

Herefordshire Partnership Management Group Meeting

6th May 2009
9:30am, Brockington, Hereford

Present

Councillor Roger Phillips – Leader of Herefordshire Council (Chair)
Chris Bull – Herefordshire Council/Herefordshire PCT
Paul Baker – Safer Communities
Richard Lawrence - Fire and Rescue Service (for Lucy Phillips)
Mark Turner – West Mercia Constabulary
Richard Quallington – Voluntary Sector Assembly
Natalia Silver – Economic Development and Enterprise

In attendance

Chris Bucknell – Herefordshire Partnership Support Team
Philippa Lydford – Herefordshire Partnership Support Team
Kevin Lloyd – Herefordshire Council Policy and Performance

Apologies

Lucy Phillips - Fire and Rescue Service (Richard Lawrence attended in her place)
Lynda Wilcox – Herefordshire Association Local Councils
Sharon Gray – Learning and Skills Council
Chris Baird – Children and Young People
Ian Williams – Healthier Communities and Older People
Ian Edwards – Advantage West Midlands
Tony Southall – Government Office for the West Midlands

Item 1 - Introduction and Welcome – Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Richard Lawrence, attending on behalf of Lucy Phillips, Fire and Rescue Service. The apologies and corresponding substitutions were noted.

Item 2 - Minutes of Last Meeting (23rd March 2009)

- Members to agree the amendments to wording (Item 4 Area Based Grant)
- Members to agree the final wording for the decision regarding LPSA2 Reward Grant (Agenda item 4)

Chris Bucknell went through the suggested changes of wording as a matter of accuracy, the following wording was agreed:

Item 4 – Area Based Grant

Mark Turner said that the principles needed are firstly that no Partnership should lose more than 5%, but not assume it will be a 5% variation. He said that the group should set out a series of commissioning priorities, going back to the Community Strategy and priorities in response to the economic downturn and invite groups to bid, redirecting funding to support the identified priorities.

Mark Turner proposed a 3% or 5% funding “top slice” (unpopular as it might be) placing the emphasis on a robust commissioning process rather than relying on everyone interpreting and responding to direction to release funding in a consistent and equally altruistic way. Mark explained that his proposal was aimed in a positive way to guarantee 95%.

Item 4 – LPSA Reward Grant

Following discussion, it was agreed that while individual organisations may have made assumptions about allocation of the funding, this would need to be discussed and agreed as part of the overall commissioning process. It was agreed by the group that the whole £2.6 million (LPSA2 Reward Grant and any underspend) had not yet been allocated, and cannot be without a due partnership process which was yet to be agreed.

It was agreed the Minutes be amended.

Item 3 - Matters arising not on the agenda

- Agenda Item 2 - Policy and Delivery Group contacts to pass on the CAA self evaluation to their groups and feed back comments before the end of March. If there are no additions groups to confirm that.
- Agenda Item 3 - Check list of missing Delivery Plans and notify relevant Chairs of Groups and Directors. All plans to be completed by the next meeting – (note) this will be covered under the item on Performance Management
- Agenda Item 4 – LPSA funding passed to Third Sector organisations - circulated
- Agenda Item 6 - List of Strategies used in the refresh to be circulated to the group, who should then reply with Strategies from their areas that should be included in the process.
- Agenda Item 6 - Guiding Principles to be circulated to the group – circulated

Item 2, only one response had been received. It was agreed to send the CAA self evaluation to Chairs of the Policy and Delivery groups.

Action – CAA self assessment to be e-mailed to the Chairs, for checking and signing off

Item 3, the delivery plans, will be covered later on the agenda.

Item 4, LPSA2 funding, Richard Qualington mentioned Sharon Gray's suggestion that this money could in part fund the Partnership Support team. Chris Bull said that the perception that the Local Authority claim money back might be a way forward. Mark said that Herefordshire Partnership should have the money and sustainability from ABG, for independence. The Chair said that it is important with tightness of expenditure to find a way forward.

Natalia mentioned that two new leaflets on Fighting the Downturn were being published and help explain to businesses and individuals how public services and partners are working together. The Chair asked which partners were involved and had it been circulated. Natalia explained that it was branded the Herefordshire Public Services (Herefordshire Council and the Primary Care Trust). Chris Bull agreed that it would be good to send them around to partners to give them the opportunity to make additions. The Chair felt that the Local Strategic Partnership should impact on this.

Action: the draft leaflet to be sent around to members of the group for input and comment.

Item 4 – Performance Management

- To give members an overview of the new Performance Plus management system
- To outline the process for performance management using the system
- To review the delivery planning process and identify any areas without delivery plans
- To gain members views as to the reporting processes and how these can be used to inform the Management Group

The end of year performance against the LAA indicators had been circulated to the group. Data was shown for the LAA as a whole and broken down by Policy and Delivery groups.

A number of indicators had been rated as amber; this was mainly because they had been deferred in year 1 awaiting baseline data from the Place Survey. A significant number of the indicators have missed their first year targets and there was a need to decide how these would be addressed

The new structure had been put in place in order to make clear links between the strategy, performance and delivery and to do this the right people needed to be around the table. Concern was raised that two

of the Policy and Delivery groups (Environment and Health and Wellbeing) were not represented,

Health and Wellbeing was a particular issue as six out of the seven indicators were rated red. Chris Bull said that the extent that people feel accountable to the partnership is a concern and this needed to be addressed. He said he was confident there was a lot of work going on but if this is going on in a silo the rating could misrepresent what was actually happening.

Chris Bull felt that with a joint Management Team responsibility for indicators would be better spread across all JMT rather than just resting with HD Directors. Looking to CAA, it would be helpful to note which partners have an impact on indicators.

Action : a new column should be included on the performance report identifying leads and contributors.

Policy and Delivery groups need to identify how they can influence performance by working with other groups.

Some of the delivery plans are not in place and some are not robust. There had been no delivery plans received from the Health and Wellbeing Group and some Safer Communities plans were outstanding although Mark confirmed that work was underway to address this. Mark suggested that Action Plans be required by the end of June and proposed that money be allocated against them, with the possibility of another funding round in August, for those unable to achieve the deadline.

Mark said that we need to know the reasons behind performance ratings to take action i.e. is it the measure, is the timeframe for changes unrealistic etc.

Mark suggested the group look at four R's

- Is it realistic to achieve?
- With delivery plans – what is the rationale for bidding funding (who, what achieve)?
- Relative value for money through the commissioning process.
- Receive reports and group looks at value

The Chair said that we need to put pressure on leads and Chairs of Partnership groups, giving clear timescales and stressing the need for a clear understanding and accountability for the impact performance has on local services.

Chris Bull said that we need to get people to feel as accountable to the Partnership as they do to their own organisation. It is very important that Chairs or other Partnership group representatives come to this meeting, otherwise the accountability doesn't work. What was being highlighted was lack of engagement, not necessarily evidence of poor performance.

Chris Bull said that we should have the right people around the table. Representatives needed to understand and be able to debate performance. Mark confirmed that we needed positive engagement as key decisions are made by the Management Group. It needed to be recognized that everyone is part of the Partnership.

The Chair said that he expected to see all delivery plans by the 22nd June (next meeting Management Group) and then to be able to engage with representatives from all areas, and drill down on the issues.

Action: Chris Bull to liaise with Chris Bucknell and write to Chairs and representatives expressing concern around engagement and being effective.

Action: Chris Bucknell to meet with the Leader the week before the Board meeting to discuss progress with representation.

Kevin Lloyd presented the new Performance Plus system. The initial exercise is to get the LAA into the system, by theme/Policy and Delivery group plus the mandatory Children and Young People's performance indicators. Performance Plus makes four judgments based on an agreed tolerance level. The system looks at performance and actions linked to delivery plans. Actions that impact on more than one indicator can be identified when the system is set up. The new performance system will be easier to monitor and can produce a performance report summary alongside detailed reports

Kevin said that if delivery plans are available by 22nd June, the first quarter report could be produced by the end of July. Chris Bull said that he had no problem with the performance system but ultimately he is interested in outcomes and action plans may need to be changed if they are not delivering the desired outcome. Kevin said the system is currently linked to performance indicators but not outcomes.

Mark said that to avoid duplication, would partners have access to this system? Kevin said that this would be possible in the future with partners having web based access.

Item 5 – Finance

- To gain members approval to the ABG Commissioning and Procurement process and associated timescale
- To update members on the latest position regarding resources available to the Partnership

Commissioning of Partnership Resources

Philippa Lydford presented the report on the Commissioning and Procurement process, with particular reference to the position regarding Area Based Grant (ABG).

Allocations for 2009/10

There was an expectation that the Partnership would manage and monitor ABG (reporting back to CLG) but it was also important that the Policy and Delivery Groups had ownership of the process and were given the flexibility to commission activity without feeling that there was a disproportionate level of central control and bureaucracy.

It was agreed that a simple offer letter, similar to the one used in 2008/09, should be issued for the 95% guarantee. This would be used to monitor the spend of the grant at a high level while still allowing PADs the flexibility to commission activity to meet their objectives.

LPSA2 funding

The group discussed whether some of the LPSA2 reward grant should be added to the ABG pot for allocation in 2009/10. It was noted that there would be an ABG allocation every year but that the LPSA Reward funding was one off funding and if it were all allocated in year 1 this would reduce the potential to boost activity later in the LAA period. There was the potential for LAA Reward Grant but this was not as much as the LPSA reward grant.

Chris Bull felt that there should be a relationship between performance and allocation and that partnerships should see some reward accruing from their achievements.

Mark Turner felt there should be a strong link between allocation and performance but funding may also be given to areas which were not performing well but may have the potential to.

There needed to be clarity on the amount available for allocation, whether this was rewarding performance and/or incentivising performance and how this could be achieved with maximum flexibility and minimum bureaucracy.

Mark Turner added that consideration needed to be given to sustainability, particularly that of areas such as the Third Sector and the Partnership Support Team.

There was a need for clarity around what was believed to be available.

Action: The Resources Directorate would prepare a paper which would go to the Board for discussion on the 29th May. This should detail what was available for reallocation, what was not and the rationale behind this.

Partnership Commissioning Framework

It was agreed that a short application form should be issued to the Policy and Delivery Groups by Monday 11th May. These would then be considered at the Management group Meeting in June and decisions made as to the allocation of funding.

The applications should take account of

- Delivery Plans
- The Commissioning criteria

- The impact the activity will have on achievement of the targets
- Consequence of not undertaking certain areas of delivery (risk)

There should be an opportunity for groups to bid for capital if there is a strong case for doing so. Applications should be returned by the 1st June in order that queries could be clarified and papers issued to the Management Group in advance of the meeting.

ABG 2008/09

The Children's Trust had under spent their budget by 3%. It was agreed that this should be rolled forward. The principle should be that if a group were given funding to commission certain types of activity and there was still an expectation that this activity was needed (although the timescale may have slipped) the funding should stay available.

There was a need to develop some guidelines around carryover.

Action: A short paper to be prepared for the June meeting.

Item 6 – Any other business

- Community led Planning

Chris Bucknell opened this item by saying that Community Led Planning had previously had funding through DEFRA, which has now ceased. There had been a review of Community Led Planning which had reported to the Chief Executive's Group and this paper was an update on progress so far.

Richard said that it needs to come through the ABG application process, via the Stronger Communities group. The Chair said that it needs to sit alongside negotiations on 106 agreements for communities, with Parish Councils. It needs to be linked to this process to avoid duplication. Richard explained that the bid was for support of the process/mechanisms rather than for projects coming out of Parish Plans.

Action: a bid for ABG to be submitted through the Stronger Communities Group.

Item 7 – Date of next meeting

22nd June at 2pm, Hereford Room, Plough Lane, Hereford