

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SUNDERLAND PARTNERSHIP AND GENDER EQUALITY IN ITS LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

APRIL 2009



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Gaynor Clarke is a qualified youth and community worker with over 25 years experience in the voluntary and statutory sector in the North East. She currently works on a free lance basis in youth and community development and has a specific interest in equal opportunities and gender issues.

Stella Magoye, a freelance researcher, currently studying residents' involvement in housing regeneration at Newcastle University.

1. Executive Summary

Following a national research project *Where are the Women in LSPs?*¹, carried out by Urban Forum, Oxfam and the Women's Resource Centre in 2007, two case study pilot projects were rolled out in two Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Sunderland and Thurrock to carry out the recommendations of the research at a local level. This report presents the findings of the Sunderland pilot. The two pilot projects will be used to demonstrate good practice in advancing the equality of women in LSPs and to make the case to Government for investment in the resources to carry out this process in LSPs nationally.

Each of the pilot case studies has two key elements:

- a) Ensuring the participation² of women in all LSP processes at every level
- b) Embedding gender equality across monitoring, strategic planning, target setting and delivery of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and examining the responsibilities of the LSP in taking action under the Gender Equality Duty

1.1 Aims and objectives of research

Sangini worked with the Commissioning Group (Oxfam UK and the Sunderland Independent Advisory Group on Gender) to carry out the pilot research study. The aims and objectives were as follows:

Aims:

To research women's participation, women's issues³ and identify structural and cultural barriers to women's participation in the Sunderland Partnership;

To examine and improve its effectiveness in tackling gender and poverty issues in its Local Area Agreements

Objectives:

- a) To use a range of methods including a desk top literature review, interviews and focus groups were used to address the following research questions:
 - i) Does a majority of women attending meetings equate to increased participation of women (i.e. the relationship between women's attendance and their participation in governance)?

¹ <http://www.urbanforum.org.uk/pubs/index.html>

² By participation we mean the process of influencing and making decisions

³ Women's issues can include those understood to impact particularly on women, such as sexual or domestic violence, abortion, equal pay, gender representation in decision making. Or it can be any issue which explores the impact on women, e.g. transport, housing, economic development, small business etc.

- ii) Do the structures, culture and style of leadership within the LSP bring about the meaningful participation of women and men and who influences strategies and decisions?
- iii) What is the LSPs' understanding of gender? For example, the way in which issues affect women and men differently and how this is reflected in monitoring, target setting, interventions (service delivery), strategy and decision-making policy.

b) To produce a report on the findings and provide recommendations.

1.2 Summary of findings and recommendations

1.2.1 Women's attendance and participation

The data shows that 51% of delegates to The Sunderland Partnership are women. Of those 30% are at an executive/ board level and 71% of delegates from the Sunderland Community Network are women. These trends are consistent with national research in demonstrating that women predominate at lower levels of the Local Strategic Partnership, not at higher levels. There is a strong representation among group members in the 'traditionally' female fields of education (84%), culture (60%) and health (58%), and weakest within Housing, (30%); Safer Sunderland (30%) and Attractive and Accessible Cities (30%)

The majority of the research participants felt that the numbers of women were equal with men, thus leading to the perception of equality in relation to their participation. The main reason given for the high percentage of women delegates was a perception that the number of women appointed to key senior posts in the statutory sector has increased. However, equal number of men and women does not indicate that men and women have equal voice, not that issues that women raise will be considered.

Participation in meetings is not the same as representation. Women may be present, but not speaking. The findings bore this out. Barriers to women's participation identified by one or more participants were the attitudes of men present, the belief that being present made no difference to the decisions made, boredom, the volume of the papers to read, inaccessible language, timing of meetings, cost and availability of childcare, the venues chosen, car parking and lack of access to public transport.

Training provision in LSPs and how they work was not available systematically to all LSP delegates. Only one of the delegates interviewed had received equality training provided by The Sunderland Partnership although some have taken part in relevant, related training in their partner organisation e.g. LA, Gentoo, and the Teaching Primary Care Trust (TPCT). This serves to widen the gap in experience, knowledge and confidence for those delegates who were unable to access the training.

The Voluntary Community Sector and Social Enterprise organisations were seen to be the strongest in representing women's issues⁴ but there was no indication that raising issues led to further discussion or influenced decisions. However the problem remained of how to encourage women to contribute. The voluntary sector delegates felt that in general the statutory sector delegates had more information and knowledge about the subjects which are discussed in LSP meetings. Thus those delegates most likely to present women's issues themselves felt ill equipped to take part in the decision making process.

Observation was made by several delegates that adequate support was not available to enable Sunderland Community Network⁵ (SCN) delegates who are not professional workers to fully participate, although what would be considered adequate was not defined and this was not further explored as it was beyond the scope of this research. The overall feeling regarding delegates from the SCN and the possibility of increasing representation of women was that there was not enough support available at the meetings for them to attend and participate.

They [local representatives] need to have more confidence that it is relevant to them and affects their lives. There is no acknowledgment that they are giving up their own time when others are getting paid.

Overall delegates could not identify relevant training they had received although some were able to identify training they had had as part of their role in the Local Authority, GenToo Housing Company or the Primary Care Trust. Therefore The Sunderland Partnership benefited from training provided by partners that wasn't open to other delegates.

1.2.2 Structures, cultures and leadership

The structure of The Sunderland Partnership was seen to work well by some but not by others, for example there was a minority view that decisions are made outside meetings, that issues don't go through the right channels and that some LSP members/ delegates are more in the know (i.e. they are more privy to information) and therefore better informed. Several research participants express the view that there was a need to 'champion' women to assist better participation but that there is too much set procedure for this to happen.

The point was made that it is important for delegates to find The Sunderland Partnership accessible and that if voluntary sector workers reported that they found it hard to get replies to queries, or to feel confident in being well enough informed to contribute fully, then local women would find it even harder.

⁴ Women's issues can include those understood to impact particularly on women, such as sexual or domestic violence, abortion, equal pay, gender representation in decision making. Or it can be any issue which explores the impact on women, e.g. transport, housing, economic development, small business etc. Where are the Women in LSPs? (2007)

⁵ This is the name of Sunderland Community Empowerment Network, which is the vehicle for voluntary and community sector representation on The Sunderland Partnership.

There is no routine way of ensuring women's perspectives are raised in relation to agenda items. This means that women's issues are incidental to the broader issues which are raised.

Structurally women's issues are looked at more by luck than design.

Some people thought that although women's representation is there in numbers it is not present in issues raised; there is no strong view that women's issues are lost, but rather that they are not specifically raised or considered.

In relation to style and culture there was a feeling from the voluntary sector that The Sunderland Partnership is inaccessible. Voluntary sector workers reported that they found it hard to get replies to queries outside meetings, information was not readily available and minutes were not sent.

Some of the processes which affect equal participation, for example difficulties with the language used, apply equally to both men and women who are not employed in the statutory sector. One male delegate felt that his organisation had valuable experience in improving equalities for women which were not recognised by The Sunderland Partnership.

The Gender Independent Advisory Group (IAG)⁶ is seen as an important part of the structure which raises key issues for The Sunderland Partnership. Minutes of the Gender IAG suggest a high capacity for strategy and policy analysis, although this was not reflected in the attitudes of the women who were interviewed in relation to their involvement in The Sunderland Partnership (i.e. that lacked confidence). There was a widely held view that the Gender IAG should be renamed the Women IAG as realistically it cannot effectively deal with all aspects of gender inequality including the way gender issues affect men.

Issues from the Gender IAG are reported to the Inclusive Communities Thematic Group. The agenda for the Inclusive Communities Thematic Group is largely pre determined and no items specifically looked at women's issues related to the topic raised. There is no routine way of ensuring women's issues are raised in relation to other agenda items. Some participants felt that these comments reflected the position of all the IAGs and not just the Gender IAG.

⁶ The Gender IAG is one of seven advisory groups formed by the Sunderland Partnership to address issues around inclusive communities through the involvement of members of harder to reach groups. The other 6 are, older people, young people, lesbian, gay and bisexual, black and minority ethnic, disability and faith.

1.2.3 Understanding of Gender

Out of 16 interviewees, 8 (50%) said that gender was a description of whether someone was male or female. The others showed a range of understanding that gender relates to social conditioning and expectations. This difference in understanding of how gender affects the way women are treated or behave in society results in widespread misunderstanding that all issues have a gender dimension and affect men and women in different ways. The definition of gender offered by the Gender IAG does not acknowledge that the constructs of masculinity and femininity posit women in an unequal power relationship to men. This will undoubtedly have an effect on the interpretation of the Gender Equality Duty, because few understand how gender discrimination arises – which is core to understanding its value in delivering fairer public services.

For many of those interviewed, gender blindness means that there is little recognition of the differences women experience and no acknowledgement of the need to address those differences. Women are accepted and welcomed as representatives, but there is no expectation that they will contribute differently or raise specific issues. It was pointed out that there was no awareness that inequality cuts across every issue that The Sunderland Partnership seeks to address.

The majority felt that issues are usually approached in a general way and don't specifically consider issues affecting women. Some issues discussed coincidentally affect women more e.g. domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, caring issues, child poverty. Where these issues are considered as women's issues they tend to concentrate on how women can change their behaviour to solve a problem. i.e. if women are having a problem, they should solve it, rather than it being seen as an issue for The Sunderland Partnership to recognise and address.

Some women delegates from women's organisations felt that when they raise issues that affect women, they are perceived as favouring preferential treatment for women, but that there is no similar reaction when women delegates raise health issues. i.e. women's issues are not recognised as valid but health issues are. The majority felt that issues are usually approached in a general way and don't specifically consider issues affecting women. Some issues discussed coincidentally affect women more e.g. domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, caring issues, child poverty. Most people's understanding of "women's issues" is narrow and tends to focus on solving problems rather than looking at how mainstream public services such as housing or employment, affect men and women in different ways. Even where this is understood, the findings of the research suggest that no action is taken. .

Most people thought that no one was purposely excluded from LSP business or themes. When asked how their gender affected their contribution or how their contribution was received a number of male and female professional workers felt that their professional position afforded them more influence than their sex. Male participants were aware that their behaviour in meetings might affect how women contributed but were not able to express how. Some women participants were very clear how they felt but did not necessarily attribute it to being a woman.

1.2.4 Embedding gender equality in LAAs

It was only possible to establish clearly that data was gender-disaggregated on 14 out of a possible 39 indicators. It has not been possible during the course of this research to establish whether, even if data is being gender-disaggregated, the data is then analysed, or whether it is being used in strategic planning, target setting and delivery of Local Area Agreements. This is a major area of difficulty in targeting services to tackle gender-related disadvantage.

It took six months of working through The Sunderland Partnership Manager to contact lead agents for the Local Area Agreement to establish a baseline of which of LAA indicators are disaggregated by gender. Data is not disaggregated on 11 indicators, yet it was not possible to establish why this was the case. On a further nine of the indicators it was not possible to establish over the course of six months whether the data was gender-disaggregated or not. This suggests that either LAA lead agents are not prioritising gender disaggregation and analysis or that there is a lack of knowledge about how to do gender analysis, or that they do not understand how it will help. It seems that none of these conditions are present, i.e. that gender analysis is not prioritised and that there is a knowledge gap in LAA lead agencies about how to do gender disaggregation and analysis.

Five indicators were selected by an internal working group for in-depth analysis:

- All-age mortality rates
- Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing
- Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates
- 16+ current smoking rate prevalence
- % of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality

The reason for having a cluster of indicators around health was to establish a clear pattern of whether data was being used by one lead agency to improve services interventions. The indicator on influencing decisions was chosen because the steering group knew that the Gender IAG was doing specific work on this. As it emerged only two of the indicators could be examined as there was no disaggregated data on the other three. Of the two remaining, one was an indicator where women fare better than men, 'all age mortality,' and although slightly different targets were set for women and men, from the information provided it was still not possible to determine whether there were different interventions for women and men.

The only indicator that it was possible to look at in depth was the *% of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality* as this is attracting specific interest from the Gender Independent Advisory Group and there was therefore a willingness to gather and provide information for this research.

This pilot project highlighted several areas of difficulty in targeting services to tackle gender-related disadvantage. Within the current performance management framework, existing data is not always adequate for gender analysis. Most of the five public sector partners responsible for leading on Sunderland's Local Area Agreement demonstrated reluctance to providing information on what data they are collecting and whether it is disaggregated by gender. There was also a lack of any priority given even to establishing a baseline position. What eventually emerged is that disaggregation of data pertaining to the LAA indicators is not common place and there is a strong implication that LSP partners, who are lead agents for clusters of LAA indicators may not be fulfilling the Gender Equality Duty in relation to providing gender disaggregated data against these indicators, namely:

- Gather and use information on how policies and practices affect gender equality in the delivery of services
- Consult stakeholders (including women's organisations) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives
- Assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality

The use of gender equality impact assessments of LAAs is not standard procedure for The Sunderland Partnership. Other than the knowledge being generated by the Gender IAG, there is an absence of any data and information on women and men's different needs and expectations in relation to the delivery of Sunderland's LAA and no indicators to reflect them.

1.3 Key Recommendations

The following recommendations are a composite of those from two focus group events one with a mixed group of delegates to The Sunderland Partnership and the second at the Femalogue event⁷ organised by the Gender Independent Advisory Group. Both groups were asked to identify recommendations based on the key findings in line with the Action Research model employed in the research

⁷ The Femalogue was a women's only event that took place in Sunderland on 10th October 2008, it was organised and facilitated by the Gender IAG for women from different backgrounds to come together to identify barriers to women in local decision making structures and to begin to devise actions to address them.

To increase women's attendance and participation:

- 1.3.1 A well resourced comprehensive training package which reflects the learning needs of all LSP partners and members to include where and how decisions are made, roles and responsibilities at all levels of The Sunderland Partnership, awareness of the barriers to participation for women, women's issues, confidence building, participation and inclusivity
- 1.3.2 The agreement of a protocol. i.e. a way of doing things that is adopted by all partners that includes systems and methods for raising and addressing women's issues and more effective monitoring of the participation of women

To ensure structures, cultures and leadership styles more conducive to women's participation:

- 1.3.3 Routine monitoring of the composition of The Sunderland Partnership
- 1.3.4 Gender impact assessments of decisions at all levels including a clear audit trail of the impact of the Gender IAG upon decisions
- 1.3.5 A knowledge base of which organisations bring expertise in gender equality and women's issues
- 1.3.6 Support systems and networks for women delegates from all sectors

To ensure better understanding of gender within The Sunderland Partnership:

- 1.3.7 Adoption of a working definition of gender and its relationship to power and inequality.
- 1.3.8 Consideration of the definition in relation to the implementation of the Gender Equality Duty of partner organisations and the purpose of the Independent Advisory Group and its title

To embed gender equality into LAAs:

- 1.3.9 The baseline position of gender disaggregated of data against all of the relevant indicators should be completed.
- 1.3.10 The professional practice of gender analysis within the Gender IAG should be highly valued by the Sunderland Partnership. It should be given a more defined role within performance management cycles in interpreting and analysing gender disaggregated data to inform target setting, interventions and strategic decision making.
- 1.3.11 Those responsible for performance managing The Sunderland Partnership should conduct internal assessment of lead partners responsible for delivering the Local Area Agreements to see whether obligations under the Gender Equality Duty have been met

1.3.12 The Sunderland Partnership's Comprehensive Area Assessments(CAAs)⁸ needs to be proactive in challenging lack of data-disaggregation by LAA lead agencies

1.3.13 The Sunderland Partnership should monitor its compliance with the equality legislation which outlaws discrimination in provision of services.

These recommendations have been presented to The Sunderland Partnership with a further recommendation that a detailed high level action plan is developed timescales for implementation, monitoring and review.

⁸ See appendix 5 for explanation of CAAs

2. Introduction

Following a national research project *Where are the Women in LSPs?*⁹, carried out by Urban Forum, Oxfam and the Women's Resource Centre in 2007, two case study pilot projects were rolled out in two Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Sunderland and Thurrock to carry out the recommendations of the research at a local level. This report presents the findings of the Sunderland pilot. The two pilot projects will be used to demonstrate good practice in advancing the equality of women in LSPs and to make the case to Government for investment in the resources to carry out this process in LSPs nationally.

Each of the pilot case studies has two key elements:

- a) Ensuring the participation of women in all LSP processes at every level
- b) Embedding gender equality across monitoring, strategic planning, target setting and delivery of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and examining the responsibilities of The Sunderland Partnership in taking action under the Gender Equality Duty

Sangini were commissioned to carry out Part A of the research. Part B was completed internally by a working group of officers from the Sunderland Partnership with the assistance of a member of the original research team. The methodology and findings of Part B are included in this report for consistency and completeness.

3. Aims and objectives of research

Sangini worked with the Commissioning Group (Oxfam UK and the Sunderland Independent Advisory Group on Gender) to carry out the pilot research study. The aims and objectives were as follows:

To research women's participation, women's issues¹⁰ and identify structural and cultural barriers to women's participation in the Sunderland Partnership;

To examine and improve its effectiveness in tackling gender and poverty issues in its Local Area Agreements

The definition for the term 'women's issues' used in this research is as follows:

⁹ <http://www.urbanforum.org.uk/pubs/index.html>

¹⁰ Women's issues can include those understood to impact particularly on women, such as sexual or domestic violence, abortion, equal pay, gender representation in decision making. Or it can be any issue which explores the impact on women, e.g. transport, housing, economic development, small business etc.

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Where are the Women in LSPs? (2007)

Objectives:

- a) To use a range of methods including a desk top literature review, interviews and focus groups were used to address the following research questions:
 - j) Does a majority of women attending meetings equate to increased participation of women (i.e. the relationship between women's attendance and their participation in governance)?
 - ii) Do the structures, culture and style of leadership within the LSP bring about the meaningful participation of women and men and who influences strategies and decisions?
 - iii) What is the LSPs' understanding of gender? For example, the way in which issues affect women and men differently and how this is reflected in monitoring, target setting, interventions (service delivery), strategy and decision-making policy.
- b) To produce a report on the findings and provide recommendations.

4. Methodology

An action research methodology was selected for each of the pilot projects in favour of traditional research methods to support the process of change required to embed women's participation. In action research processes, the emphasis is upon participation and democratising the research process to shift the power and control from the researcher to the practitioner.

There is...still a role for the outside expert, but that role shifts in the direction of mutual collaboration in the research process...the outside expert has the role of facilitator in the practitioners own project, a resource to be drawn upon...'

(Martyn Denscombe 1998)

Action research methods were selected in favour of traditional research methods to support the process of change required to increase women's participation in The Sunderland Partnership and embed gender equality in its local area agreement.

Action research is wedded to the idea that change is good. Change in this sense is regarded as a valuable enhancer of knowledge in its own right, rather than something that is undertaken after the results of the research have been obtained'

(Ibid)

The characteristics of action research are¹¹:

- practice based;
- participation;
- engendering change;
- a cyclical process of practice involving, research, critical reflection, strategic planning and action;
- the researcher being part of the research process

For example, this research is focused on LSP practice, ensured the participation of women and women's organisations, and tries to engender change by challenging accepted practice in LSP business using gender analysis

A member of the original research group (Urban Forum, Oxfam and the Women's Resource Centre) was assigned to each of the pilot action research project (Sunderland and Thurrock) to:

- Draw together and facilitate a steering group for the action research in each of the areas
- Advise upon the action research process and methodology
- Comment on the research reports from both pilot projects

Part A of the research into the role and participation of women in The Sunderland Partnership used a combination of methods including:

Desktop literature review - This included looking at the minutes of relevant meetings to ensure an overall view of the items on the agenda and discussions were taken into account.

20 interviews were carried out with members of The Sunderland Partnership: 11 women and 9 men. 9 interviewees were from the statutory sector, 1 from the private sector and 7 from the voluntary sector, 3 were from other organisations. Of the 20 people interviewed, 2 were local people, 17 held posts in relevant organisations and 1 worked in an unrelated organisation. Interviews were carried out by Stella Magoye and Gaynor Clarke. There was a combination of face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews. The areas covered by the questions remained constant throughout although the wording of the questions was changed for the second round of interviews carried out by Gaynor Clarke to ensure the common understanding of interviewees.

¹¹ Brayton (1997) and Denscombe (1998)

Observations of Meetings were carried out at two Gender Independent Advisory Group¹² meetings, an Inclusive Communities meeting and a Management Group meeting. These meetings were chosen to provide a cross section of meetings within a small sample and to provide a contrast between meetings that are recognised as part of the formal structure of The Sunderland Partnership and those which are not (i.e. Gender IAG). Notes were taken regarding the balance of male and female participants, the style of leadership, the content of the meetings and the incidence of discussion regarding women's issues.

Examination of data collected relating to strategic planning, target setting, intervention and monitoring of Local Area Agreements. Examination of five LAA targets was carried out in depth.

Two focus groups - One with 16 delegates to The Sunderland Partnership (3 men and 13 women) and the other at a women's event called Femalogue organised by the Gender Independent Advisory Group which aimed to increase women's understanding of politics and to encourage their involvement at a local level. Approximately 50 women attended. Both groups were asked to identify recommendations based on the key findings in line with the action research model employed in the research

The purpose of the focus groups was to share and seek confirmation of the key findings of the recent national survey on women's participation in Local Strategic Partnerships. In the spirit of action research the focus group participants were asked to draw meanings from the findings and to begin to identify future actions to address them. The facilitators' role was to draw out different perspectives on the findings, their meanings and the solutions to the issues and problems they raise. Both focus groups were asked to suggest recommendations for each of the four areas¹³ of the research findings and they have been reported verbatim so that The Sunderland Partnership and the Gender IAG have ownership over them in their follow-up work.

Part B of the research carried out by an internal working group of LSP officers to examine gender equality across monitoring, strategic planning, target setting and delivery, conducted a baseline audit of all 34 Local Area Agreement Indicators and 4 Multi-area Agreement¹⁴ Indicators against the following criteria:

- b) *What are existing data sources are used in measuring Local Area Agreements?*
- c) *Is gender-disaggregated data collected?*

¹² For information about Independent Advisory Group purpose and function, see page 16

¹³ i.e. women's participation and leadership; structures, cultures and leadership; understanding of gender; embedding gender equality in LAAs

¹⁴ These are agreements that are common across a whole sub-region, in this case Tyne and Wear

In addition the following five indicators were selected by the internal working group and examined in detail:

- All-age mortality rates
- Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing
- Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates
- 16+ current smoking rate prevalence
- % of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality

The following questions were also asked of these indicators:

- d) If gender-disaggregated data collected, what does it say – how do the issues affect women differently to men?*
- e) Are different targets set for women and men?*
- f) Are interventions geared differently for women and men?*
- g) Are the interventions appropriate? i.e. what is working for women?*
- h) Do the LSP Board and Executive Group have enough information in quarterly performance report to make knowledgeable strategic decisions?*

This information was collated by the member of the original team who worked with the internal working group and presented back to the focus groups with the other findings to inform the recommendations of this report.

5. Background and policy context

5.1 Sangini

Sangini was commissioned to carry out this research as a result of a tendering process carried out by Sunderland Independent Advisory Group to three women's organisations in Sunderland.

Sangini is a Black and minority-ethnic (BME) led, multi-cultural women's organisation with a focus upon health and wellbeing; and has expertise and a track record of having conducted research/mapping of BME issues in the past. It is based in Sunderland and has links across the North East and nationally.

Sangini was set up in 2002 by a group of women who identified a gap in the area of health for BME women and marginalised women and looked for ways to raise awareness about it. It soon emerged that Sangini could play a crucial role in developing a sustainable infrastructure for social cohesion through participation and education.

In 2006 Sangini was commissioned by Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust (STPCT) to carry out a health needs assessment of Black and minority ethnic community groups in Sunderland. The purpose of the assessment was to create opportunities through focus group sessions and a questionnaire survey for BME residents to have their say and share experiences of healthcare in Sunderland. Access to health service, identifying barriers to access and inequalities were explored, shared and documented and Sangini were then commissioned by STPCT to develop an action plan to implement the recommendations.

Sangini are well established with strong links and connections with local organisations and grass roots groups. The staff, management committee and volunteers have a diverse range of skills and knowledge with high levels of competence in networking, cultural competency and critical awareness.

5.2 Local Strategic Partnerships

The Government introduced Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in 2000 in England. LSPs are a way of bringing together local people, including public sector organisations, voluntary and community organisations, and business to work to improve the local quality of life of residents. LSPs aim to improve the way that local services are planned and delivered and they help local agencies and others to focus on improving the quality of life and leadership in a locality by getting communities involved in their design and delivery of public services. This includes major public services like education, health, housing, police and social services.

The role and responsibility of LSPs can be summarised in the following:

- LSPs are responsible for producing the Sustainable Community Strategy. This is a plan that draws on and influences future plans from all key local organisations. It sets out the priorities for an area, and how services can be improved and delivered in a way that increases the environmental, social and economic wellbeing of a community.
- LSPs develop the strategy for delivering services through a Local Area Agreement (LAA). This is a three year 'contract' between a local area represented by the local authority and other partners through the Local Strategic Partnership and central Government to deliver particular priorities as set out in its Sustainable Community Strategy.

LSPs are critical in ensuring the robust implementation of forthcoming legislation such as the 'Communities in control: real people, real power' White Paper which was launched on 9th July 2008, in which a key driver is devolution of power to local level. The White Paper looks at who has power, on whose behalf is it exercised, how is it held to account, and how it can be accessed by everyone in local communities.

Central to these new arrangements is the negotiation of new style Local Area Agreements between local partners and between them and Government, as the key means of agreeing, delivering and monitoring the outcomes and impact on women and men in each area which are delivered by local government on its own or in partnership with others.

From April 2009, Local Area Agreements will be subject to Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). This is a new approach that will provide the first independent assessment of the prospects for local areas and the quality of life for people living there. It will assess and report how well public money is spent and will ensure that local public bodies are accountable for their quality and impact. The Comprehensive Area Assessment will look at (amongst many other things) how well local authorities and their partners:

- develop priorities which express community needs and aspirations
- engage with the third sector and vulnerable and marginalised groups
- are progressing against the national indicator set for local authorities and local authority partnerships¹⁵

The new Duty to involve¹⁶ also comes into force on 1st April 2009, for local government and other public sector agencies. This is intended to ensure that local people have greater opportunities to have their say in local decision making. This new duty comes into force on 1 April 2009. The duty requires local authorities to involve representatives of local people in the development of public services. Local authorities must provide information about services, policies and decisions affecting local people, and provide opportunities for local people to have their say about those services, policies and decisions. Local authorities are encouraged to go beyond local consultation and seek the active involvement of local people through the following types of activity:

It is important that information provision, consultation and involvement opportunities are not limited to those with the 'loudest voice'. Authorities should be aware that equality requirements will apply to the duty to involve.

Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities Statutory Guidance, HM Government, July 2008

5.3 The Sunderland Partnership

Sunderland Partnership was originally established in 1994, and this went on to become the city's Local Strategic Partnership in 2001. It was renamed the Sunderland Partnership in 2005. Its main tasks are to:

¹⁵ There are 198 national indicators and these are the only means of measuring at a local level, national priorities that have been agreed by Government

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

¹⁶ The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

- agree, implement, monitor and review the Sunderland Strategy – its sustainable community strategy;
- bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to allow effective joint working to meet local needs;
- agree, implement, monitor and review the Local Area Agreement.

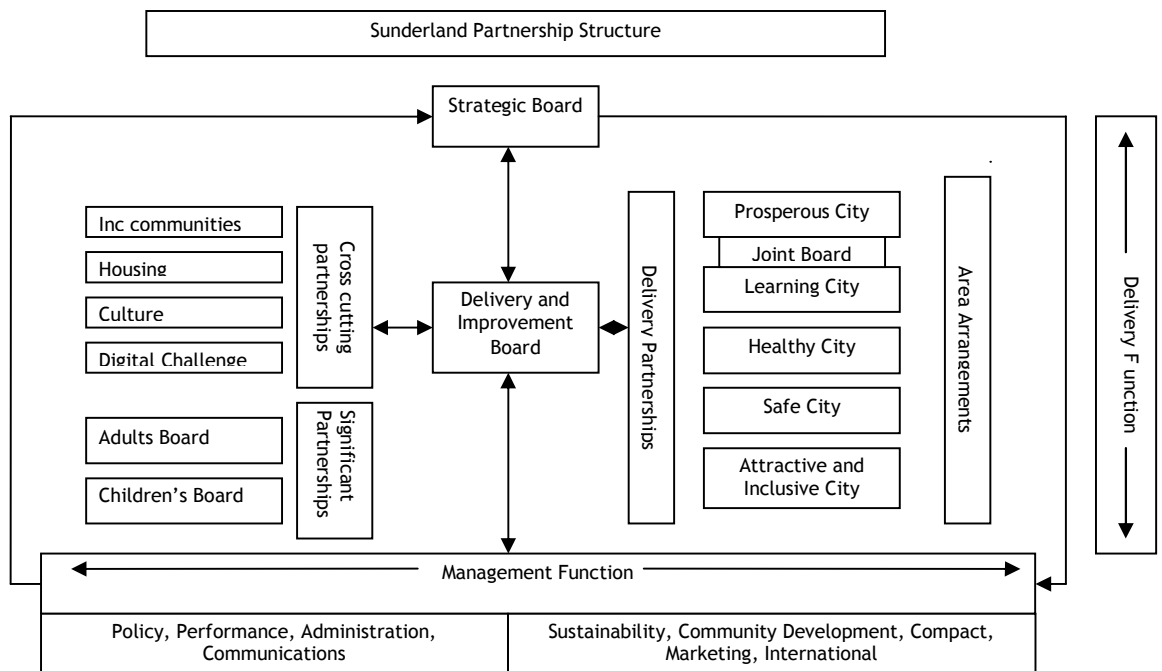
‘The Sunderland Partnership aims to be inclusive though not all organisations, groups or individuals can be represented on the Sunderland Partnership Board. We are more of a ‘family’ of partnerships and themed groups and embrace the diversity of stakeholders throughout the different levels of decision making processes. We ensure that involvement and consultation is open to all and that local views are fed through to influence strategic plans.’

<http://www.sunderlandpartnership.org.uk/aboutus.asp>

The membership of the Sunderland Partnership includes representatives from three main sectors:

- Public
- Private
- Voluntary and community

The Sunderland Partnership structure is under review to align with the new Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025 and the Local Area Agreement. At the time of writing this report, the following structure for The Sunderland Partnership was out for consultation:



The current structure of the Sunderland Partnership consists of the following groups:

Executive Partnership Board

The Board provides strategic direction, priorities for action, and reviews performance. It is accountable for resource allocation (mainstream and special funds).

Management Group

The Management Group informs and implements the Board's decisions, monitors performance and oversees the Implementation of Sunderland Partnership Action Plan.

Joint Partnership Group

The Joint Partnership Group ensures delivery of the Sunderland Strategy where there are joint targets between thematic partnerships. It co-ordinates activity and establishment of thematic sub-groups.

Thematic Partnerships

The thematic partnerships are responsible for developing delivery plans to implement the Sunderland Strategy. They provide expert knowledge and formulate strategy for strategic objectives, monitor progress of specific strategic objectives, targets and actions.

Specialist Advisory Groups

- International Strategy Group
- City Marketing Group
- Community Development Group / The Sunderland Compact
- Digital Challenge Board
- Fairtrade Steering Group
- Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs)

Independent Advisory Groups

These groups were formed to address issues around inclusive communities through the involvement of members of harder to reach groups. There are 7 IAGs; older people, young people, gender, lesbian, gay and bisexual, black and minority ethnic, disability and faith.

It is anticipated that IAGs will assist in the strategic direction of the city by:

- *Acting as consultants to the Sunderland Partnership on appropriate issues (for example the Sunderland Strategy and Local Area Agreement)*
- *Offering advice as required*
- *Providing an overview of, and identifying gaps in current service provision*
- *Feeding into the Sunderland Strategy review.*

<http://www.sunderlandpartnership.org.uk/advisory-IndividualAdvisoryGroups.asp>

The aim of the Independent Advisory Groups¹⁷ is to bring together people who, for a number of reasons, may not have had their views heard. People from across the city who have a similar interest in equality issues can come together in one place. It is hoped that this will allow a wide variety of issues to be discussed and co-ordinated and ultimately fed into the work of the Sunderland Partnership. The IAGs meet on a regular basis (usually monthly) to discuss relevant issues. These issues are then passed onto the Sunderland Partnership via the Inclusive Communities Thematic Group. In return, reports are then fed back to the IAGs to keep them informed of developments within the partnership. It is hoped that each group will attract a wide variety of people with different views and perspectives and who can represent the broadest cross section of issues. Joining a group gives an individual a chance to meet others in the City who are interested in similar equality issues, and have their views heard and included. The groups also provide a route to have those views fed directly into the Sunderland Partnership and therefore to be taken into account at the highest level in Sunderland.

5.4 Sunderland Gender Independent Advisory Group

The Gender Independent Advisory Group includes representatives from interested parties and members of the community and selected representatives to report to the Creating Inclusive Communities Group. The draft terms of reference state the Gender Independent Advisory Group will:

Be an opportunity to raise and address issues that impact on gender within the City of Sunderland.' The Group will maintain an overview of strategic planning and development of issues / services that can have an impact on gender.

The Group will be a means to challenge and positively influence partners of the LSP to ensure that consideration is given to gender when devising plans, policies and developments and gender issues are acknowledged in cross cutting strategies

Within the draft terms of reference, gender is defined as:

The social and cultural differences between men and women learned from society, families and cultures. Gender differences can change over time and between cultures...

The Gender Independent Advisory Group's stated beliefs are:

- *That they should be proactive by ensuring that strategic planning and service development consider and is responsive to changing gender needs.*
- *That all services should be delivered appropriately regardless of gender.*
- *That all services are delivered reflecting gender requirements/ needs*

¹⁷ <http://www.sunderlandpartnership.org.uk/advisory-IndividualAdvisoryGroups.asp>

The functions of the Gender Independent Advisory Group are stated as:

- *To be a means for interested parties and members of the community to work together in partnership.*
- *To maintain an overview and understanding of local needs.*
- *To agree priorities for the group, identify gaps in services and agree action to address these.*
- *To promote joint working, commissioning and development of services responsive to gender equality needs.*
- *To ensure that The Sunderland Strategy is informed by the views of the community in regard to gender.*
- *To encourage the establishment of local targets relating to national gender equality priorities and to monitor local progress and trends.*
- *To help develop, implement and monitor a joint strategy and action plan with measurable outcomes which identifies how all partners within the Sunderland Partnership will meet the needs identified for gender.*
- *To ensure effective, appropriate mechanisms are in place to engage, involve and consult with a wide range of members of the community in all aspects of service planning, development and delivery.*

5.5 The Gender Equality Duty

The Gender Equality Duty (GED) came into force in April 2007. It requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment. The duty covers all the functions of a public authority, such as policy-making, public services, and employment. The Duty places legal responsibility on public authorities to demonstrate that they treat men and women fairly, which means they need to identify and prevent discrimination rather than react to problems when they occur. The new duty represents a change from previous legislation in that it requires public bodies to be pro-active in promoting gender equality.

The legislation also introduced specific duties to assist in meeting the general duty which requires that public bodies:

1. Prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives
2. Consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
3. Gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
4. Consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and other key stakeholders such as trade unions and women's organisations), and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives
5. Assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality

6. Implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
7. Report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Code of Practice explains the Gender Duty in full. The EHRC has also produced guidance for different sectors and issues, including guidance on how local government can implement the Gender Duty.

5.6 The Gender Equality Duty's Significance for LSPs/ LAAs

The Gender Equality Duty was developed in response to continued systematic discrimination against women, in all services, for example employment, housing, transport, care, leisure, personal safety, and political representation. Existing social, cultural and institutional practices mean that women's inequality is still persistent and widespread. In this report, we examine one aspect, discrimination against women in the decision-making arena, but it is important to recognise that there are many other areas of gender inequality which are not covered here.

The Duty represents the biggest step forward for gender equality since the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975. Rather than relying on individuals to make a case against discrimination, it places a proactive obligation on public bodies to do so. It applies to the delivery of services as well as employment practice. The Duty has the potential to bring about real change in the culture of public organisations and the onus will be on organisations to promote equality, rather than on individuals to appeal against specific instances of discrimination.

Local authorities are subject to the Gender Equality Duty and therefore need to ensure that any work they do in partnership with others, including Local Strategic Partnerships, contributes to their delivery of the Duty.

The GED applies to different organisations in different ways within those partnerships. In an LSP, for example, some partners will be subject to the Duty in their own right (because they are public bodies, or they are private or voluntary sector organisations delivering services on behalf of a public body) but others will not. The relevant partners need to co-operate with the authority in order for the partnership to work.

City of Sunderland Council's Gender Equality Duty is well situated within a partnership context, its opening paragraph quotes the vision for equality outlined in the 'Creating Inclusive Communities' chapter of the Sunderland Strategy (The Sunderland Partnership):

Sunderland has a vision for equality, this being where everyone:

- *Has equality of opportunity to reach their full potential, access to similar life opportunities and to expect quality of life,*
- *Is respected, valued and celebrated,*

- *Feels they belong to Sunderland and can develop strong positive relationships within neighbourhoods and in work, education and leisure,*
- *Feels able to participate in community life, be active citizens and play a positive role in developing Sunderland's vision for its future*

Achieving Gender Equality in Service Delivery and Employment: Gender

Equality Scheme 2007 – 2010, City of Sunderland Council

City of Sunderland Council Gender Equality Scheme goes on to state that;

All of the organisations in the Sunderland Partnership are responsible for progressing these priorities... This will be achieved through the development of a Local Area Agreement which describes how this agenda will be delivered (p7)

There are several other references in the document which demonstrate City of Sunderland Council's commitment to embedding its Gender Equality Scheme within partnership working:

- Two of five key objectives of City of Sunderland Gender Equality Scheme (GES) are to 'improve partnership' and 'working to deliver One City' (p7)
- The GES refers to the Council working in partnership with other public authorities to support the development of Independent Advisory Groups to help *'under represented groups to have a more unified voice and more direct route to influencing public policy making.'* (p13).
- Section 23 of the GES (page 21) refers to a 'Partnership Strategy' that the Council has developed that includes *'information of how to build equality into partnership agreements and arrangements'*. [We were unable to locate this document during the research.]
- In the GES action plan, under *'Procurement and Partnership agreements,'* the Corporate Procurement Manager has responsibility for:

Incorporating gender equality requirements into Codes of Practice for procurement, contract management and partnerships (p24)

In the formation of the GES, City of Sunderland Council joined together with Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust, Sunderland City Hospitals, Northumbria Police and Sunderland Mental Health Trust to ensure that the schemes of all of these public bodies were 'informed by local people.' There was a commitment between these partners to ensure that *'wherever possible, partners would work together to respond to issues raised'* (Appendix 2, City of Sunderland GES).

6. Research Findings

The following findings reflect data collected from the range of methods outlined in Section 4 Methodology. The methodology was designed to extract data from a wide range of sources and the results were considered in relation to the four areas¹⁸ outlined in Section 1.1 Aims and Objectives of the Research. The findings are put together from the different data sources of the research. The recommendations are in the main taken from those of the two focus groups, in line with the action research model applied. It is worth noting that five respondents reflected that they had given considerable thought to the issues raised in the questionnaire as a result of being interviewed and two said they had got a copy of the Women in LSPs report and read it. As a result they felt more aware of the issues.

6.1 Relationship between women's attendance and their participation

In examining the relationship between women's attendance at LSP meetings and their participation¹⁹ it was initially important to gauge the number of women represented and whether there was a pattern of where they were represented, e.g. Board, management or thematic level and whether they were voluntary and community sector delegates, there is no neighbourhood level framework for The Sunderland Partnership. The following table shows the representation of women on The Sunderland Partnership:

Level	Women	% women	Total men and women
Total Executive Partnership Board	6	30%	20
Management Group	9	53%	17
Joint Partnership Groups Thematic Groups	6	60%	10
Total at senior management level	15	51%	27
Sunderland Learning	21	84%	25
Extending Cultural Opportunities	15	60%	25
Health	7	58%	12
Economic Prosperity	12	54%	22
Safer Sunderland Business Support Group	8	38%	21
Inclusive Communities	15	38%	38
Strategic Housing	3	30%	10
Safer Sunderland (Board)	3	30%	10
Developing an Attractive and Accessible City	8	30%	27
Total at a thematic / operational level	92	51%	190
Total Delegates from Sunderland Community Network (SCN) to Partnership - Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) representation	20	71%	28
TOTAL ALL	144	51%	284

¹⁸ i.e. women's participation and leadership; structures, cultures and leadership; understanding of gender; embedding gender equality in LAAs

¹⁹ By participation we mean the process of influencing and making decisions

The data collected shows that on average 51% of delegates to The Sunderland Partnership are women but that the numbers are higher at the voluntary and community sector level (71%) and lower at an executive / board level (30%). This is congruent with the national Women and LSPs research which found that:

Women are more likely to be community representatives, thematic partnership representatives or administrators on central LSP boards.

Where are the Women in LSPs? (2007)

The above table also shows the following trends:

- At an executive level, women represent 30% of Partnership Board members. This is parallel to the proportion of women councillors in Sunderland (23 of the 75 councillors are women: 31%) but not to the overall proportion of women delegates to The Sunderland Partnership (51%)
- At senior management level in the Partnership (Management Group and Joint Thematic Group), 51% of the representatives are women
- The proportion of women at a thematic / operational level are the same at 51%
- There is a strong representation among group members in the 'traditionally' female fields of education (84%), cultural (60%) and health (58%), and weakest within Housing, (30%); Safer Sunderland (30%) and Attractive and Accessible Cities (30%)
- Total representation from the voluntary community sector (VCS) is stronger, 20 of the 28 (71%) elected delegates from the Sunderland Community Network are women. Five of the 28 delegates are local and perform the role in a voluntary capacity. Of these, four are women.
- All (100%) of the VCS representatives to Community Development, Improving Health and Social Care, Raising Standards & Improving Access & Participation in Learning, and Extending Cultural Opportunities are women. The only voluntary sector representative to Housing is a woman (100%).
- The Gender IAG has 23 members: 22 women and 1 man

When it is made clear that numbers of women and men delegates are more or less equal, or in some meetings the number of women regularly exceeds that of men, then the perception is that the problem of participation does not exist.

The perception is that representation equals equality so there is nothing to discuss, if there are equal numbers there is no problem

The majority of professionals both men and women felt that there was no issue of inequality because representation was equal.

It is not women's inability to participate but the inability of others, men and women, to listen

Delegates from the voluntary sector were more likely to identify that inequality could exist in the way power is used and the inability of others to listen to what is being said by women.

Is it realistic to expect women to come from their communities and participate? It takes time and support you need to listen

The majority of women attending are professionals from the voluntary and statutory sectors who attend as part of their paid role. Overall they felt that the participation of women in meetings was equal to the participation of men although there remained some feeling from those in the voluntary sector that they were less confident in this setting.

Where participants felt able to comment on who raises issues relating to women it was felt more likely to be the voluntary sector or social enterprise sector. However the problem remained of how to encourage women to contribute. One Chair said, *'I try to pick up on those who are quiet.'* This was backed up by a local woman delegate who felt that inevitably someone else would say what she wanted to say before she had built up the courage to say it. She acknowledged that the Chair always asked her if she had something to say but this was usually at the end of a discussion when everything had been said so, she usually had to say 'no' which encouraged the view that she had nothing to contribute. A number of barriers to participation were mentioned by participants which included:

- men's attitude and unwillingness to make changes which might affect their power or position (this was stated by a man)
- boredom in relation to the way meetings were organised and the agenda
- the papers which need reading
- the language and jargon used which changed regularly and made it difficult to contribute if you were not 100% confident about their meaning
- the timing of meeting
- childcare issues and the lack of crèches and funding for crèches
- where to park or where the bus stop was
- the lack of understanding of the basic principles of women's participation

At the focus groups further comment was made regarding these barriers, for example it was explained that some meetings were held at 4pm to ensure young people's delegates could attend after school although it was accepted that this was the least convenient time for women with children. Also there was a feeling that the basic principles of participation are well documented and should be clearly stated and applied to all thematic groups, IAGs, the Management Group and Board.

It is not a case of not knowing or understanding the issues but there must be an investment in changing it if it is going to work.

A male participant who works in the private sector raised the point that it is often difficult to understand as an 'outsider', and that he has to grasp the procedures as best he can.

The language and styles are different. Also it is hard to see the relationship between the different sections of LSP without specific explanations regarding the expertise delegates were bringing.

Overall delegates could not identify relevant training they had received although some were able to identify training they had had as part of their role in the Local Authority, GenToo Housing Company or the Primary Care Trust. Therefore The Sunderland Partnership benefited from training provided by partners that wasn't open to other delegates. It was reported that this could alienate other delegates further. Other participants had received training when the Sunderland Community Network (SCN) had been under management by a different organisation²⁰ but had not had any equalities training since 2005.

Participants compared representation now with previous years when meetings were dominated by men. Overall they were very positive regarding the role of women delegates from the police authority, Local Authority and Primary Care Trust feeling that the appointment of women in high status professional posts reflected the national trend and had increased the number of women chairing LSP groups and taking a more active role generally in The Sunderland Partnership. However it was also noted by all these women that they were not in a position to specifically raise women's issues because their role did not look at issues in this way. Consequently the issues were raised by default rather than design: for example in health there are a number of priorities including smoking in pregnancy and teenage conception which clearly relate to women but the fact that they affect women specifically, is not recognised and are therefore not looked at as women's issues. Neither are they looked at in relation to the role of men and how their behaviour affects women.

The voluntary sector was seen to be strong in representing women's issues but delegates from the voluntary sector felt that they did not necessarily affect the outcome of discussions or decisions. Examples of women's issues raised and decisions leading to improvement included domestic violence, street lighting and transport issues.

It was felt that women volunteers in the VCS Sunderland had to rely on paid workers to raise their issues as few local or grassroots women attend meetings. One Sunderland Community Network delegate raised the issue that she tried to be a 'true representative' by feeding back to other SCN members, but timing was often too tight, language too complex and no real sense that feedback was listened to or considered thus leading to a sense of 'why bother?'. The issue of the capacity of VCS workers to attend meetings and read all the papers was raised. There was also the issue that voluntary groups with no paid workers would find it even harder to participate in The Sunderland Partnership.

²⁰ Up until 2006, SCN was managed by Sunderland Voluntary and Community Partnership (Voices), it is now managed by Sunderland Centre for Voluntary Services.

A relationship was found between attendance and representation of women's issues in that delegates were able to work more closely outside The Sunderland Partnership because of their contact across statutory and voluntary sector boundaries in Thematic and LSP groups. This led to joint working on issues relating to the work of 2 or more agencies, for example Domestic Violence issues which are linked to the work of Wearside Women in Need, the Police Authority and GenToo.

Some people said they found it difficult to understand how women's issues fitted into the business and structure of the LSP Issues are more likely to be dealt with if they relate to government targets e.g Domestic Violence.

It is hit and miss whether there is an emphasis on women's issues.

There doesn't seem to be much control over the agenda, usually there is a presentation about something which is already happening.

The overall feeling regarding delegates from the SCN and the possibility of increasing representation of women was that there was not enough support available at the meetings for them to attend and participate.

If they don't understand they don't come back²¹

They [local representatives] need to have more confidence that it is relevant to them and affects their lives. There is no acknowledgment that they are giving up their own time when others are getting paid.

One voluntary delegate from the SCN felt that there wasn't enough support for her. She was one of three voluntary delegates from the SCN but the others were irregular attendees. There had been a plan for all three delegates to meet prior to meetings so they could support each other but this never happened and she felt unsupported and isolated.

6.1.2 Recommendations

Both focus groups²² identified the following recommendations:

- a. Training should be made available by The Sunderland Partnership in respect of the commitment, understanding and skills required at each level of decision making.
- b. Barriers identified should be considered and acted upon to the advantage of everyone not just women.
- c. There should be funding set aside to fund training for all delegates including training in confidence building, participation and active support.

²¹ Some participants related this equally to young people representatives and BME representatives

²² See page 13 for details of the composition of both of the focus groups.

In addition The Sunderland Partnership delegates identified:

- d. There should be a raising of awareness of gender issues at all levels of The Sunderland Partnership and an identification of current issues affecting women in Sunderland.

The Femalogue²³ event identified:

- e. Chairs should be briefed and protocol developed which ensures they have the skills to be inclusive in meetings, and manage dominant members who may intimidate other members.
- f. There should be transparency regarding the drawing up of agendas, who puts items on the agenda and how delegates can be informed in advance of the content of agenda items.
- g. There should be consideration of why more women do not become involved including exploring the possibility that women are not apathetic but simply not able to identify any direct relevance to their lives in the issues addressed or decisions made

6.1.3 Key Recommendations

To increase women's attendance and participation, there should be:

- a) A well resourced comprehensive training package which reflects the learning needs of all LSP partners and members to include where and how decisions are made, roles and responsibilities at all levels of The Sunderland Partnership, awareness of the barriers to participation for women, women's issues, confidence building, participation and inclusivity
- b) The agreement of a protocol. i.e. a way of doing things that is adopted by all partners that includes systems and methods for raising and addressing women's issues and more effective monitoring of the participation of women

6.2 Structures, cultures and styles of leadership within the LSP

The data relating to the structures, cultures and styles of leadership was sometimes difficult to separate from data relating to the relationship between women's attendance and their participation, where the same data is directly relevant it has been used again, otherwise data has been used in the most relevant section.

²³ The Femalogue was a women's only event that took place in Sunderland on 10th October 2008, it was organised and facilitated by the Gender IAG for women from different backgrounds to come together to identify barriers to women in local decision making structures and to begin to devise actions to address them.

The overall view was that it is very important that The Sunderland Partnership is representative and inclusive of women and there was a feeling that this had been achieved. However the majority of women delegates represent organisations and agencies who do not specialise in women's issues and this raised the question of how the women's issues can be reliably represented.

Women's issues are not really represented; they can be lost because it is not specific. It is not unwillingness but a lack of awareness

Some delegates accepted the numbers of women had increased but felt that this had made little difference to the style of leadership which remains formal and distant. There was a sense that LSPs are complicated and the links between partners is often by accident not design.

LSPs are complicated, the link between partners is often by accident not design, and there is a fragmented approach to policy and no mechanism to look at it

The structure of The Sunderland Partnership is set and is seen to work by some but not by others. Some identified that it seems decisions are made outside meetings, that things don't go through the right channels and that those in the loop are better informed. At Partnership level there was a feeling that it is difficult to champion women as there is too much set procedure.

One participant also felt that where there was expertise in partners it was not used, citing the example of his experience of developing equality strategies in his organisation which would be useful to The Sunderland Partnership but had never been drawn on. This point was raised when the draft findings were presented to The Sunderland Partnership delegates for discussion but no one asked for further information so this could be followed up to ensure the delegate interviewed shared their knowledge with them.

Some participants identified that processes which don't facilitate equal participation, such as the language used, apply equally to both men and women who were not employed in statutory bodies.

The Gender Independent Advisory Group (IAG) was seen as important in demystifying the jargon and making women feel more confident in their participation. However, the structure of the Inclusive Communities was felt to be too traditional, and younger women are overwhelmed by it. Other comments by interviewees suggest a perception that the information feeding in from communities through the IAG's is not fully taken on board by the Inclusive Communities Group:

There needs to be sincerity about inclusion and consultation. It is a two way process

We need to think outside the box and not just expect the community representatives to take full responsibility.

Members of the Inclusive Communities Thematic Group were aware that there was a constant pressure to discuss items that are identified outside the thematic group, but they also felt great effort was made to include delegates and be informal and inclusive. The meeting observations showed the Gender IAG reporting to the Inclusive Communities Thematic Group in a standard agenda item alongside other IAGs. Issues are reported and minuted but not discussed except for clarification. There is no routine way of ensuring women's perspectives are raised in relation to agenda items. This means that women's issues are incidental to the broader issues which are raised.

Structurally women's issues are looked at more by luck than design

There was a view that although women's representation is there in numbers it is not present in issues raised; there is no real impression that women's issues are lost, but rather that they are not specifically raised or considered.

It isn't unwillingness but lack of awareness

There seemed to be a lack of creativity in thinking of ways to ensure the issues were raised and then acted on.

In relation to style and culture there was a feeling from the voluntary sector of The Sunderland Partnership being inaccessible. Voluntary sector workers reported that they found it hard to get replies to queries outside meetings, information was not readily available and minutes were not sent.

6.2.1 Recommendations

Both focus groups²⁴ identified the following recommendations:

- a. Training should be provided by The Sunderland Partnership to ensure all delegates are confident and knowledgeable in fulfilling their roles on The Sunderland Partnership.
- b. There should be shared understanding by all of those involved in The Sunderland Partnership of language and jargon used in meetings, minutes and reports to ensure all delegates have equal access to information.
- c. There should be more clarity among those involved in The Sunderland Partnership about which areas of discussion are decided locally and which are set by government so participants understand which are mandatory and which at the discretion of the LSP. In addition there should be more transparency regarding the processes and how decisions are made to avoid delegates thinking decisions are made outside the structure.

²⁴ See page 13 for details of the composition of both of the focus groups.

- d. The Sunderland Partnership should look outward across Sunderland and tackle the big questions in relation to women for the Partnership at a strategic level e.g. qualifications, employment and glass ceilings. This should include monitoring of where issues are raised and how they are dealt with. The data collected should be acted upon within existing structures which ensure good practice.
- e. There should be more concentration on the networking of women and how they can support each other. This should include all women delegates and not just those from the voluntary sector.

In addition The Sunderland Partnership delegates identified:

- f. The composition of Sunderland Local Strategic Partnership should be monitored at all levels as part of routine performance management processes.
- g. The Sunderland Partnership should support women-only events which encourage women to become involved in decision making bodies at all levels in the City for the purpose of encouraging women's participation in local decision making.

The Femalogue event identified:

- h. Organisations within the Partnership should have a more structured approach regarding how they establish or identify links with each other on various thematic groups.
- i. There should be more information about which organisations make up The Sunderland Partnership and what expertise they bring to the meetings.
- j. There should be monitoring of what decisions are made and what impact they have on the City in relation to underrepresented groups.
- k. There should be monitoring of the impact of the IAGs on the decisions taken at Management Group and Board level of The Sunderland Partnership.
- l. Minutes of meetings should be monitored to ensure women's issues are considered and that relevant issues are progressed through the structure.
- m. There should be a structured approach to considering the findings and recommendations of this research to ensure action is taken to develop alternative ways of working within The Sunderland Partnership.

6.2.2 Key recommendation

To ensure structures, cultures and leadership styles are more conducive to women's participation, there should be:

- Routine monitoring of the composition of The Sunderland Partnership
- gender impact assessments of decisions at all levels including a clear audit trail of the impact of the Gender IAG upon decisions
- a knowledge base of which organisations bring expertise in gender equality and women's issues
- Support systems and networks for women delegates from all sectors

6.3 LSP's understanding of gender

The findings for The Sunderland Partnerships understanding of Gender are led by the data from the question *'what is your understanding of the term Gender?'* which was asked of everyone interviewed. Of 20 people interviewed nine described the term 'gender' as a definition of whether someone is male or female, Of the other delegates the following comments were made which showed a range of understanding that Gender relates to social conditioning and differing expectations depending on whether you are male or female.

Gender is socially constructed and refers to life chances, social expectations and power.

Life experiences are affected by gender and life chances, sometimes this might be gender specific to men but most often it refers to oppression of women.

The Gender IAG training dealt with gender definitions, which led to some interviewees being more knowledgeable and able to discuss and understand women's issues at a different level from those who had not had training. The following definition has been adopted in the draft Terms of Reference for the Gender Independent Advisory Group:

The social and cultural differences between men and women learned from society, families and cultures. Gender differences can change over time and between cultures.

This definition falls short of naming the social constructs of femininity and masculinity and therefore fails to acknowledge that gender posits women in an unequal power relationship with men.

The belief that equal numbers of men and women means equal participation leads to "gender blindness"²⁵ in the opinion of some participants. They believe that women are accepted as representatives but there is no expectation that they will contribute differently, raise specific issues or that their contribution will lead to any significant change in the way The Sunderland Partnership works or the decisions that are made.

There is no awareness that inequality cuts across every issue that the LSP seeks to address. Women's issues are seen as separate in some way.

²⁵ Gender blindness: lack of awareness of underlying gender differences in resource and power in all policy and practice

Some delegates felt that when women representing women's organisations raise women's issues are perceived to be favouring women, but this is not said about other professionals raising health or housing issues. One delegate gave the example of when funding decisions were being made a women's organisation was expected to answer questions relating to why it was only women who would benefit from the funding but at the same meeting a male football team were given funding with no questions asked. This suggests that there is no widespread understanding of the importance of tackling structural gender inequality, and consequently little value placed upon gender analysis as an area of professional practice.

Why do minority organisations have to justify themselves and mainstream ones don't?

The majority felt that issues are usually approached in a general way and don't specifically consider issues affecting women. Some issues discussed coincidentally affect women more e.g. domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, caring issues, child poverty. Where these issues are considered as women's issues they tend to concentrate on how women can change their behaviour to solve a problem. This is a narrower definition of the term 'women's issues' than that offered in the national research:

Women's issues can include those understood to impact particularly on women, such as sexual or domestic violence, abortion, equal pay, gender representation in decision making. Or it can be any issue which explores the impact on women, e.g. transport, housing, economic development, small business etc.

Where are the Women in LSPs? (2007)

This tendency to use a narrow definition of women's issues was recognised by some of the interviewees and it is felt that a broader definition is required:

When I think about it, it is always seen as solving a problem but we need to look at how men's behaviour can be changed in these issues to benefit women.

We need to look at the roots of every issue and see how it affects women.

Some people thought that Gender Independent Advisory Group (IAG) should be called the Women's IAG because it represents women's interests rather than looking at gender more broadly. They compared it with the IAG for black and minority ethnic groups and how it looks at issues affecting them, rather than race equality per se. Others thought that the Gender IAG was being asked to deal with how gender issues affect men, (for example, why are mortality rates and morbidity rates higher for men?) for which there was not time or expertise. Others felt that the name Gender IAG should be kept as otherwise delegates might complain that men were being excluded and therefore The Sunderland Partnership would be challenged under the Gender Equality Duty.

The overall feeling was that no one was purposely excluded and broadly delegates felt that women were able to contribute freely and openly. When asked about how their contribution was affected by whether they were male or female or how it was received, a number of male and female professional workers felt that their position was more important than their sex. Male participants were aware that their behaviour might affect how women contributed but were not able to express how. Some women participants were aware that gender affected their contribution; others felt that their position was more important.

Gender is socially constructed. Even though I am powerful I don't see myself that way. Even when I hear myself speaking clearly and intelligently I still doubt myself.

6.3.1 Recommendations

Both focus groups²⁶ identified the following recommendations:

- a. There should be more awareness of when gender issues are paramount, for example poverty is a major issue in Sunderland and there should be more awareness and understanding of women's role in tackling poverty and what men can do to support them.
- b. There should be a working definition of gender and how it relates to The Sunderland Partnership to ensure a general understanding of male power, inequality and the societal expectations of women in relation to issues considered by The Sunderland Partnership. This should be considered in relation to the implementation of the Gender Equality Duty.

The Femalogue event also identified the following recommendation.

- f. The Gender IAG should encourage greater use of its members' skills and knowledge and training and present relevant issues to other groups.

6.3.2 Key recommendation

To ensure better understanding of gender within The Sunderland Partnership it should adopt a working definition of gender and its relationship to power and inequality. There should be consideration of the definition in relation to the implementation of the Gender Equality Duty of partner organisations and the purpose of the Independent Advisory Group and its title

²⁶ See page 13 for details of the composition of both of the focus groups.

6.4 Embedding gender equality in Local Area Agreements

A baseline audit of all 35 Local Area Agreement Indicators and 4 Multi-area Agreement²⁷ Indicators was assembled during the period March to September 2008 against the following criteria:

- a) *What are existing data sources used in measuring Local Area Agreements?*
- b) *Is gender-disaggregated data collected?*

The following five agencies are leads for the Local Area Agreement in Sunderland:

- Sunderland City Council
- Northumbria Police
- Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust
- Job Centre Plus
- Learning and Skills Council

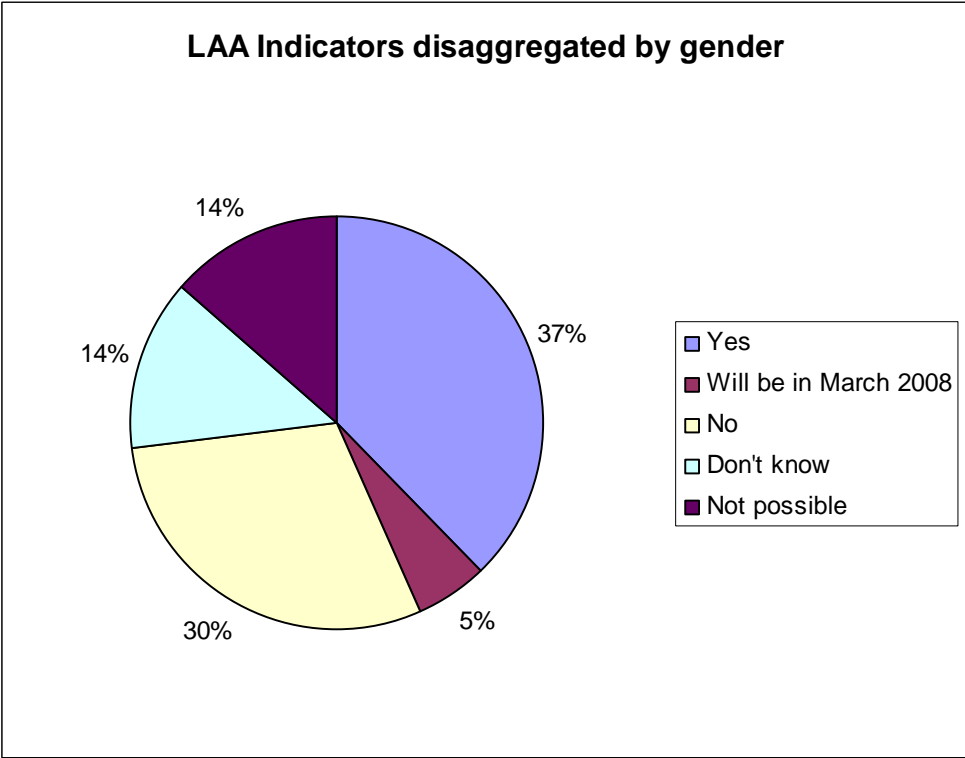
They are all public bodies and therefore subject to the following statutory duties:

- Gather and use information on how policies and practices affect gender equality in the delivery of services
- Consult stakeholders (including women's organisations) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives
- Assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality

Only one of the lead agencies provided the information requested for this research on time and they did not disaggregate their data. The information shown in Annex 3 and most of that outlined below was the outcome of a brainstorming exercise conducted in a working group meeting set up to develop and action plan for this element of the research.

The following diagram summarises the findings of the baseline audit of gender disaggregation of data pertaining to Sunderland's LAA indicators (the full baseline position is in Annex 3):

²⁷ These are agreements that are common across a whole sub-region, in this case Tyne and Wear



Data on the following 14 (37%) LAA indicators is disaggregated by gender, although no evidence was found of whether this data was used to inform different interventions and targets for women and men:

Priority Improvement Indicator	Data Source
Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement ²⁸	Children's Services
Repeat incidents of Domestic violence ²⁹	Community Safety Team
16-18 year olds not in employment, education or training	Connexions
Perceptions of anti-social behaviour	Currently BUPI/ Place Survey March 2009
% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together	Currently MORI/ Place Survey March 2009
% of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality	Currently MORI/ Place Survey March 2009
Assault with injury crime rate	Police
Drug related (Class A) offending rate	Police
Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders ³⁰	Police
Rate of proven re-offending by young people	Police and Young Offenders Service
People supported to live independently through social services (all ages)	Social Services
Social care clients receiving Self Directed support	Social Services
Priority Improvement Indicator	Data Source
All-age mortality rates	Teaching Primary Care Trust (TPCT)
Under 18 conception rate	TPCT

The following two (5%) LAA indicators will be disaggregated from March 2009 as they will form part of the new 'Place Survey'³¹,

Priority Improvement Indicator	Data sources
People over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently	Place survey
Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing	Place survey

²⁸ Possibly but small numbers

²⁹ Sample repeats only, useful local information being set up but no baseline.

³⁰ Should be but small

³¹ The Place Survey has been developed by Communities and Local Government (CLG). The National LAA Indicator Set contains 25 indicators which are informed by citizens' views and perspectives. To reduce the number of surveys being undertaken by local authorities, 18 of these will be collected through a single Place Survey to be administered by each local authority.

The following 11 (30%) LAA indicators are not disaggregated by gender:

Priority Improvement Indicator	Data sources
Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates	Analysed centrally by Department of Health and reported online
Overall Employment Rate	Annual population survey (Office of National Statistics)
Young people from low-income backgrounds progressing to higher education.	City Council and Connexions
Proportion of children in poverty	DWP
Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling	GIS Mapping and Regional Transport Plan
Skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers	National Employers skills survey
Working age people on out of work benefits	NOMIS
Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods	NOMIS
16+ current smoking rate prevalence	Smoking quitters - No reliable and regularly updated measure of smoking prevalence
Obesity among primary school age children in year 6	TPCT
VAT registration rate	VAT Register

It was not possible to determine whether the following five (14%) LAA indicators are disaggregated:

Priority Improvement Indicator	What are the existing data sources?
Working age population qualified to at least level 2 or higher	National Labour Force Survey
Working age population qualified to at least level 4 or higher	National Labour Force Survey
Emotional Health of children	Ofsted annual TellUs survey
Learners achieving a level 1 qualification in literacy	Learning and skills Council
Learners achieving an entry level 3 qualification in numeracy	Learning and skills Council

It is not possible to disaggregate the following five (15%) LAA indicators:

- Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak
- Net additional homes provided
- Supply of land ready to develop housing sites

- Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting)
- Household waste recycled and composted

The following five indicators were selected by the internal working group and examined in detail:

- All-age mortality rates
- Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing
- Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates
- 16+ current smoking rate prevalence
- % of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality

The reason for having a cluster of indicators around health was to establish a clear pattern of whether data was being used by one lead agency to improve services interventions. The indicator on influencing decisions was chosen because the steering group knew that the Gender IAG was doing specific work on this. The following questions were also asked of these indicators:

- c) *If gender-disaggregated data collected, what does it say – how do the issues affect women differently to men?*
- d) *Are different targets set for women and men?*
- e) *Are interventions geared differently for women and men?*
- f) *Are the interventions appropriate? i.e. what is working for women?*
- g) *Do the LSP Board and Executive Group have enough information in quarterly performance report to make knowledgeable strategic decisions?*

Out of all four health related indicators, only 'all-age mortality rates' was found to be disaggregated by gender. Men's mortality rates are shown to be lower than women's (as they are nationally). Of the other three there were different targets set for women and men but no analysis was done, and no evidence was provided that there were different interventions for men and women or of their appropriateness and effectiveness.

In relation to '*% of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality*' the data is disaggregated and has previously come from the Mori 2007 (Residents Survey). From 2009, this data will come from the Place Survey.

'% of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality' was the only indicator applied to all of the questions on monitoring, strategic planning, target setting and delivery of LSPs and examining the responsibilities of The Sunderland Partnership in taking action under the Gender Equality Duty. The following are the findings against this indicator:

How do the issues affect women differently to men?

- *Overall not a measurable difference*
- *Some difference when further disaggregating by age³²*
- *Race and sexual orientation not collected in these surveys although will be in future surveys (when they become part of 'The Place Survey' from March 2009).*

Are different targets set for women?

There is no evidence that there is any set for these surveys, although they could help uncover areas of gender discrimination in public services.

Are interventions geared differently for women and men?

- *Usually not, however if data shows a noticeable difference then that would be used to inform future service delivery.*
- *The Gender IAG identifies relevant gender issues to take to the LSP using existing research. They aim to look at the data using a gender perspective..*
- *The Citizens Panel would positively target a particular group if underrepresented.*

Are the interventions appropriate? i.e. What is working for women?

- *This is difficult to measure.*
- *Also the information which comes from this source does not readily indicate that there is a need for a more appropriate intervention*
- *Citizens Panel review is available which measures how involved in influencing decisions the participants have felt.*
- *Feedback from Gender IAG so far has been positive.*

Does the LSP Board and Management Group have enough information in the Quarterly Performance Report to make knowledgeable strategic decisions?

- *To a certain extent.*
- *Annual Mori report is available.*
- *The Corporate Consultation Group is a multi-agency group which many of the partners are part of and share information on consultations. However this is not formally linked into The Sunderland Partnership. There are plans to strengthen this group.*

³² However, the sample was so small that drawing any conclusions from this would be problematic. The data is available for more detail if required.

This pilot project highlighted several areas of difficulty in targeting services to tackle gender-related disadvantage. Within the current performance management framework, existing data is not always adequate for gender analysis. Most of the five public sector partners responsible for leading on Sunderland's Local Area Agreement demonstrated reluctance to providing information on what data they are collecting and whether it is disaggregated by gender. There was also a lack of any priority given even to establishing a baseline position. What eventually emerged is that disaggregation of data pertaining to the LAA indicators is not common place and there is a strong implication that LSP partners, who are lead agents for clusters of LAA indicators may not be fulfilling the Gender Equality Duty in relation to providing gender disaggregated data against these indicators, namely:

- Gather and use information on how policies and practices affect gender equality in the delivery of services
- Consult stakeholders (including women's organisations) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives
- Assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality

The use of gender equality impact assessments of LAAs is not standard procedure for The Sunderland Partnership. Other than the knowledge being generated by the Gender IAG, there is an absence of any data and information on women and men's different needs and expectations in relation to the delivery of Sunderland's LAA and no indicators to reflect them.

6.4.1 Recommendations

The following two recommendations are from the two focus groups:

- b. Data analysis should be more robust and used to inform interventions.
- c. Data analysis has to be carried out for all equality strands.

6.4.2 Key recommendations

The research team recommend that to embed gender equality into Sunderland's LAA:

- The baseline position of gender disaggregated of data against all of the relevant indicators should be completed.
- The professional practice of gender analysis within the Gender IAG should be highly valued by the Sunderland Partnership. It should be given a more defined role within performance management cycles in interpreting and analysing gender disaggregated data to inform target setting, interventions and strategic decision making.

- Those responsible for performance managing The Sunderland Partnership should conduct internal assessment of lead partners responsible for delivering the Local Area Agreements to see whether obligations under the Gender Equality Duty have been met
- The Sunderland Partnership's Comprehensive Area Assessments(CAAs)³³ needs to be proactive in challenging lack of data-disaggregation by LAA lead agencies
- The Sunderland Partnership should monitor its compliance with the equality legislation which outlaws discrimination in provision of services.

³³ See appendix 5 for explanation of CAAs

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Annex 1: Prompts for semi-structured interviews

1. What is your role on the LSP and how did you come to be involved/ part of it?
2. Have you been involved in any training, learning or capacity building linked to your role on the LSP? If so how effective was it?
3. Are you aware of any initiatives designed specifically to support women's participation on the LSPs (either in Sunderland/ or wider)?
4. What is your understanding of the term 'gender'?
5. Do you think that your position [woman/man] have any impact on the way you participate in meetings and/ or influence decisions?
6. Have you any specific examples of how policy and strategy specifically around women's issues has been influenced?
7. Have you any specific examples how thematic issues such as health, housing, employment, environment, education etc. are influenced by women's experiences and perspectives?
8. If women's issues are raised are there any particular partners that tend to initiate discussion/ raise women's issues?
9. Do you think there is anything standing in the way of women's issues being raised?
10. Do you think there is anything standing in the way of women's issues being acted upon within policy, strategy, intervention?
11. Do you think there is anything that is standing in the way of women as a group participating in the LSP and being able to influence policy and practices?
12. In your view, are there any gender inequalities on the LSP? Please expand your answer.
13. What priority do women's issues/ gender equality issues take in your own workload relating to LSP?
14. Is there anything else that you want to say?

Annex 2: Plan for focus groups

1. Introduction

As a follow up from the research, *Where are the Women in LSPs?*³⁴, two pilot action research projects are being carried out with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in Sunderland and Thurrock. The intention of the pilot projects is to implement the recommendations of the *Where are the Women in LSPs?* research at a local level. The pilot projects will be used to demonstrate good practice in advancing the equality of women in LSPs and to make the case for investment to implement this process in LSPs nationally.

In each of the pilot areas (Thurrock and Sunderland), a team of relevant people have come together to devise, implement, monitor, evaluate and review an action plan based upon the two strands outlined above. A women's sector organisation has been commissioned in each of the areas to carry out research into women's participation in the LSP. The rationale for commissioning women's sector organisation to conduct this element of the action research is that this sector is significantly under-represented in relation to size in the sector and a key purpose of the action research is to address this.

2. Purpose of Focus Group Event

The purpose of the focus group is to share and seek validation for the key findings of the recent survey on women's participation in Local Strategic Partnerships and gender equality in relation to strategic planning, target setting, intervention and monitoring of Local Areas Agreements. Then to analyse the findings and to begin identify future actions to address them, whilst drawing out different perspectives on the findings and the issues they raise.

3. Objectives of the Focus Group Event

- a) Present the key findings of the research
- b) Seek validation for the findings
- c) Discuss the findings in small facilitated groups, to identify areas of agreement, disagreement and any gaps, then feedback and record the outcome of discussions
- d) Explore understanding of the causes/ reasons for some of the findings in small groups, then feedback and record the outcome of discussions
- e) Begin to identify what actions could be taken to address the findings

³⁴ <http://www.urbanforum.org.uk/pubs/index.html> published by Urban Forum, Oxfam UK and the Women's Resource Centre

4. Methodology for Focus Group Event

The focus group is designed as an iterative process to validate and explore the findings of the surveys and begin to identify recommendations for action. The facilitators of the session will pose questions to the participants in small group settings. In order to gain male and female perspectives on the findings men and women will work in separate groups for some of the discussions. The facilitator's role will be to draw out different perspectives upon the findings, their meanings and the solutions to the issues and problems they raise.

5. Anticipated outcomes of the Focus Group Event

- Validation of the survey findings with areas of agreement, disagreement and gaps identified
- Better understanding of gender equality issues and the barriers to women's participation
- A set of outline actions to address the barriers and issues raised in the research

6. Programme for Focus Group Event

9.45 am	Arrival and coffee
10 am	Welcome and Introduction (Sangini)
10.10am	Presentation of Key findings - Followed by questions for clarification
10.45am	Small group discussions 1 - Validating findings
	a) <i>Do you agree/ disagree with the findings?</i>
	b) <i>Are there any surprises?</i>
	c) <i>Is there anything missing?</i>
11.15 am	Feedback and discussion in large group
11.30 am	Refreshment break
11.40 am	Small group discussions 2 – Defining recommendations and actions in relation to key findings of the research
12.30 pm	Feedback and discussion in large group
12.50 pm	Plenary and outlining next steps
1 pm	Lunch
1.30 pm	Close

Annex 3: Baseline of Local Area Agreement Indicators in Sunderland

Ref.	NIS Ref.	Priority Improvement Indicator	Is gender aggregated data collected?	What are the existing data sources?
MAA	167	Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak	No	
11	139	People over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently	From March 09	Place survey
12	119	Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing	From March 09	Place survey
MAA	151	Overall Employment Rate	No	Annual population survey (Office of national statistics)
1	171	VAT registration rate	No	VAT Register
MAA	174	Skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers	No	National Employers skills survey
18	56	Obesity among primary school age children in year 6	No	TPCT
21	154	Net additional homes provided	No	
22	159	Supply of land ready to develop housing sites	No	
23	195	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting)	No	
24	192	Household waste Recycled and composted	No	
25	175	Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling	No	GIS Mapping and Regional Transport Plan
19	39	Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates	No	Analysed centrally by Department of Health and reported online

20	123	16+ current smoking rate prevalence	No	Smoking quitters - No reliable and regularly updated measure of smoking prevalence
7	106	Young people from low-income backgrounds progressing to higher education.	No – new performance indicator next year	City Council and Connexions
2	152	Working age people on out of work benefits	No – Not by Job centre Plus	NOMIS
3	153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods	No – Not by Job centre Plus	NOMIS
14	116	Proportion of children in poverty	No (only families)	DWP
4	163	Working age population qualified to at least level 2 or higher	Not sure –to check with LSC	National Labour Force Survey
MAA	165	Working age population qualified to at least level 4 or higher	Not sure –check with LSC	National Labour Force Survey
16	50	Emotional Health of children	Not sure (to confirm)	Ofsted annual TellUs survey
5	161	Learners achieving a level 1 qualification in literacy	Not sure needs confirming	Learning and skills Council
6	162	Learners achieving an entry level 3 qualification in numeracy	Not sure needs confirming	Learning and skills Council
8	117	16-18 year olds not in employment, education or training	Yes	Connexions
9	120	All-age mortality rates	Yes	TPCT
10	136	People supported to live independently through social services (all ages)	Yes	Social Services
13	130	Social care clients receiving Self Directed support	Yes	Social Services
15	112	Under 18 conception rate	Yes	TPCT
27	19	Rate of proven re-offending by young people	Yes	Police and Young Offenders Service
28	20	Assault with injury crime rate	Yes	Police
29	38	Drug related (Class A) offending rate	Yes	Police
30	17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour	Yes	Currently BUPI/ Place Survey March 2009

32	1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together	Yes	Currently MORI/ Place Survey March 2009
33	4	% of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality	Yes	Currently MORI/ Place Survey March 2009
31	32	Repeat incidents of Domestic violence	Yes (sample repeats only) Useful local information being set up but no baseline	Community Safety Team
26	30	Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders	Yes (should be but small)	Police
17	63	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement	Yes possibly but small numbers	Children's Services

Annex 4: Women's inequality in the North East

Education - The proportion of women of working age without a qualification in some parts of the region is higher than the National average and there is still a strong gender bias in many subject areas in FE. Construction, Planning and the Built Environment subjects and Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies are dominated by young men. Retail and Commercial Enterprise subjects and Languages, Literature and Culture subjects are dominated by young women. There is also a strong gender bias in Work Based Learning, with male learners dominating most subject areas. Young women dominate learning in Health, Public Services and Care subjects, and to a lesser extent in Retail and Commercial Enterprise subjects and Business, Administration and Law subjects.

Employment - 80.2% of men compared to 72.3% of women in the region are economically active. Unemployment rates are 7.9% for men and 5.3 for women. 21.6% of men and 73.8% of women are employed part-time. 4.4% of women are self-employed, the lowest regional level in the country, as compared to national average of 7.2%.

Gender segregation persists across and within industries despite anti-discrimination laws³⁵.

- Women are over-represented in certain service industries and under-represented in other industries
- Women account for 17.6% of management at higher and professional levels compared to 24.2% of men.
- Within the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) sector only 15% of employees are women.
- Women hold only 9% of Research & Development (R& D) jobs, and in industrial R& D only 1%. (2006)

Women's Pay - Full-time earnings have risen at a faster rate for women than men since 2000 though more women (31.6%) earn less than £250.00 weekly compared with 16.5% of men for full-time workers. Nationally the gap between men and women's salaries is 22% in some parts of the North East this gap is as wide as 35%.

Health – At a regional level life expectancy for women is 1 year below the national average; in some parts of the North East women's health is worse than the national average.

Caring - Although more and more women are undertaking paid work, women in the region still carry most of the burden of family care. This has huge consequences for women's labour market position, and is particularly important

³⁵ *Equality and Diversity in the North East - a statistical profile* (NEEDP and Northumbria University, August 2008)

for single parents and those with caring responsibilities³⁶. Women who are caring are more likely to work part time than men.

Women in political sphere - The profile of elected members in terms of sex and age is similar to the profile nationally. Around 70% of councillors are male and 30% female. However this is not the case for BME women in the North East, seven councillors were from ethnic minorities before May 2007 election and this rose to thirteen barely 1% of councillors in total and they were all male. There is now one female BME councillor in the region.

Domestic Violence - Northumbria Police record 25,000 domestic incidents per year and in some parts of the region there are more incidents of domestic violence than burglary and robbery added together.

³⁶ Ibid

Annex 5: Comprehensive Area Assessments

From April 2009, Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will replace Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). This marks a significant change to the current assessment regime following the passing of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007). CPA focused on services provided by local authorities. CAA will look at the public services in an area delivered by councils and their partners including the private and voluntary sectors.

CAA is intended to provide assurance about how well-run local public services are and how effectively they use taxpayers' money. But it also aims to be more relevant to local people by focusing on issues that are important to their community. It will develop a shared view about the challenges facing an area, such as crime, community cohesion, a sustainable environment or public health issues such as obesity, and is intended to create a more joined up and proportionate approach to public service regulation.

CAA is being developed by seven partner inspectorates. They will work together to deliver joint judgements when CAA is introduced from April 2009. The partner inspectorates are:

- Audit Commission
- Commission for Social Care Inspection
- Health Care Commission
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
- HM Inspector of Prisons
- HM Inspector of Probation
- OFSTED