of communication and accountability, identifying shared priorities and workstreams across diverse areas and managing performance are particularly complex within a two-tier context, given the large and often diverse geographies, the number of partners around the table, competing priorities, individual identities of place, and additional layers of governance.

District LSPs need to ensure that the Local Area Agreement (LAA) is meaningful for their locality, whilst county-level LSPs face the challenge of engaging local communities, ensuring the county-level SCS tells a cohesive story for the whole county, and holding partners across both tiers to account for delivery against LAA outcomes.

Now, with the economic downturn focusing attention on efficiencies and the spotlight on collaborative working through the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), there is an added drive for LSPs in two-tier areas to work more effectively together.

PtP is offering targeted support to a limited number of LSPs in two-tier areas to address some of these issues. The support, which will be tailored to local circumstances, will aim to provide external challenge and broker improved relationships where necessary.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact your PtP Area Lead or call the PtP team on 01962 840 664.



## Total Place...find out more

Total Place is about local public agencies developing more joined up and efficient services

Total Place is an initiative seeking to map all the flows of public expenditure in an area.

The 13 Total Place pilot areas are currently undertaking the high-level 'counting exercise' and are due to report shortly. There are two stages to the 'counting' process:

- an initial **high-level** counting of total public sector spending in each pilot place, to be conducted locally in the first phase of the project to provoke and stimulate challenge of local partners about how public money comes together; and
- a **deep dive** look in more detail at the public spending specific to the theme that each pilot chooses to focus on, linking directly with service transformation.

This is one of three complementary strands that make up Total Place: 'counting', 'culture' and 'customer needs.'

Next month, some of the early conclusions from the pilots will be fed back to the Treasury to inform the Pre-Budget Report, with more concrete proposals due early in the New Year to influence the Budget and

the next spending round. There will also be a series of Total Place fringe events at the party conferences throughout September and October.

Sir Michael Bichard, Executive Director of the Institute for Government and architect of Total Place, says: 'Total Place is not just another Whitehall initiative. It is about giving local providers the incentive to work together in new ways for the benefit of their clients and citizens – and the opportunity to tell Government how it could behave differently to make this kind of collaborative action more likely. As we enter a period when resources will inevitably be constrained, Total Place is also a chance for local agencies to 'get ahead' by examining how they can deliver better services at less cost. The hope is that Total Place will provide good experience to share about service improvement, suggestions about cost savings and proposals for changes in Central Government'.

A new website on Total Place from the Leadership Centre for Local Government was launched this month. It includes news, details of events and an on-line Community of Practice: [www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace](http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace).

# East Kent LSP recognising a live opportunity

The UK's first domestic high speed rail service (HS1) goes live next month and will drastically cut journey times from East Kent to the centre of London. It is a development that has the potential to touch the lives of everyone in East Kent.

Of course, it is not the only factor that will shape East Kent's future, but its importance and urgency have led to the LSP forging four key principles that will underpin new action planning throughout:

**Act boldly:** LSPs are no longer tentative or experimental. There is now a real expectation that they aim high with their ambitions and, in execution, punch above their weight.

**Act swiftly:** the experience of continental Europe is that major advances in transport infrastructure provide a 'halo' of economic and other opportunities for no more than four years. A wait-and-see approach won't do.

**Act together:** by committing itself to collaborative action on behalf of 500,000 people, East Kent LSP can wield influence far beyond the scope of its individual partners.

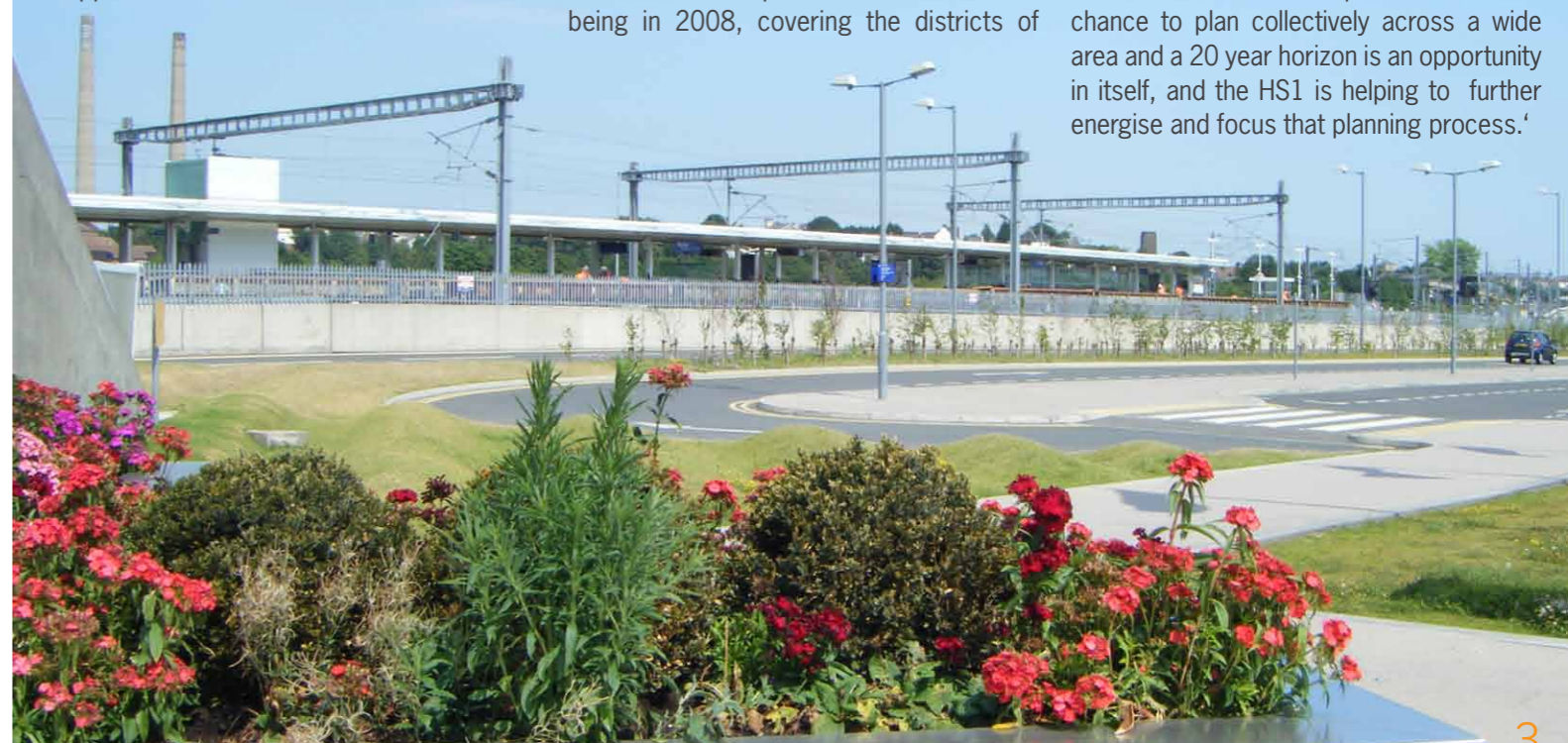
**Act on evidence:** unlocking the potential benefits of HS1 is too important for guesswork. EKLSP is therefore engaged in setting up 'think tanks', drawn in part from East Kent's thriving higher education sector, to harness the intellectual capital available locally and to invest it in future success.

The East Kent Local Strategic Partnership (EKLSP) came into being in 2008, covering the districts of



Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet, an area which is home to some 500,000 people. Working within the existing framework of strategic planning and two tier local government in Kent, the EKLSP has committed itself, in its Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), to the vision that 'by 2030, East Kent will have blended the best of its location, landscape, culture and heritage to build a lasting beacon of success for the benefit of all its communities.'

PtP Practitioner Associate David East is helping the East Kent LSP put its SCS into action. He says, 'My assignment with East Kent is to facilitate the action planning that will kick off SCS implementation. The chance to plan collectively across a wide area and a 20 year horizon is an opportunity in itself, and the HS1 is helping to further energise and focus that planning process.'



photos courtesy of MackenzieBlu via Flickr

# research backs partnership approach

The latest in a series of reports on LSPs is likely to prove as influential among policy-makers as its predecessors.



a culture of partnership working is becoming more embedded



33,102

654,129

70.5%

7,428

68.32%

42,837

34,201

7,765,134

805,026

The new report, published in July this year by a team of researchers from Liverpool John Moores University, the Office for Public Management (OPM) and consultant Davy Jones, presents findings from a national survey of LSPs in England in 2008. Surveys of LSPs have been commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) since 2002, and reports are published every two years.

'Our findings aren't rocket science and in a sense they tend to confirm what we already thought we knew anecdotally', says Davy Jones. 'However, results from earlier reports in this series have become part of accepted LSP wisdom – for example, concern about low member engagement. The reports haven't triggered major policy changes, but they have led to shifts in emphases.'

Although the self-reporting nature of the surveys create a risk of positive bias,

the emerging trends are very clear, and changes, for example in LSP membership, structure, and staff support time, are also identified. The survey has also shifted focus from process to outcomes: 'We made a conscious decision this time to cut down on questions about LSP composition and structure', says Davy.

### LSP initiatives

Perhaps one of the more useful questions was about examples of 'initiatives benefiting local people that would not have happened without the LSP.' Around half (46 per cent) of respondents reported that there were five or more such initiatives in their area, and a further 44 per cent reported up to five.

Although they vary widely, the examples suggest that LSPs are adding value:

- One LSP took up the issue of fuel poverty before it was widely highlighted by Government. It put together a scheme with all partners, which involved training home visitors to recognise fuel poverty when visiting homes, especially those of people over 60, and reporting incidents to a county telephone number for a visit by Warm Front;
- An LSP has introduced Outcomes Based Accountability (or Results Based Accountability), which helps the Thematic Partnerships target issues with simple solutions that can be measured in practical ways;
- One LSP has achieved better coordinated communication and engagement, including through a joint consultation contract for all LSP partners and the launch of a LSP-funded community TV channel to pass on partnership stories and news;

- An LSP has been instrumental in the development of a number of community groups with a diversity focus. In the towns of the district, it has supported the establishment of an African-Caribbean group and a multi-cultural forum, and in rural areas it has supported and funded a 'Meet the Nations' community project;
- One partnership has piloted innovative projects to better meet the transport needs of the more rural and disadvantaged communities in the borough. These projects have now been evaluated and have attracted mainstream and match-funding to sustain the services and extend them.

Significantly, 84 per cent of respondents agreed (or strongly agreed) that the benefits of LSPs outweigh their costs in time, energy and resources.

### OTHER KEY MESSAGES FROM THE SURVEY

- **Membership:** community network and private sector involvement has noticeably decreased; efficiency gains through more strategic and collaborative commissioning, and mapping partners spending programmes.
- **Leadership:** In some areas local authorities may be taking on a stronger role. The proportion of LSPs chaired by a senior elected member or local authority officer has risen and views about the roles that councillors play are largely positive;
- **District LSPs:** There was a clear sense that district LSPs feel they generally face greater difficulties, i.e. dealing with policies that do not seem designed to take them into account.
- **Main areas of progress:** developing a collective vision and co-ordinated strategy and understanding partners' priorities; joint funding of projects; leveraging in additional resources; and quality and efficiency gains through joint working;
- **Main challenges:** pooling budgets, mainstream co-commissioning,

The ability of the different partners to influence change in their own organisations towards achieving Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets is still seen to vary widely. However, significantly, across all LSPs and sectors there is a sense of progress since 2006, suggesting that a culture of partnership working is becoming more embedded.



## Views from an LSP partner

**Name:** Chief Superintendent Matthew Greening  
**Role:** Commander in charge of policing in Southampton

chair person for the Safe City Partnership thematic group. I am also a member of the Children's Trust and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. I've experienced partnership working in many different formats and in two tier and unitary authority areas. It's easy for the process to dominate over delivery and we all have to keep asking, 'What is the difference we are making to people who live and work in the City?'

“ We need to be more intelligence-led as a partnership, using problem-solving approaches more thoroughly, and accepting that progress takes time ”

Many LSP partners come from organisations with a hierarchical chain of accountability, whereas an LSP is considered a 'partnership of equals'. Do you think it requires a different approach to get results in the partnership environment?

Effective partnerships are as much about people as processes. In Southampton the LSP has developed over the last 1-2 years to become more business-like in the way it operates. There's a clearer plan for the City and that makes it easier to see how each thematic partnership contributes to that plan and to the City objectives. Then it's down to people to make it happen. We've recently revised our safety partnership so

that we have clearer executive leadership from senior partners. But you can't rely on the hierarchy of command. You have to be respectful of different organisational cultures and as a chair person you have to park some of what works in your own organisation and

“ It's easy for the partnership process to dominate over delivery and we all have to keep asking, 'What is the difference we are making to people who live and work in the City?' ”

be prepared to work differently to achieve outcomes. If you can find the common goals and benefits amongst colleagues and link that with some personal aspirations then you might have the will to find new solutions and to implement them.

Do you think working in partnership makes it easier to achieve Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets?

If you only do what is measured in a national indicator, or what is directly resourced or mandated, then you can be successful but only partially; and you are probably a long way short of what the combined partnership has the potential to do and maybe what the community you are serving really needs.

Could you give a practical example of partnership working contributing to safer communities?

One example is what we call CREW weeks: targeted Crime and Environment Weeks. No one told us to do them, there is no money for them, and they aren't a national measure. However, from a couple of individuals with an idea came a tactic which we have been

using for several years to improve the quality of the environment in some of our most needy areas. Many agencies and members of the community get out and make physical and environmental improvements alongside targeting criminals who operate in that area. Another example is the work we did last Halloween and Bonfire time when Police joined with other services, especially Fire and Rescue, and through some high profile patrolling and targeted work we reduced crime in one part of the City by 20 per cent on the previous year.

Some crime issues are very tough to solve. For us violence caused by alcohol is a difficult one. Police and the Council can use enforcement in different ways but that's not enough. We have to change habits about alcohol use. That's one area of work where the partnership is crucial: early and brief interventions, support to families and parents, school and health programmes etc – all these need partners to do their bit whilst Police target offenders and hot spots. We also need business and the media/entertainment industry on board too. If we mean it when we say we have had enough of people offending or being victims of alcohol, then we all need to find ways of turning that into effective and sustainable action.

What do you think the next big challenge for LSPs will be?

We need to be more intelligence-led as a partnership, using problem-solving approaches more thoroughly, and accepting that progress takes time. Too often political, organisational and budget timescales and deadlines lead to unrealistic expectations and short term solutions which don't work or aren't right for the problem, or may be right but can't be sustained. The problems caused by alcohol in Southampton and many other places have been created over many decades and they'll take many years to solve.

*The views of the author may not necessarily represent those of PtP and the Host Agencies, South East Employers and Shared Intelligence.*



## Building Better Lives

A new report calls for more effective partnership working to cut costs of housing in the recession. In its recent report *Building Better Lives* the Audit Commission says few councils recognise how a housing strategy can meet objectives beyond housing, or engage with a range of delivery partners. The wider cost savings of doing so can be significant:

- £1 spent on housing support for a vulnerable person saves nearly £2 in health services, tenancy failure, crime and residential care
- Spending as little as £2,000 on adaptations to help an elderly person stay in their own home can save £6,000 a year on care
- If only five per cent of empty homes could be brought back into use, councils could cut their annual homelessness costs by £½bn.

Some housing authorities are showing the way. For example, Kent County Council and neighbouring authorities are collaborating on the 'No Use Empty' partnership campaign, designed to reduce the number of empty homes in the county. To date, 530 have been brought back into use.

With the introduction of right to buy, stock transfer and new social housing being provided by housing associations, councils' role in managing substantial housing stocks is declining. Despite this, councils are still local housing authorities with statutory duties to make sure housing needs and problems are being addressed. *Building Better Lives* says that these duties now form the basis of a broader strategic housing role, which involves meeting the future needs of the local economy and supporting each area's Sustainable Community Strategy.

*Building Better Lives*, Audit Commission, 9th September 2009. Available online via the Audit Commission website.

# LSP MOVES

## Kent

**Geoff Miles** was appointed as the East Kent LSP Chairman at the end of April.

## Surrey

Surrey Strategic Partnership also has a new Chair: **Dr Andrew Povey**, new Leader of the County Council.

At Epsom & Ewell, the new LSP Chair is **Frances Rutter** (right), Chief Executive of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council.

**Chief Superintendent Steve Rodhouse** took on the chairmanship of Spelthorne Together in March this year.

## West Sussex

**Anita Wright**, Agency Manager of the Anchor Staying Put housing service, is now Chair of Crawley Together LSP.

**Adrian Barritt** from Adur Voluntary Action became the new Chair of Adur in Partnership in June this year.

Worthing Together LSP also has a new Chair – **Jane Claxton**, Worthing Community Partnership. She was formerly Vice Chair of the LSP.

## Buckinghamshire

The Leader of Chiltern District Council, **Cllr John Warder**, is now Chairman of the Chiltern Community Partnership.

## Berkshire

**Cllr Simon Weeks** (right) is the new Chair of Wokingham LSP, taking over from Cllr Dianne King in July.

The Chief Executive at Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, **Ian Trenholm**, is now the Chairman of the RBWM Partnership, with **Cllr Christine Bateson** as Vice Chair.

**Please help us keep up to date by letting us know about any changes within your LSP: [alison@seemp.co.uk](mailto:alison@seemp.co.uk)**



# PtP Events

## Total Place, shrinking public expenditure and the role and potential of partnerships

7th October 2009, 9.30 – 2.30  
Hollingbourne

The day will offer delegates the opportunity to consider and debate the Total Place approach, offering practical examples from the Kent pilot.

## Developing a partnership response to the recession

18th November 2009, 9.30 – 2.30  
Milton Keynes

This event will share the latest thinking on how partnerships are responding to the economic situation, highlighting the role that they can play.

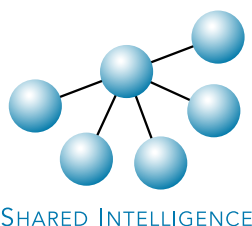
## PtP Annual Conference: The Future of Partnerships

4th December 2009, 9.30 – 4.00  
London

This conference will bring people together to consider the future of partnerships, and to share experiences of developing partnerships that deliver results.

## Attendance is free of charge for most PtP events.

To book a place, please email Janine at PtP: [janine@seemp.co.uk](mailto:janine@seemp.co.uk). For more information on PtP events, please see our website at [www.progressthroughpartnership.org.uk](http://www.progressthroughpartnership.org.uk)



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