

Local Strategic Partnership Future Vision. January 2011.

During December 2010 Camden Community Empowerment Network hosted a seminar and meetings, received email and verbal feedback, and gathered views from VCS members of strategic partnerships and groups in the borough on a future vision for LSP. The following paper has been put together using feedback from voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.

Key messages

- Strategic overview and communication between different sectors is now more important than ever. To date the LSP has played a key role in relation to this task.
- Partnerships and sharing knowledge and resources are now essential to delivering effective services. Again to date the LSP has played a key role in relation to this task.
- The borough still needs an overarching strategy, that focuses on outcomes for local people. The processes involved should be guided by a partnership between agencies, sectors and the community – a role currently performed by the LSP.

Context

- Dramatic cuts, removal of statutory obligations and restructuring of the public sector will reduce capacity locally to maintain overview and coherence.
- Localism agenda – fear of erosion of rights and democracy, and increased economic and social exclusion. For example, new ‘rights’ proposed in the Localism Bill could result in only those who have the access, time and capacity dictating the shape of neighbourhoods and public services.
- Pressures and expectations for the VCS, residents and the private sector to fill gaps left by withdrawal of the state.

Vision

- **Building on what works:** Camden has developed a balanced strategic landscape that has provided opportunities for relationships and knowledge sharing between sectors. This would not have happened without the partnership mechanisms. The future should be about strengthening that landscape to manage new challenges.
- **Future purpose:** the Local Strategic Partnership is the only strategic forum that brings together all the key stakeholders in the borough across themes and sectors. This strategic overview, and access to different knowledge and resources is essential to maintaining clarity

and focus in challenging times. For example, during the recession the 'dashboard' initiative enabled more openness, inputting of opinion and ideas, and actions, than would otherwise have been possible. The LSP also collectively holds knowledge and has connections that go beyond public service delivery. The LSP has potential that could be used to much greater effect for strategic guidance, enabling new approaches to public service delivery (or whatever else fills the gap) and managing the impacts of change.

- **Communication and knowledge:** improving links between the LSP and thematic partnerships is key to developing a more coherent and stronger strategic landscape. However there is a danger that because of new policy and legislative changes some service areas may become more dominant than others. In turn this could overshadow a balanced overview held by the LSP. This is of particular concern to VCS organisations whose services are often holistic or cross cutting. There are also other links or communication routes that could be strengthened e.g. from councillor led forums for residents, from new enterprise partnerships etc. There is also scope to increase 'bottom up' input via the VCS and other partners. The LSP is well positioned to open more communication channels for inputting and feeding back on key issues and initiatives in the borough.
- **Structure:** the existing structure of the LSP and thematic partnerships is still fit for purpose, but would benefit from the proposed stronger links where all chairs or other key personnel from thematic partnerships are involved in the LSP. The overall landscape will also be strengthened by the new Sustainability Partnership and improvements to the Economic Development Partnership. Membership of different partnerships will be dictated to some extent by new policies and statutory requirements, but this should not diminish the scope and capability of any of the partnerships. In a time when public services are being dramatically reduced it is important that the strategic landscape stretches and engages beyond the world of public services.
- **Servicing:** servicing the partnerships sits largely with the council. It could be argued that the level of support required to maintain relationships and communication is a good investment. Particularly when facing challenges that need the cooperation of different stakeholders to manage them effectively. However if servicing is the key issue for the council then the LSP could explore the viability of other partners carrying some of the load – perhaps coproducing the LSP.