

CAA – Norfolk

LSPs

A summary of findings



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 **audit**
commission

Similarities and differences

- Different structures
- Different sizes
- Different leadership levels
- Different representation
- All meet regularly
- All updated community strategy
- All get good external representation
- All focused on local issues

Structures

- 5 operate a clear 2 tier framework – strategic and delivery

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- Executive Board/Strategic Board (GY)
 - Partnership Board/MAST (Broadland)
 - Partnership Board/Management Group + thematic partnerships(NCC)
 - Strategic Board/Delivery Board (Norwich)
 - Board/Management Group (KL&WN)

- 3 are different – or were setting something new up

- Overall partnership/project specific partnership groups (Breckland)
- Partnership Board/changing to a thematic structure/also LAPA (NN)
- Executive Board/moving to thematic delivery vehicle (SN)

Size

- The meetings varied in size from 12 to 30 people.
- The average was around 15 – 20.
- Larger meetings had less engagement; the smallest worked the best.
- Many venues were too small to fit everyone in comfortably and were not conducive to effective discussions.

Leadership

- Too often meetings appeared to be an extension of the Council which discouraged others from participating.
- The most effective leaders at a district level were high profile, highly competent and independent.
- The best meetings had good engagement and support from senior officers and members.

Representation

- Generally very good support from a wide range of organisations and sectors (people attended but didn't really participate).

- Frequent sending of substitutes in many meetings means partners don't know each other. (substitutes rarely speak)
- Must be a huge drain on resources for some organisations to feed the 'LSP beast.'
 - Police always attend (but hardly ever say anything)
- Very good attendance by Voluntary Norfolk (and participation)
- Good attendance by NCC senior managers at district LSPs
- Patchy support for district LSPs by PCTs
- My overall impression is that you are not getting good value for money from the representatives attending your meetings.

Achievements

- Excellent e.g.s of local partnership projects really making a difference.

 - Vulnerable person's pilot (Broadland)
 - Credit unions (a number of LSPs)
 - VCS Together (NN)
 - Safe Haven project (KL&WN)
 - Cherry Tree park (Breckland)
- Some of these are so good they should be rolled out more widely but:
 - No mechanisms for easily facilitating this or sharing learning across LSPs

Achievements

- Many other successful partnerships between organisations operating outside of the LSP structure.
- A number of LSPs appear to be achieving little that could not be achieved through other means.
- Is maintaining 8 separate Norfolk LSPs a ‘luxury’?
- Are there more innovative solutions to achieving partnership working at a local level?

Managing performance

- Very few reports or discussions about progress on community strategy priorities.
 - Most people attending partnership meetings would leave with little idea of whether the LSP was achieving what it set out to do.
 - Most LSPs had new or refreshed community strategies; few had clear action plans for delivering outcomes in agreed priorities.
 - NCSP has the LAA focus for performance management, but is less clear in areas not covered.
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Links with the LAA – district LSPs

- Overall this was very poor.
- In most instances it was briefly mentioned
- No real debate about how the LSP could be concentrating on achieving LAA outcomes in their locality
- Not clear how priorities in district community strategies link with Norfolk Ambition and the LAA
 - The LAA is mentioned in most opening pages, but then not properly followed up in any actions.
- All LSPs trying to respond to request from LAA team to link their current work to LAA outcomes
 - Very difficult to achieve
 - Mainly looking at retro-fixing rather than new opportunities
- Many attendees do not understand the LAA or their part in it
- No real concept of organisations using mainstream funds towards LAA outcomes.

Other comments

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- The best meetings were well structured and no longer than 2 hours.
 - The management of meeting notes and agenda papers was variable.
 - Too much time spent on discussing individual project requests for funding (disproportionate).
 - Too many council officers at meetings.
 - LSPs are at differing stages of maturity.
 - Often duplication of effort between LSPs
 - Surveys, especially in and around Norwich
 - Consultants reports – needs assessments
 - Setting up of support services, such as credit unions
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In summary

- Some great work on local initiatives – with real outcomes
- Huge commitment to making LSPs work
- Strong Council lead; Good partner support
- Need better focus
- More clarity about what they are setting out to achieve, including measurable outcomes
- Better performance management needed
- Not all current structures are effective
- Consider value for money and investigate innovative solutions to delivering local partnerships
- Where appropriate review and strengthen leadership of LSP
- Ensure better understanding and stronger links to the LAA