

Planning Together
**Updated practical guide for local strategic partnerships
and planners**





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Foreword

Local government leadership is essential to improving people's lives and creating strong and thriving communities. In the current economic climate, that has never been more important, and local government will have a critical role in supporting local people and businesses through the downturn, in preparing for recovery, and in laying the foundations for future prosperity.



Margaret Beckett **John Healey**

Planning has an essential part to play in this. An effective and efficient planning service is vital to supporting development and regeneration, providing infrastructure, creating jobs and keeping the housing market going all of which will benefit local economies. Recent reforms to the planning system aim to create a fairer and faster system; speeding up decisions and giving communities a bigger say. All of us working in planning and local government need to understand the impact and implications of these changes in order to work together effectively to support economic recovery and create the places in which people want to live, work and invest.

This updated guidance is designed to be an easy reference point explaining both the new duties and responsibilities of Local Strategic Partnerships and the fundamentals of the planning system. It illustrates how key strategies and plans, such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework, work together to meet challenges locally and secure real improvements to people's lives.

The guide highlights the work already going on in many local authorities to bring planning and strategic departments together to work in a more co-ordinated and integrated way. We are grateful to the Planning Advisory Service for their work in producing the on-line resource library of good practice that accompanies this publication, and to the people and agencies that have helped form and test its contents.

Whether you are working to promote healthier living, tackle climate change, get new roads, hospitals or shops built or empower local communities, you will find this guide helpful. It will help you understand how local government and planning reform work together to reinforce each other, identify how you can work more effectively with other agencies to achieve your goals, and make best use of your resources through strong partnerships in both planning and delivery.

Margaret Beckett

J Healey

Chapter 1

Introduction

Managing public sector resources and investment

This short, practical guide is focused on the strategic leadership role of local authorities working through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and the planning system to shape good places and deliver quality services.

Co-ordinating the work of LSPs, together with the development and implementation of local planning policy, now offers a powerful mechanism for managing the combined public sector and investment resources in local areas – both capital and revenue. This guide therefore aims to promote wider understanding about the benefits of establishing a robust corporate approach to both planning and LSP coordination, particularly:

- it will help those involved with LSPs to understand the potential contribution of the spatial planning system, and the knowledge and skills available through collaboration with planners
- it will help planners with their responsibilities for the social, economic and environmental understanding required by the spatial planning system
- it will help both planners and LSPs take a coordinated approach to local citizen engagement in place shaping and determining local priorities for service improvements
- it will support local authorities which are seeking to develop their leadership role in implementing the principles of sustainable development

This document is an updated version of the original *Planning Together* guide (published by Communities and Local Government in January 2007). It is not offering detailed formal guidance, and should not be read as such. Its aim is to provide an accessible source of basic information about the planning system and the local government policy context for partnership working through LSPs, and suggests some practical tips to strengthen collaborative, corporate approaches. In summary these are:

- 1 take a **corporate approach** to planning and partnership by working through LSPs and placing these functions at the centre of your political and managerial processes
- 2 move to **joint consultation** and engagement processes for the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy

- 3 develop a shared **evidence base** for the SCS and LDF Core Strategy
- 4 combine **performance monitoring** across the Local Area Agreement and LDF
- 5 interlink **timescales and processes** for key strategies and area action plans
- 6 involve **elected members** actively in both the SCS and LDF process and use scrutiny to drive forward effective delivery
- 7 collaborate with Parishes and other **neighbourhood** structures and plans
- 8 involve the LSP in **sustainability appraisal** for the LDF
- 9 establish LSP group for **infrastructure and asset management**

What's new in this updated guide?

The government's aims in developing the new local government performance framework are to empower local areas to develop place-specific approaches, working in partnership across all the different agencies and sectors involved in their areas, and underpinned by a strong citizen-led democratic process.

The **Briefing Section** at the back of this guide (see page 20) brings together an updated reference guide to the basic components involved in both local government and planning responsibilities for place-shaping, giving brief explanations of the various terms and plans that practitioners need to be familiar with. For quicker reference, the table below summarises the most recent changes that both planners and those working with or on LSPs should be aware of:

A snapshot of recent policy changes relevant to planners and LSPs

- there is a clear objective to strengthen effective capital and revenue **resource management** by ensuring that the long term vision and priorities for local areas as set out in both Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs) and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) are aligned and place-specific¹
- a growing understanding of the role of public sector **asset management** to realise benefits for local communities; and on **infrastructure planning** to support new development, including the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)²
- further support for citizen empowerment, and a **statutory duty to involve** (which comes into force April 2009)³
- **the role of LSPs** has been strengthened and whilst they remain non-statutory, named partners now have a 'duty to cooperate' with local authorities in negotiation of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and in delivering its targets⁴
- **improvement targets** for local areas are now determined through negotiation between central government and local government and enshrined in statutory LAAs; there is greater flexibility of local spend from a 'single pot' of non-ring-fenced grant (Area Based Grant) rather than a variety of separate funding streams
- the inspectorates of local services are due to introduce the new **Comprehensive Area Assessment** (CAA) in April 2009 within which two elements are proposed: an area assessment looking at how well local public services are delivering better results for local people, and organisational assessments of individual public bodies (councils, fire and rescue authorities, primary care trusts and police authorities)
- a developing focus on **sub-regional spatial tiers** and cross boundary collaboration (eg through Multi Area Agreements), emphasising the economic priorities for regeneration and promoting a stronger role for local authorities through the proposed new duty for economic assessment⁵

¹ Statutory Guidance *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities* (CLG 2008) and *Planning Policy Statement 12* (CLG 2008);

² see CLG *Spatial Plans in Practice: Infrastructure Delivery* (CLG 2008); the *Community Infrastructure Levy* (CLG 2008) and *Building on Strong Foundations: a Framework for Local Authority Asset Management* (CLG 2008)

³ Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007; White Papers: *Communities in Control: real people, real power* (CLG 2008) and *Planning for a Sustainable Future* (CLG 2007)

⁴ Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

⁵ See *Prosperous Places: Taking forward the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration* (CLG 2008); *Transforming places; changing lives: a framework for regeneration* (CLG 2008); and *Review of economic assessment and strategy activity at the local and sub-regional level* (CLG 2008)

Chapter 2

Place-Shaping, Planning and LSPs

Fundamental changes to the planning system and wider policy changes affecting local government mean that councils have new responsibilities, powers and opportunities to coordinate expenditure and investment in their local areas to achieve the goals enshrined within Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS).

Corporate local government works through LSPs to coordinate service improvements (involving primarily revenue spend) and through the spatial planning system to deliver capital investment and the infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development. Planners and those involved in the work of LSPs therefore have much to gain from working together effectively and strengthening their collaboration. The quick summary below illustrates some mutual benefits:

Why planners should be involved with LSPs

- **telling the story of place:** to contribute to the preparation of SCS, providing the LSP with evidence and spatial analysis and with understanding of the planning contribution – benefitting in turn from the LSP's understanding of social and equalities issues
- **strategy alignment:** to ensure that the spatial planning objectives are aligned with, and reflect, the priorities identified in the SCS and reflect the goals of sustainable development (eg, it can be particularly helpful for LSPs to be involved with Sustainability Appraisal)
- **stakeholder and community involvement:** to benefit from the LSP's role in promoting and co-ordinating local stakeholder, community and business involvement in local decision-making and supporting informed engagement with the planning process
- **co-ordinating investment:** to inform and understand the local plans and strategies of service-delivery agencies and investors in the locality, including the infrastructure required to support development; demonstrating a sound approach to infrastructure planning is an important part ensuring that the plan is sound

How will it help LSPs to be engaged with the planning process?

- **SCS as overarching plan:** accessing the planners' evidence base will help LSPs to understand the key drivers of physical, economic, and environmental change in forming the priorities of the SCS, and will also help to ensure that SCS priorities are fully reflected in the spatial planning policies of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)

- **infrastructure planning:** to co-ordinate investment in the delivery of appropriate social and community infrastructure for the effective delivery of housing and other services, particularly for areas of new development, renewal or regeneration
- **stakeholder and community involvement:** co-ordinating effective engagement with stakeholders, businesses and local residents; it is better for citizens (and more cost effective) for the LSP to co-ordinate local consultation and engagement with citizens (for example, combining SCS and LDF Core Strategy consultation requirements)
- **delivering the Local Area Agreement (LAA):** ensuring that the local planning process is properly engaged with supporting the delivery of LAA outcomes, using planning policies and strategies such as Area Action Plans, planning gain, CIL, development agreements etc and collaborating in cross-boundary regeneration, housing and transport activity

Joining up the SCS, LDF and LAA

The two high-level documents which set out the agreed vision for the future of local places, and for the delivery of sustainable development, are:

- the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)⁶ setting out the long-term vision and strategic priorities for the local area, and
- the 'Core Strategy' contained within the Local Development Framework (LDF) which sets out the key themes and vision for the future development of an area⁷

There needs to be a dynamic relationship between these two critical vision strategies, and this is being strongly encouraged by government (as set out in the Statutory Guidance *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities and in Planning Policy Statement 12*).

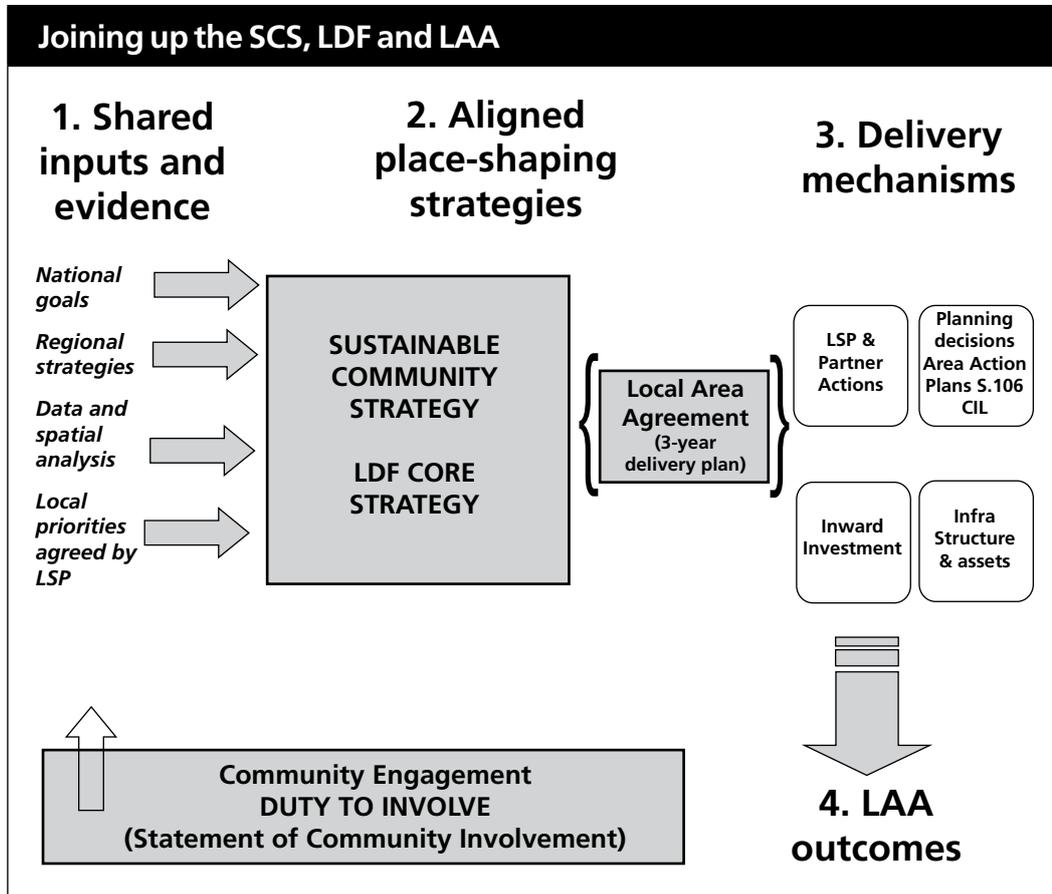
The new performance framework for local government has introduced the Local Area Agreement (LAA) as a three-year statutory agreement between a local authority area and central government setting out the priorities for action in the short term to deliver the long-term outcomes envisaged by the SCS. LAAs contain up to 35 priorities for specific performance improvement (chosen from the National Indicator Set containing 188 outcome indicators across Whitehall spending departments⁸), plus 16 statutory education outcomes. Their aim is to strengthen the ability of local government (together with its partners, including local people, and with neighbouring authorities when relevant) to determine the actions required to address locally-determined and agreed priorities.

⁶ An SCS can be prepared at both county and district level in two tier authorities

⁷ noting that LDFs can be developed jointly by authorities, across boundaries covering larger functional areas

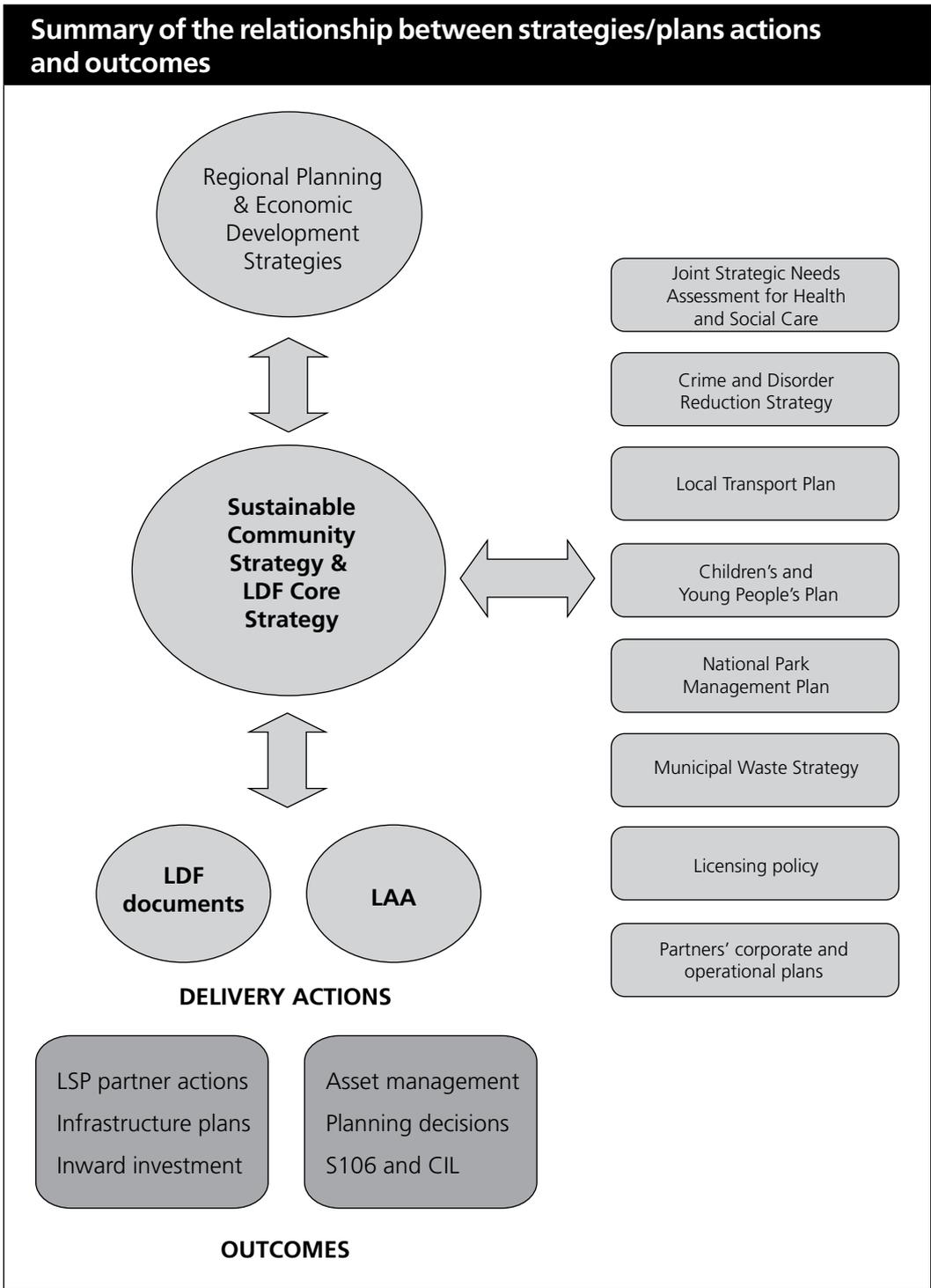
⁸ see *National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Handbook of Definitions* for detailed information on the indicators and the way they are to be measured

The diagram below illustrates how these three important documents – the SCS, LDF and LAA – relate together and the components involved in both developing and delivering them.



The starting point in preparing both the SCS and the LDF Core Strategy is a shared evidence base and robust local engagement and consultation, taking full account of regional planning and economic development strategies⁹ and incorporating all relevant local plans. The diagram on page 12 (adapted from the LSP Statutory Guidance) illustrates this approach, showing how statutory plans relate to LSP and planning actions and outcomes.

⁹ The Government is taking forward further reforms to regional strategies which will incorporate into one single regional strategy all planning, housing, transport and economic development proposals; see 'Prosperous Places: taking forward the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration, the Government response to public consultation' published November 2008 and the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill 2008-09



The next section of the guide explores in more detail how planning activities should be considered as part of corporate and LSP actions contributing to LAA delivery.

Planning Activities Contributing to LAA Delivery

In most areas some of the priority outcomes included within LAAs will reflect local objectives that relate directly to planning requirements. Looking at housing provision for example, all of the following indicators are commonly chosen LAA priorities:

- NI 154 : net additional homes provided
- NI 155 : number of affordable homes delivered
- NI 159 : supply of ready-to-develop housing sites

There are also several other indicators within the National Indicator Set which are of direct relevance to the planning function, for example:

- NI 167 : average journey time per mile during the morning peak
- NI 186 : per capita CO2 emissions
- NI 188 : adapting to climate change
- NI 197 : improved local biodiversity
- NI 175 : access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
- NI 157 : processing of planning applications.

The link to planning for these indicators is perhaps self-explanatory. However, looking more widely at some of the commonly prioritised indicators within LAAs, there are many which can be strongly aided by the planning process and where improved collaboration with planners can be helpful. A recent Local Government Association report argues that success in achieving a very significant number of the new LAA targets is directly dependant on an effective system of spatial planning within a local authority: *“...it is hard to identify a target that does not rely, however remotely, on spatial planning for its achievement. A third of indicators and a half of Public Service Agreements simply cannot be achieved successfully without the use of spatial policies, planning powers and development management”*.¹⁰

The following table provides some basic examples of the linkages that are potentially available. It is only a snapshot, but aims to prompt wider understanding of the benefits accruing from the stronger collaboration this guide is promoting.

¹⁰ *Planning at the Heart of Local Government* LGA July 2008: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/814745>

Examples of the Planning Contribution to achieving LAA Outcomes

Outcomes	Planning Contribution
Health and Wellbeing	parks, recreation and sports provision, transport, walking and cycling, air quality, access to goods and services, strong economies and access to employment; planning for a range of quality accommodation including affordable and lifetime homes
Environment and Climate Change	transport, walking and cycling, energy supply, recycling, housing design and renewal, bio-diversity, minerals and waste, flood risk, green space, air quality
Safer Communities	licensing decisions, design, landscaping, recreational and sports provision, transport
Vibrant and Sustainable Neighbourhoods	housing, strong economies and access to employment, social and community infrastructure, transport, walking and cycling, service co-location, safe and green environments, school provision and design
Social Inclusion	access to goods and services, transport, access to employment, housing provision and quality, affordable energy, involving communities in plan making

Health and wellbeing issues are a good example to further illustrate the contribution of the planning system. A number of useful approaches are now being developed by local authorities working in partnership with Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to deliver healthy communities through the planning system. The Planning Advisory Service has produced a useful guide, with case studies, of some of the approaches being taken forward by local authority planning departments and PCTs working more closely together.¹¹ Some of these examples demonstrate particularly strong synergies with planning for areas of housing growth, using GIS (Geographical Information System) and other tools to map existing and required provision, and linking requirements to planning gain strategies. The website of NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit provides a range of useful resources relating to the planning of health infrastructure: www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.uk

¹¹ Prevention is still better than cure: planning for healthy communities, PAS November 2008: <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/aio/92315>

In addition, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on physical activity gives clear indications to both health professionals and planners about the importance of working through the planning system to deliver appropriate strategies for transport, mobility, parks and open spaces.¹²

Housing is another example of the need to plan and work together. Local authorities are expected to take a strategic approach to housing so that, with partners, they can address the housing needs of all local people, looking across all housing tenures, in ways that support economic development and improve people's life chances.

Working in Two Tier Areas

Finally in this section it is important to acknowledge that practitioners in two-tier areas may often find it more challenging to work within the SCS/LAA/LDF relationships referred to above because of the different responsibilities at different spatial tiers of decision-making. Planning policy is determined by district councils (in conformity with regional planning strategy), whilst LAAs are co-ordinated at the county level. Therefore the models presented above will play out in different ways in different places.

Governance arrangements are changing quite rapidly in many areas, sometimes relating to local government reorganisation, or through cross-boundary cooperation in producing joint local development documents for LDFs, and also the growing impact of city-region arrangements. For example, many local authorities have been collaborating through Multi Area Agreements to drive forward arrangements for housing, transport and economic development across more functional economic spatial areas, and these approaches are now being further developed. The Government proposes to legislate to allow for the creation of statutory sub-regional authorities for economic development to be known as 'Economic Prosperity Boards' (EPBs). The establishment of EPBs will be voluntary, and the legislation will allow sub-regions the flexibility to propose their own functions and for these to develop over time.¹³

Given the changing governance landscape, the aim is not to be prescriptive, but for local areas to organise arrangements in the way that best suits their place.¹⁴ There can be both district council SCSs in addition to a county SCS, or just a county SCS. However, Statutory Guidance makes clear that: "county tier LSPs, in negotiation with their district counterparts, must be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of individual district characteristics and objectives when

¹² *Physical Activity and the Environment*, NICE January 2008: <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/PH8>

¹³ *Prosperous Places: taking forward the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration; the Government's response to public consultation*, CLG November 2008

¹⁴ A useful report from the Local Government Association examines how different areas are organising county and/or district level LSPs relationships in the context of LAA delivery: *Changing Places, Local Area Agreements and two-tier local government*, LGA, September 2008; <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/publications/publication-display.do?id=1032701>

setting priorities in the county-tier SCS”, and therefore the critical link between social, economic and environmental outcomes across both planning (capital) and LSP partner activity (revenue) remains the same whatever local arrangements are put in place. As LAA delivery arrangements become more developed district councils are increasingly taking responsibility for delivery on particular outcomes, and so again there are powerful links to be made with the local planning process.

Chapter 3

Steps to improved practice

This guide suggests nine key actions for improving collaboration between the planning functions of local authorities and the work of LSPs:

- 1 take a **corporate approach** to planning and partnership by working through LSPs, and placing these functions at the centre of your political and managerial processes
- 2 move to **joint consultation** and engagement processes for the SCS and LDF Core Strategy
- 3 develop a shared **evidence base** for the SCS and LDF Core Strategy
- 4 combine **performance monitoring** across the LAA and LDF
- 5 interlink **timescales and processes** for key strategies and area action plans
- 6 involve **elected members** actively in both the SCS and LDF process and use scrutiny to drive forward effective delivery
- 7 collaborate with Parishes and other **neighbourhood** structures and plans
- 8 involve the LSP in **sustainability appraisal** for the LDF
- 9 establish LSP group for **infrastructure and asset management**

Each of these suggested areas is explored in further detail in the sections that follow, giving links to further information as appropriate.

There is no particular order or sequence to implementing these steps as each has merit in its own right and different approaches will be more appropriate to particular areas at different times depending on local circumstances and opportunities. However, experience indicates that steps 1 to 3 are probably the most important ones to try and implement as early on as possible. (For those areas looking to make an immediate start, there is also a short section of ideas for 'quick wins' – see page 18.)

The **Planning Advisory Service** has worked alongside the preparation of this guide to develop a web-based **Case Study Library**. This can be viewed on the Local Development Framework section of their website at:
<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelId=33649>

This library offers a wealth of practical examples of the approaches underway in local areas and aims to stimulate thinking and spread good practice. You are strongly advised to consult the library to supplement the examples and references given over the next few pages, particularly as more case studies are being added and the references constantly updated.

1 Taking a Corporate Approach

Corporate approaches to the work of the LSP are vital to the community leadership role now envisaged for local authorities. The new performance system is based on the integration of all local strategies for place-shaping – both capital and revenue – through the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). This informs local planning policy through the Local Development Framework (LDF) to guide the capital programme, and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to lead priorities for the revenue programme.

All three strategies – the SCS, LAA and LDF – are built on local government’s responsibilities for promoting citizen involvement and achieving the principles of sustainable development. They require a clear grasp of corporate priorities, and the priorities of other key local delivery agencies and public bodies working through the LSP, for both capital and revenue resources. For more information see:

Planning at the Heart of Local Government

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/publications/publication-display.do?id=814744>

Sustainable Development and Local Decision-Making: LSPs, SCSs and LAAs

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/capability-for-local-sustainability.html>

A Benchmark for the Spatial Planning Function

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/aio/87347>

Making good plans – a common vision

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=80684>

2 Co-ordinating Consultation and Engagement

Many authorities are increasingly reporting the positive benefits from combining consultation activities for the preparation of both the SCS and the LDF Core Strategy, not least the saving of time and resources and reduced burdens on local people and stakeholders.

Planning Policy Statement 12¹⁵ sets out very clearly the consultation expectations on planning authorities, and is an accessible read for non-planners about how collaboration with LSPs is a vital part of the process. LDFs have to contain a ‘Statement of Community Involvement’ but this can now be developed as part of a broader consultation strategy under the auspices of the LSP. There are strong linkages to the new statutory ‘duty to involve’ coming into force in April 2009, and the government’s intentions that partners co-ordinate their work to implement this duty effectively through LSPs.

¹⁵ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps12lsp>

There are several useful case studies and good practice examples now available on demonstrating how planners and LSPs are working together on joint consultation arrangements; see especially the following:

Getting Engaged: how to involve communities throughout the planning process

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/aio/49624>

South Tyneside: engaging the community

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=67136>

Spatial Plans in Practice: Stakeholder Engagement

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/stakeholderinvolvementspatial>

Spatial Plans in Practice: Participation and policy integration in spatial planning

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/participationintegrationspatial>

3 Sharing Evidence and Spatial Understanding

The development of both the LDF, and the preparation of the SCS, can be aided by a collaborative approach to data and spatial analysis. Their common vision of place requires a common evidence base. Robust local data analysis and a shared understanding of its spatial implications are vital for both planning and service delivery, and will also be critical to the new duty to prepare economic assessments.¹⁶

Collaborative approaches to data and evidence are also an important element in effective sustainability appraisal approaches (see section 8 below), and in supporting performance management arrangements. They are also more efficient: data should be collected once, and used often.

For more information see:

Knowsley's Core Evidence Base

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8716271>

Chelmsford: evidence base and front loading

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=55379>

Local Development Frameworks: evidence base

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=46130>

¹⁶ See *Prosperous Places: taking forward the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration; the Government's response to public consultation* 25 November 2008

4 Joint Monitoring across the SCS, LAA and LDF

Alongside a shared evidence base it follows that a shared approach to monitoring progress, and performance management could also be considered. Both the LDF and the LAA are subject to annual monitoring arrangements:

- the LDF is required to include a Monitoring Report prepared annually, and
- the LAA is subject to annual monitoring through the relevant regional Government Office (drawing on Comprehensive Area Assessment information where available)

There is therefore scope for collaboration and a corporate approach, and for strengthening the effectiveness of elected member scrutiny arrangements (see below). For example, perhaps consider combining LDF and LAA annual monitoring reports into one document, with their separate components, but showing linkages between the two.

For more information see:

Local Development Framework Monitoring: good practice guide

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/localdevelopmentframework>

LAA Operational Guidance 2007

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/laaoperationalguidance>

LAA Annual Review 2008/9

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/laaannualreview200809>

5 Interlinking Timescales

Implementation of the *spatial planning* system is not a one-size-fits-all approach and the timing varies from area to area. Local planning authorities are required to set out the timetable proposed for preparing the major components of the LDF in the Local Development Scheme. It signposts the different points at which it will be possible for the LSP to collaborate with the process. These might include preparing or revising the LDF Core Strategy (the various stages of which can span over a period of a year or more), developing Area Action Plans and other site specific proposals, or preparing planning policy on strategic issues such as planning contributions, etc.

Differences in timescales for the preparation of SCSs and LDF documents are often cited as a critical barrier to collaboration between the two. In practice more authorities are finding that these differences are not insurmountable. The desire for partnership and collaboration is what is required to make progress. There are opportunities for collaboration at every stage of LDF preparation, and it is never the wrong time to start.

Have a look at the work of Hambleton District Council for some useful approaches:

Hambleton: promoting and integrating the Local Development Framework
<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=55382>

Also the work undertaken by Leeds to join up approaches between the SCS and LDF is interesting in this context:

Leeds Local Strategic Partnership
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8608482&aspect=full>

See also the 'Plan and Deliver' Case Studies produced by the Planning Advisory Service
<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=80671>

6 Involving Elected Members

The active involvement of elected members in determining priorities for both the SCS and the LDF is of vital importance to strong place shaping. Many of the case studies referred to in this guide show how authorities have approached the active involvement not only of Leaders and Cabinet Members but also of backbench councillors working through Area Committees and other ward-based approaches (see section 7 below for further examples).

Strengthening arrangements for the scrutiny function of locally elected councillors is a key part of the recent Communities and Local Government consultation *Improving Local Accountability* which includes proposals for new regulations in relation to scrutiny of LAA improvement target delivery and of those partners responsible for such delivery. See:

Communities in Control: real people real power: improving local accountability
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/919732.pdf>

Elected members, LAAs and Scrutiny
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=7890700#contents-5>

7 Collaborating with Parishes and Neighbourhoods

In many parts of the country there is well-established practice of community led planning which takes the form of parish planning in rural areas (often under the auspices of, or with the support of, Parish Councils), action planning in market towns, and more recently neighbourhood action planning in urban areas as part of neighbourhood renewal or a neighbourhood management approach. Community led planning has proved useful in two ways:

- providing data about the characteristics of settlements and neighbourhoods, their needs and issues; and
- providing evidence about the visions and aspirations of the local community

Recent research and case study experience have shown how community led plans can be better integrated into the development of the SCS and LDF. See in particular the web resource and toolkit on community led planning at:

http://www.acre.org.uk/communityledplanning_index.html

A substantial proportion of local authorities have established some form of area-based governance, usually covering one or more wards, which devolve some powers of decision-making and budgetary responsibility to the councillors for that area (increasingly in partnership with communities through Participatory Budgeting). Working collaboratively with communities in these ways – as promoted in the Communities in Control white paper¹⁷ – can provide a valuable channel for community influence over authority-level planning or decision-making.

The approach is also useful in preparing site-specific Master Plans or for Area Action Plans (which are also important LDF documents). Many authorities are making very positive progress in engagement through working in this way as it is often easier for partners, voluntary organisations and residents to engage more locally in specific plans for their areas than in the higher level strategic work on LDF Core Strategies. For example see particularly:

Hambleton District Council Case Study 3: Parish Plans

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/aio/74866>

Evidence through engagement: creating sustainable neighbourhoods in Plymouth

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=90251>

¹⁷ *Communities in Control: real people, real power* (CLG 2008)

Empowerment in Action Resource Pack produced by three Councils awarded Beacon Status for their excellence in improving services through community engagement – West Berkshire Council, Shropshire County Council and South Somerset District Council

<http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=15482>

8 Applying Sustainability Appraisal

Carrying out the process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a statutory requirement within the spatial planning process. It provides a means to assess the economic, social and environmental effects of development plan documents at various points during preparation and involves asking, at key intervals, ‘how sustainable is my plan’?

Sustainability appraisal needs an evidence base and can benefit from close collaboration with the expertise of the LSP (and the evidence base used for the SCS) and many areas are finding that working on SA through the LSP is beneficial in identifying key sustainability objectives and issues, particularly where workshop approaches have been utilised. Other useful approaches have included integration of Health Impact Assessments and Equalities Impact Assessment as part of SA approaches.

Local Development Frameworks: sustainability appraisal guidance

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=51859>

Issues for the Practice of Sustainability Appraisal in Spatial Planning

<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/515/23/5/3>

For information on Health Impact Assessment see:

<http://www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?RID=44530>

For more information about equalities impacts see:

Equality and Diversity: improving planning outcomes for the whole of the community

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=90217>

9 Establish LSP Group for Infrastructure and Asset Management

Place-making and the spatial planning system make the provision of social infrastructure central to the delivery of successful places and communities. The successful planning and delivery of services requires an understanding of how they are provided and by whom, the likely needs of any new major housing developments, and collaborative working to ensure that the right blend of services are available to local communities in the right locations and at the right time, in cost and resource-effective ways.

The responsibilities of local planning authorities to incorporate sound infrastructure planning as part of the formation and review of their LDFs is particularly important for ensuring that the plan is sound. This requires robust understanding and integration of resources and investment strategies across public sector providers. LSPs provide a positive partnership forum within which spatial priorities for infrastructure support – including those required to facilitate development – can be developed collaboratively and reflected in LDF policies and their delivery.

Some LSPs are starting to incorporate Infrastructure Planning working groups as part of their LSP structures and these can be useful for considering asset management strategies across organisational boundaries, improving joined-up service delivery and rationalising premises costs, and for considering approaches for the transfer of assets to community control. Authorities are also using such groups for improving collaborative approaches to planning gain through Section 106 agreements or the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy.

For more information see:

Module T7 (1-6) of the Atlas Guide about planning for Social Infrastructure as part of major developments:

http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/topic/index.cfm?coArticleTopic_articleId=47&coSiteNavigation_articleId=47

Building on Strong Foundations: A Framework for Local Authority Asset Management

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/20.pdf>

Healthy Urban Development Unit

<http://www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.uk/>

Moving from 'piecemeal' to strategic: securing infrastructure in Chelmsford

<http://email.pas.gov.uk/t/23093/231593/3599/0/>

The No Pain Guide to Gain: a community guide to planning obligations

<http://www.ethicalproperty.org.uk/PlanningActivism.php>

Asset Transfer Unit

www.atu.org.uk

Quick wins for improving collaboration

For those areas looking to make a quick start, the following have been found to be very useful and easy first steps:

- TRY:** Prepare a joint presentation (eg by the LSP Co-ordinator and Senior Planner) on the potential for collaboration to the Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and LSP Board.
- TRY:** Publish the SCS and LDF core strategy in the same document or a joint binder.
- TRY:** Second staff between LSP teams and planning teams to undertake mutual tasks on the preparation of SCS and LDF documents; or co-locate teams.
- TRY:** Share evidence and data between planners, LSPs, regeneration and economic development.
- TRY:** Ask planners to use GIS mapping tools to provide LSP partners with clear spatial maps relating to key issues and areas. For example, GIS maps can provide a visual representation of the location of concentrations of disadvantage and how such areas relate spatially to the wider area, and to other provision (eg service location).
- TRY:** Put processes in place to ensure the LSP inputs to major planning applications, for example for schools or health facilities, at the earliest stage (ie, pre-application or site allocation stages). This is especially important in relation to developing a joint approach to negotiations on planning obligations.
- TRY:** Use interactive workshop approaches with members of the LSP and its Thematic Partnerships to help develop key aspects of the LDF Core Strategy, or to explore the planning contribution to key LAA targets such as reducing childhood obesity etc.
- TRY:** Engage local authority community development staff and youth workers in developing consultation approaches for the LDF and SCS, and co-ordinate with other relevant frontline staff from partner organisations.
- TRY:** Use the more detailed focus of preparing Master Plans or Area Action Plans to engage partners in looking at the role of public sector property in the area and whether these could be rationalised to aid more seamless delivery.

Annex

Briefing Section

The Basic Building Blocks for Place Shaping:

This section is designed to provide a reference guide to the basic components involved in both local government and planning responsibilities for place-shaping, giving brief explanations of the various terms and plans that practitioners need to be familiar with.

These are shown under two broad headings:

- Policy Context: explaining the general policy context; and
- Plans and Strategies: the various plans and strategies which are involved

Policy Context

The Local Government White Paper 2006 identified place-shaping as the critical role for local authorities, using their powers and influence creatively to promote the general well-being of a community and its citizens and deliver sustainable development through linked actions on social, economic and environmental issues.¹⁸ The following are the key contributors to local government's responsibilities for place shaping:

1 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning both the task of local government (as set out in the SCS) and the planning system. The UK government has agreed 5 guiding principles for achieving sustainable development:

- living within environmental limits
- ensuring a strong healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting good governance
- using sound science responsibly

Sustainable development is often misconstrued as being mainly related to environmental concerns. The opportunities for integrated approaches to issues of social equity and the delivery of public services are weakened as a result.

Comprehensive further information about sustainable development is available from:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government>

¹⁸ See *Strong and Prosperous Communities* (CLG 2006) and *The Lyons Report* (CLG 2007)

Policy Context (continued)	
2 Spatial Planning	The planning system was substantially reformed in 2004 to deliver sustainable development and requires planners to collaborate actively with the wide range of stakeholders and agencies that help to shape local areas and deliver local services. ¹⁹ Spatial planning is tasked to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. In short, spatial plans are concerned with place shaping and not just a narrow view of land use planning and are more explicitly required to address the various factors that make places attractive to live in and sustainable. ²⁰ There is a “much stronger emphasis on positive and proactive management of development (as opposed to the previous – more negative – control of development)”. ²¹
3 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)	As part of commitments to reduce the burden of central government prescription on local authorities Whitehall departments have worked together to streamline and condense the multiple outcomes previously required of local government and its partners. There is now in place a clearer statement of priority national outcomes as reflected in the new National Indicator Set of 188 core outcome indicators.

¹⁹ For more detailed information on the contribution of spatial planning to place shaping see Planning Policy Statement 12, Section 2 (CLG 2008)

²⁰ *Spatial Plans in Practice: Supporting the reform of local planning* (CLG 2008)

²¹ Killian Pretty Review: *Planning applications: A faster and more responsive system* (CLG 2008)

Policy Context (continued)

3 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) (continued)

The new regulatory CAA arrangements are being introduced from April 2009 and will combine and develop previous local service and local government performance assessments into one process measuring the prospects for local areas and the quality of life for people living there (based on assessments against the 188 National Indicator Set). The Audit Commission and Inspectorates for social care, health care, schools, HMI Constabulary, and Prisons and Probation have proposed that the CAA has two elements: an area assessment looking at how well local public services are delivering better results for local people in local priorities such as health, economic prospects and community safety and how likely they are to improve in the future; and organisational assessments of individual public bodies (councils, fire and rescue authorities, primary care trusts and police authorities).

Reducing inequalities and discriminatory outcomes for all members of the community will be central to CAA and the new arrangements will pay particular attention to how well-matched services are to the needs of the area and local people and the means available to those people to influence decisions and service provision (in line with the *Communities in Control* White Paper).²²

²² *Communities in Control: real people, real power* (CLG 2008)

Policy Context (continued)	
4 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP)	<p>These non-statutory partnerships now exist across most local authorities areas (in two-tier authorities, the LSP normally exists at both county and district level) and were mostly established following the Local Government Act 2000. LSPs bring together the public, voluntary, community and private sectors to collectively steer and review public resources and coordinate the contribution that each agency can make to improving localities and the prospects for local people. Their operation has been strengthened by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 under which named statutory partners have a duty to cooperate in participating in LSPs, producing an LAA and delivering its targets. The new Statutory Guidance²³ defines the role of LSPs as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exercise a leadership and governing role through identifying and articulating the needs and aspirations of local communities and reconciling or arbitrating between competing interests • have oversight of and coordinate community consultation and engagement activities of individual partners and where appropriate combine them • produce an SCS based on data and evidence from the local area and its population, to establish a shared local vision and priorities for action amongst partners • produce a unitary/county-wide LAA based on the priorities identified in the SCS • have oversight of the planning and alignment of resources in the locality in order to achieve more effective and efficient commissioning and better outcomes • review and performance manage progress against the targets of the LAA and ensure delivery arrangements are in place

²³ *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities* (CLG 2008)

Policy Context (continued)

5 Community Engagement (duty to involve)

The Government has introduced a 'duty to involve' (which applies to all best value authorities in England from April 2009²⁴) to reinforce the importance of involving citizens in local decision making and service provision. Authorities included under the duty will need to take steps to co-ordinate activities to inform, consult and involve local people and organisations so that these take place in an integrated way with their partners through the LSP. In addition, the Empowerment White Paper²⁵ proposes to extend this duty.

The new spatial planning system moves away from what can be called the old style 'plan-present-defend' basis of consultation to one of consensus-building, working alongside stakeholders and communities in vision and strategy formation and its approach is therefore based on enabling engagement at every stage of plan-making and implementation. The government is keen to enable local people to have more of a say in the planning system and is providing more funding to support community engagement and to ensure planners develop stronger skills in working with communities.²⁶ In recognition of the benefits of co-ordinating consultation and engagement more corporately (eg combining such activities for preparation of the SCS and the LDF), the government has repealed the requirement for an independent examination of the Statement of Community Involvement (that must form part of the LDF, see below). This means that authorities can have more flexibility in the way they exercise these responsibilities.

²⁴ As set out in section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007;

²⁵ *Communities in control: real people, real power*, CLG 2008 proposes to extend the duty to involve to a range of additional authorities including key arts, sporting, cultural and environmental organisations; it also proposes a new 'duty to promote democracy'

²⁶ *Communities in Control: real people, real power* (CLG 2008)

Plans and Strategies

The alignment of plans and strategies across different spatial tiers of governance is an important goal of government policy. It is helpful to think of a linked chain from regional, through sub-regional, local areas and down to neighbourhood levels, with the various strategies and plans appropriately co-ordinated. However, much of this new architecture is still in development (particularly taking forward the proposals of the Review of Sub-National Regeneration and Economic Development).²⁷

Regional	Regional Spatial Strategy Regional Economic Strategy
Sub-Regional	Multi Area Agreements
Local	Sustainable Community Strategy Local Development Framework Local Area Agreement
Neighbourhood	Parish Plan Neighbourhood Agreement or Charter Area Action Plan

6 Regional and Sub-Regional Plans

Currently, at a regional level, Regional Assemblies (or in London, the Mayor) prepare planning policies through a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) setting out the broad development strategy for a region for a fifteen to twenty year period; whilst Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) prepare a Regional Economic Strategy (RES) setting out a shared vision for the development of the region's economy, to improve economic performance and enhance the region's competitiveness.

²⁷ See *Prosperous Places: Taking forward the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration* (CLG 2008) and *Transforming places; changing lives: a framework for regeneration* (CLG 2008)

Plans and Strategies (continued)

6 Regional and Sub-Regional Plans (continued)

The Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (HM Treasury 2007) included proposals to integrate these two important regional strategies (the RSS and the RES) into a single integrated Regional Strategy. Following consultation, the government is now proposing that this Regional Strategy will in future be jointly prepared by RDAs and Local Authority Leaders' Boards (although there are different arrangements within London in relation to the powers and responsibilities of the London Mayor). Government also proposes to develop a stronger economic development role for local authorities including the introduction of a new duty to assess the economic conditions of their local area. The Government also now proposes to legislate to allow for the creation of statutory sub-regional authorities for economic development, to be known as 'Economic Prosperity Boards'.²⁸

²⁸ See *Prosperous Places: Taking forward the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration: the Government response to public consultation* published 25 November 2008 and the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill 2008-0

Plans and Strategies (continued)	
7 Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS)	<p>The starting point for delivering better outcomes in local areas is for the local authority, through the LSP, to create a shared vision and shared sense of priorities for a place and to set these out in a Sustainable Community Strategy.²⁹ The purpose of the SCS is to set the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of a local area – typically 10-20 years – in a way that contributes to sustainable development. It should tell the ‘story of the place’, setting out a distinctive vision and future ambitions for the area, backed by clear evidence and analysis.</p> <p>In any given local authority area the SCS is the overarching plan for promoting and improving the well-being of the area, driving the priorities for LAAs (in relevant authorities) and for local planning strategies as set out in Local Development Frameworks (see below). Local authorities are also expected to recognise the importance of ensuring that the strategic vision of the SCS takes full and proper account of local housing issues and therefore, where possible, to incorporate homelessness and housing strategies within their SCS (taking account of the statutory requirement to revise these strategies at least every five years).</p>

²⁹ County, unitary, district, London boroughs, Isles of Scilly and the City of London have a duty under Section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000 and as amended by Section 7 of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 to prepare an SCS

Plans and Strategies (continued)

8 Local Development Frameworks (LDF)

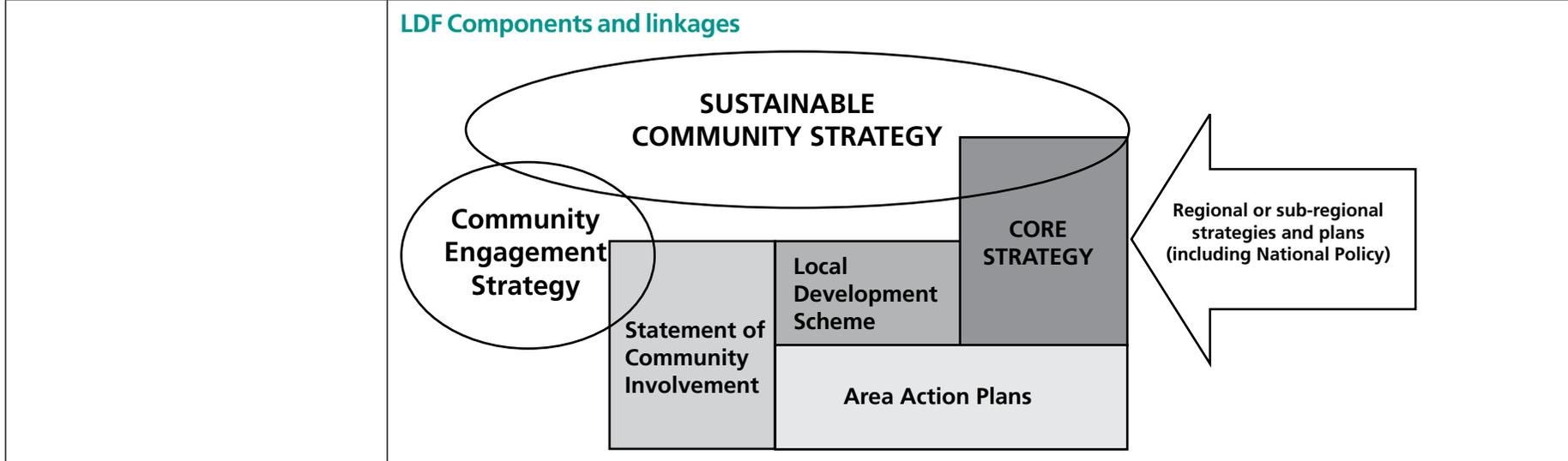
The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new kind of planning at local authority level – the Local Development Frameworks (LDFs), a flexible portfolio of different documents, which are referred to as local development documents (LDDs) that can be tailored to the needs of a particular area and easily updated. For the purposes of this guide, the most relevant parts of the LDF are as follows:³⁰

- the **Core Strategy**, which sets out the spatial vision for the local area in response to the SCS (taking account of national, regional and other local plans) and the views of citizens and local stakeholders in the planning system. The government is encouraging the integration and alignment of LDF Core Strategies with SCSs, although the former must remain clearly identifiable for examination by the Planning Inspectorate as part of the statutory adoption process
- the **Statement of Community Involvement** (SCI) which sets out the ways in which citizens and stakeholders will be consulted and engaged in developing and delivering local planning policy. In future the government would prefer to see LSPs develop a comprehensive community engagement strategy which can apply across the requirements of the LDF, the SCS and the LAA (although the SCI must still be a clearly identifiable component within the LDF)
- **Area Action Plans** which provide detailed planning frameworks for particular issues (such as promoting major new development or employment areas) or for areas of major change such as housing renewal, regeneration or growth areas, conservation etc

The diagram below shows some of the component documents within LDFs (all the shaded areas), and the relationship with the SCS and an LSP-wide Community Engagement Strategy. These various documents within the LDF are prepared, and updated, at different times through a continuous process the timing of which is set out in an LDF component called the Local Development Scheme.

³⁰ see *Planning Policy Statement 12: creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning* for more detailed information about LDFs

Plans and Strategies (continued)



9 Local Area Agreements (LAAs)

Substantial reforms to the performance framework for local government are being introduced which aim to empower local government in its leadership role and reduce the burden of central government prescription. The reforms centre on strengthening the ability of local government (together with its partners, and with neighbouring authorities when relevant) to determine the local actions required to improve prosperity and to reflect these priorities through the setting of performance and outcome targets through local area agreements (LAAs) and cross-boundary multi area agreements (MAAs).

LAAs are three-year statutory agreements between a local authority area and central government setting out the priorities for action in the short term to deliver the long-term outcomes envisaged by the SCS. Each LAA has no more than 35 negotiated priorities chosen from the national set of 188 indicators (see section 3 above on CAA). Targets set in the LAA are now the only targets set for 'quantified and specific' levels of improvement by local government and its partners, although they will be assessed against all 188. Only upper-tier authorities are required to have an LAA but district councils are 'statutory consultees' for the upper-tier SCS and are expected to be actively involved in delivery.

Plans and Strategies (continued)

10 Multi Area Agreements (MAAs)	<p>Linked to the introduction of the new approaches to LAAs are proposals for similar agreements at wider sub-region or city-region spatial tiers of governance. MAAs are designed to be cross-boundary agreements, developed in partnership between neighbouring authorities and regional bodies (such as Regional Development Agencies, Jobcentre Plus, Learning and Skills Councils). Their introduction forms part of the arrangements being set in train to take forward the Government's proposals in the <i>Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration</i> (HM Treasury, 2007) to strengthen the involvement of local government in determining and delivering regeneration priorities and to underpin more effective strategic coordination across functional economic areas.</p> <p>The major issues that MAAs can tackle include housing market imbalances, transport and infrastructure projects, and economic development and skills deficits. Developing an MAA is currently a voluntary decision by local government and relevant regional bodies and is recommended where it is considered that such an agreement would add value to existing partnership arrangements. Agreement to the first seven MAAs was announced by government in July 2008.</p>
11 Parish and Neighbourhood Plans	<p>Many town and parish councils, and other groups in rural areas, have developed Parish Plans with their communities and local partners which are similar in scope to SCSs.³¹ In other areas Neighbourhood Action Plans fulfil a similar function. It is important to ensure that these types of local plans are fully integrated into SCS and LAA delivery, and reflect appropriate levels of engagement with planning, particularly for Area Action Plans (as part of LDFs). The government is keen to promote more neighbourhood councils and similar bodies, and to utilise Neighbourhood Management and Community Contracts to deliver improved and more integrated services, especially to tackle the problems of deprived areas.³²</p>

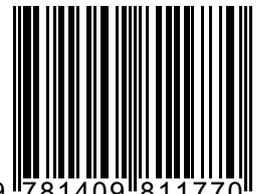
³¹ see <http://www.pariahplanning.co.uk> and http://www.acre.org.uk/communityledplanning_index.html

³² *Communities in Control: real people, real power* (CLG 2008); and see also the consultation *Transforming places; changing lives: a framework for regeneration* (CLG July 2008)



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