

## Camden Local Strategic Partnership

<b>Meeting</b>	14 October 2010
<b>Report Title</b>	Discussion paper on developing a new model of partnership in Camden
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<b>Purpose</b>	To outline the context for a changing landscape for partnership working in Camden and the opportunities it presents to create a more agile and flexible approach to our partnerships which will add value and deliver our strategic priorities.
<b>Recommendations</b>	The LSP is asked: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To consider the opportunities and ideas for reshaping the LSP.</li></ul>

## 1 Summary

1.1 This discussion paper sets out the changing landscape for partnership working in the borough and the implications for Camden's Local Strategic Partnerships. It provides a starting point for LSP members to explore the opportunities for reshaping the LSP in light of the significant reductions in regulation from government and the corresponding freedom to organise our partnerships differently.

## 2 Background

2.1 Camden's Local Strategic Partnership has been in existence since 2002. It is the overarching forum for strategic discussion among the borough's key stakeholders. The LSP is a non-statutory body, however it has responsibility for overseeing the statutory Sustainable Community Strategy. Published in 2007, the community strategy sets out the shared partnership vision for the borough to 2012.

2.2 The partnership is comprised of senior representatives of the significant public sector bodies (council, PCT, police, fire, JCP), VCS, business and other significant Camden interest groups (registered social landlords and higher education).

2.3 The LSP is a strategic, not a decision making, body. It does not have delegated responsibilities over budgets or commissioning decisions. Decisions that are taken at the LSP must be ratified by Cabinet and partners' management boards for them to be enacted.

2.4 To date, the business of the LSP has been significantly driven by central government requirements to oversee the community strategy, monitor the Local Area Agreement and prepare the partnership for the Comprehensive Area Assessment. Since 2008, the LSP has also focussed on the impact of

the recession on Camden's people and businesses and the subsequent constraints on public finances.

- 2.5 Meetings are also an opportunity to update on thematic partnership activity via verbal feedback from each link member. The LSP has provided a place for collective sharing of information across thematic partnerships, at times helping to join up pieces of work. As a matter of practice, the LSP does not directly commission work from the thematic partnerships or direct them to undertake certain actions.
- 2.6 The thematic partnerships are:
- Community Safety Partnership
  - Children's Trust Partnership Board
  - Health and Well-being Board
  - Economic Development Partnership
  - Sustainability Partnership (subject to agreement at 14 October LSP meeting)
- 2.7 We also have two forums which were instigated by the LSP to address particular issues in the borough: the Social Cohesion Forum and the Climate Change Alliance.

### **3 Context for developing partnership arrangements**

- 3.1 Since May, the coalition government has announced a number of policy shifts that have implications for the size, focus and function of public services generally and for bodies such as PCTs specifically. Measures have also been introduced which will impact directly on partnerships and partnership working in Camden.
- 3.2 Proposals in the Health White Paper would bring new responsibilities, and statutory footing, to the Health and Wellbeing Board which is likely to necessitate changes in remit and membership. Similarly, the government is pursuing changes that will impact on Children's Trust arrangements and Community Safety Partnerships. Legislation is currently before parliament that will remove the statutory requirement to produce a children and young people's plan and DfE have indicated plans to remove the requirement to set up Children's Trusts Boards and withdraw statutory guidance. The Home Office plan to repeal some regulations relating to Community Safety Partnerships in order to increase flexibility, but the statutory duty on partners to work together will remain.
- 3.3 Little has been said nationally about LSPs. The government's approach here seems more laissez faire; if places want to continue with their LSPs then they are free to do so. However, government has removed many of the past drivers for LSP business such as CAA and LAAs and the 'watching' establishment around LSPs such as the Audit Commission and Government Offices. Whilst nothing has yet been said about removing the statutory basis for sustainable community strategies, given the reduction of statutory plans elsewhere, this has to be considered a strong possibility.
- 3.4 Locally, the creation of a new sustainability partnership is a priority and proposals will be brought to the October meeting of the LSP. This will add to the current LSP landscape. Proposals are also being brought to the LSP on

steps to reshape the Economic Development Partnership into a more strategic body with enhanced business representation.

- 3.5 These developments make for a shifting and uncertain landscape for partners and partnership working, and also a rationale for fewer process-oriented meetings responding to a centrally set regulatory framework. It creates space to focus conversations between partners on more strategic 'Camden issues'. This gives us an opportunity to rethink the way we enable those conversations, building a more agile and flexible model that will be responsive to Camden's priorities.

#### **4 Developing an innovative model for partnership working**

- 4.1 Camden is committed to partnership working, particularly during this more challenging time for the public sector. LSP members are asked to consider ideas about moving Camden's partnership landscape into a different, more flexible model that is more agile and fit for purpose in facilitating effective partnership working in the difficult years ahead. The deregulation initiative of the coalition government offer us an opportunity that we should seize – to remove processes that we recognise duplicate effort with little value and introduce a model that feels different and is conducive to facilitating strategic debate and direction.
- 4.2 This could involve strengthening the active thematic partnerships whose business would be focussed on delivering outcomes against the borough's priorities. In this more agile model of partnership working, time limited groups could also be created to take forward particular issues that might sit outside the remit of the thematic partnerships. This would also provide an opportunity to review the membership of the groups to ensure they include all key players, including the voluntary sector.
- 4.3 The formal LSP could be remodelled around a coordination role with the Leader of the Council and Chairs or other representatives of thematic groups and a representative of the voluntary sector. This group and the Leader would have responsibility for strategic overview of partnerships in the borough and convening larger partnership events focussing on big issues for the borough with influential speakers. This group could meet quarterly to review the strategic agenda.
- 4.4 This innovative approach seizes the opportunity offered by a reduction in regulation and shows that we are able to demonstrate added value through our partnership working. It offers a real opportunity to lift the bureaucracy and shift to a more strategic position.
- 4.5 The commitment to partnership would remain. Reshaping the LSP supports that position and demonstrates that Camden is responding on all levels to the impact of less resource. As a partnership, we need to demonstrate added value to all that we do. This is an opportunity to be innovative in our solution, removing a static upper layer whilst strengthening the delivery layer (which the sustainability and EDP proposals and future changes to the Health and Well-Being Board will do). It creates capacity and energy to have focused time limited groups on issues that might be at risk of falling between the gaps.

- 4.6 The larger scale partnership events focusing on big issues, with influential speakers, will also give us an opportunity to have big conversations with our wider partners and stakeholders.
- 4.7 Ensuring that links with partners are maintained and relationships are valued and developed does not require regular LSP meeting for that to happen. Under a new Camden model of partnerships, thematic partnerships – where Camden’s partners are substantially represented – would forge closer understanding that can be achieved through our current model of process-led meetings.

## **5 Next steps**

- 5.1 Further detail can be developed around a Camden model of partnership working, informed by the LSP discussions.