

**West Kent Partnership
Notes of the Meeting 22 October 2004
Held at Holiday Inn, Wrotham**

Present: Cllr David Aikman, Keith Austin, Merle Bigden, Penny Chatfield, Jim Davis, Bill Fearon, Steve Ford, Tony Fullwood, Cllr Melvyn Howell, Anne Knight, Jean Morgan, Brendan O'Connor, Tom Phillips, Mark Raymond, Lynne Selman, Caroline Shaw, Rodney Stone, Barbara Thorndick, Vic Webb, Cllr Grahame Weston, Wendy Wilton, Cllr Mark Worrall, Mandy Wynne, *Wendy Wood*

Action

Guests: Richard Barnes (SEEDA) Chris Lay, Richard Spoerry

Apologies: David Coleman, Alsion Cook, Angela Hammond, Robin Hales, Roger House, David Hughes, Alan McKendrick, Jeremy Price, Rosie Serpis, Simon Wilshaw

Chairman's opening remarks

Cllr Mark Worrall welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially the new members from the voluntary sector – Keith Austin from Malling Age Concern, Penny Chatfield from Homestart, Jim Davis from Tunbridge Wells Mental Health Resource and Mandy Wynne from Sevenoaks Volunteer Bureau.

1. Minutes/Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Project Funding - Bid for Volunteering England funding for consideration at the meeting. Merle Bigden explained that the launch had been rescheduled to the end of January to enable the Kiosks to be fully developed and locations to be explored.

3. Additional Voluntary/Community Engagement – Faith representation currently being resolved and will be brought to next meeting.

WW

6. STAR Adult Review – West Kent response was sent to LSC and no feedback yet from the final consultation.

2. Project Funding – New Bids

Education Business Partnership – Safety in Action 2005

Wendy Wood reported that the appraisal group suggested supporting this bid on the basis of a one off rescue package for one year only as the main sponsor had withdrawn. The appraisal group suggested limiting the funding to a level between £2,500 and £5,000 on the understanding that the project would go ahead on that agreed funding basis. **The partnership agreed that support would be given on this basis with a strong caveat that alternative funding must be found for future years.** It was suggested that the project could possibly link to the Healthy Schools project and this will be fed back to the Applicant. Community Safety partnerships as a potential sponsor were

WW

WW

discussed but the project is unlikely to meet the specific objectives for which the partnerships are funded.

Volunteering England

Wendy Wood reported that the appraisal group were very impressed by this bid which demonstrates strong benefit to the rural communities in West Kent and contains clear proposals to ensure sustainability after the initial set up. **The bid met all the appraisal criteria and the appraisal group recommended funding the bid. This was agreed.**

3. Sub Groups Feedback

Transport

Tony Fullwood pointed the meeting to the proposed schemes for inclusion in 2006/11 Local Transport Plan bid explaining that in addition to the strategic level transport issues, these included schemes to relieve urban congestion, focus on the school run and some rural schemes to increase safety and conserve the environment. The bid is generic at this stage but important that West Kent is firmly positioned with the pressure from other growth areas such as Thames Gateway and areas of regeneration such as East Kent.

Grahame Weston, who is closely involved at KCC level, said that the bid is compliant with the Government local transport strategy for the next 15 years with the emphasis on improving what we already have rather than building new. The bid does support strategic new build such as Colts Hill Link.

The meeting was invited to consider how the Partnership, the districts and KCC, might influence school travel plans with schools, governors and parents to relieve school run congestion. The West Kent Learning Federation have put a bid into KCC for a transport grant to be used to move pupils between sites in West Kent. There was some discussion about the use of minibuses instead of bigger buses for rural transport and Mark Worrall suggested that school minibuses might be made available to rural communities outside of school run times. Jim Davis commented on the impact of the NHS service reconfiguration, particularly on rural communities and access to services. **Reference to the changes to health provision to be included in the West Kent response to the local transport plan.**

TF

Housing

Barbara Thorndick distributed draft copies of the two reports produced through the housing sub group focussed on getting employers engaged in affordable housing – *Developing new affordable housing for essential workers without Government grant* and *Employer engagement*. These reports should be a useful resource for those interested in developing new affordable housing. The reports will be made available as pdf files on the WKP website and will also be available on CDRom. The documents will be sent to the employers originally consulted at beginning of this process. **The WKP agreed to support a launch.** Two possible pilot schemes are under consideration. **There are other sites in KCC**

BT

ownership that might provide further opportunities for pilot schemes and it was agreed that the WKP would take up with KCC

MW

Business Development

Mark Raymond thanked SEEDA for their confirmation that they will provide capital funding to the level of £50,000 to be spent this financial year to support the production of two feasibility studies – the first into supply and demand for business premises in West Kent and the second into supporting West Kent's homeworkers. Both studies are intended to lead to practical projects on the ground, bringing capital investment to West Kent. The partnership are very grateful for SEEDA's support and hope that this will be ongoing.

The business premises project will build information from secondary data, initially on existing provision and lead to proposals for providing what is required and not currently being provided. It may lead to spin outs for existing companies and managed workspace for new and grow on businesses will be considered.

The second project will explore homeworker needs particularly in regard to IT competency. West Kent has a high proportion of home-based lifestyle businesses and FSB studies have shown that this sector is difficult to support and are less inclined to take up IT support. **It was suggested that engagement with parish councils should be explored. Wendy Wood to contact Rodney Williamson.**

WW

Bill Fearon commented on the synergy between the business development and learning and skills sub groups and Anne Knight emphasised the importance of this link so that existing provision might be tailored to meet identified training needs. Mark Worrall commented that the WKP quarterly meeting enables the subgroups to keep each other informed on their activities and identify where they can work together in support of particular projects.

Mark Worrall commented that there are now a considerable number of initiatives underway through the auspices of the WKP and that these should be built into a news release to demonstrate the difference the partnership is making already to West Kent.

WW

Regeneration

Jean Morgan introduced her paper and explained that the WKP funded Priority Communities consultancy project was well underway with work initially interrogating the index of multiple deprivation. This has highlighted thematic issues such as child poverty, educational attainment and skills and barriers to accessing services. Rural accessibility issues will be developed using other data sources in phase 2. **The consultant, Liz Haggart, will report to the regeneration sub group at the beginning of January and make a short presentation to the WKP at our January meeting.** It was agreed that this was very valuable research for highlighting future priorities for West Kent and this will be fed into SEEDA. The work was not presented at Brussels but will be presented at a European event to be held on a date yet to be advised at Guildford.

JM

Rural issues are very much under consideration by the sub group and copies of the SPIF are available in electronic format from Wendy Wood.

The rural towns SEEDA funded initiative was the first time SEEDA recognised the very real issues in West Kent and this will be carried forward through the sub group although the main emphasis is generated by the town partnerships themselves. Edenbridge health check is underway under the Town Council. Merle Bigden suggested that a briefing could be set up in 6 months time for Edenbridge to share their experience with other West Kent market towns. Once the healthcheck is completed then the WKP role (as the WKAIF Board) will be to make a formal recommendation to the Rural Towns partnership on what projects should be supported.

Learning and Skills

Wendy Wilton gave a verbal update on the work of the subgroup. This covered progress on the StAR reviews, and an initial proposal for a project to meet AIF priority for Action 1.3 – *Develop coherent programme of pre-vocational and vocational opportunities for disaffected school pupils or those at risk of exclusion*. The meeting was also advised that the Kent and Medway Basic Skills Consortium is proposing to establish Achievement Task Groups in each of the AIF areas with the aim of improving the achievement rates of basic skills qualifications. This directly supports AIF priority for action 1.4.

Bill Fearon commented that the STAR 16-19 year old provision review is likely to link quite closely to the West Kent Learning Federation's action plan but that the outcome of the review of the Adult STAR is less predictable. The WKP notes the support that West Kent College is receiving from LEA.

The land based review and the future of Hadlow College is now at the stage where the University of Greenwich and West Kent College have submitted a joint bid with West Kent College as the lead. The process of sharing the benefits with Hadlow stake holders and colleagues is underway.

The West Kent construction college was launched successfully in September and was featured on South East TV this week. The Brook Street campus was also featured. West Kent College hope to lease a neighbouring building to house engineering and car mechanic facilities. Press interest is also anticipated in the proposed £20M development of the Brook Street site which is just entering the initial phase of local consultation.

Bill Fearon represents the further education sector on the regional skills and productivity alliance. There is also a local alliance. This is a new initiative for the South East and essential that the West Kent perspective is adequately represented. **Bill will pass all the paperwork to Wendy Wood so that the best route to achieve this can be identified.**

BF

Caroline Shaw wished to register the strong support received from West Kent College by West Kent Council for Voluntary Service by working with them to persuade the LSC not to withdraw their franchise which enables courses to be

subsidised. West Kent College are also helping WKCVS to develop OCN accredited courses which should help safeguard the sustainability of these courses.

Health

Lynne Selman introduced the paper. The two major issues were the service reconfiguration (covered in Steve Ford's presentation) and the implication of the Licensing Act. There is a concern that the NHS are not statutory consultees on the licensing of large scale events and this lack of formal consultation is a restriction to contingency planning within the NHS. The Health Board is lobbying on this issue and in the interim it has been agreed that the emergency planning officer will be on the licensing forum and notified informally of when a large event is planned. It was suggested that the Health Board also explore the self licensing facility that is available as this can cover quite large scale events and there is no process in place to keep the emergency planning officer informed. **The WKP agreed to support the NHS in its lobbying role to become statutory consultees on licensing.**

WW

Brendan O'Connor advised that a Director of Public Health has been appointed at South West Kent PCT and that this role will enhance public engagement.

4. Conference – draft proposals

Wendy Wood introduced her discussion paper. She emphasised that this is to stimulate debate and other ideas on how our first annual conference might be organised. **A detailed proposal incorporating other views will be brought to the January meeting.**

WW

Partners are requested to feed comments through to Wendy as soon as possible to consider the following:

- **key themes**
- **delegate organizations**
- **possible key note speakers**

all

Wendy to work on securing keynote speakers and confirm date of conference and other key details within 4 weeks. Sir Sandy has agreed to speak. **Wendy to contact Mike Gwilliam at SEERA.**

WW

It was agreed that no conference facilitators or PR company will be commissioned and that in-house expertise will be drawn on. The cost of the conference to be kept as low as possible balanced against the requirement for a suitable venue and arrangements for a prestigious event.

Universities to be added to delegate list and youth groups approached via Kent Youth Council. The meeting discussed the need for the delegate mix, for example, youth involvement, to be considered when organizing the conference sessions.

5. Themed Education Presentation – LPSA Education Targets

Richard Spoerry, Central Policy Team, KCC and Chris Lay, Area Education officer, KCC gave an informative presentation on LPSA2 education targets in West Kent. Powerpoint presentation attached. Comprehensive packs were also supplied to partners providing much greater detail. **An invitation to be issued to County to present at the next WKP meeting on how local organisations will be represented in Local Area Agreements**

WW

6. Shaping Your Local Health Services – Service Reconfiguration

Steve Ford presented the plans for service reconfiguration between Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells. Powerpoint presentation attached. The presentation stimulated considerable discussion. The meeting endorsed the view that the service reconfiguration provided both Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone hospitals with sustainable and exciting futures. Transport links between the two towns and the surrounding rural area was a weakness, or certainly perceived as one. The WKP agreed to work with the PCTs to sell the overall benefits of the service reconfiguration and tackle the transport issues.

7. Community Safety Annual Reports

These were noted.

8. Any Other Business

South East Plan – Jean Morgan distributed the South East Plan publicity and consultation process paper. The consultation process will be early next year and completed well in advance of May. LSPs are intended to be fully involved.

Wendy to put website link from the WKP site. Jean Morgan, Brian Gates and Tony Fullwood from the 3 West Kent Councils are the relevant contacts. **It was suggested that Jean Morgan set up a process whereby a West Kent response can be put forward in addition to each district response.**

WW

JM

Smoking Cessation – Health bodies are collaborating in a national exercise to reduce smoking and smoking in public places. **The health subgroup will look at this and bring to a subsequent meeting.**

Health
Chair

Meeting Dates – A request was made that sub-group chairs ensure that all members of subgroups are given adequate notice of forthcoming meetings.

Sub-grp
Chairs

9. Dates of Next Meetings

All Fridays, 10am, venues to be advised.

21 January

late May/June – annual conference, date to be advised.

15 July

21 October