



## So what is PtP all about?

PtP is a peer led capacity building programme for Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in the southeast. The programme offers support to LSP practitioners and partners to help them understand the opportunities that effective partnerships can offer and to build their expertise to make the best use of them.

To ensure that the programme meets the needs of LSPs in the region it takes a lead from people striving to make LSPs work at a grass route level.

PtP offers both a regional approach with free events and other centralised support and bespoke development through a credit system that individual LSPs can draw on to pay for support activities.



## What have we done so far?

PtP was launched on the 28 March with an event attended by 60 delegates representing over half the LSPs in the region. The feedback from the event was very supportive with the peer led approach being strongly endorsed.

Since then PtP has:

- Completed recruitment of the staff team
- Launched a website to provide a central information resource for LSPs in the region [www.progressthroughpartnership.org.uk](http://www.progressthroughpartnership.org.uk)
- Held an event for LSP practitioners: A Sense of Place – The role of LSPs in shaping their area
- Coordinated a self assessment survey completed by two thirds of LSPs in the southeast
- Circulated three newswires to our subscribers in the region

## What next for PtP?

Over the next three months the work PtP will have completed includes:

- Holding a further three regional events (see the events section for details)
- Analysing the self assessments completed by LSPs
- Agreeing with LSPs how they wish to spend the £6000 of credit available to them for bespoke development activities
- Establishing a pool of 'practitioner associates' and other providers that LSPs can draw on to support their bespoke training

## Hot topics in the world of partnership

Some of the hot topics in the field of partnership working identified by LSPs include:

- Place shaping – developing a vision for your area
- Partnership governance and structures
- Engaging communities
- The LSP delivery role
- Establishing the right profile for your LSP – building a brand name
- Aligning community and spatial planning
- Managing partnership resources effectively

## So how can PtP help LSPs and their partners?

PtP is taking its lead from practitioners and partners involved with LSPs. The self assessment recently completed by LSPs in the region will help guide the development of the programme.

PtP is partnered with South East Employers (SEE), the regional employers' organisation and Shared Intelligence (Si), a dynamic and independent national consultancy. Between them they bring considerable knowledge and understanding of the needs of partnerships in the region and a proven ability to deliver capacity building support.

As well as centrally coordinated activities each LSP has the opportunity to draw down £6000 of credit to fund bespoke activities tailored to their individual needs. Some LSPs are looking to pool this funding to work on common issues.

### A series of regional events

PtP events take an interactive approach. The events are helping PtP to gain a better understanding of the aspirations, frustrations and tensions LSP partners and practitioners from the region are facing; and delegates are able to use the events to discuss topical issues, forge new contacts and share their experiences and different approaches.

### Developing a 'Community of Practice'

A Community of Practice (CoP) provides a secure environment on-line where partners and practitioners can discuss topical issues, share their thoughts on guidance and consultation from government, or hold discussions with specialists, without the need to physically meet. PtP is developing a CoP to support LSP partners and practitioners.

### Ensuring councillors are part of the process

At both a local and national level strong messages are being heard that without the active involvement of local Councillors LSPs lack the necessary accountability. Councillors can use LSPs to serve their communities more effectively but only if they are confident in their governance and accountability arrangements. Scrutiny of partnerships must be effective if Councillors are to lead partnerships in the way that the government is expecting of them.

### Analysing needs and brokering support

Based on the regional events and the self assessment recently completed by LSPs in the region PtP will develop a variety of support options. LSPs can draw on this for their development needs using the credits available through the central fund. PtP will act as a broker to provide an easy link between providers and LSPs.

### Supporting the development of LAAs

Sustainable Community Strategies are increasingly expected to be the document that sets out a vision for the future of an area. The LAA is the document that lays out the activities partners will undertake to achieve that vision. PtP is closely following the pilot work in the region around preparing and delivering the latest round of LAAs. The PtP programme will help share the expertise developed across the region and we anticipate that some LSPs will want to use their funding credits for activities that support the development of their LAA.

### Developing a pool of 'Practitioner Associates'

PtP is developing a pool of experienced practitioners and partners who will be able to provide peer to peer support to LSPs in the region, sharing their experiences and guiding their colleagues in areas where they have developed expertise.

### Strengthening communications between partnerships

PtP has launched a website and circulates a monthly newswire, alongside our Newsletter and the Community of Practice. These will help us keep LSPs informed about the work of PtP, share the latest thinking from government and share the good practice and guidance that is being developed by individual LSPs.





## Interview with an LSP Practitioner

**Claire Evans** Strategic Partnerships Manager, Oxfordshire County Council

Claire is the Strategic Partnerships Manager who, supported by a Partnership Officer, manages the Oxfordshire Partnership and is developing the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

### Which LSP do you support?

I work in a three tier system with five districts in our county area. There is a countywide LSP 'The Oxfordshire Partnership', which I support, and five district LSPs. We all work very closely together and have a countywide LSP officers group which meets regularly.

Each district LSP is represented on the Oxfordshire Partnership board, usually by the district LSP chairperson. District and parish councils are also key partners and all five district councils are members of the Partnership Board. The parishes/area committees in each district have representatives nominated by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils.

### What are the key factors in helping your LSP move forward?

- Having dedicated partnership support
- We have recently re-structured the partnership and now have in place a clear governance framework, which has helped enormously
- A Clear Partnership Agreement which has been signed by all partners; partners need to understand their roles and responsibilities

### What are the biggest challenges you are facing this year?

- Developing the Sustainable Community Strategy and ensuring that it is integrated fully with the LAA
- Working together to ensure that the work of the county and district LSPs is integrated
- Ensuring 'buy-in' from elected members

### What are some of your LSP's successes?

- The launch of our first Community Strategy in July 2004
- Negotiating our first LAA which was signed in March 2006
- Following the decision to re-structure the Oxfordshire Community Partnership we were able to strengthen governance. Positive responses to the proposals were received from many partner organisations and as a result we now have in place a Public Service Board which is responsible for performance managing the LAA
- Developing the Oxfordshire Partnership Data Observatory. The Observatory encourages joint work to develop data and information to support Oxfordshire's partnership projects
- Our joint event for Oxfordshire LSPs which looked at the partnership elements of the White Paper

### How is the PtP programme helping you?

- It is helping us forge links with similar authorities
- Acting as a role model for the peer led approach
- Signposting us towards toolkits and guidance
- Providing newsletters and newswires which help keep us up to date on recent developments

### What are the key skills a partnership officer needs?

It is difficult to know where the list stops but here are some essential skills needed:

- A strategic thinker
- Diplomatic and tactful!
- Innovative forward and flexible thinker
- Ability to influence and persuade at all levels
- Cognitive ability – to absorb and analyse complex information quickly
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills – able to present effectively, promote collaborative working and manage complex relationships within a strategic multi-agency environment
- Finally – must be able to stay calm and have a good sense of humour!

### How can we find out more about your work?

Please have a look at our website [www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk](http://www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk)

The website will tell you more about the partnership, acts as a signpost to useful sources of data and includes a selection of downloadable reports, maps and excel spreadsheets.



## Upcoming events

### 15 June 2007

LSP Health Partners: The contribution of LSPs to better local health

### 4 July 2007

LSP Practitioners: Driving delivery through effective governance and accountability structures

### 19 July 2007

LSP Chairs and Members: Driving delivery through effective governance and accountability structures

### September 2007

LSP Practitioners and Partners – Sustainability and sustainable community strategies (provisional).

### September 2007

LSP Practitioners and Partners – (provisional)

We are liaising with GOSE to see how best to bring together the developments arising out of the LAA pilots and LAA feasibility studies in the region and hope to set a date for an event shortly

## Introducing the project team

### Programme Manager – Peter Johnson

Peter was LSP Manager at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council before taking up a post with PtP. Peter said “I have found working for an LSP an enormous challenge, developing a framework for strategic collaboration across all the organisations active in an area is a huge task. It is becoming increasingly challenging as central government lays out their intention to devolve more responsibility downwards and hold partners accountable by geographical areas and through LSPs. I am very excited about the chance to help deliver PtP and build the capacity of both LSPs and their individual partners to respond to the challenge that is being set”.



### Programme Coordinator – Sarah McDuff

Sarah joined PtP as Programme Coordinator. She is seconded from Portsmouth City Council where she has recently been working on a LPSA target to increase volunteering in the local area. Her role has involved working with and creating partnerships within the voluntary and community sector of Portsmouth to aid in the delivery of shared priorities.

Sarah will initially focus her efforts at PtP on developing both the network of Practitioner Associates, who will provide peer support to LSPs and the PtP Community of Practice, a virtual meeting place for LSP practitioners and partners.



### Programme Administrator – Nicola Locke

Nicola is the PtP Programme Administrator, having recently graduated from Portsmouth University with a degree in Psychology. “Working for PtP is a great challenge, I hadn’t realised that there were 74 councils in the southeast and understanding the differences between first and second tier local authorities and their relationships with the LSPs in the region is a big task”.



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This programme is led by South East Employers and Shared Intelligence.

