

Coventry Local Public Service Board

**Minutes of meeting held on 12 December 2007
Room 77, Council House**

Present:

Stella Manzie, Coventry City Council (Chair)
Cllr Ken Taylor, Coventry City Council
Jenni Venn, Coventry City Council
Mike Attwood, Coventry Teaching Primary Care Trust (CTPCT)
Deborah Harrod, West Midlands Police
Sarah Chand, Probation Service
Jane Beaver, Job Centre Plus
Peter Shearing, Learning and Skills Council
Mark Taylor, West Midlands Fire Service
Mark Tovey, Government Office West Midlands (GOWM)
Cat Parker, Coventry City Council
Ros Roke, Coventry Partnership Secretariat

Apologies:

Jos Parry, Coventry City Council
Sara Roach, Coventry City Council and Community Safety Partnership

1. Welcome and Apologies

Stella welcomed everybody to the meeting and made a particular note of welcome to Mark Tovey from Government Office West Midlands.

Stella informed the Board that she was still in discussions with Martin Lee from University Hospital Coventry and Warwick about joining the Local Public Service Board. Mike Attwood, CTPCT, suggested that a representative from the Mental Health Board should also be asked to join the Local Public Service Board.

Action:

- **Stella and Ros to identify a senior representative from the Mental Health Trust to join the Local Public Service Board**

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Stella informed the Board that exact dates had not yet been scheduled for senior directors to be invited to attend meetings in order to discuss performance against particular indicators within the Local Area Agreement but that the times would be confirmed shortly.

3. New Local Area Agreement – Process and Priorities

Ros Roke, Coventry Partnership Secretariat, referred members of the Board to a copy of the letter from Stella which was recently sent to all members of the Coventry Partnership. Ros explained that the letter proposed an outline for the ongoing process of developing Coventry's Local Area Agreement and confirmed the work that had been undertaken so far.

Stella confirmed that a report based on the information within the letter and outlining the proposed process was also to go to Cabinet shortly. Stella then invited comments from members of the Board.

Mark Tovey, GOWM, raised the issue of the language used within the document and highlighted the potential for confusion between priorities and indicators. Mark also commented on 'Developing the Priorities for the Local Area Agreement', a paper which Jenni Venn had produced and was circulated prior to the meeting. Mark advised that some current priorities appeared to be articulated as targets. Mark reiterated that the advice from Government Office was to consider the priorities at the broadest level at this stage, then move on to consider indicators and targets.

In addition, Mark recommended that it would be useful to add three further dates in to the timeline to reflect the regional Government Office timetable. The three additional dates would be:

- 21 January 2008 – Draft priorities to Government Office
- Mid March 2008 – Draft priorities and indicators to Government Office
- End May 2008 – Government Office Regional Director to sign off final draft of LAA for negotiation with Ministers

Stella highlighted the need to ensure information was taken to the Partnership Board and through Cabinet even if the information was to be submitted was in draft form. Mark agreed that any indicative documents could be presented to Government Office with clear caveats if necessary.

The Board recommended that the information within the proposed timeline be amended and the letter and timeline form part of the papers for the next Partnership Board meeting on 16 January 2008.

Actions:

- **Jos, Jenni and Ros to make recommended changes to the timeline**
- **Ros to ensure the letter and timeline are included in the papers for the next meeting of the Partnership Board**

Mike Attwood, CTPCT, advised that implications for resource allocation arising from the new Local Area Agreement would be challenging to accommodate after March 2008 due to PCT financial planning processes.

Jenni Venn, Coventry City Council, referred members of the Board to the paper 'Developing the Priorities for the LAA' explaining that the document was a first attempt to map out the long term outcomes proposed within the draft Sustainable Community Strategy, the short term priorities which had been identified, and potential links between the priorities and the National Indicator Set.

Jenni focussed on the Learning, Skills and Economy section of the document first. She drew attention to issues which were existing local priorities but which may not be easily measured with indicators from the National Indicator Set, such as the regeneration of the city centre. Jenni also advised the Board that there was an opportunity to focus the Local Area Agreement priorities on particular groups of people and/or on specific neighbourhoods.

Stella advised that some priorities, such as those currently included within the Council's corporate plan, would be monitored in the background but would not be appropriate to include in the Local Area Agreement as one single body or organisation could not be held responsible for performance e.g. some measures of economic growth.

Jane Beaver, Job Centre Plus, and Peter Shearing, Learning and Skills Council both highlighted the lack of baseline data for some of the indicators. Peter also advised that tracking systems would require a common base.

Mike Attwood, CTPCT, informed the Board that the PCT culture was now developing to consider city wide actions and those actions which would be delivered in partnership. In addition, the PCT was beginning to focus on communities of interest.

Jenni continued with her overview of the document moving on to discuss the Health and Wellbeing theme. She highlighted that wellbeing and independence would now be given a much stronger emphasis by government (through the National Indicator Set). Conversely, there were only limited indicators around sport and physical activity. Jenni reported that an alcohol related priority may improve performance across other broad issues such as community safety and health but questioned how sensible it would be to include such priorities within a three year Local Area Agreement.

Mike Attwood, CTPCT, informed the Board that PCTs were being encouraged to work through Local Strategic Partnerships to measure wider health and independence issues. Mike also highlighted that some communities of interest would be a focus for a range of partners.

Cllr Ken Taylor, Coventry City Council, asked how services could be targeted at particular communities of interest and how appropriate information could be collected about these groups. Ken voiced his concern that services were focussed on the right groups, particularly those that were hard to reach. Stella explained the government's 'personalisation' agenda and the move to target specific cohorts of people and individuals.

Peter Shearing, Learning and Skills Council, asked about information/data sharing between partners at the level of the individual. Stella confirmed the need to develop a robust data sharing protocol and ensure effective data matching. Mike Attwood, CTPCT,

informed the Board that the PCT now had a member of staff in post to provide the technical support to enable effective data sharing.

Jenni went on to explain that there were a number of perception indicators with the National Indicator Set. She reported that perception indicators could be a useful tool but were also very volatile and the Board may wish to recommend that no perception indicators were included in the Local Area Agreement. The Board acknowledged this but also recognised that government may encourage areas to include some perception indicators. In particular, Deborah Harrod, West Midlands Police, advised that the only indicator to measure Anti Social Behaviour was perception based.

Stella explained that local partners may wish to measure other contributing issues and information and this could be agreed where appropriate.

Jenni continued to introduce the priorities identified under the theme 'A safer, more confident Coventry'. Jenni advised that the Community Safety Partnership had reconsidered the proposed priorities and had recognised that the current range of priorities did not focus on the misuse of drugs. There would be a need to include a priority for this area.

Jenni reported that there was an indicator about terrorism within the National Indicator Set. National government representatives have advised that they consider that this should be a priority for Coventry. A discussion between local partners was planned to take place around this issue shortly.

Jenni highlighted that some issues may be a local priority but that the indicators available to measure performance (from the National Indicator Set) were not always useful or appropriate.

Cllr Ken Taylor, Coventry City Council, questioned the time dependent definitions within the indicators, such as the agreed times for drugs rehabilitation.

Stella asked Jenni to highlight the most critical issues within the remainder of the document. Jenni reported the following key points:

- There were no local environmental indicators within the National Indicator Set so the Partnership may wish to agree these as local priorities
- The priorities identified by the Children and Young People's Partnership were drawn from the annual performance assessment and developed with OFSTED. There would also be 16 statutory indicators around children's attainment
- As a designated New Growth Point, Coventry would be expected to include an indicator to measure housing numbers
- The Partnership may wish to focus some priorities on specific target groups and neighbourhoods

- The Partnership may wish to include a modal shift indicator within the transport priorities as this could contribute to improvements in health and other broad outcomes
- Although there were few appropriate indicators around culture and sport within the National Indicator Set, the Partnership may wish to agree local priorities in this area
- Climate change would be a challenging priority to have a measurable impact on within the short timescale of the Local Area Agreement but the indicator which measures the Council's CO2 emissions may be useful
- Waste reduction would be an important priority

Peter Shearing, Learning and Skills Council, identified that the range of priorities did not currently include anything around migrant workers and asked whether this issue should be included. Peter also questioned whether the definition of children and young people was consistent across all of the themes and between partner organisations.

Stella confirmed the need to ensure consistency of definitions across all themes and the importance of establishing agreed definitions across the Local Area Agreement and amongst all partners.

Mike Attwood, CTPCT, highlighted of the need to be clear about where some priorities already exist (in other plans and strategies) and would also be included in the Local Area Agreement with associated stretch targets. Mike asked Mark Tovey from Government Office whether further priorities and indicators could be introduced to the Local Area Agreement in years two and three. Mark advised that there may be an opportunity to renegotiate targets in later years and reiterated that local priorities could be included.

Ros Roke, Coventry Partnership Secretariat, referred members of the Board to three slides, the first of which presented a diagram to explain the relationship between the Sustainable Community Strategy and the priorities and performance indicators to be included in the Local Area Agreement. Ros explained that the additional slides proposed a set of questions which could act as criteria to inform decisions on which priorities to include in the Local Area Agreement and a further set of questions to aid the selection of appropriate indicators.

Stella confirmed the need to develop a coherent Local Area Agreement package across all themes as well as consider individual priorities using the proposed questions. Ros informed the Board that Theme Group Leaders and Advisors would come together at a meeting on 19 December to consider the range of priorities across all themes.

Mark Taylor, West Midlands Fire Service, queried the inclusion of the question 'is there a real need for improvement' reasoning that if there was not a need for improvement the issues would have not been identified as priorities.

Mark Tovey, Government Office West Midlands, proposed that some issues may be so important for Coventry that maintenance of the current performance level may be

desirable. Stella confirmed that the maintenance of performance levels in some areas where performance is already good may be appropriate.

Deborah Harrod, West Midlands Police, identified that the data required to measure some of the indicators was not currently collected or measured in the ways proposed within the technical guidance accompanying the National Indicator Set. The Board also acknowledged that some data may only be available through other agencies at present.

Stella explained that all 198 indicators would be monitored by government as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment to be introduced in 2009.

Mark Tovey, informed the Board that the consultation around the technical guidance for the National Indicator Set would close in January 2008 and that further information would be announced in February 2008. Mark confirmed that this would still leave plenty of time to consider all these issues in more detail. Stella reiterated that Coventry's response to the consultation should be clear and should identify all of the issues raised.

The Board recommended that the language within the Local Area Agreement mapping document should be refined to clearly differentiate between priorities, indicators and targets. In addition, Stella requested that an additional letter be drafted and circulated to all members of the Partnership to confirm the criteria for selecting priorities and indicators, and to explain how the process would be taken forward. This information should be circulated to regional partners but may need to be personalised for each organisation.

Actions:

- **Jenni to refine language with LAA mapping document**
- **Ros to draft a further letter from Stella to circulate across the Partnership**
- **Ros to send information to regional partners**

Mark Tovey, recommended that the Partnership should consider engaging regional agencies within the process to agree priorities and specific indicators. Mark confirmed that the business plans of all of the regional agencies were now of the Government Office West Midlands website.

4. Update on the Area Based Grant

The Board considered the latest information about the Area Based Grant presented in a paper by Barry Hastie, Interim Head of Financial Management, Coventry City Council.

The paper proposed three potential options for allocating the Area Based Grant, which included:

- Capping existing allocations where these allocations remain stable or increase
- Consider more comprehensive reductions in some programme areas subject to an assessment of existing commitments and priorities
- Instigate an approval process for spending where new or increasing allocations have been notified

Barry confirmed that the level of the Area Based Grant for Coventry had been announced and that details of the grant had been given at the level of each specific funding stream. Barry informed the Board that various departments within the Council had received communications from central government departments to confirm the details of specific funding streams. Barry explained that the Area Based Grant formed one element of the range of resources which the Local Authority received to spend on local priorities and was not linked directly to the Local Area Agreement. Barry cautioned

the Board that the information contained within his paper did not yet perform a like for like comparison. He also explained that the Council's budget setting process would have planned for funding fall out but that the Council would need to balance its own accounts.

Mark Tovey confirmed that LEGI (Local Enterprise Growth Initiative) funding was now included within the Area Based Grant, although this funding stream had not been expected to continue beyond 2008/2009. In addition, Mark explained that the new Working Neighbourhoods Fund had been allocated to the 40 most deprived localities in the country. Coventry had not been included within this classification so would receive only transition funding for two years.

Stella confirmed that the Board would want to consider top slicing a proportion of the Area Based Grant to provide some flexibility for strategic commissioning around the Local Area Agreement.

5. Any Other Business

Stella announced that Coventry had agreed to be a Local Area Agreement demonstration area. Coventry was one of ten demonstration areas nationally and the only demonstration area within the West Midlands. Stella confirmed that she would update the Board with further information as soon as it was available.