

Case Study

Find out how a partnership can be reinvented

Identifying the issues

In November 2009 we were commissioned to carry out a strategic review for a large multi agency multi sector partnership. The first phase was the problem identification phase including review, analysis, and recommendation of options. The Partnership was the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership, a Partnership which comprised both Allerdale and Copeland Local Strategic Partnerships and was administered from a Policy Unit based at Allerdale District Council. Simply, this had become much more of an observatory/policy-making body than an appropriate strategic partnership. It functioned extremely well as a policy body but was not enabling Copeland to work at a local level with its local communities.

Intervention

The option chosen was therefore that the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership should be dissolved and a new structure created in Copeland which was fit for purpose. This work ran through to December 2010 and comprised two phases. Allerdale were not part of the review but were simultaneously creating their own separate partnership.

Phase Two comprised the development of an appropriate Copeland strategic structure which took place between June and December 2010 and was hugely successful in creating a single focus, common understanding and much greater commitment across partners in the Copeland locality. Key features of the new structure were that no Board would be created, which would require agreement about membership, but rather that the core would be a Copeland Partnership Conference twice a year and that the real life and delivery of the strategy would be through the six localities which were neighbourhoods across the Copeland area. Phase two of this project was funded privately through the North West Improvement Partnership.

Resolution

The work culminated in the first Conference of the new Partnership at the Rosehill Theatre in Whitehaven, Cumbria, an architectural and historical gem, and a perfect location for the purpose. Representatives from all the partner organisations made brief presentations “on stage” which told the story of their visions and ambitions. Enthusiasm and commitment was palpable and the event was judged a great success. The partnership continues its work.

Benefits

Commitment across the whole range of partner organisations to the new Copeland framework; a greater understanding by elected members as to their role and responsibility within a strategic partnership and localities; the simplification of previous structures; and the creation of greater accessibility to all who wished to participate in the partnership.