

## Coventry Partnership Leaders & Advisors – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2007

### Present:

**Sara Roach** Advisor, Community Safety Partnership  
**Richard Monk** Chair, Housing Theme Group  
**Mark Taylor** Chair, Community Safety Partnership  
**Janice Nichols**, Head of Neighbourhood Management  
**Bob Keith**, Chair, Environment Theme Group  
**Adrian West**, Advisor, Environment Theme Group  
**Jane Beaver**, Chair, Job Strategy Group  
**Sally Giles**, Children and Young People's Partnership  
**Helen Shankster**, Coventry Partnership Secretariat  
**Nigel Wain**, Coventry Partnership Secretariat  
**Nigel Hart**, Coventry Partnership Secretariat  
**June Morley**, Coventry Partnership Secretariat  
**Lesley Wroe**, Coventry City Council  
**Niall McChesney**, Coventry City Council  
**Rob Allison**, CVSC

### Apologies:

**Stephen Jones** Coventry PCT  
**Andrea Clemons**, Community Safety Partnership  
**Sue Bent**, Chair, Equalities and Communities  
**Marc Harder**, Children and Young People's Partnership  
**Cllr John McNicholas**, Chair, Transport Theme Group  
**Hamish Glen**, Chair, the Cultural Partnership  
**Caron Grainger**, Advisor, Health Theme Group  
**Jenni Venn**, Advisor, Equalities and Communities  
**Les Ratcliffe**, Chair, Coventry Partnership

### 1. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record. It was agreed that Sara Roach would chair the meeting.

### 2. **Consultation on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy**

Lesley Wroe City Planning Manager for Coventry City Council and Niall McChesney from Planning Services updated the group on the process of developing a Local Development Framework Core Strategy. The Strategy will be the key planning document for Coventry for the next 20 years and will be embedded into the Sustainable Community Strategy (revised Community Plan). It needs to consider the physical implications of the agreed vision and priorities for Coventry, including growth and expansion of the city over the next 20 years.

It is essential that a wide range of partners and sectors including the Coventry Partnership contribute towards developing the Strategy. The Operations Group, had asked Theme Group Leaders & Advisors to consider how best to involve the Coventry Partnership, including a suggestion that a small sub group of key players should be formed.

Bob Keith did not believe a sub group was the right way forward. He feared that it would consist of the people who had the time to be on it rather than those who should be on it. **It was agreed as an alternative that Lesley would work closely with the new Coventry Partnership Development Manager who is to be appointed imminently and Jenni Venn.**

Development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Core Strategy will provide an opportunity to look across existing partnership strategies (e.g. Employment Strategy, Local Economic Development Strategy, Housing Strategy etc.) and develop greater coherence amongst these and identify conflicts and gaps.

**It was agreed the Coventry Partnership should organise a half day or day event in September to involve theme groups in looking across strategies to create a common understanding and identifying how well these fit together to support the agreed vision for the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Development Framework.**

Janice Nichols suggested that this item become a **permanent item on the agenda for the Learning and Advisors group which was agreed** and a request for a timeline to be produced over what was happening over the next 12 months was made to Lesley.

Bob Keith expressed concern that that the theme groups and Coventry Partnership give responses to various consultations and never receive feedback from this. He cited the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy as one such example which Lesley said she could update on.

Lesley said that Coventry City Council has published a document outlining that its preferred option is to grow Coventry by 24,000 households on condition it is employment led, sustainable and support is given to ensure the relevant infrastructure is put in place.

Many local authorities believe the government will push for the larger expansion growth options but Lesley said they hoped the situation would be clearer by the middle of July. Discussions with sub-regional partners are taking place, which may provide an option for extending growth into the fringes of Coventry / Warwickshire.

It was agreed that reporting on the contribution of the LDF Core Strategy in delivery of the Sustainable Community Plan should be built into the revised performance management framework for the Coventry Partnership.

**Actions:**

- **Lesley to produce a timeline and to circulate copies of the LDF Core Strategy consultation document to theme group leaders and advisors.**
- **Lesley, Jenni Venn and incoming Partnership Development Manager to design and organise the workshop**

**3. Guide to Partnership Working**

Rob Allison has co-ordinated the production of a new Guide to Partnership Working which has been produced by a sub-group of the Compact Working Group. The Guide was produced following the Compact Review last year and concern coming out of the Fully on Board survey in relation to meeting styles and the various experiences of the community and voluntary sectors.

Although produced for the Partnership Board and associated theme groups, it was agreed the guide was extremely useful and should be made generic so that it could be applied to any meeting. The Guide to Partnership Working has been approved by both the Operations Group and the Coventry Partnership Board and Rob was keen to get feedback from Leaders & Advisors about how it could be used as part on the existing self-assessment process.

Sara Roach suggested that as this year's self assessment was predominantly about outcome in helping to meet the targets of the LAA and Community Plan, she suggested that Chairs of theme groups meet with advisors and/or Partnership Support Officers, to go through the Guide to Partnership Working and identify strengths and weaknesses. **It was agreed that feedback from these meetings would be given at the next Leaders & Advisors meeting and include any improvements needed in theme group action plans.**

Several members of the Leaders and Theme Group said they were already using the Guide to Partnership Working in Partnership and non partnership activities.

**4. Communications**

Nigel Hart presented three items to the group. The first was a suggested content of an introduction folder to be given to all new members of the Coventry Partnership. It consisted of a welcome letter from the Chair of the Partnership which highlighted where to go for more information, a copy of the Guide to Partnership Working, a list of members of the Coventry Partnership and a recent newsletter of activities. **It was agreed that the introduction pack should also include a copy of the Community Plan, a publication listing successes of the Partnership's work and a stand alone diagram highlighting how the Coventry Partnership works.**

Nigel said that work was to start imminently on the next newsletter of the Coventry Partnership – called Your Neighbourhood Your News – and asked leaders and advisors to think about success stories that could be included. **It was agreed that the next edition should form an annual review type document charting the success of the last 12 months using the results of the improvement plans completed at the end of 2006.** This could then be included in the introduction pack.

Nigel finished with feedback on the Coventry Partnership's annual conference on June 4 which was targeted at the private sector. Feedback was extremely positive with a number of the 40-odd companies that attended expressing interest of getting involved further. A half-day event is to be planned in late June early July to move this forward and build on the momentum the annual conference started.

**5. Update on the Local Area Agreement 'Road Testing'**

Sara Roach reported back to the group about the road testing review with Local Government Office held in Coventry on June 11. Sara felt that GOWM found the day useful.

A key question posed to LGO was whether the LAA was to be used as a remedial tool or whether it was to help achieve an over-riding strategic idea. No definitive answer was given although she suspects it would be a bit of both.

The group then went to a national event in Leeds the following day where Coventry was highlighted for its forward thinking on the LAA issue. Sara said the end of the road testing process was set to take place on Friday July 13<sup>th</sup> and she would update the group at future meetings.

**Information on some of the outcomes from the review meeting is to be circulated with minutes.**

**6. Update from all Theme Groups**

**Housing:**

Richard Monk reported that the Choice Based Lettings initiative was to be pushed back until September due to issues with the IT supplier. The programme is also put forward as a model of good practice for its inclusion process.

Richard also reported that Coventry is to host a 'housing summit' where officers and Elected Members from Coventry and neighbouring authorities would come together to discuss cross-cutting issues and talk about ongoing and future developments. The event will take place at the Welcome Centre on July 20.

### **Children and Young People's Partnership:**

Sally Giles said that a key area of work over recent weeks has been the Annual Performance Assessment of children's services which has focused on a review of the Children and Young People's Strategic Plan – delivery to date and production of action plans for year two.

New Sub Groups reflecting Every Child Matters outcomes (outlined at the last meeting) have been established and have been drafting action plans. Some have met and some are to meet shortly.

Play Strategy and Big Lottery bids have been approved with £750,000 awarded to develop four to six new play areas across the city.

### **Your Neighbourhood Matters:**

Janice Nichols reported that the YNM programme had agreed work programmes for the six priority neighbourhood areas it serves. The programme was also linking in with Neighbourhood Employment and Skills Plans and LEGI which is also delivering in these areas.

Janice also said that a YNM stakeholders event was taking place on June 18 and she would feed back outcomes at the next meeting.

### **Environment:**

An Environment theme group meeting was taking place later today. Bob Keith said items on the agenda would include the city's Climate Change Strategy, which was expected to be a major issue for the city.

A suggestion had come from the Coventry Partnership's self assessment that the Environment and Transport theme groups merge. Bob said that after discussions with Cllr John McNicholas, Chair of the Transport Theme Group, this was rejected. However, it was agreed a sub-group featuring representatives from all relevant theme groups be formed to discuss the ongoing climate change issues. It was also agreed that a future Theme Group Leaders and Advisors meeting would be given over to discuss the Climate Change Strategy.

### **Jobs Strategy Group:**

Jane Beaver reported that the Jobs Strategy Group and the Learning and Training Groups had now merged. From now on the new group would be known as the **Learning, Skills and Employment** group. Jane said it had been decided that she would be chair of the new group.

Pathways to Work is a new initiative looking to get people off income support and back into work. For the first time it looks at what people can do rather than what they can't. It will be run by an external company and tenders have been submitted for the £10 million contract to run the service in Coventry and

Warwickshire. The winner will be announced in December with the new service starting on April 6.

Jane also reported that the Welfare Reform Act will see the introduction of the Employment Support Allowance (ESA) which will replace Incapacity Benefit and Income Support based on incapacity or disability from next year (October 2008).

- A new Personal Capability Assessment will be introduced alongside the ESA to assess an individual's entitlement and the possible support that would be needed to get back into the workplace.
- The Act will also require people who are able to work to attend Work-Focused Interviews and develop with their advisers a plan of action to help them.

Finally Jane reported that Coventry was seeing a rise in the numbers of people claiming JSA and that the reasons behind the trend are uncertain. . 1,000 new NI numbers were issued last month and an average of 98 per cent of Eastern European workers go straight into work both skilled and unskilled. Jane reported that these people were not taking jobs of people in the region as Job Centre Plus were finding that they were filling only 40 per cent of the jobs available.

#### **PIE:**

Helen Shankster reported that a dissemination event for the Household Survey was held recently and a report into the findings of the event would be published in the next few weeks.

Helen also said that Robert Dyson from the University of Warwick is retiring and has decided to step down as Chair of the PIE group and a search for a successor had started.

#### **Community Safety Partnership:**

Mark Taylor reported on the success of the Crackdown and Consolidation project – called Operation Blue Ribbon – which was underway in Foleshill. The initiative sees more than 20 partners working together and targeting issues identified by residents in a high profile and high visibility way. This is not just crime but environmental improvements meeting the Your Neighbourhood Matter's greener, cleaner, safer agenda. The initiative was so successful it was to start in Willenhall shortly and could well expand to other areas of the city as well.

Jane Beaver expressed interest in JobCentre Plus getting involved in future as a way to help combat benefit fraud.

Sara Roach reported that the Community Safety Partnership was struggling to meet its PSA targets and considerable work was ongoing that would hopefully see changes in this shortly. Sara also said there was a review underway into the substance misuse services.

**7. Any Other Business**

Janice Nichols reported she was the new Chair of the Domestic Violence Partnership. She will provide updates on their work to future meetings.

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