

Briefing Paper to Cheltenham Strategic Partnership

Developing the strategic role of CSP

20 August 2009

Introduction

We agreed at June's meeting to use today's meeting to discuss how best to develop the CSP's strategic role particularly in how we agree needs / outcomes and what our joint priorities should be.

The starting point is our sustainable community strategy but the CSP needs to take a lead in translating the SCS aspirations into improved outcomes for local people.

I've identified three areas where the CSP can become more influential:

- Strategic (place-based) commissioning
- Being more influential in county / sub-regional initiatives
- Being more influential in place-shaping initiatives such as civic pride and the joint core strategy

Strategic (place-based) commissioning

This is defined as:

- identifying and mapping needs of the local population and communities;
- engaging with citizens to understand and respond to user and neighbourhood choices and preferences and raising aspiration;
- determining local outcome goals;
- allocating resources and balancing quality and outcomes with available resources;
- developing and managing markets to develop a diverse range of providers;
- identifying and appraising options for securing services and then deciding which option to adopt and with which organisation (internal or external) to 'contract' in order to achieve the outcomes prioritised within the available resource limits; and
- monitoring and evaluating outcomes and using the information to be accountable to local people and to redesign services.

If LSPs are to play a part then the focus needs to be on place-based commissioning which can deliver integrated outcomes which will deliver the SCS aspirations.

A paper produced by the University of Birmingham describes the characteristics, values and competences a LSP would need to develop in order to practice a place-led strategic commissioning model. It needs a partnership to have a clear sense of place – in overall terms, in terms of relating to the wider-sub region and in terms of working jointly at town, parish or neighbourhood level.

Figure 4: Characteristics of effective place-based strategic commissioning



Source: CPSP seminar, November 2008

The paper goes onto make a series of recommendations for LSPs:

- understanding the totality of public resources and provision currently invested/provided in an area and using that information to target or redirect resources at agreed priorities; and to realise the potential for increased efficiency by sharing costs and reducing duplication of functions.
- developing an overall needs assessment and understanding of the profile of the population across an area and across all service themes. LSPs can ensure that they pool their data and population based research and develop a holistic view of the needs of their areas. This will in turn provide the basis for a more coherent strategy and set of priorities for a locality that all partners can then reflect in their plans.
- working at engaging elected members – particularly leaders and cabinet members – in the life of partnerships and ensuring that strategies and priorities reflect the political values and objectives of the local democratically elected representatives. Members of overview and scrutiny committees need to think about how their programme of reviews can channel their constituents' concerns into the life and work of local partnerships.

- agreeing what 'place' means for their locality. Adopting a co-terminous approach to service delivery and strategic commissioning is for most public servants (and local people) a 'no-brainer'. It makes such obvious sense. But the geography of areas, the history and loyalty of communities and the logic of administrative boundaries vary enormously and can make it difficult to do this in practice. LSPs need to be clear about what they are organising and strategically commissioning at an area level and what they are delegating or devolving to a town or neighbourhood level. There needs to be agreement on how place relates to different functions and services and – as far as possible – alignment of organisations' structures around the agreed understanding of place and community. Partners within LSPs should also have a shared understanding of how their area relates to the wider economy of their region and sub region so that they can see, for example, which issues might be more appropriately tackled through a multi-area agreement;
- embedding the citizen's and user's perspective in the strategic commissioning process by having joint consultation procedures and agreeing procedures for involving local people in shaping local plans and by reporting to the public on key shared targets;
- using the opportunity that crises (credit crunch, floods, plagues and other disasters!) provide to develop joint systems and shared working and to be bold and innovative in taking local action as opportunities arise;
- creating win-wins for organisations within partnerships to commit to joint strategic commissioning. In other words try and construct an agenda that enables partners within an LSP to achieve their organisation's objectives while at the same time contributing to wider partnership outcomes; and
- communicating clearly and simply – this involves creating a common language and story for explaining what strategic commissioning means

County / sub-regional initiatives

Partly this is about ensuring that our representation on county partnerships is working to ensure improved outcomes for Cheltenham:

County Partnership	CSP member	representing
Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership	Jill Crook	CSP
Accountable Bodies Group	Steve Jordan	CBC
Community Strategy Executive Board	Andrew North	CBC
Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership	Andrew North Plus Cordell Ray	District councils VCS
Gloucestershire Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership	Andrew North Plus Rosi Shepherd	Urban districts CDRP
Gloucestershire Health and Community Well-being Partnership	Margaret Sheather Plus Craig Mortiboys	GCC HWB partnership
Gloucestershire First	Steve Jordan	CBC
Gloucestershire Environment Partnership	Chris Hickey	CSP
Gloucestershire Conference Support Group	Richard Gibson	CBC / CSP

But, the IDeA sensed that Cheltenham was not being sufficiently pro-active on the county-stage and a feeling that we should be taking the lead more on county-wide initiatives.

Since the IDeA visit, Cheltenham is now the joint accountable manager for outcome 15 of the LAA (improving the quality of life in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods) and is representing the urban districts of the JSNA steering group.

So, perhaps the question should be to our reps above is *“can you demonstrate that you are bringing Cheltenham’s expertise to the table to support county initiatives even when these might not benefit Cheltenham directly?”*

Place-shaping initiatives

The two most significant projects on the cards for Cheltenham are the joint core strategy work and civic pride.

With regards to the joint core strategy, a number of us have expressed concern that the three LSPs have not been sufficiently engaged. A meeting has now been held with land-use planners and LSP officers which has agreed a way forward which should enable the LSPs to play a more prominent role.

Claire Cullen-Jones will attend today’s meeting to discuss this new approach.

For discussion - what this might mean in practice:

Some initial ideas.....

- A move away from our traditional meetings every other month to meeting less frequently to agree shared needs, outcomes and priority projects.
- Coordinating consultation to build up a picture of community aspirations.
- Pulling together a shared understanding of local needs.

For further information, contact

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