

Introduction

This briefing presents the views of the Chamber network on involvement in Local Strategic Partnerships in England and what affects the success and/or failure of LSPs.

For each Chamber that has responded, comments relate to the following three areas:

- 1) Level of a Chamber's involvement with LSPs within its local area.
- 2) The type of business-focused activities that these LSPs are undertaking and any successes they have had.
- 3) Chambers' views on LSPs, including the reasons for their success or failure and any suggested improvements.

Summary of Views

- Businesses are a key part of any local community and it is important that local authorities work with their business communities and see them as a means of driving forward economic development and prosperity. The feeling in some areas is that engagement and consultation, whether it be through local groups such as Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) or other means, is not always substantive or has any bearing on subsequent courses of action.
- As long as they set out to be constructive and properly engage partners, initiatives such as LSPs can offer real benefits. In circumstances where the LSP operates in an effective manner a more dynamic and accountable governance structure can be established. In other cases concerns have been raised about the effectiveness of these bodies and the limits of what they are able to achieve.

1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- Chamber of Commerce involvement in LSPs varies from place to place and depends on a number of factors.
- There is good involvement in many areas, especially where there is an economic focus.
- There is also involvement in many other groups such as: Learning Partnerships; Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships; and Transport Partnerships.

- Local Government structure can also have an impact. For example, engagement can vary where there are two tier authorities.

2) **Type of activities taking place**

- The levels of business-focused activity vary. In some areas there is concern that issues of relevance to business are missed.
- Some of the themes that have particular relevance for business include:
 - economic development;
 - health;
 - education and skills;
 - transport;
 - enterprise;
 - business crime;
 - collaborative schemes with business including Licence Watch and Workplace Health; and
 - getting those on Incapacity Benefit back into work.

3) **Views on LSPs and factors affecting their success**

a) *There is a failure in many LSPs to fully develop the input of the private sector*

- LSPs need to recognise the vital role that the business community can play in improving the prosperity of their areas. There is a need to genuinely engage the private sector in the delivery and management of projects and ideas. Economic development and regeneration requires willing private sector participation. This requires continued efforts to get businesses involved. It also needs continued dialogue to inform businesses of how the aims of partnerships fit with their priorities. Business Brokers are highlighted as an example of good practice.

b) *There are excessive demands on the private sector*

- Some Chambers are starting to find that demand for business engagement often outstrips supply. Business engagement often falls to the usual suspects such as Chamber members and these representatives often find themselves as the only business representatives on the panels. All other representatives are there as part of their job. The demands in this area are increasing and there is a suggestion that thought should be given to funding private sector involvement. Businesses often leave meetings because they can ill afford the time to attend meetings with what are, at times, irrelevant agendas.

c) *Some areas can suffer from having too many partnerships*

- In some areas there is a feeling that there are too many partnerships. It has been noted that in too many cases the response to a new idea is often just to create a new partnership. To counter this there is a need for prioritisation and a tighter focus. For some, the networks established within a partnership area can appear complicated. There can be confusion about who sits on which partnership at which level. There can also be confusion about differences between strategic and operational aspects. Local Strategic Partnerships should also be integrated with other partnerships and forums locally.

d) The balance of LSP make-up can often weaken effectiveness

- Many LSPs have an over-representation of public and community sector members. This can lead to business views being sidelined and private sector engagement seen merely as a tick box exercise. There is a fear that this can lead to a situation where LSPs exist merely to rubberstamp Local Authority decisions. A potential solution to this problem is to not have the LSP chaired by the local council.
- There is also a concern that in many LSPs discussion often gets bogged down in settling the relationship between the public sector and the voluntary/community sector. It is suggested that there is a closer natural understanding between these sectors that often excludes business people.
- In some instances, there is also a concern that groups can be too large and that this can lead to a lack of focused debate.

e) There are problems with the process of partnership meetings

- There is frequent complaint about the process of LSP meetings being anathema to business. Meetings are often described as unwieldy, with over-congested meetings and overly detailed papers. Some Local Authority papers can be too full of acronyms and specialist, public sector terminology. Genuine business people can find the meetings problematic due to their language and style. Meetings are often scheduled during the working day.

f) Many LSPs can have excessively broad objectives and a consequent lack of focus

- There is a concern that in many instances the objectives of LSPs are too broad. Partnerships can be focused on trying to achieve too many different things and this can lead to ‘talking shops’ with useful networks but weak delivery.
- There is a need for clearer goals at all levels. Meetings should set targets that members then go away and achieve.
- Local Strategic Partnerships must deliver results and have a clear purpose: there should not be a blanket requirement for them to be set up in every area unless there is a defined need for them.

g) The impact of LSPs is affected by the funding available

- Variations in funding mean that you can get a two-tier situation where better funded partnerships, such as those in Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) areas, can point to a number of successes. In contrast, under-funded LSPs often seem to lack teeth and can be seen as Local Authority talking shops. In areas where the public sector is particularly well resourced, the private sector is often more marginalised. There is concern that in these areas, LSPs do only the minimum in order to comply with statutory obligations. Where LSPs are ineffective, a lack of funding is one of the major underlying reasons.

h) There is a lack of measurement of achievements

- There is concern that there is not enough measurement of what LSPs are established to do. There is a lack of detail and output can therefore appear low for the amount of time and resource that goes in. Thematic groups should be required to demonstrate and measure the value they add to the LSP.

i) There is enthusiasm for the introduction of Local Area Agreements (LAAs)

- The development of LAAs is going to have a significant impact on LSPs. At the moment there are often a series of shared priorities. However, this often fails to provide the kind of co-ordinated action that is envisaged in Local Area Agreements.
- It has been suggested that in some areas, LAAs have re-energised local authorities. There are signs that councils are more open to developing business-focused economic development forums within the partnerships. Where LAAs are being set up, many Chambers are getting involved in discussions on business development and enterprise. The fourth strand of LAAs, 'Economic Development', has given a focus around which business can get involved.

Bedfordshire and Luton

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
 - The Chamber's involvement is considerable with half of their Board also members of the LSP boards. One of their senior managers sits on the executive groups and chairs the theme group that discusses business issues. The Chamber coordinates £250,000 worth of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding to deliver some of the business support activities written into the Community Plan. The Luton LSP sees the Chamber as a useful ally and a vehicle to get things done. The activities of the various LSPs do influence their agenda but do not directly control it.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
 - It is fully recognised that the key outcomes required are jobs. The Chamber's assertion, which is fully accepted by local LSPs, is that this will be achieved by the following; helping start-ups; improving growth of existing businesses; and encouraging inward investment. The challenge is to ensure that the LSPs influence the other constituent partners to deliver what is necessary. The key, going forward, is to examine how the LSPs can dovetail with other partners and funding routes and regimes, especially Local Area Agreements.
- 3) Views on LSPs
 - The Chamber believes the economic development agenda should be within the business domain but is less interested in leading on other strands such as 'children and young people', 'health and older people' and 'safer and stronger communities'. LSPs are very bureaucratic and time consuming and could run more efficiently within the private sector. Interestingly the Luton LSP does not always recognise the Chamber as private sector.

Birmingham

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
 - Birmingham Chamber is the only representative of the private sector on the LSP.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
 - The LSP is funding a 2-year business engagement project called "Business Empowerment" (BEP), to the tune of £70K per annum to set up local business groups and identify the needs of local businesses. The Chamber has the contract to deliver those outputs. The LSP recognises that the Chamber's BEP project is the only real business-oriented use of the NRF money and that there is room for more.

- The Chamber is contributing to the development of a Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Birmingham - in particular through participation in the discussions on business development and enterprise.
 - The Chamber also chaired the Working Group responsible for the development of Birmingham's Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) bid.
- 3) View on LSPs
- The LSP is far too large. The size of the LSP makes it extremely difficult to manage business through focused debate. Recognising that, the decision has been taken to set up a smaller Programme Management Board upon which the Chamber has a seat.
 - Overall, the problem with the LSP in Birmingham is that it is very much public sector in complexion and style. At a recent meeting of the City Council's Scrutiny Committee, the Chamber representative commented that individual business representatives "*would last no more than 20 minutes*" in an LSP meeting because of the language and style.

Black Country

Sandwell

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
- Sandwell Partnership is chaired by Stewart Towe who is also Chair of the Black Country Chamber. The partnership has five thematic groups: Health; Community Safety/Crime Reduction; Children and Young People; Economy and Environment; and Skills and Lifelong Learning. The Chamber sits on the Economy and Environment Group and the Crime Group. The Chamber also chairs the Skills and Lifelong Learning Group.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
- Within the Economy and Environment Group the main issue is the Sandwell Economic Plan. This will be used as an ongoing plan to develop the local economy, focusing on output, productivity and employment. The Chamber has had an input into this. The Chamber is being asked to lead on Enterprise, Business Crime and Lobbying Activities.
 - The main issue for the Skills and Lifelong Learning Group is to look at ideas to improve Sandwell's skills within the adult population. This has been facilitated by Marjorie Hester, a consultant working for ODPM. There will be three areas of focus: Basic Skills, Construction Skills and The Knowledge Economy.
 - The Chamber has attended meetings and held discussions with relevant parties, trying to get some action on the concept of a Construction Skills Centre in Sandwell. Sandwell is going to benefit from £7billion worth of

investment coming to the borough from rebuilding the housing stock (Sandwell Housing, HAMRA), building new schools for the future, the new Sandwell College and ReGenCo. The concern is that Sandwell will miss out on an opportunity to provide the local population with job opportunities, leaving the level of worklessness and the skills base in its current poor state and also leaving local companies out of the investment and regeneration process.

3) Views on LSPs

- It is essential for the Chamber to engage with this process to improve the local economy for existing and potential Chamber members.
- The LSP moves too slowly and it focuses on reporting the now rather than moving forward with delivering the future. Local provision could be aided by pots of money being deployed with more flexibility – often they seem too narrow and/or shallow.

Dudley

1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- The Chamber sits on the Dudley Community Partnership Executive (LSP) and is involved in the Jobs theme group, as well as chairing one of its working groups. To date the Jobs theme group is, the Chamber believes, the only group in the Black Country, possibly the West Midlands as a whole, that has managed to obtain a 'green' from Government Office West Midlands for two years running. This is an indication of the importance that this Chamber has put on LSPs.
- Dudley has ensured that the LSPs Challenge document is passed onto businesses and is available via a link on the Chamber's website.
- Other local directors sit on LSPs in Walsall, Wolverhampton and Sandwell.

3) Views on LSPs

- LSPs could still do more. An emerging trend is that they are now beginning to concentrate more on how their work is presented and what words are used to ensure Government agreement rather than carry out action to change things for the better. There are also concerns that on occasions LSPs are beginning to try and run the councils rather than be a useful addition, potential shades of an unelected body doing its own thing. This might not be the fault of LSPs but rather the Government forcing its own agenda irrespective of whether it is good for the community or not.

Bradford

1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- Bradford Chamber is involved with Bradford Vision (Bradford's LSP) and the Chamber's immediate past President is the Vice Chairman of the LSP Board, which now leads the LSP's decision-making following the abolition of the Executive. The Chamber is also on a number of the operations groups, including the Communications Group.
- The Chamber's influence in the LSP has led to the creation of an Economic Development Partnership (EDP) and four members of the Chamber's Board sit on the EDP, with one acting as Vice Chairman of the EDP.
- The Chamber's Chief Executive chairs the Children's University which is a sub-group of the Bradford Learning Partnership which is the learning arm of Bradford Vision. The Children's University is aiming to improve aspirations and attitudes towards learning amongst children aged 8 and up.

2) Type of activities taking place

- Until relatively recently, the only real success to date was the setting up recently of a 'business-focused' Economic Bulletin, although this also took a lot longer to achieve than was anticipated.
- As a result of the work of the EDP, Bradford Vision is building links with businesses, including a local, small-scale regeneration and economic development initiative on the edge of the city centre.
- Bradford Vision is funding a "Buy in Bradford" campaign and put £250,000 into a marketing campaign to improve Bradford's image and profile beyond the local area, a top priority for local businesses. The Chamber believes that these activities would have been unlikely had it not been for the work of the EDP.
- The LSP has also put £120,000 into improving teaching in schools.

3) Views on LSPs

- The Chamber has in the past had concerns that the LSP is not very business-focused, though it did try to be 'business-friendly'. There were problems due to the difference in approach between the public and private sectors and a perceived excess of bureaucracy. However, there have been substantial improvements and changes to the LSP which have addressed the previously convoluted structures and duplication. There is now no Executive, only the Board, which is supported by operational groups including the EDP, crime reduction group and communications group.
- LSPs do not appear to have clear or strong enough measurements for what they do.

Coventry and Warwickshire

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
 - Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber is closely involved in the Coventry LSP, at both LSP level and with theme groups such as ‘jobs and the economy’, which are a major feature of the Community Plan.
 - The Chamber has a contract with the LSP to deliver business support.
 - The role of the Chair is rotated and members of the public, private and voluntary sectors all serve as chair. In 2005, Coventry Chamber’s Chief Executive chaired the LSP.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
 - The LSP has a well-established and widely distributed Community Plan, about which there is good awareness of. The Community Plan is focused on actions and targets and to date has been working effectively.
- 3) Views on LSPs
 - Where LSPs are resourced by the local authority, or better still by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, they work best. Coventry LSP receives both NRF support and local authority resources.
 - The Coventry LSP is felt to be one of the best LSPs. It is a wide, strong partnership with senior level representatives of all the key agencies and organisations within Coventry. Generally it is attended by those who can make decisions, including Chief Executives (or equivalent) of the NHS locally, police, Chamber of Commerce, LSC, Connexions, local authority, voluntary services, Law Society, LEA, schools and colleges and race equality organisations. Local Authority Cabinet Members also attend, as do community representatives and members of the private sector in addition to the Chamber, including from Peugeot, Jaguar and Powergen.
 - The LSP works well as it is supported by a well-managed and action-oriented structure of working groups and theme groups. The City Council acts as the legal secretariat.
 - As a result of Coventry LSP’s success, it was one of the first, pilot, Local Area Agreements. The Chamber’s Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council met with the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005 to sign the LAA. The LAA is built on the Community Plan and is seen as an opportunity to align targets and be flexible about resources.
 - Whilst aligning targets and resources amongst members of an LSP is always going to be a difficult issue, Coventry LSP is urging the Government to allow LSPs to do this, so that the LSP can do what it believes best for the local community. This is what being local and locally responsive really involves.

- As local authorities are given more of a role by ODPM in economic development, business engagement and business support, they should look to bring in the expertise of the private sector, not least the Chamber of Commerce locally, or indeed for the private sector to lead these efforts.

Greater Manchester

1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- Greater Manchester Chamber is represented on each of the ten LSPs which operate across the sub-region. This has been a natural step as the Chamber enjoys strong links with each local authority in the area. The Chamber also has seats on a number of other groups within each LSP ‘family tree’. Groups such as Learning Partnerships, CDRPs and Transport Partnerships allow the Chamber to input on a variety of levels.

2) Type of activities taking place

- The level of business-focused activity varies from area to area across Greater Manchester. Eligible areas have discussed LEGI though in many cases Economic Partnerships, which sit under each LSP, are the groups which focus on economic development issues. In some instances, LSPs have been known to devolve power to Economic Partnerships. This devolved responsibility helps the Economic Partnership to have a clearer goal and ensures that groups engaged within these partnerships feel that their input can help to influence strategy.

3) Views on LSPs

- The attitude of the local authority to true partnership working is a major factor. In some cases, the aims of the partnership are incompatible with the targets of an individual funded partner. While LSPs do encourage a partnership approach, the individual targets of the constituent members often mean that decisions have already been taken and that the LSP exists to provide a rubber-stamp. This is particularly acute in certain local authorities.
- The spending power of the LSP is another factor affecting the success of a partnership. Areas with Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, for example, can target funds into projects that they support. This automatically enables members of the LSP to see a definite benefit which justifies their commitment.
- Areas without funding often find that they are left to look to increased partnership commitment to joint working and using existing funds in a more focused manner. While this is welcome, there is the risk that a two-tier situation develops within LSPs where representatives from agencies with substantial funds such as the local authority, Jobcentre Plus and the Primary Care Trust effectively lead the partnership while other groups including the Chamber are present to listen and seek to influence the direction that the partnership takes. The areas with funding can more easily claim successes

when assessing how specific projects that they have funded have performed. Areas without funding have to try to gauge the additional benefit gained from their joined-up approach, which can be difficult to calculate.

- Agendas for LSP meetings can in some cases be too congested, which means that presentations are not allowed a suitable amount of time for digestion and subsequent questioning. Similarly pre-issued papers can be heavily detailed. In some areas LSP ‘family trees’ have become unmanageably large, with subgroups of subgroups set up to look at the finer detail of proposals.
- Generally LSPs do not adequately communicate their role to their communities. Businesses and individuals do not have a great awareness of their role and in many cases are even unaware of their existence. Some areas are now looking to develop websites for their Partnerships with links to partner sites while other areas have had sites for some time.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire

1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- The Chamber is involved in all of the eight LSPs in its geographic area. There is one in Herefordshire because it is a Unitary Authority and seven in Worcestershire - one at county level and one in each of the six districts.
- The two county level LSPs are very important to the Chamber. The Chamber’s Chief Executive sits on both of those. Both LSPs have had a major impact on strategic issues across the two counties. However, there is a noticeable imbalance in representation between the private and public sectors. Nevertheless, these are likely to be the foundations on which the new Local Area Agreements are built in the two counties.
- On all of the LSPs in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Chamber representatives are generally staff members, although in Wyre Forest (North Worcestershire), a Chamber member is the representative and they report to the Chamber’s North Worcestershire Area Council.

2) Type of activities taking place

- At district level, the LSPs vary enormously. In Worcester, a series of priorities for action have been agreed, under a number of headings: A Prosperous City; A Healthy City; A Green and Pleasant City; and a Safe and Secure City. Key partners, including the Chamber, have then indicated how they will help to deliver these objectives. These commitments are published and each member of the LSPs reports back on how they are achieving the targets. A similar structure operates in Redditch although presented slightly differently.
- Malvern has a different approach with a series of working groups that are given tasks to do. For example there is a working group to advise District

Council planners on the development of a major site that recently became available. There are also ongoing groups that have been trying to achieve a more co-ordinated partnership between partners on questions such as creating and sustaining employment, housing and transport. The Chamber is currently chairing a group which is working on strengthening Malvern as the southern anchor for the Central Technology Belt, part of the Regional Economic Strategy.

- Herefordshire LSP has been active in some of the major development proposals for the County. The LSP has been very involved in the discussions on the redevelopment of a major part of the City of Hereford. It appears to be having a major influence which should ensure that it delivers an appropriate and viable development that supports the economic as well as the social and cultural aspects of the City.
- The LSP in Herefordshire has also been very focused on delivering the economic development strategy for Herefordshire, which the Chamber was fully involved with, and encouraging business engagement.

3) Views on LSPs

Overall

- The issue with these structures is that it demonstrates what partners are doing in an area. It does help partners to see what others are doing and provides a forum to exchange information and knowledge. However, it does not provide the kind of co-ordinated action that is envisaged in Local Area Agreements.
- There is a lot of discussion going on in all of the more active LSPs about the future, given the LAAs which are currently developing and will transform the structure.
- Often the partnerships are focused on achieving everything whereas they in fact need some prioritisation. Herefordshire has 10 sub-groups and prioritisation of these groups would be beneficial.

Herefordshire

- In the past the Economic Development group has been very agency-focused, with little or no private business representation. The Chamber and FSB has been viewed as private sector, more than as a link to the private sector in a wider sense. Often the agenda and issues discussed have been agency and council focused initiatives. Though sometimes relevant to the local business community, this has led to work which is not really focusing on actions that will benefit the local business community, despite the efforts of the Chamber and FSB to raise this approach.
- Recently the Chamber and FSB, working in partnership, have raised a number of questions with Herefordshire Council in order to achieve a more business-focused economic development forum within the partnership. This is

particularly in the light of the economic development strategy, now in place, the LAA developments and AWM initiatives. These questions include the purpose of the group (which is not clear), the membership of the group, (which appears very agency based) and the activity which this group should be undertaking (as it also appears unclear). At this stage the group does not have a great deal of partnership working, as each agency focuses on its own area. The partnership then acts as the forum in which to exchange information on what each particular agency is undertaking separately.

- The Chamber, working in partnership with the FSB in the area, can deliver and support the local business community if the agencies provide the finances and resources to back such initiatives. Both organisations seem to appreciate more than any other organisations around the table that real results need to be delivered for businesses in the locality. The Chamber is hopeful that the LSP can be steered towards delivering these results and believes that more goals, short, medium and long term, would give the partnership greater focus and impact on specific businesses issues which concern the local business community. Local businesses need to be invited to a specific meeting to discuss an issue and then partners should have specific actions to follow up on. They can then feedback on what they have achieved, what they cannot achieve and how the LSP can lobby for greater resources.
- On a more strategic level, greater prioritisation within the partnership effort is needed and the limited resources available need to follow the priorities. In seeking further funding, specific reference needs to be made to the business community as a group that is often quite hard to reach and whose voice is often lost when compared to those of voluntary or community pressure groups in the LSP.

Hull and Humber

1) Level of Chamber involvement in LSPs

- In Hull, an NRF area, the Chamber has a broad and deep engagement by running a Business Forum for the LSP via a Service Level Agreement.
- The Chamber's involvement in LSPs in the East Riding of Yorkshire, not an NRF area, is more limited. It is a partner and is represented on the economy partnership.
- Likewise in North Lincolnshire, the Chamber has a fairly limited involvement. The Chamber's Area President and other members are involved.
- In North East Lincolnshire, a 'new' NRF area as from April 2006, the Chamber managed what was the economic partnership of the LSP for four years until funding ran out. A former Chamber Board member is Chair of the LSP.

2) Type of activities taking place

- Hull: when the Chamber became involved there was limited business engagement and a very wide range of priorities with a social rather than economic emphasis. The Chamber's strategic lobbying through the Business Forum has contributed to a massive change in emphasis. A new Community Strategy is about to be agreed with a much sharper focus on jobs and education/skills as the top priorities for the LSP. This should then drive activity.
- Already, the LSP has invested NRF in some good economic projects such as part funding of the Business Development Fund and youth enterprise activities, which the Chamber is heavily involved in and supportive of. One of the Forum's Business Representatives has been elected as Vice-Chair of the LSP and the Chamber-led, LSP-backed bid to be Britain's Capital of Enterprise. Though the bid was unsuccessful, the process helped put Hull on the 'enterprise map'. The Chamber is now key partner and has actively contributed to the area's LEGI bid. The Forum has lobbied on issues such as transport, procurement, planning and education.
- East Riding of Yorkshire: the LSP has a quality of life agenda and it is not clear that the LSP actually adds anything to the economic agenda that would not happen in any case.
- North Lincolnshire: the LSP has been heavily involved in an Urban Renaissance agenda, led by the RDA, to transform Scunthorpe. This has an economic focus in shaping the future fabric of the town.
- North East Lincolnshire: the economy has been an important part of the Community Strategy to date, but little new activity has followed. This may change when the area is in receipt of NRF resources from next year and possible LEGI funding at some point after that.

3) Views on LSPs

- The Chamber is concerned that though LSPs are a great concept on paper, with all partners developing a common strategy and focusing their activities to meet agreed objectives, there are significant flaws in the way LSPs work.
- Firstly, the objectives are far too broad. Partly this is because partners themselves are not always capable of agreeing a small number of priorities, but also because the remit from the Government is too wide. The result is that LSPs become talking shops and useful networks, but are generally weak on delivery. This is especially true for non-NRF areas. It is almost impossible to deliver much in an LSP without some funding to make things happen, however much the theory suggests otherwise.
- Secondly, there is just too much partnership, with too many groups often with overlapping agendas. The first response to a problem or issue is to set up a new partnership group. Though some are effective, most are not. All are well

intentioned, but not necessarily effective. The theory about using LSPs to rationalise partnerships has not worked out in practice and if anything there has been further proliferation. There is a danger that LSPs become a sink for every initiative no single partner wants and they can easily lose their focus.

- A potential solution would be to encourage LSPs to have a much sharper focus. Partners can still decide where this focus is best placed in their area, but Government should not expect the LSP to deliver all of its economic and social objectives at the same time.
- With a sharper focus, LSPs could be made much more agile and able to move faster, whereas at the moment they are slow and bureaucratic. Hull is making good progress in reshaping its LSP and Community Strategy in a much more focused and rational way. In part it has to do this because of the Government monitoring and inspection regime. A concern is that the LSPs in prosperous areas with 'good' local authorities do not use their LSPs effectively, but simply do the minimum to comply with their statutory obligations. This is a lost opportunity.
- Overall, there is a sense in Hull that business engagement is as strong as it is anywhere else in England. When the LSP was being established, it decided to set up a Business Forum and the Chamber persuaded the LSP that, rather than set up a separate business voice, the management and administration of the Business Forum should be contracted to the Chamber. It is therefore run independently of the LSP and semi-independently of the Chamber.
- The Business Forum has elected three private sector members on the LSP Board and two to three business representatives on each of the eight themed partnerships. The Chamber supports them with briefing and research. The Forum operates a free membership scheme, separate to the Chamber and FSB, and provides news, information and invitations to events related to the city's regeneration. Around 400 businesses are signed up.
- Hull City Council was until recently officially the worst in the country and the only one rated 'poor' in the CPA process. The Chamber's experience however, is that whilst it has its problems, it is not the worst in the country and is making excellent progress. It has worked very hard in vastly improving its business engagement and the Business Forum is one reflection of this, as is a £1million per year Business Development Fund the Chamber runs for the Council. The Chamber has also recently taken on the City Centre Management responsibilities and Business Improvement District process, with a referendum on the latter due in 2006.

Leeds

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
 - The Leeds Initiative (the city's LSP) was set up in 1990 by Leeds Chamber of Commerce and the City Council to promote the city's economic development.

- Over the years the Initiative has grown to cover all aspects of the city's life, bringing together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.
 - The Chamber, via officer and member involvement, is represented at various levels of the Initiative. This ranges from members of the Initiative Board, the two executives, and various strategy and partnership groups. The Chamber's involvement tends to be concentrated on those groups which have an economic development focus.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
- The Leeds Initiative recently published its second long-term plan – Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020 – for the economic, cultural, social and environmental development of Leeds.
 - The Vision has three aims:
 - a) Going up a league as a city,
 - b) Narrowing the gap, and
 - c) Developing Leeds' role as the regional capital
- 3) Views on LSPs
- It should not be underestimated how much time representation on the boards, executives and groups of the LSP requires of the Chamber. This is given freely by the Chamber, but the demands are continually increasing and some thought should be given to payment for involvement if the Government and local authorities want input from the private sector.
 - The Chamber is sometimes frustrated by the concentration on the production of strategies and plans rather than action and implementation.

Leicestershire

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
- Leicestershire Chamber and its members are represented on many of Leicestershire's LSPs.
 - The sort of business-focused activity that takes place in these LSPs varies substantially and in any case the Chamber is working at two tiers of capability. The upper tier is represented by Leicester Partnership (Unitary Council) and Leicestershire Together (County Council). These two differ significantly.
 - The lower tier comprises the District level authorities. The presence of recognised local business communities varies from authority to authority, which impacts noticeably on engagement and the state of the Community Plan. However the announcement of Local Area Agreements has energised the local authorities and Leicestershire Together has helped to coordinate matters in the past three to four months. A further influential factor has been the

Welland Partnership whose overlapping economic development function has been influential in two districts (Melton and Harborough).

2) Type of activities taking place

- The adoption by Leicestershire Together of Leicestershire Economic Partnership as the lead for the LAA economic development theme is the best practice achieved in the area.
- The formation of local business partnerships meshing LSP theme group Support and Welland Sub-regional Strategic Partnership (SSPs) themes has helped to draw down well-focused rural business assistance. The Chamber role in this has been limited to one authority.
- The pattern in the Districts is patchy and hard to document. A major private sector employer in Blaby has teamed up with other large public sector employers to form a Green Travel Plans user group. Town partnerships have been formed in Melton and Hinckley.

3) Views on LSPs

- At the time of regional consultation about LSPs and SSPs in the late 1990s, Leicestershire Chamber stressed that demand for engagement by businesses would outstrip supply and capacity. The Chamber has tended to meet a wall of incomprehension when explaining the need for extra help in order to engage in "community development" amongst the business community before they will participate in partnership bodies. Until the late addition of the economic development theme to LAAs, there have been few handles for business people to grasp and to justify investing their time and interest. LSPs that successfully engage business tend to rely on the "usual suspects" - business people whose active membership of Chambers and similar organisations has enlightened them to the significance of partnership work. Even these able people struggle when LSPs become bogged down in settling the relationship between the public sector and community/voluntary sector.
- The closer understanding between the public sector and community/voluntary sectors, due to a longer relationship history, might be a contributory factor that tends to exclude business people from effective partnership building. The inability to engage with "empowered" individuals in businesses frustrates members of these sectors.
- Enterprise education targeted to develop public sector and community/voluntary sector partners would progress true partnership building – something that could be explored with IDEA. A similar initiative aimed at the training and development of councillors could be beneficial as, given that it has been increasingly difficult for people in business to undertake public service over recent years, something is needed to help rebuild a common language.

- The closest to supportive intervention was the Business Broker project scheme. ODPM and Neighbourhood Renewal Unit have been very quiet about this, despite hints that these have been moderately successful. The name may have to change, due to the special meaning of "broker" that is being used in Business Support and Skills strategy with the accompanying Business Engagement Strategy in LSC.

North East

1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- The Chamber has excellent relationships with the local authorities in the North East at Unitary, County and District level and aims to maintain a pro-active, constructive relationship.
- The Chamber is involved in many of the Local Strategic Partnerships in the North East. The level of involvement that the Chamber has is dependent on the area.

2) Type of activities taking place

- It is difficult for some LSPs to engage with business due to emphasis on the partnership agenda. Having a group led by business maintains the involvement of business. In Newcastle the Chamber, through the Newcastle Business Forum, allows for involvement in changing the perceptions of the area. The Business Forum has conducted surveys looking at the role of public transport on employment in the area, travel to work schemes and green transport plans. The Business Forum also holds all the consultation events for the LSP in Newcastle.

3) Views on LSPs

- There is a perception that business involvement is seen as tokenistic. Many LSPs do not add value to the other community schemes, leading to difficulties and confusion for business.
- Other groups that are involved in LSPs, notably the public sector and voluntary and community sectors, have a greater say.
- A business agenda would allow greater business involvement. Many businesses do not have time to give up hours from running their organisations for discussions on Government programmes. Furthermore, the issues discussed can be parochial, leading businesses not to give up their time
- There is a perception that many of the funding streams, including the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, do not understand the private sector.
- Resources and targets need to be streamlined as in many areas there are duplications. There needs to be greater prioritisation rather than a long list of targets. Where there is no funding, the success of LSPs is questionable. LSPs

are successful where there are the resources to carry through the activities identified by business. Without this, they become talking shops.

- One possible solution to the problems outlined above is the use of Business Forums. Through these there can be a pooling of resources and a business agenda can be implemented. LSPs can engage with the grassroots and many other businesses to implement a common agenda. They allow for someone on the ground to implement and facilitate the actions required for the LSP. Involving businesses can allow for other floor targets to be met in other areas.

North Staffordshire

Stoke on Trent

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
 - The Chamber's President chairs the Stoke on Trent LSP.
 - The Chamber is also represented on the city's Responsible Authorities Group for Community Safety, ensuring that tackling crime against business remains a priority.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
 - An Economic Development and Enterprise Group has been established and is playing a key role in Stoke's Local Area Agreement bid, the results of which are expected in March. The group is scheduled to meet regularly over the next 12 months and a programme of work is being drawn up. Though the LAA will not bring in a great deal of funding, it is hoped it will focus partners' attention on a smaller number of key targets and deliver tangible results.
- 3) Views on LSPs
 - Stoke on Trent LSP receives Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and has also been linked with the Single Regeneration Budget. This funding has significantly helped the LSP by allowing it to plan for economic development, giving it a sense of purpose and enabling it to engage business interest, as a result of which there was significant input into the drafting of a Community Strategy.
 - The creation of North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone, however, through which SRB money is now routed, meant that the focus of the private sector switched from Stoke LSP to the Regeneration Zone. The LSP risked becoming a parochial talking shop but this has been averted since the city started to bid for a Local Area Agreement. Private sector interest in the LSP has been rekindled.

Staffordshire Moorlands

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- The Chamber's Chief Executive was a Board member of the Staffordshire Moorlands LSP when it was first set up, though the exclusive focus of the LSP on the activities of the statutory authorities involved meant that he felt he had to resign after 12 months. Even in discussions on community safety, business crime was not addressed.

3) Views on LSPs

- Other private sector representatives have been invited to LSP meetings, but have found it difficult to engage because there has been no additional funding for some of the most pressing needs of business, namely enterprise, business start-up or innovation, even if these aims have been in the LSP's strategy. Business representatives quickly regarded the LSP as more of a talking shop.

Newcastle under Lyme

1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- The Chamber's Chief Executive was involved in setting up the Newcastle under Lyme LSP and now sits on one of the LSP committees.

3) Views on LSPs

- The LSP receives no additional funding, which limits its effectiveness. It also has problems engaging the private sector. The only other private sector representative on the LSP is the local university, which is widely regarded amongst businesses as more public than private sector.

Stafford

1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- Staffordshire Chamber has been involved with Stafford Borough's LSP since its inception and has a representative on the Executive.

2) Type of activities taking place

- There is an active Economic Task Group (with which the Chamber is involved) that tries hard to engage the business community. Members of the Task Group have been out to talk to BNI meetings to encourage more to attend. Times of meetings are alternated between 7:30am and 4:30pm to make it possible for wider participation, working on the premise that not everyone can attend at the same time. However, the group does still seem to be top heavy with local councillors.
- The Economic Task Group considers the LDF at each stage and also has a list of Actions in the Community which is reviewed regularly. Whilst the Chamber is not a lead on any of these Actions, it has influenced their inclusion. The first Economic Theme, for example, is *'to promote Stafford Borough as a leading base for the research and development of sustainable technologies including renewable energy and energy efficiency best practice'* which the Chamber has a large input into through the Biomass and Renewable

Energy Business Support Project which is co-ordinated from the Chamber. Other Themes include '*vibrant town centres*', '*provision of high quality employment sites*' and support for the local Market Towns Initiative, all of which the Chamber fully supports and works with partners to achieve.

3) Views on LSPs

- Stafford has worked very hard to be an inclusive LSP but this has proved to be difficult with the business community. There is no money coming into the Partnership and some business people are not convinced that it is not just another local council talking shop with no teeth.

North and West Lancashire

1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- There are eight local LSPs and one countywide LSP in the Chamber's region and it is involved in all of them (seven at full Board level and two at working group level). One of the LSPs (West Lancashire) went through a consultation process during the summer and the Chamber was one of eight respondents.
- Two more LSPs are reinventing themselves and the countywide partnership is about to consult with its members (of which there are over 50). Most of the LSPs in the area have smaller Executive Committees that tend to be public sector dominated.
- Private sector representation is poor with most LSPs relying on the Chamber and Business Link to provide the business input.
- The recently published summary evaluation report of the Business Brokers Pilot Programme recommended that LSPs review the extent and quality of their business engagement. The report also recommended that LSPs should ensure that they maximise opportunities for business engagement and consider embedding this function within their structures. The Chamber supports this view and would welcome the opportunity to work with partners to increase business engagement in the West Lancashire LSP.

2) Type of activities taking place

- West Lancashire LSP presents many opportunities for strategic and integrated action to make improvements to people's lives and to the environment. Many of the Chambers' members in West Lancashire are ready and willing to play their part in undertaking this action. They are an important and thriving part of the West Lancashire "community" and yet there are still great concerns over the level of understanding amongst other LSP partners of the benefits that Chamber members can bring to the Partnership.
- Many of the poorest communities in West Lancashire face fundamental problems such as high crime and a low skills base that discourage private investment. West Lancashire LSP, through the Community Plan, is taking a

lead on tackling these problems. Whilst the Chamber supports the aims and objectives of the Community Plan, it believes that greater emphasis needs to be placed on promoting enterprise. If the Community Plan is to be successful and sustainable it must have a real economic base. Encouraging enterprise has to be a key component of this approach and that means more business growth and success.

- The key priority for West Lancashire LSP must be economic development. Developing a more dynamic, enterprising economy is the first step in tackling the issues of deprivation faced by some wards in West Lancashire.

3) Views on LSPs

- A common criticism of LSP activity in general is an obsession with process rather than outcomes. Local partners' main aims are often to maximize the level of resources going into an area when the main aim of any LSP should be to maximize the impact of the private sector resources available.
- The private sector has a vital role to play in helping improve public services in West Lancashire through levering in higher levels of capital investment and by raising standards and improving the quality of public services. West Lancashire LSP needs to recognise the vital role that the business community can play in improving the prosperity of the area by developing processes to get businesses involved.
- The future success of West Lancashire LSP is dependent on its ability to connect the public sector and community groups with the private sector. However LSPs in general are failing to engage the business community in the delivery and management of projects and ideas. This is clearly an important challenge for West Lancashire LSP as unless the private sector is fully and willingly participating, how can it address economic regeneration?
- It will be difficult to sustain business interest if partnership working becomes bureaucratic, there is not a bias towards action and local businesses believe (rightly or wrongly) that the process is being run by West Lancashire District Council. Electing a chair from the private sector (as some LSPs have done) will help improve business engagement.
- If the LSP is to engage effectively with business it must demonstrate evidence of what it can do for the private sector that is different and significant. Business wants to see different approaches being put into practice, for example, encouraging local public sector bodies and agencies to promote a policy of local sourcing and to provide help for local businesses to get onto the tender lists for public sector procurement.
- A useful exercise would be to total the procurement budgets of West Lancashire District Council, local NHS Trusts, and other public bodies operating in West Lancashire and identify how much of the combined budget is spent in the District.

- West Lancashire LSP needs to improve the way it communicates. One of the reasons for non-participation by the private sector is a lack of communication: in simple terms, talking to businesses and delivering something that is going to fit with their vision of the future.
- West Lancashire LSP, in the interests of transparency and accountability, should set out clearly its proposed arrangements for consultation, communication and reporting, and should make explicit the relationship between these arrangements and the accountability mechanisms of partner organisations. Thematic groups should be required to demonstrate and measure their added value to the LSP.
- The demand for business representatives to invest in partnership projects causes tensions. This stems from half-remembered recollections of the benevolence of individuals with high net wealth and strong civic values playing a central role in funding the needs of their communities. Trying to foist this role on "big business" is unlikely to produce satisfying results and the results for such individuals trying to play this role today can be rather mixed, given today's culture of "fame and shame".

Nottinghamshire

Ashfield

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
 - Nottinghamshire Chamber is part of the Ashfield Hub within the LSP and also assists with the economics group within the LSP. However, there is little other contact with business by the LSP and the Chamber is sceptical of business involvement as the LSP seems to focus on social issues rather than business needs, with a number of presentations on crime, health, deprivation and education. The Chamber is the only business representation on the LSP and there is a sense that everyone else on the panel is there as part of their job – whether as police, fire, PCT, councillors, voluntary sector or Government Office.
- 3) Views on LSPs
 - Ashfield has in many ways been successful but is still low in its attainment according to the criteria set by the Government Office. Results are not always measured in sufficient detail and the cost benefit appears small when the effort, time and resources involved are analysed.
 - There appears to be much duplication with the strategic partnerships of each area, region and so on.

Gedling

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- Nottinghamshire Chamber is also represented on the Gedling LSP Board and attends the Gedling Business Action Group (GBAG) meetings.
 - The Chamber's involvement has been somewhat "hit and miss". In the early days the council employed a Business Development Officer and there were a few very successful meetings of GBAG. Unfortunately, when he left, the council did not replace him and any business issues were handled by various officers in the Cabinet Office all of whom had other more pressing duties to attend to. In recent months there has been an upsurge in interest in GBAG and an inaugural meeting was held recently.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
- Gedling LSP has an almost total focus on public sector issues aided mainly by the huge amount of resources they can devote to the partnership. Hindered by the lack of a Business Development Officer, there have been few resources available to develop GBAG and until recently any initiatives by the group were effectively independent of the LSP. Business Link, who are also represented on the Board, have modest resources available and they administer GBAG. GBAG are now putting together an agenda, in conjunction with a wish list from the LSP, but success will be dependent on a small number of willing volunteers to drive this forward.
- 3) Views on LSPs
- Specific funding would help significantly in driving forward GBAG's agenda. It would also encourage the long-term, ongoing involvement of business if meetings were not held during the working day.

Portsmouth & South East Hampshire

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
- The Chamber is involved in two LSPs – Havant and Portsmouth. In Havant, the Chamber also represents the LSP on the Traffic & Transportation Committee. In Portsmouth, the Chamber is involved in both the Transport and Environment Group and was recently invited to actively involved in the Economic Wellbeing Lead Partnerships.
 - In Portsmouth, the Transport and Environment Group has not met since February 2005. However, the Chief Executive of the Chamber chairs the Area Investment Framework Transport Forum and this group is now being looked at as a possible replacement for the ineffective Transport and Environment Group. If this does go ahead the Chamber will be represented on the LSP Strategy Group. The LSP Strategy Group has also recently been reduced from 32 to 15 people, in order to achieve more effective decision-making and more focused discussions.
- 2) Type of activities taking place

- To date there has been very little activity that could be described as business-focused. With the Portsmouth LSP having 16 of its 32 representatives from Community Boards, their agenda seems to overtake everything else. The most positive development to date has been the Business Transport Conference organised by the LSP at the end of November at which the Chamber spoke.
 - In Havant there are concerns at the lack of business representation and agendas as most meetings do not tend to cover topics directly relevant to business.
- 3) Views on LSPs
- Things are unlikely to change whilst the community sector have such a weighted presence. Businesses who have been involved in both LSPs have left as they cannot afford the time to attend meetings where the agendas are not relevant. This is also a challenge for the Chamber.

Rotherham

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
- Rotherham Chamber is engaged at every level and across every theme of the LSP.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
- Business activities focus on business crime, business-education links, collaborative schemes with business including Licence Watch and Workplace Health and getting those on Incapacity Benefit back into work.
- 3) Views on LSPs
- LSPs are still too dominated by Local Authorities, but that would seem to be the way the Government wants it to work.
 - The LSP's agenda should be limiting the amount of public money spent both nationally and locally, tackling 'red tape' and limiting the damage to business of government-funded interventions in the market.
 - There needs to be significant change to create vibrant local leadership. Business leaders, in the main, will not engage except for within LSPs/partnership structures due to the party political nature of local government. Thirty years ago business leaders did lead their local communities.

Surrey

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- Of the 11 boroughs in Surrey, the Chamber sits on the LSP Executive of two of them, so is very closely involved with the running of the Partnership. The Chamber is an enthusiastic supporter of LSPs where they are properly understood and run and every member has an equal say in running them. A Chamber representative also attended the GOSE annual awayday in Portsmouth sharing best practice and problems. The Chamber representative shared a car with two people from the local Borough council and someone who represents the residents associations - partnership working in action.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
- The objectives are not specifically business related - youth and crime are the two being focused on in Staines - but they are broad enough to allow the business community to become involved and, of course, if the young people behave better then crime is reduced, improving the whole economic climate and helping retailers do better.
 - A couple of big businesses are LSP executive members in their own right. However, for general business issues, the Chamber is the first port of call.
- 3) Views on LSPs
- LSPs are best chaired by non-council staff, though the council should provide the secretariat.

South Essex

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
- The South Essex Chamber of Commerce, part of Essex Chambers, is proactively involved with the LSPs in its area. The Chamber represents the business community on the Boards and steering groups, including regeneration and the development of the Community Plan.
 - The Chamber is looking to extend its involvement in LSPs to ensure the business community is involved in shaping the local community and achieving a sustainable business environment. The challenge though will be time management to take account of this growing involvement.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
- South East Essex Chambers of Commerce sit on the board for Southend Together as the only private sector representative. The key focus of this board is to better develop Southend as a tourist destination and vibrant business centre. The Chamber's involvement is therefore key to helping to shape the Community Plan and involving local businesses in working with the LSP to deliver this objective. The Chamber's representative is on the working party responsible for a full review of the community plan.

- Chamber members have real concerns about business crime and accordingly, the Chamber has been invited on to the Police Executive Board which is responsible for planning and implementing strategies and tactical initiatives to raise awareness and reduce the incidence of crime.
- Community and corporate opportunities exist in the area for the 2012 Olympics, therefore it is pleasing that the Chamber has been asked by the Leader of the Council to represent the town of Southend, in every respect, on the Essex Olympic Committee.
- The Thames Gateway is a huge regeneration initiative and, together with the East of England Plan and Renaissance Southend, forms the foundation for substantial change in the region. The Chamber is therefore working hard to maintain the close relationships with these bodies to help shape and support the future of the area for business and personal prosperity.
- The Chamber is currently developing close links with local schools, colleges and the university, as part of the Chamber's initiative to develop enterprise in education. To assist in this, the Chamber has introduced Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC), based in Cambridge, to a number of education establishments to assist them in effectively obtaining and utilising funding available to develop enterprise.

3) Views on LSPs

- The structure of LSPs is crucial. There has to be a clear objective and members have to be empowered and made accountable for delivery. Where possible, the objectives of the LSP should be included in the corporate and individual objectives of the organisation or person to encourage delivery and corporate buy-in. An LSP without this direction, commitment and accountability is merely a time-consuming talking shop.
- LSPs need to be operated as a business. If it does not deliver it does not survive. They therefore need to be run by business-minded people rather than civil servants to ensure the right delivery ethos and framework. LSPs have the potential to make a difference so it is incumbent on all who sit on an LSP to deliver, promote and ask difficult questions where necessary.

Sussex

1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs

- Sussex Enterprise is keen to continue working closely with each of the LSPs in Sussex to try and increase levels of business engagement and exert positive influence over these partnerships. It is beneficial to get involved in strategic partnership discussions at an early stage in order to offer guidance and encourage wide participation by the sector so that all avenues are explored and the majority of people have the opportunity to enter the debate.

3) Views on LSPs

- It is worth noting that at a local level it is often hard to measure the success of LSPs. With future Chamber involvement there is scope to progress the achievements of these partnerships further, however often activities at a local level are overlooked and it proves difficult to reach the relevant decision-maker.
- There is a need for LSPs to forge stronger links with Local Authorities and County Councils so that thoughts and words are transformed into action easily and with maximum effect. LSPs require support from authorities in terms of accessible avenues of communication, a willingness to act and available funding.
- There is undoubtedly a strong future for LSPs with the continual assistance from partners, Chambers and higher authorities.

Thames Valley

- 1) Level of Chamber involvement with LSPs
 - Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce is heavily involved with LSPs at a strategic and operational level across the whole Thames Valley Region.
- 2) Type of activities taking place
 - Business-focused activities cover a wide remit including economic development; health; education and skills; and transport.
- 3) Views on these LSPs
 - The Chamber finds the LSP “network” complicated in the sense that it is difficult trying to establish which members sit on which partnership and at which level, strategic or operational.
 - At meetings, lower priority issues tend to be discussed, for example tackling graffiti and *Active Rural Communities* - enhancing quality of life in your village – mixed with very high-level issues, for example, the Primary Care Trust Health Plan for East Berkshire.
 - Another key aspect is uniformity of message being given at each LSP across the region. There is also an issue around standardisation. Some regions are more rural in the Thames Valley and some more urban, so there are very different priorities and perspectives.
 - Knowing how Local Area Agreements fit in, what they area and how they work is also a little confusing. Likewise for Public Service Agreements. Furthermore, some of the position papers that are written by the local authorities on their LSP position are full of acronyms and public sector terminology.