

West Kent Partnership
Notes of the Meeting 21 January 2005
Held at Delarue Hall, Tonbridge

Present: Cllr David Aikman, Keith Austin, Merle Bigden, Penny Chatfield, David Coleman, Cllr Alison Cook, Bill Fearon, Robin Hales, Cllr Melvyn Howell, Janet Hughes, David Hughes, Anne Knight, Alan McKendrick, Jean Morgan, Declan O'Neill, Tom Phillips, Jeremy Price, Mark Raymond, Rosie Serpis, Caroline Shaw, Barbara Thorndick, Vic Webb, Cllr Grahame Weston, Simon Wilshaw, Wendy Wilton, Cllr Mark Worrall, Mandy Wynne, Wendy Wood

Guests: Mike Daly (observer), Angela Painter, Steve Humphrey, Matthew Balfour, Elizabeth Haggart, Graeme Brown, John Haynes

Apologies: Steve Ford, Tony Fullwood, Angela Hammond, Roger House, Brendan O'Connor, Rodney Stone

Chairman's opening remarks

Cllr Mark Worrall welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Minutes/Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

- **Faith Representation** – Finding an appropriate Faith representative who feels able to speak for and feed back to, the whole West Kent Faith community is problematic. Further possibilities will continue to be explored. WW

- **Press Releases** – Four press releases have been sent out since the last meeting and some positive media coverage has been obtained. Releases have been staggered so there is a steady feed to the media. They covered, Safety in Action funding, Volunteering England funding, the two SEEDA funded projects and a release on the difference the Partnership is making to West Kent, leading on the forthcoming conference. The flow of releases will continue and will cover the essential worker housing studies and live schemes launch, the priority communities work and the continuing work on the two SEEDA funded projects. A process to be established so that each of the Councils have an equal number of quotes spread across a batch of press releases. It may be more practical to restrict quotes to the Chairman of the WKP and, if appropriate, an expert on the topic. WW

- **New Director of Public Health for Maidstone Weald** – A correction to the last minutes was made. Declan O'Neill is the new Director of Public Health for Maidstone Weald PCT, not South West Kent PCT.

2. South East Plan – West Kent response

A draft issues paper on the SE Plan setting out some preliminary views was presented. Comments on the Paper were requested before Easter to Ian Bailey at Sevenoaks District Council who is leading the West Kent response. The housing sub group will input into the process and a revised draft response will be tabled for discussion at the next meeting.

BT
JM

3. Vision Statement/Priorities for Action 2005/06/Review of Terms of Reference

These were all adopted by the Partnership.

The WKP Priorities for Action will run for the next financial year with a report to the October 05 and April 06 meetings

Point 8 of Terms of Reference to be amended so it reads:

Take a strategic level view of the community strategies for each District and Borough in West Kent, promoting good practice and better joint working

WW

4. Project Funding

There have been no applications for funding since the last meeting.

The Priority Communities study has been completed and was presented to the meeting at item 7.

A written report on the CVS Development Officer will be provided to the next meeting.

A report on the Safety in Action initiative has been requested for the April meeting.

The Volunteering England initiative will provide 25 public access computer terminal booths across West Kent to promote volunteering in rural areas. The sites are being identified and the diverse mix will include leisure centres, rural libraries, GP surgeries, pubs, rural post offices and supermarkets. The logistics of providing laptops for mobile access via, for example, blood transfusion mobile centres and mobile libraries will also be explored.

The terminals will also have the facility to provide access to information available on the websites of other voluntary and public bodies. West Kent CVS and the Kent Rural Consortium have already attracted DEFRA funding to enable them to do this. The potential for using the terminals to link into training opportunities will be explored.

Continuing evaluation will be undertaken by Volunteering England to assess the level of usage of the terminals against site type in this pilot project. The meeting

congratulated the voluntary sector on this initiative and will continue with support to ensure its success.

5. Conference

A draft programme for the Conference was presented. A working group has been established and will meet in early February to take plans forward. Partners were invited to join this group. It was noted that some strong key note speakers have been secured.

A number of comments and suggestions were made on the range of issues to be covered and potential participants which would be considered further by the working group. Caroline Shaw was invited to make a recommendation for a voluntary sector member for the conference panel session

CS

Following discussion about the overall purpose of the conference, it was agreed that speakers will be specifically requested to address issues that are important to West Kent. There would be an opportunity for challenging questions to be put as part of each session. A local perspective would be provided by the post lunch question and answer session and local West Kent achievements could be promoted by exhibition stands and the proposed networking session. An update report will be produced for the April meeting.

WW

6. Sub-Groups Feedback

Transport

The meeting authorised the sub group to respond to the news detailed in the update report which means there will be delays in construction of both sections of the A21. The response will express the importance of such infrastructure to West Kent and the disappointment in both decisions.

TF

The transport sub group to comment on the Kent Franchise and the IKF proposals for the next meeting.

TF

Housing

Plans for a joint launch of the two reports on essential worker affordable housing and the launch of the related website were discussed. The meeting agreed that it would be appropriate to have an early launch on a smallish scale as this information is topical and up to date and should be made available as soon as possible.

BT

Business Development

Outcomes from the two SEEDA funded projects underway will be reported to the April meeting. The intention is that the studies will lead to activity on the ground in West Kent addressing the technological needs of home-based workers and the supply of appropriate sites and premises to support business growth in West Kent. The sub group will be considering priorities for the forthcoming year at its next meeting.

Learning and Skills

Whilst the sub-group awaits the results of the StARs in late February they have been investigating potential projects to meet the AIF priorities for Action. Initiatives are under consideration to support vocational progression opportunities and take a proactive approach to tackling basic skills requirements.

It was also reported that the 14-16 programme is proving very successful. It is probable that the construction skills site at North Farm Estate will be complemented by a vehicle workshop facility in an adjacent unit thus facilitating a taster of college life to a greater spectrum of 14-16 year olds.

It has just been announced that West Kent College in association with West Kent Council for Voluntary Service and other partners have been successful in winning a large European Social Fund bid to fund a study into training needs and analysis for the voluntary sector. A full time training manager will be in post for 3 years as part of an overall package worth £300,000. The Partnership welcomed this initiative.

Health

The sub group will meet again shortly with a change of Chair and administrative support. The Government White Paper on health was published in November and the delivery plan will be published in March.

Regeneration

The meeting endorsed the draft response on the Allocation of the new Neighbourhood Renewal fund (NRF) Resources of 2006/7 and 2007/8. It was suggested that 'strongly disagree' be reserved for the key point and 'disagree' used for the others. This will now be sent.

MR

7. Priority Communities Presentation

A presentation was made by Liz Haggart on the study of priority communities and pockets of deprivation across West Kent.

It was agreed that the suggested list of Priority Communities across West Kent with a strategic focus on children and families should be adopted

The regeneration sub group were asked to co-ordinate convening a Priority Communities Strategy group and to report back to the next meeting on a timetable for taking forward the recommendations.

JM

The role of the Children's Consortium in West Kent was acknowledged, as was the importance to involve all agencies who have a contribution to make in improving conditions for children, young people and their families in these priority communities.

The report was welcomed and it was hoped that by pinpointing these small pockets of deprivation accurately, we now have data to support a case for

additional funding. Particularly, it is important to provide funding in West Kent to support preventative programmes as without addressing the underlying issues the situation will not improve. This report provides a resource for justifying funding applications and will be made available for this purpose.

The local authorities present all indicated that they would welcome a presentation to members and officers, by Liz Haggart to highlight the findings of the report. A presentation to the Voluntary Sector Forum was also requested.

8. KCC Presentation on Local Area Agreement (LAA)/Public Service Agreement (PSA)/Public Service Board (PSB) – Graeme Brown

Graeme Brown outlined the relationship between Local Area Agreements and the second Local Public Service Agreement, together with a proposed structure and timetable for progress. Kent and its Districts and Boroughs were jointly one of the 21 national pilots, the results of which will influence what happens across the nation. The powerpoint presentation is attached to these minutes.

A lively discussion followed the presentation, particularly around the consultation process. Some concerns were expressed about a lack of involvement at district level in decisions that will be made by the PSB. However, the dialogue provided an opportunity for the partnership to be given reassurance that no core funding will be removed, that the consultation process will continue and all are actively encouraged to be involved. The point was also made that by devolving control to County level as opposed to national level, it was anticipated that district issues would receive greater recognition.

Fundamental to the success of the LAA would be the move away from micro managing. It is essential that less control is imposed from Government and in turn from the Public Service Board. The full LAA document has a range of outcomes and indicators and local input is essential. Concern was expressed that the West Kent local authorities are not represented on the Kent delivery PSB which has a vital role.

9. Any Other Business

- The annual GOSE LSP conference is on 15 February at Portsmouth.
- The Council for Voluntary Service celebrates its 40th year in 2005. The name is to be changed to Voluntary Action in West Kent and support for the various events planned, including a Ball on 2nd July, was requested.

10. Dates of Next meetings

Friday 8 April
Tuesday 21 June (conference) – HRI East Malling
Friday 15 July
Friday 21 October