

Minutes from Wigan Borough Partnership Board

Date: 11th January 2010

Venue: Douglas Valley Training Centre, Turner St, Wigan

Present:

Paul Argyle, Trevor Barton, Shaun Donnellan, David Dunning, Liz Edmondson, Pam Gilligan, Cath Hurst, Ray Hutchinson, Susan Loudon, Jim Maloney, David Molyneux, Chris Ready, Joyce Redfearn, Peter Smith, Carol Watson

Apologies:

Miranda Allen, Marion Andrews, Gareth Cheesman, Jean Garlick, Les Higgins, Harry Holden, Devan Lucas, Alan Stephenson, Peter Rowe

In Attendance:

Julie Southworth, Simon Dale,

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Peter Smith welcomed new members; Susan Loudon and Pam Gilligan to their first meeting as representatives of the Township Forums

2.0 Minutes of previous meeting

Accepted as correct

3.0 Action Updates

3.1 CAA

Joyce reminded partners of the key themes from the assessment and the need for continued focus on the core messages for the Borough.

3.2 Wigan Life Awards

Simon reported on good progress with the new awards scheme

- 100 Nominations to data (across 13 categories)
- Awards event provisionally booked for the 11th March at 6pm in Leigh Sports Village
- Deadline extended to 22nd January

Special thanks were noted to Liz Edmondson and colleagues from Lancashire Publications for strong support by local press

Several board members agreed to participate in the judging panel; Trevor Barton, Liz Edmondson, Shaun Donnellan, David Dunning and Chris Ready

3.3 Cohesion

The board noted the report on recent work against 4 key priorities.

The new 'Connecting Communities' programme, being developed in Leigh was welcomed. Additional resources to support intensive local engagement were felt to be important in an area that has experience a number of the issues. It was noted that the programme would welcome support for community leadership within the area - engaging local people, elected members and service managers: details to be shared with LSP partners as they emerge.

3.4 Partnership Convention

Members emphasised the importance of using the event to focus on the Peer Review and the call to take action.

Everyone agreed on the need for a realistic (but positive) approach to key issues and the likely impact of the recession on public sector finance.

There was a shared view about the need for public services to have a different relationship with local communities and to have an open dialogue about priorities and the choices that will have to be made
Community capacity needs to be understood and supported as it is likely to be a critical component of future work and services.

In discussion the board noted the importance of improving ability of services to target more effectively - and the need to consider alternative approaches such as the extension of charges for services.

4.0 Total Place

Joyce Redfearn gave a brief update on Manchester Region development work:

- Emerging evidence from 0-5 years pilot about impact of recent services/approach - and the likely need for a more directive approach in work with young people.
- Opportunity for Manchester region to influence national policy setting

In discussion, key points included:

- Role of community sector in provision of services is an opportunity to be developed; naturally grown, local development often provides the best solution
- Need to support and foster development of strong community spirit.

Agreed that the LSMG should adopt the role of the Local Place Board

5.0 Peer Review

Peter Smith invited the Board to review and reflect on the findings of the recent Peer Review.

In overall terms he commented that the review served to reflect on the discussions we had held with the review team. The need to introduce a stronger degree of challenge and accountability across the LSP has been acknowledged together with the imperative focus on action.

Following a short workshop session a series of key themes emerged from the range of group discussions:

- The vision for the Borough may need updating. It is important to retain a **focus on people** and not just physical places
- The LSP needs to be **'light on its feet'** to ensure flexibility in terms of vision and strategy. We need to develop an inspirational style that encourages creative thinking and solutions
- Partnership working requires partners to spend time with one another in order to enable a sense of shared purpose and bond. It is important to recognise that **people participate in partnerships as individuals as well as representing their own organisations**. We need to exploit the intelligence and commitment of people who set at the table.
- The **economic downturn** is a major threat for public services - but also an opportunity for partnerships to work together creatively and to support one another. The **focus must be on improvement** and must prevent potential avoidance behaviour such as organisations referring problems (and costs) to other agencies.
- The contraction in public finance is likely to have a **disproportionately high impact in Wigan** due to the high number of people employed within public services.
- Community and Voluntary organisations are likely to take an increasingly important role in providing services and support as well as enabling a different self help culture
- We need to be proactive **in promoting awareness of community organisations**. This should generate an increased media profile as well as improved information systems. This could also include a shared website and improved ICT contribution.
- The relationship between LSP Board and LSMG is important. The Board needs to **hold LSMG to account for performance** against agreed key targets
- A refreshed vision should lead to a **simpler set of priorities** for the Borough

- It is important that people participating in different elements of the LSP are **clear about their role and terms of reference**
- Important also that these **different elements understand their relationship to other parts of the system**. We need to encourage them to connect better to one another
- If people are clearer about their role and their relationship between the different parts of the system it will help to **reinforce accountability and reporting** requirements
- We need to be more outward focused and be prepared to **learn and import ideas from other areas** more flexibly that we do at present
- Economic recession will require public services to move away from a consumerist 'choice' driven approach to services - towards a more explicit management of public perceptions. This will include work to help **reduce the demand for services**
- We need to provide **clear support for communities** who wish to take a stronger lead role in delivering local services themselves.

Agreed Actions

It was agreed to:

- Convene a meeting with LSMG and the LSP Advisory group in Feb 2010
- Establish a small working group between the Board and the LSMG (Peter Smith, Carol Watson and Trevor Barton, Joyce Redfearn, Shaun Donnellan and Cath Hurst offered to assist)

6. Any other business

None

7. Date of next meeting

Monday March 22nd 2010