



progress through partnership

Member engagement

The experience in SE Unitary Councils

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Unitaries network

2nd December 2008

What we did

- Telephone survey of each of the 12 Unitaries
- On-line survey (seven responses)



Main themes explored

- Member awareness of partnership working
- Levels of experience of partnership working
- Change in political control of council
- Member perception of benefits of partnerships
- Involvement of scrutiny, opposition and ward councillors
- Induction & training of councillors
- Member involvement in performance management

Political Context

- Political Control
- Councillors represented on LSP Boards
- Cabinet/executive involvement in thematic partnerships

Political Control

- Conservative – 7 councils
- Labour – 1
- Lib Dem – 1
- Minority administrations – 3 (one each led by Conservative, Labour & Lib Dem groups)

Involvement in partnerships

- Considerable range in member reps on LSP from 0 (Bracknell Forest) to 5 (Milton Keynes)
- Six chaired by Leader of Council
- One chaired by another cabinet member
- One LSP has rotating chairs (council leader currently chair)
- 11 authorities have portfolio holders sitting on thematic groups

Activity out side formal meetings

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Annual conference | 8 |
| Topic specific workshop | 3 |
| Open Forums | 2 |
| Joint events with other stakeholders | 5 |

From eight responses to online survey

Member attitudes to partnerships

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Leadership: | Mostly “growing acceptance” or “very supportive” |
| Cabinet: | Mostly “growing acceptance” or “very supportive” |
| Backbenchers/ward cllrs: | Mostly “indifferent” |
| Opposition: | Varied but opposition leadership tends to be “supportive” |

Induction & training

Some messages from survey

- Brighton, Medway & Portsmouth all offer training for all members on partnership working
- Medway offer training on local leadership
- Reading currently enhancing member development
- Most authorities do not currently have much member training or induction in this field

Council scrutiny of partnerships

| | |
|---|---|
| Scrutiny regularly examines aspects of the work of partners & partnerships? | 2 |
| Scrutiny occasionally looks at partnership working? | 4 |
| Scrutiny rarely or never looks at partnership working? | 2 |

From eight responses to online survey

Has the LSP Board considered the implications of CAA?

“Yes” – 5

“No” – 0

“Plan to, in near future” – 3

Specific issues of note #1

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <p>Bracknell Forest</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader a driving force (though does not sit on LSP). • Publicity on successes (e.g. rime) key to engagement |
| <p>Brighton & Hove</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place survey branded with LSP & Council logos • CAA leads attend LSP & thematic group meetings |
| <p>Isle of Wight</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Island mentality makes working together more natural“ • Recent Eco-Island initiative has wide support |
| <p>Medway</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reports on partnership activity to Cabinet & scrutiny • Pilot for NIE National Improvement project big stimulus to member engagement |

Specific issues of note #2

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Milton Keynes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large number of members involved in “story of place” for community strategy • LSP a large body – acts as “scrutiny” body for LSP executive |
| Portsmouth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication between LSP & council a major issue • Timing of meetings a problem (LSP = day, Council = evening) |
| Reading | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusting to new political realities (after years of Labour majorities, other parties have now to be brought into loop) |
| Windsor & Maidenhead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead member on community partnerships very involved in LSP |

Specific issues of note #3

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <p>Slough</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slimmed down LSP with separate Forum and twice yearly conferences • Conference “themed” e.g. SCS, LAA, CAA, performance |
| <p>Southampton</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate delivery body from main LSP • Value of co-terminal” boundaries of main partners |
| <p>West Berkshire</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Credit Crunch” a major driver for growing member involvement |
| <p>Wokingham</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem of differing cultures & language of main partners • Lack of district wide CVS to engage vol sector |



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For discussion - 1

Why is this an issue?

- Credibility with other partners?
- Lack of priority in council's own agenda?
- Lack of support internally?
- Difficultly in progressing local partnership initiatives?
- Concern about consequences (particularly CAA)?

For discussion - 2

- Improving communications
- Managing and disseminating information
- Publicising successes
- Considering differing perspectives
 - Leadership, cabinet, opposition, scrutiny, backbenchers, ward members, members as reps
- Integration with council business
- Building relationships