Learning from Self-Evaluation

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Richmond upon Thames | Local Strategic Partnership

Contents

1. A picture of Richmond upon Thames
2. The challenges
3. The LSP, reviewing and reshaping
4. LSP approach to self evaluation
5. What did self-evaluation tell us
6. What we're doing differently
7. Summary
8. Wider messages

A picture of Richmond upon Thames

- Affluent, healthy, educated population
  - High average household income £46k
  - Prevalence of major diseases much lower than national average and higher lifer expectancy
  - Children much less likely to be living in poverty
- Attractive environment
- High property prices and high home ownership
- Safest borough in London
- Low level of central government funding – 48% of budget sourced through Council Tax
- Strong on Value for Money

The challenges

- Pockets of relative deprivation which are emphasised by the affluence of the rest of the borough
- High levels of CO_2 emissions and risk of flooding
- Maintaining the special character – protecting the environment
- Though not as great as nationally, growth in older population and high proportion of people over 85
- Increasing BME population, particularly older people
- Key groups of children not reaching threshold achievement levels in secondary schools (difference between borough and school populations)
- Shortage of affordable housing
- Small area with small organisations – capacity issues and need to do more with less

The Local Strategic Partnership

- LSP established 1999 and first Community Plan published 2000
- New Community Plan 2007 – 2017 with following priorities
  - Tackling disadvantage and inequalities
  - Being the greenest borough in London
  - Being the safest London borough for all our communities
  - Growing up in Richmond upon Thames
  - Creating a vibrant and prosperous Richmond upon Thames
  - Improving access and participation
- Six thematic partnerships
- LAA agreed in 2008 with 17 targets

The LSP's approach to self-evaluation

- LSP recognised relative lack of funding and consequent need for focus in working together
- Review of structures and processes 2007 to clarify membership and structures
- First annual conference held in June 2008 reviewed progress over preceding year
- Risk management session held July 2008
- New Executive Group set up September 2008 to manage LAA delivery

The LSP's approach to self-evaluation – the trial

- Agree aims and parameters – opportunity for the new Executive Group
- Decide scope and outputs – not another "place narrative" – gap analysis and action plan
- Gather initial evidence from across the key partners
- Supplement with questionnaire data
- Propose headline findings
- Challenge session with the Executive Group
- IDeA facilitated workshop
- Action plan to the LSP

What did it tell us?
…that we didn't already know

- Delivering a lot and we should be telling people about it
- Not as clear as we should be about how our actions stacked up against priorities
- Lots of evidence about what we are doing together in the LSP, as partners working together in smaller partnerships and as individual organisations but less about what effect we are having
- Long narratives don't work for us – we don't have the capacity

What we're doing differently …as a partnership

- Strengthened the role of the Executive Group
- Deeper, honest self-evaluation; greater openness and appetite for challenge
- More focus and understanding of the behaviours – taking the partnership into the organisation
- Greater focus on the cross-cutting agendas for the LSP
- All partners bringing issues to the LSP

What we're doing differently …as a partnership

- Community engagement …
  - Planned and co-ordinated approach to consultation and system for sharing outcomes
  - Making a partnership-wide approach to citizen engagement a reality
  - More systematic way of routinely involving citizens in evaluation and review
- Information management
  - One data sharing protocol for the partnership
  - Developing a common, accessible and versatile database to support a shared local narrative, underpin priority setting and inform resource management across the partnership

What we're doing differently …as a partnership

- Delivering outcomes
  - Clarity over what is working well and why
  - Better understanding of where the partnership adds most value – e.g. sustainability and tackling deprivation
- Performance management
  - Developing delivery planning across the six partnerships
  - Embedding performance management across the partnerships
- Opportunities for improving partnership working
  - Review of governance arrangements

Summary

- Key LSP strength – leadership in identifying priorities for the area
- High quality services and outcomes for citizens and prospects for improvement
- Greater understanding of the level of self-awareness across the LSP – corralling existing review activities
- Recognised we can do more to genuinely embed partnership working within individual organisations
- And there is room for improvement in the way the partnership works together in order to deliver greater benefits to the community,
  - developing more structured and systematic partnership approaches to citizen engagement and demonstrate impact
  - Agreeing a common data strategy and data sharing protocol
  - embedding partnership performance management
  - finding better ways of reporting to the public

Wider messages for the sector

- The benefits of the framework – clear structure
- The importance of local style – do what and how works for you
- Self-evaluation continuous but useful to have snapshots
- Common issues across area assessments – many wrestling with the same issues
- Directing resources for support – acting now, not waiting for CAA results