

Our Place

The newsletter of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Strategic Partnership

August 2008

What's the Local Strategic Partnership?

Working together with shared goals to make a real difference to the people of the borough, that's what the Basingstoke and Deane Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is all about.

Bringing together, at a local level, the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors; it allows different initiatives and services to support one another so that they can work together more effectively. It provides a single overarching framework in which other partnerships can operate.

By pooling experience and expertise, the partnership has a much wider understanding of local people, places and problems. It can make sure the right actions are taken and right services delivered. The LSP's 'joined-up' vision for the future of the borough is laid out in **Pride in Our Place** – the community strategy for Basingstoke and Deane.

This newsletter aims to update you on the latest LSP 'hot topics'.



Photo: Some of the board members get involved at the LSP conference

Lights, camera and actions...!

The spotlight is quite literally on the Basingstoke and Deane Local Strategic Partnership after it was chosen to feature in a DVD as a good example of working together.

To give councils across the country a close-up on how a LSP can work most effectively together to make a difference in an area, South East Employers and Hants and Isle of Wight Councils have commissioned the film.

With the working title of "What has my LSP ever done for me?", the producers focused on Basingstoke and Deane LSP as an example of best practice and filmed the 2008 conference in July.

The aim of the conference - **People at the Heart, Communities Taking Part!** – was to discuss joint actions for getting the people of Basingstoke and Deane more involved in decisions that effect their local neighbourhood and services.

A record turn out at the conference at the Carnival Hall in Basingstoke ensured that there was a good mix of different organisations represented.

LSP Chair Stephen Sheedy

said: **"In strong communities residents create the sort of place they want to live in rather than being vulnerable to what other people decide for them. That is why it is so important that we do encourage residents in the borough to have 'community spirit' - to get involved and have their say about their area. The LSP is key to bringing this all together."**



Photograph: LSP Chair Stephen Sheedy is interviewed by the film crew at the conference

Getting communities involved

Public services and organisations need to make themselves more visible in communities and not expect residents to make all the effort!

That was one of the messages coming out of discussion groups at the LSP conference focusing on how partners can work together to ensure communities get involved in improving their neighbourhoods and have their say about key decisions on their area and services.

One of the common themes was that if you want to find out what people think, you should go to places where they already meet rather than expecting communities to fill in complicated surveys.

Conference attendees included representatives of the borough's county, borough and parish councils, health, emergency and other public services, housing associations and members of a range of borough forums, including the multicultural, over 55s, environment, and cultural forums and the youth council.

Suggested actions from the conference discussion groups included

- Making sure that if communities have engaged, you keep them informed about progress or decisions as it encourages them to participate again.
- Publicising opportunities to volunteer
- Cutting the jargon, talking in plain English and banning acronyms (initials to stand for things)
- Making it as easy as possible for people to give their views
- Using community and parish magazines, that are already well-read locally, to raise awareness about decisions and issues needing feedback from residents
- Sharing good ideas and what works and what doesn't among partners

The ideas put forward are helping in drawing up the LSP's first ever **Involved Communities** joint strategy and action plan to be agreed by the end of the year.

Even the title of the strategy reflects feedback from the conference as it was felt the 'community involvement strategy' sounded like something that was 'done to residents' rather than reflecting their needs.

There was good support at the conference for a joint action plan for community engagement.

A poll of those attending showed 55% thought that was the only way to make things happen and 34% could see some benefits.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Cabinet member Cllr Elaine Still told the conference: ***"As LSP partners, we are all working within or serving the same communities. Today has given us lots of food for thought on what the public would see as a more 'common sense' joined-up approach to getting them involved in decisions about their areas and services."***



Have your say!

Make sure we know your ideas and suggestions for working in partnership to get more people involved.

To find more about the development of the LSP Involved Communities Strategy and Action Plan contact Sara Shepherd at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council by email sara.shepherd@basingstoke.gov.uk or by calling 01256 845493.

Tips for getting people to talk!

We asked the speakers at the conference what they thought could make more people get involved in taking decisions about their communities...

“Make it fun so people want to take part.”

Jeremy Barber of Longparish Parish Council, who spoke about how they engaged 500 of the 700 people in the village in putting together a parish plan with local meetings and noticeboards as well as social events such as pub quizzes.



“Show people that the only way to make changes is to be involved. If you leave it to someone else you are someone else.”

Alan Phillips, chairman of Kingfisher Residents Federation, who spoke about the value of bringing people together to do things for their local community.



“There is a key role for community development in making a difference – enabling people to take control of the issues in their communities – both of place and of interest.”

John Stevens of Community Action South East, who talked about the outcomes of regional research into empowering residents.



To find out more about the conference and the presentation notes see the website at www.basingstokelsp.org.uk

Asking the audience

In true *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* style the conference ‘asked the audience’ using electronic voting equipment to get instant feedback at the conference. This is how the votes went:

How would you describe the B&D Local Strategic Partnership?

- 1 One multi-agency partnership 27%
- 2 A council initiative 6%
- 3 A range of partnerships all working to the same aims 51%
- 4 A forum for public sector agencies 4%
- 5 A talking shop 12%

People at the heart... communities taking part!



To what extent do you think that local public services are responsive to the needs and concerns of local residents?

- 1 Not at all 5%
- 2 Not very much 7%
- 3 To some extent 68%
- 4 A great deal 19%
- 5 Don't know 1%

People at the heart... communities taking part!



How well do you understand how your organisation fits into the LSP?

- 1 Not at all 17%
- 2 It's still hazy 26%
- 3 I think I have grasped it 26%
- 4 Understand - I could confidently describe it to a colleague 31%

People at the heart... communities taking part!



When working in partnership how well do you feel the voice of your organisation/ sector is heard?

- 1 Rarely / have little influence 13%
- 2 Sometimes/ have some influence 40%
- 3 Often / can influence 47%

People at the heart... communities taking part!



Give us more direction!

Are we still aiming to achieve the right things for the borough by working together? You tell us!

Pride in Our Place is the LSP's community strategy for the borough setting key outcomes under the following themes:

- A safe borough
- A healthy borough
- A learning and creative borough
- An economically prosperous borough
- An environment that's good to live in
- An inclusive borough with strong communities.



The strategy will be shortly coming under review and the LSP will be keen to hear from partners and the public what they think of the strategy and how it can be improved.

A total of 52% of the LSP conference audience said they were already linking their work into the shared goals of the community strategy, but 38% had not even considered this. The LSP would like to see more partners focusing their resources towards the shared vision of how working together they can make the most difference to local communities.

Talking to groups and organisations face to face was the clear leader when the conference audience was asked how they would like to be involved in the community strategy review.

Photo: LSP Vice Chair Martin Nurse with Pride in Our Place, the community strategy

Making us even fitter for the future

So how does the LSP work and get things done? Is this the best way?

Those are the questions that are being asked as the LSP looks at how it organises itself and makes decisions. A key part of this review is how the LSP evaluates what difference it is making on the ground and shares its success.

The structure needs to balance a strategic overview in tackling the borough's needs and shaping its future against delivering improvements on the ground and making sure all sectors of the community are heard.

The review team is keen to hear from all the partners already represented in the LSP, and those that feel they aren't involved enough! The consultation will run until the end of October.

A chair and vice-chair of the LSP is set to be elected in September.



Getting to know you

Do you know who represents you on the LSP Board?

Of those attending the LSP conference 58% said they did know and either knew how to contact them or got regular feedback about board decisions.

Get in touch with your board member to find out more about the LSP and how working together can make a real difference. There is a full list of board members on the website at www.basingstokelsp.org.uk

Find out more about the LSP and how you can get involved. Visit www.basingstokelsp.org.uk