

**Welsh Assembly Government  
Local Vision: Preparing Community Strategies**

**Consultation Response from the Sports Council for Wales**

Consultation Questions		Response
1.1	Does this chapter describe the purpose and context of community planning clearly and comprehensively?	Yes, however the underlying principles are not conducive for LA-wide ownership of the strategy. From a sport and recreation perspective, for example, Sport and Leisure Departments would have to think creatively in order for their work to 'fit' in.
1.2	What are your views on how often community strategies should be reviewed or updated?	The Strategic outcomes should remain the same; however the Strategies should continuously be evaluated and shaped to take account of local needs. The Strategy itself should remain in place for the term of the Assembly Government.
1.3	How important is community planning across boundaries? Can or should anything be done to encourage this?	Extremely important. Communities are not determined by administrative boundaries.  Each LA shares at least one boundary. The Strategy guidance should make community planning across boundaries implicit in the development of the Community Strategy/Plan. It shouldn't be left up to each LA-area to decide whether they opt to do cross-boundary work.
2.1	Is the place of the community strategy in the wider policy framework clear enough? Are there any national or local areas of uncertainty that need to be clarified?	Yes, it is clear.
2.2	How readily can community strategies be integrated with other strategies and plans, whether statutory or not?	I think this is a two-way process. Other Plans/Strategies should, for example, be reflected in the Community Strategy.  The danger is, however, that developing the Community Strategy may become a 'tick box' exercise – ensuring that all issues/areas are covered. The Strategy should be more than this: prioritising specific issues pertinent to the community. It shouldn't lose its focus.  Not all Strategies/Plans will be relevant to the Community Strategy; therefore, there shouldn't be a reference made for the sake of it. Integration of Strategies and Plans must be purposeful and result in an efficient, consistent and holistic approach to delivering services.  There needs to be an appreciation that the timing of Strategies/Plans will vary; the Community Strategy will not be able to be integrated into all relevant Strategies/Plans and vice versa.
2.3	How readily can community strategies reflect regional and national issues and planning frameworks?	1. Through the integration of other Strategies/Plans; 2. Through the processes of engagement.  The potential obstacles to this include: potential

		conflict and competing priorities across departments/organisations/areas.
3.1	Is the role and purpose of local service boards and local service agreements sufficiently clear at this development stage?	Yes.
3.2	Do you think LSBs/LSAs as described will adequately improve (a) local partnership working and (b) long-term well-being and quality of life? If not, what improvements or alternatives would you like to see?	<p><i>(a) Local Partnership Working</i> There is an issue about what is meant by 'local'. Does this reflect local communities that straddle LA boundaries? Community Strategies should be unbounded – reflecting the needs of the community, irrespective of administrative boundary, but LSBs/LSAs are bounded. The LSBs/LSAs should, therefore, encourage cross-boundary partnership working.</p> <p>Improving partnership working, however, isn't just about process. The LSB members must have the appropriate 'people' skills to facilitate successful partnership working. Effective communication and an appreciation of the issues, and others, are imperative.</p> <p><i>(b) Long-term well-being and quality of life</i> Depends on what the components of quality of life and well-being are. This will inevitably vary across LA areas.</p> <p>It also depends how the service areas/other organisations/groups are engaged in the process. The end result is only as good as the component parts!</p> <p>There should be a regular review of the membership of the LSBs to ensure that it continues to facilitate local partnership working and the delivery of the Community Strategy.</p> <p>In the light of <i>Beecham</i> and <i>Making the Connections</i>, it is important to recognise that there needs to be a <b>culture change</b> in the way organisations operate and that this will not be achieved by solely changing processes.</p>
4.1	How readily can community strategy objectives be measured and reported? Are there any obstacles to this?	<p>It depends on the objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether there are existing monitoring frameworks in existence;</li> <li>• whether new ones need to be established (this will inevitably result in a time-lag in terms of data collection);, or</li> <li>• whether they are quantitative or qualitative measures.</li> </ul> <p>It will also depend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what input/output information is being collected to help achieve the outcome(s);</li> <li>• how often this data is being collected;</li> <li>• the readiness of the LSB to react;</li> <li>• what the sample size is (in terms of its robustness); and</li> <li>• resource implications.</li> </ul> <p>To note: in terms of sport and recreation, the PI</p>

		<p>Framework for Wales is inadequate in terms of performance measurement; it does not reflect the overall performance of LA sport and recreation departments. This, therefore, has limitations as a tool.</p>
4.2	<p>How should local service boards account for the progress they have made in a way which adds value to individual organisations' accountability mechanisms?</p>	<p>By ensuring that the objectives are shared.</p>
4.3	<p>What, if anything, do local partners and national organisations need to do to strengthen performance management and performance measurement by partnerships?</p>	<p>In terms of performance management, the use of <i>Ffynnon</i> (pan-Wales performance management system) should be encouraged. This would also avoid duplication.</p> <p>In terms of performance measurement, guidance should be provided on what measures could be used.</p> <p>It is difficult to attribute, in a quantitative way, the impact of the partnership. To understand the context, pre-Community Strategy/LSB etc, this could be explored qualitatively through in-depth interviews or focus groups with stakeholders.</p>
5.1	<p>How effectively can partnerships engage with all community and citizen interests in the community planning process? What obstacles are there to this and what might be done about them?</p>	<p>First of all, partnerships need to 'know their community'. Market segmentation tools like Experian's <i>Mosaic</i> can facilitate this (i.e. the best methods of engaging with different sections of the community, what their interests are, demographic information etc).</p> <p>There is a danger that those already engaged in community issues will be involved. Woods <i>et al</i> (2003) evidenced that nearly 3 out of 4 community and town councillors, for example are men compared with less than half the population. Four out of ten are aged over 60, compared with less than 60% of the population. In addition, the quality and openness of interaction with the public by local-level councils can vary significantly (also see Woods <i>et al</i>).</p> <p>Different methods of communication and engagement could ensure that there is a 'true' representation of citizens involved in the community planning process.</p>
5.2	<p>Does this chapter adequately describe other organisations' role in, and contributions to, community planning?</p>	<p>Yes. It is inevitably public sector-focused, given the local variability and differentiation of the private and voluntary sector.</p> <p>Other than the Assembly Government and the Environment Agency Wales, there are no other organisations with a Wales-wide remit (including ASGBs) detailed.</p> <p>From a Sports Council for Wales' perspective, the role of sport and physical activity should play a part in these strategies. We would envisage that this process is primarily facilitated by LA sports and leisure departments and supported by the voluntary sector.</p>

		In order to ensure that sport and physical activity is reflected in the Plans, the Sports Council would like there to be a duty placed on LAs to consult with us regarding their Community Strategies.
5.2a	Are there other ways in which those contributions could be maximised? And/or	In terms of the Sports Council, our Community Investment Panels could be engaged in the process and help facilitate wider community engagement.  Small grants for the development of sport and physical activity are distributed via 22 local authority-based panels. Each panel is compiled of up to 12 members of the local community; this includes a minimum of 3 local authority representatives and the rest from the wider community, the majority of which represent the voluntary sector. The panels have been praised by both the Wales Audit Office and DCMS in terms their facilitation of devolved decision making.
5.2b	Are there limits to how far other organisations can or should become involved? Does this guidance raise unrealistic expectations in this area?	This can be as wide or narrow you like. It will depend on what the community prioritises and how best this is actioned. The key thing is about how the process is managed – that established groups/organisation and LA colleagues are engaged in the process so that they can feed in appropriately.
A.1	Do you believe that the proposed duty to co-operate would enhance community planning?	Yes.
A.1a	Do you agree with its focus on delivering outcomes rather than prescribing processes?	Yes.
A.1b	Do you think that the list of bodies to which the duty would apply is appropriate? Do you think any should be added (or deleted)?	Yes, however we would like to see that there is a statutory duty on LAs to consult with the Sports Council for Wales regarding their Community Strategies (in the same way that they have to regarding planning issues relating to sports facilities).

**Submitted by:**

Dr Rachel Hughes  
Research and Evaluation Manager  
Sports Council for Wales  
Sophia Gardens  
Cardiff  
CF11 9SW

e. [rachel.hughes@scw.org.uk](mailto:rachel.hughes@scw.org.uk)  
t. 029 2033 8296

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