



Coventry Partnership Board Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 8th January, 2009
5.00 pm – 7.00 pm St. Peters Community Centre

Present:	Organisation	Representing
Les Ratcliffe (Chair)	Jaguar Cars	Private Sector
Afzal Hussain	Coventry NDC	Public Sector
Cllr Kevin Foster	Coventry City Council	Public Sector
Cllr Ram Lakha	Coventry City Council	Public Sector
Deborah Harrod	West Midlands Police	Public Sector
Dianne Williams	Chamber of Commerce	Private Sector
Eric Shakespeare	Community Empowerment Network	Community Sector
Jane Beaver	Job Centre Plus	Public Sector
Janice Nichols	Coventry City Council	Public Sector
Jos Parry	Coventry City Council	Public Sector
Jeanne Jenner	ICE	Private Sector
Mark Tovey	Government Office West Midlands	Public Sector
Peter Shearing	Learning and Skills Council	Public Sector
Peter Woodward	Chair – Environment Group	Private Sector
Professor Donald Pennington	Coventry University	Public Sector
Ray Goy	Henley College	Public Sector
Ric Richards	Federation of Small Businesses	Private Sector
Richard Monk	Whitefriars Housing Group	Public Sector
Rob Allison	Voluntary Action Coventry	Voluntary Sector
Roger Lewis	PSA Peugeot Citroen	Private Sector
Sandy Taylor	C&W Partnership Trust	Public Sector
Steve Banbury	Voluntary Action Coventry	Voluntary Sector
Steve Glover	West Midlands Police	Public Sector
Stephen Jones	Coventry PCT	Public sector
Steve Stewart	ConneXions	Public Sector
Sue Bent	Coventry Law Centre	Voluntary Sector
John McGuigan	Coventry City Council	Public Sector
Colin Green	Coventry City Council	Public Sector
Trevor Seeley	Warwick University	Public Sector
Guest Speakers:		
Andy Ashton	Yorkshire Bank	Private Sector
John Lowe	The Coventry Building Society	PrivateSector
Carl Pearson	Coventry City Council	Public Sector

Apologies:		In Attendance:	
Cllr Ken Taylor	Coventry City Council	Dawn Ford	Coventry Partnership
Jon Baldwin	Warwick University	Tim Coleman	Coventry Partnership
Louise Bennett	Chamber	Nigel Wain	Coventry Partnership
Cllr John Mutton	Coventry City Council	Sarah Perry	Coventry Partnership
Cllr Gary Ridley	Coventry City Council	Myles Mackie	Coventry City Council
Gwen Daley	Community Empowerment Network		
Cllr John McNicholas	Coventry City Council		
Caron Grainger	Coventry PCT		
Simon Shilton	West Midlands Fire Service		

Minutes of the Meeting

No.	Agenda Item	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1.	The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting, especially our guest speakers: Andy Ashton from the Yorkshire Bank and John Lowe from the Coventry Building Society. He also welcomed Jeanne Jenner the newly appointed Chair of the Cultural Partnership, Peter Woodward Chair of the Environment Group and Sarah Perry the new Partnership Support Officer to their first meeting of the partnership.	
1.2.	Apologies were noted.	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising	
	The minutes of the 6 th November 2008 were accepted as a true and correct record.	
2.1	Matters Arising – None	
2.2	Sustainable Community Strategy – Executive Summary should be ready by the end of January for distribution.	Agreed DF
2.3	Economic Recession – Main agenda item.	
3.	Coventry Partnership Communications Campaign Summary – A short briefing paper had been distributed with the agenda. The purpose of the campaign is to stress the importance of the Coventry Partnership, what it is, and what it does and how it relates to the SCS, LAA indicators and the forthcoming CAA. The campaign will, over the next 12 months, promote the partnership and its activities and emphasis that working together, tangible results can be achieved to try to ‘narrow the gap’, enhance service and make better use of our resources. New promotion banners and a scrapbook of all key press clippings over the last 12 months were displayed. A new template for presentations has also been produced to provide a fresh look for the partnership. The board's approval for use of the template was requested. The recording of a promotional DVD for the partnership is due to start next week and this will be place on the website and used to promote the partnership more widely. Tim has been invited to speak at the Rochdale Partnership on communications to talk about the Coventry approach as they recognise the best practice that is exhibited here.	Template Approved

<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p>Compliment – Deborah Harrod thanked Tim for all his work for the partnership and theme groups and the Campaign work undertaken on behalf of the Community Safety Partnership over the Christmas period.</p> <p>Stand Up to Hatred Walk – This walk is taking place on Saturday 24th January, 2009 commencing at 1.00 p.m. at the Belgrade Plaza. Leaflets were placed on tables prior to the meeting. Jos wished to thank the Communications Team at the Council for all their support and hard work.</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>The Economic Recession</p> <p>The Chamber – Dianne Williams – The Chamber conducts a quarterly questionnaire, which contains core questions that are consistent throughout the country – all questionnaires are aggregated by British Chambers of Commerce to provide a national picture from a business perspective on economy and policy.</p> <p>The presentation slides, distributed at the meeting, gave facts and figures on Q3 and Q4 2008 and compared Q4 2008 with Q4 2007 on sales, orders, labour force and cash flow and identified what is expected to happen over the next 12 months. The general picture shows that sales and orders are down, the labour force is remaining constant and that cash flow has decreased.</p> <p>A real concern is that businesses are currently operating below capacity and in an unsustainable manner. The outcome of the next quarter is vital and is like to show a worsening picture. Coventry has seen redundancies, but there is a constant workforce and it is unclear what this means.</p> <p>Trends and Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to finance, rising costs of overdrafts, difficulty in raising overdrafts, banking fees, small firms loan guarantees not readily available. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cash flow, later payments, defaulting. • Rise in calls to chamber legal helpline – biggest percentage HR issues, followed by debt and landlord disputes. • Increase in calls to LEGI helpline (already 60 in January) • Sectors struggling: construction, retail, hotels and restaurants and now manufacturing. • Trading patterns changing e.g. Property sales v lettings, cars repairs and re-moulds, late bookings, reduced peripheral spend. • New business starts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Steady rise in enquiries over past 12 months ○ Confidence and commitment not always evident ○ Increase in a part-time businesses. <p>Other factors:</p> <p>Interest rate down today by 0.5% to 1.5%</p>	<p>Reports Noted</p>

<p>4.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefiting some e.g. tracker mortgages • Hurting savers • Hitting sterling • Affecting confidence <p>Exchange rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for exporters • Bad for importers • Good for inward tourism and Uk based travel • Affecting confidence. <p>Yorkshire Bank – Andy Ashton – Presentation slides were circulated with the notes. The credit crunch became evident in August 2007 – starting with the Northern Rock. The current situation changes daily and is affecting everyone.</p> <p>The Market Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a number of reasons Bank's have found credit more expensive to obtain due to a limited supply being available within the market place • Challenges exist around ensuring Bank's satisfy the industry need to hold increased levels of capital whilst maintaining support for borrowers. • Awareness of the current market conditions has been heightened due to the level of media coverage currently being experienced • We source our funds from the market place at 3 month London Inter Bank Offer Rate (LIBOR) • Over a number of months 3 month LIBOR has fluctuated significantly above Base rate resulting in an increase in cost of our raw materials <p>Capital and Liquidity are important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSA requirements to hold capital against all assets (not just loans) • Various forms, but most important tier 1 capital – key measure of banks profitability • Close tier 1 = past from share issue + accumulated profits • Banks first purpose is to take in money and make it safe • Funding risks = confidence issue • Now holding 15 times more liquid funds <p>Banks are not currently talking to each other and therefore not giving anything away, this is leading to market turbulence. Banks availability of credit is reduced and they desperately require savers.</p> <p>So why is the Yorkshire Bank Different:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have continued to deliver a strong trading performance and sustained profitability throughout the challenging market conditions. • They have stuck to the sound business principles of a traditional banking model. 	
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- They have continued to take a disciplined and prudent approach to risk, liquidity and funding.
- Diversifying our lending, funding and geographic spread has made us more resilient.
- Our mortgage book has no direct sub-prime or self-certified lending.
- Clydesdale Bank was named “Best mortgage lender in Scotland” for the fifth year running and Yorkshire Bank “best regional mortgage lender” by Your Mortgage Magazine for the tenth year running.

What the Yorkshire Bank does is deliver specialist expertise locally and they have a strong Corporate Social responsibility agenda.

4.3

The Coventry Building Society – John Lowe – Presentation slides were circulated with the notes. John talked about the Coventry Building Society perspective on the current economic situation. The presentation covered:

Consumer Savings and debt - The difference between consumer savings and levels of debt is widening, which means the extent of savings and resources have dropped and overall consumer debt has increased. The savings ratio is now only around 10% of the level of the 1990’s.

There is a lack of readily available credit and lenders are being very cautious, as the debt gap is funded by credit and the credit market is spooked and therefore there is a withdrawal of lenders from the market.

Housing Market Activity – Mortgage approval levels already confirm that a fall in prices in excess of 10% has taken place. Forecasts now indicate falls of up to 20% from the 2007 peak by the end of 2008. This is due to a lack of lending and confidence in the market and a direct consequence of lenders from the Market. Although there is a downturn pressure on house prices – there is still a reduction in demand and it is difficult to see how we will come out of the current situation.

House Price Scenarios – The view for Coventry is that the deteriorating economic conditions lead us to conclude that a fall in house prices of 35% from peak to trough is a realistic scenario. First time buyers and house movers are the hardest hit. There are currently good deals for re-mortgages. Previous experience indicates that house price falls are likely to play out over a three or four-year period with the steepest falls in the first two years.

Coventry Building Society credit risk exposure – The society is undoubtedly better placed than many to withstand further deterioration in the housing market. A third of mortgages stay in Coventry. People are struggling and repossessions are increasing in the area. The most vulnerable lending being that undertaken immediately before the downturn crystallises.

Summary – The position will not improve in 2009 particularly for the financial sector, as the recession will widen. Until the credit position improves the economic situation will worsen.

4.4

Voluntary Sector – Stephen Banbury and Sue Bent

Advice Services Coventry (ACS) is a partnership of independent advice agencies in the city. All members of ACS are experiencing an unprecedented increase in demand for their services and all are working hard to create extra capacity to respond to this demand. A briefing Paper was circulated with the agenda.

There is a three-week waiting time for debt advice interview across all member agencies. There was evidence in early 2008 with a steady increase in debt advice and associated problems. Specialist advice is required for multi-debts.

Some key points from local agencies:

CAB

- 40% increase in debt enquires
- First available appointments early February
- Fuel debt has increased by 130%
- 112% increase in clients seeking advice about mortgage and secured loan arrears
- 100% increase in clients seeking advice pending eviction due to mortgage arrears
- 28% increase in clients seeking advice about evicts from Social Housing.
- 73% more enquiries being received that handled last year.

Willenhall Advice Centre

- 2007/08 debt amounted to £155,206.86
- 2008 to date more than doubled to £319,888.00 with two months remaining.
- Centre dealt with on average 1 bankruptcy a month – this year 1.5

Wood End Advice Centre

- 2006/07 127 debt cases
- 2007/08 465 cases

St. Oswald's – centre offers a drop in advice service, run by volunteers, on Friday mornings. Recorded figures show a 70% increase in debt advice. Holbrooks Community Care Associate – 70% of casework is related to debt.

Coventry Law Centre - Twice as many cases represented for mortgage repossession in 2008 than in 2007 (251 cases)

ACS Response:

Members of ABS are doing all they can to adapt their services to meet the current and anticipated demand.

- Coventry Law Centre has doubled its overall caseload across all

<p>4.5</p>	<p>areas of law in the last couple of years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coventry Cyrenians have made available £35,000 over two years from its special projects and combined with £30,000 from the Coventry Building Society, this will allow Coventry Law Centre to establish a specialist housing debt advice serve. • Coventry CAB is planning to move to new more accessible premises and increase its opening hours by 50% with a re-modelled service in the next 3 months, in order to meet increased demand. • The neighbourhood advice agencies have less flexibility as they are already working with low numbers of staff. In common with all ABS members, their staff have significantly increased their caseload to respond to demand. <p>Coventry City Council – Carl Pearson – It is a fact that we don't have the experience to deal with the issues that are currently happening locally as they reflect wider international and global issues. There is a pause in the growth of world trade and there needs to be structural changes before an improvement in organisations ability to lend.</p> <p>There needs to be changes in values as we go forward and an improvement in political persuasion on the banking system and that difference needs to last seven years or so. No return on investment currently and this is a problem, but also an opportunity.</p> <p><i>Market correction</i> will take one to two years to get confidence back and pride in city, forecast ripples for the next five to ten years. Not enough money in the system.</p> <p>Employment/redundancy is rising more steeply in Warwickshire than Coventry. If we reach early 1980's level it will be a real worry for the city. People will need support to get back into work; some job losses will never come back and may be lost abroad. We need to reduce the level of empty properties in the city.</p> <p><i>Road Block</i> - We are struggling to understand dynamics of what is going on – and how do we take advantage e.g. early retirements, flexible working etc</p> <p><i>Revenue</i> – Coventry City Council will be constrained, we can't increase the Council tax more and at some time recession will hit the Public Sector.</p> <p><i>Scope for</i> – There is the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Renewal – putting in place work placement jobs for a reasonable period of time • Creating jobs for NEETS • Retaining graduate employment and looking at routes into work • Creating job opportunities • Pensions fund – look at flexible retirement arrangements. <p>Key things for city:</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage inward investment to fair better in recession • Drive jobs and quality of access to jobs and build on current successes of e.g. STWA, Ericcson coming into area. • Corporate Responsibility – via ELSE group to look • Technology in Universities – work our way out of recession • Any recession gives an opportunity to be successful • Above all lets have a good recession – lead from the front. 	
5.	<p>Plenary Section – As time was short this consisted of questions to the panel and discussion.</p> <p>Thematic Groups – It was agreed that the Thematic Groups be contacted to put forward actions which they consider will help to contribute to the LAA Indicators which will help the current economic situation. The Partnership to draw together an action plan of about 10 key actions that will help in the current economic climate. To be discussed at next meeting.</p> <p>Panel - The Chair thanked the panel for their contributions, input and time and that the Coventry Partnership now had a lot to think about.</p>	<p>Agreed Action Plan to be drawn together</p> <p>Discuss at next meeting.</p>
6.	<p>NDC Succession Planning – Afzal Hussain – Slides of the presentation were circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>This programme is in its eighth year and has been a model of resident led partnership working at a neighbourhood level with £54m to invest in the themes where a clear gap existed between NDC and the rest of the city. These being: Education, Employment, Health, Crime, Housing and environment and Community and youth engagement</p> <p>The programme has two years to run plus one – now is the time to develop at a key business plan on how key projects can be taken forward. There have been 150 projects involving numerous partners and learning mentors, based around teenage pregnancies, health and practical working tackling issues on the ground as they arise. Currently a pilot is running for a local Service Area Agreement, with a real commitment on service standards to improve in the local area.</p> <p>One of the key projects and a lasting momentum is the new Moat House Leisure Centre and one stop shop, which will be launched shortly.</p> <p>Projects have resulted in improved GCSE results – at the start of the NDC programme only 5% of students were achieving 5 GCSE's and the latest figures show 35% of students are achieving 5 GCSE's, this is still below the Coventry average. ASB has also reduced and partners work very effectively to keep this at a low level.</p>	
6.1	<p>Remaining challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrenched worklessness • Housing market and redevelopment scheme • Teenage pregnancy and sexual health • LAA alignment and securing mainstream commitment beyond NDC 	

<p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p>	<p>life.</p> <p>Succession planning:</p> <p>Community leadership and neighbourhood Governance – setting up Moat House Community Trust</p> <p>Economic well being – establishing the workshop as an employment hub for North East Coventry and supporting enterprise (private and public).</p> <p>A physical legacy – implementation of the masterplan.</p> <p>Strengthening local service delivery through Neighbourhood Management – Virtual School and community contracts with neighbourhood charters.</p> <p>Key Messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint investment opportunity for accelerated achievement of LAA /organisational targets. • Use our knowledge and experience of community engagement and local governance (good practice and service delivery) • Opportunity to establish a common Performance Management Framework for commissioned service, to be delivered by third party contractors. <p>Attached to the presentation slides is a questionnaire, which Afzal asked partners to complete and return to the NDC offices.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Forward Planner – The following items on the planner were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coventry Partnership Performance Management Framework • Priorities from the forward planning meeting • Coventry Data Sharing Protocol Revision (TBC) • LAA Indicator Planning (TBD) • Communities that Care Survey (TBD - 09.07.08) 	
<p>8</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Economic Downturn – It was agreed that the partnership need to work closely together, particularly outside partnership meeting on this issue, but that the next meeting should again focus on this topic – agenda to be discussed via the Operations Group.</p>	<p>Agreed DF</p>
	<p><i>The next meeting is on Thursday 18th March, 2009 at St. Peter's Community Centre from 17.00 p.m. until 19.00 p.m.</i></p>	