

Scrutiny Committee – 30th November 2010

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

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Purpose of the Report

This is a report to update members on the activities of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the district from the last report to Scrutiny Committee in September 2009. Paull Robathan, Chairman of South Somerset Together will be presenting this report to members.

The appendices for this report have been sent out under separate cover.

Action Required

That members note the progress of the Local Strategic Partnership in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy (2008-2026) and that it achieved Best Local Strategic Partnership in the country for 2010 in the Community Partnerships Awards.



Background

South Somerset Together is a non-statutory, non-executive body (an unincorporated association), with an independent Chairman, a full-time Coordinator and a membership of 35 individuals representing 24 public, private and voluntary sector organisations from across the district that meet six times a year. There have been no new partner organisations to the LSP in 2009/10.

A main function of the LSP is to lead and influence the delivery of services and objectives as a conduit for change to improve the quality of life in South Somerset. Key to this is the development and implementation of *Shaping South Somerset – a Strategy for Sustainable Communities* that links with the current development of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2010-2026) and the Somerset Local Area Agreement Indicators (2008-2011).

All Partners have agreed to collaborate to address shared priorities together but retain their independent corporate status and therefore the Partners work by mutual cooperation, with SSDC acting as the host and lead body. This reflects national good practice.

In 2009/10 the LSP agreed to work more closely with SSDC's Scrutiny Committee by implementing recommendations made in the Audit Commissions Report: *Working better together? Managing local strategic partnerships* (April 2009) that contained a booklet: *Key messages for councils' overview and scrutiny function*. The result of this was the adoption by the LSP of an Action Plan that is monitored by the LSP's Working Group.

Funding

Since 2004 the LSP has received 2nd Homes income from Somerset County Council and SSDC. SSDC is the Accountable Body for the LSP. The contribution from SSDC to the LSP has been £48,000 in 2010/11. In 2008, the County Council changed its funding arrangement for the LSP by limiting the amount available to the 2nd Homes contribution from SSDC in 2007/8. In 2008 this was £43,429. In 2010 this has increased to £44,510 and the LSP produced an Investment Plan, which was approved by Somerset Strategic Partnership's Joint Implementation Team on 1st December 2009. Most of the SSDC allocation is used to fund the core activities of the partnership including remuneration to the Chairman and the LSP Coordinator.

SCC has withdrawn all future funding for the district LSPs from March 2010. SSDC has not committed to funding the LSP to 2011/12.

An annual report of the LSP's funding for the financial year 2009-2010 is in **Appendix One**.

Activity of the LSP 2009/10

1. General Activity

The activity of the LSP includes:

1.1. **Championing sustainability**

- The LSP adopted the Sustainable Community Strategy on 26th September 2008 and started delivery in April 2009 through 7 pump-priming projects all of which were completed by the end of 2009. (Affordable Housing Site ID Project: Phase 2 is still active as the Registered Social Landlords are engaged in bringing four sites to the development ready stage). The LSP agreed (in May 2009) to focus attention on 22 Strategic Priorities in SCS for 2009/10 and 17 (in July 2010) for 2010/11 (**Appendix Two**);
- Taking a lead in championing sustainability across the district, South Somerset Together held its fourth Annual General Meeting in June 2010, which included an Annual Report on progress made in 2009/10 (**Appendix Three**);
- The LSP hosted and attended events to raise awareness of sustainability for example by attending the Montacute Food Fayre in 2009 and in partnership with the Somerset Waste Partnership held the *Make Money by Reducing Waste* event for businesses in March 2010;
- Producing the leaflets *Less Carbon...More Living* (for everyone) and *Make Money...by Reducing Carbon* (for businesses) (**Appendices Four & Five**);
- The LSP is working closely with SSDC's Planning Policy to ensure that spatial aspects of the Sustainable Community Strategy influence the emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy. LSP Partners have formed a new LSP sub-group to develop an Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- The LSP hosted a Climate Change Adaptation Workshop in February 2010 for LSP Partner organisations to learn how to take account of adaptation in decision-making, corporate and service plans.

1.2. **Commenting or lobbying on local, regional and national issues**

- The LSP played an active role in South Somerset's process for developing the four proposals submitted to the Local Government Association (as Selector for the Government) under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 that were

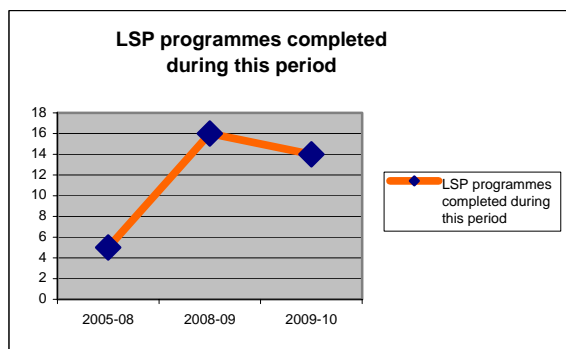
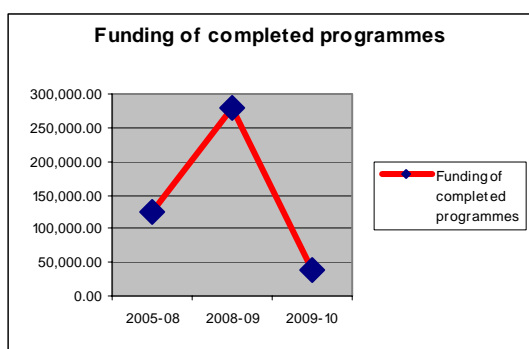
successfully shortlisted. The new Government has said that it will consider these shortlisted proposals;

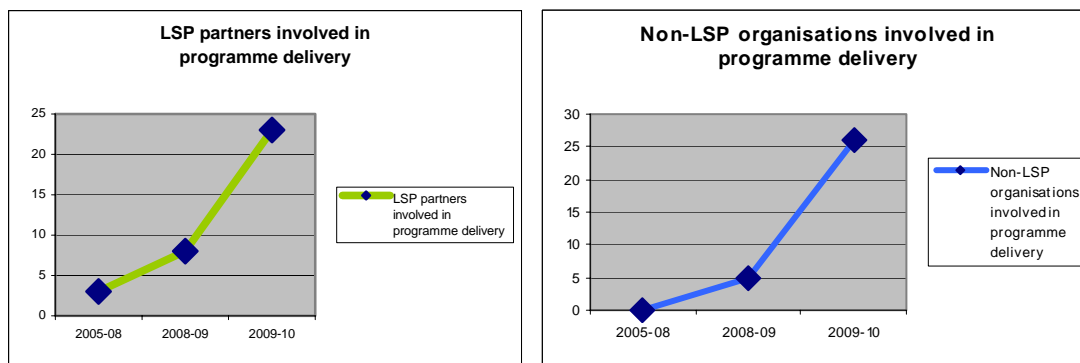
- The LSP has raised awareness of issues and responded to them on behalf of Partners for example the LSP supported the recommendations of its VCS Forum in the recent revision of the Somerset Compact to have a mechanism by which VCS groups and organisations can voice their concerns to funding organisations when funding is suddenly stopped;
- The LSP proactively created a mechanism by which the district’s representatives on the Somerset Strategic Partnership Themed Sub-groups could comment to the LSP Board on implications of decisions and discussions at County level and vice versa;
- The LSP is a member of *LSP Futures* a national network of LSPs that represent the role of LSPs to Government departments and offers advice and support;
- The LSP offers advice and support to a range of other LSPs locally and nationally for example the LSP participated in a Peer Review of Sedgemoor District Council’s LSP and answers issues such as how to manage performance of the SCS as in recently to Maidstone District Council;
- The LSP participates in consultation by regional and national bodies on the structure and function of LSPs. A recent example was a request for representation on the LSP Board for the Equality strands by South West Equality.

1.3. Commissioning programmes that address priorities

The LSP is currently supporting a range of activities linked to delivering shared commitments in the Sustainable Community Strategy. In 2009/10 the LSP completed its 7 pump-priming projects from previous year’s funding. The LSP annually reviews the priorities in the SCS. This was considered in a workshop on 16th July 2010 Board meeting. A table with the details of the current activities supported by the LSP and the priorities for 2010/11 is included in **Appendix Two**. The **added value** of the LSP is evidenced by:

- The reduction in funding available and used for programmes commissioned by the LSP;
- The increase in LSP Partner commitment to and participation in the programmes;
- The increase in the range of programmes being delivered;
- Despite reduced funding being made available for programmes the LSP has been able to draw into the district funding for core elements of work to enable the SCS to be delivered;
- It should be noted that all the actions in the SCS relate to issues that have been resistant to the consistent efforts of Partners in the district, and therefore any progress in tackling them is a real achievement.





In addition, the LSP is perfectly placed to enable Partners from all sectors to respond quickly and work together on joint bids for funding. The LSP pulled together a countywide bid for improving insulation and the health of residents living in Park Homes from Local Area Agreement PRG Funding through Somerset County Council early in 2010 but it was not successful. The Migrant Impact Funding project which was a joint bid last year to support migrant workers in the county has had its second year funding reduced but this will not affect the existing programme in South Somerset which will be delivered.

2. Improving the LSP's Governance and structure

2.1. LSP Self-Assessment & Action Plan

The LSP Partners are committed to improving its overall effectiveness. To this end they carried out a detailed Self-Assessment and approved three priority actions in May 2009. The Action Plan for these priorities is monitored by the LSP's Working Group, which meets bi-monthly. This has led to the revision of the LSP's Communications Strategy.

2.2. Equality Impact Assessment and Equality Statement

The LSP has produced an Equality Impact Assessment and Action Plan that was adopted in November 2009 and is monitored by the LSP's Working Group and the South Somerset Corporate Equality Steering Group on a regular basis. A key action from this is to develop and adopt an Equality Statement for the LSP by the end of 2010. In addition, an Equality Risk Assessment methodology has been developed to enable Partners to measure the impact on equality of activities to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy.

2.3. Managing Performance and Risk

In 2008, the LSP formed a new sub-committee to manage performance and risk. The LSP's Performance Monitoring Sub-Committee (PMSC) closely monitors the agreed activities under the Sustainable Community Strategy and any pump priming or pooled budgets, being delivered by Partners. The SCS Strategic Priorities and Actions have been added to SSDC's TEN system. The PMSCA considers all of these in detail at its bi-monthly meetings and reports to the Board actions for comment or concern to the Board. The full performance-monitoring database is available to Partners as an appendix in the agenda for each Board meeting.

In 2009 the LSP Board asked the PMSC to consider why the Green Business Project did not achieve all its outcomes in terms of engaging as many businesses in the programme offered as was hoped. The Lead Partner and Project Officer discussed the issues with

the members of the PMSC and an alternative approach to engaging businesses during a difficult period of recession was considered and has informed the delivery of future activities of the LSP.

2.4. “Working better together? Managing Local Strategic Partnerships” (April 2009)

In April 2009 the Audit Commission produced a long-awaited guidance document for LSPs. Included in this was the booklet *Key messages for councils’ overview and scrutiny functions*. The booklet outlined ways that LSPs and Scrutiny Committees could work together to improve communication, learning and outcomes. In view of this the following has happened:

- A meeting was held between SSDC’s Scrutiny Chair, Vice-Chairs and Scrutiny Manager and the LSP’s Lead Officer and Coordinator to improve understanding of how the LSP brings added value to the work of individual partner organisations including SSDC;
- 3. A meeting of the LSP Chair and Scrutiny Chair with officers to agree the implementation of the proposals in the booklet;
- The development of a shared Action Plan (which the LSP adopted in November 2009) of how the LSP and Scrutiny Committee can work together more closely which is monitored by the LSP Coordinator and Scrutiny Manager (**Appendix Six**).



4. Delivering the South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

The LSP does not replicate or replace the function and activities of its member partner organisations. On the contrary, the aim is to add value to what is already happening in the district either by identifying a gap and commissioning work to address this or by working in innovative ways together to address particularly resistant issues.

It is a statutory requirement for the district to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) that draws together the trends, issues and needs across all areas of life into one comprehensive document. It was completed in 2008 and adopted by South Somerset Together on 26th September 2008 and by SSDC’s Full Council on 30th October 2008, and is available on the South Somerset Together website (<http://www.southsomersettogether.org.uk>). To deliver against the ambitious 35 Strategic Priorities and 50 Actions of the Strategy has required:

- Written commitment by the LSP Partners to the SCS and specific Actions which they will commit to delivering;
- The agreement by Partners of Priorities for 2010/11 with a wide range of activities to support these;
- SSDC has included all of the Actions in its Our Targets Insert 2009/10 of the revised Corporate Plan.

5. Collating evidence of Trends and Issues for an accurate picture of South Somerset

Underpinning the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is a *Trends and Issues* document based on evidence from a whole range of sources. The aim is to identify the

current issues and future trends, what the drivers are for these and what needs to be done to address these. It will therefore inform the SCS delivery and LSP Partners' focus of delivery. The original document was completed, consulted on and adopted in 2007. The revised edition should be complete by the end of 2010.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications in accepting this report.

Appendices:

Appendix One: Financial Report 2009-2010

Appendix Two: Annual Report 2010

Appendix Three: Summary of completed and current LSP Programmes

Appendix Four: Leaflet: *Less Carbon...More Living*

Appendix Five: Leaflet: *Make Money...by Reducing Carbon*

Appendix Six: LSP and Scrutiny Action Plan (as at August 2010)

Background papers:

1: SST Constitution and Terms of Reference (www.southsomersettogether.org.uk).
