

Bromsgrove Partnership Board

7TH AUGUST 2008

MINUTES

Present:

Sue	Baxter	Parish Councils Representative
Hugh	Bennett	Bromsgrove District Council
Louise	Berry	Bromsgrove District Council
Mike	Brown	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
Kevin	Dicks	Bromsgrove District Council
Mike	Dunphy	Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Mrs June	Griffiths	Bromsgrove District Council
Rachel	Jones	Worcs. Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
Mike	McCarthy	NEW College
Cllr Ed	Moore	Worcestershire County Council
Elaine	Mortimore	Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum
Ann	Sowton	Bromsgrove & Redditch Network
Phil	Street	Bromsgrove District Council
Mark	Weaver	Independent (Chair)
Glyn	West	Worcestershire Partnership
Item 1	<u>APOLOGIES</u>	
Liz	Altay	Worcestershire PCT
Maggie	Bryan	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Roger	Hollingworth	Bromsgrove District Council
Tony	Love	West Mercia Police

ACTION

Item 2 **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**
MW welcomed all and introductions were made.

Item 3 **MINUTES OF MEETING 5TH JUNE 2008 & MATTERS ARISING**
The minutes were approved as a true record.

Matters Arising
Climate Change:

- Climate change will be one of BDC's new priorities and the Council will be looking to put some funding into this area. MB to discuss with HB/PS re possibility of BDHT allocating funds.
- Climate Change Co-ordinator – KD had emailed Glyn West about the possibility of funding a post(s). GW indicated that this would be picked up via the Management Group.

Mike Brown

Labour Market Survey - As stated at the meeting, there are

issues for those who live and work in the district. A meeting had been held with Marie Green from BDHT re worklessness/ economic regeneration and Super Output Area information was being sought. A further meeting had been arranged for early September in order to move this forward.

Community Improvement Plan: Better Environment – 2.6.4d
Habitat Inventory: LB to check timescales of BDC's spatial project.

Louise Berry

Item 4

PRESENTATION: COMPACT STEERING GROUP

PS presented on the work of the group. The district was amongst the first to develop its own Compact on the back of the county Compact. The Steering Group meets regularly and is working on the following areas:

- Networking & Engagement – vital due to the strong community engagement history of the VCS.
- Signposting – via the Customer Service Centre. There is also a designated area within the CSC for VCS organisations to have allocated time slots.
- Training – Event planned for BDC Heads of Service and VCS organisations in October to exchange information.
- Volunteering – BDC staff had attended placements within VCS organisations during National Volunteers' Week in June, with excellent feedback being received from those staff and also from the organisations that they went into.

Resources are a big issue but some real progress has been made.

AS informed the meeting that a successful bid for £5,500 had been made and she will be working with BDHT to provide taster training days linked to worklessness.

HB stated that BDC has no formal grants policy, and this will be in his business plan for 2009/10. The WCC approach will be taken into account when developing a policy.

Item 5

WORCESTERSHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The draft Strategy was presented to the Board in January 2008 and a detailed response was prepared by BDC. The final Strategy, which is in effect the business plan for the Worcestershire Partnership, was approved by WCC Cabinet on 17th July 2008. HB will write to the Worcestershire Partnership to reiterate that more could have been mentioned about Bromsgrove, particularly around the town centre, but that BDC appreciates the support coming from the county.

Hugh Bennett

The new LAA has also been approved by government.

A discussion was held and the following comments made:

- Crime is more about perception in the new LAA. More powers will be given to CSOs, who will be able to issue fixed penalty notices.
- Environment – the targets will be difficult to attain re CO₂ emissions and it is proposed that a climate change officer be employed in order to ‘own’ the process. This is being discussed at county level, but budget is an issue.
- Economic development – worklessness - BDC/LSP is starting to focus on this area. A review of the situation in North Worcestershire may need to be commissioned.
- Health – Bromsgrove is a fairly healthy district, but there are issues around obesity and teenage pregnancy.
- Children and young people – working on engagement. Many of the targets are statutory targets.
- Stronger communities – Affordable housing is still high on the agenda.

MB discussed the need to encourage partners to understand the bigger picture and suggested looking at a case study to map the obstacles in attaining targets in order to understand why things take so long to achieve. HB to discuss with Brian Nicholls.

Hugh Bennett

KD suggested that the annual report could have a lessons learned section.

GW informed the meeting that the Worcestershire Partnership has indicated that many problems relate to middle managers, and that work needs to be done with that group to work on inflexibility.

Item 6

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS IN TWO-TIER AREAS

GW discussed work done by IDeA and noted that the evaluation of LAA 1 had found that unitary authorities tended to deliver better, but the overall conclusion was that no one size fits all and LAAs in 2 tier areas are actually more realistic and better achieved. However, it was agreed that there is a lot of confusion and the parish councils should not be ignored.

Districts are better at planning and dealing with environmental issues because they are closer to their communities. Members also appear to be better engaged, but the evaluation did not take into consideration ‘twin hatted’ members.

It was felt that the story of place in the new SCS is robust and reflects local issues. The Management Group wants to think about critical success factors and the lessons learned, particularly around performance management, reducing duplication of effort and a better shared commitment.

The following points were discussed:

- Districts all want their share and there is a perception that WCC controls district spend. GW noted that the Management Group needs to look at its governance to ensure that it is fit for purpose, as more funds will be streamed through the LAA in future.
- WCC is part of a national evaluation and is the only 2-tier authority in the process. The authority is seen as being ahead of the game.
- RIEP capacity building money (Learning to Deliver) is available to address working together in better ways. Some training had been provided in Bromsgrove from L2D to engage members.
- HB asked GW about his thoughts on Members sitting on theme groups and should there be closer links to scrutiny.
 - At county level, there are 2 places allocated on each theme group for Members, with 1 district councillor representing all districts, and it is difficult to fulfil this role. Feedback suggests that hardly any councillor is aware of who the representatives are.
 - The role of the elected Member needs to be challenged – are they a critical friend or there to challenge? The scrutiny process is not strategic enough and the issue needs to be addressed systematically.
 - The Partnership Board has elected Members, but the Management Group does not.
 - SB noted that engaging with parishes is even harder. There is a place for parish councils on the Partnership Board, which will draw on district LSPs for connection, therefore parish plans need to be considered at district level.
- It was agreed that theme groups are a good way of getting results and delivering the LAA targets, but it was noted that the targets were signed before the credit crunch really took hold and that some of the targets are now going to be harder to achieve.

Item 7

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2008/09

The CIP had been drafted and circulated. There are still some gaps, particularly around the Health & Well Being theme. HB/LB will follow the same process as for the High Level Action Plan to ensure that the document is robust.

Hugh Bennett/
Louise Berry

Item 8

LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIPS

HB discussed that the issue is out to consultation until 3.10.08. There are issues around boundaries that need to be addressed. Two events are planned in late autumn: one for the proposed Hagley & Rural LNP and the second as a wider event for all interested parties.

It was noted that if LNPs are rolled out across the district, it will be a big financial commitment for BDC in terms of funding and officer support, but at a practical level, there are many benefits of devolving funding to a local level as results can be seen by the community quickly.

There are issues around the model; it may be appropriate for some areas but not for others. Consideration needs to be given to:

- potentially adding in another layer of governance in parished areas;
- the parish planning process;
- parished/unparished areas

therefore the consultation is important.

MB felt that the proposed Hagley & Rural area wouldn't fit well with BDHT and voiced concern about the amount of meetings that BDHT staff may need to attend. HB stated that BDC has split the PACT areas between heads of service, but reiterated that administering the LNPs (currently carried out by BDC officers) is an issue that needs to be clarified. A positive outcome of attending the meetings is that the attending officer gets to know the patch well.

JG noted that she sits on BDC, her local parish council and the LNP. The Alvechurch LNP is having some success with its youth group, and the LNP funding will be used along with parish funding to support this work. She noted that the LNP has proved useful in Alvechurch but careful management is required.

Item 9 **LSP ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08 – DRAFT**

The draft report had been circulated for information. Comments on content to LB by the end of August. More work is required to ensure a thread through the report and an executive summary will be produced. The report will ultimately be presented to Full Council in the autumn.

Item 10 **IMPROVING MEMBER AWARENESS OF LSP'S**

HB discussed the issue of front line members awareness of the LSP, as the LSPs sit outside the Council and papers are not currently circulated to district councillors (this point has also been made by Cabinet Members).

A discussion raised the following points:

- Should LSP Board meetings be open meetings?
- Should members sit on the theme groups?
- Should the Board papers be published?

It was agreed that LSP Board minutes should be taken through the BDC democratic process and reported to Cabinet and

Performance Management Board and that minutes will be published on the Council's website. LSP performance is currently reported to Performance Management Board once (for the annual report); HB stated that performance updates will be reported twice in future.

Item 11 **WORCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

KD reported back on the outcome of the last Management Group meeting:

- The LAA had been launched the Sustainable Community Strategy published.
- Migrant workers and Polish community –it had been agreed to fund a “Welcome to Worcestershire” website to signpost migrant workers. Herefordshire has developed a model that can be adapted and therefore the cost to districts will be minimal.
- Olympics Co-ordinator – Peter Turvey had been doing a lot of work behind the scenes and more work will come on stream once the Olympics are ‘given’ to the UK. KD to give an update at the next meeting.

Kevin Dicks

Item 12 **EXTENDING LSP BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

It was agreed to defer the item until the next meeting due to Councillor Hollingworth not attending the meeting. LB to put on agenda for 2/10/08 meeting.

Louise Berry

Item 13 **COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

Learning to Deliver- A risk analysis of the LAA indicators had been carried out to ensure the selected project focuses on area of need. The project had not been agreed upon but it is likely to be around NI 186: CO₂ emissions and NI 187: fuel poverty. An improvement support plan will be produced. LB to feedback when more information is available.

Community Transport Consultation – 45 responses had been received; most of them were in favour of development of a scheme for the district. Two organisations had been requested to complete pre-contract questionnaires, and a business case will be produced by the end of August.

Health Improvement Fund – The PCT has allocated £1million for 3 years for the county for identified hotspots, to address the 7 LAA outcomes relating to health and well being. The district's hotspots are Charford and Sidemoor. A meeting will be held later in the month to discuss potential projects for the district. Emma Barton, the new Health Improvement Practitioner, will have a leading role. MB noted that many tenants are cutting their own gas supplies due to affordability and that there are education issues. AS informed the meeting that an older people's conference will be held in Redditch in September which will

discuss such issues.

Town Centre Consultation – Circulated for information. MD noted the importance of linking to the LSP. MD to present to the next meeting about the development of the Core Strategy.

Mike Dunphy

Together Bromsgrove – Circulated for information. Articles had been submitted by the Better Environment and Feel Safe Theme Groups, plus an article about the support during National Volunteers' Week and around the work of the Youth Homelessness Project.

Item 14 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

AS had been invited to apply for BASIS funding for North Worcestershire, for which a letter of support is required from individual LSPs.

Item 15 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

2.00pm, 2nd October, NEW College