

LEICESTERSHIRE TOGETHER (LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP) BOARD

Monday 3rd September 2007

LEICESTERSHIRE TOGETHER PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Report of Leicestershire County Council

Background

1. Both the focus and structure of the Leicestershire Together partnership have evolved considerably since the LSP was established in 2002, particularly since the advent of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the establishment of various groupings to oversee its effective delivery. These include the creation of the Strategic Senior Officer Group (SSOG), establishment of the LAA Leads and Leads Plus groups, and closer links with the theme partnerships delivering the Local Area Agreement (LAA).
2. In addition to this, the government has placed increasing emphasis on the role of LSPs as the “partnership of partnerships” for their area, leading the delivery of their Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement and bringing together the multiplicity of other partnerships that operate in their area to simplify working arrangements and clarify responsibilities.
3. This role was clearly set out in the 2001 Local Government White Paper ‘Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services’ which stated that the: *‘Proliferation of partnerships can lead to fragmentation, duplication and inefficiency. LSPs were established in part to bring some order to this situation by placing themselves at the apex of local partnership arrangements...’*, and reinforced in the Local Strategic Partnerships – Shaping Their Future Consultation Paper *“We have recognised that, to be effective, these different partnerships and their plans must be co-ordinated. This role as the “partnership of partnerships” was always envisaged for LSPs. It is now imperative that this becomes a reality”*.
4. Another significant driver was the Peer Review of Leicestershire Together in March 2006. At its meeting in March 2007, the Board approved a new structure for the Leicestershire Together “partnership family” which clarifies the relationship between the different elements of the structure, establishes closer links with communities of interest and geography, and clarifies representation from different organisations at different levels, particularly between SSOG and the Board itself – as recommended in the Peer Challenge report.
5. Following the Peer Challenge and the development of the Action Plan (approved by the Board at its meeting in March 2007 and reviewed/updated at subsequent meetings), Links Consulting were engaged to undertake workshops as part of Board meetings (March and May 2007) to explore how the Board could work

more effectively, the job that it has to do, the way that it relates to other parts of the LT “family” and the contribution of individual Board members to the partnership. The outcomes of this were circulated to Board members with the minutes of the last meeting.

The Partnership Agreement

6. To reflect the various changes outlined above and in order to update the content of the Induction Pack that was produced in 2005 to help Leicestershire Together Board Members to understand their role, it was agreed to try and bring various pieces of information together in one document which sets out the various roles and responsibilities of the different levels of the partnership and of the individuals who represent their organisation or partnership on the different levels of the structure.
7. A copy of the draft Partnership Agreement is attached as Appendix A
8. The Partnership Agreement includes the following sections:
 - The **mission, purpose** and **vision** for Leicestershire Together (sections 1, 2 and 3)
 - The **organising principles** (set out in our original Community Strategy) (section 4)
 - Section 5 covers the **structure** of the partnership, including terms of reference for the Board and SSOG, suggested responsibilities for the affiliated theme and cross-cutting partnerships, and the role of the LAA Leads and Leads Plus groups
 - Section 7 is a draft **job description** for everyone involved in the Leicestershire Together Partnership “family”, including responsibilities and a person specification
 - A section on **decision making**, including the Nolan principles of public life (section 8)
 - A section on **communication**, plus the draft Communications Plan which is attached as Appendix 2
 - The final section briefly covers **operating and support arrangements**
9. The content of the Partnership Agreement has been heavily influenced by discussions at the last two Board meetings, particularly in relation to what people thought of as the role of the Board (L1), How we ensure that the Board achieves change (P1), the critical issues for the Board to tackle (M1) and how people can demonstrate their commitment to Leicestershire Together (L2).
10. The intention is that the Partnership Agreement will be made available to everyone within the Leicestershire Together “family”, providing a framework for partnership working and ensuring a minimum level of knowledge by all those engaged in any part of the Leicestershire Together partnership family.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) approves the Partnership Agreement and Draft Communications Strategy;**
- b) ensures that the content of the Partnership Agreement is shared within their own organisation/partnership and incorporated into their governance arrangements**

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