

# Briefing

**Northumberland Strategic Partnership**  
**Thursday, 27 January 2010**

## **The review of the NSP**

### **1 Purpose of the Report**

This briefing provides a short overview of the work undertaken to date in reviewing the NSP. It will be complemented at the joint meeting of the Board and Executive with a comprehensive presentation.

### **2 Changing national context**

- Significant cuts to public sector spending
- Decentralisation of power (“The Big Society”)
- New partnership landscape emerging (Local Enterprise Partnerships, GP Consortia etc)

### **3 Current operation of NSP**

- Role founded on the Council’s statutory duty “to co-operate” (with residents) and “to involve” (community representatives)
- Structure based on Board/Executive supported by Thematic, Affiliated and Area Partnerships
- Characterised as being inclusive, all-embracing, meeting based, with information sharing and performance focus

### **4 The review process**

- Initiated through the Votes and Voices Leadership Programme
- Series of structured focus group discussions involving the NSP Board/Executive membership that:
  - Adopted a “back to basics” approach
  - Focused on defining what the role of the partnerships, the relationships within the partnership, and its subsequent operation
  - Demonstrated groundswell of positive commitment to the NSP

### **5 Outcomes**

- Emerging consensus as to the role of the NSP relating to promoting partnership working, exercising leadership and challenging convention
- The relationships within the partnership should:
  - Bring the public, voluntary, community and private sectors together
  - Harness the community leadership role of county and parish councils
  - Influence regional/national policy
  - Be facilitated through a streamlined structure
  - Connect strategic policies and priorities to local aspiration and activity

- Two broad principles of “leadership/vision” and “added value for partners” emerged as being fundamental to strategic partnership working

## **6 Conclusions**

- Widespread frustration at domination of “process” within the current NSP
- Broad agreement that the structure needs to be radically streamlined and refocused on “adding value”
- Effective engagement of community leaders remains fundamental
- Recognition that residents need to be involved in local decision-making but challenge as to the role of the partnership in facilitating this
- Less public resources provides significant opportunity for partnership working to introduce more innovative solutions

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