

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

REPORT TO: Halton Strategic Partnership Board
DATE: 18 January 2006
SUBJECT: Consultation on Local Strategic Partnerships

INTRODUCTION

The ODPM has launched a consultation on the future of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). This potentially has far reaching implications. Issues addressed include roles, governance, accountability, and capacity, and the possible creation of a duty on public service providers to co-operate with local authorities in LSPs and Local Area Agreements. The purpose of this report is to alert members to the consultation.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Board is recommended to note the consultation paper and agree that partners submit responses to the Partnership Team so that they can frame a Halton response for endorsement by the 3 March deadline.

BACKGROUND

The ODPM has developed proposals to streamline and integrate the role of LSPs nationally. This would see the development of a Sustainable Community Strategy by LSP partners. It would set out the vision and priorities for an area, with the Local Area Agreement (LAA) defining some detailed outcomes, which would then be monitored and reviewed by the LSP. This is already the approach partners in Halton want to adopt.

These proposals are contained in a consultation document, *Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future*, which was issued in December. A copy is available on the Partnership website, or can be e-mailed on request by the Partnership Team (The document is 60 pages long, and we do not want to overburden members with paper) It sets out ambitions for the future of LSPs, strengthening their role and status, in the context of increased expectations, as LAAs roll out to all upper-tier authorities over the next two years, and the neighbourhood agenda expands as a result of the local: vision programme. The emphasis on the community leadership role of the local authority is maintained, with recognition that partnership working requires further accountability, strengthened governance provisions, and additional support in developing appropriate capacity.

This is an important consultation, which will test the willingness of other government departments to make a commitment to local engagement. It attempts to formulate a coherent local strategic planning process.

The consultation closes on 3 March 2006. In addition to potential changes in the legal and policy framework, it may lead to revised statutory guidance on community

strategies and LSPs. The Halton Strategic Partnership will want to contribute to this process given the importance of the issues.

ACTION

Partners should consider the document and let the Partnership Team have specific comments and views on any of the 35 Key questions embedded in the document, which are relevant. The Partnership Governance day on 1 February also provides an opportunity for many of the issues around the future shape of our LSP to be explored. That debate will add to the Halton opinion on some of the main questions in the document.

It is proposed that the Partnership Team will collate partner views into a draft Halton response by mid February. This will be shared with Board members for final endorsement before it is submitted to ODPM by the March deadline. Given the timing of the next Board meeting the final consultation on the draft response will be by a written procedure.