

Meeting: Haringey Strategic Partnership

Date: 3 July 2008

Report Title: Communications Protocol and Strategy Development

Report of: Sharon Kemp - Assistant Chief Executive, Policy, Performance and Partnerships and Communication

Summary

Effective communication and consultation by HSP and the organisations which are members will be vital to the achievement of Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets and to a successful Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

An HSP Network of communications professionals from the HSP partners has been created and will be used to drive forward progress.

A strategy is being developed. This paper outlines initial ideas which could shape the strategy.

Dialogue with the chairs of each theme board is planned in order to ensure the strategy reflects needs across the piece and pulls together resources in the most effective way.

Recommendations

- i. That the HSP Communications Network develops a communications and consultation strategy following discussion of this paper and individual discussions with the chairs of each board.
- ii. That the strategy is then proposed to a future meeting of the HSP.
- iii. That the strategy includes recommendations for any additional
- iv. resources required to deliver it.

Financial/Legal Comments

Much of the work will be about using the existing resources of partners more collaboratively and effectively.

Some resources are already available within elements of the partnership for

communications. We will need to map these as we develop the communications strategy in order to understand whether additional resources are required and where within the partnership they should be located for maximum impact.

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Consideration is being given to communicating partnership work, this includes the plans and achievements of Haringey Strategic Partnership. The Local Area Agreement outcomes and targets will give a framework for the partnership's achievements until 2011.

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 The communications challenge

Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will be looking at the outcomes local authorities set out to achieve either alone or in partnership. It will look at 198 national indicators as well as local ones, but will focus on the outcomes and targets chosen in the Local Area Agreement. The Place survey will be asking how well informed people are about local public services. The communications challenge in this environment is to be able to demonstrate shared success to senior stakeholders whilst enabling the organisations directly responsible for service delivery to retain profile and their relationship with service users.

2.1.1 The service user perspective

Understanding the rich range of partnerships we are engaged in is complex enough for people involved in them. Resident focus groups by local authorities consistently show a lack of understanding of which public service organisation delivers which service. Asking our service users to know or care about the detail of any of the partnerships we are part of begs the question "why do they need to know?"

Each organisation within each partnership is making their contribution toward local outcomes and is keen to maintain their own profile for their achievements. Creating a separate customer facing "brand" for the partnership, any of the groups and workstreams within it or for the LAA does

not help the public understand who is behind each achievement, or help local people to understand who to contact regarding it.

2.1.2 The way forward

A partnership communications strategy should be created by the HSP Communications and Consultation Network and proposed to HSP based on the following principles.

There should be three types of communication about the Haringey Strategic Partnership and the work done to deliver agreed outcomes.

- **Corporate communications**, within the partnership and to senior stakeholders such as government departments and offices, regulators and local community leaders, explaining how the partnership plans, works and achieves.
- **Service communications**, outcome communications to local stakeholders regarding access to service delivery and achievements.
- **Social marketing**, communications activity aimed at behavioural change which supports the outcomes and targets in the local area agreement.

These three types of communication will be addressed in turn below.

2.1.2 Corporate

Examples of this type of communication include:

- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Local Area Agreement
- Haringey's well-being strategic framework
- The partnership's website
- Updates on achievements against the strategy and the LAA for all stakeholders
- Subscription e-newsletter eg <http://www.teamhackneyupdate.org.uk/>
- Media releases aimed at trade and national press.

The HSP identity should only be used on this type of communication. This communication is designed to help the partnership function and to promote and explain the work of the partnership to senior stakeholders.

2.1.4 Service communication

Local communications to service users around particular outcomes of the partnership should be primarily attributed to the organisation(s) delivering them and secondarily referring to HSP in a consistent way. If a service delivery partnership has been formed, this should be dominant only where this is a service which users can contact. The principle driving service communication is that it should be clear who is responsible for delivering the service and who residents should contact to find out more about the service.

The Place Survey asks questions about what local public services are achieving. It asks for views on whether local public services:

are working to make the area safer;
are working to make the area cleaner and greener;
promote the interests of local residents;
act on the concerns of local residents; and
treat all types of people fairly.

We therefore need to ensure that local people attribute our work to the bodies they know of as local public services, rather than an umbrella body which may dilute this connection.

Reference to the fact that the work of the service delivery organisation(s) is supporting the outcomes signed up to by the HSP should be secondary. Some options for how this could be phrased are below.

Eg.

“in partnership for Haringey”

“members of Haringey Strategic Partnership”

“part of the Haringey Strategic Partnership”

“Working together with the Haringey Strategic Partnership”

This approach will be developed and a proposal made to the HSP by the HSP Communications and Consultation Network as part of the strategy.

2.1.5 Social marketing

There are a number of LAA targets which could be achieved with the support of local social marketing campaigns to encourage behaviour change.

LAA targets which could benefit from social marketing campaigns are highlighted in appendix 1.

Each of these objectives would benefit from a cross partnership communication / marketing plan. A template for planning these campaigns will be discussed by the HSP Communications and Consultation Network with the aim of maximising the impact of such campaigns.

2.1.6 Opportunities to promote partnership outcomes

In the same way that the plans and governance of the strategic partnership connect to the plans and governance of member organisations, so communications by the partnership should connect with communications by the member organisations. The HSP Communications and Consultation Network will provide this connection.

The proposed terms of reference for the HSP Communications and Consultation Network are included in appendix 2.

Any partnership communications strategy we develop should make the most of the media owned by the partners themselves. The network will help achieve this as well as sharing good practice.

2.1.7 Key messages for the HSP

For all stakeholders

- We're working together for Haringey
- We understand our community
- What we're doing is making a difference to local quality of life
- We're grappling with some tricky issues
- We're (delivering relevant outcome)

These will be developed by the HSP Communications and Consultation Network , but are the buttons we need to press with stakeholders with regard to CAA.

2.1.8 Media relations

A separate media protocol is needed to ensure clarity about how we handle both positive and negative media issues for the partnership. This can be put in place ahead of the overall strategy. A draft of this is included in appendix 3. This will be revised as necessary following the next meeting of the Communications Network and a revised version tabled at the HSP meeting for agreement.

2.2 The consultation challenge

The Place Survey includes questions such as “Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?” this is not organisationally specific and therefore consultation is only as good as our weakest partner. The challenge is to demonstrate credible consultation by the partnership and its members.

2.2.1 Whilst we can not guarantee that every consultee will see the decision they want, we need to manage our relationship with those who give their views by ensuring that standards of consultation are adhered to.

This means:

- Only consulting at a stage in the decision making process where stakeholder views can be considered;
- Consulting in ways which are meaningful and engaging to the relevant stakeholders;
- Being clear about when the decision is being made and the role the views expressed will play; and
- Feeding back about the decision made and how views influenced it.

2.2.2 Only if we complete this cycle with each consultation will we effectively manage our relationship with our community and enable them to feel that they can influence local decisions.

2.2.3 The partnership communication and consultation strategy should include a commitment to these basic principles. The network can then share best practice to ensure these commitments are delivered.

2.2.4 The council has a consultation toolkit and runs courses to support effective council consultation. These should be extended to include partners as one example of effective joint working.

3 CONCLUSIONS

Partnership communications is complex and can lead to stakeholder confusion if handled badly.

As many indicators on which we are measured are now based on perception, getting partnership communications right has never been more important.

Developing the network, protocol and strategy and determining resource requirements will help ensure an effective approach and support LAA achievements for our community and a positive CAA for our partnership.

APPENDICES

1. Targets from the LAA which could benefit from communications and consultation activity.
2. Draft Terms of reference for HSP communication and consultation network.
3. Draft media communications protocol.

Appendix 1 LAA targets which could benefit from social marketing

Target number	Indicator	Comms lead – based on lead organisation for the target	Examples of types of activity which could be planned. Detail to be added by Communications & Consultation network
1, 35	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area Building resilience to violent extremism		Promote cohesion commission. Promote work of cohesion forum
4	% of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality		Ensure consultation only done at a time in process when it can influence decision loop closed on all consultation. Consultation network to share practice across the HSP
6.	Participation in regular volunteering		Celebrating volunteers, awards, Features in HP
8	Adult participation in sport		Highlighting venue based activity Promoting parks Campaign around the benefits of exercise. Local case studies.
21	Dealing with local concerns about ASB and crime		Community safety strategy communications
39	Alcohol harm related hospital admission rates		Targeted
Local	Reduction in personal robbery		
Local	Prevalence of		

	breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from birth		
56	Obesity among primary school age children in year six		Targeted health promotion activities and messaging. Aimed at parents and children
Local	Increase in the % of children immunised by the second birthday		
112	<u>Under 18 conception rate</u>		
113	Prevalence of Chlamydia in under 20 year olds		
117	16-18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment		
Local	Number of smoking quitters in the N17 area		Targeted health promotion using national and localised materials
123	Smoking rate, 16+ prevalence		
Local	Carbon emissions from vulnerable private households		
186	Per capita CO2 emissions in the area		Better Haringey campaign, linked to greenest borough strategy
187	Tackling fuel poverty- people receiving benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating		
192	Household waste recycled and composted		Better Haringey campaign

Appendix 2

- **Draft terms of reference – HSP Communications and Consultation Network**
- share information
- to ensure a co-coordinated communications approach -making use of existing channels to maximum effect
- speak with an agreed consistent voice across the partnership
- maximise publicity & awareness for all partnership activity, achievements and good working practice
- to alert each other to forthcoming opportunities and Issues
- to agree a communications process
- to share and agree key core and programme messages
- to share good practice
- to seek possible joint resource savings (ie print, advertising rates physical resources and support etc) - pooling our communications resource to maximise impact and value for money
- further develop cross partnership working, communications and consultation
- to develop a mutual understanding of the communications and consultation needs of different local audiences and targeting activity accordingly (i.e. development of trusted message givers and delivery in an accessible format to all communities)
- to explore possible joint communications research opportunities
- identify where objectives are not met by existing communications channels and seek new approaches
- to support each others individual communications and consultation work (ie joint brainstorming, sharing experience, providing advice and support)
- explore and test new channels for communications and consultation
- ensuring a sustained approach over the year reviewing and regularly feeding back progress to inform continued adaptation and improve on going working practice
- to audit existing communications materials
- to regularly report on communications and consultation programme planning and delivery to the HSP Board

Appendix 3 Draft Partnership Media Communication Protocol.

Background

Each partner will be keen to generate maximum profile for the partnership and their contribution towards it. Establishing ground rules for creating this profile will help all parties. In the event of any problem in the partnership, these ground rules will also prevent any discussion being played out in the media, rather than through the established channels within the partnership.

The protocol needs to be flexible enough to allow speedy responses to media enquiries and quick seizing of positive promotional opportunities whilst applying the full spirit of the partnership to the way we communicate.

Principles

Operational issues for individual service delivery organisations communicating about their own services to their own target audiences will not be affected by partnership working.

This protocol should apply to the HSP and the partnerships within it.

No partner will put out independent statements about the partnership.

The partners will identify and communicate to each other approval mechanisms for any statement about the partnership. These will differentiate between:

- Operational issues such as particular partnership service delivery successes or failures
- Strategic issues which deal with the overall performance of the partnership and the principles which underpin it.

Operational issues regarding services delivered in partnership will be dealt with by the lead service delivery organisation, in consultation with any relevant service delivery partners, materials will be copied in to other members of the partnership for information. These will acknowledge the delivery organisations and the fact that the work is contributing to the strategic partnership.

Strategic issues will be dealt with in discussion with the chair of the partnership and or relevant theme board. Materials will be copied to relevant members of the partnership for information.

The detailed approval mechanisms, including contact details will be laid out in an appendix to this protocol.

Proactive Communications

Any partner may initiate pro-active media relations (press release, launch event, article in own publication etc.)

Each delivery partner must approve the text using the approval mechanism in appendix 1.

Quotations

Where a quotation is to be included in proactive or reactive communication, the ideal approach would be to include a single quote attributed to the partnership. The chair of the relevant board or the partnership overall is best placed to do this. Where this would be a council officer, the relevant member should be quoted.

As an alternative, quotes from each partner can be included giving their perspective, but the scope of these quotes should be agreed with the partners to ensure they are different enough to avoid duplication and to ensure that a single joint quote would not be a better way of promoting the partnership.

Any quotes included in the statement will be attributed to a named person. If timescales do not allow this, as a last resort the quote may be attributed to “a spokesman for the partnership”, but only where each organisation has agreed the text.