

Management Group Meeting

Monday 22nd June 2009
2.00 pm, Plough Lane, Hereford

Minutes

Present

Councillor Roger Phillips – Leader of Herefordshire Council (Chair)
Chris Bull – Herefordshire Council/NHS Herefordshire
Chris Baird – Children and Young People
Paul Baker – Safer Communities
Geoff Hughes – Stronger Communities
Bill Bloxsome – Environment Partnership
Natalia Silver – Economic Development and Enterprise
Ian Williams – Health and Well-being Partnership
Sue Thomas – West Mercia Constabulary (for Mark Turner)
Richard Lawrence – Fire and Rescue Service (for Lucy Phillips)
Lynda Wilcox – Herefordshire Association Local Councils
Richard Quallington – Voluntary Sector

In attendance

Chris Bucknell – Herefordshire Partnership Support Team
Philippa Lydford – Herefordshire Partnership Support Team
Greg Evans – Resources, Herefordshire Council
Maxine Bassett – Herefordshire Council Research Team (for agenda item 3)
Clem Attwood – Herefordshire Council Research Team (for agenda item 3)

Apologies

Lucy Phillips - Fire and Rescue Service (Paul Amos attended in her place)
Mark Turner – West Mercia Constabulary (Sue Thomas attended in his place)
Sharon Gray and Sarah Tulk (alternative) – Learning and Skills Council

1. Introduction and Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Minutes of last meeting (6th May)

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3. State of Herefordshire Report

Maxine Bassett and Clem Attwood presented the State of Herefordshire Report (SOHR) to the group. The SOHR is annually updated and feeds into the Community Strategy refresh and key findings of the Comprehensive Area Assessment. The SOHR was previously produced as one document and is now split into chapters. Also new this year is a key findings document which links to the full chapters. The SOHR is available on the Herefordshire Partnership website, where electronic updates are added. There is soon to be a facts and figures page which will give access to key statistics about the county. Copies of all this years chapters and the key findings

were made available to the group. The Chair welcomed the changed timetable for next year, linking in with the most up to date information available. There were no questions from the group.

4. Declarations of interest

It was agreed that everyone had an interest, unless they said otherwise.

5. Allocation of Area Based Grant

The Chair checked that everyone had received the papers for this item, including the background report, financial summary, LAA targets matrix and six Policy and Delivery group applications.

The Chair noted that having seen the size of the bids it would probably not be possible to allocate funding at the meeting but the group needed to agree a clear rationale and to discuss and challenge the applications. There was a particular need for groups to work together and to add value through cross partnership working.

Chris Bucknell explained that £474,000 was gained through the 5% flexible pot. There is also £1.3 million capital funding available through LPSA reward and approximately £200,000 revenue of LPSA underspend, this was one off funding and would not be repeated in 2010/2011. LPSA money is not recurrent, which needs to be born in mind, as next year was the final year of the current LAA and reward grant relies on a good achievement averaged across all performance indicators.

The Chair suggested that the underspend be carried over to next year as there may be a need to boost performance on some LAA indicators in the final year.

The Chair suggested the group agree in principle not to allocate all the funding but to keep some back for next year. The group agreed but noted that this may need to be reviewed over the year depending on performance.

Four Officers without a vested interest in the bids had met to look at the applications and observations on the various submissions were contained in the report circulated to the group.

The Chair suggested each group describe in summary, for five minutes, their bid, leaving a chance for questions.

Children's Trust

Chris Baird explained that the bid was targeted at the LAA and areas of weakness and the downturn of the economy and was ranked in order of priority.

Chris Bull asked what are the consequences of not getting the funding, i.e. redundancies or service cuts? Chris Baird said that no salary was directly linked, but the activities need to be done, so a knock on effect was possible.

Chris Bull asked why homelessness could not be funded under Supporting People grant (currently ringfenced). Chris Baird said that it didn't fit the criteria.

The Chair noted that NEETs was in other bids, so could join this up and make links to worklessness, what are the numbers this is dealing with? Paul Baker said that the young people supported through the Youth Offending Service are only a small sub set of the total NEET group. Chris Baird said that they expected the NEET figures to rise dramatically in September 2009.

Natalia Silver asked what money went towards education and training. Chris Baird said this is funded mainly through existing bodies. The ABG was to enhance and put on activity which was additional to existing contracts.

There was a query as to why the housing element of the application could not be funded through Supporting People. Paul Baker confirmed that supporting people will not fund young people. Chris Bull said this needed to be looked into.

Safer Communities

Paul Baker explained the bid to include that it was to directly support activities and how they support/affect other funded services/departments and the LAA targets. This is a prioritised list.

The Chair asked regarding impact on existing employment. Paul Baker said there was none as this application was deliberately targeted on delivering new work

Chris Bucknell asked why the signposting scheme, originally an LPSA activity and then mainstreamed, is no longer supported by the PCT? Ian Williams said that the signposting co-ordinators are still in place. Chris Bull said that this needs to be checked.

Chris Bucknell asked why the vehicle bid for Signposting wasn't capital. This needed to be checked.

Lynda Wilcox asked if the SIDs were being purchased (not in the bid as capital) as Parish Councils had been asked not to purchase any.

Stronger Communities

Geoff Hughes explained that Stronger Communities was responsible for a diverse range of nine performance indicators; the bid was prioritised around money cut on rural bus subsidies, which would see a reduction in bus services, access to services, volunteering, community planning and culture. A sub group had prioritised the bid, with the bus subsidy coming out top, then community planning.

Chris Bull asked why the 5% lost would lead to a reduction in bus services, is this the only source of funding the subsidy? Geoff Hughes said that it was mostly. Chris Bull said if Herefordshire Partnership says no to returning the 5%, could the bus services be protected? Geoff Hughes said they could look at cuts in community transport, with the consequence in a reduction of service there.

Geoff Hughes said that the Local Authority had looked to reduce the budget but didn't because services would be affected, so £85,000 went back into subsidising bus services in rural areas. There is no excess in the Council budget. Bus companies have retendered, but with fuel prices changes, costs are likely to increase.

Chris Baird said that the Children's Trust had tried to think what to do with 95% to avoid redundancies, what weight to give it if not this pot and cut services. The Chair said that the Partnerships are in different places. With likely budget cuts in the public sector, there will need to be a new culture.

The Chair said that recent surveys showed that public transport was a high priority for local people.

Richard Quallington said that it was good to see cross overs and compatibility with other bids.

Health and Well-being

Ian Williams explained that there were a range of budgets in the ABG with very specific responsibilities that could not be ignored and the bid was needed to support them.

The Chair asked if this money was to reinstate the money lost. Ian Williams said that the budgets were largely committed.

Chris Bucknell voiced concern that the application did not reflect the wider Health and Wellbeing agenda and was merely focused on adult social care. Ian Williams said that the bid had been agreed with the Chair of the Health and Well Being Partnership.

Environment

Bill Bloxsome explained that the Environment Group does not currently have money through ABG. The group has responsibility for three LAA performance indicators; the bid covers two, bio-diversity and CO2, but not waste as this was funded through the core budget.

Chris Bull asked if you work with schools on CO2 awareness could they not fund it themselves. Bill Bloxsome said that there was a democs pack that could be used to promote initiatives in their buildings. Chris Baird said that you could build this into feasibility studies for schools.

Chris Baird asked whether there were any toolkits available nationally.

The Chair asked regarding Welcome to our Future money.

Economic Development and Enterprise

Natalia Silver explained that the group does not currently have money through ABG. This bid is linked to the Economic downturn action plan.

Ian Williams said that the bids show part of the picture and that different grants link so for some existing spend is cut and there is a money shortfall, so we need to be clear about the rationale and look at it in totality.

Natalia Silver said that money Advantage West Midlands receives from central government had been cut and they had chosen the most effective use of resources. This had meant that some schemes, such as Wheels to Work, had lost funding.

Chris Baird suggested that the £35,000 for redundant building grants was not a lot.

The Next Steps

The Chair said that there needed to be more work done around areas of duplication where there was scope for groups to work together. However, it was noted there was a clear need to allocate funding to the groups so that activity can begin.

Geoff Hughes suggested allocating (say) £50,000 to each group and ask them to allocate, avoiding duplication, based on ability to spend in time and impact and hold back the remainder of the funds.

Chris Bull said that there is some capital requested and we can hold back the £200,000 LPSA underspend. This proposal doesn't deal with consequential issues, so we need to be clear about movement of money i.e. from social care to environment.

Chris Baird said that the group should take account of performance and be able to shift money into new areas of business.

Chris Baird said that with regard to NEETs, the groups needed to work up a combined submission. Chris Bull said we need to avoid duplication, look at alternative sources of funding, capital and revenue. Also the group needed to consider the impact of cutting existing services in favour of funding new activity.

The Chair said that there had to be a level of equality across partnerships.

Chris Bucknell checked whether the group was bidding into the 5% or pitching for the LPSA reward grant, there was a need to be clear about this.

Action: It was agreed that an e-mail outlining the various issues that needed more work or clarification discussed would be circulated within 24 hours and that a meeting of the Chairs or their nominated representative would be called within the next week to decide final allocations.

6. Any other business

It was agreed to call an extraordinary meeting during July to have the CAA briefing with Mary-Ann Bruce.

Richard Quallington asked about the Review of the Third Sector and how this was going to be taken forward. Chris Bucknell said that the final report would be circulated for approval and that it has been agreed to fund continuity for the existing structures until the new framework was in place.

7. Date of next meeting-

9th September, at 9:30am Brockington, Hafod Road, Hereford