



“Proud of
our past:
Ambitious
for our
future”



Celebrating the achievements
of the
Portsmouth Community Network
and looking to the future



Portsmouth



Community Network

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1 Foreword

Portsmouth's Community Network is the umbrella partnership for voluntary and community groups in the city. The Community Network was established in 2001 to facilitate the engagement of the voluntary and community sector in the new Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), and to give local communities a stronger voice in decisions affecting their neighbourhoods.

This report highlights some of the many successes achieved by the Community Network, which contribute to Portsmouth's strong history of community involvement.

Our achievements include:

- bringing together the city's voluntary and community sector under the umbrella of the Community Network
- strategic engagement with the LSP and its lead partnerships; a key player in the development of the city's Community Strategy 2005-09, representing the interests of the voluntary and community sector at the highest level, and contributing towards the LSP's priorities and achievements to build a better Portsmouth
- developing the Portsmouth Compact to ensure good partnership working across all sectors
- supporting vulnerable groups and emerging communities
- providing grants and other support to many small community groups through the Community Chest and 'training for action in communities' (TRACS) programme
- successful conferences and networking events on priority issues

Community involvement is one of the seven priority themes of the Portsmouth Community Strategy, which aims to make Portsmouth a city where 'Everyone feels they belong, everyone knows how to make their voice heard and everyone can make a difference'. The Community Network has coordinated the delivery of this priority theme along with other relevant organisations.

In March 2006, the current government funding for the Community Network comes to an end. In celebrating our achievements, we also want to look to the future and build on our many successes to ensure that the people of Portsmouth continue to be heard.

I would like to thank colleagues from the Community Network who have voluntarily given so much of themselves to the work of the Community Network, Local Strategic Partnership and the lead partnerships for Community Safety; Education and Lifelong Learning; Economic Wellbeing; Environment and Transport; Housing, and Health and Social Wellbeing.

Portsmouth Community Network can be 'proud of our past.' We also want to be 'ambitious for our future' and look forward to continuing to work with the LSP on addressing the key Portsmouth issues.



Marguerite Nudd
Chair of Community Network
December 2005

2 Purpose of this paper

This paper is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Portsmouth's Community Network since it was set up three years ago and look to its future.

3 Background – national context

Community Empowerment Networks (CENs) were established in 2001 in the 88 most deprived areas of the country as the mechanism for the voluntary and community sector to engage with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP). Central Government established LSPs to facilitate better joined-up working not only between public agencies, but also with the voluntary, community and private sectors. This reflected the fact that all sectors have a part to play in improving quality of life.

The original government guidance on LSPs stated that community and voluntary organisations should be represented on the partnership's core membership on equal terms with their often better-resourced partners. However, it was also recognised that many areas lacked a suitable infrastructure for the voluntary and community sector to engage with LSP, and this was why CENs were set up in parallel with the establishment of LSPs. CENs facilitated and supported community involvement and participation in neighbourhood renewal, leading to greater community empowerment.

Progress was accelerated in the 88 most deprived areas (including Portsmouth) because additional resources were available through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). CENs in the 88 neighbourhood renewal areas received funding directly from the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's three community participation programmes (Community Chest, Community Learning Chest and Community Empowerment Fund.) The Community Empowerment Fund was specifically for the purpose of supporting the involvement of voluntary and community groups in LSPs.

In 2003 the NRU's three community participation programmes were combined into the Single Communities Programme (SCP), a single funding stream to the CEN in the 88 neighbourhood renewal areas. In 2005 the SCP was included as part of the broader Safer Stronger Communities Fund which combines other related Home Office and ODPM funding streams and gives local areas through LSPs more flexibility in how that funding is allocated to meet agreed national and local outcomes. In 2005/06 there has been a requirement to 'passport' funding directly to the CN, but this requirement has been removed for Year 2 2006/07 and the CN will need to agree any allocations with its partners.

CENs and LSPs in the 88 neighbourhood renewal areas are subject to performance monitoring from Government Offices.

4 The benefits of community involvement

Key findings from national research about Community Empowerment Networks (CENs)

National evaluations have looked at the four goals of CENs and how far the programmes have brought about:

Social capital

- stimulated local activity and encouraged a range of groups to get involved in neighbourhood renewal
- built local capacity, confidence and skills
- provided opportunities for learning across neighbourhoods

Social inclusion and cohesion

- reached out to all parts of sector, especially hard to reach communities
- improved communication, networking and cohesion in the VCS

Governance

- represented communities on LSPs and other partnerships in a way that is well informed and accountable
- impacted on LSP decisions

Service delivery

- impacted on local service delivery

There are over 360 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in England, and although models and structures vary across the country, research from the national evaluations has also shown:

- about one in ten LSPs are chaired by someone from the voluntary or community sector
- most LSPs (59%) have between 1 and 4 VCS members on the LSP's core membership (VCS membership is generally slightly higher on NRF LSPs)

'Local Strategic Partnerships: shaping their future' consultation by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was issued on 9 December 2005 to help identify the challenges now facing LSPs. This included critically the need to develop and drive Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and the need to reshape community strategies into Sustainable

Community Strategies in line with the Egan Review. The consultation also reflects the progress made in areas in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources. The consultation closes in March 2006.

The National Audit Office's 'Neighbourhood Renewal: case examples in getting communities involved' (October 2004) report identified that:

- the Single Community Programme has been successful in providing funds to support some 25,000 self-help and community group projects in England's most deprived neighbourhoods. This funding has helped to build confidence locally, although more needs to be done to ensure the programme reaches out to all sectors and groups within local communities.
- the extent of Community Empowerment Network representation on Local Strategic Partnerships and consequently the ability to influence the decisions of local service providers varies considerably.
- community members of LSPs have exerted influence by establishing links with service providers at a neighbourhood level, complementing their wider work with LSP lead partnerships.

GOSE Fitness for Purpose

The 'Fitness for Purpose' criteria for Community Empowerment Networks from the Government Office of the South East has three key strands for effective Community Empowerment Networks:

- Community Empowerment Network has a robust internal organisation
- Community Empowerment Network has capacity and strategy for working at the neighbourhood level
- Community Empowerment Network is able to work strategically at district level and works well with partners on the LSP

IDeA 'ideal authority'

The IDeA has identified the following key components of community engagement for an 'ideal local authority' which will also be relevant to other statutory partners:

- listens to its customers, users and citizens
- understands what drives customer satisfaction
- understanding of when, where and how users want to access services
- routinely informs the community and its partners
- equal access to all and a range of communication channels

- consultation is taken seriously and a range of methods is offered
- community resources and capacity are built
- commitment to the council's community leadership and engagement role
- citizens participating in the council's decision making

ODPM Improving Public Services

Further, the recent report 'Improving delivery of mainstream services in deprived areas' (September 2005) from the Office of The Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) identified that community involvement is a key element of the government's drive to improve public services, recognising that communities themselves are best placed to identify the issues and define the solutions for their communities.

The report suggests that the benefits community involvement can bring include:

- reductions to the cost of public services
- increased user satisfaction and easier access to services
- lower crime rates, reduced fear of crime and better local environments
- better prospects for improved health outcomes
- improved employment opportunities for local residents
- more motivated frontline staff and more joined-up local services
- communities engaged and empowered in democratic processes and feel they are heard and can make a difference in their local areas

Civic Pioneers and Beacon status

Building on the city's 'Beacon' status for neighbourhood renewal (and in particular its approach to community-based regeneration through the Community Boards), in 2004, Portsmouth was selected by the Home Office to join its Civic Pioneer programme in order to achieve national recognition for the city's strong history in engaging with communities; provide an opportunity to share experiences with other authorities similarly recognised as having a commitment to, and developing processes for involving local people in the decisions which affect them; influence and shape emerging government thinking; and provide a building block to help us celebrate the good work we are doing in Portsmouth.

Further work could be undertaken to identify and evidence Portsmouth's contribution to the criteria highlighted by these national evaluations.

5 Background - Portsmouth's Community Network

As one of the 88 neighbourhood renewal areas, Portsmouth received Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and Community Empowerment Funding. The initial LSP was built from the Portsmouth Regeneration Board (which acted as the interim LSP) who had experience of strategy development and allocating resources.

The CEF was used to establish the Portsmouth Community Network, which was the result of extensive consultation, and brought together an existing voluntary sector forum with newly elected representatives from community boards and neighbourhood forums.

In addition to the core aims of any Community Empowerment Network to facilitate involvement in neighbourhood renewal and participation in the LSP, the Portsmouth Community Network has described its role as bringing together the community, voluntary and statutory sectors in a partnership to consult and influence future policy to benefit the people of Portsmouth. Its aims are to:

- give local communities a stronger voice in decisions affecting their neighbourhood
- support the effective engagement of the voluntary and community sector in the Local Strategic Partnership
- support community learning and neighbourhood-level capacity building, to enable residents to play a central role in driving forward neighbourhood renewal
- support residents and voluntary groups with activities that improve community understanding, health and well-being
- share ideas and resources to help spread good practice among the voluntary, community and special interest groups in Portsmouth

The local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) was made the responsible body for the CENs in most areas, including Portsmouth where Portsmouth Council of Community Service fulfils this role.

Consultation with stakeholders on the prospective membership of the LSP showed support for strong Voluntary and Community sector representation on the LSP and it was agreed that 16 of the 32 LSP members would be elected from the CN. This was significantly higher than virtually all other LSPs at the time. An early task for the LSP was to agree the Community Strategy in which Community Network members were actively involved.

Community Empowerment Fund (CEF)

Portsmouth Council of Community Service manages the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) for the Community Network (CN). The CN has agreed to, and monitors, the following activities funded by CEF.

- **Training for Action in Communities (TRACs)** is a training programme managed on behalf of the CN by the Community Empowerment Fund Manager. The aim of TRACs is to increase the skills and capacity of workers and volunteers in the voluntary and community sector, particularly from smaller groups working with marginalised communities of interest.
- Over 117 **workshops** have been organised with more than 1,138 people attending. Focus days have also been organised for groups who are facing financial or developmental difficulties, or new groups preparing to apply to funders. Thirty groups have benefited from an 'Organisational Health Check'. Using the information and feedback from all of the above activities, the CN concludes that TRACs needs to develop and widen its remit to enable capacity and developmental support to be given to the VCS.
- **The Community Network's Community Chest Panel** has agreed funding to the voluntary and community sector totalling £548,420. A wide range of activities and groups has been supported with grants of between £50 and £5,000. Decisions are made by a panel of local people (drawn from the Community Network members and the voluntary and statutory sector), with a wealth and breadth of experience, and knowledge of the needs of neighbourhoods and marginalised groups in Portsmouth. The organisations benefited from Community Chest funding are in the appendices of this report.
- **Networking Events** are organised bi-monthly; a different theme for each event gives participants the opportunity to discuss concerns, share good practice, and update on activities based on a number of different themes.
- **Mapping** of the voluntary and community sector has been undertaken and a database commissioned to hold the information. Of the 500+ questionnaires sent out to date 369 have been completed and the groups interviewed. The database will be compatible with E.volve the Hampshire wide searchable website for voluntary and community sector activity. The information gathered will enable us to highlight the huge and essential benefits the voluntary and community sector brings to Portsmouth.

- **Funding Advice** – working three days per week the Funding Advisor has supported 197 groups, prepares funding lists for specific activities, and prepares regular updates for the bi-monthly Network News.

Membership of the Community Network

The Community Network, along with other relevant organisations, oversees the implementation of the community involvement priority theme of the Community Strategy. The

sixteen LSP members from the CN bring essential elements to the procedures: local knowledge, representation of local interests, users and carers' views, and residents' views.

The CN members also bring knowledge of ward profiles and an understanding of the local democratic process. A great strength is the huge diversity of representation across the voluntary and community sector. All of the above are essential to the development of future services, as well as strategic planning. The Community Network is made up of the following members:

Voluntary and Community Sector organisations representatives on the Community Network

Marguerite Nudd	University of the Third Age <i>(Chair of Network)</i>	Dr Isabelle Pine	Portsmouth Council of Community Service
Ken Dobson	Portsmouth School Governors Forum	Janice Burkinshaw	Milton Neighbourhood Forum
Charles Burns	Central Southsea Neighbourhood Forum	Philip Hudson	Buckland Community Board
Jan Dod	Somerstown Community Board	Kam Ip	Communities United
Paula Walker	Somerstown Community Board	Tunde Bright-Davies	PRENO
Adrian Clee	Salvation Army	Carolyn Barber	Motiv8
Terry Osborn	Beneficial Foundation	Martin Affleck	Disability Access
Vince Ibbs	Citizens Advice Bureau	Kaye Checkley	Age Concern
Susan Newcombe	Portsmouth Council of Community Service	Jo Hider	Alzheimer's Society
Shelley Price	Portsmouth Council of Community Service	Naomi Shaw	Shaftesbury Society
Jennifer Kelsey	Community Empowerment Fund	Marie Adams	Individual
Carole Damper	EC Roberts	Jackie Buckley	Relate Portsmouth
Cllr David Horne	Paulsgrove and Wymering Community Board	Marie Costa	African Womens' Group
Brian Miller	Portsea Action Group	Tony McCarthy	Refugee Action
Nick Ralph	Diocese of Portsmouth	Lynne Rigby	Portsmouth Disability Forum
		Mohammed Riyami	Portsmouth Minority Communities Federation
		Geoff Philpotts	PHA create
		Brenda Cairns	Home-Start
		Phil Rendell	CP Centre

Statutory Sector organisations representatives on the Community Network

Fiona White	Portsmouth City Council	Trish Bell	Portsmouth City Council
Stephen Morgan	Portsmouth City Council	Laura Caton	Portsmouth City Council
Mandy Lindley	Portsmouth City Council	Holly Miller	Portsmouth City Council
Delyth Horsley	Portsmouth City Council	Jane Day	Portsmouth City Council

The government has now changed the eligibility criteria for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and Single Communities Programme. This change, combined with Portsmouth's reduction in deprivation ratings, means that from March 2006, Portsmouth is no longer eligible for these funds.

A further key challenge for the new LSP will be ensuring that the Community Network continues to play a full and active role in the LSP 'family.'

6 Portsmouth's Community Network - identifying the achievements, challenges and options for the future

During October and November 2005, a consultation exercise was launched to celebrate the key achievements, challenges and issues for the future of the Portsmouth Community Network.

The consultation programme led by the city council's Community Involvement, Empowerment & Development Team in conjunction with the Community Network consisted of:

- A **seminar** with the Community Network in October to celebrate the role and achievements of the Network, identify learning and explore options for the future
- A **survey** issued to over 500 voluntary and community groups in the city, members of the Community Network and LSP, officers at the city council and Elected Members
- A number of **individual email responses** were also received from voluntary and community sector representatives

Achievements identified in the seminar on the Community Network

In summary, the consultation identified five key achievements for the Community Network:

1. **strength of representation at strategic level and acting as equal players at the LSP table**, LSP and Community Network briefings of lead partnerships representatives, the opportunity for someone from the VCS to chair the LSP, offering real, active engagement by the voluntary and community sector, **helping to steer the formulation of the Community Strategy**, and promoting its implementation to the voluntary and community sector.
2. the CEN has helped facilitate partnership working with a wide group of agencies, and **linked closely with vulnerable and emerging community groups** in the city. Successfully supported the development of multi-agency working for example the **Compact agreement and accompanying codes of practice** through a Community Network sub-group.
3. **working with the community boards to bring about tangible results** and visible outcomes from Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) monies, for example, encouraging the mainstreaming of Community Wardens.
4. the Community Network has **provided a key route for the voluntary and community sector to voice opinions** as 'critical friends'.
5. **well received support programmes by effectively using the Community Chest funding** to provide one-to-one advice, annual conferences, networking opportunities funding advice and 'training for action in communities' (TRACS) provision for groups and small organisations.

Specifically the consultation responses identified the key themes which include:

Partnership working and the LSP

- key route for Community Boards and Neighbourhood Forums to voice opinions and keep informed to play a role in communities and at LSP/partnership board level
- two-way communication – top-down, and bottom-up – what’s going on in the Council, initiatives and policy and sharing information
- working in partnership with a wide group of agencies
- links to more vulnerable groups – setting up groups and making linkages
- strength of debate at Community Network meetings, supporting criticism and offering valuable feedback as ‘critical friends’
- broad representation with a new electoral process even more useful
- maintaining political neutrality
- strength of representation at LSP level and acting as equal players at the table – real, active engagement
- network provides checks and balances on city council and LSP policies and plans
- good attendance at LSP and lead partnership meetings
- representatives bring a lot to the lead partnership boards

SRB Community Boards

- strength of SRB funding – Community Boards had money to deliver tangible results and visible outcomes in terms of quality of life, from jobs and training, to childcare
- area co-ordinators (SRB Community Boards)

Community Chest

- Community Chest has contributed to social/community cohesion by empowering local communities to apply for funding then take forward into action to meet the needs of communities
- advice available and people to go to at PCCS for help
- training for groups, especially small organisations and Community Chests have been very valuable

Community Strategy

- forming the Community Strategy and other strategies, acting as a essential and active participant in the setting of the Community Strategy and its priorities
- seeing real commitment to the Community Strategy from the sector
- agreeing the ‘Proud of our past: ambitious for our future’ title for the Community Strategy

Examples of successful projects

- Healthy Eating Project (LSP Project)
- helping to mainstream Community Wardens Scheme (from original pilots in Paulsgrove and Wymering)
- the Portsmouth Compact agreement
- the Network has offered an opportunity to really improve an area

Challenges and barriers to success

- Finding ways to ensure the **Community Network is as representative of the VCS as possible**, maintaining a broad and consistent membership including black and minority ethnic communities and young people and successfully meeting the needs of both the voluntary and community sectors.
- Having the time to read paperwork, prepare and learn to gain knowledge for meetings, and sufficiently **disseminating information to the wider sector and at the same time finding out their needs and views**.
- Although the Community Network have a Community Empowerment Fund Manager, the Network feel they would benefit from a **dedicated policy officer** to work with the Community Network and LSP representatives to inform their input into strategic planning.

- **Maintaining and raising the profile of the Community Network with all sectors**, and encouraging further commitment and communication between statutory sector partners.
- **Influencing the agendas** of LSP and lead partnerships and finding innovative ways to better voice the views of all communities in the city.
- **Managing the uncertainty of funding arrangements** for future years.

Respondents were further asked to identify what the future role of a voluntary and community sector network should be. A summary of the responses include:

- better **organised, co-ordinated Network** with **clearly defined role and membership** reflective of its aims.

- continue to **represent the VCS voice on future government policies and initiatives**, and helping the sector move towards the social enterprise agenda for the sector.
- develop better **communication mechanisms to identify grass root opinion** whilst building on existing good partnership working.

Options for the future

Key elements of a future voluntary and community sector network

As part of the consultation process respondents were also asked to identify what they feel the key elements and role a future model for a voluntary and community sector network should contain:

In summary, the consultation programme has identified that the following key elements:

- the Community Network should continue
- it should continue to develop mechanisms to ensure that the views of communities are taken into account and are voiced at the Community Network and other partnerships in the city

- it should co-ordinate the contribution of the voluntary and community sector and build links with other networks and groups in the city
- it should brief LSP representatives and representatives on the lead partnerships about community needs and wants
- act as the interface with the LSP and the voice of the community

A recommendation from the consultation was that there should be a partnership board for community involvement with a minimal representation of 50% and the possibility of 75% of non-statutory partners/community representatives. These could be members of the Community Network but also others involved in community involvement across the city particularly to ensure that BME communities, young people, tenants etc are also represented. This partnership board would be the vehicle for delivering the community involvement chapter of the Community Strategy and therefore be a lead partnership under the LSP.

The Community Network would like to have more discussion about this before taking this forward as a possible proposal.

Specifically, the consultation identified the following key elements of any future Voluntary and Community Sector Network:

Breadth of representation and support for the sector

- bring the voluntary and community sector together
- networking
- wide representation of both geographical communities and communities of interest
- encouraging dedicated time for partnership working

Informing decision-making

- consultation
- inform strategy development
- information exchange nationally on the government's agenda
- information exchange with senior officers and Strategic Directors at local level
- influence decisions of the city council and other statutory agencies
- commitment to partnerships
- capacity to influence the LSP, lead partnerships and Community Network agendas, so as not to be too council-led

Voicing community issues and priorities

- reach vulnerable groups
- act as the voice of Portsmouth people
- ability to improve an area

Resourcing

- access to resources
- small grants/Community Chest
- provide training

Methods and process

- address the format of meetings to ensure real discussion and active involvement
- non party-political approach
- limit the amount of paperwork and allowing enough time to consult and respond
- have knowledge and respect for the sector
- rebuild trust

Publicity and clarity of role

- raise the profile of the Community Network with officers in partner agencies
- train and empower officers and communities to work together
- commitment to community involvement throughout the whole of the city council

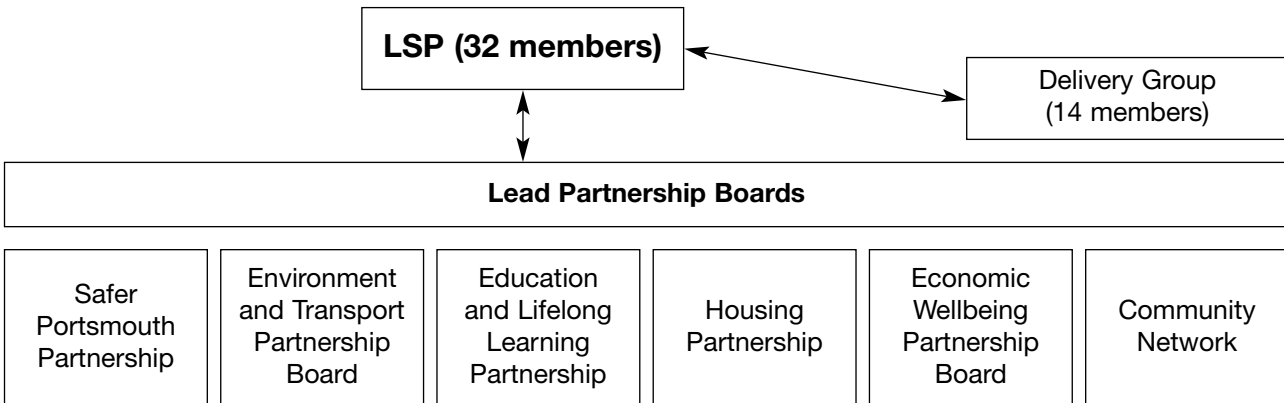
7 The relationship with the proposed structure for the LSP

In July 2005 two members of the LSP, Caroline Collings, City Growth and Paul Whittle, Learning and Skills Council (LSC), developed some discussion options on the future role and structure of the LSP. This was in response to

feedback from a number of LSP members that we needed to improve the strategic focus and effectiveness of the current structure, whilst consolidating existing strengths.

It also recognised the need to respond to the changing national agenda, particularly ensure that we have the capacity to develop a Local Area Agreement by April 2007.

The current structure of the LSP is as follows:



The following key issues were identified:

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

- an inclusive partnership, but difficulties with taking decisions
- Community Strategy monitoring needs to be more manageable
- general uncertainty about the purpose of the LSP – if the Delivery Group & lead partnerships are working well, how can the wider LSP add value?
- Community Network loses funding 03/06 and this will affect its ability to engage with the LSP

Delivery Group

- good work with Buckland Community Board but needs to be more strategic and less operational
- should be clearly steering the work of the lead partnerships but isn't at the moment
- needs to have the expertise and key people able to develop and oversee a Local Area Agreement

Lead Partnerships

- most are working well, but not effectively linking back to the LSP or Delivery Group
- not all chairs sit on LSP or Delivery Group
- should empower lead partnerships to take forward the issues/priorities identified by the LSP

- need to re-visit membership to ensure key stakeholders are represented, including the Community Network

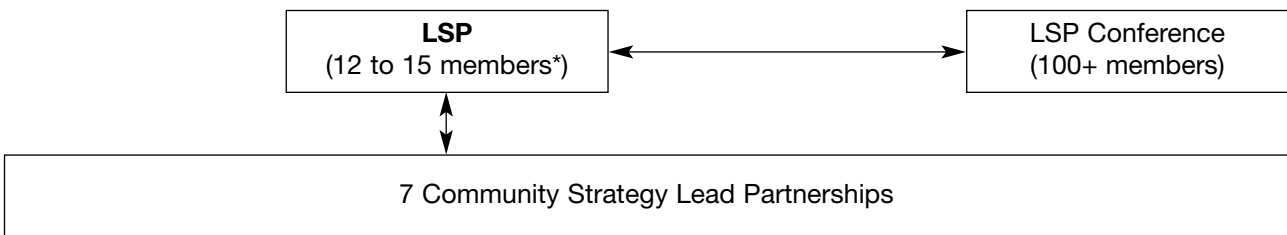
LSP members emphasised from the outset that the review was not an attempt to reduce Community Network representation, and firmly supported continued Community Network representation on the new LSP – the main driver was the need for an effective partnership that could deliver on the Community Strategy and respond to the changing national agenda. This reflects the national trend of LSPs moving away from an advisory/consultative role which was necessary to form a consensus around which the Community Strategy was developed, to a delivery mechanism that adds real value over and above what is already happening.

There followed presentations to partners including the Community Network. Options were presented to an extraordinary LSP meeting in October 2005. The Community Network presented a 'hybrid' of options three and four. The LSP voted for option 3 at its meeting of members of the LSP voted in support of 'option 3,' the detail of which was discussed by the LSP Delivery Group in November, and will be reported back to the LSP on 13 December 2005. Not all representatives of the Community Network voted for this option and some members of the Community Network have expressed concern about both the decision and the process of decision-making.

Given the vote that had been taken and after careful deliberation the Community Network recognised that the strength of their representation will in future lie in the lead partnership boards and the work to deliver the community involvement chapter of the Community Strategy. Therefore although saddened to lose the 50% representation on the LSP, and in anticipation that lessons will be learnt from this decision-making process, the Community Network have agreed to support the changes with some clarification about the accountability of the smaller LSP to the community representatives and agreement as to the voluntary and community sector representation on the lead partnerships,

The diagram below illustrates the new LSP structure, which will be launched in January 2006:

- smaller LSP of 12 to 15 members made-up of the 7 Chairs of the Lead Partnerships, representatives of core agencies when not also Chair of Lead Partnership (agreed as city council, police and Primary Care Trust) * and 5 Community Network members
- Community Strategy Lead Partnerships
- six-monthly conference that brings together a much wider group of stakeholders including community representatives and voluntary groups



*(*Exact membership will depend upon whether the Chairs of the Lead Partnerships come from the core agencies).*

The Community Network will have five representatives on the new LSP (increased from the three originally proposed.) Depending upon whether there are between 12 and 15 LSP members, Community Network representation will be between 33% and 42%. (Although this is fewer than at present, other agencies also have less representation in numerical terms, and the 50/50 split was agreed when there were no lead partnerships feeding into the LSP).

It was agreed to ask the Community Network to reflect faith and black and minority ethnic representation in their nominations to the LSP. The LSP also agreed on the importance of reviewing the membership of its lead partnerships to ensure consistency in Community Network and other stakeholder representation.

In addition, there will be six-monthly conferences that bring together a much wider range of stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector, to have a meaningful role in holding the LSP to account and proactively contribute towards the partnership's agenda, particularly the Community Strategy and from 2007 the Local Area Agreement. The recent conference on the Local Transport Plan provides a possible model for the 'themed' part of the conferences and there are best practice examples from other LSPs.

The new structure will address the issues identified at the outset of the review by:

- re-focusing the LSP on being strategic
- clearer linkages between LSP and lead partnerships by virtue of Chairs of lead partnerships sitting on the LSP
- lead partnerships empowered to be the 'delivery' arms of the LSP
- Community Network retains important role
- engaging with a much wider range of stakeholders than at present i.e. extending the strengths of the current structure

8 Conclusions and recommendations

Since it was established in 2002, the Portsmouth Community Network has made a significant contribution to empowering local communities and in the decision-making of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Community Network members have given thousands of hours of their time, much of which (particularly for community rather than voluntary Sector representatives) is given voluntarily.

The overwhelming response from the consultation programme has identified that people want the Community Network to continue acknowledging that further work is required to clearly define their role, and establish an even broader representation of Portsmouth communities, ensure more effective communication and the opportunity to identify future funding streams to support the Network's work.

There is a particular need to explore how voluntary sector provider organisations can best be represented in the city and have a voice on matters such as contracting and procurement which can affect them more directly than community organisations and groups. A seminar is planned with Voluntary Sector providers early in 2006 to explore this.

Following the end of government funding streams in March 2006, and in response to the proposed new structure for the LSP from January 2006, it is proposed that the future role of the Community Network should:

- continue and be resourced to represent the voice of the Community on the LSP, the lead partnership boards and decision-making process of the statutory sector
- be representative of all communities in Portsmouth including geographical and communities of interest, and ensuring representation of different ages and communities including black and minority ethnic communities and young people
- bring together the contribution of the voluntary and community sectors
- support the empowerment of communities through training and development opportunities
- continue to contribute to the process of the renewal of the city's most deprived areas

The contribution of the Community Network to the LSP

The Community Network propose that:

- five representatives from the Community Network sit on the LSP
- representation from the Community Network on the LSP should if possible include a representative from BME/faith communities. Ideally BME/Faith representation should be in addition to the 5 representatives above
- deputies can be substituted for LSP representatives at LSP meetings
- there is a minimum of four representatives from the Community Network on each lead Partnership Board
- all voluntary sector representatives on the LSP and lead partnerships are members of the Community Network
- there is further clarity on the accountability of the new smaller LSP to the community and the role of the LSP conferences agreed

These recommendations were agreed at the Community Network Friday 2 December 2005.

New Partnership Board for Community Involvement

The Community Network propose that:

- the establishment of a Partnership Board for Community Involvement to be responsible for delivering the Community Involvement theme of the Community Strategy
- a minimum of 75% representation from non-statutory agencies on the Community Involvement Partnership Board (which includes representatives from the Community Network and others)
- that before the LSP makes decisions on particular communities, consultation takes place with the Community Network and/or the new Partnership Board for Community Involvement
- that the Community Involvement Partnership Board, consistent with each of the other 6 lead partnerships should have assistance from the City Council, through the CIED team, to develop, implement and monitor the delivery plan

Funding and resource implications

The Community Network will need to be resourced to fulfil this role. To date the Community Network has had around £250,000 of single communities programme monies per annum (which includes funding for the Community Network, Community Chest and TRACs). While the Community Network could make full use of a comparable level of funding in the future, it is suggested that as a minimum this should include:

- a Community Network Coordinator to promote and coordinate the activities and of the Community Network, take responsibility for managing communication across the Community Network and act as a Policy Officer for the Community Network
- administrative support to the Community Network
- budget for communication, consultation, events and publications

Funding could be sought from the following:

- the Safer Stronger Communities Fund agreement which prioritises community engagement as one of the 4 core priorities of the fund that LSPs are expected to deliver
- individual statutory partner agencies from the LSP could each be asked to make a contribution to the funding required for the Community Network as part of their duty to involve communities in decision making
- Portsmouth Council for Community Service (PCCS) has volunteered to host the Community Network beyond March 2006. As this role is consistent with the core business of a CVS, Portsmouth City Council (the main funders of PCCS) are willing to consider incorporating some of this support to the Community Network into any contract they may negotiate with PCCS from 1 April 2006, within existing and available resources
- bid for external funding e.g. Big Lottery Fund

In addition:

- further work is underway to bid for funding for the TRACS programme beyond March 2006
- use of the 'Neighbourhood Element' could be considered to provide Community Chest and /or TRACS support in the Charles Dickens Ward

And Finally...

The Portsmouth Community Network is rightly 'Proud of its past and ambitious for its future!' This report celebrates the Community Network's many achievements over the past three years and the contribution the Community Network has made to the Local Strategic Partnership. The report also looks to the future, in a revised LSP structure and following the end of the existing government funding streams in March 2006.

The Local Strategic Partnership has prioritised Community Involvement as one of its seven priority themes in the Community Strategy and, building on the achievements to date, the Portsmouth Community Network has an invaluable role to play in delivering this commitment in the future.

This report of the achievements of the Portsmouth Community Network will initially be presented to the LSP on the 13 December 2005, and considered in more detail by the LSP in January-February 2006 as part of the LSP's review of the Safer Stronger Communities Funding agreements.

December 2005

Appendices

SWOT analysis

The points raised in the discussion at this seminar on 25 October 2005 were summarised under the SWOT theme of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bringing the voluntary and community sector together • route for communities to voice opinions with links and support to vulnerable groups • two-way communication and information sharing especially with the city council and informing groups in the community • CN members' role and representation on LSP and lead partnerships • training and access to small pots of money and PCCS funding support for smaller groups has helped others to recognise their value • SRB has empowered local people to make decisions affecting their local area • 'Check and balance' for the LSP and acting as critical friend to the statutory sector • pre-LSP briefings • established for over 3 years • depth of debate • area co-ordinators for Community Boards • mainstreaming Community Wardens and NRF projects 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to know more about Neighbourhood Management • perception that the Community Network is negative but critical friend is strength • differing influence LSP – sometimes due to time to debate/need more time to give community view • strategic element can put people off • some voluntary organisations don't perceive Community Network/LSP structure as useful
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Network's new electoral process • build on links with vulnerable groups • how to continue the SRB 'ethos' of Community Boards using small amounts of money to help shape SSCF • Community Board influence • link with extended schools • Neighbourhood Management • Voluntary Sector contributions to the Community Strategy • mapping will give more evidence of scale and value of the sector • evidence how meeting key government outcomes • training • influence of key strategies 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must not lose trust between sectors during challenges • risk losing commitment to partnership – crucial to Local Area Agreements (LAAs) • where community involvement structures sit in relation to neighbourhood management (also an opportunity?) • smaller community groups not able to function as well as community boards • need funding for volunteers who are doing too much

Appendices

Organisations benefited from Community Chest Funding

55's Alive	Dot to Dot	Kings Church
ACE	Drayton & Farlington Action Group	Ladywood Steering Group
African Women's Forum	Drayton & Farlington Carers Support Group	Leamington House Residents Association
Age Concern	Drayton & Farlington Friendship Centre	Leapfrog Club
All Saints Church	Drayton & Farlington Luncheon Club	Like Minds
Art & Soul Traders	Drayton Institute	Link Youth Activity
Art and Soul Traders Committee	EBP - St Luke's and King Richard's School	Little Oliver's
Arundel Court Junior	EC Roberts Centre	LSP/PPCSR/PARS
Aspex Gallery	EMAS	Manor Infant School
Aspex Visual Arts Trust	Farlington Women's Group	Mayfield After School Club
Asylum Seekers Activities Project	Frank Sorrell Trust Dial Helpline	Messy Tots
Asylum Seekers Project	Fratton Community Association	Milton Glee Club
Ba Mamas	Fratton Live at Home Scheme	Milton Neighbourhood Forum
Bangladeshi Older Women's Group	Freedom Café	Milton Road Twins & Triplets Club
Barkis House Residents Association	Friday Club	Moulvi Bazaar Association
Brewery House Management	Greater Sylhet Inauguration Ceremony	Multicultural Resource Company
Buckland Community Association	HAFRIA	MUSIC
Buckland Park Play Association	Hampshire Friends for ME	North End Young People's Project
Bumpers Parent & Toddler Group	HAMRA	Oasis Centre
Captive Audience Theatre	Hants East Guides	Omega Street Café
Carers Development Team	Havelock Community Centre	P&SHE Multicultural Group
Caribbean Island Association	Havelock Scrabble Group	PARCS
Chance to Dance	Haven Community Centre	Parent & Carers Group for Relaxation
Churches Homeless Action	Haven Nursery	Parent Support Committee
CODIAS	Headway	Parents + Carers Group
Coffee Morning Social Club	Help in Bereavement	PARS
Communities United	Hi Spinners	Pat a Cake
Community Matters	Highbury Community Association	Pat-a-Cake
Community Newspaper Group	Highbury Community Centre	Patey Day Centre
Community Warden Scheme	Highbury Pre School	Pathfinder
Connors Toy Library	Hillside Young Persons Centre	Patient Environment Action Group
Contact	Home Start	Paulsgrove & Wymering Neighbourhood Wardens
CONTACT	Horizon Angling Club	Paulsgrove Baptist Church
Copnor Childminders	Isambard Brunel Centre	Paulsgrove Community Association
Cosham Baptist Church	IWW	Paulsgrove Football Club
Cosham Guides	John Pounds Trust	Paulsgrove Residents Association
Cultural Consortium	Jumping Jacks	PCT - Baby Massage
CWAY	Kent Road Carers Group	PDF
Dad's Club	King Richards Dynamic Doings	
Detached Youth Work Project		

Phoenix Hilsea Youth Football	Portsmouth Woodcraft Folk	Sunrisers/Sunsetters
Play Champions	Portsmouth, Southampton & IOW Pituitary Support Group	Sylhet District Welfare Association
Pompey Pensioners	PRAG	The Bivol Trust
Port of Call	Pre School Learning Alliance	The Brook Club
Portsea Action Group	PRENO	The Collective
Portsea Community Day Nursery	Princes Trust	The Cornerstone Contact Centre
Portsea Island Gateway Club	Priory Bangla School	The CP Centre
Portsmouth Area Rape Crisis Service	Priory Plus & Portsmouth Friends of the Earth	The Festival Players
Portsmouth Association for the Blind	PSCU - Conference	The Friday Club
Portsmouth Autism Support Network	PSCU - Volunteer Training	The Friends of Binstead
Portsmouth Autistic Spectrum Disorder Support Network	PYOP	The Friendship Zone
Portsmouth CAB	PYOP Siblings	The New Theatre Royal
Portsmouth Childbirth Trust	Ramsay Caledonia Pipe Band	The Portsmouth Networks
Portsmouth Chinese Association	RE USE IT	The Tuesday Club
Portsmouth Community Development Launch	Regenerate	The Wellcome Social Group
Portsmouth Counselling Service	Relate	Think Ahead
Portsmouth Diocese Mothers Union	Relate & Off the Record	Time for You
Portsmouth Domestic Violence Helpline	Replay Charity Ltd	Tini Tots
Portsmouth Family Church - Community Fun Day	Retired Companions	Town Court Social Club
Portsmouth Francophone Space	Revelation Playscheme	U3A
Portsmouth Friends of the Earth	SAIL	University of the Third of Age VIAG
Portsmouth Jami Mosque	See Saw	Visually Impaired Action Group (VIAG)
Portsmouth Junior Rugby Club	Solent Community Church	Voice Hearers Group
Portsmouth Light Orchestra	Solent Support Group	Voices
Portsmouth Lions Club	Somerstown Community Day	Wellcome Social Group
Portsmouth Mediation Service	Somerstown Community Sport Project	Westfield School
Portsmouth Multicultural Group	Somerstown Parents Group	Women in Health
Portsmouth Osteoporosis Society	Somerstown Strategy	World Mental Health Day Planning Group
Portsmouth Rugby Club	South Zone	YOT/Substance Misuse
Portsmouth Self Advocacy Group	Southsea Community Association	Youth Football
Portsmouth U3A	Southzone	
Portsmouth Vietnamese Association	St Agathas Trust	
	St James Community Pre School	
	St James' Pre School	
	St Luke's Editorial Team	
	St Mary's Viewpoint Group	
	St Nicholas Parent & Toddler Group	
	St Simons Church	
	STRAND	
	Sunrisers & Sunsetters	

“Proud of our past: Ambitious for our future”

For more information please contact

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Portsmouth



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