

## 8. Local Strategic Partnership South Somerset Together – Annual Review

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### Action Required

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the Annual Review report on the Local Strategic Partnership as attached and consider whether it wishes to refer any comments to the District Executive.

### Background

At its last meeting the Committee agreed the scope for the Annual Review of the Local Strategic Partnership including the key questions that it wished to ask. The responses to the questions are set out in the attached report. The Committee is asked to consider the responses and decide whether it wishes to refer any comments on to the District Executive. It is suggested that in considering the responses the Committee may wish to particularly look at the following areas:

1. the delivery of the LSP's own objectives.
2. the linkage with the District Council's Corporate Objectives
3. value for money and resourcing issues.
4. any possible areas where the LSP could develop or look at improvements.

### Background Papers

None

# Local Strategic Partnership South Somerset Together – Annual Review Report

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## 1. Composition of the Local Strategic Partnership, South Somerset Together

Independent Chairman – Paull Robathan

Public Sector	Voluntary & Community Sector	Business Sector
Cllr Tim Carroll – Leader SSDC Phil Dolan – Chief Exec SSDC Mark Pollock – Corporate Director James Rimmer – YD Hospital Angie Gray – Connexions Cllr Justin Robinson – SCC Trudi Grant – Somerset PCT Nikki Watson – Police James Hampton – Yeovil College Mark Stone – SCC Brian Payne – Env Agency Peter Smart – Fire Service Cllr Tony Fife – SSDC Area South & Community Safety Portfolio Holder Cllr Mike Lewis – SSDC Area East Portfolio Holder Cllr Kim Turner – SSDC Area West Portfolio Holder Cllr Patrick Palmer – SSDC Area North Portfolio Holder	David Mansfield – Director of Housing, SSH Sam Healy – CVS Monica Carrier – CAB Joe Burlington – South Somerset Climate Change Group	Julie Pilbeam – Augusta Westland Nicolas Webbe – Yeovil Chamber of Trade Stuart Annett – Business Link

## 2. Main Functions of the Partnership

- South Somerset Together is one of a national network of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)
- Non-Statutory/non-Executive body (an unincorporated association)
- Such Partnerships have been set up in almost all Local Authority areas across the country.
- Remit is to “lead and influence the delivery of services and objectives as a conduit for change to improve the social/economic environmental education, health & safety needs of the communities within in South Somerset”. Other functions include:
  - To prepare, implement and monitor a 5-year rolling programme to deliver a Sustainable Community Strategy for South Somerset and, in particular
  - Analyse and use existing consultation or commission any additional research to address gaps in existing information
  - Through SSDC, the Lead Authority, allocate funding to address and pilot new and innovative ways of working
  - Defining measurable indicators and actions to address the issues

- Consulting with communities as a reality check on the actions in the Sustainable Community Strategy
- The Local Government White Paper envisages a key and growing role for LSP's to lead "place shaping" and cross cutting responses to local needs across agencies through the mechanism of Local Area Agreements.

A full copy of the Constitution is available on the website.

### **3. LSP Funding**

- Since 2004 the LSP has received 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes funding through the County Council and District Council.
- This year £198,770 made up of £156,800 from the County Council and £41,970 from SSDC.
- The Police have declined to put their proportion of 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes funding into the Partnership from the outset.
- Each partner puts in support in kind in various ways to the LSP, principally through officer time.
- Partners also match fund priority work on a case-by-case basis, depending on the partners whose own objectives will also be taken forward by fulfilling LSP priorities.

### **4. Maturity of the Partnership - where it sits in partnership lifecycle**

- Still developing!
- Formed in June 2001 and so is well established.
- Over the last year it has been evaluating its performance and adjusting its structures in order to be more effective. In particular:
  - Appointed an independent Chairperson, October 2006
  - Developed a performance management framework and self-evaluation tool, which will be implemented when the new Sustainable Community Strategy is adopted, in order to make sure that the Partnership is fit to deliver its Action Plan arising from the Strategy and has the right membership and structures to assist with this
  - A working group of technical representatives meets between meetings to appraise project bids, comment on the effectiveness of projects that have been implemented and develop a forward programme for the Partnership's work.
  - The working group also looks at examples of best practice from other LSPs and brings back proposals to the Board

### **5. A Clear Long-term Vision of what needs to be Achieved Agreed by All**

- The Sustainable Community Strategy is currently out for consultation on the draft Trends, Key Issues, Vision and Goals.
- In the autumn, the Partnership will put together its Strategy and Delivery Plan, which will provide the clear long-term vision for the Partnership.
- At the present time, priorities are set annually and have been based on Local Area Agreement targets and some particular local issues not featuring in the current LAA document.

### **6. Are Roles & Responsibilities Identified and Understood by Partners?**

- There is not a separate delineation of roles and responsibilities, as all partners come to the table equally with hosting via SSDC.
- A new partner joining South Somerset Together will receive an induction pack, which explains the history and role of the Partnership including the current constitution and structures, etc.

- All aware that SSDC, as lead body, has a distinct role in hosting the Partnership, acting as employer to the LSP Coordinator and accounting for the spending of LSP allocated resources.
- SSDC also has a statutory responsibility to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy (although this doesn't have to be done through a device of a Local Strategic Partnership).

## **7. & 8. SSDC Representation and Role**

- See above
- The Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Director for Economic Vitality.
- Portfolio Holders have been co-opted as follows:  
4 Area Portfolio Holders (Cllr Fife also holding the Community Safety portfolio)
- Cllr Angie Singleton is on the Board but as the Chair of the Health & Well Being Partnership and its sub group the Community Sports Network
- A wide range of officers support the SST, notably the Area Heads of Service, Corporate Director for Health & Well Being and the Corporate Research Officer. Other officers get involved in programme development and Partnership work on a subject-by-subject basis.

## **9. What is the Relationship Between LSP and the Somerset Strategic Partnership?**

- District LSP Chairs sit on the Somerset Strategic Partnership, as do District Council Leaders and Chief Executives.
- With the establishment of the Local Area Agreement in 2006, a whole range of block sub-groups have been established to take forward targets set in the LAA.
- This has led to a re-structuring of the SSP sub-groups and the current governance arrangements are set out in the diagram attached
- SST not represented on the multi-disciplinary steering group, but having representation on the various blocks, with Paull Robathan vice chair of the Healthy and Stronger Communities theme block.
- A new Environmental Leaders group has been formed and the SST representative on this group is Joe Burlington of the South Somerset Climate Change group.
- See diagram in appendix 2

## **10. What is the Role of the Ward Member in the LSP?**

- Ward Members have a critical role to play in local community and parish planning,
- Supporting and encouraging communities to develop a long-term of the future of their area and taking a range of actions to address local needs, including lobbying service providers to better meet the needs of their communities.
- The Area Portfolio Holder on behalf of the Area Committee carries representation on the LSP of local issues coming up from the Ward level forward.
- Ward Members have been consulted as part of the Sustainable Community Strategy process.
- Section 5 of the White Paper, Local Government as Strategic Leader & Place Shaper, states very clearly that elected members at all levels should be more involved in LSP activities, be it through the relevant Thematic Partnership or at the LSP itself.
- The White Paper stresses LSPs as being the overall Strategic Partnership, with a manageable number of Key Thematic Partnerships to deliver agreed Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA priorities.
- It also stresses the need for reshaped public services around local citizens and communities that use them. Ward Members are well placed to emphasise the importance of a sense of place and working in partnership focusing on whole areas,

not individual services. They are also well placed to encourage service providers to work together across services and geographic boundaries.

- (Many of the provisions under the new White Paper regarding LSPs have not been translated through into the face of the draft legislation but that has not affected the strong emphasis placed on LSPs by DCLG – for example in the response to the County Unitary bid and also in the revised governance arrangements and ‘duty to cooperate’ placed on all authorities for the new LAA)

### **11. LSP’s Contribution to the Delivery of Corporate Aims & Objectives**

- Priorities developed through the LSP are mainly focused around achieving LAA targets and other local priorities expressed through the Corporate Plan and other strategic documents
- For all proposals going forward for LSP financial support, the potential contribution to Corporate Aims & Objectives is assessed, alongside LAA impact and other key strategic documents
- All programmes sponsored by the LSP are required to produce evaluation reports to see the extent to which they met their original objectives and performance indicators.

### **12. Ensuring LSP Membership is the Right Balance of Organisations**

- SST constantly monitoring its membership
- Has co-opted in the last 12 months
  - South Somerset Homes - Registered Social Landlord representative
  - Joe Burlington from the South Somerset Climate Change Group.
  - Sponsored the South Somerset Association for Voluntary & Community Action Ltd, to form a voluntary sector reference group with a view to getting stronger representation from this sector.
  - The Area Portfolio Holders now represent the broader interest of the parishes and towns across their areas, on the Partnership.
- Have encouraged the formation of a South Somerset Equalities Forum and anticipate membership through this route in due course.
- Meeting with Business Link and Yeovil Chamber of Trade, to look at ways of strengthening links with the business sector.
- Balance to be struck between keeping a manageable Board size and ensuring a broadly representative voice through LSP membership. Thematic sub groups are a good way of doing this and this work will be progressed as the County wide procedures for increased governance of the LAA are embedded during late 2007/early 2008.

### **13. Are there further Agencies that would Add Value to the Work of the LSP?**

- We are looking at this presently, for example, adding a cultural representative who also links through to the LAA Thematic group.
- Some of the more regional bodies are difficult to engage, but would definitely add value eg: The Regional Development Agency who sit at the County level but don’t get involved at the local level. Another is the Learning & Skills Council (again at County SSP level already). Faith groups are represented at County SSP level and are also part of the community and voluntary sector representative group work mentioned earlier.

### **14. Reviewing the Effectiveness of Partners in Terms of Their Contribution to Achieving Objectives.**

- A partnership health check has been developed and it is intended to use this once the Strategy is nearing completion, to ensure that the structures we have and the agencies around the table are the right ones to deliver the Strategy.
- Not sure that this would assess the relative effectiveness of different Partners but the gap analysis for the Strategy should help with this

**15. How does LSP know that its work has a positive impact on the services provided in the community?**

- Through monitoring and evaluation of individual sponsored programmes
- Feed back from members and affected groups
- Continued strong and visible support from partners and agencies

**16. What consultation mechanisms are in place to ensure that that the LSP is aware of and responding to community need and expectation?**

- Audit of Parish and Community Plans
- Meetings are open to public and regular press on the LSP's work
- Publicly promoted AGM
- Consultation on Strategy and subsequently.
- Web site - in process of being re launched with interactive forum facility

**17. How does it ensure that it is not duplicating work being done elsewhere?**

- We rely on partners to flag up strategic fit with other related work and often challenge proposals that do not appear to have “clocked” related work going on.
- The mission of the LSP is to actively NOT duplicate other mainstream work but take bold and imaginative strides in to new areas while gaining early commitment from partners that effective pilots will be mainstream funded by our partner agencies when the projects report success.

**18. LSP Performance over last 12 Months**

Done well	Could have been done differently
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of strong focus on communication/ promotion of SST work- much better profile in media</li> <li>• High profile independent Chair has helped to bring more players on board</li> <li>• First consultation document for sustainable Community Strategy has been well received. Link with LDF is recognised as national best practice.</li> <li>• Launch of key initiatives like Newtosomerset and Market Towns Investment Group</li> <li>• Some really innovative strands of work progressing well: eg Enforcement Audit, Chard Connect,</li> <li>• Adoption of clear self evaluation framework and performance management framework for implementing new Strategy</li> <li>• Created a focus on delivering LAA targets locally through special seminar- the first in the county</li> <li>• Clearer relationships with sub groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relaunch of web site is now 6m behind target due to encountered technical difficulties and staff shortages</li> <li>• Strategy work has taken much longer/ greater resources than expected due to scale of task, t/o of project team members and need to integrate with other documents such as LDF</li> <li>• Sponsored programmes have in the past been prone to drift and not sufficient focus on tangible outcomes (we have revamped appraisal and evaluation method to address this)</li> <li>• Further strengthening of membership to make it more representative of different sectors (this work is in hand)</li> </ul>



## 19. Staff / Other Resources

Dedicated Staff	LSP Co-ordinator – now full time from July 2007
Partnership budget (SSDC and SCC transfer of second homes money)	£198,770 for 2007/08
Budget of member bodies for use by partnership	None
Other in kind support	Time allocated from SSDC/ College research officer Time given by members of working group Time of staff allocated to Project team developing strategy

## 20. How does the LSP ensure that its work follows the agreed outcomes and contributes to achieving the Community Strategy?

- The first Community Strategy did not have a delivery plan or performance management framework. The new Sustainable Community Strategy will have this.
- All current programmes state which elements will contribute to Strategy or LAA targets. Regular monitoring reports and final evaluation report track progress/ outcome. As mentioned above these arrangements have recently been significantly tightened up.

## 21. To which Authorities / Organisations is the LSP accountable?

- SST is a not a Statutory body. It is a non-executive partnership.
- It works co-operatively with all its powers exercised via SSDC as the accountable body
- Annual Scrutiny reports are produced for SSDC and available to SCC and other partners.
- SST is accountable to local people through its AGM the first of which was held in June 2007. Its meetings are held in public and a high PR profile is now making sure a wider public is aware not only the LSP exists but what it does and why.

## 22. How does the LSP ensure that the wider community is aware of its work?

- Regular press/ media coverage
- Open meetings and AGM
- Web site
- Consultation on Sustainable Community Strategy.
- In person visits by Chair, members or officers as appropriate at the County LAWP, Parish and Town Councils.

## 23. Any examples of how the LSP has adapted as a result of what it has learnt from best practice and how it is constantly seeking to improve and develop

- Appointment of independent Chair with clearly defined role and remuneration in line with (and contributing to) best practice nationally
- New arrangements for programme appraisal, management and evaluation based on good practice elsewhere
- Chairman and Co-ordinator part of County and national LSP networks and attend relevant seminars and events which share good practice

## 24. How often are the Aims of the LSP reviewed and evaluated by Partners and the community?

- Partner review and major revamp of the role of the SST (constitution) in spring 2006
- The next major review of aims is the adoption of the Sustainable Community Strategy later this year. Community consultation is an important part of this process.
- The Partnership has yet to decide how often the Strategy will be revised and updated but this will be on a roll forward programme of a 5 year delivery plan

**25. Does the LSP have a robust Performance Management Framework which includes clear Milestones, stated Outcomes and Target Dates?**

- This is in place for individual sponsored programmes supported this year but some earlier ones did not have this clearly set down
- A new framework, drawn from national best practice, will apply to the whole delivery plan for the new Strategy to be adopted later this year

**26. What are the implications of the chair of the LSP being an Elected Member and a Portfolio Holder of SSDC – does this in anyway compromise the independence / transparency of the LSP?**

- Only performance in the role can answer this.
- The appointment was done to a job description and candidate specification as the LSP wanted to appoint the best person for the role whatever their background or other responsibilities elsewhere
- In the role the Chair has to demonstrate an adherence to the brief and no doubt will be judged by an ability to “wear the right hat”
- The appointment was made on an arms length basis totally separate from elected responsibilities and is not ‘in the gift’ of Council or dependent on being an elected member.

**27. What role does the Regional Assembly play in the LSP ?**

- None directly, regional policy has a bearing on the Strategy due to framework documents like the Regional Spatial Strategy which we have to take into account, as do the Regional Development Agency and Government Office for the South West responsibilities.

**28. Are the Aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy set too far in the future to be realistic?**

- No, although it does depend on what the question means by ‘realistic’, They are long term goals and aspirations clearly representing the wishes of the many communities of interest involved. As with any long term plan, such as the District Council’s Corporate Plan, some activities can be defined as short term, others are more aspirational.
- A regularly revisited short-term delivery plan will show a base line position and some realistic milestones and indicators which will be used to gauge progress towards the wider goals (such as carbon neutrality – too important to leave out, impossible to deliver in a short time frame; subsidiary targets will be developed on the road to completion of the broad objective).

**29. Provide an up to date list of all LSP Members and Representatives**

- The member list is the answer to question 1. There are also a number of supporting officers
- A structure chart appendix 1 shows the relationship with sub groups

**30. What is SSDC’s Financial Contribution to the LSP and how do we ensure Value for Money?**

- See answer to question 3.
- SSDC has a statutory duty to produce a sustainable community strategy. The SST is the mechanism used. The performance of the Strategy and how well that contributes to corporate aims etc. will be the test
- We are the only LSP in the County to top slice second homes money to fund core costs like the LSP co-ordinator. In this way we believe our relationship with other



partners is more egalitarian and the South Somerset LSP is a cohesive and balanced group that is recognised both locally and nationally.

### **31. What is SSDC's Contribution in terms of officer time and support and how do we ensure Value for Money?**

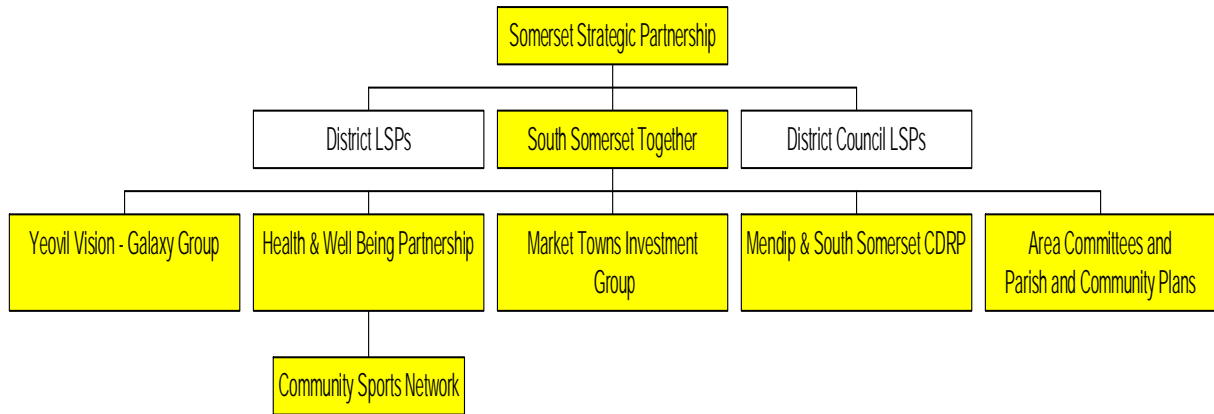
- For list of main support officers see question 8
- See point in 30 above about staffing. We would estimate that other staff time on core work of the LSP normally equates to another FTE, and this level of work is consistent with both expectations and the clearly defined responsibility of the District Council to produce and support a Community Strategy in some way or other.
- Due to the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy work has been far higher over the last year, and this has been balanced by significant officer and member time from all the other partners including the PCT, Police, County Council, Voluntary and Community Sector, Yeovil College, Yeovil Hospital, and Connexions.
- Initiatives developed by the LSP and now mainstreamed at District such as the Market Town Vision and others mark real contributions to corporate objectives. The linkage to the Local Development Framework is a national exemplar.

### **Background Papers**

None

APPENDIX 1

### South Somerset Together Structure Chart



# Somerset Strategic Partnership Governance & Performance Arrangements

Agreed: 10 November 2006

