

MINUTES OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

29th May 2009

9.30 am, Hereford Room, Plough Lane, Hereford

List of Attendees:

Cllr. Roger Phillips – Leader, Herefordshire Council (Chair)
Chris Bull – Herefordshire Council & NHS Herefordshire
Joanna Newton – NHS Herefordshire
Kevin Purcell – West Mercia Police (also representing Safer Communities Partnership)
Richard Betterton – Voluntary Sector
Cllr Peter Jones – Hfds. & Worcs. Fire & Rescue Authority
Richard Gething – HALC
Sharon Menghini – Children's Trust
Angela Smith – Economic Development Partnership
Bill Bloxsome – Environment Partnership
Dr Akeem Ali – Health and Wellbeing Partnership

Helen Braithwaite – Government Office West Midlands
Philip Weaver – Job Centre Plus

In attendance:

Chris Bucknell – Herefordshire Partnership Support Team
Jane L Jones – Herefordshire Partnership Support Team
Natalia Silver - (for agenda item 4)
Hasnah Sheriff – (for agenda item 7)
Max Bassett – Herefordshire Council (for agenda item 8)
Clem Attwood – Herefordshire Council (for agenda item 8)

Apologies:

Mike Ashton (Gary Woodman representing)
Will Lindesay (Richard Betterton representing)
Mark Turner (Kevin Purcell representing)
Ian Edwards – Advantage West Midlands

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

Cllr Phillips welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that everyone should briefly introduce themselves.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

These were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising not on the agenda

None were raised.

Before the main part of the meeting Supt Kevin Purcell gave some background information regarding a recent serious incident. He explained how the police had, and still are, working with partner organisations through a difficult time in Hereford, and as a result of effective

partnership working, a potential flashpoint had been diffused. Valuable lessons had been learnt in communicating with some “hard to reach” groups.

4. Economic Downturn Action Plan

Natalia briefly went through the two papers circulated (Impact of economic downturn on Herefordshire – Update Report – May 2009, and Fighting the Down Turn (May)) It was reported that local unemployment was still rising, although slightly more slowly than previously. However it was known that a number of redundancies would occur soon. Small businesses continue to seek support.

Phil Weaver reported a fluctuating situation locally, with notably the number of female claimants increasing. A number of government assisted schemes had been implemented since the last HP Board meeting to encourage take up of available jobs and training. This includes including financial incentives and promoting voluntary work. Further information can be viewed at:

<http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Employers/redundancies/index.html>

Concerns were raised over the potential for large numbers of young people with nothing to do during the summer months, and the capacity for local colleges to accommodate larger numbers of entrants than usual if little work is available later in the year. The importance of ensuring the continued involvement of Connexions (particularly regarding NEETS) was reiterated.

A number of points were raised:

Local businesses are being encouraged to use the Local Business Directory

An e-newsletter for local businesses has been produced with up-to-date information

A number of “tired” looking shop fronts in Hereford and the market Towns are being made more attractive

The 20 day payment procedure has been adopted and HPS is working towards a 10 day payment target.

Local procurement continues to feature as a priority for local public services

Recommendation:

- 1. To promote assistance with Small Business Rate Relief**
- 2. To promote uptake of Rural rate Relief**
- 3. To promote local procurement**
- 4. To ensure 20 day payment of non-disputed invoices and promote even further reduction in payment turn around, i.e.10 days**
- 5. To ensure health and homelessness perspectives throughout the economic downturn debate**

5. Area Based Grant (ABG) and LPSA2 Reward Grant

Chris Bucknell explained the background for this paper, reiterated that ABG does not represent new money and that it was within the remit of the Board to agree initial allocations to the Management Group, with the Policy and Delivery Groups empowered to commission appropriate activity.

Because of the timescale and the necessity to get initial allocations agreed with the Policy and Delivery Groups the allocation process for 09/10 had been taken forward with the Management Group. Chris stressed the need for 2010/11 discussions and decisions to

start early so that the Board can have the appropriate level of input. It is proposed that the initial discussions around 2010/11 allocation begin at the September Board meeting.

As agreed by the Management Group, 95% of ABG will be allocated on a historic basis to maintain services during 2009/10 with the remaining 5% to be contested. Policy and Delivery Groups have been asked to submit proposals for this 5%, to be submitted by 1/6/09. These proposals will be examined by a small sub group which will include representatives from the Resources Directorate and the External Funding Team (to ensure they can't be funded through alternative sources), and then passed back to Management Group for a final decision.

In relation to paragraph 7. of the ABG and LPSA2 Reward Grant Paper, a substantial amount of discussion ensued during which it was agreed that there was a need for greater transparency and this needed to be borne in mind during the future allocation process. It was pointed out that there may be an impact on groups' motivation to bid or attain higher targets if they perceive decisions are taken without going through structured and agreed processes. It was also noted that as the LPSA2 Reward Grant remaining was all capital this would disadvantage groups wishing to fund additional revenue based activity.

It was felt inappropriate to backtrack, but lessons had been learned on the importance of timing the process in preparation for next year. Although there was limited information contained in this paper, the Board were reassured that Management Group members had received all the appropriate detail on which to make decisions and the importance of cross-communication was noted.

The issue of sustainability was also noted, and the need to consider in relation to "one off" or longer term payments. There was also expected to be a substantial change in the availability of future public expenditure, and local expectation would need to be managed.

Recommendation

- 1. It was agreed that the Capital / Revenue split within the LPSA2 Reward Grant would be considered with a view to making more revenue funding available.**
- 2. It was agreed that when allocating the remaining LPSA2 Reward Grant consideration would be given to organisations that had not already drawn down funding.**
- 3. It was agreed that planning for next year's allocation should begin at the September Board meeting.**

6. Refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Herefordshire

Jane Jones and Richard Gething explained the refresh process to date, including the evidence base used to identify the key local priority issues. The outcomes from the Policy and Delivery Group workshop were shared and it was noted that these were with the six groups to discuss/amend/agree as appropriate. Groups have until 5th June to return comments to the Partnership Team. These would be circulated to Board members as soon as possible on or after 8th June.

It was noted that work was still be undertaken on the wording of the Guiding Principles. The timetable for the completion of the document was discussed. It was agreed that the contents of the final document should place emphasis on Herefordshire and signal the direction of travel.

Recommendation

- 1. It was agreed that the latest priorities would be circulated to Board members by e-mail during the second week of June.**
- 2. The timetable for the refresh process was noted.**

7. Third Sector Representation

Hasnah Sheriff presented the findings of her work reviewing Third Sector Engagement. She explained her brief, and offered some definitions of Thirds Sector and engagement, current local structures and emerging messages.

Chris Bucknell stressed the need for this work to be embedded and the necessity for the outcome of the review to be supported with sustainable funding. Initial discussions were taking place with Oliver Goode of RIEP with a view to finding some support for a second stage of the work.

Cllr Phillips thanked Hasnah for her presentation, and noted the value of the voluntary sector in service delivery.

Recommendation

- 1. It was agreed that Herefordshire Partnership should support the development of a comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy which would include how the Partnership wished to engage with the Third Sector.**
- 2. It was agreed that, to ensure successful delivery of engagement, strategic co-ordination would be required.**
- 3. It was agreed that consideration would be given to making the recommendations of the review sustainable for the benefit of both the Partnership and the Third Sector.**
- 4. Consideration should be given as to how these recommendations might be supported by the Learning to Deliver Programme.**

8 State of Herefordshire Report

Max Bassett and Clem Attwood gave a brief presentation on the recently released State of Herefordshire Report, explaining the new format (by Theme Groups and Key Findings) as opposed to one large document. The Report presents a digest of all statistical information for Herefordshire reported in one place.

Evidence from this has been used to develop the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy and offers key data for the Comprehensive Area Assessment process.

Cllr Phillips congratulated the Research Team on the publication of an extremely useful source of information and urged everyone to take copies which were available.

9 PACT meetings

Chris Bucknell explained the background of the PACT meetings which were an important part of the community engagement agenda. Positive changes had been made to the recent round of PACTs which had included a presentation on the new recycling strategy and the attendance of a member of JMT and AMEY at each meeting.

This item generated a considerable amount of discussion, at the end of which the Recommendations were agreed as follows:

Recommendation:

The Location and Frequency of PACT meetings remain at the current four times per year, to comply with West Mercia Police requirements.

Charing, Governance and the role of Elected Members – the importance of the role of elected members and the need for them to take an enhanced community leadership role at PACT meetings was well recognised. Chairing of meetings should be what is best suited to each individual PACT meeting. This may result in the PACT Chair being an elected member, a member of the local community, or someone from an independent organisation such as the voluntary sector. The decision should be based in what works best in each area and the skills and competence of those involved.

Meeting Content – this should ensure that there is a balance of countywide information relevant to everyone, e.g. recycling, and issues which are specific to the local community e.g. a community facility.

Quality Assurance and Feedback – it was agreed that more robust evaluation is required, and that this needs to be acted upon. The value of PACTs as a positive opportunity for community engagement should not be underestimated. In addition it was requested that:

More widespread and advance publicity should be available

Parish notice boards to be used

Additional work on agenda planning be introduced

PACT question boxes be available in public places for use between meetings

It was agreed that a planning meeting would be held for each PACT location in order to arrange the September/October round of PACT. These meetings would include elected representatives, members of West Mercia Police and other stakeholders as appropriate. They would agree the Chairing arrangements and format for each individual meeting which should reflect the needs of the local community. Chris Bucknell was tasked with taking this forward.

10. Any other Business

There was none

11. Date of next meeting

Monday 28th September 2009, at 2.00 pm in the Hereford Room, Plough Lane