

**Minutes of Coventry Partnership Meeting  
Wednesday 16 January 2008  
Ricoh Community Space, Coventry**

**Attendance:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Les Ratcliffe	Jaguar Cars, Chair	Private sector
Stella Manzie	Coventry City Council, Secretary	Public Sector
Sheila Bates	Community Empowerment Network	Community Sector
Dianne Williams	Chamber of Commerce	Private sector
Sue Darling	Citizens Advice Bureau	Voluntary Sector
Sue Bent	Coventry Law Centre	Voluntary Sector
Colin Green	Coventry City Council	Public Sector
Mike Attwood	Coventry Primary Care Trust	Public Sector
Bob Keith	Groundwork	Voluntary Sector
Peter Shearing	Learning and Skills Council	Public Sector
Ric Richards	Federation of Small Businesses	Private Sector
Mark Tovey	Government Office West Midlands	Public Sector
Richard Monk	Whitefriars Housing Group	Public Sector
Cllr Ram Lakha	Coventry City Council	Public Sector
Cllr John McNicholas	Coventry City Council	Public Sector
Jon Baldwin	University of Warwick	Public Sector
Stephen Banbury	Coventry Voluntary Services Council	Voluntary Sector
Rosalind Roke	Coventry Partnership	Public Sector
Ray Goy	Henley College	Public Sector
Eric Shakespeare	Community Empowerment Network	Community Sector
June Jeffrey	Community Empowerment Network	Voluntary Sector
Mike Fowler	Coventry Cyrenians	Voluntary Sector
Cllr Kevin Foster	Coventry City Council	Public Sector
Cllr Ken Taylor	Coventry City Council, Leader	Public Sector
Jim Tittley	West Midlands Police	Public Sector
Colin Merker	Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust	Public Sector
Sandy Taylor	Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust	Public Sector
Jane Beaver	Job Centre Plus	Public Sector
Justine Themen	Belgrade Theatre	Public Sector

<b>Apologies:</b>		<b>In Attendance:</b>	
Louise Bennett	Chamber of Commerce	Helen Shankster	Coventry Partnership
Cllr John Mutton	Coventry City Council	Susan Edwards	Coventry Partnership
Madeline Atkins	Coventry University	Nigel Hart	Coventry Partnership
Stephen Jones	Coventry Primary Care Trust	Paula Deas	Coventry City Council
Roger Lewis	PSA Peugeot Citroen	Jos Parry	Coventry City Council
Deborah Harrod	West Midlands Police	Paula Deas	Coventry City Council
Cllr Tony O'Neill	Coventry City Council	Priti Bharadawa	Coventry City Council
Gwen Daly	Community Empowerment Network	Adrian Coles	Coventry City Council
Steve Stewart	Connexions	Sharon Mace	Coventry City Council
		Rob Allison	CVSC
		Cllr Jack Harrison	Coventry City Council
		Fiona Fortune	Sport England
		Paul Billinger	Health and Safety Executive
		Kevin Rogers	West Midlands Fire Service
		Rohan Torkildsen	English Heritage

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Les Ratcliffe welcomed everyone to the meeting and made a special note of welcome to a Regional Partners from English Heritage, Sport England, West Midlands Fire Service, and the Health and Safety Executive.

### **2. Minutes of last meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### **3. New Local Area Agreement – Update on development and selection of priorities**

Ros Roke, Coventry Partnership presented information about the ongoing development of the new Local Area Agreement, highlighting the work already completed and the process proposed in taking the work forward. Ros presented some brief examples of how regional partners may be able to contribute to the priorities within Coventry's draft Local Area Agreement. Ros informed the Board that Coventry was now one of 12 national demonstration areas for Local Area Agreements and the only area in the West Midlands to be involved.

Members of the Board were asked consider and comment on the paper 'Developing Priorities for the Local Area Agreement', referring to the following questions:

1. Are you happy with the general direction of travel and the proposed way forward?
2. How are you taking information about the Local Area Agreement back through your own organisations and networks?
3. How could regional partners (particularly those present at the meeting) contribute to the emerging priorities?

In addition, Stella encouraged members of the Board to comment further on the emerging priorities for the Local Area Agreement presented within the document.

Facilitators recorded full feedback from the discussions at each table (summarised in appendix 1) and a spokesperson from each table presented the main points to the rest of the Board.

#### **The main points reported were:**

- That the culture of Coventry was changing and would continue to change, so the Local Area Agreement should take account of this
- The priorities of partners should align with the priorities within the Local Area Agreement (for example, the Primary Care Trust's performance management would now focus on 70 vital signs)
- Operational planning and figures/targets for each priority would now be important
- The recent consultation workshop with the Community Empowerment Network had provided an opportunity for members of the community to consider and comment on the proposed short term priorities for the city (and for the Local Area Agreement). The feedback had been very positive
- The priorities should ensure that the Local Area Agreement contributes to community cohesion and developing a positive culture for Coventry – there should be a priority about developing civic pride

- The Partnership must be careful not to lose sight of important priorities (not reflected in the National Indicator Set) and should maintain a strong local focus on these issues
- The Partnership should take the time to reconsider how it works together to deliver the new Local Area Agreement (and ensure all partners are working towards the strategic priorities)

Stella thanked members of the Board for their comments and confirmed that they would be considered fully and taken account of in the ongoing development of the Local Area Agreement.

**Les confirmed that members of the Board endorsed the ongoing process in developing the new Local Area Agreement.**

#### **4. Economic Development Strategy – Update on development**

Paula Deas, Regeneration Team, Coventry City Council, briefly updated the Board on the consultation process for the Economic Development Strategy and the strategy's ongoing development. Paula summarised the process to date, detailed the groups and networks which had been involved in the consultation and summarised the feedback from the Coventry Partnership Board meeting on 7 November.

Paula reiterated that the consultation was open until 25 January 2008 and further contributions would be welcome. Responses could be made through Coventry City Council's website (details provided in the accompanying briefing paper). The final draft of the strategy would be brought to the next meeting of the Board on 21 February for the Board's final approval.

**The Board noted the information as an update.**

#### **5. Local Employer Partnerships and The Skills Pledge**

Jane Beaver, Job Centre Plus, and Peter Shearing, Learning and Skills Council, presented details of two initiatives for local employers aimed at providing employment and progression opportunities for people at the greatest disadvantage in the labour market, and to support the up-skilling of workers in the city. Jane and Peter referred to related local, regional and national initiatives which collectively make up the developing 'Employer Offer'. Jane and Peter informed the Board that they wanted to identify ways in which the Partnership could support the two initiatives; Local Employer Partnerships and the Skills Pledge.

Jane explained that Coventry had faced rising rates of those on Job Seekers Allowance, bucking regional and national trends. The trend had recently turned to a more positive trajectory but Jane stressed that the city needed to intensify efforts to achieve parity for priority neighbourhoods and some communities.

It was explained that Local Employment Partnerships (which include a 'Jobs Pledge' and 'The Skills Pledge') would be key elements of the Employer Offer. For these initiatives to work, the commitment and buy in from employers, including Partners, would be crucial. Jane explained that support was required from employers that were prepared to recruit from and develop priority customer groups from the city's most deprived areas.

Peter explained how this work linked with the skills agenda and introduced The Skills Pledge. Peter informed the Board that The Skills Pledge was a high level commitment by an employer to actively encourage and support employees to gain the skills and qualifications that will improve their future

employability, support progression and meet the needs of businesses (specifically Level 2 qualifications). He also detailed the support provided for employers through Train to Gain.

Jane and Peter reiterated the relationship between the initiatives and the priorities within the new Local Area Agreement and the City Strategy (a Strategy to tackle worklessness in priority neighbourhoods). They highlighted the benefits to economic development and how the initiatives supported efforts to encourage inward investment to the city.

Jane informed the Board that Coventry City Council was amongst the first local employers to sign up and the Board were involved in the 'Partners as Employers' element.

Shokat Lal, Workforce Development, Coventry City Council informed the Board how the City Council had worked with Job Centre Plus to take more referrals on to its generic clerical register and to fill vacancies in areas such as cleaning and maintenance. Shokat explained that the Council had altered some recruitment processes to include two week trials (as opposed to interviews) as an assessment method for potential employees in maintenance roles. It was confirmed that of 152 recently employed staff, 42 had been through referrals from Job Centre Plus. There had been a particular focus on recruiting long term unemployed people from within the New Deal for Communities area in roles within City Services (which were often difficult to recruit to). From 40 recent referrals, 25 people were now in permanent employment with the Council. In addition, it was reported that 15 people with disabilities had been successfully recruited to full time positions within the Council since April 2007. The Council were now planning to focus on providing training opportunities for Looked After Children and NEETS (those Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Les thanked Jane, Peter and Shokat for the presentation and invited members of the Board to ask questions.

Cllr McNicholas, Coventry City Council, asked what would be required to achieve the target of recruiting 1,000 people across the city through the initiative by 2009. Jane explained that Coventry City Council had signed up to take 100 people but that other partners/employers were needed to sign up to the initiative in order to meet the local target.

Stella advised that the Council had learnt that it was important to develop better monitoring and tracking of individuals to support the retention of employees. This would also help to provide evidence that the scheme worked and encourage employers to alter their current systems for recruitment.

Mike Attwood, Coventry Primary Care Trust, confirmed that the Primary Care Trust would be a large organisation to target but that it only had a relatively small Human Resources Department. He suggested that a consortium arrangement between a number of partners could help overcome this and that he would like to know more about getting involved. Mike also highlighted that the City Council and the Primary Care Trust procured many services and suggested that support for the employer initiatives could be considered within procurement processes.

Sue Bent, Coventry Law Centre, advised that the volunteer sector would be interested in accessing the support network, but may only have small numbers to offer towards the total recruitment target.

Cllr Harrison, Coventry City Council, questioned the focus on the long term unemployed, pointing to the changing demographics of the city and incoming migrant workers. Jane confirmed that a large number of migrant workers were moving straight in to work but that there was a problem around funding for English language courses. Peter reiterated that companies with migrant workers could

access the support through Train to Gain but that employers, as well as the Government, had some individual responsibility to support this.

The Board were asked to endorse the initiative and also requested to consider ways in which their organisation could support the initiative.

**The Board endorsed the initiative and the Chair requested that individual members go back to their own organisations as ambassadors, encouraging organisations to take up the pledge.**

**Les invited Jane and Peter to bring the information to the next meeting of the Coventry Partnership Business Group and to request its support.**

## **6. Forward Planner**

Ros asked the Board to note the following issues for consideration at forthcoming Partnership Board meetings:

- a) Sustainable Community Strategy sign off at the extraordinary meeting on 21 February
- b) Development of the new Local Area Agreement – ongoing updates
- c) Compact Code for Commissioning and Contracting (Voluntary Sector)
- d) Youth Labour Market Opportunities in Coventry – information from Steve Stewart, Connexions

## **7. Any Other Business**

### **a) Feel Good Factors**

- i) Jane Beaver, Job Centre Plus, reported that of the original 2300 Peugeot workers made redundant there are only 101 still unemployed. Those remaining unemployed were being supported and tracked by Job Centre Plus.
- ii) Mick Attwood, Coventry Primary Care Trust, informed the group that the Primary Care Trust was now out of financial turmoil.
- iii) Mick Fowler, Coventry Cyrenians, reported that 81 local people had volunteered at Methodist Central Hall on Christmas day to help provide a meal for homeless people in the city
- iv) Les Ratcliffe reported that the Jaguar XF had recently won Best Car award.

## **8. Any Other Business**

- a) Stella presented informed the Board that Sue Darling, Citizens Advice Bureau, was to retire shortly. Stella thanked Sue for her contribution and commitment to the Coventry Partnership and presented her with a gift and card.
- b) Les concluded the meeting by welcoming new members, Jon Baldwin from the University of Warwick, and Colin Merker and Sandy Taylor from Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust.

## Appendix 1: Full Feedback from Local Area Agreement Discussions

**Table 1:**

### Community Safety:

- Focus on the short term priorities all appear to be around reducing certain aspects of crime – the group felt more emphasis should be placed on prevention.
- Encourage more usage (by all ages) of public open spaces to create a feeling of safety
- Focus on improvements that can be made to support businesses –examples given included networked cameras and co-ordination of resources (model similar to AIMS for businesses was cited as being needed – or increase AIMS to focus on businesses )
- Improve links to positive activities (for all ages and not just young people) / Provision of funding for these activities noted as being a challenge

### Learning, Skills and Employment:

- Sport England pleased to see sport and physical activity high on priorities
- Emphasis should be on creation of wealth and not just on reducing worklessness – sustainable job creation noted as being of high importance. Creation of 3000 low value jobs will not bring prosperity required to build positive sustainable future for the City
- Local environment /entrepreneurial environment (creating a reputation that Coventry is the place that people want to be) is essential in attracting high value, long-term aspirational jobs.
- Put Coventry as the central focus of the sub-region
- Relating to the short term priorities – 25 new businesses not ambitious if not quantified (could be 25 lone traders who would not bring business opportunities on the scale required)
- Private sector revenue essential to success
- Need to develop the vision for the type of industries that Coventry wants to attract.

### Health:

- Important to link longer life with the financial means to enjoy a quality of life in older age
- Recognise what is achievable and what is not
- Recognise the levers and drivers of change
- Important to get environmental factors – e.g. air quality - right if long life is to be achievable
- Need to promote more sport (of all types) to all age groups – noted associated support needed with caring demands / cost of participation
- National market segmentation tools can provide information on demographics and link to sport participation and health – could be used to target areas of greatest need (equality of opportunity)
- “Sport” terminology can be a perception barrier - with people linking it to team games and not physical activity in its wider sense.
- Important to identify lead who has responsibility for delivery of plans.
- Look beyond presenting issue to see cause and effect and tackle the root causes as a preventative measure.

#### Culture:

- Need to make the strategy unique – “Coventryise” it.
- What will Coventry be noted for if we are successful?
- Link more to 2012 games and promote the City's facilities and resources

#### Transport:

- Need to improve the positive aspects of the outcomes

#### Table 2:

- There is more to do to take the LAA back into partners' own organisations
- Regional Fire Service priorities have been fed in to the process.
- There is little about education. In particular there is nothing about the gap between younger aged students and skills. Could include more about the role of further and higher education.
- Relationship between jobs, environment and education.
- Need to focus on specific communities of need, disadvantaged communities, targeted action planning
- Increasing prosperity - growth agenda should lead to meaningful jobs not just training for skills that don't the lead to accessing the jobs available.
- We must consider how we can meet the needs of disadvantaged groups.
- High quality jobs are required.
- The forthcoming Community Empowerment Network conference will involve consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement. We need both organisational views and the views of local people.
- Outcomes – what difference will the new LAA make? How can we communicate what we will achieve?

#### Table 3:

- More emphasis is required on the cross-cutting themes – we need to develop joint understanding and this will happen more quickly if we work together. The challenge is how to find ways of working that enable partners to manage this effectively.
- Partners need to know what each others' organisational priorities and targets are. We need to organise this so we can make sense of them.
- How can we deal with conflicts between priorities?
- There is concern about the limitation of the National Indicator Set. We must not lose sight of important local issues just because they cannot be associated with a national indicator.
- Business crime is / will affect the local economy and our ability to grow it. Concern that information about business crime is not widely available.
- Creating environmental corridors would make Coventry look attractive and we would reap the benefits in the future (e.g. like the trees on Kenilworth Rd).
- We need to identify those priorities which are herd leaders.
- We need to make sure that we are not driven by counting outputs and take time to work out how services could be delivered differently. This was the original aim of the LAA.
- Need further consideration of how regional strategies and regional partners could contribute.

**Table 4:**

- General consensus that process had been inclusive so far.
- Dave Pillinger from the Health & Safety Executive highlighted the fact that he covered four LAA areas but Coventry was the only city he had contact with so far.
- Forthcoming challenge is to ensure that key information is fed throughout partner organisations. Managers are currently aware of the process and priorities but the information must be disseminated throughout organisations, particularly once targets are agreed.
- The Belgrade Theatre reported that all staff were given a presentation on the work of the LAA and SCS before opening. This was found to be helpful as many of the staff did not live in Coventry and it had helped to put into context the work they were contributing towards (such as cultural improvement and regeneration)
- The Health and Safety Executive reported that involvement with Coventry was helping the organisation to develop its strategy in relation to LAAs. The H&SE would not be demanding what any LAA or SCS priority should be but as a company they would try and help achieve any priorities set if it were possible/applicable.
- The image of the city was discussed as a priority. Although both the SCS and LAA would partly address this issue through the section: 'A creative, active and vibrant Coventry' there is no direct reference to image as a priority.
- Many people outside of the city are not aware of the big regeneration programmes taking place – need to communicate this more effectively to challenge the perception of the city to audiences/stakeholders outside of the city.
- Physical regeneration does not automatically result in the regeneration of a city's image. Perceptions and image are important in attracting future inward investment.

**Table 5:**

- General agreement with all of the priorities proposed.
- The demographics of Coventry are changing and the LAA needs to consider short term migration.
- How well is the community represented in the LAA process?
- It will now be important to set targets for each priority.
- Coventry has a strong historical identity and this should be maintained within future re-developments (English Heritage). A city/place can embrace its identity to support future economic development.
- Civic pride/cultural development should be an overt priority within the LAA.
- Partners' business plans must align with the LAA priorities e.g. PCT.